

World Artists Experiences Presents



Bridges to the World

International Film Festival
February 2 - March 2, 2021



Sponsored in partnership with
the Embassies of five countries



Mozambique



Latvia



Mexico



Japan



Egypt

PROGRAM GUIDE FOR
VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE
www.WorldArtists.org

Arts as a bridge to international understanding

For information: wae@comcast.net www.WorldArtists.org





www.WorldArtists.org

February 2021

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 13th Annual Bridges to the World International Film Festival, sponsored by World Artists Experiences in partnership with the embassies of Mozambique, Latvia, Mexico, Japan, and Egypt. The theme is in recognition of bridging the people and cultures of the world with those in communities throughout Maryland.

The five-week celebration features films from countries in the order they are presented: Mozambique, Latvia, Mexico, Japan, and Egypt. The films are a means of presenting each country through images and sounds. Our hope is that you will gain the spirit of each country represented. All films were selected by their respective embassies.

For the first time, the festival is being held virtually. In the past, the films were screened throughout the State of Maryland. We recognize the venues who held and continue to support the festival: Allegany College of Maryland, University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland, Towson University, Salisbury University, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, and Community Place.

Each film will be introduced by a diplomat, scholar, or producer. The audience will then screen the film at the provided link. Following the screening, questions and answers will be addressed by the presenters. This program guide will direct you through the details for attending virtually and provide information on each film.

We express gratitude to the planning committee: Beth Wells, Greg Faller, June Krell-Salgado, Linda Smith, and Mendy Nitsch. We appreciate Dr. Greg Faller for writing the essays, Mark Burchick for his technical expertise, David Mitchell and team for communication organization, and Margaret Rose Caro for editing. We acknowledge all volunteers and in-kind supporters who have generously contributed their time, talents, and resources to make the festival possible. We especially thank the embassies for partnering with World Artists Experiences to produce the 13th annual Bridges to the World Film Festival. Let's hope that we can return to a live film festival next year!

Building bridges with people and countries of the world.

Betty McGinnis
Betty McGinnis

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GUIDE FOR ATTENDING THE VIRTUAL FILM FESTIVAL

In order to attend the 2021 Bridges to the World International Film Festival, attendees will need to follow the Zoom link below and provide a valid name and e-mail address to attend. Zoom Webinars require both a valid name and e-mail address for security purposes.

ZOOM LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83360293896?pwd=dCtRbTB3RENBNzBxanA2NFFCV3pRZz09>

or

<https://tinyurl.com/ydz8qv3>

If prompted for a passcode, use the code "Bridges."

WEBINAR ID: 833 6029 3896

PASSCODE: Bridges



New Meeting ▾



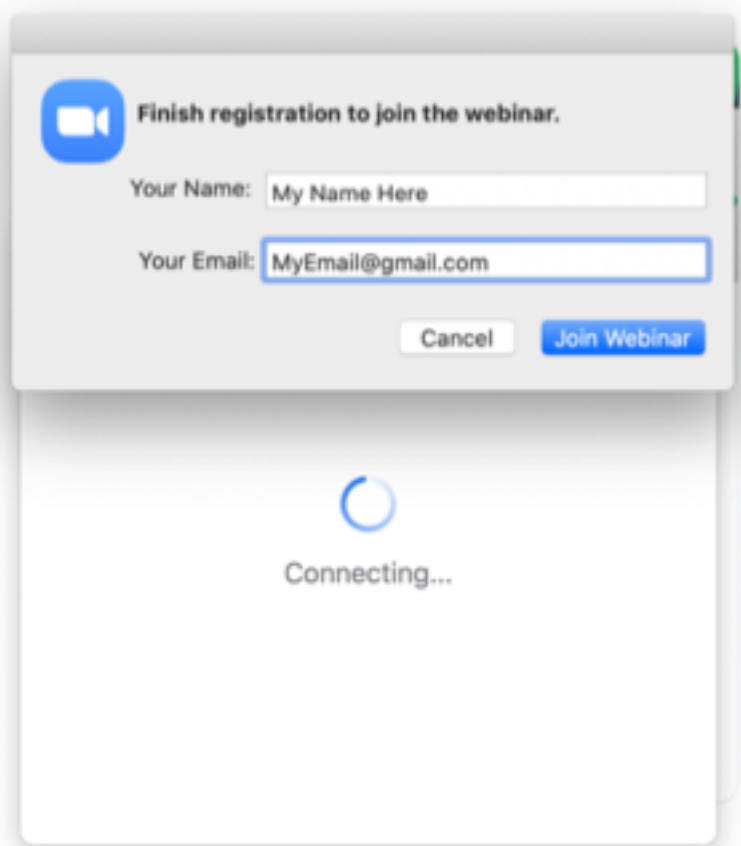
Join



Schedule



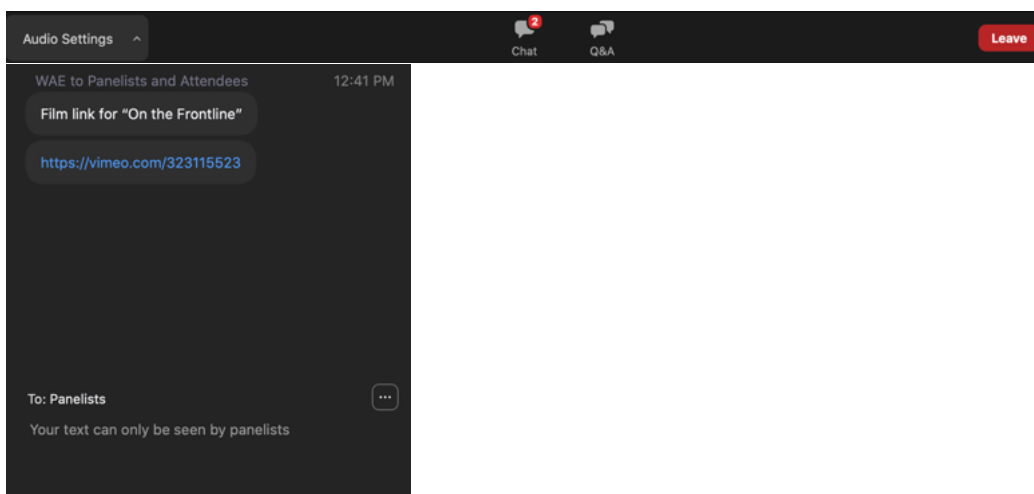
Share Screen ▾



Each Tuesday night, screening of the film festival will use these same links listed above and begin promptly at 7pm.

❖ At 7pm, guests will be invited into the Zoom Webinar room, where we will hold a pre-screening introduction.

❖ After the introduction, we will post the link to the film's screening URL in the Chat box of the Zoom Webinar platform. The Chat feature is located in the "Control Bar," either at the top or bottom of your Zoom window. A notification will appear announcing that the link has been posted. When directed, select this box to bring up a new window.

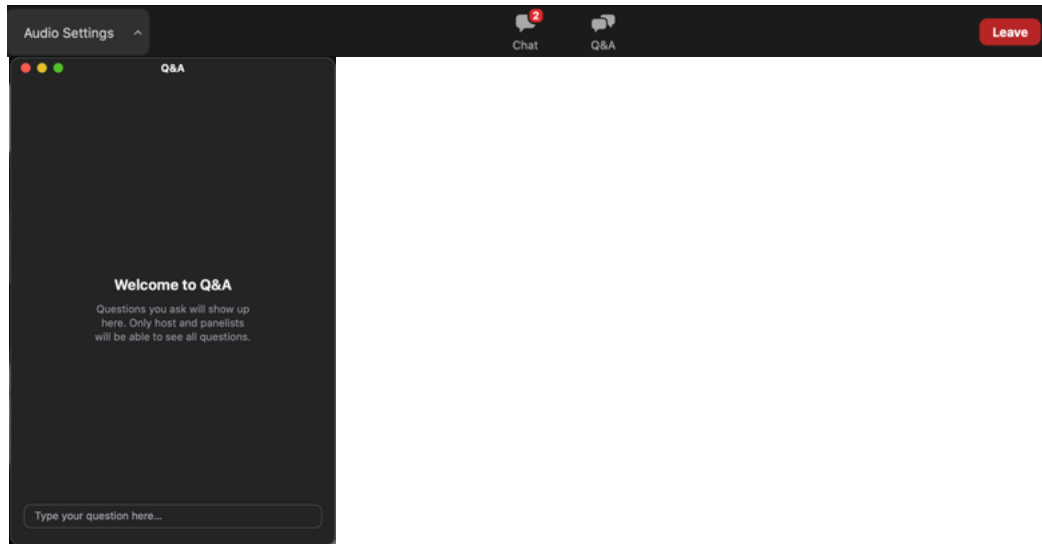


❖ Guests will then follow the link in the Chat to screen the film on their own computers. Selecting the link will bring up an Internet browser window.

❖ We will make an announcement to play the film and expectations for the length of the film's runtime. Guests are invited to come back to the Zoom Webinar at the conclusion of the film's runtime. We will give you an expectation for a specific time to rejoin the Zoom Webinar.

❖ Please leave your Zoom Webinar open and in the background during this time. Be aware that while you will have the ability to pause and resume play of the film at your leisure, we are only allowing for a five-minute buffer before the post-screening discussion. If you close your Zoom Webinar window, you will have to rejoin the Zoom Webinar to participate in the post-screening discussion.

❖ After the film has completed its runtime, guests are invited to return to the Zoom Webinar room to participate in a post-screening discussion using the Q&A feature. Submit questions by writing them in the Q&A box.



❖ We will hold brief closing statements and thank you's at the conclusion of the evening.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

❖ Guests will be muted during the session. If guests have any technical difficulties, they may correspond with WAE Tech Support via the Chat feature. WAE Tech Support will privately message you to respond. Please reserve the Q&A function for the post-screening discussion.

❖ The links to these films will only remain active DURING the screening, so guests will NOT be able to watch these films via the links after the evening of the event.

February 2, 2021

MOZAMBIQUE



***Na Linha de Frente: Os Fiscais do Parque Nacional da Gorongosa* *On the Frontline* (2018)**

Directed by: James Byrne

Running Time: 70 minutes

Introduced by:

- His Excellency Carlos dos Santos,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of
Mozambique to the U.S.A.
- Brett Kuxhausen,
Producer & Cinematographer

Gorongosa National Park sits in the center of Mozambique, about 100 miles west of the Indian Ocean coast. Established in 1960, the 1,500-square-mile park includes a wide diversity of geographical features and some of the densest wildlife populations in Africa. The park's flora and fauna were severely diminished during the 1981–1994 civil war but eventually rebounded over the next 20 years due to extensive restoration efforts by the government and international organizations.

The Park was damaged again in March 2019 by Cyclone Idai, one of the worst tropical storms ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere. Fortunately, the wildlife was not significantly impacted and today the park continues to develop its ecotourism while working with local communities to abolish poaching and illegal logging. In short, conservation of the park is now the primary goal of the Mozambican government.

Empowered with leading the conservation effort, the Gorongosa Rangers provide the “front line” of protection for this beautiful wilderness. Fighting against ivory and bush meat hunters, illegal teak loggers, wildfires, and concerned members of buffer zone communities, the Rangers struggle to maintain the park’s integrity and demonstrate its immense value for the country. A team of only 150 Rangers could not effectively patrol the park’s nearly one million acres, so a call went out for reinforcements.

Seven-hundred candidates from the surrounding communities registered to participate in the intensive physical and mental examinations required to become a Gorongosa Ranger. For the first time in the park’s history, women were encouraged to sign up for the opportunity, but they weren’t shown preferential treatment. We meet some of the women, including Rosa Costomo and Micaela Alexandre, as they endured 14 days of a grueling selection process (reducing the 700 candidates to 40) and 45 days of ranger training.

On the Front Line follows the candidates as they devote themselves to the heroic work of preserving the environment. The film offers an inspiring story of what people will endure to reach their dream of proudly wearing a Ranger’s uniform. The film also provides a glimpse into the sublime natural wonders of the Gorongosa National Park.

To view a photo essay on Gorongosa National Park by Brett Kuxhausen, go to: <https://africageographic.com/stories/gorongosa-in-images/#agtravel-3>

You can watch a trailer for On the Frontline at:

Bridg World Film Fest 21 PROG GUIDE.docx <https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-Lkry-SF01&hsimp=yhs-SF01&hspart=Lkry&p=on+the+front+line+the+rangers+of+gorongosa+national+park#id=1&vid=e9d930df0084ae90424ebc4480c1b9a2&action=click>

February 9, 2021

LATVIA



Es esmu šeit [Mellow Mud] (2016)

Written & Directed by: Renars Vimba

Running Time: 105 minutes

Introduced by:

Sarma Gintare,
Third Secretary,
Public Diplomacy
Embassy of Latvia

Es esmu šeit (which translates as “I am here”) presents a bittersweet story of a young woman coming of age under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Not only does she seek to establish a mature self-identity, but to also assert her value and independence in a world that has ignored her — to exclaim “I am here.”

Living with her younger brother Robis in a simple wooden cabin at the end of a soggy, nearly impassible road, Raya must function as a sister, mother, student, farmer, and lover. Her poverty, a deceased father, a difficult brother, an absent mother, an uncaring grandmother, and the threat of being placed in foster care push Raya to make some rash and unfortunate decisions in an attempt to improve her life. Elina Vaska, in a stellar debut film performance, depicts Raya as a complex and confused youth whose emotional quest is to find the respect, love, support, and family she once experienced. She fully conveys Raya's feelings of desperation, anger, abandonment, bitterness, and first love with incredible conviction and deep authenticity. Vaska also expertly reveals Raya's strength, tenderness, sensuality, and self-reliance.

Es esmu šeit is Renars Vimba's first feature-length film. Vimba studied filmmaking at the Latvian Academy of Culture and also studied under director and screenwriter Boris Frumin at the Baltic Film and Media School in Tallinn, Estonia. His embrace of social realism provides the mechanism to honestly tell Raya's poignant story of youthful mistakes and links the film to other examples of Baltic Cinema that this series has recently screened: *Stupid Young Heart* (Finland), *Cherry Tobacco* (Estonia), and *Children from Hotel America* (Lithuania). These films aspire to capture the "poetics of the everyday," which includes challenging — often ugly — issues that teenagers must navigate such as immigration, racism, poverty, abortion, alcoholism, and inappropriate sexual relationships.

The young characters in these films, frequently without adult role models, make mistakes and exercise poor judgment at every turn. Their actions typically make older viewers uneasy and fearful because experienced individuals can see the tragic consequences headed their way, unexpected repercussions that these young adults simply can't recognize: That dreams of happiness often end in disappointment, that plans often fall apart, that obligations replace personal freedom. And yet, even with these setbacks, they ultimately learn to take responsibility for their actions, learn how to negotiate the harsh reality of their lives, and assume the mantle of adulthood.

In 2016, *Es esmu šeit* was named Best Film by the Youth Jury at the Berlin Film Festival and won Best Film, Best Screenplay, and Best Actress (Elina Vaska) at the Latvian National Film Festival. *Es esmu šeit* runs 105 minutes.

You can watch a trailer at:

https://www.imdb.com/video/vi2218574105?ref_=tt_pv_vi_aiv_1

February 16, 2021

MEXICO



Redes [The Wave] (1935)

Co-Directed by: Emilio Gómez Muriel
and Fred Zinnemann

Running Time: 60 minutes

Introduced by:

- Beatriz E. Nava Domingues,
Deputy Director, Mexican Cultural Institute
Embassy of Mexico
- Gregorio Luke,*
Scholar and Lecturer on Mexican Art

In terms of cinematic and musical history, *Redes* is a monumental — if perhaps unfamiliar — piece of art. A collaboration between Silvestre Revueltas, Paul Strand, and co-directors Emilio Gómez Muriel and Fred Zinneman, the film proved to be an innovative and seminal work that not only launched Mexico's golden age of cinema (1935–1960), but also created a new form of semi-documentary filmmaking. It demonstrates a clear political and aesthetic link to the Soviet Cinema of the era, particularly the shooting and editing styles of Eisenstein and Pudovkin.

Its use of oppressed people living in poverty, shooting in real locations with natural light, using non-actors, working on a limited budget, and exposing social injustices connects the Soviets to the Neorealist Movement that flourished in the 1940s. In fact, *Redes'* story, theme, and filmmaking approach are almost identical to Luchino Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948), the Italian Neorealist classic about exploited Sicilian fishermen.

Produced by the new Mexican government that emerged after the devastating Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), *Redes* tells the economic struggle of poor fishermen manipulated by the sole owner of their region's fish market. It celebrates day-to-day physical labor and depicts the working class as intrepid and valiant. Unabashedly pro-union, it champions consciousness-raising and organized resistance as means to achieve social justice and political reform. The film clearly expresses the left-leaning politics in international artistic circles of the time when artists championed the rights of workers everywhere.

Silvestre Revueltas composed *Redes'* music, the first of 11 films he scored. He served as the assistant conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico (1929–1935) and did much to promote modern Mexican orchestral music. He wrote most of his compositions between 1930 and 1940 when he died due to various health issues at 41. Revueltas' dazzling score for *Redes* is emotional, vibrant, colorful, and ultimately heroic. The music elevates the images of the film especially noticeable in three scenes: the sad processional of a funeral, the pulsing excitement of the season's first successful catch, and the epic drive of an inevitable working-class rebellion. In short, the film's score is one of the most powerful examples of cinematic music ever written. After *Redes*, Revueltas' best known work is *Sensemaya* (1938).

Emilio Gómez Muriel was an up and coming cineaste in the 1930s and eventually became one of Mexico's most prolific filmmakers, best known for melodramas, into the 1970s.

Fred Zinnemann also began his directorial career in the 1930s and went on to become one of Hollywood's major directors, helming such films as *High Noon* (1952), *From Here to Eternity* (1953), *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), and *Julia* (1977), and winning four Academy Awards.

Paul Strand was a major American photographer with strong social realism tendencies. He was also a filmmaker. His best known films include *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) — sponsored by the US Resettlement Administration — and the anti-fascist *Native Land* (1942). Both films are clearly influenced by *Redes*.

Redes runs 60 minutes. The film was restored in 2010 by Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Project and features a new recording of the original score produced in 2014 at the University of Maryland's Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

* <https://www.gregorioluke.com/about>

February 23, 2021

JAPAN



Koi no shizuku [For Love's Sake] (2018)

Directed by: Naoki Segi

Running Time: 115 minutes

Introduced by:

- Minister Shinichi Saida,
Minister, Head of Economic Department, Embassy
of Japan in the USA
- Reed Hessler,
Scholar and Lecturer on Asian Cinema

Koi no shizuku offers a light-hearted combination of romantic, culinary, and family dramas. Initially focusing on a student of an agricultural university in Tokyo Shiori (Rina Kawaei, a former member of the girl group AKB48) and her undesired sake internship, the film eventually features an ensemble cast of complex characters deal-

ing with multiple personal issues. *Koi no shizuku* also shows us how sake is made through dedication, intense labor, and teamwork. We see how sake is enjoyed as a central part of Japanese culture (for example, a visit to a sake festival highlights a *kagami biraki* ceremony where a wooden cask of sake is opened with mallets). As one character exclaims, “making sake is a trade that cultivates life.”

Due to an unfortunate incident in college, Shiori detests sake. Consequently, she has developed exceptional skills in wine tasting and is hoping an internship will take her to France. Instead, a lottery sends her to the Nogami Sake Brewery outside of Hiroshima. Shiori’s visit does not start well. The small, family-run brewery forgot to cancel the internship because of financial troubles. She meets the owner of the brewery Teruyoshi (played by the famous actor Ren Osugi), his renegade son Kanji (Hayato Onozuka, known for his role in the *Kamen Rider* metaseries), master brewer Tsubosima (Mantarō Koichi), rice farmer Misaki (Mao Miyaji), rival brewer Arishige (Yuichi Nakamura), and many others who help her slowly appreciate sake — as a beverage and as a way of life. Shiori becomes an important mediator between the old traditions and the new model of mass production. Ultimately, she not only rejuvenates the brewery but also her perspective on life.

Shiori develops a close friendship with Misaki (who is secretly loved by Arishige) and eventually a romantic connection with Kanji. A quiet death precipitates the reconsideration of a business deal to modernize production, the exploration of a family secret, the importance of honoring tradition, the value of community, and the various ways people fall in love. Life-altering decisions must be made by the main characters at the end of the film. They begin thinking about their options by following Yukio Mishima’s short story “The Seven Bridges,” where four geishas walk across seven bridges without stopping or speaking, in the hope that the moon will grant their wishes. In *Koi no shizuku*, after much walking and contemplating, some wishes are granted and some are left unanswered — but with hope. The future is appropriately ambiguous, but clearly full of promise.

You can watch a trailer at: <https://mydramalist.com/25424-loves-water-drop>

To learn more about the sakes of Hiroshima, go to

<https://sake-hiroshima.com/en/>

Kampai!

2021 is the 40th Anniversary of the Maryland and Japan’s Kanagawa Prefecture Sister State relationship as part of Maryland’s Sister States Program. Thousands from both regions have benefited from the partnership through educational and sports exchanges, business development, and cultural programming.

Kanagawa Prefecture, with a population of 9 million people, lies southwest of Tokyo. Its capital, Yokohama, is a bustling port city, and the center of the Prefecture’s economy.

March 2, 2021

EGYPT



Al-mowaten [The Citizen] (2013)

Written, Directed, and Co-written by:

Sam Kadi

Running Time: 100 minutes

Introduced by:

- Dr. Mohamed Hamza,
Cultural Counselor and Director, Educational and Cultural Bureau
- Sam Kadi,
Producer and Director

This is not an “Egyptian Film,” per se, but an independent American film that foregrounds an important challenge faced by Arab immigrants (and all immigrants): How to access and live the American Dream in a society that is suspicious of or feels threatened by you. Imagine how this challenge is amplified if you happen to arrive in New York City one day before the 9/11 terrorist attack. You learn that innocence is not a defense against xenophobia.

Ibrahim Jarrah (played by the well-known and award-winning Egyptian actor Khaled Nabawy) enters the United States as a lucky winner of the green card lottery. A skilled auto mechanic and car salesman, he plans to gain American citizenship and open his own business. A miscommunication with his cousin leads Ibrahim to fabricate an excuse about where he will stay; an excuse that later creates a significant problem. His life in New York proves to be quite a roller coaster — he befriends a young American woman, is arrested without cause and held at an undisclosed location for six months, finds a job, befriends a homeless man who later betrays him, begins to fall in love with a Lebanese woman he meets at an English language class, defends a Jewish man from a vicious attack, becomes a media hero, and defends himself against an unjust deportation order. Through every setback and humiliation, Ibrahim maintains his resolve to become a citizen. His credo — “to reach your dreams, plant your good deeds” — foreshadows the conclusion of the film and the realization of his goal.

Sam Kadi is an award-winning filmmaker. His documentary *Little Gandhi* (2016) about murdered peace activist Ghiath Matar was selected as the Syrian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2017 Academy Awards and *The Citizen* has received international acclaim. Effectively using some of the conventions of melodrama (concerns of the family, a focus on morality and ethics, the interplay of coincidence and fate, an unexpected threat from an external source, and a strong appeal to emotions), Kadi creates a powerfully moving film that also corrects Arab stereotypes and advocates for social justice. Kadi gave a TED Talk in 2018 about the need to tell the stories of the oppressed and to lend voices to the unheard as a means to change lives, opinions, and society.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMkzQ47FwI0>

The Citizen’s ensemble cast (featuring Carey Elwse, William Atherton, Rizwan Manji, Brian Edward Marable, and Agnes Bruckner) effectively portrays believable New York City characters caught up in the insecurities of urban life during a crisis. The standout performance belongs to Khaled Nabawy. He creates a fully rounded and complex Ibrahim, reacting to everything he experiences with a combination of wonder, disbelief, and determination. Through his perseverance, Ibrahim becomes a true hero in every sense of the word.

You can watch a trailer at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhRCfX1pU5U>