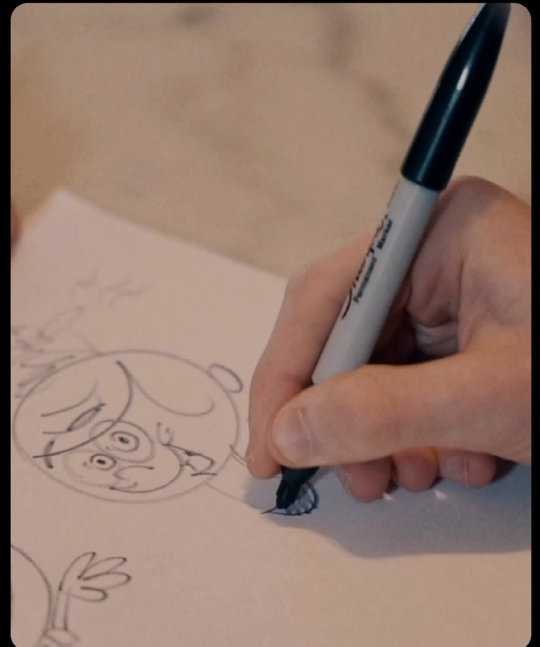


# MVFF EDUCATION



## YOUTH SHORTS



**CURRICULUM GUIDE**  
GRADES: 8-12

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Dear Educators,

Thank you for attending the 46th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival screening of the shorts collection *Youth Works*.

This year, our MVFF Education film selections continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe the films will be powerful and engaging texts to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence, with a particular emphasis on social-emotional learning. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Of the short films in this collection, which story did you find the most original, unique, or inspiring? Why?
2. How did the live action shorts in the program succeed in showcasing a wide range of narratives?
3. How did the animated features allow for new worlds to be explored?
4. What do you think is important about non-fiction filmmaking? How did the documentary shorts showcase powerful stories that are important for instilling a sense of awareness and understanding of a social or cultural issue?
5. In this international cohort of storytellers, what cultural similarities or differences did you notice in the treatment of the subjects of the films or in the film styles?
6. What do you think contributes to a filmmaker's choice of genre to tell their story? Do you think the medium is important for the message?

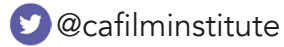
## INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. Write an essay in which you argue the contemporary, cultural, and critical relevance of the stories told on screen by young filmmakers.
2. Using examples and evidence from the films featured in this program, analyze the effectiveness of the different genres and how the style of filmmaking enhanced the subject or the story.

## ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

Follow the California Film Institute on social media



## STANDARDS

### Common Core State Standards ELA-Literacy

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

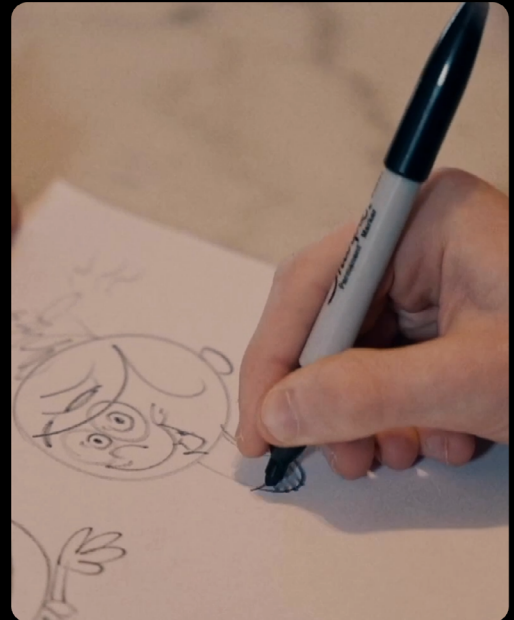
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# YOUTH SHORTS



## ABOUT THE FILMS

This year's collection of peer-reviewed, youth-produced short films showcases an international cohort of storytellers who span genres from animation to documentary, comedy, horror, and drama. It's an inspiring display of emerging young talent from as close to home as San Rafael and San Francisco and as far afield as Australia, Belgium, and Belarus.

**Key Themes:** Filmmaking, Media Studies, Animation, Documentary

## ABOUT THE FILMS

### **Clownin'**

Samantha Jimenez Garcia | US 2023 | 6 min

It's hard out there for a clown—and even harder for those aspiring to become one.

### **David's Doodles**

Michelle Tang | US 2023 | 5 min

An autistic teenage cartoonist shares his work, his creative process, and his greatest weakness: drawing realistically.

### **Daisies**

Ana Testas | US 2023 | 6 min

After weeks secretly watching the beautiful but peculiar sisters who live across the street, Oliver and Thomas decide it's time to make an introduction.

### **Bestiary**

Paul Van der Stegen | France 2023 | 13 min

A trio of mean girls choose a new target for their vicious bullying, sparking intense rivalries and violent impulses that threaten to spin out of control.

### **Bloody River**

Polina Bai | Belarus 2023 | 1 min

A moment of ice-cold horror.

### **Goose Town**

Gaspard Choquet | US 2023 | 9 min

An urban teenager finds solace from his chaotic home life in a fictional cowboy outlaw persona, but risks taking the cosplay one step too far.

### **Mountain Man**

Otis Monteny | Belgium 2023 | 5 min

In this sharp animation, a mountain man battles an antagonist made of stone amidst a harsh winter landscape. Good thing he's a skilled skier.

## ABOUT THE FILMS

### **binary.**

Milan Mackenzie Wood & Maddie Barbiee | US 2023 | 14 min

In this intimate look into the life of a young transgender person inspired by androgynous rock stars, a teen struggles to understand who they really are while facing conflict with those around them.

### **Burnout**

Jonathon Charlie Copson-Pacal | Australia 2023 | 4 min

A clever mix of animation, music, and poetic narration illustrates the childlike creativity that fuels our ideas, and how quickly that can sour if expended in large bursts too fast.

### **My Sisters in the Stars: The Story of Lee Yong-soo**

Ian Kim | US 2023 | 10 min

This powerful documentary chronicles the painful history and current activism of a former Korean "comfort woman" who was abducted at age 14 by the Japanese Army during WWII and forced into sexual slavery.

### **Better Late Than Never**

Estevan Evaristo Garcia | US 2022 | 1 min

In skeletal stop-motion, two cousins at a Day of the Dead celebration impatiently await their Tia Carmen who is late with the food.

### **Room**

Ian Dani Kim | US 2022 | 9 min

Struggling with depression and social anxiety, a teen locks himself in his imaginary room as his life plays out around him. Told through remarkable miniatures, the film follows his post-pandemic journey as he tries to escape from his psychological lockdown.

### **Yesterday, Again**

Noah Shin | US 2022 | 10 min

In CG animation, a former pilot reflects on his past and how his memories shape his choices.





# DURING VIEWING NOTEATCHER

**Directions:**

Use this notecatcher to keep track of the films you will see so you will be able to dig a little deeper later with some interpretive analysis work. After each film, write a one-sentence summary of the story in your own words. Then, use six words to record your personal review of the film.

Title	Director(s)	One Sentence Summary	Six Word Review
Clownin'	Samantha Jimenez Garcia		
David's Doodles	Michelle Tang		
Daisies	Ana Testas		
Bestiary	Paul Van der Stegen		

# DURING VIEWING NOTECATCHER

Title	Director(s)	One Sentence Summary	Six Word Review
Bloody River	Polina Bai		
Goose Town	Gaspard Choquet		
Mountain Man	Otis Monteny		
binary.	Milan Mackenzie Wood & Maddie Barbiee		
Burnout	Jonathon Charlie Copson-Pacal		

# DURING VIEWING NOTECATCHER

Title	Director(s)	One Sentence Summary	Six Word Review
My Sisters in the Stars: The Story of Lee Yong-soo	Ian Kim		
Better Late Than Never	Estevan Evaristo Garcia		
Room	Ian Dani Kim		
Yesterday, Again	Noah Shin		

# AFTER VIEWING RESPONSE QUESTIONS

**Directions:** A unique way of connecting to the stories told in film is to think of them as mirrors or windows. **Mirrors** are those stories that reflect your own identity, world, or a lived experience that is familiar or relatable, even while providing a fresh perspective. **Windows** are those stories that lead us into a new and unfamiliar world beyond our own lived experience. Think about these terms in relation to the films you've just watched and respond to the following prompts using evidence from the film to support your writing.

1. Of the films in this program, which one was the best mirror: a story that reflected your own life, and gave you a way to see your own lived experience from a new perspective? What was relatable about the story and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell it?

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2. Of the films in this program, which one was the best window: a story with insight into a world, identity, or lived experience you were unfamiliar with? What was different about the story and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell it?

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# EXTENSION ACTIVITY

## PERSONAL ESSAY FILMMAKING

### Introduction:

Personal essay films are a great entry point to filmmaking because of the low barriers: You don't need a big crew. You don't need sets, props, or actors. All you need is a basic camera, simple editing software, and the courage to share your own story. And even the camera is not necessary if opting for a found-footage approach. With these few ingredients, the personal essay film becomes a powerful tool for communicating your unique perspective to the world.

In this extension activity, you will learn a basic production approach for creating a 3-minute personal essay film, combining scripted narration with symbolic video imagery to tell a story from your own life.

### MY PLACE | MY STORY

Foundations of Filmmaking and The Personal Essay Film online course

Enroll for Free:

<https://www.cafilmeducationonline.org/courses/foundations-personal-essay>

CAFILM Education's virtual course curriculum for making a personal essay film



# ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

©Tommy Lau

## What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

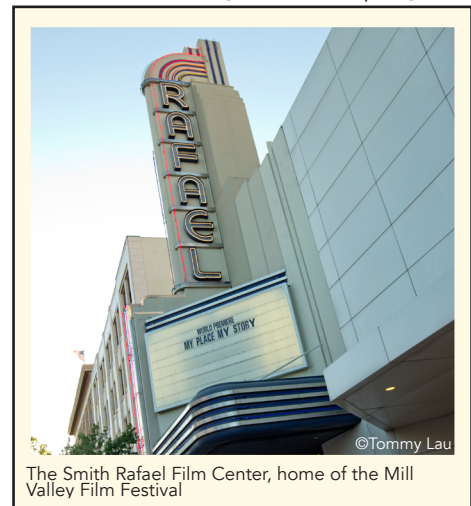
## History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

©Tommy Lau

## Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

## Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway ([www.filmfreeway.com](http://www.filmfreeway.com)) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.