



54th Ann Arbor Film Festival
March 15-20 2016

The longest running independent
& experimental film festival in North America

Michigan theater
& other locations

aaafilmfest.org

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National Endowment for the Arts



Ann Arbor Film Festival
Ann Arbor, Michigan
P.O. Box 8232 Ann Arbor, MI 48107 USA

54th Ann Arbor Film Festival

March 15–20 2016

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is the longest-running independent and experimental film festival in North America. Founded in 1963, the AAFF started as a critical, alternative venue for filmmakers and artists to publicly share their work. Today the festival continues its focus on the art of film, serving as one of the country's premier forums for bold, visionary, experimental and independent filmmakers.

aafilmfest.org

Tuesday March 15

Opening Night

VIP Reception & Fundraiser | 5:30–7pm
Michigan Theater Screening Room Lobby
Join us for a private VIP reception! This party will feature fantastic hors d'oeuvres and cocktails from Bona Sera Cafe, and give guests a chance to meet some of the world's newest and brightest film artists. Tickets to this event include reserved seating.

Opening Night Party | 6–8pm

Michigan Theater Grand Foyer
The 54th Festival opens with a reception featuring open bar with wines from Owen Roe, Arbor Brewing Company beer, and signature cocktails mixed by guest bartenders from the Ravens Club, Isaltia and 327 Braun Court. Refreshments from local favorites Jerusalem Garden, Sava's, The People's Food Co-op, Jefferson Market and more. Music by DJ Jeremy Wheeler.

Screening | 8:15pm

Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Short films in competition featuring narrative, animation, documentary, and experimental new works including *Discontinuity* by Lori Felker, *Life with Herman H. Rott* by Chintia Lundgren, *Back Track* by Virgil Widrich, *Isola del Giglio* by Tom Schroeder, *The Place* by Julia Poplawska, and *Drive In* by Joel Rakowski and Trent Sarria.

Tickets & Passes

Screenings | unless otherwise noted
\$10 General Admission
\$7 Students / Seniors / AAFF Members

Opening Night Reception & Screening

\$40 General Admission
\$30 Students / Seniors
\$30 AAFF Members / Michigan Theater Members
\$10 Screening Only
\$150 VIP Reception & Screening

Festival Passes

includes opening night and all events
\$100 General Admission
\$85 Students / Seniors / AAFF Members

Weekend Passes

includes Friday
\$60 General Admission
\$50 Students / Seniors / AAFF Members

Each program is different.

Films are not rated. All programs are student friendly for mature audiences, unless otherwise noted. Some films have imagery of a disturbing nature. Some of the competition programs will include historic and archival films, outside of awards consideration.

Poster Image

Drawing by Alisha Wessler
Designed by Letterform

Expanding Frames

Workshops & Discussions
Space 2438 North Quad | 105 S. State St
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Participate in this forum for talking, learning and doing.

Tu

3/15, 2:30–4:30pm
Girls and Games

student roundtable

Tu

3/16, 4:30–6:30pm
Video Remix

workshop

We

3/16, 10am–noon
What's Your Day Job?

panel discussion

We

3/16, 3–5pm
Show & Tell Forum

lightning rounds

Th

3/17, 10am–noon
How To Be a Film Critic

panel discussion

Also on view: *Laser Girls Series* by Manda Moran, and student film programs.



Light Music (1953) - Lis Rhodes
Friday | 3pm | AAAC

Wednesday March 16

Garbiñe Ortega: This Place Called Mexico

Juror Presentation

1pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room | FREE

Originally from the Basque Country, Spain, Garbiñe Ortega is a film curator based in Mexico City. Her curatorial projects have been programmed at various venues internationally. She has worked at Centro de Cultura Digital and is the former co-director of programming of the Amblante Documentary Film Festival in Mexico. Ortega will present a program of recent independent, experimental and documentary films from Mexico including *Minotouro* by Nicolás Pereda, *Oleada osaxoñea* by Bruno Varela; *Impresiones para una máquina de luz y sonido* by the political art collective Los Ingrávidos; and *Xillita* by Melanie Smith and Rafael Ortega.

Chantal Akerman: News From Home

5pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

The first of three films at the 54th AAFF celebrating the work of Chantal Akerman (1950–2015), an immensely influential filmmaker and artist whose work contributed substantially to feminist and avant-garde cinema. *News From Home* is one of Akerman's essential films from the 1970s, an especially vibrant period in the director's life. Letters from Chantal Akerman's mother are read over a series of elegantly composed shots of 1978 New York, where our (unseen) filmmaker and protagonist has relocated. Akerman's unforgettable time capsule of the city is also a gorgeous meditation on urban alienation and personal and familial disconnection. "By punctuating *News From Home*'s 16mm footage of desolate cityscapes with her own voice reading her mother's letters, Akerman creates the perfect combination of the personal and the formal. The film's long takes (about fifty in total) add up to a simple compendium of detached urban imagery but to a kind of autobiography." (Michael Koresky)

Andrew Noren: The Lighted Field

7pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

The Lighted Field, from 1987, is a 59 minute, silent black & white 16mm film, and is one of the masterworks from Andrew Noren (1943–2015). "Noren's films were among the most visually intense and overwhelming films ever created, incorporating relentless barrages of imagery, rapid in-camera editing, incredible single-framing and time lapse photography, only pausing for the briefest of moments. Noren was a master 16mm photographer, a master of capturing motion and a master of black & white composition. Shot largely in bustling cities during the course of the artist's daily life, Noren's films emphasize the passing of time and—in their speed and Noren's uncanny rendering solid forms as fragile and ephemeral—are consistently concerned with not only passing time, but the brevity of life. An amazing filmmaker with an incredible body of work, Noren's films presented profound challenges to the art of filmmaking and expressed, in purely visual terms, an extremely complex and radical aesthetic-based philosophy that is frequently chilling and always exhilarating." —Steve Polla, SF Cinematheque

Films in Competition 1

7:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Counting

Feature In Competition

9:15pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Acclaimed filmmaker Jim Cohen follows up his masterful *Museum Hours* with a richly evocative, elegiac look at the fabric of urban life. Presented in 15 chapters dedicated to such influences as Kleckhoff and Chris Marker, this lyrical documentary travels from New York to Moscow, to Istanbul and beyond, capturing street protests and snowfalls, subway buskers and commuters. Cohen will also present a program of his short films on Friday, March 18. (see FRIDAY) [Jim Cohen in attendance](#)

Films in Competition 2

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Work Gallery Exhibition

Ah humanity!
Václav Castaing-Taylor,
Várna Paravel, and Ernst Karel
March 15 – April 1 | Work Gallery | 306 S. State St.
An installation for video and four-channel audio. *Ah humanity!* reflects on the fragility and folly of humanity in the age of the Anthropocene. Taking the 3/11/11 disaster of Fukushima as its point of departure, it evokes an apocalyptic vision of modernity, and our production for historical amnesia and futuristic lights of fancy. The images were shot on a telephone through a handheld telescope, at once close to and far from its subject, while the audio composition combines empty excerpts from Japanese genbaku and related film soundtracks, audio recordings from seismic laboratories, and location sound.

Ernst Karel will present a talk about the work at 3pm on Thursday, March 17th. (see THURSDAY).

Light Music (1953) - Lis Rhodes

Friday | 3pm | AAAC

An Humanity! (2015)

March 15 – April 1 | Work Gallery

Carl Bogner: Instruction Manual

Juror Presentation

1pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room | FREE

Bogner, the, for some time, lecturer for the foundational experimental film class in the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee's Film Department here cribbs from past syllabi to share some gestures, declarations, and models all possibly edifying. Work to screen will include *Anat Masturbation* and *Object Loss* (Steve Reinke, 2002); *Mirror* (Robert Morris, 1971); *Hand Movie* (Yvonne Rainer, 1968); and *A + B in Ontario* (Joyce Wieland + Hollis Frampton, 1967/1984).

Ernst Karel

Gallery Talk & Reception

3pm–5pm | Work Gallery | 306 S. State St.

Ernst Karel makes electroacoustic music and experimental nonfilm sound works for multichannel installation and performance. His recent projects are edited/composed using unprocessed location recordings; in performance he sometimes combines these with analog electronics to create pieces which move between the abstract and the documentary. He has done sound work on many non-fiction films including *Sweetgrass*, *Leviathan* and *The Iron Ministry*. His collaborative projects include *Single Stream* and *Ah humanity!* which is exhibited at the Work Gallery March 15–April 1.

Penny W. Stamps Presents

David O'Reilly

5:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | FREE

Inish-born and Los Angeles-based, David O'Reilly is one of the most adventurous and innovative independent animation filmmakers working today. O'Reilly's animations include *Please Say Something* (awarded Best Animation at 48th AAFF), and *The External World* (49th AAFF). He directed "Alien Child," the unforgettably funny and touching four-animated video game in Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013). He was the also first guest director in Cartoon Network's 20-year history, creating the Adventure Time episode "A Glitch is a Glitch." O'Reilly is the creator of the acclaimed 2014 video game "Mountain." O'Reilly is resolutely independent, moving freely among television network, feature film, and music video commissions; metaphysical, otherworldly video games and interactive projects that question ideas of the self and the nature of role-playing Tumblr games, iPhone hologram apps, and Twitter-based comic strips; and virtual reality environments.

Films by Curt McDowell

7:00pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

A program of newly restored 16mm films by Curt McDowell (1945–1987), a beloved favorite at the AAFF throughout the 1970s. "A filmmaker, actor, visual artist, and writer, McDowell arrived in San Francisco in the mid-1960s to attend the San Francisco Art Institute in the painting department and quickly changed course to become a filmmaker to work with George Kuchar, within a period that witnessed the Summer of Love, gay liberation, and the onset of AIDS, to which he succumbed at the age of 42. He directed over 30 films, celebrating sex and as well as genre riffing and autobiographical narratives that bear the influences of Jack Smith's lush, DIY camp aesthetic, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's explosive melodrama, and Nan Goldin's glimpses of countercultural bohemian" (The Tenderlon Museum). The program will feature *Ronnie* (1972), *True Blue and Dreamy* (1973), *Stinky Butt* (1974), and *Wieners and Buns Musical* (1972) among others. Presented by Mark Toscano, archivist for the Academy Film Archive.

Films in Competition 3

7:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

The Prison In Twelve Landscapes

Feature In Competition

8:15pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

A meditation on the prison's disappearance in the era of mass incarceration, Brett Stroy's feature-length documentary unfolds as a journey through a series of ordinary places across the USA where prisons do work and affect lives: from a California mountainside where female prisoners fight the region's raging wildfires, to a congregation of chess players in Manhattan who did their time becoming masters of the game, to an Appalachian coal town betting its future on the promise of prison jobs. [Brett Stroy in attendance](#).

Out Night: Films In Competition

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The 15th year of this celebration of queer cinema at the AAFF, the program will include *Wirk Mead's* animation *Summer 1975*, Zia Argon's narrative *Remember Nothing*, *A Boy Needs a Friend* by Steve Reinke, *Reluctantly Queer* by Akosua Adoma Owoso, and a new restoration of Curt McDowell's seminal film *Loads* (1980).

After Parties

Tu Sava's | 10pm–2am | FREE
Continue the Opening Night celebration with a champagne toast at Sava's!

We The Ravens Club | 11pm–2am | FREE
Enjoy independent and experimental mythology in a 1920s speakeasy setting.

Th lautBAR | 11pm–2am | FREE
Out Night continues at lautBAR with complimentary appetizers and fire pits in the courtyard!

Fr Hathaway's Hideaway | 11pm–2am | FREE
Drinks, DJ and dancing at Ann Arbor's historic Second Ward meeting hall.

Sa The Club Above the Heidelberg | 11pm–2am
\$5 FREE WITH AAFP PASS Enjoy a live video performance, followed by DJ's and dancing!

Su The Bar at 327 | 10pm–12am | FREE
Wrap up the festival with a drink at our neighborhood upscale dive bar!



ANN ARBOR 54

MARCH 15–20 2016 FILM FESTIVAL

Friday March 18

Rebecca Baron

Juror Presentation

1pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room | FREE

Rebecca Baron is known for her essay films concerned with the construction of history, with a particular interest in media archeology and the ways photographs and moving images create meaning and hold historiographic knowledge. Her films include *Detour de Force* (2014, awarded "Best Experimental Film" at 53rd AAFF), the "Lostless Series" (2008, w/ Doug Goodwin); *How Little We Know of Our Neighbours* (2005), *ok bye-bye* (1998), and *The Idea of North* (1995).

Light Music: Lis Rhodes

Expanded Cinema Film Screening

3pm | Ann Arbor Art Center | 117 W. Liberty St. | FREE

A very special presentation of *Light Music*, Lis Rhodes' groundbreaking 1975 expanded cinema work for two 16mm projectors and sound system.

Chantal Akerman: D'est (From The East)

5pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

From the East retraces a journey from the end of summer to deepest winter, from East Germany, across Poland and the Baltics, to Moscow. It is a voyage Chantal Akerman wanted to make shortly after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, "before it was too late," reconstructing her impressions in the manner of a documentary on the border of fiction. By filming "everything that touched me," Akerman sifts through and fixes upon sounds and images as she follows the thread of this subjective crossing. Without dialogue or commentary, *From the East* is a cinematographic elegy.

The Illinois Parables

Feature In Competition

7pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

The Illinois Parables is an experimental 16mm documentary comprised of regional vignettes about faith, force, technology and exodus by Deborah Stratman, director of many films including *O'er the Land* (awarded "Best Film" at 47th AAFF). Eleven parables relay histories of settlement, removal, technological breakthrough, violence, messianism and resistance, all occurring somewhere in the state of Illinois. The state is a convenient structural lure, allowing its histories to become allegories that explore how we're shaped by conviction and ideology. [Deborah Stratman in attendance](#).

Films in Competition 4

7:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Films by Jim Cohen

Special Presentation

9:15pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

A program of films by Jim Cohen, a New York-based filmmaker and media artist whose works are built from his own ongoing archive of street footage, portraits, and sound. His films and installations often navigate the grey area between documentary, narrative, and experimental modes. Cohen is best known for the feature films *Museum Hours* (2012), *Chain* (2004), *Instrument* (1999), *Benjamin Smoke* (1989); his short films *Lost Book Found* (1998) and *NYC Weights and Measures* (2005); his 2015 installation *We Have an Anchor*, and his work with musicians such as Patti Smith, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Fugazi, Vic Chesnutt, the Ex, Terry Riley, Elliott Smith, and R.E.M. among others. [Jim Cohen in attendance](#).

Animated Films In Competition

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Recent animated films from Colombia, Iceland, Japan, Hungary, Croatia, Germany, Switzerland, the UK, Canada, and the US.

The Illinois Parables (2016, 60 min) - Deborah Stratman

Friday | 7pm

Counting (2015, 111 min) - Jim Cohen

Wednesday | 9:15pm

The Host (2015, 60 min) - Miranda Pennell

Saturday | 7pm

Fragment 53 (2015, 111 min) - Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli & Federico Lodoli

Wednesday | 9:15pm

Sixty Six (2002-2015, 80 min) - Lewis Klahr

Sunday | 1:15pm

Films in Competition 5 (Ages 6+)

11am | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium | \$5

A family-friendly program of narrative, documentary, experimental, and animated films including Tom Carey's *Thoth* in the *Kalaidoscopy UFO*, a live performance using shadow puppets and hand drawn transparencies.

Territorio

Feature In Competition

1pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Shot in her native country of Ecuador, Alexandra Cuesta's *Territorio* was inspired, in part, by the fragmentary travels as recounted in Henri Michaux's 1929 book *Ecuador: A Travel Journal*. The film opens in the ocean, crosses the mountains, and descends into the jungle, constructing a temporal experience while thinking of geography as both real and imaginary. [Alexandra Cuesta in attendance](#).

Films in Competition 6

1:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Britt Kootstra: Northern Lights and Phill Nillock: T H R

Live Cinema Performance and Film Screening

3pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Northern Lights (2015, 45min) is a cinema performance for five 16mm projectors and hand-processed film loops. Britt Kootstra, a visual artist based in Finland, constructs a continuously shifting spatial and immersive environment, with images of natural phenomena emerging and receding from lightness. *TEN HUNDRED INCH RADII* (1972/2015, 43 min) is Phill Nillock's extremely close-up observations of natural environments, recently reconstructed into a single 16mm film with a new score, from its origins as part of an intermedia performance in the early 1970s.

Films in Competition 7

3:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Dead Slow Ahead

Feature In Competition

5pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Mauro Hosen's documentary *Dead Slow Ahead* is a revealing and a hallucinatory trip on board a lost ocean freighter where the hypnotic rhythm of its gears reveals the continuous movement of machinery devouring its workers: the last gestures of the old sailors' trade disappearing under the mechanic and impersonal pace of 21st century neocapitalism.

Fragment 53

Feature In Competition

5:15pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli and Federico Lodoli's documentary is composed of seven self-contained portraits of warriors, generals and warlords who took part in the Liberian Civil War, revealing "not just Liberia's violent, modern history, but of the nature and essence of war itself."

The Host

Feature In Competition

7pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

While investigating her late parents' involvement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (BP), Miranda Pennell comes across the letters of a petroleum geologist in Iran in the 1930s, who was later to embark on a search for the origins of civilization. Deciphering signs from fragmented images buried in the BP archive, Pennell interweaves stories drawn from personal memory and from the records of an imperial history, gradually building a picture of a 20th century colonial encounter.

Films in Competition 8

7:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

time/OUT OF JOINT

Feature In Competition

9:15pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Part documentary, part science fiction, Caspar Stracke's *time/OUT OF JOINT* establishes a dialogue between a highly eclectic group of philosophers, scientists, and cultural producers whose work has a common denominator—their work is related to time reversal. [Caspar Stracke in attendance](#).

Films in Competition 9

9:30pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Music Videos In Competition

5pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room | \$5

Recent music videos by Thom Andersen, Sean Curtis Patrick, Ephraim Asali, Amelia Giller, Lori Felker, Kent Lambert, Roger Beekie, and Sasha Livintova; with music by Benoit Poulard, Josephine Foster, Angel Olsen, and Spines that in the Sun/Rest, among others.

Awarded Film Programs

The 54th Ann Arbor Film Festival closing events provide a screening of select award-winning films as chosen by our jury.

Award Screening 1

6pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Onstage announcement of the 54th AAFP awards followed by a select screening of awarded films.

Award Screening 2

8:15pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Additional awarded films from the 54th AAFP.

Sixty Six (2002-2015, 80 min) - Lewis Klahr

Sunday | 1:15pm

Fragment 53 (2015, 111 min) - Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli & Federico Lodoli

Wednesday | 9:15pm

Sixty Six (2002-2015, 80 min) - Lewis Klahr

Sunday | 1:15pm

Regional Films in Competition

11am | Michigan Theater Screening Room

Programs from Michigan and northern Ohio including *Solitary Acts #4* by Naal Dinqueh, *How to Rust* by Julia Yebicki, *Roubado* by Erica Watson, *Tobacco, My Father* by Carson Parish, and *Pretty Good Produced* by Christine Hucal. Program guest-curated by Milwaukee-based filmmaker and programmer Ben Balcomb.

Films in Competition 10

11:15am | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Recent experimental, documentary and animated films.

Chantal Akerman: No Home Movie

1pm | Michigan Theater Screening Room

At the center of Chantal Akerman's enormous body of work is her mother, a Holocaust survivor who married and raised a family in Brussels. In recent years, the filmmaker has explicitly depicted, in videos, books, and installation works, her mother's life and their own intense connection to each other. *No*