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Milwaukee Film Unveils 2024 Dialogues Documentary Festival Lineup

The inaugural Dialogues Documentary Festival will run September 26-29, 2024



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MILWAUKEE – September 4, 2024 – Milwaukee Film is thrilled to officially reveal the program guide for the [2024 Dialogues Documentary Festival](#) online. The program guide includes a full schedule of film screenings and plenty of helpful information for festival attendees. Physical copies of the program book are scheduled to arrive by Friday, September 6th at various locales, including Milwaukee Film’s Historic Cinemas, the Oriental and Downer Theatres.

Film tickets will go on sale for **Milwaukee Film Members only starting at 8:00 am on Wednesday, September 4th.**

Film tickets will be available for purchase by the **general public starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 5th.**

“Our inaugural Dialogues Documentary Festival sets a high water mark for future years,” noted Cara Ogburn, artistic director for Milwaukee Film. “These are some of the very best documentaries of the year, most not having screened yet in Milwaukee, and we’re thrilled to be able to use these films to bring vital discussions surrounding important topics to our audiences. We’re truly bringing the world of documentary into conversation with the city of Milwaukee,” she concluded.

DDF24 Film Lineup:

Showtimes, tickets, and the full lineup of films, are available online now at www.mkefilm.org/ddf. Keep checking film listings as the festival approaches to learn more about filmmakers, film participants, local experts, and others expected to be in conversation following the screenings.

Admissions Granted

Hao Wu, Miao Wang | 2024 | United States

In a landmark Supreme Court case pitting Asian American plaintiffs against Harvard University, activists on both sides wrestle with hard truths about race, equality, and stereotypes that AAPI folks face in education. While headlines polarize attitudes around affirmative action, *ADMISSIONS GRANTED* nuances these conversations and reveals more about the complex dynamics of race in America than simple soundbites might.

9/29/2024 | 6:30 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Agent of Happiness

Arun Bhattarai, Dorottya Zurbó | 2024 | Bhutan, Hungary

What's the secret to happiness? The tiny mountain nation of Bhutan may have just cracked the code. In 2008 the Bhutanese government started measuring the "Gross National Happiness". Agents are sent across the country to measure people's happiness to inform the government's mandated goal of increasing happiness. The film follows two men as they travel the mountainside, getting to know the people and maybe finding their own happiness along the way.

9/26/2024 | 4:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

An Invitation to Wonder: Waubesa Wetlands

Ben Albert | 2024 | United States

Guided by the wisdom of his grandfather, a young filmmaker journeys through the mysterious wetland in his grandparents' Wisconsin backyard. Navigating the challenges of this environment, the film uncovers the life, secrets, and wonder of wetlands in a way that must be seen to be believed. When we lose our relationship with nature, we lose our ability to care for and protect it. This documentary is an invitation to explore the beauty our state has hiding just around the corner.

9/27/2024 | 8:30 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

BEYOND THE BRIDGE: A Solution to Homelessness

Don Sawyer | 2024 | United States

BEYOND THE BRIDGE begins by asking seemingly simple questions about solutions to homelessness. Starting in Milwaukee and traveling over 40,000 miles around the US, the filmmakers meet those with lived experience, policymakers, and service practitioners discovering that Housing First and integrated systems are the answer, but getting to zero homelessness is not as simple an equation as the solutions may suggest.

9/26/2024 | 6:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

Black Table

John Antonio James, Bill Mack | 2024 | United States

The class of 1994, the largest group of Black students at Yale in the 1990s, faced an unprepared institution. The Black Table became their refuge, a space of their own. Directors John James and Bill Mack's documentary BLACK TABLE tells their story by highlighting a created environment for scholars discovering their identities. Through interviews and reunions, the film is a time capsule with insights that resonate today as the country addresses the Supreme Court's decision to abolish affirmative action.

9/27/2024 | 5:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Dust to Dust

Kosai Sekine | 2024 | Japan

The future of fashion is here and it's being ushered in by Yuima Nakazato. While designing sculptural haute couture for the runway, Yuima dreams up a visionary and socially aware practice through research and experience of environmental and production issues happening all across the world—this time in Kenya, where the scale of textile waste is a harbinger of the urgent need for conservation and social change.

9/27/2024 | 8:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Emergent City

Kelly Anderson, Jay Arthur Sterrenberg | 2024 | United States

EMERGENT CITY is an observational civic epic that explores the profound intersections of gentrification, climate crisis, and real estate development in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. When this neighborhood with a long legacy of good industrial jobs (and the environmental impact of that industry) meets a global developer who promises "innovation," a battle erupts over the future of this place for current residents, future residents and workers, and the land itself.

9/28/2024 | 2:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

Eternal You

Hans Block, Moritz Rieseewieck | 2023 | Germany, United States

With the help of artificial intelligence, a dream comes true that is as old as mankind itself: eternal life. ETERNAL YOU examines the story of people who live on as digital replicants in the pockets of their loved ones. The film tracks tech start-ups creating these "digital doppelgangers" raising crucial questions: Can a digital replica replace a lost loved one? How will human memory be impacted? And do we have the right to forget?

9/29/2024 | 11:00 AM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Family Tree

Jennifer MacArthur | 2024 | United States

This cinema vérité style documentary showcases the moving story of two Black family forest owners in North Carolina and tracks their triumphs and struggles historically and in the present day. The Jefferies sisters, Nikki and Natalie, struggle with their estranged father, Sidney, to clear the overgrown thicket of underbrush on their property. Meanwhile, the Williams family cultivates an award-winning tree farm at their aptly named Fourtee Acres.

9/28/2024 | 2:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Food and Country

Laura Gabbert | 2023 | United States

Worried about the survival of small farmers, ranchers, and chefs hobbled by America's policy of producing cheap food, trailblazing food writer Ruth Reichl reaches across political and social divides to report on the country's broken food system and the innovators risking everything to transform it. As Reichl says: "How we grow and make our food shows us our values—as a nation and as human beings."

9/29/2024 | 11:30 AM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Free Money

Sam Soko, Lauren DeFilippo | 2022 | Kenya, United States

When universal basic income (UBI) comes to the Kenyan village of Kogutu, lives are forever changed. GiveDirectly, one of the fastest growing nonprofits of the 21st century, is sending free money to select villagers for twelve years as part of the world's largest UBI experiment. FREE MONEY juxtaposes these young, ambitious economists deadset on ending poverty with the lived experiences of local Kenyans whose lives are being impacted in diverse ways by UBI.

9/26/2024 | 4:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

Mediha

Hasan Oswald | 2023 | United States

Mediha, a teenage Yazidi girl who was kidnapped and enslaved by ISIS and was recently liberated from captivity, turns her camera on herself to process her trauma while rescuers search for her missing family members. MEDIHA tells the story of the Yazidi genocide and its aftermath, shown through the lens of one young survivor as she confronts her past through personal video diaries, reclaiming her voice and stepping bravely toward the future.

9/27/2024 | 2:15 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

Missing From Fire Trail Road

Sabrina Van Tassel | 2024 | United States, France

Mary Ellen Johnson Davis has been missing from the Tulalip Reservation since 2020, just one of thousands of Native American women gone missing in the U.S. This urgent documentary sheds light on the epidemic of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women plaguing this country. Davis' story opens up a broader conversation about the violence and generational trauma suffered by Indigenous communities, as well as the fallible laws, policies between tribal and federal entities, and lack of investigation surrounding them.

9/28/2024 | 9:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

My Sister Liv

Alan Hicks | 2022 | Australia, United States

The bond between the sisters Tess and Liv seems to be unbreakable until Liv, who battles with depression, body dysmorphia, and suicidal thoughts, can't take it anymore. Surviving sister Tess takes us on a heart-wrenching journey through their shared joys and fears, seeking to

understand the circumstances that led to her sister's death as she takes steps to help other struggling youth, honoring Liv's memory by making a difference.

9/28/2024 | 5:15 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

New Wave

Elizabeth Ai | 2024 | United States

Mile-high hair. Synthesized sounds. Teenage rebellion. Elizabeth Ai was on a mission to excavate an untold story of rebellious punks in the chaotic world of 80s Vietnamese new wave, until she uncovered a hidden past. Amidst vibrant performances, she also reveals the struggles of refugees navigating cultural assimilation. Bolstered by a treasure trove of archival footage, NEW WAVE is ultimately a love letter to a determined community striving for acceptance and identity.

9/28/2024 | 8:15 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

One Person, One Vote?

Maximina Juson | 2024 | United States

ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE gives an in-depth look at the Electoral College, its slavery origins, and its impact on society today. Four dynamic electors from different parties during the 2020 election cycle—a Republican, a Democrat, a Green, and a Kanye West elector—offer insight into the inner workings of this often-misunderstood institution. This timely, nonpartisan documentary will fill a stark information gap in American presidential elections for audiences.

9/26/2024 | 7:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Preconceived

Sabrina Keane, Kate Dumke | 2023 | United States

Where does someone turn when facing an unplanned pregnancy? PRECONCEIVED follows Maleeha and Maria, two women whose quests to navigate their unplanned pregnancies misled them to enigmatic centers that some call “pregnancy resource centers” and others call “fake clinics.” Shedding light on how many of these centers are a part of a movement striving to make abortion unthinkable and illegal, the documentary explores the complex role of deception, finances, faith, and privacy.

9/29/2024 | 3:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Public Defender

Andrea Kalin | 2024 | United States

Heather Shaner, a feisty, blue-haired defense attorney in Washington, DC, has spent over 45 years representing people who can't afford a lawyer. Her empathy is tested when she is assigned to represent two clients who participated in the violent mob that stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021. PUBLIC DEFENDER explores the delicate state of U.S. democracy, the forces threatening to tear it apart, and the people dedicated to protecting it.

9/27/2024 | 5:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

Quad Gods

Jess Jacklin | 2024 | United States

From debut filmmaker Jess Jacklin, this high-stakes and heart-warming documentary follows three New York men who meet at Mount Sinai Hospital's neuro-rehabilitation lab and decide to form the first fully quadriplegic e-sports team. Providing a unique lens into both gaming and disability, this captivating story challenges assumptions and spotlights the restorative power of resilience, passion, and found community.

9/28/2024 | 6:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Razing Liberty Square

Katja Esson | 2023 | United States

As rising seas threaten Miami's luxurious beachfront, wealthy property owners are pushing inland to higher ground. Residents of the historically Black neighborhood of Liberty Square—the first segregated public housing project in the South—are the new target of an upcoming “revitalization” project due to their location 12 feet above sea level. RAZING LIBERTY SQUARE is a character-driven verité documentary that weaves personal stories with the larger social justice narrative of climate gentrification.

9/29/2024 | 6:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Sabbath Queen

Sandi DuBowski | 2024 | United States

The choices are clear: accept a 38 generation-deep ancestral tradition or become a rebellious drag queen. Rabbi Amicai Lau-Lavie chooses both! Filmed over 21 years, SABBATH QUEEN joins the Rabbi on a quest to creatively and radically reinvent religion while challenging gender norms in a rapidly changing 21st century.

9/26/2024 | 7:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Shorts: Carceral Justice

From bail freedom funds, to expungement, to programs creating communications access for Deaf incarcerated, these three films will open your eyes to carceral justice reforms and actions, including some efforts happening right here in Milwaukee.

Breaking Silence | *Amy Bench, Annie Silverstein*

A Clean Slate | *Tran Hoang Calvin*

How We Get Free | *Geeta Gandbhir, Samantha Knowles*

9/27/2024 | 02:00 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Shorts: Making a Splash

This set of splashy shorts follows trailblazers from across the US who are fighting to protect our most precious natural resource: Water. Whether they are combating oil spills, maintaining unfettered access to shorelines, or demolishing dams to restore tribal fishing sources, these eco-warriors will inspire you to fight the good fight in your own community.

Boca Chica | *Ái Vuong, Samuel Díaz Fernández*

ᄒᄒᄒᄒ ᄒᄒᄒᄒ (Meet Me at the Creek) | *Loren Waters*

Planetwalker | *Dominic Gill, Nadia Gill*

Undammed | *Shane Anderson*

9/28/2024 | 05:15 PM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Shorts: Resilient Paths

In this program of shorts, we bear witness to the great resilience of women in the face of trauma and gain insights to how collective action and activism can help surround impacted communities with abundant love and healing.

Funny Not Funny | *Marc D'Agostino, Ben Feldman*

Smile4Kime | *Elena Guzman*

We Ride for Her | *Prairie Rose Seminole, Katrina Lillian Sorrentino*

9/28/2024 | 11:00 AM | Downer Theatre (North Cinema)

Shorts: The Fight for Healthcare for All

This duo of longer short docs explore healthcare access—from both a geographic and a policy standpoint—in the American South and Southeast. These issues are not irrelevant to those of us in Wisconsin, however, and this program will inspire you to learn more locally.

If Dreams Were Lightning: Rural Healthcare Crisis | *Ramin Bahrani*

In Due Season | *Ashley O'Shay*

9/26/2024 | 04:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Shorts: Womb-anhood

Four shorts that explore reproductive justice and medical impoverishment for people who have uteruses that will leave audiences fired up and ready to join the revolution to combat period poverty, or fight for more medical research for endometriosis, among other topics.

As Long As We Can | *Kristy Guevara-Flanagan*

The Menstruation Station | *Miguel Luis*

There's Not Much We Can Do | *Erica Monde*

Contractions | *Lynne Sachs*

9/28/2024 | 11:00 AM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

The Book of Mary - A Memorable Man

Daniel Ollman | 2023 | United States

Milwaukee filmmaker Dan Ollman chronicles forty years of the life of Leslie Lemke, a prodigious savant who, despite severe physical and cognitive limitations (including having his eyes removed at birth) has proven to have the deep talent of inspiring others across the world through his musical gift. Audiences will come to know Leslie's life and, in turn, the power of family to nurture the unique gifts of all individuals.

9/29/2024 | 12:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

The Click Trap

Peter Porta | 2024 | Spain, France

Automated ad tech dominates the web, with just a few big tech giants using sophisticated algorithms to match ads with users, cementing their monopoly over this multi-billion-dollar industry. THE CLICK TRAP exposes how this powerful digital advertising machine not only drives massive profits but also fuels scams, spreads misinformation, and amplifies extremist

hate online. THE CLICK TRAP is required viewing for anyone using the internet—which includes you.

9/29/2024 | 7:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

The Eternal Memory

Maite Alberdi | 2022 | Chile

Augusto and Paulina have been in love for 25 years. Eight years ago, their lives were forever changed by Augusto's Alzheimer's diagnosis. Oscar-nominated for Best Documentary Feature, THE ETERNAL MEMORY beautifully balances the heartbreaking taxes of the disease with the same warmth and tender sense of humor shared by its subjects.

9/27/2024 | 4:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

The Strike

JoeBill Muñoz, Lucas Guilkey | 2024 | United States

Pelican Bay—one of the most infamous prisons in the US—houses mostly men of color, many alone in tiny cells for indefinite periods based on questionable evidence. In 2013, 30,000 prisoners went on hunger strike. THE STRIKE features a half century of personal and criminal justice history, combined with unprecedented access to state prison officials along with never-before-seen footage from inside Pelican Bay to reveal the panic that gripped the highest echelons of state government.

9/28/2024 | 11:30 AM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

The Thinking Game

Greg Kohs | 2024 | United States

THE THINKING GAME takes you on a fascinating journey into the heart of DeepMind, one of the world's leading AI labs, as it strives to unravel the mysteries—and possible ethical concerns—of artificial general intelligence (AGI). Filmed over five years, the documentary puts viewers in the room for the pivotal moments of this quest, including the exhilaration of historic breakthroughs, the crushing weight of disappointment during setbacks, and the unwavering pursuit of knowledge.

9/28/2024 | 3:00 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Union

Stephen Maing, Brett Story | 2024 | United States

In 2022, a group of ordinary workers made history when they successfully won their election to become the very first unionized Amazon workplace in America with no prior organizing experience, no institutional backing, and a total budget of \$120,000 raised on GoFundMe. Heralded as the most important win for labor since the 1930s, this timely documentary captures the Amazon Labor Union's historic grassroots campaign to unionize thousands of their co-workers from day one of organizing.

9/29/2024 | 2:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

unseen

Set Hernandez | 2023 | United States

An aspiring social worker, Pedro faces restrictions as a blind, undocumented immigrant to get his college degree. But when attaining his dreams leads to new challenges, what will Pedro do? Using experimental cinematography, UNSEEN reimagines film accessibility through an audio-centric experience, while exploring the intersections of immigration, disability, and mental health. The film is a jagged quest towards healing in a society that struggles to see folks with these challenges as multi-dimensional.

9/29/2024 | 3:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

War Game

Jesse Moss, Tony Gerber | 2023 | United States

WAR GAME sweeps audiences into an elaborate future-set simulation inhabited by a group of bipartisan U.S. defense, intelligence, and elected policymakers, spanning five presidential administrations. While participating in an unscripted role-play exercise, they confront a political coup backed by rogue members of the U.S. military, in the wake of a contested presidential election. Like actors in a thriller, but with profound real-world stakes, the players have only six hours to save American democracy.

9/27/2024 | 7:30 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

We Can Be Heroes

Carina Mia Wong, Alex Simmons | 2024 | United States

In a remote corner of upstate New York, a live-action role-playing (LARP) camp becomes a haven where magic isn't just make-believe. Here, neurodivergent, queer, and self-proclaimed "nerdy" teens find more than just camaraderie—they unearth a joyful sanctuary for self-discovery. As the campers immerse themselves in this imaginative world, they discover inner strength, heal from traumas, and emerge as heroes, both in the fantasy realm and in real life.

9/28/2024 | 8:15 PM | Oriental Theatre (Abele Cinema)

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About Milwaukee Film

Milwaukee Film is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community through cinematic experiences, with a vision to make Milwaukee a center for film culture. Milwaukee Film is committed to high-quality and accessible film programming through their operation of the magnificent Oriental Theatre, a historic cinema palace, and the iconic Downer Theatre, Milwaukee's oldest running cinema. The inaugural [Dialogues Documentary Festival](#) will run September 26-29, 2024. The 17th annual [Milwaukee Film Festival](#) will be held April 24 - May 8, 2025. For more information or to become a Member, visit mkefilm.org.

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