

VANCOUVER ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

27th Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival: Call for Entries

November 2-12, 2023



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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.

2023 marks VAFF's 27th year of continuous programming as we start the next chapter after celebrating our milestone year in 2021.

We plan to continue with our 'Hybrid' model for our festival. That means an online festival Canada-wide for 7 days and live screenings and presentations in Vancouver for 4 days. There will be one day with a merging of virtual and in-person events. The festival will run from November 2-12, 2023.

VAFF27 information will be announced in Fall 2023.

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 & *Snakehead*, 2021); 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); Jeff Chiba Stearns (*Mixed Match*, 2016), Renuka Jeyapalan (*Stay the night*, 2022), Jason Karman (*Golden Delicious*, 2022) and Kathleen Jayme (*The Grizzlie Truth*). 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) and the cast of *Kung FU at CW*.

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**; juried awards for **Best Screenplay for Canadian Feature**, juried awards for **Best Animation for Canadian Short**, and for audience-voted **People's Choice Awards** for best **Overall Feature**, **Overall Short**, **Overall Performance for Feature** and for **Short**.

VAFF is an **IMDB eligible film festival**. This means that all selections and awards can be added to your IMDB film listing.

Programming/Industry

Programming at the November festival includes 22-26 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, Filmmakers Talk Series, the VAFF Industry Insight series including panel discussions, workshop and networking, and gala events.

How to Submit

- Open Call Submissions for VAFF27 are accepted **March 15 - June 4, 2023**.
- 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) **South Asia** (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh) or **West Asian-Canadian (permanent resident or citizen of Canada only)** (including Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen) 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 after March 15th, 2022.** Submissions completed prior to this date will not be considered. **Films that have been previously submitted will not qualify for submission.**
- Films that have been self-distributed online, across all and any media platforms, **will be ineligible.**
- Current VAFF Board, Executive and Committee members are also eligible to submit but their work will be reviewed by third party judges outside of VAFF **and they will now be eligible for awards.**
- 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, 2023**
- Regular deadline: **May 15, 2023**
- Final deadline: **June 4, 2023** (unless Open Call is officially extended by VAFF)
- *Open call submissions received after the Open Call deadline will not be considered for the 2023 festival. **NO EXCEPTIONS.***

Entry Fees

- **Free submissions** for Canadian Shorts and Canadian Features on **March 15 - 16, 2023** only
- **Early bird: \$35 USD (Short), \$40 USD (Feature), \$35 USD (Feature Animation), \$30 USD (Short Animation)**
- **Regular: \$40USD (Short), \$45 USD (Feature), \$40 USD (Feature Animation), \$35 USD (Short Animation)**
- **Last chance: \$45 USD (Short), \$50 USD (Feature), \$45 USD (Feature Animation), \$40 (Short Animation)**
- 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 ANY 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 2023, 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, Best Screenplay for Canadian Feature, and Best Animation for Canadian Short. 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;
- 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; and

The award winner will be determined by an adjudication panel of industry professionals and announced during VAFF27.

Best Canadian Short Award,

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF27 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 VAFF27 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 Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF27 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 VAFF27 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 VAFF27 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.

Best Screenplay for Canadian Feature

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF27 we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

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

Best Animation for Canadian Short

Best independent dramatic animation short, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF27 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.

People's Choice Awards

The People's Choice Awards are presented at the Closing Night Awards Ceremony November 12, 2023. The audience selects the best Overall Feature, Overall Short, and Overall Performance for Feature and for Short. Online voting will be open from November 2 through November 12 inclusive, throughout the November 2023 Festival.

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

Notification of Festival Selection

- You will be notified of festival selections on or around the **mid August, 2023**.
- 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:

1. The following Terms and Conditions govern the applicant's submission of their film/video to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival. To the extent these Terms and Conditions are inconsistent with any other document prepared by VAFF or anyone else with respect to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival, these Terms and Conditions will take precedence. Any questions about these Terms and Conditions should be directed to submissions@vaff.org.
2. By submitting the applicant's film/video to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival, the applicant represents that:
 - (a) they have read, understood and agreed to all the VAFF submission rules and information as stated on FilmFreeway and published PDF document, including, but not limited to these Terms and Conditions (collectively, the "**Submission Rules**"); and
 - (b) they have obtained consent from any and all owners, creators, writers, producers and/or other authorized representatives or rights holders of the film/video whose consent is required to submit their film/video to VAFF.
3. Submission fees are in Canadian dollars and are **non-refundable**.
4. VAFF is under no obligation to contact the applicant should the applicant not have adhered to the Submission Rules.
5. VAFF may disqualify or reject, but is not required to do so, any submission that it determines, in its sole and absolute discretion would not be in VAFF's best interest to include in the Vancouver Asian Film Festival including, but not limited to, any film/video that is not in compliance, in whole or in part, with these Terms and Conditions, and may do so without refunding any submission or other fees you paid or returning any materials you submitted. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, if any person connected to the film/video is involved in, or alleged to be involved in, any situation or occurrence which subjects such person to public scandal, disrepute, widespread contempt, or public ridicule, that violates VAFF's Code of Conduct, or that will tend to shock, insult or offend the community or public morals or decency, or prejudice VAFF in general, then VAFF shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to take any action it deems appropriate, including but not limited to excluding such person from attendance at the Vancouver Asian Film Festival

and/or disqualifying the film/video from participation in the Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

6. By submitting the film/video to VAFF, the applicant hereby warrants and represents that:
 - (a) the film/video is wholly original and is not copied from and does not include any other work that is the subject of copyright or other protection, unless such work is in the public domain or the applicant has obtained any and all consents, releases, licenses, and other authorizations or waivers of any kind necessary for the inclusion or reproduction of any person, character, location, thing, trademark, sound recording, musical composition, or other work in the film/video;
 - (b) the film/video does not defame any person or violate the common law or statutory rights, including, without limitation, the rights of privacy and publicity or any other right of any person;
 - (c) the film/video is not the subject of litigation or any dispute that may give rise to litigation;
 - (d) there are no agreements, nor will there be any agreements made subsequent to the date of this film/video submission, that would or could have the effect of impairing the applicant's ability to provide the film/video as contemplated herein, or otherwise conflict with any provision of the Submission Rules; and
 - (e) the applicant has the full right, power, and authority to submit the film/video to VAFF for the Vancouver Asian Film Festival consideration, and to grant all of the rights granted hereunder including, without limitation, the right to screen the film/video in the Vancouver Asian Film Festival venues and/or digitally on VAFF's online screening platform, and there is no prior obligation or impediment which would in any way impair or restrict the applicant from fully performing all obligations pursuant to the submission and these Terms and Conditions.

7. The applicant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless VAFF, its licensees, successors, and assigns, and its and their members, officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, associates, volunteers, and affiliates (each, an "**Indemnified Party**"), from any claim, suit, action, or other proceeding brought against an Indemnified Party and from any losses, costs, or damages, including the Indemnified Party's full legal fees and costs, which it may have suffered or incurred or may suffer or incur, directly or indirectly based on, in connection with, or arising from the use and exhibition of the film/video submitted by the applicant, including, without limitation, the decision to exhibit or not exhibit the film/video, which decision shall be in VAFF's sole and absolute discretion, or the breach or alleged breach of any representation, warranty, or other agreement made by the applicant in the applicant's FilmFreeway registration form for the Vancouver Asian Film Festival or these Terms and Conditions.

8. VAFF takes reasonable anti-piracy and security precautions. By submitting a film/video to VAFF, the applicant hereby releases VAFF from any and all liability in

the event of theft, unauthorized access or copying, or any breach of copyright of the Film while it is in VAFF's possession or on VAFF's online screening platform.

9. VAFF reserves the right to rule, in its sole and absolute discretion, on cases and situations not foreseen by these Terms and Conditions.

Exhibition Screeners: Digital Files

- Send digital file download link to printtraffic@vaff.org
- The Instruction for the upload link to the virtual screening platform will be sent directly to the submitter.

Exhibition Screeners: DCP

- The Instruction for the DCP film format will be sent directly to the submitter.

Exhibition Screeners: Hard Copy Shipping Policy and Guidelines

- **Ship exhibition prints (Blu-Ray or DCP) to VAFF, prepaid, to arrive no later than September 30, 2023.**
- If exhibition prints/files are coming from other festivals, VAFF must receive print traffic contact information of the prior festival no less than 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) will be sent out by Festival Attendance/Liaison on or around mid August 2023
- Print Traffic (contact only after August 15, 2023): printtraffic@vaff.org
- Any enquiries should be addressed to programming@vaff.org after September 15, 2023