

VANCOUVER ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

25th Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival: Call for Entries

November 4-14, 2021



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Submission Guidelines

About the Festival

VAFF is the longest running pan-Asian diaspora film festival in Canada. It was founded in 1995 and debuted in September 1997. Since then, tens of thousands of film lovers have experienced a diverse selection of Asian North American and international films, in English and in other languages.

Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF) is dedicated to promoting and celebrating the diversity and depth of Asian culture and identity in film and media, and to help North American Asian actors and filmmakers more authentically and more powerfully define and express themselves on screen.

Through its annual film festival and many other programs and events hosted in Vancouver, Canada, VAFF's mission is to be the "go-to" forum for the public and the film industry to engage in and support the rise of Asian influence in film and media in the world. VAFF envisions a world where North American Asian actors and filmmakers have the resources and opportunities to shape mainstream culture in a powerful and positive way.

This year is big and we are going big. 2021 marks VAFF's 25th year of continuous programming. Eyes will be on us and your films too.

We plan to go 'Hybrid' this year! That means an online festival Canada-wide for 7 days and live screenings and presentations in Vancouver for 4 days. The festival will run from November 4 - 14, 2021.

VAFF25 information will be announced in Fall 2021.

Each year VAFF attracts close to 5,000 audience members over its four-day festival and year-round events. It also reaches many more through word of mouth, pre-festival events, and traditional and social media throughout the year.

VAFF is entirely organized and produced by a group of dedicated volunteers, and is made possible by generous financial support from corporate sponsors, public funders and private donors.

Artists

Being the platform where a number of successful Asian filmmakers first showcased their work, VAFF's international visiting artists have included Justin Lin (*Fast & Furious*, 2009), Quentin Lee (*White Frog*, 2012), Benson Lee (*Seoul Searching*, 2015), Evan Jackson Leong (*Linsanity*, 2013), Jessica Yu (*Grey's Anatomy*), Tze Chun (*Gotham*), and Freida Lee Mock (*Return with Honor*, 1998), as well as Canadian filmmakers Julia

Kwan (*Everything Will Be*, 2014), Mina Shum (*Meditation Park*, 2017), Ann Marie Fleming (*Window Horses*, 2017), Ben Lu (*Blood and Water*), Phil Planta (*Beyond Redemption*, 2016), and Jeff Chiba Stearns (*Mixed Match*, 2016). Attending performers have included Edison Chen (*Infernal Affairs II*, 2003), Tzi Ma (*Arrival*, 2016), Anastasia Lin (*Miss World Canada 2015*), Agam Darshi (*Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, 2017), Sarita Choudhury (*The Hunger Games*, 2014), and Rizwan Manji (*The Dictator*, 2012).

Awards

Available awards include juried awards for **Best Canadian Short** and **Best Canadian Feature**, presented by Telefilm Canada; juried awards for **Best Director for Canadian Short** and **Best Director for Canadian Feature**, presented by the Directors' Guild of Canada—British Columbia; juried awards for **Best Cinematography for Canadian Short** and **Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature**; audience-voted **People's Choice Awards** for best **Overall Feature**, **Overall Short**, **Overall Performance**.

Programming/Industry

Programming at the November festival includes 10-13 film programs incorporating feature length and short films and videos (dramatic narrative, documentary, experimental and animation) featuring an Artist/Concept Spotlight, International Spotlight, International and Canadian Shorts, Q & A sessions, the VAFF Industry series including panel discussions and networking, and gala events.

How to Submit

- Open Call Submissions for VAFF25 are accepted March 15 - June 5, 2021.
- Open Call Submissions can be made through **FilmFreeway** at VAFF.ORG. Questions regarding submissions can be emailed to: programming@vaff.org or submissions@vaff.org.

Eligibility

VAFF accepts:

- Independently produced films and videos by Asian North American artists (including Asian-Canadian or Asian-American artists), or
- Films or videos produced in East Asia (including People's Republic of China [incl. Hong Kong], Macao, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan), Southeast Asia (including Myanmar [Burma], Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Timor-Leste) or South Asia (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh), in English or with English subtitles, or
- Films or videos produced must have at least one member of the creative team (director, writer, producer/production company or cinematographer) or at least one of the lead actors/subjects (if Documentary) self-identify as being of Asian or part-Asian heritage.
- Please specify how your submission meets our eligibility criteria above, in your submission notes/cover letter.
- If the country you are submitting from currently has a banking embargo, in these cases, we recommend that you find friends/filmmakers in other countries to assist your payment/submission.
- Films and videos must have been completed no earlier than January 01, 2019. Submissions completed prior to this date will not be considered. Films that have been previously submitted will not qualify for submission.
- Current VAFF Board and Executive members are also eligible to submit but their work will be reviewed by third party judges outside of VAFF. However, they are not eligible for awards even if films or videos are selected.
- Films that were part of or screened at VAFF's own MAMM (Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon) Gala **will not** be considered.
- Important Note - In the initial submission phase - DCP will not be acceptable. However, if the feature film is chosen for screening, Filmmakers will later be given the option of sending in the DCP for that purpose.

Acceptable exhibition formats are as follows:

- Feature Films – Digital exhibition formats H.264 (.MOV or .MP4) /ProRes/ DNxHD files; in HD resolution (1080p or 2K) at 23.98 frame rate. Audio in 5.1 surround (and or Stereo if that is the only available mix). If possible, a BluRay disc for backup.
- Short Films - Digital exhibition formats H.264 (.MOV or .MP4) /ProRes/ DNxHD files; in HD resolution (1080p or 2K) at 23.98 frame rate. No DCP Audio in 5.1 surround (and or Stereo if that is the only available mix). If possible, a BluRay disc for backup.

- Other exhibition formats, e.g. 16mm, DVD, HDCam, Digibeta, VHS cannot be considered.

Right to Use:

- All entries, selected for the Festival, grant VAFF the rights to use footage, stills, titles and information as we deem appropriate for publicity and promotional purposes.
- This requires:
The applicant must hold the necessary rights for the submission and exhibition of this work. The applicant agrees that if his/her title is selected, that any material including photographs and/or video submitted to VAFF may be used by the festival or a third party authorized by the festival for the purpose of promoting the festival (online, in print and media).

Submission Deadlines

- Early bird deadline: **April 15, 2021**
- Regular deadline: **May 15, 2021**
- Final deadline: **June 5, 2021** (unless Open Call is officially extended by VAFF)
- Open call submissions received after the Open Call deadline will not be considered for the 2021 festival. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Entry Fees

- **Early bird: \$30 USD**
- **Regular: \$35 USD**
- **Last chance: \$40 USD (Short), \$45 USD (Feature)**
- Each film/video submitted must be accompanied by its own entry fee.
- **Open Call submission fees cannot be waived. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Any submission that does not meet the submission eligibility or criteria and is disqualified will not receive a refund.
- Payment is accepted via credit card (preferred) or PayPal on FilmFreeway, or by cheque to the VAFF mailing address listed on the site.

Other Fees

- **OPEN CALL SUBMISSION/ENTRY FEES:** VAFF does not waive entry fees.
- **SCREENING FEES:** VAFF is also committed to paying screening fees to films from Canadian/Canadian resident directors in selection. Eligible filmmakers will be notified of our fee structure if successful in selection. All fees will be paid post-festival. Please note we cannot pay fees for productions with filmmakers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada that are not based in Canada.

- **ARTIST FEES:** In fulfillment of its mandate, VAFF is provided with a small amount of public funding for artist fees to independent Asian Canadian artists only.

Film Categories

- Accepted film categories (submissions outside these categories will not be considered):
 - Narrative Feature (any genre)
 - Narrative Short (any genre)
 - Documentary Feature
 - Documentary Short
 - Animation Feature and Shorts
 - Web Shorts - Single Episodes Only (no less than 10 minutes - except for commercial videos and ads, music videos, previously broadcast television, and trailers)

Submission Materials

Preview Screeners: Discs

- Preview screeners on playable DVD/Blu-Ray or digital file format (.MOV or MP4) on disc/drive are only accepted for feature length (over 40 min TRT) submissions.
- Submit 2 preview screeners in playable DVD/Blu-Ray or 1 copy in a digital file format (.MOV or MP4) on disc/drive. Please check that the DVD/Blu-Ray discs are playable on all consumer DVD players.
- Discs/drives must be labeled with the film title, total running time, contact name, address, phone number and email address.
- Preview screeners can be mailed/couriered to:
Print Traffic Coordinator
Vancouver Asian Film Festival
1178 W. Pender Street
Vancouver, BC, V6E 2R9
Canada

Preview Screeners: Digital Files

- Preview Screener Links are accepted for feature length (longer than 40 min TRT) and shorts (up to 40 min TRT).
- For FilmFreeway, you have the option of submitting a secure screener link or uploading directly online.

Press Materials

VAFF requests press materials and film/production details if your film is accepted for programming in 2021, for its online and print program and other festival promotion. If available, submit an Electronic Press Kit (EPK) with your signed Notice of Acceptance (NOA):

- Provide a download link, or provide a data disc or USB thumb drive with your exhibition screener (if sending a physical copy)
- Label all files descriptively e.g. "Film Title_Still 1," "Film Title_Director Name"

If you do not have an EPK, VAFF will request the information in your NOA.

The press kit should contain:

- A film synopsis (approximately 100 words) and logline;
- Film stills (photos or hi-resolution electronic images: minimum 1200×1800 pixels @ 300 dpi) for program guide and publicity;
- An above-the-line cast and crew list;

- Director(s) biography (80 words each) and headshot(s) (see above for technical specs);
- Press/publicity clippings and list of awards and screenings (Word or PDF)
- Official website URL; social media URL/handles

Note: Press materials and preview screeners will not be returned.

Juried Awards: Qualifications

Overall

All adjudicated awards are given to eligible Canadian films only, including Best Canadian Short and Best Canadian Feature, Best Director for Canadian Short and Best Director for Canadian Feature, & Best Cinematography for Canadian Short and Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature. Some awards may include a cash prize if funding is available. To qualify for any of the above awards, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- One of the key members (director, writer, producer or cinematographer) or one of the lead actors/subjects (if a documentary) must self-identify as being of Asian or part Asian heritage;
- Films by current VAFF Board and Executive members selected for screening are not eligible for awards. Members who have left the organization for over 12 months are eligible to enter into competition again.
- Both dramatic narrative and documentary genres accepted;
- The film must be independently produced without majority funding from institutions (public or federal organizations, film schools, broadcasters etc.);
- The film must not have been broadcast on television or have received commercial theatrical distribution prior to the festival screening;
- Due to the continued restrictions of COVID-19, a film that has been released digitally online after March 15th 2021 will be accepted

The award winner will be determined by an adjudication panel of industry professionals and announced during VAFF25.

Best Canadian Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Director for Canadian Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Director for Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Cinematography for Canadian Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident, but the Cinematographer does not need to be Canadian;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The cinematographer must have full creative control of the cinematography.

Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF25 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident, but the Cinematographer does not need to be Canadian;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The cinematographer must have full creative control of the cinematography.

People's Choice Awards

The People's Choice Awards are presented at the Closing Night Awards Ceremony November 13, 2021. The audience selects the best Overall Feature, Overall Short, and Overall Performance. Online voting will be open from November 04 through November 13 inclusive, throughout the November 2021 Festival.

- The award is open to all eligible films by filmmakers from all countries.

Films by current VAFF Board and Executive members selected for screening are not eligible for awards. Members who have left the organization for over 12 months are eligible to enter into competition again.

Notification of Festival Selection

- You will be notified of festival selections on or around September 01, 2021, or earlier.
- If selected, a **Notice of Acceptance (NOA)**—including a request for press kit information and festival attendance RSVP—will be sent to you.
- The NOA must be completed, signed and returned by the deadline date listed in the NOA document, or your position in the festival may be offered to another film.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

By submitting your entry to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival, you represent that you have the authority to do so and that you have reviewed all the VAFF submission rules and information as stated on Film Freeway and published PDF document.

You agree to hold VAFF harmless and without liability for the statements you make, and you assert that there are no assigned rights, agreements, distribution agreements, production deals or any other arrangements whatsoever attached to this work - that would in any way interfere with the showing or screening of your entry to the public by VAFF.

We cannot offer any exception to current policies regarding submissions. Absolutely no fee waivers. No submissions past the late deadline. Absolutely no refunds. Please read through our submission criteria carefully. Please contact us if you need any further clarification.

Exhibition Screeners: Digital Files

- Send digital file download link to printtraffic@vaff.org

Exhibition Screeners: Hard Copy Shipping Policy and Guidelines

- Ship exhibition prints (Blu-Ray or DCP) to VAFF, prepaid, to arrive no later than October 04, 2021.
- If exhibition prints/files are coming from other festivals, VAFF must receive print traffic contact information of the prior festival two weeks prior to VAFF's start date.
- If VAFF is to send the exhibition print/file to another film festival, this outbound address must be given to VAFF one week prior to the start of VAFF or it will be sent back to the print source.
- Exhibition Prints/Files can be mailed or couriered to:
Print Traffic Coordinator
Vancouver Asian Film Festival
1178 W. Pender Street

Vancouver, BC, V6E 2R9
Canada

- The filmmaker is responsible for providing any required paperwork for the shipping of his/her films, particularly those coming from outside of Canada.
- VAFF TYPICALLY PAYS FOR ONLY THE RETURN OR OUTBOUND* SHIPPING COSTS OF THE SCREENING FILM/VIDEO. INBOUND SHIPPING CHARGES WILL BE COVERED BY PRINT SOURCE OR PRECEDING FILM FESTIVALS. *If by special arrangement VAFF pays for inbound shipping, the outbound shipping cost must be covered by the print source or the forwarding contact/festival.
- VAFF does not insure the films during the festival or during shipping. This is the filmmaker's responsibility. VAFF takes no responsibility for loss or damage to films in transit.
- Do not send the original, or your only copy, of your film/video.
- If shipping a disc or hard drive/thumb drive, use bubble wrap envelopes or stiff cardboard backing rather than fiber-filled packages or envelopes.
- Please ensure the file/print is playable before sending to VAFF. Please also include any relevant screening notes with your film, if possible.
- Please label your films as "For cultural and educational purposes only."
- If the film is coming from outside of Canada, please identify on the package that it is a temporary importation and that the films will be returned to the original country.
- If your film is being shipped from outside of Canada and you are declaring the value of your film as above CAD \$20, this may delay your film at Canada customs, so please send it two weeks earlier than planned.
- Always use a tracking number, regardless of whether the film is sent by post office or courier*. *If you are sending by a courier, we recommend using FedEx. Many filmmakers have encountered border delay issues and poor or lack of communication with UPS.
- Any costs incurred by VAFF as a result of the filmmaker not following the provided shipping guidelines may result in charges to the filmmaker to recover these costs.

Queries: Contact Information

- Programming/Curation: programming@vaff.org
- Submissions: submissions@vaff.org
- Notice of Acceptance (NOA) and Print Traffic (contact only after August 1, 2021): printtraffic@vaff.org
- Festival Attendance/Liaison (contact only after September 15, 2021): filmmaker@vaff.org