



CAAMFest 2023 Spotlights Programming With Bay Area Connections

SAN FRANCISCO, April 11, 2023 - CAAMFest 2023 is thrilled to return for its 41st year with expanded programming, taking place **May 11-21, 2023**. The fully in-person festival will be held across key cultural locations in the Bay Area, providing a joyful experience through film, music, and food. Below you will find all films and programming with local ties to the Bay Area.

FEATURES

B-Side: For Taylor, directed by Christina YR Lim

Narrative Feature

Sunday, May 21, 3:00 PM | New Parkway Theater

A year after the sudden death of her mother, Taylor, a 14-year-old Korean American adoptee becomes increasingly desperate to find her birth parents, especially as her relationship with her father grows more estranged. But when a Korean family unexpectedly immigrates to her all-white neighborhood, she befriends a new maternal figure who connects her to her roots and helps her uncover the truth about her birth family's whereabouts.

- **Producer David Liu has previously lived in Berkeley and is an alum of UC Berkeley.**

*screener available

Last Summer Of Nathan Lee, directed by Quentin Lee

World Premiere - Narrative Feature

Sunday, May 14, 6:30 PM | Castro Theatre

18-year-old Nathan Lee finds out he has brain cancer and asks his best friend Dash to document his remaining life which he vows to live with passion.

- **Director Quentin Lee has previously lived in Berkeley and is an alum of UC Berkeley.**

*screener available

Big Fight In Little Chinatown, directed by Karen Cho

Documentary Feature

Saturday, May 13th, 2:30 PM | Great Star Theater

Big Fight in Little Chinatown is a story of community resistance and resilience. Set against the backdrop of the COVID pandemic and an unprecedented rise in anti-Asian racism, the documentary takes us into the lives of residents, businesses, and community organizers whose neighborhoods are facing active erasure.

- **The film highlights San Francisco's Chinatown.**

*screener available

Crossings, directed by Deann Borshay Liem

Documentary Feature

Saturday, May 13, 5:30 PM | Great Star Theater

In *Crossings*, a group of international women peacemakers sets out on a risky journey across the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, calling for an end to a 70-year war that has divided the Korean peninsula and its people. The groundbreaking mission of Women Cross DMZ is captured in an intimate cinema vérité style, framed with historic newsreels of the Korean War and punctuated with dramatic contemporary news coverage.

- **Director Deann Borshay Liem lives in Berkeley.**

*screener available

Fanny: The Right To Rock, directed by Bobbi Jo Hart

Documentary

Friday, May 19, 5:30 PM | SFMOMA Phyllis Wattis Theater

Fanny: The Right to Rock is about a band formed by two Filipina American sisters from the Central Valley in the 1960s. The film explores Fanny's uphill battle to complete and release their new album, with the fascinating herstory of the band's improbable journey during their 70s heyday. *This screening is made possible with support from Mona Lisa Yuchengco.* Expected guests: Filmmaker Bobbi Jo Hart and Fanny members Jean Millington, June Millington, and Brie Darling.

- **Jean Millington, Fanny bassist, grew up in Sacramento and lives in Davis today.**
- **Jean, June, and Brie co-founded the high school garage band The Svelts in Sacramento and played gigs all over the Bay Area in the 1960s.**
- **Filmed in Davis and Sacramento.**

*screener available

Jamojaya, directed by Justin Chon

Narrative Feature

Saturday, May 13, 9:00 PM | Castro Theatre

A father-son relationship is put to the test when an up-and-coming rapper at the crossroads of his career decides to let go of his manager, who is also his father. This decision forces them to confront the past and figure out what they want of each other

- **Producer Joseph Dang has family in Milpitas**

*screener available

Jeanette Lee Vs., directed by Ursula Liang

Documentary Feature

Sunday, May 14, 12 PM | Great Star Theater

Jeanette Lee Vs. is an intimate portrait about the life and career of the world's most famous pool player, Jeanette Lee—also known as The Black Widow. Rising to fame and dominance in the 90's the Korean American phenomenon took the world by storm. Her sex appeal, fierce play, and media savvy made her a household name at a time when strong women and Asian Americans were often marginalized. Directed by Ursula Liang (*Down a Dark Stairwell*) and produced by Cora Atkinson (*Summer of Soul*), this documentary takes fans and newcomers behind the glitz and glam and shows Jeanette unfiltered and candid about her journey through fame, trauma, family, and pool.

- **Director Ursula Liang lives in Oakland**

*screener available

Nurse Unseen, directed by Michele Josue

Documentary Feature

Friday, May 12, 7:15 PM | Great Star Theater

Nurse Unseen explores the little-known history and humanity of the unsung Filipino nurses risking their lives on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic while facing a resurgence of anti-Asian hate in the streets.

- **Film Subject Dr. Catherine Ceniza Choy lives in Berkeley.**
- **Parts of the documentary were filmed in Berkeley**

*screener available

This Time, directed by Sebastien Tobler

Narrative Feature

Sunday, May 21, 6:30 PM | New Parkway Theater

Long lost high school sweethearts, Laela and Colin, unexpectedly reunite in Los Angeles 23 years after being separated during the 1998 riots in Jakarta, where they were torn apart without notice, unable to say goodbye, and flown away to different countries. When they see one another again, the temptation to reconnect with a kindred spirit is irresistible despite Laela's looming deadline and Colin's impending move to Pennsylvania. As the star-crossed lovers examine the choices that led them down their separate paths and back again, Laela and Colin must decide if they're still in love or just nostalgic for the past.

- **Director Sebastien Tobler has family in Sunnyside.**
- **Executive Producer Allen Chai lives in Castro Valley.**
- **Producer Theresa Chiu has family in Hayes Valley.**

Unconditional, directed by Richard Lui

Documentary Feature

Saturday, May 13, 2 PM | San Francisco Public Library (Main)

Unconditional is a revealing film about the arc of mental health that challenges 50+ million families each year. It is a film that shows us how mental health is not what we think it is. It is not only the polar extremes of what the media often describes it to be. It comes in hundreds of shades and in places we do not notice. Filmed over seven years, three families open up their lives as they explore what a hidden wound is and how to talk about it. *This screening of Unconditional is made possible with support from AARP.*

- **Director, Producer Richard Lui is from the Richmond District.**
- **Producer Alex Lo is based in Cupertino.**
- **The filming took place in Central Richmond San Francisco and Ocean Beach.**

*screener available

Unseen, directed by Set Hernandez

Documentary Feature

Sunday, May 14, 12:15 PM | Roxie Theater

Most people dream of a better future. Pedro, an aspiring social worker, is no different. But as a blind, undocumented immigrant, Pedro faces political restrictions to obtain his college degree, secure a job in his field, and support his family. As he finally graduates, uncertainty looms over Pedro. What starts as a journey to provide mental health care for his community ultimately transforms into Pedro's path toward his own healing. Through experimental cinematography and sound, "unseen" reimagines the accessibility of cinema, while exploring the intersections of immigration, disability, and mental health.

- **Editor Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros is based in Alameda.**
- **Sound Designer IMRSV Post-Production House is based in Berkeley.**

*screener available

Wisdom Gone Wild, directed by Rea Tajiri

Documentary Feature

Sunday, May 14, 3:30 PM | Castro Theatre

Wisdom Gone Wild is a reflection on elder consciousness, the power of listening, and the healing empathy of being heard. Filmmaker Rea Tajiri partners with her mother, Rose Noda, to create a film about entering the world of a person living with dementia. Together, they nurture their connection through listening, art, and song.

- **Main Subject Rose Noda Tajiri lived in San Francisco and attended the California School of Beauty Culture.**

*screener available

SHORTS

Autopilot, directed by Jennifer Zhang

World Premiere - Part of the Shorts Program: REALITY BITES

Thursday, May 18, 8:30 PM | Roxie Theater

A lone pilot on a homebound space vessel finds herself trapped in a waking nightmare when her holographic "virtual companion" begins to defy his own programming and exhibit an aggressive form of sentience.

- **Writer/Director/Producer Jennifer Zhang's family lives in San Jose.**

*screener available

Benkyodo: The Last Manju Shop In J-Town, directed by Tadashi Nakamura & Akira Boch

World Premiere - Part of the Shorts Program: JAPANTOWN

Friday, May 12, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM | Japanese Cultural Center of Northern California in Japantown (JCCCNC)

Rick and Bobby Okamura, the current owners of the Benkyodo mochi shop, established in 1906, make a difficult decision to close their family business. The Japanese pastry shop, a landmark for Japanese/Asian Americans in the Bay Area, is one of two mochi shops currently open in the San Francisco Bay Area. Currently 115 years old, the business has endured the anti-Asian laws of the early 20th century, Japanese internment, Redevelopment of the 1960s and continues to weather San Francisco's notoriously high costs of living. The unsurmountable economic pressure, coupled with the two brother's desire to preserve their Japanese heritage, family business, and community space, create an age-old conflict many children of diaspora face--between the laborious preservation of culture or the submission to the economic forces of racial capitalism.

- **Filming took place in Japantown.**

*screener available

Brown Elephant, directed by Fawzia Mirza

Part of the Shorts Program: DESI BLOCK PARTY

Saturday, May 13, 9:15 PM | Roxie Theater

A young Muslim woman and her family discuss a peacekeeping solution for their overly aggressive 'White Elephant' gift exchange.

- **Writer and Lead Actor Kausar Mohammed is based in East San Jose.**

*screener available

Dos Bros Force, directed by Jyothi Kalyan Sura

Part of the Shorts Program: DESI BLOCK PARTY

Saturday, May 13, 9:15 PM | Roxie Theater

With money tight, a video game-obsessed little girl and her loving older brother endeavor to find a way to go to the arcade for her birthday. This film was inspired by parts of Director Jyothi Kalyan Sura's life in the Bay Area and reflects the lives of many South Asian communities in the Bay.

- **Lead Actor Anisha Ruth Arlagadda lives in San Jose.**

*screener available

Kapwa Texas, directed by PJ Raval

Part of the Shorts Program: COMMUNITY CARES

Saturday, May 13, 11:00 AM | San Francisco Public Library (Main)

As the world grapples with an emerging global pandemic, three young Filipino women forge unexpected connections with their families and discover themselves in the process. A self-documented time capsule during turbulent times, *Kapwa Texas* captures the unbreakable bond between Filipino families and communities.

- **Executive Producer Theresa Navarro lives in Union City.**

*screener available

Lahi, directed by Reina Bonta

Part of the Shorts Program: THE MOURNING AFTER

Saturday, May 20, 9:00 PM | Roxie Theater

While visiting O'ahu to sell her late Grandmother's house, a young Filipina American woman must confront her disconnection from her cultural identity.

- **Director Reina Bonta was raised in Alameda.**
- **Co-Writer, Producer Angelique Axelrode was raised in Orinda.**
- **The film is inspired by Director Reina Bonta's grandmother who lived in Alameda for over 20 years.**

*screener available

Let Me Take You Home, directed by Evelyn Hang Yin

Part of the Rea Tajiri Retrospective program: HISTORY & MEMORY

Saturday, May 20, 12:00 PM | SFMOMA Phyllis Wattis Theater

In a dreamscape of projections, Ah Yeh recounts the tale of how he came to this country and the hardships he faced.

- **Let Me Take You Home is set in the period of the Gold Rush, where Chinese immigrants came to the United States through the San Francisco port before departing to the Central Valley.**

*screener available

Luv, Me, directed by Nicolas Jara & Yen Dinh

Part of the Shorts Program: OUT/HERE

Sunday, May 14, 12:30 PM | Castro Theatre

A K-drama obsessed young woman and her asexual friend butt heads over the importance of romantic love.

- **Director, Lead Actor - Yen Dinh lives in Hayward.**
- **Lead Actor Quayne Mariah Vu lives in San Jose.**
- **Associate Producer Anh Le lives in San Jose.**
- **LUV, ME was filmed in Petaluma.**

*screener available

Many Moons, directed by Chisato Hughes

World Premiere - Part of the Rea Tajiri Retrospective program: HISTORY & MEMORY

Saturday, May 20, 12:00 PM | SFMOMA Phyllis Wattis Theater

In the county which once boasted it was “free of Chinamen,” Chinese community members search for those who may have survived Humboldt’s 1885 expulsion and 60 years of enforced exclusion– the only known survivor being Charlie Moon, whose descendants are Native tribal members. Framed by the words of a ghost, this hybrid documentary/fiction film alternates between the observational search for ‘the others’ with the appearance of ghosts as the past demands recognition in the present.

- **Director/Producer Chisato Hughes lives in Oakland.**
- **Dramaturge Pia Sazani lives in Oakland.**

*screener available

Nâi Nai & Wài Pó, directed by Sean Wang

Part of the Shorts Program: COMPANION PASS

Thursday, May 18, 5:30 PM | Roxie Theater

A filmmaker turns a loving lens on his two grandmothers and their special bond as they dance, stretch, and fart their sorrows away.

- **Director/Producer Sean Wang lives in Fremont.**
- **NÂI NAI & WÀI PÓ was filmed in Fremont.**

*screener available

Open And Shut, directed by Kulap Vilaysack

Part of the Shorts Program: REALITY BITES

Thursday, May 18, 8:30 PM | Roxie Theater

Struggling with isolation and family pressures, Jen becomes preoccupied with her mysterious neighbor.

- **Executive Producer, Writer Emily Heller grew up in Alameda before moving to Fillmore after college.**

*screener available

Overdue, directed by Abigail Pañares

World Premiere - Part of the Shorts Program: MAMA TRAUMA

Sunday, May 14, 3:15 PM | Roxie Theater

Left to her own devices a week before her c-section, a first-time mother begins to spiral when confronted with the impending change.

- **Director Abigail Pañares lives in Outer Richmond.**
- **Producer Justin Nguyễn lives in Western Addition.**
- **Lead actor Patricia Nguyễn lives in Emeryville.**

- **Lead actor William Tran lives in Emeryville.**
- **Actor Edwin Jacobs lives in Noe Valley.**
- **Overdue was filmed in Outer Richmond.**

*screener available

Perry And A Pause, directed by Tess Paras

Part of the Shorts Program: COMPANION PASS

Thursday, May 18, 5:30 PM | Roxie Theater

A divorced gig worker gets a new lease on life when she is sent to assist a free-spirited elder who lives life by her own rules.

- **Director Tess Paras' family lives in Santa Clara and Fremont.**

*screener available

Pō'ele Wai (As The Water Darkens), directed by Tiare Ribeaux

Part of the Pacific Shorts Program made possible with support from Pacific Islanders in Communications

Sunday, May 21, 12:00 PM | New Parkway Theater

Told through visual metaphor and poetic homage, a weaver experiences a transformation when she realizes her drinking water has been poisoned by petroleum leaking into O'ahu's watersheds.

- **Director, Writer Tiare Ribeaux lives in Oakland.**
- **Producer, Co-Writer Sebastian Galasso lives in Oakland.**
- **Producer, Director of Photography Jody Stillwater lives in the Mission District.**

*screener available

Reality Dad, directed by Charlene deGuzman

Part of the Shorts Program: REALITY BITES

Thursday, May 18, 8:30 PM | Roxie Theater

After a single father is eliminated from America's most famous reality dating show, he must explain to his young daughter why he didn't bring home a "new mommy" like he promised.

- **Director, Actor Charlene deGuzman was born and raised in San Jose, in the Berryessa neighborhood.**
- **Actor Ava Gulick lives in Union City.**

*screener available

Tequila Sunset, directed by Jinsui Song

Part of the Shorts Program: REALITY BITES

Thursday, May 18, 8:30 PM | Roxie Theater

Overworked and lonely, an old woman caring for her ailing husband attempts to take a much needed break from reality.

- **Cinematographer Jacqueline Chan lives in the Sunset District.**

*screener available

The Van, directed by Bernard Badion

Part of the Shorts Program: THE MOURNING AFTER

Saturday, May 20, 9:00 PM | Roxie Theater

A man has trouble moving his stubborn father unless a broken-down van comes with him.

- **Director Bernard Badion lives in Sunnyvale.**

*screener available

FOOD

EVER-GREEN VIETNAMESE WITH ANDREA NGUYEN AND SOLEIL HO,

Saturday, May 13, 12:00 PM | The Great Star Theater

Although many people think of Vietnamese cooking as beefy pho and meat-filled sandwiches, traditional Vietnamese cooking has always involved a lot of plants and seafood, and a little meat. In *Ever-Green Vietnamese*, James Beard Award-winning author, Andrea Nguyen, details how cooks in her home country draw on their natural resourcefulness and Buddhist traditions to showcase a wide array of herbs and vegetables in flavorful, comforting recipes. Nguyen will be in conversation with former *San Francisco Chronicle* restaurant critic Soleil Ho followed by a book signing with Eastwind Books.

- **Andrea Nguyen lives in Santa Cruz.**
- **Soleil Ho lives in San Francisco.**

FUTURIST FLAVORS: ABACÁ x ANIMAE

Tuesday, May 16, 5:00 PM / 8:00 PM | Abacá

CAAMFest welcomes acclaimed chef, Tara Monsod, of San Diego's Animae for a one night only dine-in collaboration with James Beard-nominated Chef Francis Ang of Abacá. *This program is made possible in part by Dave Liu and Lauren Wu.*

- **Chef Francis Ang lives in Daly City.**
- **Abacá is located on Fisherman's Wharf.**

CALABASH AND COMMUNITY

Wednesday, May 17, 6:00 PM | Calabash, Oakland

Chef Nigel Jones (Formerly Kingston 11) and Chef Hanif Sadr (Komaaj) joined forces to open Calabash in December 2022. Like its namesake, Calabash - restaurant, market, and bar - is a place of global innovation; a home for creative local chefs and producers to bring the uniqueness of their culture and flavors to The Town. Join us for a vibrant evening filled with delicious Jamaican and Iranian bites and a conversation with Chef Nigel and Chef Hanif about how they're transforming the way we gather.

- **Calabash is located in Oakland.**
- **Chef Nigel Jones lives in Oakland.**
- **Chef Hanif Sadr lives in Oakland.**

A SOY STORY

Thursday, May 18, 7:00 PM | KQED

Join modern-day stewards of our ancestors' seeds, local chefs, and eaters as we journey through the culinary landscape of the soybean in all its forms in a night of storytelling and tastings. Second Generation Seeds reminds us that seeds carry memories and histories transported through time and space. This event is a collaboration with [KQED](#), featuring Kristyn Leach of Namu Farm, Steve Joo of Joodooboo, and more.

- **Kristyn Leach lives in Davis.**
- **Chef Steve Joo is based in Oakland.**

MUSIC

SNEAK PEEK: LARRY THE MUSICAL

Sunday, May 14, 6:00 PM | The Great Star Theater

Set to premiere at the Brava Theater in October 2023, CAAMFest audiences will get a sneak peek of LARRY THE MUSICAL, based on the book, *Journey for Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong* by Dr. Dawn Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta. Join members of the production team as they take us through the journey of bringing to life the story of Filipino labor organizer, Larry Itliong, who fought for dignity in the fields and united for the first time with the Mexican community in Delano, California.

- **Executive Producer, Writer Gayle Romasanta is based in Stockton**
- **Executive Producer, Composer Bryan Pangilinan is based in Potrero Hill, San Francisco**
- **Music Director, Co-Composer Sean Kana is based in Daly City, San Francisco**
- **Lead Producer Melvign Badiola is based in Oakland**
- **Director of Film & Photography Christopher Sotelo is based in Cole Valley, San Francisco**
- **Folk Arts Consultant Herna Cruz-Louie is based in Oakland**

DIRECTIONS IN SOUND: FANNY AND FRIENDS

Saturday, May 20, 1:00 PM | Yerba Buena Gardens

Directions in Sound, CAAMFest's fresh music showcase, returns once more to the SOMA Pilipinas Filipino Heritage District for a renewed collaboration with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. Tearing up the stage will be the legendary Fanny, the first all-female rock band – co-founded by two Filipina American sisters – to release an LP with a major record label in the US. They will be joined by Ruby Ibarra and Peaboo and the Catz. *Directions in Sound is made possible with support from AARP.*

- **Jean Millington, Fanny bassist, grew up in Sacramento and lives in Davis today.**
- **June Millington, Fanny lead guitarist, grew up in Sacramento.**
- **Brie Darling, Fanny drummer, grew up in Folsom.**
- **Jean, June, and Brie co-founded the high school garage band The Svelts in Sacramento and played gigs all over the Bay area in the 1960s.**

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TICKET INFORMATION

General admission tickets for screenings and panels range from complementary to \$15. Special presentations and events range from \$20 - \$135. Tickets for students, seniors, and people with disabilities are at reduced prices for most events. For more information, please visit the box ticketing information page at: [CAAMFest.com](https://www.caamfest.com)

CAAMFest COVID-19 POLICY

Masks are recommended for indoor events and venues and when not eating or drinking. This policy may change depending on each host venue's policy as well as any changing local and federal guidelines.

About CAAMFest

Celebrating its 41st year in 2023, CAAMFest is the nation's leading showcase for Asian and Asian American talent in film, food, music, and arts. CAAMFest takes place May 11-21, 2023. Check CAAMFest.com for more programming and ticketing details.

About CAAM

For over 40 years, CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) has been dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. As a nonprofit organization, CAAM funds, produces, distributes, and exhibits works in film, television, and digital media. For more information about CAAM, please visit www.CAAMedia.org.