

Thomas Edison Film Festival Returns to Ocean County Artists Guild Saturday July 15th

Now celebrating its 42nd Annual Tour to institutions such as The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts and many others

Founded in 1981, the Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF) celebrates the creativity, innovation and the exploratory spirit and insights into the human condition as found in contemporary short form film and video. In 1893, Thomas Edison and his team in West Orange, New Jersey developed early motion picture technology, that came to offer audiences a wider world view, and declaring that their new medium would do for the eye what the phonograph did for the ear. Edison and his collaborators made numerous silent shorts in his humble Black Maria Revolving Photographic Studio, i.e. The Black Maria (see photo below) built at his "invention factory" just 70 miles from Island Heights. His films at the dawn of cinema depicted performances by such figures as Annie Oakley, Leonard and Cushing in their 1894 Boxing Bout, also Boxing Cats, and cinema's first screen kiss (1896), and in 1903, the first Western *The Great Train Robbery* and finally his 1910 film *Frankenstein* based on Mary Shelley's novel.



Festival founder and director emeritus John Columbus and current director Professor Jane Steuerwald will present a program of brand new shorts at the Guild from 6 PM to 8 PM Saturday July 15, 2023. The suggested donation is \$10.

International selections from the juried 2023 season include animation, documentary, experimental, narrative, and screen dance genres. Works from Austria, Canada, China, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, UK, and USA are represented and include the following.

Cornucopia – Animation

7 min. by Ani Antonova and Dimiter Ovtcharov, Vienna, Austria

A man wanders in constant search and pursuit, driven by the longing for a magical cornucopia. His vicissitudes are brought to life on an ancient vase's surface.

Winter's Passing - Narrative

21 min. by Yang Fei, LA, CA, US, and Pinghu, Zhejiang Province, China

"Winter's Passing" is a coming-of-age story. Due to the untimely death of a young boy's mother and his father's remarriage, the 8-year-old must live with his grandfather who runs a small funereal urn shop. While reluctantly living with his grandfather, spending his days at the shop, and longing to return to his father, the boy meets a woman who wants to buy two identical urns. Through their secret deal, the boy gradually learns the meanings of loss and grief.

La Galerie – Screen Dance

11 min. by Loup-William Th  berge, Qu  bec City, Canada

During a nighttime visit to a museum, an unforeseen connection between a woman and a painting triggers an unexpected journey between the real and the unreal.

Inner Polar Bear – Animation

7 min. by Gerald Conn, Cardiff, Wales, UK

Based on a piece of writing by acclaimed novelist Jeanette Winterson, “Inner Polar Bear” employs sand animation to create an imaginative stream of consciousness, contrasting alternative human and animal perspectives on the implications of climate change. The narration moves through a wide spectrum of visual imagery, including references to Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* (and Thomas Edison’s 1910 film *based on it*) and the evolution of life on earth.

giroscopio – Experimental

8 min. by John Muse, Bryn Mawr, PA, US and Brendamaris Rodriguez, Puerto Rico

“giroscopio” is a short experimental film by two artists, one in Pennsylvania and one in Puerto Rico, each in pandemic lockdown. Objects seem to control them; their bodies are unbalanced, unwieldy, comical. The horizon spins; the ground falls away; and yet a strange wonder reigns.

Heidi Lau’s Spirit Vessels – Documentary

8 min. by Bryan Chang, NY, NY, US

Sculptor Heidi Lau creates otherworldly clay works, bridging the opposing worlds of the human and non-human. Set in the Catacombs of Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, we follow the Macau-born artist as she researches traditional Chinese burial objects after her mother’s passing and creates a body of iridescent work that recall funerary vessels and mourning garments.

Bolero Station – Animation

10 min. by Rolf Brönnimann, Zürich, Switzerland

The signalman lives on one side of the tracks, the saleswoman on the other. They see each other every day, but it’s not till death comes knocking that they both seize their chance to be together. They do it properly – and it’s enough for a lifetime.



Jurors for the Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF):

Henry Baker began his career at the ground-breaking video arts facility: Synapse Video Center. His work as educator, curator and director helped launch video as an art form in America. He co-created the NYS Media Alliance. As premiere video Paintbox artist, his work on award-winning and innovative videos includes the first MTV Video Music Awards: The Cars “You Might Think.” Establishing his own company enabled projects with Menudo, Celeste Holm, HBO, SONY, Panasonic and others. You’ll find his works in the permanent collections of the NY Public Library and Everson Museum of Art. His award-winning documentary “PISS OFF” has been included in 40+ film festivals around the world. He served as a dedicated juror for the National Endowment for the Arts, WNET-TV Lab, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Thomas Edison Film Festival. He resides with his husband in Washington DC.

Margaret Parsons, Curator Emeritus and founder of the film program at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Where she served as curator of film for decades and organized screenings related to film history, film art, and the role of time-based media in society. She has curated media exhibitions and programs at embassies and cultural organizations including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, American University, the National Archives, the Smithsonian Museum of American History, and Smithsonian Museum of American Art. She has served on the boards of film organizations ranging from the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar to the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation’s Capital, and has been on the editorial boards for *The Moving Image* and the Getty Trust’s experimental *Art on Film* in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2012 she founded Glimmerglass Film Days in central New York State. For her work in film preservation Parsons has received awards from the governments of France, Georgia, Italy, and the Czech Republic, and in the U.S. has been the recipient of life achievement awards from the Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival, DC Independent Festival, and Women in Film and Video. Her scholarship is in the field of outsider art and her articles have appeared in *Raw Vision*, *Folk Art*, *The Folk Art Messenger*, *New York Folklore*, *Curator*, and *The Moving Image*.

To learn more about the Thomas Edison Film Festival and the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium visit www.TEFilmFest.org, Jane Steuerwald, Executive Director, +1 201.856.6565, Jane@TEFilmFest.org.

