



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Jonathan J. Cavallero,  
Bates College

**Phone:** (207) 755-5937

**Email:** [jcavalle@bates.edu](mailto:jcavalle@bates.edu)

**BATES FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FEATURE-LENGTH  
SELECTIONS FOR 2019 FESTIVAL**

*Free Program Includes Films from Sundance, Cannes, Tribeca, and Berlin  
Festivals*

**LEWISTON, MAINE, October 14, 2019** – The Bates Film Festival has announced its slate of feature-length films for its 2019 festival, scheduled to take place November 6-10. The list includes 5 documentaries and 5 fiction films. The documentaries include: *Always in Season*, *Changing the Game*, *Chasing Portraits*, *The Feeling of Being Watched*, and *Midnight Traveler*. Narrative features include: *Farming*, *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*, *Ms. Purple*, *Tazzeka*, and *Woman at War*.

“It is a thrill for us to bring these nationally- and internationally-recognized films to campus, and screen them in settings that are free and open to the public,” Jonathan Cavallero, BFF founding director and Associate Professor of Rhetoric, Film, and Screen Studies, said, “We are looking forward to the conversations they generate in the Bates, Lewiston/Auburn, and larger Maine community, especially since many of the films have not previously played in the state.”

The festival is an outgrowth of Cavallero’s “Film Festival Studies” course, a seminar in the Rhetoric, Film, and Screen Studies department. “As soon as they enroll in the class, students become board members of the Bates Film Festival,” Cavallero said, “They are involved in every aspect of the festival’s planning and execution from crafting the mission statement and raising funds to selecting films and promoting the event.”

A team of 22 students along with Cavallero served as the festival programming board. They were guided by a student-created mission statement that emphasized social justice. “Our mission statement lays the groundwork for what we want to achieve through the films that we program,” Julia Gutterman, a senior majoring in Rhetoric and German said, “First and foremost, this is the Bates Film Festival and with social justice being such a crucial facet of what Bates College stands for, it felt most appropriate for us to focus on that with our film selections. Film festivals are a wonderful opportunity to provide a platform for stories not typically shared from voices that may have been silenced before and we want to emulate that with what we are screening.”

A brief description of each film follows:

***Always in Season*** premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2019, winning a special jury award for moral urgency. The film investigates the history of lynching in the US and tells the story of Lennon Lacy, a young African American man, whose mysterious death in 2014 was ruled a suicide even though evidence suggests that he may have been lynched. Director Jacqueline Olive is scheduled to be in attendance.

***Changing the Game*** premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in May. It follows four transgender high school athletes who fight for acceptance in the sports that they love. The film currently has a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. One of the athletes, Sarah Rose Huckman, a New Hampshire skier, is scheduled to be in attendance.

***Chasing Portraits*** follows the journey of Bates graduate Elizabeth Rynecki as she tries to track down the artwork of her great-grandfather, Moshe Rynecki, a Polish-Jewish artist who was killed in a concentration camp during World War II. Following his deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto and his murder, Rynecki’s paintings were lost, stolen, or otherwise dispersed. Rynecki, a first-time filmmaker and also the author of a book on the experience, is scheduled to return to Bates to screen the film.

***The Feeling of Being Watched***, a documentary feature supported by Maine’s own Points North Institute, follows filmmaker Assia Boundaoui as she uncovers a history of FBI surveillance in the community where she grew up.

***Midnight Traveler*** premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2019 and won a Special Jury Award for no borders. It follows the harrowing journey of a refugee family that flees persecution in Afghanistan for safety in Europe. Shot entirely on mobile phones, the film has been universally acclaimed, enjoying a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

***Farming***, written and directed by Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje and starring Kate Beckinsale, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and Damson Idris, tells the filmmaker’s incredible true story. As a child, he was “farmed” out to a working-class British family by his Nigerian parents. After experiencing intense hatred, Akinnuoye-Agbaje became a key figure in a white supremacist group in the UK, before changing his ways.

***The Last Black Man in San Francisco*** follows Jimmie Fails as he tries to reclaim a house that his grandfather built in now gentrifying San Francisco. The film stars Fails, Danny Glover, Mike Epps, Finn Whitrock, and Jonathan Majors, and is widely regarded as one of the best fiction films of the year. The film won the best director award in the US Dramatic category at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival as well as a special jury award for creative collaboration.

***Ms. Purple***, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Justin Chon, stars Tiffany Chu as Kasie, a young woman from a Korean-American family who negotiates an array of emotions as her elderly father lives his last days. Teddy Lee offers a strong supporting performance as Kasie's brother Carey.

***Tazzeke*** tells the story of a young Moroccan man, played by Mahdi Belemlih, an aspiring chef who dreams of success in Paris. The film follows his journey as he becomes an undocumented immigrant and chases his dream despite the legal and emotional obstacles that appear in his path.

***Woman at War*** is an Icelandic film that follows Halla, an environmental activist who takes on the aluminum industry in her home country with acts of sabotage. This drama-comedy features a remarkable performance by Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir and an edgy directorial style by Benedikt Erlingsson.

“For me, the planning of the festival has been an experience unlike any other at Bates,” said Andrew Berg, a senior majoring in Economics and minoring in Rhetoric, “The festival has added to my Bates education by allowing me to apply what I have learned in the classroom to concrete, real-world situations. The critical thinking, leadership, and communication skills learned in other classes are consistently exercised in the festival planning process -- something that I find incredibly valuable. “

The Bates Film Festival is scheduled to take place from November 6-10, 2019. The list of short films to be screened at the festival will be released soon.

###

If you would like more information about this topic, please email [jcavalle@bates.edu](mailto:jcavalle@bates.edu). More information can also be found on the BFF website at: [www.bates.edu/bff](http://www.bates.edu/bff)