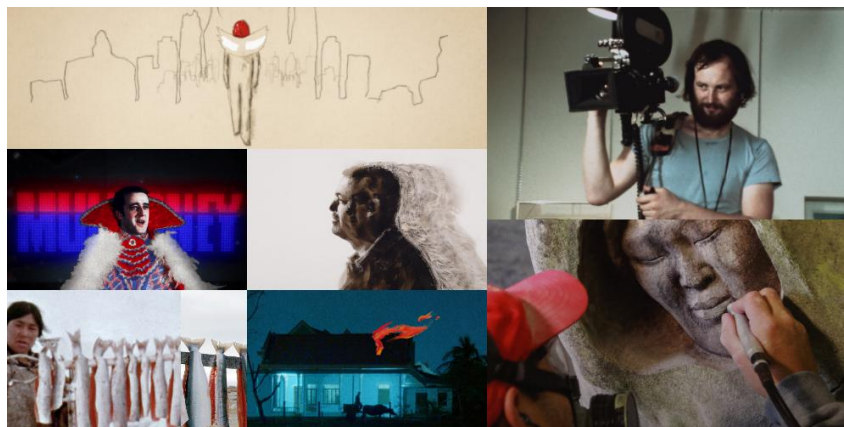


PRESS RELEASE
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Premieres from Atlantic filmmakers Justin Simms, Jennie Williams and Daniel Léger at AIFF
Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax to showcase eight new NFB documentary and animated films



(Images provided by the NFB)

August 12, 2026 – Montreal – National Film Board of Canada (NFB)

The 2026 [Atlantic International Film Festival](#) (AIFF) will showcase **eight compelling new works** from the [National Film Board of Canada](#) (NFB).

Running September 16 to 23 at Halifax's [Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane](#), AIFF will host the **world premieres** of two documentaries by **Newfoundland and Labrador** filmmakers profiling celebrated artists from the province:

- **Justin Simms'** Never Forget Films/NFB feature documentary [Smash & Grab: The Rebel Lens of Mike Jones](#);
- Inuk writer and director **Jennie Williams'** short film [Billy Gauthier: Carving the Future](#).

The festival will present **new NFB animation**, including the **Atlantic debut** of New Brunswick filmmaker **Daniel Léger's** animated short [The Flames of Me](#), a courageous personal portrait created with Montreal visual artist **Steven Spazuk**. The NFB animation lineup at AIFF also includes the **world premiere** of **To Our Future Ancestors** by **Bogdan Anifrani-Fedach** and **Ian Keteku**, and [Piluk](#) by **Elisapie Isaac** and **Marc Séguin**, following its world premiere at the Locarno Film Festival.

From beyond Atlantic Canada, AIFF will offer three more NFB feature documentaries:

- [Ladies and Gentlemen](#), **Brian Mulroney** by Montreal-based, Winnipeg-born Matthew Rankin;
- [Nirilaurta: Let Us Eat](#) by Iqaluit director Malaya Qaunirq Chapman;
- [Still Night, Burning House](#) by Montreal-based, Vietnamese-Canadian filmmaker Carol Nguyen ([Metafilms](#)/[NFB](#)/[Portage Films](#)).

Smash & Grab: The Rebel Lens of Mike Jones and **Billy Gauthier: Carving the Future** will be available online during the festival **exclusively to residents of Atlantic Canada**, from September 23 to 27, at **AIFF Online**.

The NFB and [Telefilm Canada](#) will host an **open house** during the festival on **September 18 from 3 to 5 p.m.** at their shared space at 5475 Spring Garden Road, Suite 201. Come by, say hello and **connect** with NFB and Telefilm Canada representatives, along with members of the local film community. This event is free and open to all.

Reel East Coast Shorts Gala

Billy Gauthier: Carving the Future by Jennie Williams (16 min 33 s) | **WORLD PREMIERE**

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/billy-gauthier-carving-the-future

Sunday, September 20, 7 PM, Theatre 8

- With each stroke of his blade, **acclaimed Inuk carver Billy Gauthier** instills his art with his passion for his home, **Labrador**. ***Billy Gauthier: Carving the Future*** is an **intimate look** at the master sculptor's meticulous process and the inspiration behind one of the most **ambitious creations of his career**: the carving of a **monumental whale skull**.
- Award-winning Inuk writer and director **Jennie Williams** was born and raised in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL. Williams creates films from a Labrador perspective that reflect a deep love of the North and Inuit culture. This is her second film with the NFB, following her multi-award-winning ***Nalujuk Night***, which was named Best Atlantic Short Documentary at AIFF 2021.

The Flames of Me by Daniel Léger (10 min 2 s)

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/the-flames-of-me

Sunday, September 20, 7 PM, Theatre 8

- How do you rebuild your sense of self after being diagnosed with **bipolar disorder**? Through **striking images** created with **fire and soot** by visual artist **Steven Spazuk**, and music by **Daniel Lanois**, director Daniel Léger recounts his journey **through shadow and light** since his diagnosis, in a **courageous self-portrait** that reminds us that no one is defined solely by their **dark side**.
- New Brunswick native **Daniel Léger** is a multidisciplinary artist who describes himself as a poet of the everyday. A filmmaker and singer-songwriter, he has made four films with the NFB and recorded six albums with Productions Koonacky, which earned him a place on the "New Brunswick Francophone Music Wall of Fame" in 2022.

Documentary Program

Smash & Grab: The Rebel Lens of Mike Jones by Justin Simms (82 min) | **WORLD PREMIERE**

A Never Forget Films/National Film Board of Canada co-production in association with [Pearl Productions](#) and [Odd Sock Films](#), produced in association with Telefilm Canada and [PictureNL](#).

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/smash-grab-the-rebel-lens-of-mike-jones

Monday, September 21, 7:00 PM, Theatre 4

- With little more than a 16-mm camera and a bedrock love of place, **renegade filmmaker Mike Jones** broke the trail for **Newfoundland's cultural renaissance**. Through **never-before-seen footage** of the comedic chaos that was **CODCO**, ***Smash & Grab: The Rebel Lens of Mike Jones*** summons this chapter of Canada's hilarious history in a **joyful journey of rediscovery** featuring **Andy Jones, Mary Walsh, Cathy Jones, Rick Mercer** and more.
- **Justin Simms** is a Canadian Screen Award-nominated filmmaker based in St. John's, Newfoundland. His work has screened at festivals worldwide, including TIFF, the Berlin International Film Festival and Hot Docs. A longtime collaborator with the NFB, his credits include ***Hard Light*** (2012), ***Danny*** (2014), ***Hand.Line.Cod*** (2016), ***Becoming Labrador*** (2018) and ***Sons*** (2024).

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brian Mulroney by Matthew Rankin (105 min)

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/ladies-and-gentlemen-brian-mulroney

Saturday, September 19, 8:30 PM, Theatre 5

Wednesday, September 23, 7:45 PM, Theatre 5

- In 1976, **Brian Mulroney** launched a **charm offensive** the likes of which Canada had never seen, **dismantling the political establishment** one dad joke at a time. In this **psychedelic doomscroll** through the mind of a master politician, filmmaker Matthew Rankin charts the **flamboyant rise** of Canada's 18th prime minister.
- **Matthew Rankin** is an acclaimed Montreal-based, Winnipeg-born director whose work has been presented at TIFF, Sundance, SXSW, Annecy, the Berlinale, Cannes Critics' Week and the Directors' Fortnight. His 2024 feature, *Universal Language*, received the Chantal Akerman audience award at Cannes. His previous NFB work includes the multi-award-winning 2017 experimental animated short [The Tesla World Light](#).

Nirilaurta: Let Us Eat by **Malaya Qaunirq Chapman** (52 min 10 s)

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/nirilaurta

Friday, September 18, 5:30 PM, Theatre 5

- With **soaring food prices**, the community of **Taloyoak, Nunavut**, is working to feed its families. **Nirilaurta** tells the story of a community that draws on **Inuit culture, land-based knowledge** and **kinship** to nourish their bodies, spirits and one another.
- **Malaya Qaunirq Chapman** is an Inuit actor, producer and emerging director from Iqaluit whose work bridges storytelling and cultural identity. Most recently seen as "Auntie Eva" in the hit TV show *North of North*, Chapman brings Northern voices to the screen with authenticity and passion.

Still Night, Burning House by **Carol Nguyen** (Metafilms/NFB/Portage Films; 76 min)

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/still-night-burning-house

Sunday, September 20, 2:45 PM, Theatre 3

Tuesday, September 22, 2:45 PM, Theatre 3

- In her deeply personal **debut feature**, award-winning filmmaker Carol Nguyen charts her family's first **reunion** on a **journey to Vietnam**, where together they face **long-unspoken questions** about an **uncle's mysterious death**.
- **Carol Nguyen** is a Montreal-based, Vietnamese-Canadian filmmaker whose films explore themes of cultural identity, family and silence. **Still Night, Burning House** is the follow-up and companion to her 2019 short *No Crying at the Dinner Table*, which was named to Canada's Top Ten, TIFF's annual list of the country's finest films.

Short Film Program

To Our Future Ancestors by **Bogdan Anifrani-Fedach** and **Ian Keteku** (6 min 4 s) | **WORLD PREMIERE**

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/to-our-future-ancestors

Monday, September 21, 6:00 PM, Theatre 5

- A **woman journeys** through **time and terrain**, guided by **ancestral memory**, to find a **mysterious egg** that holds the key to her future. This animated short is a moving allegory about **lineage** and enduring **resilience** across millennia.
- **Bogdan Anifrani-Fedach** is a Montreal-based animation filmmaker and illustrator of Togolese and Ukrainian descent. His films explore identity, the unconscious, disorientation and abstract concepts through the intricate play of light, shadow and pattern.
- **Ian Keteku** is a Ghanaian-Canadian filmmaker, poet and educator whose work blends African storytelling traditions with speculative, diasporic futures. A former World Poetry Slam Champion, Ian has written and directed projects for CBC, PBS, TVO and *Sesame Street*.

Piluk by **Elisapie Isaac** and **Marc Séguin** (10 min 30 s)

Press kit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/piluk

Thursday, September 17, 5:45 PM, Theatre 5

- Born from a **single feather**, young **Piluk** walks on, just as her mother did before her. From the **raw landscapes** of the tundra to a **city of concrete**, will she still be able to hear the **breath of the wind** that witnessed her birth?
- World-renowned artists **Elisapie Isaac** and **Marc Séguin** have spent more than a decade cultivating a friendship rooted in freedom, creativity and a profound bond with the land. Isaac is an Inuk author, singer, songwriter, documentary filmmaker and activist born in Salluit, Nunavik. Séguin is a Quebec multidisciplinary artist whose work explores beauty, fragility and violence in the world.

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