

a Visual Communications production

LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL

NO. 41 — MAY 1ST-7TH

festival.vcmedia.org



VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

"Visual Communications is a story of peoples and communities in movement. Movements that reflect imagination and adventure, desperation and courage, minds and bodies moving by leaping and struggling towards new possibilities and futures. VC was created as an organization to be the media arm of movements to protect and promote our communities. We are stewards of that heritage and binded to that legacy struggles, of and for movements, through media."

Founded in 1970 with the understanding that media and the arts are powerful forms of storytelling, Visual Communications creates cross-cultural connections between peoples and generations. Our mission is to develop and support the voices of Asian American & Pacific Islander filmmakers and media artists who empower communities and challenge perspectives. Created by a group of artists and filmmakers to organize and empower communities through media, Visual Communications is the first media arts organization in the nation dedicated to the honest and accurate portrayals of the Asian American & Pacific Islander peoples and communities. We are home to the VC Archives, one of the largest photographic and moving image collections on Asian Pacific experiences in America.



WELCOME TO YOUR 41ST LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL

The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival returned for its 41st year from May 1st to 7th in Los Angeles and featured an exciting lineup of in-person programming, along with virtual programming for our audiences at home in Southern California.

The 2025 LAAPFF Lineup celebrated Native Hawaiian, Pasifika, Indigenous Voices, and Artists across the Asian American and Asian Diaspora Communities.



**6,500+
ATTENDEES**



**300+
ARTISTS
SERVICED**



**154
FILMS**



**72
IN-PERSON
EVENTS**



**29
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**

FESTIVAL PROGRAMS



ANIMATION PROGRAMS

Where there was nothing, nebulae coalesce and universes burst forth. Harnessing the spectrum of mediums and mechanisms, 2025's lineup of animated films pull, hold, touch, move and break us. We invite you to lean in close, our creators this year have something to say.



C3: CONVERSE

Conference for Creative Content brings together AANHPI media professionals in film, streaming, television, digital, and new media to create a dialogue about our media industry, share best practices, and celebrate a collective vision for our community. It's our goal to dive in and hear from the foremost advocates of this rapidly evolving landscape.



CINEMA MUSICA: (UN)SPOKEN FEELINGS

Kickoff LAAPFF 2025 during our Opening Night Party, and come watch MTV – VC style! Dive into music videos that explore confusion, love, and the tug of war of feelings that linger for too long.



DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

Nonfiction films allow us to deeply connect to each other through stories built on shared experiences. Deeply rooted in community, these intimate stories reflect authentic spaces and places. Join us in a cinematic learning experience to better understand each other.



NARRATIVE PROGRAMS

Fiction is where hearts are told to live on sleeves. It crafts conflict and resilience to it in the details. It builds worlds, plank by plank. This year's lineup is filled with films born out of diverse spaces, but all created to have you maybe wonder, giggle, and cry. You might go to lean on the person next to you. Take a seat. The fire is waiting.

PACIFIC CINEWAVES

In our fortified commitment to amplify Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, Pacific Cinewaves programming celebrates stories and storytellers emerging from Hawai'i, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Guåhan (Guam), Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Samoa, and throughout the Pacific region.



R3:VOLVE

Acknowledging the turbulence of our constantly changing now, joy and mindfulness remain a pillar at the Festival. We look forward to continuing our growing practice of igniting intimate dialects surrounding Regeneration, Reciprocity, and Renewal. Welcome to our curated space for artists and filmworkers to create community through wellness.



SHORTS PROGRAM

Our Shorts Programs chart stories of loss, faith, loss, fantasy, and family. Short films tend to be a focused experience of emotional storytelling, savvy editing, and heart. Through our robust range of narrative, animated, and documentary shorts, join us in journeys to places near and far — in the hopes that we can feel a little closer to ourselves.



SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Collaborating with other organization in the AANHPI Community, we present programming that centers Asian and NHPI storytelling and enriches the outreach to these communities.



VC ARCHIVES PRESENTS

VC's legacy is built upon what sets us apart and what we do best: and that is our VC Archives and our Filmmaker development programs dedicated to emerging voices (AWC) and our beloved elders (Digital Histories).



ABOUT OUR ART

The 41st Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival artwork celebrates the boundless optimism and imagination of future generations, paying tribute to the profound potential young people hold in re-envisioning our collective future. At the heart of the piece, we chose to show a vibrant burst of energy symbolizing creativity, innovation, and hope, originating from the foundational strength of our ancestors, flowing through the nurturing hands of parents and elders, and ultimately igniting the imaginations of children who stand confidently atop this intergenerational foundation.



We wanted to showcase how different generations support one another, embodying community, warmth, and healing. Children joyfully reach toward the sky, symbolizing their power and potential to shape a brighter, inclusive future in their image. The tone is warm, playful, and dynamic. Energetic animation accentuates the cyclical flow of inspiration, visually articulating how past wisdom and stories empower present creativity to fuel future possibilities.

The flowy visual style features bold, clean linework and a vivid yet soothing palette dominated by warm oranges, yellows, and saturated tones, evoking feelings of comfort, community, and energetic optimism. The typography complements the artwork's overall feel, pairing bold, contemporary typefaces that provide clarity and strength with a playful, rounded style that underscores the celebratory and community-oriented spirit of the festival.

MAY 1 & 2

Directors Guild of America, Landmark Theatres Sunset

On May 1st, VC proudly kicked off the 41st Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival at the Directors Guild of America (DGA) with our Cinema Musica: Festival Launch Party! The night was filled with music, joy, and community as we celebrated the start of another incredible festival season.

In true LAAPFF spirit, the opening day also featured a powerful lineup of narrative and documentary features and short films that showcased stories of resilience, identity, and community.

Day 2 was all about industry, insight, and inspiration! We hosted a full day of C3:CONVERSE panels, where creatives and industry professionals came together to share knowledge, build community, and spark important conversations about the future of storytelling. The day also included press interviews with featured filmmakers, amplifying the voices and visions behind this year's lineup.

HIGHLIGHTS

- SOLD OUT all Opening Night Programs, including film screenings and opening night party
- Over 600 people in attendance at Cinema Musica: Festival Launch Party
- Debut of the 4K Restoration of KITES AND OTHER TALES
- Welcomed over 80 filmmakers and artists through a Festival Welcome Brunch
- Celebrated Pasifika voices and storytellers through our opening night film: MOLOKA'I BOUND, along with MĀHŪ: A Trans-Pacific Love Letter, TINĀ (MOTHER), and our Pacific Cinewaves short block and happy hour
- L.A. Premiere of the BTS Army documentary – FOREVER WE ARE YOUNG
- World Premiere of the Prime Video exclusive documentary LEE SOO MAN: KING OF K-POP, with Lee Soo Man and A2O in attendance
- Hosted REEL CONNECTIONS Reception for festival filmmakers with the Asian Pacific Filmmakers Experience




VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS



C3:CONVERSE

C3 is a space for creative communities and industry leaders to converge through panels and conversations. C3 connects industry professionals to create dialogues on the ever-changing media landscapes as we build a collective vision for our creative communities.

This year's C3 conversations included:

- [CONNECTING WORLDS: A Fireside Chat with Henry Chan](#)
- [Fireside with Alika Maikau and Lisette Marie Kaualea Flanery](#)
- [Fireside Duo: Reina Bonta and Anna Huix](#)
- [The Cleaning Lady Tells All: Creating Grit and Grace for 4 Seasons](#)



C3 IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



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THE
CLEANING LADY

R3

R3 Conversations

Searching for wellness and joy at the Festival continues with our growing practice of Regeneration, Reciprocity, and Renewal. An evolution of the 2023 and 2024 Festival's R3:NEWAL series, this year's R3 revolves around artists and filmworkers through intimate roundtable conversations. Focused on Festival Filmmakers, R3 conversations are designed for artists to connect with each other

This year's R3 conversations included:

- Fireside w/ Set Hernandez and Diane Quon
- Navigating Difficult Subject Matter in Post



MAY 3 & 4

JANM, Aratani Theatre @ JACCC, AMC Atlantic Times Square 14

The festival continued in-person programming from May 3-4 in Little Tokyo and Monterey Park. With over 110 unique films — ranging from shorts, to documentaries, to narratives — and over 3,000 people in attendance, these two days were filled with an abundance of films, joy, and community.

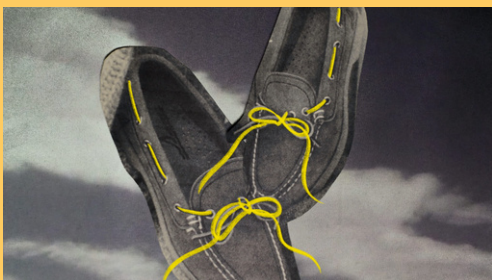


HIGHLIGHTS

- SOLD OUT screenings for our shorts programs: Can I Borrow A Feeling?, APT: Advanced Parenting Too, An Emotion, We Are More! Revisited, At Crossed Roads, Borderlands, Kuwentuhan Lives, #LIFE #TIMES, and From Visions To Reel: Living Legacy.
- L.A. Premiere of THIRD ACT with over 800 people in attendance at Aratani Theatre
- Celebrating Hong Kong Cinema and filmmakers with SOLD OUT screenings of BLOSSOMS UNDER SOMEWHERE and LITTLE RED SWEET
- Celebrating our Armed With a Camera Alumni and current fellows at our AWC Social Hour
- Closing out the weekend with the From Visions to Reel: Living Legacy shorts program, amplifying the next generation of storytellers



Along with our in-person programming, we included virtual programming for our audiences at home in Southern California. This year's Virtual Cinema included films from our VC Archives, *Armed With A Camera Vol.*, 2024 and Digital Histories 2024 artists.



MAY 7

JANM

We closed out the 41st Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival on a powerful note with two unforgettable Closing Night films at the Japanese American National Museum: YONSEI and MONGRELS.

The night was a celebration of community, storytelling, and the vibrant future of Asian and Pacific Islander cinema. Thank you to everyone who joined us to help close out another incredible year of LAAPFF. Here's to the stories that continue to move us forward.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 100 people from the Little Tokyo community gathering for the World Premiere of YONSEI, with George Takei in attendance
- Closed out our festival screenings with the 2025 LAAPFF Grand Jury Narrative Award Winner – MONGRELS
- Wrapped up the 41st LAAPFF with a Closing Night Celebration at Far Bar in Little Tokyo



LAAPFF 2025 ON FILM



TESTIMONIALS

"Can't express how moved & inspired I was from LAAPFF! From the thoughtful questions asked by programmers at every screening, to being in community with so many talented artists... everything was so beautifully intentional."

-Nick Hartanto, Director of Daly City

"LAAPFF is a great festival all-around! The organization, the communication, the moderation of screening Q&As are at the highest level you can find anywhere. They have great connections with the industry which is of great value for up and coming filmmakers."

-Hang Luong Nguyen, Director of Rooftop Lempicka

"One of the best run festivals I've ever had the pleasure of attending and screening a film. I particularly appreciate this festival's willingness to not only prioritize entertainment but are committed to amplifying critical community issues."

-Jon Osaki, Director of Making Waves: The Rise of Asian America

"From the moment my film was selected, until its screening and the closing of the festival, the festival team showed incredible care, empathy, and support. Even from afar, I felt seen, heard, and valued as a filmmaker. They were always there to assist and communicate with warmth and professionalism, making sure I felt included every step of the way. I'm deeply grateful to the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival for treating my film with such respect and dedication, and for creating an environment where independent filmmakers feel recognized and supported."

-Paniz Khoshnik, Director of If There Is A Ghost Among Us



LAAPFF AWARDS



WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS TO THESE ESPECIALLY MOVING FILMS FROM THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL:

GRAND JURY AWARD – BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE

MONGRELS by Jerome Yoo

SPECIAL JURY RECOGNITION - NARRATIVE FEATURE

MOLOKA'I BOUND by Alike Tengan

BITTERROOT by Vera Brunner-Sung

GRAND JURY AWARD – BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

BETWEEN GOODBYES by Jota Mun

SPECIAL JURY RECOGNITION - DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

YEAR OF THE CAT by Tony Nguyen

TE PUNA ORA (THE SOURCE OF LIFE) by Virgine Tetoofa

GOLDEN REEL AWARD – NARRATIVE SHORT

THE BOYS AND THE DONKEY by Tsering Yangjyab

SPECIAL JURY RECOGNITION - NARRATIVE SHORT

VOX HUMANA by Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan

VAHA'A | THE DISTANCE BETWEEN by Pingi Moli

GOLDEN REEL AWARD – DOCUMENTARY SHORT

WOULDN'T MAKE IT ANY OTHER WAY by Hao Zhou

SPECIAL JURY RECOGNITION - DOCUMENTARY SHORT

WE WERE THE SCENERY by Christopher Radcliff

TO DANCE AGAIN by MG Evangelista

EMERGING FILMMAKER AWARD

Jinho Myung, Director of SOFTSHELL (Narrative)

Vicky Du, Director of LIGHT OF THE SETTING SUN (Documentary)

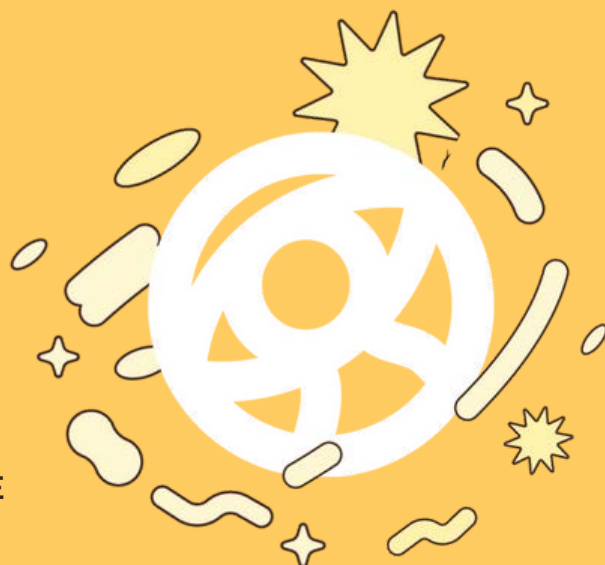
LINDA MABALOT | NEW VISIONS AWARD

CROW, STARFISH AND UNICORN by Xiaoxuan Han

AFTER THE STORM by Sungbin Moon

SPECIAL RECOGNITION – GENERATIONS OF LIGHT

THIRD ACT by Tadashi Nakamura



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STAR



**ANGRY
ASIAN MAN**

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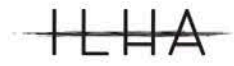


Alan and Ruth Kondo
George and Sakaye Aratani CARE Award
Hachidori Fund at East Bay Community Foundation

GOVERNMENT



IN-KIND





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