

Rza, Misty Copeland, Yvonne Orji & More At Urbanworld Film Festival 2023 (Photos)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 03: (L-R) RZA, Karen McMullen and Gerald Barclay attend the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival – Day 3 at AMC 34th Street on November 03, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Dominik Bindl/Getty Images)

Rza, Misty Copeland, Yvonne Orji, and more appeared at the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival. The Wu-Tang Clan member was the ambassador for the festival and the co-director of *A Wu-Tang Experience: Live From Red Rocks Amphitheatre* with Gerald Barclay. The event is on day three of the five-day event. Various industry people have attended, including Nelson George, Misty Copeland, and Leyla Fayyaz, the producers of the film *Flower*. Benny Boom, who directed *A Love Letter To Hip-Hop*, also attended the festival in New York City. Orji made her debut as a director with the feature *JAMAAL*. dream hampton's *Freshwater* and the experimental film *Paradise* from

Terrace Martin & Alex Isley will also be presented at the festival. *American Fiction* director Cord Jefferson received the Visionary Award on opening night. Gina Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood attended the screening and Q&A for *Genius: MLK/X*, which they executive-produced. The festival is in its 27th year and is the nation's largest multicultural competitive film festival. This year, the festival screened 73 official selections, 7 spotlight screenings, 3 spotlight conversations, and featured 5 Urbanworld Innovation sessions and 4 original screenplay finalists. The winners have been announced.



American Fiction director Cord Jefferson accepts the Visionary Award



American Fiction Opening Night



Urbanworld Founder Stacy Spikes (left) joins Gano Grills, The RZA, Thembisa Mshaka, and Gerald Barclay for a quick photo opp

following the 'Wu-Tang Experience' Q&A



Leyla Fayyaz, Nelson George, and Misty Copeland



Benny Boom and Rza



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 03: (L-R) Marija Juliette Abney, Derrick A. King, and Yvonne Orji attend the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival – Day 3 at AMC 34th Street on November 03, 2023, in New York City. (Photo by Dominik Bindl/Getty Images)



Screening Of A Love Letter To Hip Hop



The team from Maxine's Baby, Erick Sasso (producer), Asante White (producer), Gelila Bekele (director), Jasmine K. White (producer), Armani Ortiz (director), and Karen McMullen (Urbanworld Festival Director)



Retired Astronaut Leland Melvin (Executive Producer, 'The Space Race')



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 04: (L-R) Raphael Jackson Jr., Gina Prince-Bythewood, Reggie Rock Bythewood, and Damione Macedon attend day 4 of the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival at AMC 34th Street on November 04, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by John Nacion/Getty Images)

2023 Winners

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE (U.S.) – Frybread Face and Me – Directed by Billy Luther

THE JURY:

Darcy Heusel – VP of Audience Engagement and Impact, NEON

Efuru Flowers – Founder and CEO, Flourishing Films

Sue Ellen Chitnuya – Filmmaker and Academy Member

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE (WORLD) – Sira – Directed by Apolline Traoré

Honorable Mention: Inky Pinky Ponky – Directed by Damon

Fepulea'i and Ramon TeWake

THE JURY:

Darcy Heusel – VP of Audience Engagement and Impact, NEON

Efuru Flowers – Founder and CEO, Flourishing Films

Sue Ellen Chitnuya – Filmmaker and Academy Member

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – Brief Tender Light – Directed by Arthur Musah; Presented by ESPN Films

THE JURY:

Jackie Glover – Emmy-Winning Executive Producer

Leslie Fields-Cruz – Executive Director, Black Public Media

Sarah Eshaghian – Coordinator, HBO

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT – Slice – Directed by Zaire Love

Honorable Mention – Things Long Left Unsaid – Directed by Antonia Thornton

THE JURY:

Jackie Glover – Executive Producer

Leslie Fields-Cruz – Executive Director, Black Public Media

Sarah Eshaghian – Coordinator, HBO

BEST YOUNG CREATOR – The Old Young Crow – Directed by Liam LoPinto

Honorable Mention – Shallots and Garlic – Directed by Andrea Nirmala Widjajanto

Presented by The Walt Disney Studios

THE JURY:

Ramona Wright – Founder and CEO, WrightOne Media Group

Phillip Domfeh – Senior Manager, Disney+ Launchpad

Julian Newman – Founder and CEO, Culture Creative

Will Schnable – Programs Manager Equity and Inclusion, Warner Bros. Discovery

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT (U.S.) – Spaceship – Directed by Jorge G. Camarena

Honorable Mention – Jerome – Directed by Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz; Death and Ramen – Directed by Tiger Ji

THE JURY:

Amanda Ross – Director, TV Programming DEI, NBCUniversal

Kecia Cole – Director, Fiction, BRIC

Kierna Mayo – Writer, Editor, and Media Executive

Marquis Daisy – Producer, ESPN Films

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT (WORLD) – Yellow – Directed by Elham Ehsas

THE JURY:

Tamara McCaw – Chief Civic Program Officer, The Shed

Ivonne Cotorruelo – Film Programmer

Amy Andrieux – Executive Director, Chief Curator, Mocada

BEST ANIMATION SHORT – Tomato Kitchen – Directory by Junyi Xiao

Honorable Mention – Lil Ruby – Directed by Bartek Kik

THE JURY:

Ramona Wright – Founder and CEO, WrightOne Media Group

Phillip Domfeh – Senior Manager, Disney+ Launchpad

Julian Newman – Founder and CEO, Culture Creative

Will Schnable – Programs Manager Equity and Inclusion, Warner Bros. Discovery

BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM – Quiet As It's Kept – Directed by Ja'Tovia M. Gary

THE JURY:

Tamara McCaw – Chief Civic Program Officer, The Shed

Ivonne Cotorruelo – Film Programmer

Amy Andrieux – Executive Director, Chief Curator, Mocada

BEST SCREENPLAY – Long Live AJ – Written by Marvin Van Buren

Honorable Mention – The Washroom – Written by Elie El Choufany and Omar Al Dakheel

THE JURY:

Tracey Moore – EP, The Spirited Actor Podcast (iHeart Radio); Celebrity Acting Coach

Sonja Perryman – Writer, Producer, Actress

Joshua Sanchez – Screenwriter + Member of Writers Guild of America, East

Jenny Mayer – Screenwriter, Playwright + Member of Writers Guild of America, East

URBANWORLD AUDIENCE AWARD BEST SHORT – Homing – Directed by Ricardo Varona

URBANWORLD AUDIENCE AWARD BEST FEATURE – Brief Tender Light

– Directed by Arthur Musah

NYWIFT AWARD for BEST FEMALE DIRECTOR, US NARRATIVE FEATURE

Sira – Directed by Apolline Traoré

Presented by New York Women In Film & Television

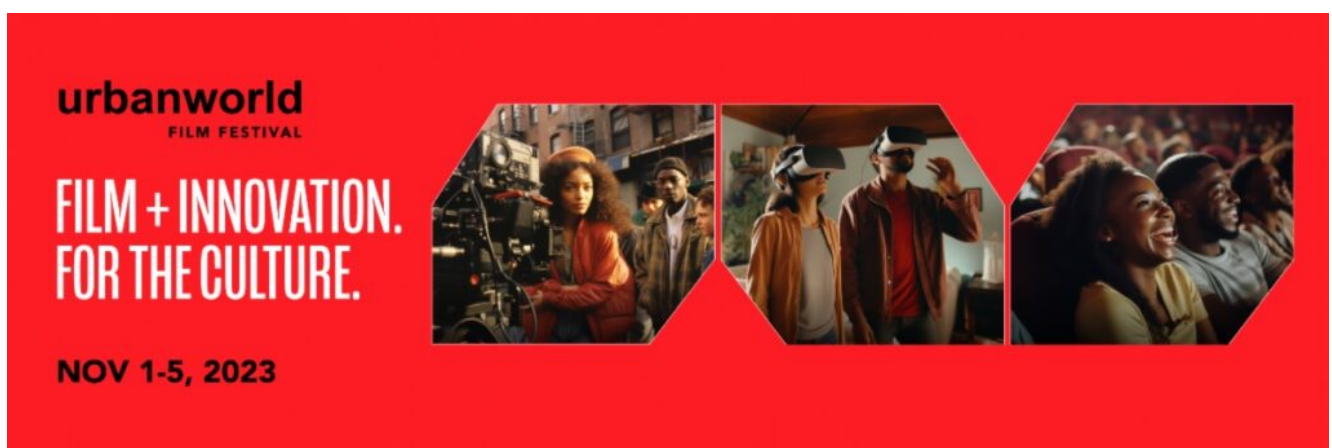
NYWIFT AWARD for BEST FEMALE DIRECTOR, US NARRATIVE SHORT

Lunch Box – Directed by Anne Hu

Reunion – Directed by Zainab Jah

Presented by New York Women In Film & Television

Urbanworld Film Festival Announces 2023 Lineup



The 27th annual Urbanworld Film Festival's lineup has been announced for the event taking place the first week of November. The five-day occasion is November 1-5 at AMC 34th Street and the SVA Theatre in New York City. The schedule includes the world premiere of *A Wu-Tang Experience: Live At*

Red Rocks Amphitheatre directed by Rza and Gerald Barclay. A conversation with Marvel Studios' *The Marvels* writer/director and Urbanworld alum Nia Acosta is also planned. HBO returns as a Founding Partner and Warner Brothers Discovery is the Prestige Partner.

Stand Up & Shout: Songs from a Philly High School, an HBO Documentary Films feature, from director Amy Schatz and executive produced by Mike Jackson, John Legend and Ty Stiklorius of Get Lifted Film Co. will screen. *Lawman: Bass Reeves*, starring and executive produced by David Oyelowo about the first Black US Marshal is scheduled for viewing. *Maxine's Baby: The Tyler Perry Story* will be presented by Amazon Prime and National Geographic Documentary Films is having a youth screening of *The Space Race* directed by Urbanworld alum Lisa Cortés (Little Richard I Am Everything) and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza.

The work of more Urbanworld alums will be highlighted with *To Live And Let Die* starring Amin Joseph and Omari Hardwick; *Young. Wild. Free.* directed by Thembi Banks with Sanaa Lathan and Mike Epps; and *Sira*, a Berlinale audience winner directed by Apolline Traoré.

ESPN is presenting *Black Girls Play* from documentary team Joe Brewster and Michéle Stephenson. Disney+ is showcasing six short films from its Disney + Launchpad incubator program of filmmakers including *The Ghost*, directed by Erica Eng; *Black Belts*, directed by Spencer Glover; *Beautiful, FL*, directed by Gabriela Ortega; *The Roof*, directed by Alexander Bocchieri; *Maxine*, written and directed by Niki Ang and *Project CC*, directed by Cashmere Jasmine.

The almost 100 titles comprises shorts from several known artists including Yvonne Orji's directing debut with *Jamaal* and Zainab Jah's first film *Reunion*. Executive producer, Urbanworld alum and writer Nelson George will present *Flower*, a short film about ballerina Misty Copeland. Benny Boom's *A*

Love Letter To Hip-Hop starring Tariq Trotter aka Black Thought and *Part of Me: Anuar Khalifi* by Yasiin Bey starring Yasiin Bey (fka Mos Def) are two of the music-oriented titles.

To purchase tickets and passes, visit urbanworld.org.

2023

Urbanworld International Film Festival Lineup

Spotlight Presentations

- *Lawmen: Bass Reeves* – Created by Chad Feehan (Presented by Paramount+)
- *Maxine's Baby: The Tyler Perry Story* – Directed by Gelila Bekele and Armani Ortiz (Presented by Prime Video)
- *Stand Up & Shout: Songs from a Philly High School* – Directed by Amy Schatz (Presented by HBO Documentary Films)
- *The Space Race* – Directed by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and Lisa Cortés (Presented by National Geographic Documentary Films)

U.S./World Cinema Narrative Features

- *Chronicles of a Wandering Saint* (Argentina) – Directed by Tomás Gómez Bustillo (New York Premiere)
- *Frybread Face and Me* – Directed by Billy Luther (New York Premiere)
- *INKY PINKY PONKY* (New Zealand) – Directed by Damon Fepuleai, Ramon TeWake (U.S. Premiere)
- *To Live and Die and Live* – Directed by Qasim Basir
- *Young. Wild. Free.* – Directed by Thembi Banks (New York Premiere)
- *Sira* (Burkina Faso) – Directed by Apolline Traoré (U.S. Premiere)

Documentary Features

- A Wu-Tang Experience: Live at Red Rocks Amphitheatre – Directed by Gerald K. Barclay and The RZA (World Premiere)
- Bike Vessel – Directed by Eric D. Seals (New York Premiere)
- Black Barbie: A Documentary – Directed by Lagueria Davis (New York Premiere)
- Brief Tender Light (Ghana/USA) – Directed by Arthur Musah (New York Premiere)

Disney Launchpad Shorts (Presented by Disney+)

- Beautiful, FL – Directed by Gabriela Ortega
- Black Belts – Directed by Spencer Glover
- Maxine – Directed by Niki Ang
- Project CC – Directed by Cashmere Jasmine
- The Ghost – Directed by Erica Eng
- The Roof – Directed by Alexander Bocchieri

POV Showcase (Presented by WNET)

- By Way of Canarsie – Directed by Emily Packer and Lesley Steele
- Freshwater – Directed by dream hampton
- Sol in the Garden – Directed by Emily Cohen Ibañez and Débora Souza Silva
- Still Waters – Directed by Aurora Brachman
- The Dream of a Horse (Iran) – Directed by Marjan Khosravi (New York Premiere)

U.S. And World Narrative Shorts

- A Version – Directed by Asad Farooqui (New York Premiere)

- August Visitor – Directed by Ifeyinwa Arinze
- Becoming – Directed by Tramaine Raphael Gray
- Children of Light (Korea/USA) – Directed by Minkyu Kang (New York Premiere)
- Choices – Directed by Justin Luis Denis (World Premiere)
- Cousins – Directed by Karina Dandashi
- Cut Me If You Can – Directed by Nicolas Polixene and Sylvain Loubet (New York Premiere)
- Death & Ramen – Directed by Tiger Ji
- Don't Touch My Hair – Directed by Matthew Law (New York Premiere)
- Don't Wait Up For Me – Directed by Alain Alfaro (New York Premiere)
- ExpoZure – Directed by Kimson Albert (World Premiere)
- He?matome (Belgium) – Directed by Babetida Sadjo
- Homing – Directed by Ricardo Varona (New York Premiere)
- House Party (United Kingdom) – Directed by William Alexander Boyd III (U.S. Premiere)
- Incomplete – Directed by Zoey Martinson
- I Held Him – Directed by Hans Augustave
- JAMAAL – Directed by Yvonne Orji (World Premiere)
- Jerome – Directed by Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz (New York Premiere)
- LOOK BACK AT IT – Directed by Felicia Pride
- Lunchbox – Directed by Anne Hu
- Magic Ring – Directed by Alex Ashe
- My Two Left Feet – Directed by Damian Gonzalez (U.S. Premiere)
- October Mourning – Directed by Frederick Thornton (New York Premiere)
- Reunion – Directed by Zainab Jah and Tim Naylor (New York Premiere)
- Spaceship – Directed by Jorge G. Camarena (New York Premiere)
- The Burden – Directed by Tish Arana (New York Premiere)
- The Fore-men (Canada) – Directed by Adrian Bobb (East Coast Premiere)

- The Old Young Crow (Japan) – Directed by Liam LoPinto (New York Premiere)
- TikTok Challenged – Directed by Ivan Rome
- YELLOW (United Kingdom) – Directed by ELHAM EHSAS (East Coast Premiere)

Documentary Shorts

- Black Girls Play: The Story of Hand Games – Directed by Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson (Presented by ESPN Films)
- Duckworthy – Directed by M.G. Evangelista (New York Premiere)
- I Was a Soul Train Dancer – Directed by Timiza Sanyika (New York Premiere)
- Merman – Directed by Sterling Hampton IV
- PART OF ME – Anuar Khalifi BY Yasiin Bey (Spain) – Directed by Jordi Esgleas Marroi (New York Premiere)
- OVER THE WALL – Directed by KRYSTAL TINGLE
- SLICE – Directed by Zaire Love (New York Premiere)
- The Big Idea: Birth Without Bias – Directed by Sarah Klein, Tom Mason (New York Premiere)
- Things Long Left Unsaid – Directed by Antonia Thornton (New York Premiere)
- WA GUEJJ GUI – OCEAN PEOPLE – Directed by Clé Hunnigan (World Premiere)

Animation Shorts

- Bridges – Directed by Jonathan Davenport (World Premiere)
- BURNING RUBBER – Directed by Christopher Fequiere and Dara King (New York Premiere)
- Lil' Ruby – Directed by Bartek Kik (New York Premiere)
- Perfect City: The Bravest Kid – Directed by Shengwei

Zhou (East Coast Premiere)

- Tomato Kitchen (China) – Directed by Junyi Xiao

Experimental

- BET Presents: A Love Letter to Hip Hop – Directed by Benny Boom
- FLOWER – Directed by Lauren Finerman
- It Smells Like Springtime – Directed by Mackie Mallison
- Quiet As It's Kept – Directed by Ja'Tovia Gary (New York Premiere)
- Paradise Ft. Terrace Martin & Alex Isley – Directed By child. (Presented By Jill Newman Productions)

Young Creators Showcase

- BURNT MILK (Jamaica) – Directed by Joseph Douglas Elmhirst (U.S. Premiere)
- Of Silence and Song – Directed by Dai Leyi (New York Premiere)
- Shallots and Garlic / Bawang Merah Bawang Putih (Indonesia/Canada) – Directed by Andrea Nirmala Widjajanto (New York Premiere)
- Xiaohui and his cows (China) – Directed by Xinying Lao (New York City Premiere)
- UNERASABLE – Directed by Déon Ragin (World Premiere)

Screenplays

- I Don't Dream in Spanish Anymore – Written by Missy Hernandez
- Long Live AJ – Written by Marvin Van Buren
- Panorama Connection – Written by Nicole Weaver
- The Washroom – Written by Omar Al Dakheel and Elie El Choufany