

The Regent Park Film Festival (RPFF) unveils its full festival line-up celebrating 20 years as Toronto's longest running FREE community film festival

This year's festival is set to take place from **December 7th – 10th** continuing its mission to bridge communities through films

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The **Regent Park Film Festival (RPFF)** officially announces its full festival line-up with 45 highly acclaimed films and multiple industry panels and events continuing its mission to bridge communities through films that are always FREE and accessible. Toronto's longest running FREE community film festival will make its return this **December 7th -10th** in-person and online with screenings and events taking place at Regent Park's staple community cultural hub **Daniels Spectrum (585 Dundas St E)**.

View the full schedule at: rpff.ca/2022

This year, **RPFF** is proud to be celebrating 20 years of storytelling, bringing together the diverse communities that exist in the vibrant Regent Park neighbourhood and all across Canada to enjoy and engage with film as a means of artistic expression and a catalyst for change. Since its inception, **RPFF** has believed in the power of art and film to bring people together, to create empathy and understanding amongst neighbours, and to open one's eyes to new perspectives and possibilities.

*"RPFF had humble beginnings, with our first festival taking place in the gym at Nelson Mandela Park Public School. However, this year we're coming back in-person with more FREE programming than we've ever had before, putting together an ambitious, captivating program over four days with a bit of something for everyone." said Executive Director **Kalpna Srinarayanadas**. "We're excited to celebrate not only our 20th anniversary, but also the resilience and fortitude we've all experienced these past few years, and our chance to finally come together in-person as a community again. The mission has always been and will continue to be providing access to art no matter anyone's financial or social status."*

*"While we want to reminisce, we also hope our programming inspires conversations about the future; the future of communities like Regent Park that continue to be in flux yet thrive despite it, and an industry that should be in flux to meet the needs of the diverse creatives within it, by way of tough but necessary conversations." said RPFF programmer **Aashna Thakkar**. "This year's program features a wide range of stellar Canadian films, from the most seasoned directors, like **Clement Virgo**, to the many short film directors who are freshly entering the festival sphere. When combined, each filmmaker has helped us to curate a program that reflects and brings validity to the past, present and future of BIPOC narratives."*

RPFF places emphasis on works that represent culturally diverse experiences and offer Regent Park residents positive images from their countries of origin. They also showcase films of all genres (documentary, fiction, animation, experimental) with topics pertinent to the Regent Park community.

This year's feature films include:

***BROTHER* by Clement Virgo (Opening Night Film)**

Sons of Caribbean immigrants, Francis and Michael face questions of masculinity, identity and family amid the pulsing beat of Toronto's early hip-hop scene.

***TIKTOK BOOM* by Shalini Kantayya**

Dissecting one of the most influential platforms of the contemporary social media landscape, TikTok Boom examines the algorithmic, socio-political, economic, and cultural influences and impact of the history-making app.

***PORTRAITS FROM A FIRE* by Trevor Mack**

Portraits From A Fire is a coming-of-age film following Tyler, a teen who spends his days vlogging his Indigenous community. He meets an older teenager who pushes him to show his latest work about his family to the community, leading to a reckoning between the past and the future.

***SUMMER OF SOUL* by Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson**

In his acclaimed debut as a filmmaker, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson presents a powerful and transporting documentary—part music film, part historical record created around an epic event that celebrated Black history, culture and fashion. Over the course of six weeks in the summer of 1969, The Harlem Cultural Festival was filmed in Mount Morris Park.

***RICEBOY SLEEPS* by Anthony Shim**

Set in the 90s, a Korean single mother raises her young son in the suburbs of Canada determined to provide a better life for him than the one she left behind.

This year's short films have been curated into four different programs:

NUANCED CONNECTIONS

The relationships we form can be comforting, complicated and, at times, painful. This collection of shorts showcases the intricacies of our connections with loved ones through pivotal moments of self-discovery, to the fleeting moments that make up our lived experiences. How do these relationships stand the test of time and how do they inform who we are as individuals? Films included: *Nanitic* by Carol Nguyen, *The Syed Family Xmas Eve Game Night* by Fawzia Mizra, *Perfect Restaurant* by Aiken Chau, *N'xaxaitkw* by Asia Youngman, *Cupids* by Zoey Martinson and *Ahu's Journal* by Weeda Azim

PHYSICAL PERCEPTIONS

Whether due to our perceived gender, race or physical attributes, there comes a time when our self perception is not always in line with how others see us. What intersections of our identity and experiences are not apparent to the eye? This program explores how these misaligned views about our bodies inform how we move through the world. Films included: *It's a girl!* by Andy Nguyen, *Guardians* by Minerva Navasca, *We Went Out* by Ian Kamau, *Nectar* by Nakita Sunar, *For Love* by Joy Gharoro-Akpojotor, and *Diaspora* by Tyler McKenzie Evans.

TRUTHS UNRAVELING

This shorts program challenges perceptions of BIPOC narratives we've come to know. What knowledge of our past has been buried and what is left to learn? From stories of racism, culture and health, these films seek to unveil just that. Films included: *Reel Black: Our Film Stories* by Tristen Sutherland, *Emeraude Domingos Mbuku* and *Ayan Tan*, *Fresh Meat* by Lu Asfaha, *Where Are You From* by Fatima Gardaad, *Hindsight* by Shubhi Sahni, and *Patty vs. Patty* by Chris Strikes.

REGENT PARK MADE VISIBLE

In celebration of their 20th anniversary, Regent Park Film Festival launched *Regent Park Made Visible*, a new project for which they commissioned five local filmmakers to produce films that celebrate the history and resilience of Regent Park. This project will give viewers an opportunity to experience the neighbourhood's transformation through decades-old archival footage, news clips, and interviews with residents. These films, along with a talkback with the filmmakers, will explore the trials and triumphs of Regent Park and the impact it has had on those who call it home. Films included: *A Tale of Two Regents* by Akasha Jones, *remnanthood* by Calla Moya, *terrestrial* by Shanele Soares, *A Pile of Dirt* by Rhoma Spencer, and *A Tribute to Paintbox* by Focus Media Arts Centre. This program was made possible with funding from Canada Council for the Arts.

In addition to the films, the festival will be featuring exciting panels, workshops and events including *Commercial Filmmaking: From Production to Post* guided by an industry-leading group of storytellers including Oscar nominated director **Hubert Davis**, the annual pitch competition *Emerging Directors' Pitch Competition and Retrospective* where the winner will receive a development deal with **CBC** and \$1000 courtesy of **RBC**, *Discovering Delight: Creative Writing Workshop for BIPOC Creatives*, *Mental Health and Self Care for Filmmaker*, *Designing Sound: Sourcing Music for your Next Film*, and *In Conversation with Carlos Bustamante*. In celebration of its 20th anniversary, **RPFF** will be hosting *20 Years of Film and Community in Regent Park* which will bring together the Festival's Executive Directors of the past decade, along with **RPFF's** Founder, for a discussion on leadership, community and the power of film.

A new offering is the *Industry Lounge* for aspiring and established filmmakers to relax, speak with industry insiders, learn about available resources, and meet potential new collaborators. The space will also feature an exclusive exhibit of **Walter Klassen** FX's props and costumes from popular Toronto productions. This space is made possible with the generous support of **MBS Equipment Co. Canada**.

Back this year is **RPFF's** School Program where the Festival puts together a selection of curated films for classrooms which address social issues affecting Toronto's diverse population. These lesson plans are created by their Education Committee, composed of teachers, teacher candidates, and those with strong interest in film education. Students are invited to **Daniels Spectrum** for a unique and thought-provoking

field trip and a fun film festival experience. The program will also be made available online to schools across the GTA who wish to take advantage of the films and learning resources available.

This year's School Program has been curated into four different themes:

YOU, ME AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This program encourages you to reflect on your inner voice, your place in your community and consider your role in shaping our world. While caring for our planet and figuring out where you belong within it are valuable, these films also serve as a helpful reminder to maintain your self-worth and unique identity. Films included are *The Lost Seahorse* by Benjamin Fieschi-Rose, *Bémol* by Oana Lacroix, *Cool For You* by Sherene Strausberg, *Blue Curry* by Magali Dunyach, *Blewish* by Ezra Edmond, *Jump* by Stanley Hector and *Aki* by Wanci Hua.

YOU, ME AND THE COMMUNITY

There are many different ways to engage with community, whether through friendship, family traditions, knowledge sharing, or mentorship. This program explores the many facets of what it means to be a part of a larger group of people with shared interests, experiences, or goals. How does community help in shaping you as a person and embracing the cards you've been dealt. Films included are *Out There* by Sebastian Hill-Esbrand, *Evan's Drum* by Ossie Michelin, *The Gift* by Rachel Garrick, *Generation Impact: The Scientist* by Stephanie Wang-Breal, and *Cupids* by Zoey Martinson.

YOU, MYSELF AND MY IDENTITY

Figuring out who you are is no easy feat. This program highlights the journey and the joys of trying to be your authentic self, while on a road to self-discovery. Whether you're navigating your sexuality, gender, racial identity, or life circumstance, how do you hold space for growth when dealing with external forces such as family, society, or cultural norms. Films include are *Generation Impact: The Coder* by Samantha Knowles, *It's a girl!* by Andy Nguyen, *Out There* by Sebastian Hill-Esbrand, *The Talk* by Ella Saini, *Silence* by TJ O'Grady Peyton, and *We Are Not Speaking the Same Language* by Danika St-Laurent.

Regent Park Film Festival would like to thank all the sponsors, partners and funders who share their vision and values: **RBC, The Daniels Corporation, Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage, Telefilm Canada, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council.**

Regent Park Film Festival started in 2003 through the efforts of a determined group of community residents and volunteers. Their goal was to bring Regent Park residents access to high quality films that resonated with their experiences. From the very beginning, it has been vital to **RPF**'s mission as an organization to offer programming that is free and accessible to anyone who wishes to participate and attend. This includes community screenings, school programs, internships and learning opportunities, industry panels and workshops, film submissions, and childcare. The key communities that **RPF** serves are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities, people with low-income, people who live in public housing, and Regent Park residents. About 70% of their annual audience members identify as BIPOC and they prioritize such artists, audiences, and narratives. They program the most aesthetically interesting, educational, thought-provoking, and entertaining films as well as industry and networking events.

Today, as Regent Park has undergone a seventeen-year revitalization project, **RPF** works to bring together the diverse communities that exist in the neighbourhood to enjoy and engage with film as a means of artistic expression and a catalyst for change. Their mandate supports films made by culturally diverse people on topics congruous with the Regent Park community such as urbanization, racial justice, community activism, immigrant experiences, truth and reconciliation, and experiences of working class and youth of colour.

Available for Interviews:
Kalpana Srinarayanadas, Executive Director
Select Filmmakers

For media interviews and inquiries, please contact:
Project Four Public Relations
Amira de Vera
amira@projectfourpr.com
647-865-1804