



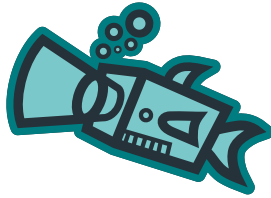
RIVER BEND FILM FESTIVAL

WHERE WATERS MEET

SEPTEMBER 3-5, 2026 | DOWNTOWN GOSHEN, INDIANA



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Welcome

Welcome to the River Bend Film Festival!

RBFF believes in the power of storytelling through independent films to inspire, entertain, challenge assumptions build empathy, and lead to positive social change.

In small communities, opportunities to view or create independent films can be limited. Our festival helps bridge that gap by bringing these stories to the screen and inspiring more support for local filmmaking.

Creatives in Goshen and South Bend have joined together with the support of generous sponsors to welcome independent films and filmmakers to our community. Our joint effort supports storytellers and helps build a meaningful relationship between filmmakers and our region of the world.

We accomplish this task in a variety of ways.

- We invite independent filmmakers from all over the world to submit films of all genres: narrative, documentary, experimental, music video, animation, student, features, and shorts.
- We host featured filmmakers and crews at the festival to engage, educate, network, and inspire.
- We screen stories from across the globe while highlighting the work of regional filmmakers.
- We host screenings, workshops, industry guest presentations, and special events to surprise and entertain audiences.

RBFF has introduced the community to more than a thousand independent films and hundreds of filmmakers since its founding in 2002. Each year, the event gains more notoriety, attracting more industry guests and fans alike.

We're so glad to have you with us celebrating independent filmmaking.

Thank You for Your Support!

Your support is crucial to ensuring that the festival not only survives but thrives! Volunteering is always appreciated, but our volunteer slots fill up quickly. Here are the best ways you can make a meaningful impact:

ATTEND RBFF AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS! #GORBFF

Filmmakers love screening their work to full houses, and your attendance helps generate essential revenue for the festival's future. While you're here, post about it and tag us. We love to see your reviews and reactions, and it helps to get the word out about the filmmakers and their work.

BECOME A SPONSOR!

If your business or organization is looking for representation and visibility, consider sponsorship. We offer five tiers of sponsorship, each with its own set of attractive benefits.

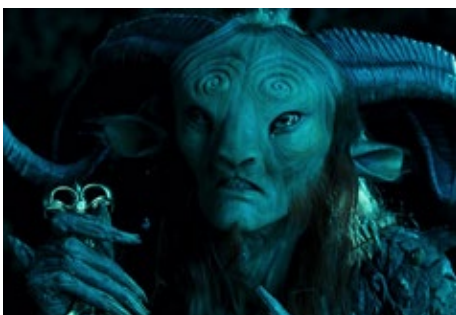
MAKE A DONATION!

Supporting RBFF has never been easier. Your generous donations directly contribute to the growth and success of the festival.



SCAN TO MAKE
A DONATION

Special Guest



Doug Jones

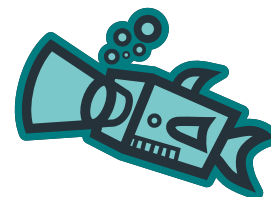
From Haunting creatures to unforgettable characters, Indianapolis native and Ball State graduate Doug Jones (*The Shape of Water*, *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*, *Tank Girl*, *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*) has become a legendary Hollywood fixture by transforming the art of performance beneath the mask. Now, he's stepping into the spotlight with us at the 2026 River Bend Film Festival.

Help us welcome Doug for a special screening of

THE SHAPE OF WATER

Saturday at 6:10 PM, followed by a

LIVE Q&A AND SIGNING





RBFF Team

Kyle Hufford, Board Chair	Jordon Hodges, Program Manager	Ed Ernstes, Script Judge
Tim Richardson, Board Member	Francisco Ramirez, Event Coordinator	Debbie McMillen, Script Judge
Megan Hessel, ad hoc Board Member	Todd Yoder, Secretary/Treasurer	Dave Orvis, Script Judge
Neil King, Festival Director	Genevieve Carreno, Filmmaker Hospitality	Rose Orvis, Script Judge
Joni Earl, House Manager	Abby Gilbert, General Support	Stephen Susco, Script Judge
Amy Worsham, Grant & Volunteer Coordinator	Zoe Bird, Script Judge	Chris Waite, Script Judge
Katie Barnes, Stage Manager	Barbara Deveraux, Script Judge	

Volunteers

Adrienne Laws Landis	Jerry Lapp	Neil King
Alli Linhart	Joe Christophel	Phyllis Stutzman
April Dinhes	Julia Fisher	Richard Worsham
Christine DeLaFuenta	Keith Hiebner	Rob Smead
Delilah Martinez	Kendra Collat	Ron Byler
Emma Eitzen	Linda Christophel	Rose Goyette
Geoff Owens	Liz Richards	Samantha DeLaFuenta
Jake Miller	Mim Shirk	

...and thanks to all of our  volunteers who jumped in to help!

Festival Schedule

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

- 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM **BIKE FEATURE #1 AT GRENCROFT**
Free and open to the public
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM **BIKE FEATURE #2 AT GRENCROFT**
Free and open to the public
- 5:15 PM **Goshen Theater Box Office Opens**
- 7:00 PM (150 MIN) **GOSHEN COLLEGE & BEYOND**
In partnership with the Goshen College Communications Dept. and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County. Discover the next generation of local filmmakers in this showcase of student and youth-created short films.
Ticket Holder Event
- 8:30 PM (60 MIN) **CASH BAR RECEPTION | SOUTH LOBBY**
Ticket Holder Event
- 9:30 PM **Goshen Theater Box Office Closes**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

- 9:00 AM **Goshen Theater Box Office Opens**
- 10:00 AM (115 MIN) **FILM INDIANA**
Q&A following the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 12:25 PM (125 MIN) **NARRATIVE SHORTS BLOCK #1**
Q&A following the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 3:00 PM (115 MIN) **DOCUMENTARY SHORTS BLOCK #1**
Q&A following the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 5:30 (100 MIN) **FAMILY FRIENDLY BLOCK**
Q&A following the screening
Free and open to the public, sponsored by Exhale Sinus
- 7:15 (75 MIN) **KICK-OFF PARTY & SCREENWRITER AWARDS | BALLROOM**
All-Access Pass Holder Event
- 7:15 (75 MIN) **RED CARPET EVENT | BALLROOM**
All-Access Pass Holder Event
- 9:00 PM (100 MIN) **FEATURE FILM: CRYSTAL CROSS**
Q&A after the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 10:00 PM **Goshen Theater Box Office Closes**
- 10:45 (105 MIN) **AFTERPARTY AT COMMON SPIRITS**
All-Access Pass Holder Event

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

- 9:00 AM **Goshen Theater Box Office Opens**
- 9:00 AM (90 MIN) **COFFEE TALK: FILMMAKERS PANEL AT GOSHEN BREWING CO.**
Free and open to the public
- 10:55 AM (115 MIN) **DOCUMENTARY SHORTS BLOCK #2**
Q&A after the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 1:05 PM (140 MIN) **NARRATIVE SHORTS BLOCK #2**
Q&A after the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 3:40 PM (135 MIN) **NARRATIVE SHORTS BLOCK #3**
Q&A after the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 6:10 PM (155 MIN) **FEATURE FILM: THE SHAPE OF WATER**
Q&A after the screening
Ticket Holder Event
- 9:00 PM (60 MIN) **DOUG JONES SIGNING | NORTH LOBBY**
Ticket Holders for The Shape of Water
- 10:00 PM (120 MIN) **FESTIVAL AFTERPARTY AT THE FOLD**
Featuring Vinyl Habits
All-Access Pass Holder Event

Award Winners

Award winners will be announced throughout the weekend following select screenings and officially posted on FilmFreeway and our website after the festival.

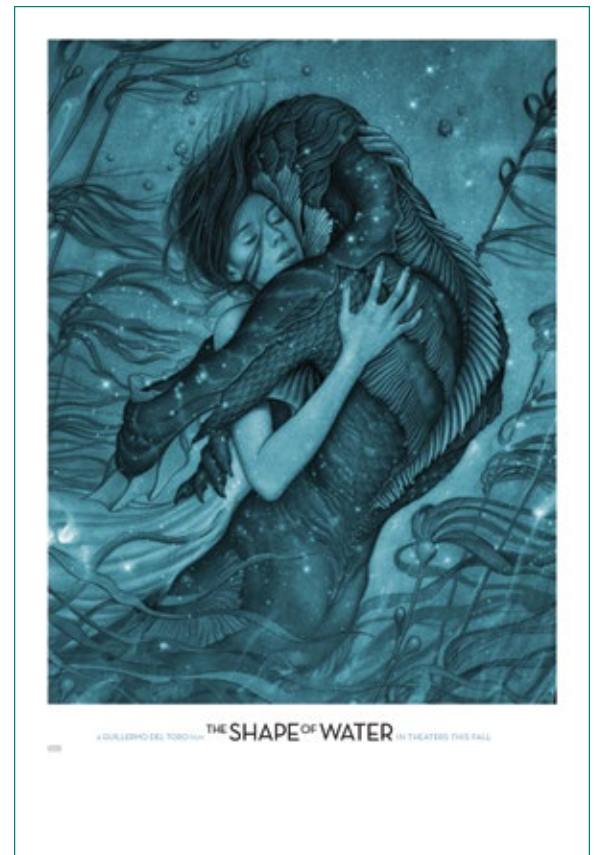
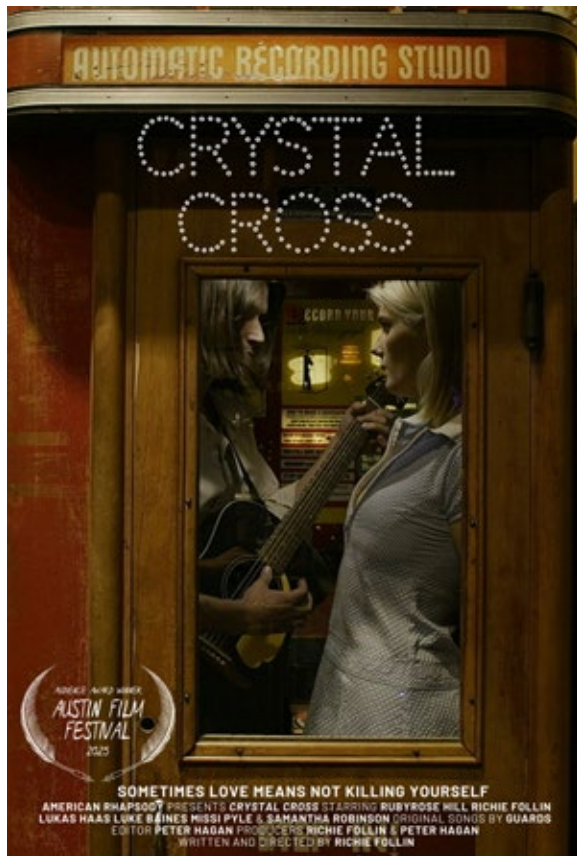


FILMFREEWAY.COM/RIVERBENDFILMFESTIVAL



RIVERBENDFILMFEST.COM

Feature Films



FRIDAY, 9:00 PM

Crystal Cross

Richie James Follin

88 min

Dotty, a Christian singer chasing fame, hitches a ride with James, a grieving father bent on ending his life. On the road, their twisted love story unfolds as two desperate souls find faith, music, and truth on the way to life and death.



SATURDAY, 6:10 PM

The Shape of Water

Followed by Q&A with Doug Jones

Guillermo del Toro

123 min

At a top secret research facility in the 1960s, a lonely janitor forms a unique relationship with an amphibious creature that is being held in captivity.

Narrative Shorts Block #1

FRIDAY, 12:25 PM



Tamara Flores - Chingona

Rupert Höller Mexico 3 min

Tamara Flores moves with fearless determination through the colorful streets of Acatlán, Mexico, the hometown of her mother.



Stand Alone

Soyeon Kim South Korea/California 5 min

Stand Alone is a quiet, personal reflection on what it means to keep moving—alone—through life's uncertainties. Following the meandering path of a snake, the film becomes a mirror for our own inner journeys, where direction is unclear, and every step.



Common Time

Stacey Larkins New York 5 min

As a creeping sense of unreality—akin to the Mandela effect—and a controlling AI begin rewriting her world, a woman hides her profound personal heartbreak behind a mask of normal routines, realizing she must radically rewrite her own future.



8:38

Imole Ladipo Texas 9 min

At 8:38 PM, May wakes up in a room with no memory. With one lifeline call, she must uncover the truth, before it's too late. But is the voice helping her... or hiding something darker? 8 minutes is all she has.



Steakout!

Max Neace California/Indiana 8 min

Sean's going to a steak dinner. Patrick's going to a stakeout. Unfortunately they're both in the same car.



The Drive

David Arrow New Jersey/New York 12 min

It's a warm November day in the early 1960s and Liz has just picked up the kids for her weekly carpool. Little does she know that this will be a drive she'll never forget.



Kaprekar's Constant

Aaron Garcia California 4 min

A poetic equation from a spider wile he convinces a butterfly of the inevitable pattern of life



So Tender a Flame

Carolyne Paschal Ohio 15 min

A grieving carpenter's life is upended when two orphans arrive at his doorstep, setting him on a path of healing.



Colors of My Soul

Taylor Mac Brown International/Oregon 12 min

Built from years of travel across America and beyond, Colors of My Soul is a cinematic, non-narrative journey through light, landscape, motion, and music revealing the world through the deeply personal eye of a cinematographer.



Mamie

Pedro Tamames Spain 15 min

Carla receives a disturbing call from her mother: her grandmother wants to die. As the three women reunite for one last goodbye, old resentments and buried family wounds resurface.



Fine

Meirav Heiman Israel 5 min

This video work captures a structured family mealtime going haywire. Ordinary domestic routines dissolve into a chaotic, spectacular performance as the familiar, fragile space of home completely falls apart.



The Christmas Crew

Vince Dixon, Dillon Stewart & Steele Stewart California 22 min

With Twitch streaming success having gone to his head, Shelley pushed away his best friends. Visited by the ghost of his formal rival on Christmas night, Shelley must rediscover the meaning of the holiday—and friendship—before it's too late.



tête-à-tête

Soyeon Kim South Korea/California 3 min

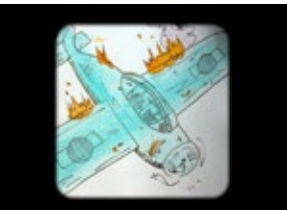
tête-à-tête is a lyrical exploration of human connection where the language of movement and abstract visuals replace words inviting viewers into a dance of emotions that unfolds across a 360-degree canvas.



Rocketship

Iris Almaraz California 11 min

Two neglected sisters set out to retrieve their mentally ill mother from a playground, discovering grit, tenderness, and childhood resilience along the way.



Someplace in Time

Scott Palazzo New York 3 min

Late at night, Billy Pilgrim finds himself marooned within his own memories. While watching old films, he views his world in reverse, as well as the universe defying logic he attaches to it.



Serenity

Frank Tremblay Canada 23 min

A funeral home employee must put her own personal struggles aside to help a grieving woman who just lost her daughter.



An Alternate Pond

C Thomas Lewis Alabama 10 min

A man takes his boat out on a pond. The ritual is familiar: the casting, the waiting, the stillness. But somewhere between the water's surface and the depths below, the present begins to blur into a dream.



Jasmine. Home. Mother.

Ugne Skonsmanaite California 15 min

On a surreal game show where stories are currency, a WOMAN battles a systems that censors her every word, fighting to reclaim the memory of her family, her homeland, and the jasmine that once bloomed there.



Prayer of the Sea

Martin Gerigk Germany 6 min

A composer reflects on a dream that inspired his first string quartet, exploring its message of peaceful acceptance of morality, as he reconnects with its profound meaning decades later.



Girl in the Woods

Claudia Pak New York 9 min

Trapped in a painful cycle of shame and depression, a woman stumbles upon someone she's long been neglecting—her own inner-child



Chet Bueller: Attorney at Law

Dylan Arrow California 14 min

A lawyer enlists the help of his former client to get his dog back from the clutches of his ex-wife.



Reliefs

Juan Manuel Gonzalez Fernandez Mexico 18 min

Carlos is approaching midlife trapped in a personal crisis that has lingered too long. Rosa, his mother, suffers from disabling pain that is only mitigated by the warm waters of hydrotherapy



Hide

Brenden Hubbard Pennsylvania/Texas 16 min

Still reeling from an incredible loss, a father (Shakey Graves) and daughter cling to a bedtime routine keeping them safe in a town where an unfathomable horror visits its inhabitants night after night.

Narrative Shorts Block #3

SATURDAY, 3:40 PM



Man Flesh: Shingy Shoo

Steve Herold & Danielle Hoffman New Jersey 4 min

Can love survive the age old question: CD or Vinyl?



After the Fire

Loïc Billiau France 13 min

In a post-apocalyptic, fractured France, a man reluctantly captures women for a ruthless militia. Until one of them changes everything.



I Guess this is Goodbye

Chad Matthews Texas 11 min

During a getaway to the LBJ Ranch, a couple confronts the end of their marriage and the painful truth that goodbyes are never simple.



Take Me Home

Fabian Martin California 11 min

The estranged relationship between an "always-too-busy" daughter and her mother who suffers from Alzheimer's comes to a head when the mother escapes from her assisted living facility to search for her husband.



Estela, is it You?

Fabian Martin & Victor Martin California 22 min

A grieving woman communicates with her dead husband through her car radio.



Shoot, Shovel and Shut Up

Tran Hoang Calvin Michigan 15 min

The Clifford family hopes to start a new life by selling their dilapidated, impoverished farm. But when the discovery of an endangered bird on the property threatens to collapse the sale, Andy must decide whether to make the bird's presence known.



Seppuku in the Park

Nikko Wisner New York 14 min

After a decade of being pigeonholed as an insurance commercial mascot, an obsessive actor must shed his ego or risk being suffocated by his aspirations for the big screen.



Meeting Your Maker

Gregory JM Kasunich California 18 min

Meeting Your Maker follows Otis, a beloved puppet on a long-running children's show, as he faces an existential crisis just before the series' milestone 300th episode.



The Passenger

Jan Zivkoivc, Carrie Anne Drazerski-Keller & Jonathan Ong Pennsylvania 5 min

A stressed-out assistant manager, already haunted by the ghost of familial ties is confronted by the unknown while driving his father on a final ride.

This film was created for the 48 Hour Film Project - Pittsburgh Oracle Reel Films



Documentary Shorts Block #1

FRIDAY, 3:00 PM



Sincerely, Ric

Jesse Carfield Indiana 58 min

Discovered in a storage unit, the lost archive of beloved dog-show reporter Rick Routledge reveals why he disappeared from the sport and how ambition, hubris, and denial became his undoing.



Mall Video Store

Nick Nummendor & Andrew J. Morgan Michigan 23 min

A candid portrait of a video store in Michigan launched in the streaming era.



Flick: A Fingerboarding Story

Graham Abney Indiana 11 min

An ambitious entrepreneur and other fingerboarders reflect on how the fingerboarding community has impacted their lives as they come together for the very first national fingerboarding championship.



4-Speed on 50

Lauren McGavic & Zach Donnachie Indiana 9 min

We follow Steven Claudill who dreams of bringing Route 66 nostalgia to Route 50. "4 Speed," a gesture to hot rods and momentum, rises amidst the Covid-era to become a roadside hit in Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

Documentary Shorts Block #2

SATURDAY, 10:55 AM



Father

Miles Meyer Nigeria

A Nigerian-American artist honors all good fathers with an uplifting Afrobeats anthem. Shot a decade ago in Goshen and Elkhart, Indiana, this ResQ Records musical project celebrates fatherhood while spotlighting local businesses and community pride.



Pursuit of Perfection-The INDY 500 with Conor Daly

JD Groh Indiana

Pursuit of Perfection follows Conor Daly during the Indianapolis 500 weekend as he gears up to win the most coveted prize in racing. Witness the highs, lows, and sometimes wild moments of what being an IndyCar driver during the Greatest Spectacle in racing.



On The Stream

Grant Michael Indiana

A short documentary about Al White, an Indiana fly fisherman whose time on the river becomes a reflection on life. After a turbulent youth, he finds peace in fly fishing and discovers that the water can be a place of healing.



Dream Horse: A Breeder's Story

Jack Lugar Indiana

Debbie Masuoka has always loved horses, so when her "best friend" horse dies, she decides to venture into horse breeding with the help of her family.



The Good Neighbor

Kate Stapleton Wisconsin

A cowboy doctor has spent a lifetime paying house calls to the Old Order Amish community in Southwestern Wisconsin—but what will they do when he dies? His solution is an inventive use of nurses to serve a unique rural population.



Marlee x

Grant Beachy Ohio

A raw and unfinished journey of a Rust Belt artist as they work to understand their creative industry, their history, and themselves.



FREEHAND: The Muralists of Fort Wayne

Anna Porter Indiana

Mural artists in Fort Wayne, Indiana, use their gifts to create beauty and develop the community in their city.



Broken Shells

Paul Weller Indiana

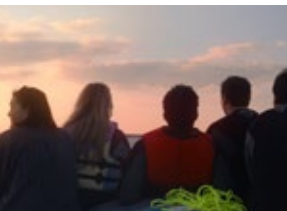
An educator's life is upended by a cruel statistical anomaly: a shared cancer diagnosis with his two best friends. Now, he must navigate the debris of survival to discover the profound purpose behind a life with broken shells.



Winter (Every Color)

Luke Holdom Indiana 4 min

A hospitalized man struggles with regret, but the actions of a good doctor make his reality more palatable.



South Shore

Jack Fauser Indiana 15 min

During their last trip to the lake, David, Michael, and Phillip's annual tradition drives them apart, until a car accident, a raft, and a jetski reunite them.



A Simple Act

B.G. Moore & Lincoln Reed Indiana 2 min

A lonely widower struggles to rekindle hope during the Christmas season



Long Play

Reana Rodgers Indiana 6 min

When a young woman has the closing shift at a record store, things go awry when a strange visitor enters the store with a mysterious record.



The Display

Matija Margetic Indiana 9 min

Linda, the owner of a charming clothing boutique, finds herself at a crossroads in her career. Faced with a challenging decision, she turns to an old friend who might hold the key to her future. As they reconnect, Linda embarks on a journey of self-discovery.



In the Dark

Joe Golc Indiana 7 min

A man takes extreme measures to escape his grief



The Ruko Show

Elijah Junkhouser Indiana

Ruko, a small and shy creature, lives in the miniature town of Rukville. Things go south when his friend Dean creates a questionable machine...



Roses

Corey Tindall Indiana 13 min

Returning to her hometown, Elena must face her estranged brother in the wake of a painful loss.



It Comes From Within

Colin McCorquodale Indiana 8 min

After a bank robbery, a group of criminals converse their next move as they are interrupted by what seems to be a superhero...but is something far worse than they can imagine...



Harold Hojima and The Unwanted Game

Shaun Pope Indiana 5 min

When his incompetent and toxic boss fires him after tearing apart the game he's worked so hard to create, Harold, a lovable 16-bit game developer, reminds audiences that every Game Over is just another chance to press Start on a new adventure.



A Thousand Suns

Majita Margetic Indiana 15 min

An early Croatian teen Luka struggles with homesickness on his first day in the United States, where he unexpectedly bonds with his uncle Dino, as two share similar feelings of grief and longing.



To Answer Your Question

Karl J Niemiec Indiana 4 min

A man has to explain how his boss died while interviewing for a job after spending 15 years in prison.

Family Friendly Block

A Free, Public Event Sponsored by Exhale Sinus

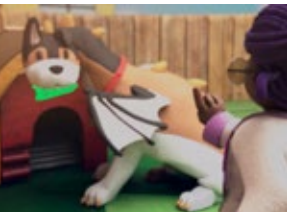
FRIDAY, 5:30 PM



Sunspark

Danny Bourque Washington 11 min

While scavenging for spare parts, a lonely robot discovers someone who desperately needs his help.



Pet Project

Olivia Barr Indiana 4 min

A short film following girl genius, Chantelle, and her loyal dog, Baxter, in which after a scientific mishap occurs in the lab, transforms not only her dog, but their relationship with one another, for better or worse.



The Sun & The Wind

Todd Hemker & Soyeon Kim Minnesota & South Korea 3 min

Two cosmic rivals battle it out, only to realize that even the fiercest power can't beat a small spark of warmth. Based on a classic Aesop's fable.



Used to Be

Matt Webb Tennessee 8 min

Ally struggles daily with her anxiety and panic attacks, fighting back to show herself kindness and grace in the midst of her inner battles with negative self-talk and doubt



Leaves are Weird

Mar Nester Indiana 9 min

Viewers learn about the incredible process of photosynthesis from a professional botanist, a puppet, a leaf, and a song!



SHEISTY

Nathan Jourdain Brown Indiana 8 min

A crew of professional burglars come together to perform a heist for the legendary sword, Excalibur.



Something Pointless

Asa Bailey United Kingdom 14 min

When an unhappy young boy discovers an older man quietly affixing painted eggshells to a disused wall in their neighbourhood, both begin to understand how even the smallest, strangest acts can leave behind something lasting.



Bye-Bye Baby Otter

Nathanael Shoemaker & Katie Louise Indiana 6 min

While teaching her clumsy, young pup the skills for survival, Mama Otter must learn a farm more bittersweet lesson: learning how to let him go as he grows up.



VAQUERA

Nathaniel Jourdain Brown Indiana 8 min

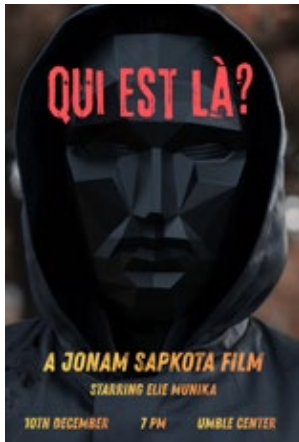
A young cowgirl must change the definition of defender her farm when one of her own flock turn against her.



Max Q

Joel Benjamin Illinois/US Minor Outlying Islands 17 min

A virtual reality short about a deep space survey team that finds their relationships pushed to the brink when they embark upon a dangerous search and rescue mission. Sit in the cockpit of a research shuttle with our main characters and a 360-degree view of the action as they drop from orbit, through the atmosphere, and into the ocean of a newly discovered exoplanet.



Qui Est Là?

Jonam Sapkots Kathmandu, Nepal.

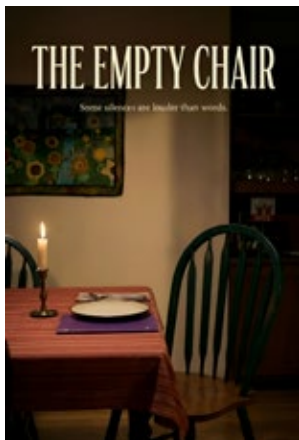
A college student goes to the gym late at night and finds a strange mask in the locker room. After putting it on out of curiosity, the quiet gym begins to feel unsettling and nothing around him seems quite the same.



A Thousand Suns

Matija Margetic Zagreb, Croatia.

After moving to the U.S. and leaving behind his ill mother, a withdrawn teenager Luka bonds with his estranged uncle Dino over shared grief for their loved ones.



The Empty Chair

Lindsey Daniels Goshen, IN.

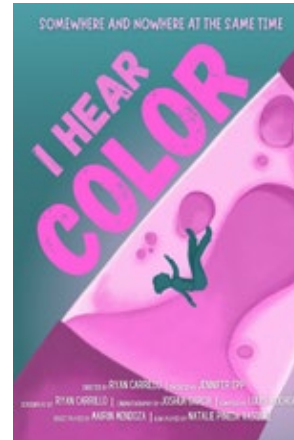
When a college student comes home to find her grieving parents locked in a silent battle over a place setting left for their dead daughter, she must force them to see each other — and her — before the family fractures completely.



Burning

Isabel Massud São Paulo, Brazil

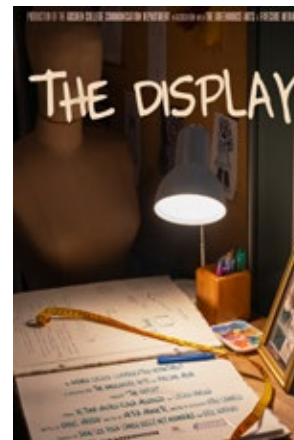
After losing her sister, Victoria still carries the weight of her passing. But when she finds how to make things right, Victoria takes unconventional measures that would change the outcome of her future.



I See Color

Ryan Carrillo Goshen, IN.

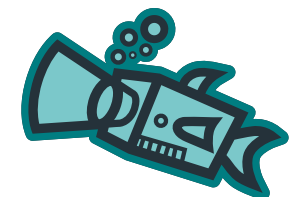
After her mother's death, Violet struggles with grief as her world begins to change color.



The Display

LA May Term Class

Linda, the owner of a charming clothing boutique, finds herself at a crossroads in her career. Faced with a challenging decision, she turns to an old friend who might hold the key to her future. As they reconnect, Linda embarks on a journey of self-discovery and unexpected opportunities, leading her to redefine her path and embrace new possibilities.



Special Thanks



Goshen
Theater



branding | strategy | social | web | blogging | video | photography | events

Marketing
for
Good



**Cortado | Electric Brew - Goshen | Common Spirits
The Fold - Goshen | Friends of the Festival
Goshen Brewing Co. | Jackson Rooftop
Maple Indian Cuisine | MapleLeaf Printing
Menno Travel | Northern Indiana Clay Alliance**



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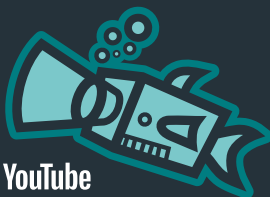


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PARENTAL GUIDANCE & CONTENT DISCLAIMER

The River Bend Film Festival showcases a wide range of independent films from around the world. Some screenings may contain mature themes, strong language, or other content not suitable for all ages. We recommend that parents and guardians review film descriptions before attending with younger viewers. Viewer discretion is advised.

PHOTOSENSITIVITY WARNING

Please note that some films may include flashing lights or strobe effects, which could affect individuals with photosensitive conditions.