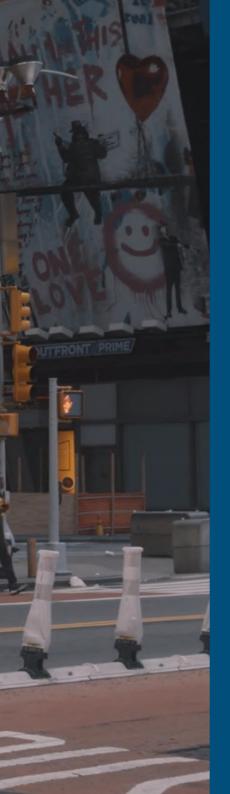
SHORT FOCUS
FILM FESTIVAL
2021



Welcome to **Short Focus Film Festival 2021**, and we are back on the big screen (and online as well)! Getting back to this point has been a sizeable feat to say the very least, but despite all the challenges thrown at us, and with the continued support and belief from our contributors and filmmakers, we have managed to pull through and bring you another fantastic line-up of original stories to your screens.

Due to the success of last year's online exhibition, we decided to bring a dedicated programme for you to stream from the comfort of your own home. And for those itching to get back to seeing films on the big screen, we have two live events as well. It means that we can bring you more great shorts than ever before, almost doubling our tally from last year. From 18-26 September 2021, you will have access to 29 incredibly inventive short films across five programmes, all available from the FRAME LIGHT website.

Each live event is £5 and each online programme is just £2. You can also purchase a Full Access ticket for £10, which will provide entry to both live events and access to all online programmes. We also have FREE bonus content featuring online Q+A sessions with some of the directors and producers of the films. We recommend screen mirroring from your computer or smart device to your TV for optimum viewing, although any device with WiFi and video capabilities will be suitable.

For their continued contributions and support, **FRAME LIGHT** would like to thank the following: Sally Roberts, Sam Briggs, Will Whitehead, Wendy Brooking, Fung Ying Cheng, Natalia Brammen, Alison Girault, Nikola Harris, Antonio Matei, Freddie Deighton, Jordon Briggs, Sarthak Kaul, Paromita Sengupta, Melody Chan, Adam Donald, Hope Smith, Denitsa Yordanova, Alex Hutson, Mia Parnall, Daniel Hess, Sharleen Opia, Natasha Lake, Kiran McCann, NxGen Organics, Polaroid, Simba and Sloane, Cinema For All, Visability Film Festival, FilmFreeway, and Close-Up Cinema.

#### Thank you.

Festival Directors: Aya Ishizuka, Dean Archibald-Smith
Programme Authors: Dean Archibald-Smith, Sally Roberts

Programme Design: Dean Archibald-Smith

**Festival Jury:** Sally Roberts, Natalia Brammen, Wendy Brooking, Fung Ying Cheng, Freddie Deighton, Nikola Harris, Sarthak Kaul, Antonio Matei, Paromita Sengupta, Will Whitehead.

### **FILMS**

#### PROGRAMME ONE c+o

page 5. Like I Said (06:39)

page 6. Rimi (13:05)

page 7. The Fell Runner (03:52)

page 8. Deleve (02:15)

page 9. Photograph (04:16)

page 10. A Knowing of Loss (20:00)

page II. Home Stream (10:56)

page 12. Anna (14:59)

#### PROGRAMME TWO C+0

page 14. Spar (14:35)

page 15. Leo (05:00)

page 16. Soyka (15:28)

page 17. So That Nothing Changes (24:21)

page 18. The Moderator (04:45)

page 19. A Problem (15:00)

page 20. Clown (10:21)

#### PROGRAMME THREE o

page 22. Fargate (18:02)

page 23. Yuluu (02:52)

page 24. Cornflakes Are Rubbish (06:32)

page 25. Who Is Afraid of the Black Man? (13:15)

page 26. Starlings (08:20)

#### PROGRAMME FOUR o

page 28. Outside the Box (09:22)

page 29. From A to Q (18:52)

page 30. Original Sin (17:41)

page 31. Flux (06:46)

page 32. Shallow (10:43)

#### **PROGRAMME FIVE** <sub>o</sub>

page 34. Bohemia (12:32)

page 35. What If? (14:33)

page 36. Red t'Blue (23:00)

page 37. My Actresses (25:00)

### **TICKETS**

#### **PROGRAMME ONE**

Cinema\* - £5
Online - £2

#### **PROGRAMME TWO**

Cinema\* - £5 Online - £2

#### PROGRAMME THREE

Online - €2

#### **PROGRAMME FOUR**

Online - €2

#### **PROGRAMME FIVE**

Online - €2

#### **FULL ACCESS**

All live and online programmes - €10 Online only - €7

Click item(s) to purchase

\* Live programmes run from 2:00 - 4:00 pm at Close-Up Cinema

SHORT FOCUS
FILM FESTIVAL
2021

# PROGRAMME OF A CONTROL OF A CON

1 hr 16 mins



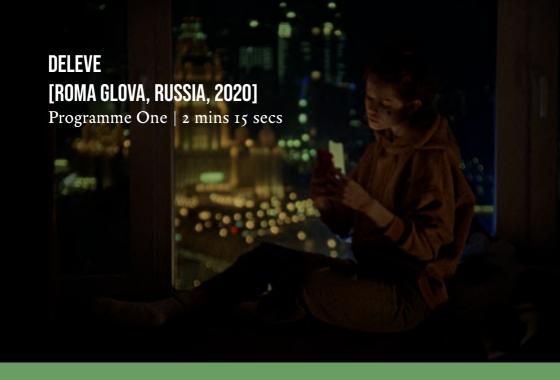
Call centres and masochism are two concepts that have often been united - the endless waiting, the terrible music, and the unbearably scripted friendliness are something many of us have experienced. Joylon White's dark comedy uses this classic combination to throw light onto the increasingly insidious relationship between consumers and corporations in this well-scripted and brilliantly acted short.



Rimi, a housewife stuck in a mundane life of domesticity, finds herself on the threshold of leaving everything behind and embracing liberation, when a desire awakens in her after she encounters the young and attractive Riya. Skating the line between melodrama and poetic realism, *Rimi* is gently revealing in its forensic depiction of a middle-class family.



Somewhere between micro essay and personal interview, *The Fell Runner* sheds light upon one man's relationship with exercise, mental peace, and the stunning beauty of the Cumbrian hills. We follow Calum Tinnion as he runs, climbs and splashes through jaw-dropping landscapes while he explains the appeal of this little known sport. With a dreamy soundtrack and stunning shots achieved with a Super 8 camera and a drone, this short emulates the meditative state the narrator finds through running.



A teenage girl takes a selfie when strange things start happening. Shot in a single room, *Deleve* explores the relationships between social media and our own selfimage. In just over two minutes, this film uses a touch of surrealism to critique our own disconnection with reality.



Produced to promote Keeley Forsyth's EP following on the heels of her well-received debut LP, *Debris*, this promotional short was directed by Ross Downes and shot over one day in Kent on a friend's land with a small crew of Neil Cain on camera and Chris Randack pulling focus. Taking respectful tonal influences from some of the great Eastern European film auteurs, the intention was to create an absurdist narrative steeped in Beckett, Ionesco, and Artaud that complemented the music, whilst committing to a simple and formal visual language in which Forsyth could invent and react with improvised movement.



For a teenager like Max, summer is still that time of year when worries fade away and all that's left is to enjoy the holidays. But life doesn't understand that, and Max will see his summer cut short when he realises that what he had once idealised is perhaps not what it seemed. A Knowing of Loss is a heartbreaking depiction of innocence lost as a young boy enters into the first stages of adolescence.



Lily has been homeless for a year and a half. She uses a phone to tell us her story. *Home Stream* is a short iPhone documentary that exposes the conditions of homelessness in an innovative way (giving agency to people who are homeless themselves), reshaping the viewer's perception of homelessness, debunking common myths and misconceptions.



Anna is the third short film from writer, director, activist, and graphic designer, Dekel Berenson. Living in war-torn Eastern Ukraine, Anna is an ageing single mother who is desperate for a change. Lured by a radio advertisement, she goes to party with a group of American men who are touring the country, searching for love.

## PROGRAMME TWO

1 hr 29 mins



Anthony Vander's dramatic short, *Spar*, tells the story of Isabel, who is training for the day in a London gym while her usual facilities are under construction. Entering the building, she is met with the aggressive sound of of sweat-drenched men pounding their mitts into taped up punching bags. It is an immediately intimidating situation, exacerbated by three men ogling her from a distance. Through sheer determination and sporting prowess, Isobel must redress the gender imbalance and age-old sexist preconceptions.



In *Leo*, the second film from award-winning director, Moein Rooholamini, two small boys remind us of the importance of football in even the most difficult situations. This short makes the most of a young commentator's explosive performance, ingenious use of props, and intelligent camerawork. In five minutes, *Leo* manages to be engaging, amusing and moving.



Anna is a bird that has flown the nest. A Belarusian immigrant finding her way in the bustling metropolis of New York City, her resolve to carve out her position in the art world is proving futile. We witness the isolation and cold public remonstrations that deface her wide-eyed optimism as she searches for independence and identity in the land of opportunity. *Soyka* is ultimately a reflection on the collective experience of countless young women who have endeavoured to escape a life of austerity and suppression.



After a long absence, Marie decides to return to her family home to introduce the partner with whom she is expecting a child. What is intended as a warm family gathering, slowly becomes an embittered and fraught encounter as deeper familial truths are forced to the surface.



Ade is a social media content moderator on the verge of a promotion, but he's traumatised by the violent videos he views each day. He is forced to keep his deteriorating psyche under wraps when he is called into an evaluation. The situation quickly deteriorates when HR confronts him, and the harrowing content ingrained in his memory begins to distort his reality.



A seemingly normal afternoon in the city gets disrupted, as passers-by are temporarily unhinged from their daily business by a man lying on the pavement. Who has time for a stranger when there are films to see, keys to find, and arguments to be had? Director, Tomasz Wolski, makes excellent use of the short film format to succinctly and effectively highlight our connections, as well as their absence, with those around us.



"It's a serious business being funny." A seasoned professional clown on the eve of retirement reflects on a lifetime of adoration and rejection, humour and heartbreak. *Clown* is a short, stylised documentary, delving into the hidden customs and quirks of the clowning community to tell the story of a life spent trying to make people laugh.

### PROGRAMME THREE

49 mins 13 secs



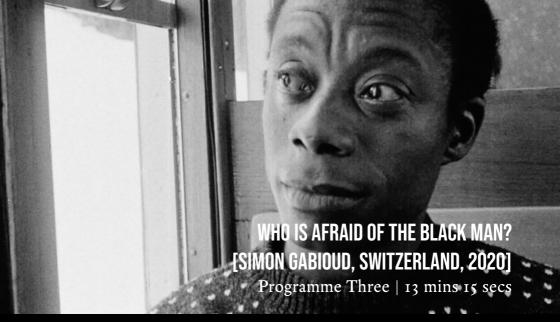
The debut comedy short film from writer and director Sally Cancello, *Fargate* is a story about two women on a mission. One is Kelsey, a single mother to a baby boy, who needs to deal with her overdraft payments at the bank. The other is Maureen, Kelsey's mother, who believes her daughter is about to carry out a bank robbery. Maureen enlists the help of family members to track down Kelsey, and the adventure begins.



Through a beautifully stripped-back, hand-drawn animation style, *Yuluu* looks back at the story of a young woman stranded in Beirut during the abrupt start of the 2006 war. This is a raw and haunting account of a life disrupted by political and military conflict.



From the depths of UK's first Covid-19 lockdown comes *Cornflakes Are Rubbish*, an experimental short film from co-directors, Charlotte Nind and Jacob Bacon. Visually arresting and disturbing in equal measure, this film transforms the domestic space into a canvas for nightmares, which is perhaps unsurprising given the circumstances in which it was created.



"No black man had ever set foot in this tiny swiss village before I came." In the winter of 1951, the African-American writer James Baldwin spent a few months in Leukerbad, in the heart of the Valais mountains, where his lover came from. There he experienced the strangeness of being black, with the white locals equally abusive, terrified, and intrigued. Seventy years later, in a world shaken by the murder of George Floyd and in a Switzerland undermined by racial discrimination, James Baldwin's words resonate with an odd relevance.



Simon Allen, with his directorial debut, *Starlings*, offers a realist depiction of isolation and loneliness. The short film follows Jack, an elderly man who struggles with impaired hearing. He leads a secluded and monotonous life ruled by routine and habit, finding purpose in taking care of his beloved vegetable patch. When a flock of starlings ruin his garden, disturbing his carefully crafted little haven, he will stop at nothing until peace is restored.

## PROGRAMME FOUR

1 hr 02 mins



An office worker has an unforgettable day after discovering an intriguing box in the store cupboard. Fulfilling the midweek fantasies of many, he shirks his dreary duties and discovers a new world in this wonderfully simple wordless comedy. *Outside The Box* was shot in the summer of 2019 with a small crew doing its absolute best to avoid people and traffic in order to capture the perfect atmosphere for the film.



From A to Q is the story of 22 year-old, Alex, who wakes suddenly from a dream in which she becomes intimate with Kayla. The only problem is Kayla happens to be Alex's best friend, and Alex has never been with a girl before... She now has to reconcile her new-found feelings, whilst also trying not to mess up the friendship she's had since she was five.



Adamo is a writer who is failing to publish his own novel, and Cassandra is a talented painter. Their relationship is in crisis as is their sense of identity. Adamo suspects a betrayal, and jealousy prevents him from writing. Cassandra seems distant, an ambitious woman hiding a secret. In an emotional waltz made of silences and sharp words, dreams and fantasies, jealousy and anger, Adamo and Cassandra find themselves in search of one another and their lost love.



Flux is an experimental short film and music video by UK artist DFTCNT. Flux delves into a human mind drowning in external chaos and inner crisis. Lost in a surreal, consumer-driven world where clickbait tribalism and identity games rule, the characters are left to vent a collective wave of simmering rage and turmoil.



Put aside your prejudices - Barry and Larry are here and they're digging deep into society. Paul Ashton's short, sharp comedy plays with the audience's expectations as these two mysterious men traverse the hot topics of today, from gender pronouns to pro-football puppies. Well-written and brilliantly acted, *Shallow* is as unsettling and it is endearing.

# 

1 hr 14 mins



Paul is a young, bohemian artist living in Los Angeles. Waking up at the venue after a modest performance of one of his shows, he meets a young woman who invites him back to her apartment. He doesn't know it yet but this meeting will lead to a series of misfortunate events. *Bohemia* is the latest short film from Samuel Kaperski whose psychological post-war drama, *Hollow Tooth*, was a big hit at last year's festival.



Elena suffers from agoraphobia, but is forced to step out of her comfort zone as household supplies become scarce after a wave of panic buying in the midst of the Covid-19 lockdown. At every step, Elena's agoraphobia reinforces her sense of mortality but, as anxiety spreads around her like wildfire, she finally sees a way out.



Red t'Blue is a documentary short, focusing on how and why the ex-mining town constituency of Mansfield swung from the Labour party, which had held it for a consecutive 94 years, to the Conservative party in the 2017 snap-election, which had not claimed the seat since its creation in 1885.



Isa and Fanfan are two actresses hovering in the eclectic limbo between cinema and television. Both women in their 50s, getting cast in an industry heavily weighted against them is no mean feat. In this charming and affectionate short, director, Anna Mezencev, gives an insight into the people behind the profession as the colourful duo reflect upon the joys and sorrows of an uncommon daily life.

