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FILM FEST 919 PRESENTS 2021 PROGRAM

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***KING RICHARD* SET TO OPEN THE FEST, WITH *C'MON C'MON* AS
CENTERPIECE AND *SPENCER* TO CLOSE**

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**THE "DISTINGUISHED SCREENWRITER" AWARD TO BE PRESENTED TO
WRITERS OF CANNES FAVORITE *RED ROCKET*:
CHRIS BERGOCH AND SEAN BAKER**

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RISING STAR AWARD TO BE PRESENTED TO EDUARDO FRANCO OF *KOATI*

Chapel Hill, NC, September 30, 2021 – [Film Fest 919](#) is proud to announce the program for its highly-anticipated 4th edition, which takes place as a live, in-person event **October 18-24, 2021**.

Film Fest 919 (FF919) embodies the true spirit of a film festival, presenting a diverse breadth of compelling features to the area’s enthusiastic, film-loving audience. Showcasing the season’s most talked-about films selected by Cannes, Sundance, Berlin, Venice, Telluride and Toronto film festivals, audiences will have an opportunity to see awards-worthy films early on.

As previously announced, FF919 kicks off the week on **Monday, October 18** with the **Spotlight Award** presentation to multi-award-winning songwriter **Diane Warren**. The evening will include a Conversation with Diane and a special laser show presentation of her hit tunes at the Drive In at Carraway Village.

Film Fest 919 will then launch into Opening Night on **Tuesday, October 19** with Warner Bros. Pictures’ critically acclaimed drama ***KING RICHARD***, directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green, written by Zach Baylin and starring two-time Oscar nominee Will Smith as an undeterred father who, along with his family’s unwavering resolve and unconditional belief, delivers two of the world’s greatest sports legends: Venus and Serena Williams.

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The Fest will close **Sunday, October 24** with **SPENCER**, directed by Pablo Larraín and starring **Kristen Stewart** who gives a fearless and deeply committed performance in this imagining of what might have happened during those few fateful days of Christmas festivities at the Queen's Sandringham Estate that led to the eventual dissolution of Charles and Diana's marriage.

The Centerpiece film, on Thursday, October 21, will be the Telluride darling **C'MON C'MON** written and directed by Mike Mills and starring Joaquin Phoenix, Gabby Hoffman and Woody Norman in this sublime look at adults coming to terms with the presence of kids in their lives.

On Friday, October 22, Film Fest 919's 3rd Annual **Distinguished Screenwriter Award** will be presented to co-screenwriters **SEAN BAKER** (virtual) and **CHRIS BERGOCH** (in person), followed by a screening of their film **RED ROCKET**, starring Simon Rex. *Red Rocket* was a highlight of the 2021 Cannes Film Festival Palme d'Or competition and winner of the Critics Award and Jury Prize at the Deauville Film Festival. *Red Rocket* marks the 4th feature screenplay collaboration between Baker and Bergoch who excel in telling stories of people on the fringe of society.

"We are beyond excited about honoring Sean Baker and Chris Bergoch," remarked Film Fest 919 founders Randi Emerman and Carol Marshall. "Film Fest 919 first began with a special showing of *The Florida Project* which Chris attended and he has attended each year and has been dubbed our official mascot ever since! And now we can finally share that adulation with Sean Baker!"

In addition, the **Rising Star Award** will be presented to **Eduardo Franco** (*Booksmart, Stranger Things*), who co-stars in the animated feature **KOATI**, directed by Rodrigo Perez-Castro and starring Sofia Vergara and Joe Mangianello. *Koati* is an animated film featuring three unlikely heroes: Nachi, a free-spirited coati; Xochi, a fearless monarch butterfly; and Pako, a hyperactive glass frog, who embark on an exciting journey to prevent a wicked coral snake named Zaina from destroying their land of Xo.

Film Fest 919 showcases a carefully curated program of the year's most highly anticipated films, including the best in US and world cinema, and will be presented safely in person at two venues: [Silverspot Cinema](#) and [Drive-in at Carraway Village](#). In order to ensure that #FF919 is as safe as possible, proof of vaccination will be required for all in-person events. Masks will be required...no exceptions.

The 2021 Film Line-up includes:

A CHIARA, Italy/France

Written and directed by Jonas Carpignano

A rising star of a resurgent Italian cinema, Jonas Carpignano continues his deeply felt project of observing life in contemporary Calabria with this gripping character study of a teenager, Chiara (a revelatory Swamy Rotolo), who gradually comes to discover that her close-knit family is not all that it seems. Keeping his camera close to Chiara as she struggles to understand the difficult truth about her

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mysteriously missing father—and the crime syndicates that control her region—Carpignano has created an intimate, furiously paced drama that refuses to make its unlikely protagonist either a victim or a hero. *Cannes Film Festival Winner, Best European Film, Directors' Fortnight.*

A HERO, Iran

Written and directed by Asghar Farhadi

Rahim is in prison because of a debt he was unable to repay. During a two-day leave, he tries to convince his creditor to withdraw his complaint against the payment of part of the sum. But things don't go as planned... *Cannes Film Festival Winner, Grand Jury*

CATCH THE FAIR ONE, USA

Written and directed by Josef Kubota Wladyka

Kaylee “K.O.” Uppashaw, a mixed Indigenous boxer, prepares for a championship fight. Her hands are wrapped, gloves taped shut, and face greased. She pounds the mitts with her trainer, Brick. The room echoes with the strength of each hit. She’s preparing for the boxing match of her life. The crowd roars in the distance as the sounds crescendo into a fever pitch— Kaylee wakes up in a women’s shelter from a wishful dream of a life she once had. This is her reality. A boxer struggling to pick up the pieces of her life. After her shift working at a diner, Brick drives her to a clandestine rendezvous. They meet a P.I. who presents evidence that Weeta, Kaylee’s younger sister who disappeared two years ago, is possibly alive and circulating in a trafficking network. He tells her a time and place to plug herself into this dangerous world in hopes of finding her sister. Kaylee agrees and sets off on a dark and treacherous journey. Her strength and determination are tested as Kaylee fights the real fight of her life—to find Weeta and make her family whole again. *Tribeca Film Festival winner Audience Award.*

C’MON C’MON, USA

Written and directed by Mike Mills

Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Woody Norman, Gabby Hoffman

Johnny (Phoenix) and his young nephew (Norman) forge a tenuous but transformational relationship when they are unexpectedly thrown together in this delicate and deeply moving story about the connections between adults and children, the past and the future, from writer-director Mike Mills. *Telluride Film Festival*

FLEE, Denmark, France, Sweden, Norway, United States, Slovenia, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Finland

Written and directed by Jonas Poher Rasmussen

FLEE tells the story of Amin Nawabi as he grapples with a painful secret he has kept hidden for 20 years, one that threatens to derail the life he has built for himself and his soon to be husband. Recounted mostly through animation to director Jonas Poher Rasmussen, he tells for the first time the story of his extraordinary journey as a child refugee from Afghanistan. *Sundance Film Festival, Winner Grand Jury; Annecy International winner Best Feature, Original Song and Gan Foundation Award*

HUDA’S SALON, Egypt, Netherlands, Palestinian Territories

Written and directed by Hany Abu-Assad

Reem, a young mother married to a jealous man, goes to Huda’s salon in Bethlehem. But this ordinary visit turns sour when Huda, after having put Reem in a shameful situation, blackmails her to have her work for the secret service of the occupiers, and thus betray her people. *Toronto International Film Festival.*

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INDIA SWEETS AND SPICES, USA

Directed by Geeta Malik

When college freshman Alia returns home for the summer, she discovers secrets and lies in her parents' past that make her question everything she thought she knew about her family. *Tribeca Film Festival*

KING RICHARD, USA – OPENING NIGHT

Directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green, written by Zach Baylin

Starring Will Smith, Aunjanue Ellis, Saniyya Sidney, Demi Singleton, Tony Goldwyn, Jon Bernthal
Armed with a clear vision and a brazen 78-page plan, Richard Williams is determined to write his daughters Venus and Serena into history. Training on Compton, California's abandoned tennis courts - rain or shine - the girls are shaped by their father's unyielding commitment and their mother's balanced perspective and keen intuition, defying the seemingly insurmountable odds and prevailing expectations laid before them. Based on the true story that will inspire the world, *KING RICHARD* follows the journey of a family whose unwavering resolve and unconditional belief ultimately delivers two of the world's greatest sports legends. *Telluride Film Festival 2021*.

KOATI, Mexico – SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Directed by Rodrigo Perez-Castro

Starring Sofia Vergara, Joe Mangianello, Eduardo Franco

Koati is an animated film starring three unlikely heroes: Nachi, a free-spirited coati; Xochi, a fearless monarch butterfly; and Pako, a hyperactive glass frog, who embark on an exciting journey to prevent a wicked coral snake named Zaina from destroying their land of Xo. *Eduardo Franco and producers Melissa Escobar and Anabella Sosa-Dovarganes will attend.*

MASS, USA

Written and directed by Fran Kranz

Starring Ann Dowd, Martha Plimpton, Jason Isaacs, Reed Birney

Years after an unspeakable tragedy tore their lives apart, two sets of parents (Birney & Dowd, Isaacs & Plimpton) agree to talk privately in an attempt to move forward. In Fran Kranz's writing and directing debut, he thoughtfully examines their journey of grief, anger, and acceptance by coming face-to-face with the ones who have been left behind. *Sundance Film Festival; San Sebastian International Film Festival Winner, Youth Jury Award*

OLEG: THE OLEG VIDOV STORY, USA

Directed by Nadia Tass

Features Joan Borsten, narrated by Brian Cox

Based on his soon-to-be published autobiography, *OLEG* reveals the incredible life story of Oleg Vidov. Born in communist Russia to a schoolteacher, by the age of 25, Oleg had become one of the Soviet Union's most celebrated actors of his time. However, no amount of fame could save him from the political system that tried to control his life. He married into General Secretary Brezhnev's inner circle only to wind up blacklisted, threatened with death, and forced to defect to the West. Reinventing himself in Hollywood, his efforts to counter anti-Russian stereotypes were attacked by the same forces that ruined his career decades earlier. Finally, in October 1991, with Oleg's fears of

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persecution calmed by the rise of perestroika, he returned to Moscow to star in a Danish film. Then, two months later, on Christmas Day 1991, President Gorbachev resigned from office and the USSR collapsed. *Joan Borsten will attend.*

PASSING, USA/UK

Written and directed by Rebecca Hall

Starring Tessa Thompson, Ruth Negga, Alexander Skarsgård, André Holland, Bill Camp
Marking Rebecca Hall's directorial debut, *PASSING* is adapted from the celebrated 1929 novel of the same name by Nella Larsen, telling the story of two Black women, Irene Redfield (Tessa Thompson) and Clare Kendry (Academy Award® nominee Ruth Negga), who can "pass" as white but choose to live on opposite sides of the color line during the height of the Harlem Renaissance in late 1920s New York. After a chance encounter reunites the former childhood friends one summer afternoon, Irene reluctantly allows Clare into her home, where she ingratiates herself to Irene's husband and family, and soon her larger social circle as well. As their lives become more deeply intertwined, Irene finds her once-steady existence upended by Clare, and *PASSING* becomes a riveting examination of obsession, repression and the lies people tell themselves and others to protect their carefully constructed realities. *Sundance Film Festival, Grand Prize nominee.*

PETITE MAMAN, France

Written and directed by Celine Sciamma

Nelly has just lost her grandmother and is helping her parents clean out her mother's childhood home. She explores the house and the surrounding woods. One day she meets a girl her same age building a treehouse. *Berlin Film Festival, Telluride, Toronto Int'l. Film Festival; San Sebastian Winner Audience Award*

RED ROCKET, USA – DISTINGUISHED SCREENWRITER AWARD

Directed by Sean Baker; written by Baker and Chris Bergoch

The audacious new film from writer-director Sean Baker (*The Florida Project, Tangerine*), starring Simon Rex in a magnetic, live-wire performance, *Red Rocket* is a darkly funny, raw, and humane portrait of a uniquely American hustler and a hometown that barely tolerates him. *Cannes Film Festival; Deauville Film Festival Winner, Jury and Critics Awards. Chris Bergoch will attend.*

SEE FOR ME, Canada

Directed by Randall Okita

Starring Jessica Parker Kennedy, Laura Vandervoort, Kim Coates

When blind former skier Sophie cat-sits in a secluded mansion, three thieves invade for the hidden safe. Sophie's only defense is army veteran Kelly. Kelly helps Sophie defend herself against the invaders and survive. *Tribeca Film Festival.*

SPENCER, UK/Germany/Chile – CLOSING NIGHT

Directed by Pablo Larrain

Starring Kristen Stewart, Sally Hawkins, Timothy Spall, Jack Farthing, Sean Harris

On Christmas weekend in 1991, the marriage between Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, née Diana Spencer, spirals apart. And we get to watch. Director Pablo Larrain and screenwriter Steven Knight ingeniously weave a narrative that stays scrupulously close to known historical fact with a dark, dream-like fairytale gone wrong, a mashup of the official history, *SNOW WHITE* and *THE SHINING*. The film's power emerges directly from the fearless and deeply committed performance of Kristen Stewart, imagining Diana mercurial and haunted, while Sally Hawkins, Timothy Spall and

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Sean Harris play the royal staff torn between their obligation to help control Diana and their desire to support her. The score, from Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood, ingeniously combines chamber music, jazz and pop. Following his films NO, NERUDA and JACKIE, Larraín continues an inspired string of alternative histories of essential moments. *Venice, Telluride, Toronto Film Festivals*

THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN, UK

Written and directed by Will Sharpe

Starring Claire Foy, Benedict Cumberbatch, Sophia Di Martino

The extraordinary true story of eccentric British artist Louis Wain (Benedict Cumberbatch), whose playful, sometimes even psychedelic pictures helped to transform the public's perception of cats forever. Moving from the late 1800s through to the 1930s, we follow the incredible adventures of this inspiring, unsung hero, as he seeks to unlock the "electrical" mysteries of the world and, in so doing, to better understand his own life and the profound love he shared with his wife Emily Richardson (Claire Foy). *Telluride, Toronto International Film Festival*

THE FRENCH DISPATCH, Germany/USA

Written and directed by Wes Anderson

Starring Benicio Del Toro, Adrien Brody, Owen Wilson, Bill Murray, Christoph Waltz, Timothee Chalamet, Elisabeth Moss, Frances McDormand

THE FRENCH DISPATCH brings to life a collection of stories from the final issue of an American magazine published in a fictional 20th-century French city. *Cannes Film Festival 2021*.

THE HAND OF GOD, Italy

Written and directed by Paolo Sorrentino

From Academy Award®-winning writer and director Paolo Sorrentino (*Il Divo, The Great Beauty, The Young Pope*), comes the story of a boy, Fabietto Schisa, in the tumultuous Naples of the 1980s, full of unexpected joys such as the arrival of football legend Diego Maradona, and an equally unexpected tragedy. Fate plays its part, joy and tragedy intertwine, and Fabietto's future is set in motion. Sorrentino returns to his hometown to tell his most personal story, a tale of fate and family, sports and cinema, love and loss. *Venice Film Festival, Winner, Pasinetti Award for Best Film; Winner of Marcello Mastroianni Award for actor Filippo Scotti*

THE LOST DAUGHTER, USA/Greece

Written and directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal

Starring Olivia Colman, Dakota Johnson, Peter Sarsgaard, Ed Harris

Alone on a seaside vacation, Leda (Olivia Colman) becomes consumed with a young mother and daughter as she watches them on the beach. Unnerved by their compelling relationship, (and their raucous and menacing extended family), Leda is overwhelmed by her own memories of the terror, confusion and intensity of early motherhood. An impulsive act shocks Leda into the strange and ominous world of her own mind, where she is forced to face the unconventional choices she made as a young mother and their consequences. This is Maggie Gyllenhaal's directorial debut, based on the novel by Elena Ferrante. *Venice Film Festival 2021, Winner Best Screenplay Award; Telluride*

THE MUSTANGS: AMERICA'S WILD HORSES, USA

Directed by Steven Latham, Conrad Stanley

"**The Mustangs: America's Wild Horses**" is a feature documentary that is executive produced by **Robert Redford, Patti Scialfa Springsteen and Jessica Springsteen**. The film features songs by Bruce Springsteen, Emmylou Harris, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and an original song written by Diane

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Warren and performed by Blanco Brown. *The Mustangs* takes audiences on an odyssey throughout America to places few people have seen or even know about. There are more than 80,000 wild horses on our federal lands and more than 50,000 in government. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Philipps says, "The wild horse is so ingrained in the American imagination that even for those who have never seen one know what it stands for: fierce independence, unbridled freedom, the bedrock ideals of the nation. From car ads to high school mascots, the wild horse - popularly known as the mustang - is the enduring icon of America. But in modern times it has become entangled in controversy and bureaucracy, and now its future is in question." This film will make you fall in love with America all over again and understand why the protection of our wild horses and our public lands are worth fighting for.

THE NOVICE, USA

Written and directed by Lauren Hadaway

Starring Isabelle Fuhrman, Amy Forsyth, Jonathan Cherry

Isabelle Fuhrman plays Alex Dall, a queer college freshman who joins her university's rowing team and undertakes an obsessive physical and psychological journey to make it to the top varsity boat, no matter the cost. Intent on outperforming her teammates, Alex pushes herself to her limits—and beyond, alienating everyone around her in the name of success. Furhman's fierce lead performance collides with Lauren Hadaway's bold direction and dynamic editing, creating a visceral window into a cutthroat world. Stylish cinematography and a seductive soundtrack complete the experience, evoking the romance and danger of falling in love; the attraction, the drama and the fallout. This unapologetic debut from Hadaway, based on her personal experience as a competitive collegiate rower, heralds a bold new voice in queer storytelling. If you liked *Whiplash*, this one's for you. *Tribeca Film Festival Winner Founders Award, Best Actress and Best Cinematography.*

THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD, Norway

Written and directed by Joachim Trier

Starring Renate Reinsve, Anders Danielsen Lie

Julie (Reinsve) is restlessly cycling through career paths, relationships and the taxing realities of existence. As she goes hurtling into her 30s, she's left wondering: when will life really begin, and what is her true purpose? Framed around Julie's delightful indecisiveness, we follow four years of ups and downs, featuring two important relationships and a handful of what ifs. This darkly comedic journey from director Joachim Trier (*LOUDER THAN BOMBS*, HIFF 2015) is a biting take on romantic comedy in the modern age. *Cannes Film Festival 2021, Winner Best Actress for Renate Reinsve*

About Film Fest 919:

Film Fest 919 is a film festival based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina that highlights the best feature films the year has to offer. Founded by Randi Emerman and Carol Marshall, the festival showcases great films and the artists behind them. In just three years, Film Fest 919 has attracted more than 50 members of the national and local press, in addition, the social media platforms serve as a multiplier to optimize visibility of the festival in today's world. The Triangle area has a strong community of film lovers with discerning tastes and a passion for the arts and the festival aims to serve as a celebration of these qualities. Chapel Hill is cherished by its citizens and admired by its visitors. Its charm, mystique and 'small town' atmosphere makes it the perfect setting for entertaining film festival guests.

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Passes are still available and individual tickets will go on sale **October 11**, available at www.FilmFest919.com. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest updates and for when individual tickets go on sale.

Press credentials are extremely limited this year. Please apply for credentials here NO LATER THAN Oct. 11: <https://filmfest919.com/press-credentials/>.

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