

# WRIF



WHITE RIVER JUNCTION, VERMONT

## WHITE RIVER INDIE FILM FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 15 - 18, 2024 • THE BRIGGS OPERA HOUSE 53 MAIN ST. WRJ • [UVJAM.ORG](http://UVJAM.ORG)

HOSTED BY JAM - JUNCTION ARTS & MEDIA TICKETS, PASSES & MORE INFO AT:

[UVJAM.ORG/WRIF](http://UVJAM.ORG/WRIF)

Original art by Jes Raymond



# WELCOME TO WRIF 2024!

WHITE RIVER INDIE FILM FESTIVAL FEB. 15-18

## The best of new global & regional cinema

Four days, eleven feature films, shorts by WRIF regional Emerging Filmmakers, panel conversations, parties and more

**Festival Venue, Parking & Access:** Both venues are located at 5 South Main Street, White River Junction, VT. The WRIF home base is located at **JAM (Junction Arts & Media)** on the 1st floor of Newberry Market next to Tuckerbox. Films screen upstairs at **The Briggs Opera House** on the 2nd floor. Street parking is free throughout the village. An elevator is located at the south end of the Gates-Briggs Building to the left of the Post Office; go to 2nd floor and turn left.

**TICKETS & PASSES AT: [UVJAM.ORG/WRIF](http://UVJAM.ORG/WRIF)**

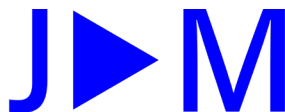
**Your donations and purchases** support WRIF's annual festival, our Emerging Filmmakers contest, and a vibrant filmmaking community bringing the world to the Upper Valley and the Upper Valley to the world through cinema.

### ABOUT WRIF & JAM



WRIF brings filmmakers and audiences together to enjoy new global and regional groundbreaking, provocative, entertaining cinema. White River Indie Films was founded in 2004 by a group of local film lovers who wanted to bring works from outside the mainstream to an appreciative audience. The first three-day festival was held in White River Junction,

Vermont in 2005. From the beginning, our focus was on screening issue-oriented films, hosting discussions, and partnering with community organizations with the goal of inspiring change. Last year WRIF joined forces with CATV to create JAM – Junction Arts & Media. JAM's mission is to build community in the Upper Valley of VT and NH through the media arts. JAM offers media education for all ages, media coverage of local events and government, and media arts-centered events to bring people together through media year-round.



**[UVJAM.ORG](http://UVJAM.ORG)**

**Junction Arts & Media**

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Tickets, passes, and details at [uvjam.org/wrif](http://uvjam.org/wrif)

**WEDNESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 14**

9:00 - 11:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**The Rocky Horror Picture Show**

**THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 15**

6:00 - 7:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**#PitchFest 2.0**

8:00 - 9:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**CUSTODIAN + Filmmaker**

**FRIDAY,  
FEBRUARY 16**

Filmmaker Friday Master Classes

9:00 - 10:15 AM @ JAM

**Storytelling on Screen Workshop  
with Samantha Davidson Green**

10:30 - 11:45 AM @ JAM

**Sound Design with Daniel K. Felicetti**

NOON - 1:15 PM @ JAM

**Indie Film Financing & Distribution  
Brown Bag Lunch**

1:30 - 2:45 PM @ JAM

**Directing Actors with Camera  
with Richard Waterhouse**

3:00 - 4:15 PM @ JAM

**Documentary Editing with Chad Ervin**

5:00 - 6:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**Opening Night Gala Party!  
with Route 5 Jive**

6:15 - 8:15 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**THE TASTE OF THINGS**

9:00 - 11:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**MAMI WATA**

► *The Thaw* Short + Filmmakers

**SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 17**

10:00 - 11:30 AM @ Putnam's vine/yard  
**Emerging Filmmakers Brunch**

NOON - 2:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**JOIN OR DIE + Panel Discussion**  
+ Emerging Filmmaker Short

3:00 - 5:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House  
**PERFECT DAYS**

**SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 17**

6:00 - 8:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**FOUR DAUGHTERS + panel**

+ Emerging Filmmaker Short

8:30 - 9:45 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**HUMANIST VAMPIRE SEEKING CON-  
SENTING SUICIDAL PERSON**

+ Emerging Filmmaker Short

10:00 PM - MIDNIGHT @ JAM Junction Arts & Media

**Vampire Dance Party**

10:00 - 11:00 AM @ JAM

**Breakfast at JAM**

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**ROBOT DREAMS**

+ Emerging Filmmaker Short

1:00 - 1:30 PM @ JAM

**Draw Robot Comics with  
the Center for Cartoon Studies**

2:00 - 4:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**ORLANDO, MY POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY**

► *Daughters of the Fire* Short

5:00 - 7:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**JOONAM + Filmmaker**

► *I Signed the Petition* Short

8:30 - 10:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

**THE SWEET EAST**

+ Emerging Filmmaker Short

**SUNDAY,  
FEBRUARY 18**

Throughout WRIF and during JAM office hours until March 31 @ JAM

**Opera Action Figures**

Opera like you've never seen it before with stop-motion animations created by Thetford-based twin sisters Amy and Terry Lawrence. "We loved the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Akhnaten* so much we decided to make an animated version.

In the spirit of making it up as we went along, we sewed costumes, built a set,

lit it and filmed it." From a studio in their mom's basement, Terry contributed her theater set design and model-making background, and Amy, a former Dartmouth Film Professor, brought her filmmaking to create many more opera-inspired animations. On display with their sets and figurines at JAM.



# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

9:00 - 11:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **The Rocky Horror Picture Show**

White River Junction based shadow cast, the **Creature Feature Club**, will do the time warp again this Valentines Day! Join us for an interactive, sexy, queer, freaky show with the traditions you love and some new surprises. Reserve your tickets with any WRIF pass, otherwise admission is free and first come first serve. Goody bags available for any donation amount (\$10 recommended) or included with pass reservations.



## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

6:00 - 7:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

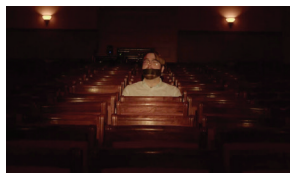
### **#PitchFest 2.0**

JAM is elated to once again host #PitchFest a shark-tank style competition where local film and media makers have 5 minutes to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges with the hopes of winning money to bring their vision to life. This year we have a bigger stage, more money to give away, and more opportunities to help you make cool art! Don't have an idea ready to pitch? No worries, you can still get a piece of all the action as part of our live studio audience!

8:00 - 9:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **Custodian (NH, VT 2024) with Filmmaker Feature Film**

Travis, a musician living in his car, gets a job as a custodian at a music studio and starts recording his album in secret. Shot in Vermont and New Hampshire for a shoestring budget of \$1,000, this is the debut feature by filmmaker and musician **Loren Howard**.



## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

9:00 - 10:15 AM @ JAM

### **Storytelling on Screen Workshop with Samantha Davidson Green Filmmaker Friday Master Class**

Do you have a story idea for a screenplay but don't know how to get started? Or a screenplay-in-progress that has stalled and seek help to get going again? Join this participatory story workshop to help you take your next screenwriting step.

10:30 - 11:45 AM @ JAM

## **Sound Design with Daniel K. Felicetti**

### **Filmmaker Friday Master Class**

A well-crafted sound design in a film can elevate the story and propel the narrative in subtle yet powerful ways. Join for insights on film sound, technical basics of sound editing, and inspiring examples of creative decision-making in the filmmaking process.

NOON - 1:15 PM @ JAM

## **Indie Film Financing & Distribution Brown Bag Lunch with Nora Jacobson, Bill Stetson, Jay Craven, and Jane Applegate**

### **Filmmaker Friday Master Class**

Catch up on how indie filmmakers are financing and distributing their work and the state of "the biz" over an informal lunch discussion with regional producers.

1:30 - 2:45 PM @ JAM

## **Directing Actors with Camera with Richard Waterhouse**

### **Filmmaker Friday Master Class**

In this 75-minute workshop you will learn the foundational tools of acting on camera in an upbeat, no-pressure setting. These tools are incredibly helpful for actors and directors alike!

3:00 - 4:15 PM @ JAM

## **Documentary with Chad Ervin, editor of JOIN OR DIE**

### **Filmmaker Friday Master Class**

Documentaries are often "written" in the edit. How do documentarians create story structure in the edit and how does that translate into the structure of individual scenes? Discover how editing timelines, clips, digital and analogue productivity tools, and cinematic techniques can organize a film's storytelling and keep an audience engaged.

5:00 - 6:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## **Opening Night GALA PARTY! with Route 5 Jive**

Celebrate 19 years of WRIF with good food from Fresco Catering, good tunes from Route 5 Jive, and good people in the newly renovated Briggs Opera House Lobby. Mingle with filmmakers and film lovers alike as the festival kicks off.

6:15 - 8:15 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## **The Taste of Things (France 2023)**

### **Feature Film + Emerging Filmmaker Winning**

**Short:** *Sylvain in the Kingdom of Giants* and *If You Find Yourself in a Pocket Dimension* (Maggie Zeng, Montreal)

France's 2024 Oscar submission is a rapturous feast for the senses. Set in 1889 and starring real-life one-time lovers Benoît



Magimel and Juliette Binoche, the film transports viewers to a passionate affair between a renowned gourmet and his incomparable cook. Both a sumptuous romance and an ode to the culinary arts, *The Taste of Things* is one of the most mouth-watering works of cinema ever made. Serving up delicacy after delicacy, filmed with warmth, care, and affection, **Tran Anh Hung's** exquisite direction exudes a gastronomic sensibility equal to that of his characters.

9:00 - 11:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **Mami Wata (Nigeria, France, United Kingdom 2023)**

► *The Thaw* Short with Filmmakers Sean Temple and Sarah Wisner (VT 2023)

Filed in the most spectacular high-contrast black and white, *Mami Wata* is a spellbinding vision of mysticism, modernity, and matriarchy. Inspired by Nigerian folklore, the story concerns the coastal village of Iyi, in which the people are losing faith in the sea deity Mami Wata and growing skeptical of her intermediary, Mama Efe (Rita Edochie). When a rebel deserter arrives at the village, he is able to exploit the divisions amongst the people and elevate himself to a position of power. It is up to Efe's troubled daughter Zinwe (Uzoamaka Aniunoh) and devoted protégé Prisca (Evelyne Ily Juhen) to reassert the spiritual order of the village.



In *The Thaw*, in 19th-century Vermont, a young woman's parents drink sleeping tea to survive the harsh winter, but an early thaw leads to horrifying results. Official Selection 2023 Fantastic Fest, Telluride Horror Show, and now WRIF!

## SATURDAY, MARCH 25

10:00 - 11:30 AM @ PUTNAM'S VINE/YARD @188 S Main St Suite 110, WRJ, VT  
**Emerging Filmmakers Brunch**

A breakfast celebrating WRIF's regional Emerging Filmmakers and local filmmakers from the Upper Valley with coffee and Bagel Lady bagels courtesy of **Putnam's Vineyard** and boozy drinks for purchase. All WRIF attendees are invited to join us in Putnam's secret garden and meet cool people making cool stuff.

NOON - 2:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **Join or Die (USA 2023) + Panel Discussion** **Feature Film**

Based on Robert Putnam's trailblazing academic work *Bowling Alone*, about the decline of American civil society, *Join or Die* argues that club membership is the bedrock of American community and democracy. Following Putnam's journey as he researches the health of communities and their civic participation, the film tests Putnam's theory with modern-day club-builders with interviews with academics and politicians such as Hilary Clinton and Pete Buttigieg.





Stay for **post-screening panel** with Annette Brown (Norwich Women's Club), David Crandall (Lebanon Rotary), Rachael Thomeer (Upper Vally Young Professionals, Valley Improv), Tatum Barnes (Hartford Parks & Rec), David Briggs (White River Rotary), and *Join or Die* editor, Chad Ervin moderated by Joe Major (White River Rotary) connecting the film to our community.

3:00 - 5:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **Perfect Days (Japan, Germany 2023)**

#### **Feature Film**

In this sublime work of life lived simply, Hirayama (Kōji Yakusho) has built stable daily routines cleaning the sleek and modern public toilets of Tokyo. Pleasures found in caring for his plants, riding his bicycle, and reading nightly allow him easeful movement in the world, receptive to moments of beauty too often overlooked in the hustle and bustle. Billowed on the sounds of Lou Reed, Patti Smith, and Van Morrison, *Perfect Days* is an effervescent meditation on finding harmony in one's life—with work, family, friends, and oneself. Academy award-winning director **Wim Wenders** is in top form, luxuriating in the sweep and lights of Tokyo's magnificent skyline while staying grounded in the smallness and boundless depth of human existence.



6:00 - 8:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

### **Four Daughters (France, Tunisia, Germany and Saudi Arabia 2023)**

#### **+ Post-Screening Discussion**

#### **Feature Film + Emerging Filmmaker Winning Short:**

##### ***Dear Mom* (Mae Nagusky, VT)**

This audacious documentary from Academy-award nominee **Kaouther Ben Hania** courageously re-enacts a Tunisian family's troubled history. A mother and two daughters reconstruct pivotal moments from their lives in which they play themselves and two actresses fulfill the roles of their estranged siblings. The result is a behind-the-scenes expose of buried traumas, fitful efforts at liberation, and a religious radicalization that tears the family apart. Captivating as much for its unconventional form as for its revelatory story, it is a Best Documentary Feature Oscar nominee.



*The Daughters of Fire* is an operatic musical short from Portuguese master **Pedro Costa** about three sisters separated by the eruption of the immense Fogo volcano, the highest peak in Cape Verde.

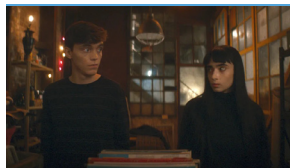
Stay for **post-screening conversation** with filmmaker Laura Plasencia, actor Allison Fay Brown, and Cartoon Studies graduate and graphic novelist Natalie Norris.



8:30 - 9:45 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## Humanist Vampire Seeking Consenting Suicidal Person (Canada 2023)

Feature Film + Emerging Filmmaker Winning Short:  
*Pourquoi tu dances pas princesse?* (Rosalie Pelletier, Montreal)



Sasha (Sara Montpetit) is a young vampire with a serious problem: she's too sensitive to kill. When her exasperated parents cut off her blood supply, Sasha's life is in jeopardy. Luckily, she meets Paul (Félix-Antoine Bénard), a lonely teenager with suicidal tendencies willing to give his life to save hers. In a sweet and funny twist on the vampire genre, creatures of the night become self-conscious Québécois teens stumbling towards romance and a new ethic of bloodlust. Top ranked 2023 horror film of Letterboxd.

10:00 PM - MIDNIGHT @ JAM – Junction Arts & Media (5 S. Main St. 1st Floor)

## Vampire Dance Party

Don your velvetiest capes, sharpen those fangs, and come dance the night away to dark wave classics at our Vampire Dance Party. Costumes deathly encouraged.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 26**

10:00 - 11:00 AM @ JAM

## Breakfast at JAM

All are invited to enjoy pastries and coffee at JAM—Junction Arts & Media to kick off the final day of WRIF.

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## Robot Dreams (Spain 2023)

Feature Film + Emerging Filmmaker Winning Short:  
*Birth of a Doodle* (Elisa Pontes, Montreal)

This playful, profound animated feature comes from Spanish visionary **Pablo Berger**, known for *Blancanieves* (2012). Set in 1980s' New York, a dog and his robot companion delight in exploring the city, basking in the joyful elation of their friendship until an unexpected incident forces them apart. By twists and turns, they fight their way back for an ecstatic, emotionally-rich reunion. Oscare nominee for Best Animated Feature, *Robot Dreams* is for young and old alike, a deeply human investigation into the tender longings of friendship, with nary a human on the screen.



1:00 - 1:30 PM @ JAM

## Draw Robot Comics with the Center for Cartoon Studies

All ages are invited to join us in JAM for a Robot Dreams inspired comics activity after the screening, lead by Center for Cartoon Studies MFA students!

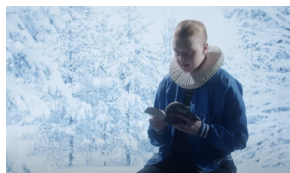
2:00 - 4:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## **Orlando, My Political Biography (France 2023)**

**Feature Film + *The Daughters of the Fire* Short  
(Portugal 2023)**

Writer, philosopher, and now filmmaker, **Paul B.**

**Preciado's** newest work is poetic in form and function. Hybridizing literary adaptation with fiction and nonfiction filmmaking, Preciado uses Virginia Woolf's 1928 century-spanning, gender-bending romance, *Orlando: My Political Biography*, as a template for the modern trans experience. Interlacing passages from the novel with contemporary testimonies, including the filmmaker's, the film focuses on "gender poets" whose lives transcend binary expression. A cast of contemporary Orlandos offer intimate access and playful insight into their experiences with hormones, gender-affirming care, institutional erasure, and the political positioning of trans-people subjected to a normative regime. No two stories are the same, and, yet, somehow Woolf's fantastical biography contains them all.



5:00 - 7:00 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## **Joonam (USA 2023) with Filmmaker**

**Feature Film + *I Signed the Petition* Short (Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom 2018)**

Growing up in rural Vermont, far from her Iranian roots, **Sierra Urich** doesn't speak the same language as her grandmother, and Urich's mother refuses to divulge much about her life before coming to America. Wrestling with the black box of her own fractured identity, Urich begins a filmmaking project to capture her grandmother's stories and mend the threads of her family's matrilineal line. The film's gorgeous cinematography, its rich tapestry of diasporic connection, and its heartfelt familial intimacy have earned Urich a nomination in the Film Independent Spirit Awards' Truer than Fiction category.



In *I Signed the Petition*, after a Palestinian man signs an online petition, he is thrown into a spiral of self-doubt. Over the course of a funny and philosophical conversation with an understanding friend, he analyzes, deconstructs and interprets the meaning of his choice to publicly support the cultural boycott of Israel.

8:30 - 10:30 PM @ The Briggs Opera House

## **The Sweet East (USA 2023)**

**Feature Film + Emerging Filmmaker Winning Short:  
*Picnic in the Clouds* (Malik Clyde Terrab, NH)**

This debut feature from acclaimed cinematographer **Sean Prince Williams**, known for his grotty, kinetic work with the Safdie Brothers and Alex Ross Perry, traipses along the mid-Atlantic as an *Alice in Wonderland* tale for the modern age. A college stu-



dent from the South, on a school trip to the nation's capital, stumbles through the looking glass of Pizzagate, Antifa, and pseudo-intellectual white supremacists for a bouncy picaresque through the subcultures and political fringe of the American east coast, including a stopover in idyllic Vermont. Starring Talia Ryder (*Never Rarely Sometimes Always*), Ayo Edebiri (*Bottoms*), Jacob Elordi (*Saltburn*), and Simon Rex (*Red Rocket*), this hilarious and hallucinatory autopsy of a political moment narcotized by insularity and delusions of grandeur doesn't pull any punches aimed at the Left or Right.

# THANK YOU WRIF 2024 SPONSORS

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# THANK YOU WRIF COMMUNITY PARTNERS!





## THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!



WRIF thanks the community volunteers who began searching last fall for the best new global and regional cinema, watching, discussing and choosing films to inspire Upper Valley audiences. We thank the many festival volunteers for their work to create a joyful event uniting filmmakers and film lovers to celebrate the power of film to inspire empathy, catalyze conversation, and affect positive change in the world. If you love film and want to get involved as a sponsor, community partner, or volunteer, please email us at: [info@uvjam.org](mailto:info@uvjam.org), subject: WRIF. We hope to see you again at WRIF



## Coming up at JAM & BOH...

JAM – Junction Arts & Media offers year-round media arts events, exhibits, and media education opportunities. JAM also channels the Upper Valley on two local cable access channels (Comcast 1075 & 1085/VTEL 1169 & 1170), streaming online at [uvjam.org](http://uvjam.org), and via JAM's YouTube channel, delivering 24/7 coverage of local events, municipal government and school board meetings, and locally created media, including video, podcasts, audiobooks.

In partnership with Briggs Opera House, Inc. (BOH) and Shaker Bridge Theater, the resident theater company of BOH, JAM also manages rentals of the Briggs Opera House for community groups. Visit [uvjam.org/briggs](http://uvjam.org/briggs) for more info.

### Upcoming & ongoing at JAM:

- Feb. 21 & March 1 **JAM Equipment Orientation**
- Feb. 26 & March 11 **JAM Scriptwriters Group**
- March 14 **Story JAM** Bimonthly Story Circle
- March 15 **Valley Improv**
- March 19-May 7 **Zine-making Workshops with CCS Fellow S. Mirk**
- April 4 **Lampshade Poets**
- March 20 - May 9 **JAM Club** Spring Session (youth)
- March 22 - May 24 **Digital Media Creation Lab for Seniors with Bugbee Senior Center**
- April 19 - May 24 **SNSC & JAM Film Lab**
- May 17-19 **JAM 48-Hour Film Slam**
- June 24-Aug 4 **JAM CAMP 2024 – Now open for registration!**

**JAM CAMP 2024**  
registration now open  
[UVJAM.ORG](http://UVJAM.ORG)

**JAM CAMP**  
ENTERING GRADES 4-9  
Full Day: 9am-3pm  
Cost: \$350/week

**ANIMATION INTENSIVE**  
GRADES 5-RECENT GRAD  
Full Day: 9am-3pm  
Cost: \$350/week

**FILM INTENSIVE**  
GRADES 5-RECENT GRAD  
Full Day: 9am-3pm  
Cost: \$675/2 weeks

**CREATIVITY + MEDIA + FRIENDS**  
When your media project takes summer camps give you new media arts tools, skills and a crew of friends to help you succeed!

[UVJAM.ORG](http://UVJAM.ORG)

Fee assistance and other details with respect from donors, LLC, the Jack & Cook Trust, and the Dorothy & Jack Byrne Foundation. Contact [info@uvjam.org](mailto:info@uvjam.org) with subject "Camp assistance" to make a request.

**Most JAM events are free and open to the public.** Tuition assistance and waivers are available for workshops and camps thanks to sponsors Adimab, Jane B. Cook Trust, and Jack & Dorothy Byrne Foundation. **Sign up for JAM's weekly newsletter for highlights & upcoming events at: [UVJAM.ORG](http://UVJAM.ORG)**