

**NITEHAWK  
SHORTS  
FESTIVAL**



**APRIL 8 - 12, 2026**

# W E L C O M E L E T T E R

Thank you for joining us for the 2026 Nitehawk  
Shorts Festival!

We have quite an array of films this year, with several  
festival alumni that we're happy to continue to support,  
plus many new filmmakers in the mix. Many locally made  
films are in the mix, and as usual our devotion to female  
and non-binary creators is on display.

Typically we see a common thread in submissions, but this  
year proved an exception, with touchstones such as  
coming-of-age and relationship strife all wholly original in  
their styles and execution. We can't wait to hear reactions  
from the audience as we sit in the dark with you.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

**CRISTINA CACIOPPO**

**DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING  
NITEHAWK CINEMA**

# FESTIVAL MISSION

Since 2013, the mission of the Nitehawk Shorts Festival has been to highlight exceptional short-form film and videos by artists and filmmakers. The Festival's main slate programming features a range of filmmakers, from emerging film school students to Academy Award nominees, in curated screenings that prioritize conversations between the films over categorical listings. The Nitehawk Shorts Festival provides an inclusive platform for filmmakers to encourage an engagement with new audiences and to establish a dialogue with the New York film community. Programs consist of short films in all forms (animation, documentary, narrative, non-narrative, artist films, music videos, genre) by local, national, and international filmmakers.

The Nitehawk Shorts Festival is held exclusively at Nitehawk Cinema, New York's premiere dine-in theater that pairs exemplary first-run and repertory film programming along with table-side food and beverage service.





#NHShorts26

# O P E N I N G N I T E

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH \ 7:00PM \ NITEHAWK  
P R O S P E C T P A R K**

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For this year's Opening Nite program we have shorts from several festival alumni and other first time filmmakers. With stories grappling with devotion and desire takes on relationships that are sometimes hilarious, other times haunting, each demonstrates a form of connection, whether it spans time or falls flat, or is complicated by outside forces.

**Q&A moderated by Cristina Cacioppo,  
Nitehawk Cinema**

# MUSIC DRIVEN

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH \ 6:45PM \ NITEHAWK  
WILLIAMSBURG

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Once again the Music Driven program for the 2026 edition delivers on all levels. A remarkably varied and explosive selection of music videos which let us know the new golden age only grows stronger and ups the ante with each passing year. From beat based tracks to meditative songs which thrive on subtle tonality it's an immersive and sincere selection of music. Bookended with two of the most well thought out and produced documentaries you'll be taken on quite a journey this year.

**Q&A moderated by John Woods,  
Nitehawk Cinema**



# M I D N I T E

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH \ 9:30PM \ NITEHAWK  
W I L L I A M S B U R G**

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Where can you find a creepy baby, jocks in soft-core, and a persistent spot of mold that just won't quit? Look no further than this year's Midnite program. We are thrilled that the Midnite program is returning with a new selection of scary, surreal, silly, and sexy shorts, all screening at a reasonably late hour. This year's lineup is packed with premieres that are guaranteed to leave you on the edge of your seat. We invite you to join us for this wild ride—if you dare.

**Q&A moderated by Desmond Thorne,  
Nitehawk Cinema**



# MATINEE ONE

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH \ 11:00AM \ NITEHAWK  
WILLIAMSBURG**

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This year's Matinee One program is another section within the festival that offers a close examination of our most intimate connections, ranging from parent-child relationships and lost loves to new flings and close friendships. These short films invite us to reflect on the various relationships in our own lives as we kick off the morning's screenings.

**Q&A moderated by Caryn Coleman,  
The Future of Film is Female**

# MATINEE TWO

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH \ 11:00AM \ NITEHAWK  
PROSPECT PARK**

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The 2026 edition of the Matinee Two program presents very distinctly human stories told in a variety of ways. People searching for connections, survival, advancement, and closure amongst other deeply felt things. Many different worlds and environments are explored and it's fascinating to watch this group of individuals navigate and move through the real and imagined worlds they dwell in.

**Q&A moderated by Shay Filmore,  
Film Programmer**



11<sup>th</sup>

# N O B U D G E

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH \ 11:00AM \ NITEHAWK  
P R O S P E C T P A R K

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NoBudge is excited to take part in the 2026 Nitehawk Shorts Festival to co-present a program of new work from a group of emerging indie filmmakers. The lineup features eight short films, a broad sampling of off-the-cuff documentaries, heavy dramas, goofy comedies, and a taste of animation. Each has its own self-assured style and tone, packing a punch working with limited budgets and resources.

**Q&A moderated by Kentucker Audley,  
NoBudge**



12<sup>th</sup>

# CLOSING NITE

**SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH \ 7:00PM \ NITEHAWK  
PROSPECT PARK**

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We wrap up this year's festival with a strong program of pieces that find people revealing themselves in myriad ways, realizing things may not go according to plan. Some characters seek resolution only to find it is out of their grasp, while others perform versions of themselves that they can't sustain.

**Q&A moderated by Cristina Cacioppo,  
Nitehawk Cinema**

# OPENING NITE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH | 7:00PM



## MAIN MAN

JOHN DE MENIL | 10 MIN

Abe and Erwin are two minor guys connected across history by their feelings of having peaked.



## CRAB DIANE

RYAN MCCOWN | 17 MIN

A young woman, tired of working at a seaside diner, reaches out to cosmic forces.



## GOING DARK (WORLD PREMIERE)

KATE DIRIENZI | 10 MIN

A catholic school girl competes with her drama teacher for her friend's affection.



## HOLEY

BAVLY SOLIMAN | 20 MIN

While visiting New York from Egypt, Christian-Orthodox Mark decides to lose his virginity, confronting cultural and religious restrictions.



## LEAF PEEPER

VITO A. ROWLANDS | 2 MIN

A frantic frolic in Fall foliage. A stop-motion autumn adventure. A symphony in blaze orange.



## EVEN IN THE LIGHT (HASTA EN LA LUZ)

(NYC PREMIERE)

VALERIA A. AVINA | 15 MIN

This visceral psychological drama follows Sofia, a tender and imaginative child navigating a fractured home filled with silence, secrets, and shadows.

# OPENING NITE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH | 7:00PM



## **DOCTOR DEATH GRIP (NYC PREMIERE)**

AMBER SCHAEFER | 20 MIN

An autofiction writer's viral essay about her six-fingered boyfriend's porn addiction tests a couple's already deteriorating relationship.

# MUSIC DRIVEN

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH | 6:45 PM



## "JOY, JOY!" / VALERIE JUNE

TAYLOR WASHINGTON | 3 MIN

Tennessee roots rock fave Valerie June's music video for her uplifting new single.



## TESSITURA

LYDIA CORNETT, BRIT FRYER | 18 MIN

Blending character portraits with historical context, *Tessitura* explores how voice and gender are continuously reformulated in opera..



## "SANDRAIL SILHOUETTE" / AVALON EMERSON & THE CHARM

FELIX GEEN, HAYDEN MARTIN | 4 MIN

From Avalon Emerson's debut album *& the Charm*, "Sandrail Silhouette" represents scales of time through it's collage-like nature.



## "EURO-COUNTRY" / CMAT

EILIS DOHERTY | 5 MIN

Set in the Omni shopping centre in North Dublin, CMAT sings about her experiences of the economic crash in Ireland.



## "CUT&REWIND" / SAY SHE SHE

ALYSSA BONI | 3 MIN

"Cut&Rewind" is both a playful celebration of feminine grit and a graphic exploration of the New York City grind.



## I QUIT. (WORLD PREMIERE)

GORDY DE ST. JEOR | 2 MIN

A janitor is forced to clean up after a clown.

# MUSIC DRIVEN

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH | 6:45 PM



**LÜCY - X (WORLD PREMIERE)**  
HAOYAN OF AMERICA | 9 MIN

Techno-mysticism, the occult, and reincarnation converge when a beekeeper believes her deceased lover has returned to her in the form of a bee.



**"WELL HENRY" / THE SCREAMING MULTITUDES**  
ELLEN CALLAGHAN | 5 MIN

Set under the blazing sun of a desert wasteland, "Well Henry" finds desperate cowboys in search of water and a place to let their tired hobby horsies rest.



**LETHE MUSIC VIDEO (WORLD PREMIERE)**  
MIKE ENRIGHT | 4 MIN

An animated journey through Hades' river of oblivion. Rebirth awaits at the end of tunnel's light.



**"NOT BROKEN" / TÕTH**  
DANIEL FOX | 4 MIN

"Not Broken" off Tõth's third solo album *And The Voice Said* offers a sonic hug to his inner child.



**"SLOWLY" / TRU PIERONE**  
BRIAN HERRERA GLADSTONE | 4 MIN

Slowly is about the space between desire and expectation, a meditation on light, composition, and the vulnerability in unguarded performance.



**"KIMBERLY" / MZZTR (WORLD PREMIERE)**  
MR. MAN | 4 MIN

"Kimberly" is the debut single from NYC based band MZZTR, a masked horde emerging from the sexy bowels of NYC, who channel rage, seduction and absurdity.

# MUSIC DRIVEN

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH | 6:45 PM



## OH YEAH!

NICK CANFIELD | 17 MIN

The story of the iconic electronic music duo Yello and the phenomenon of their 80s hit song.

# MIDNITE

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH | 9:30 PM



## BENNY'S SECOND BIRTHDAY

R.J. GLASS | 12 MIN

When strangers arrive at her toddler's birthday party, an expectant mother confronts her son's unexpected popularity.



## I BEG YOUR PARDON

JOHN W. LUSTIG | 4 MIN

A man commits a terrible crime and the consequences are not what you'd expect.



## BIRTH OF THE HIVE QUEEN

TEMPEST CREATION | 8 MIN

Amina, a trans escort, gives birth from her anus.



## COLLECTORS (NYC PREMIERE)

SUSAN C. O'BRIEN | 14 MIN

When an unexpected visitor arrives at a blind man's doorstep posing as a saleswoman, the night takes a fatal turn as he soon discovers her true intentions.



## JOCK (WORLD PREMIERE)

MAX WREN | 5 MIN

College football player Harry battles his desires as he tries to comfort his friend. Shot on VHS and inspired by soft-core gay porn.



## WATER SPORTS

WHAMMY ALCAZAREN | 19 MIN

Sad boys Jelson and Ipe harness the power of their love in an attempt to survive a world devastated by climate change.

# M I D N I T E

THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH | 9:30 PM



**ROT. (WORLD PREMIERE)**  
WES ANDRE GOODRICH | 6 MIN

Over the course of a sleepless night, a father is consumed by the fear that the mold in his apartment is not only sentient, but has dark designs on his family.



**BAD DAD (NYC PREMIERE)**  
CHISA HUTCHINSON | 11 MIN

When a stranger shows up at Warren's door to escape the heat, it soon becomes clear he is definitely not waiting for a tow.



**CATHEXIS (WORLD PREMIERE)**  
LIBE BARER | 5 MIN

A young woman who has found herself under investigation for murder begins liking being thought about by the female detective tasked with catching the killer.



**BIRTH CONTROLLED**  
ISA FRAGA-ABAZA | 5 MIN

A visceral response to a lifetime of medical neglect, patriarchal control, and the systemic failure to treat vaginas as vital organs essential to well-being.

# MATINEE ONE

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH | 11:00AM



## **SECOND BEDROOM (NYC PREMIERE)**

BEATRIX CHU | 12 MIN

Over the course of a day, 12-year-old Agnes goes apartment hunting in Brooklyn with her dad Peter, and struggles to come to terms with her parents' separation.



## **LET'S FLY AWAY**

GRIFFIN BOUCHER | 13 MIN

Two inseparable friends wrestle with fear, excitement and uncertainty as they face the possibility of leaving their small town behind for something larger.



## **SUBJECT OF DESIRE**

BENETT HOLGERSON | 10 MIN

Moses, a seasonal worker on Fire Island, navigates the tempestuous waters of pleasure and connection in a journey to become an artist seen on their own terms.



## **A GRIEVING HEART (NYC PREMIERE)**

WENDY CONG ZHAO | 12 MIN

An immigrant woman examines her past in the wake of her American ex-boyfriend's death.



## **IS GANG STALKING REAL (NYC PREMIERE)**

THEODORE COLLATOS | 16 MIN

A raw, unflinching look at a friendship haunted by meth-fueled paranoia, and fragile moments of clarity behind bars.



## **CUB**

SOFIA RUBIN | 9 MIN

A tween MMA fighter grapples with her suffocating sports bra and her domineering dad, pushing her changing body to surreal limits during her toughest match yet.

# MATINEE ONE

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH | 11:00AM



## **IN THE FLESH**

EMILY FRANCES KAPLAN | 15 MIN

The perfect housewife has a secret: She's obsessed with expensive meat, and the local butcher who knows how to handle it.



## **AWIT NATIN (OUR SONG)**

PACQUI PASCUAL | 10 MIN

When their father dies during their mother's hospitalization, a Filipino family goes to extreme and absurd lengths to hide the truth.

# MATINEETWO

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH | 11:00AM



## **ALPHABET BACKWARDS (NYC PREMIERE)**

TARYN WARD | 12 MIN

A wandering porn addict attempts to write the next great American novel. After many lonely miles traveled, inspiration is found in an unlikely friendship.



## **I LOVE YOU SO MUCH BUT YOU ARE SO DIFFICULT**

BERENICÉ BRINO | 13 MIN

Through a collaborative art performance and open dialogue, a daughter-mother duo explore their tense and nuanced relationship.



## **KASEY CARTOON**

VERONICA KEDAR | 10 MIN

Since diversity is dead in media, Veronica the animator decides to kill off Kasey, one of her diverse cartoons. But Kasey is not going anywhere without a fight.



## **DEAR SHOP GIRL**

NIRA BURSTEIN | 14 MIN

A quirky vintage shop owner, who's behind on her rent, contends with a new customer searching for the outfit he'll wear when he kills himself.



## **BENT (WORLD PREMIERE)**

SAM B. JONES | 17 MIN

A boy from a family of demolition derby drivers tries to prove himself by competing in his first derby, but finds the validation he's seeking is elusive.



## **GOOD NEIGHBORS CARE (NYC PREMIERE)**

KATE E. HINSHAW | 3 MIN

A chemical company in North Carolina promises environmental stewardship, while neighbors suffer due to the ecological disaster they caused.

# MATINEE TWO

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH | 11:00AM



## NUKE

KELSEA BAUMAN-MURPHY | 13 MIN

A struggling comedian forces herself onto the lineup of New York's most coveted comedy showcase, using the fallout of a nuclear missile alert to her advantage.



## WHOLESOME (WORLD PREMIERE)

KIMMY CAMPBELL | 12 MIN

After accidentally breaking into their favorite deli when it closes without notice, two friends attempt to recreate the home they once found.

# N O B U D G E

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH | 11:00AM



## LOTION (WORLD PREMIERE)

BRI RODEBAUGH | 10 MIN

On a quiet night amidst mid-80s suburban bliss, privileged couple Sherri and Mel suddenly face the biggest challenge they've ever encountered.



## ASS MAGIC (WORLD PREMIERE)

AELFIE OUDGHIRI | 16 MIN

A day in the life of magician Jack Grady, *America's Got Talent's* fastest loser.



## CLEAN SLATE

EMILY MAY JAMPEL | 9 MIN

Two Asian nonbinary best friends and actors must make some sacrifices when they go up for the same breakout role.



## BLUE (NYC PREMIERE)

ETHAN ROMAINE | 5 MIN

Josh runs into an old friend.



## CAFE CAFE (WORLD PREMIERE)

DYLAN WAITE | 14 MIN

A lonely Queens professional seeks answers at his local diner after a strange piece of takeout leaves him haunted by sinister visions.



## BUFFALO 10 (NYC PREMIERE)

TRISHA PICKELHAUPT | 12 MIN

A glamorous trans woman aching for the simplicity of her upbringing moves back to Buffalo, where she tumbles into a dalliance at the local bowling alley.

# N O B U D G E

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH | 11:00AM



## **DON'T GET ME WRONG**

COREY SHERMAN | 10 MIN

A young man becomes obsessed with a mysterious device that allows him to hear every bad thing anyone has ever said about him behind his back.



## **THE CONTESTANT**

PATRICK XAVIER BRESNAN | 14 MIN

In 1996 a young prankster entered a contest hosted by David Hasselhof to visit the set of Baywatch, the highest rated TV show in the world at that time.

# CLOSING NITE

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH | 7:00 PM



## **GOLDEN YEARS (NYC PREMIERE)**

JARED MEYER | 17 MIN

A newly retired man has his friendship tested when he is involved in a horrifying accident.



## **LESBIAN JESUS IS PREGNANT WITH VIBES**

REID POPE | 12 MIN

"Lesbian Jesus" (a volatile 19-year-old pop phenom) confronts a career-defining decision during a seven minute interview before her next tour stop.



## **LONG'S LONG LOST & MINI MART**

JULIAN DOAN | 18 MIN

In the seedy back rooms of a Little Saigon convenience store, a young customer seeking closure reanimates his dead father for one last conversation.



## **LAST KNIFE (NYC PREMIERE)**

ALLIE VITI | 15 MIN

Shelby is one knife set sale away from the vacation of her dreams, if her fantasies don't get in the way.



## **INTERLOPER (NYC PREMIERE)**

KERRY O'NEILL | 16 MIN

A troubled 16 year old girl disturbs the harmony in her new foster home.



## **ALL YOU CAN EAT (WORLD PREMIERE)**

KELLY ANN SCHIESSWOHL | 14 MIN

A small town crumbles as it prepares for the annual pie-eating contest.

# PARTY INFO

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OPENING NITE | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH | 9:00-11:00PM

NITEHAWK PROSPECT PARK  
TREES LOUNGE BAR

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CLOSING NITE | AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH | 9:00-11:00PM

NITEHAWK PROSPECT PARK  
TREES LOUNGE BAR

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FEATURING DRINKS FROM:



singani63



SUPPORTING SPONSORS:

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# PRIZES

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## FESTIVAL JURY WINNER

- Post-production sound services from **HEARD CITY** (\$16k value)
- Boris FX Bundle (featuring Boris FX Sapphire, Boris FX Continuum, Boris FX Mocha Pro) one-year subscription from **BORIS FX** (\$1195 value)
- One year Artist Membership from the **VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS**, New York (\$200 value)

## MIDNITE PRIZE

- Boris FX Bundle (featuring Boris FX Sapphire, Boris FX Continuum, Boris FX Mocha Pro) one-year subscription from **BORIS FX** (\$1195 value)
- One year Artist Membership from the **VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS**, New York (\$200 value)

## MUSIC DRIVEN PRIZE

- Prize package featuring GS1000x headphones and phono cartridge from GRADO (\$1195 value)
- One year Artist Membership from the **VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS**, New York (\$200 value)

## FUTURE OF FILM IS FEMALE PRIZE

- \$250 + inclusion in the FOFIF screening series

## FIRST TIME FILMMAKER AWARD

- Training certificate good towards any in-person educational workshops or classes (\$500 value) + rental certificate good towards any equipment rental package (\$500 value) from **ABELCINE**
- \$500 awarded to a selected debut short film by a filmmaker screening in the 2025 Nitehawk Shorts Festival.
- One year Artist Membership from the **VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS**, New York (\$200 value)

## AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARDS

- Pro-Accounts from **VIMEO** (eligible during Opening Nite, Midnite, Music Driven, Matinee One, Matinee Two, No Budge and Closing Nite screenings - \$199 value each).

**PRIZE SPONSORS:**

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THE FUTURE  
OF FILM  
IS FEMALE

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**JURY:**

CRISTINA CACIOPPO, NITEHAWK

JOHN WOODS, NITEHAWK

DESMOND THORNE, NITEHAWK

**MAIN JURY:**

BEN DAVID GRABINSKI

JEREMY TRUONG

RACHEL WOLTER

**MUSIC DRIVEN:**

TED LEO

**MIDNITE:**

PAYTON MCCARTY-SIMAS

**FESTIVAL BUMPER CREATED BY:**

KRISTIAN MERCADO

**SUBMISSIONS SCREENER:**

NINA RIDDEL

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COMMITTED TO GENDER PARITY, WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE  
THAT 60% OF THE FILMS IN OUR FESTIVAL ARE DIRECTED BY  
WOMEN AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE. **REPRESENTATION MATTERS!**



136 METROPOLITAN AVENUE  
WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN

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188 PROSPECT PARK WEST  
PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN

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