



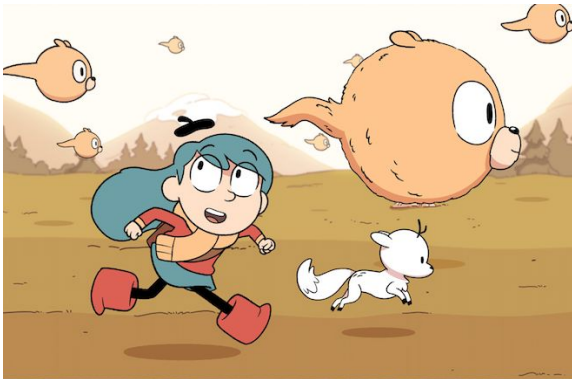
## NEW YORK INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES COMPLETE 2018 FEATURE SLATE

**Festival dates: Feb 23 - Mar 18, 2018**

**WORLD PREMIERE: Luke Pearson's *HILDA***

**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERES: Luc Jacquet's *MARCH OF THE PENGUINS 2: THE NEXT STEP*; Clovis Cornillac's *BELLE AND SEBASTIAN, FRIENDS FOR LIFE*; and Mischa Kamp's *SING SONG***

**US PREMIERE: Emelie Lindblom's *ROOM 213***



Clockwise: *Hilda*, *March of the Penguins 2: The Next Step*, *Sing Song*, *Room 213*

**NEW YORK (January 17, 2018)** – The Oscar® qualifying NY Int'l Children's Film Festival announces its complete 2018 feature lineup. Celebrating its 21st anniversary, the 2018 Festival presents four weekends

**NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL**

of groundbreaking and thought-provoking new films carefully curated for a new generation of filmgoers ages 3 to 18. Comprising animated, live action, and documentary features from over a dozen countries, this year's lineup includes one World premiere, three North American premieres, one US premiere, and six East Coast premieres. Tickets go on sale January 17 for members and January 24 for the general public at [nyicff.org](http://nyicff.org).

Highlights include the World premiere of *Hilda*, Luke Pearson's episodic adaptation of his celebrated graphic novel series, in which plucky Hilda sets out on adventures evoking both Scandinavian folklore and Studio Ghibli. Among NYICFF's trio of North American premieres are *Sing Song* (Netherlands/Suriname), Mischa Kamp's refreshing, inventive entry to the musical genre, in which a young singer travels to Suriname in search of her roots; Clovis Cornillac's beautifully shot *Belle and Sebastian, Friends for Life* (France), the third installment of a Festival-favorite franchise set in the French Alps circa WWII; and Luc Jacquet's *March of the Penguins 2: The Next Step* (France), a feat of cutting-edge 4K cinematography that allows audiences deep into the Arctic waters to witness a new generation of emperor penguins as they trek far and wide to survive. NYICFF's premiere screenings of *March of the Penguins 2* will be the film's only theatrical showcase before its HULU release on March 23. The 2018 Festival also features the US Premiere of Emelie Lindblom's *Room 213* (Sweden), a spooky, smart genre entrypoint for young audiences set at a haunted summer camp.

Previously announced special screenings and events include Masaaki Yuasa's *Lu Over the Wall* as Opening Night, Alexandre Espigares' *White Fang* as Opening Spotlight, and Netflix's *A Series of Unfortunate Events: Season 2, The Austere Academy* as Centerpiece, along with inaugural edition of a kids and family-gear Virtual Reality mini-fest: VR JR.

**FESTIVAL DATES:** February 23 - March 18, 2018

**TICKETS:** [nyicff.org](http://nyicff.org)

**LOCATIONS:** Alamo Drafthouse City Point, Cinépolis Chelsea, IFC Center, Museum of the Moving Image, Scandinavia House, and SVA Theatre

OPENING NIGHT:

● **LU OVER THE WALL, dir. Masaaki Yuasa (Japan) – 2018, East Coast premiere, Animation, 107 minutes**

Anime auteur Masaaki Yuasa's latest gem boasts a distinctive, off-kilter animation style, eye-popping color palette, and outrageous music. But at its core, *Lu Over the Wall* is a captivating coming of age story. The eponymous Lu is a manic mermaid with a show-stopping voice who helps Kai, a gifted teenager unfulfilled by small-town life, discover his own. Winner of the Grand Prize Cristal Award at Annecy 2017 and screening at NYICFF straight from Sundance, the film evokes charming hints of Miyazaki, but claims a frenetic energy and surreal structure all its own.

OPENING SPOTLIGHT:

● **WHITE FANG, dir. Alexandre Espigares (France/Luxembourg/USA) – 2018, East Coast premiere, Animation, 85 minutes**

NYICFF alum and Oscar®-winning short film director Alexandre Espigares returns with his feature debut, a thrilling and thought-provoking adaptation of Jack London's classic tale. *White Fang* employs the voice work of Rashida Jones, Nick Offerman, Eddie Spears, and Paul Giamatti to tell the epic journey of White Fang's life from pup to sled-dog to abused prizefighter and beyond, set in the gorgeously rendered landscape of the Pacific Northwest frontier.

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CENTERPIECE:

- **A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS: SEASON 2, THE AUSTERE ACADEMY**, dirs. Barry Sonnenfeld and Daniel Handler (USA) – 2018, Special Preview Screening, Live Action, 98 minutes (Parts 1 & 2)

Join us for an exclusive sneak peek as the delightfully dark and witty Lemony Snicket *Series* goes from book to screen in season two of the Netflix original. The ever-intrepid Baudelaire siblings--Violet, Klaus, and Sunny--are back, still plagued by the evil Count Olaf (Neil Patrick Harris) and his troupe. The challenges mount, but shabby disguises, nefarious schemes, and very big words don't faze this resourceful trio. They won't relent until they unlock the secret to their parents' disappearance and enlighten a few less literate adults along the way. Season 2 launches March 30, only on Netflix.

VIRTUAL REALITY MINI-FEST:

- **VR JR., Interactive VR Experiences and VR JR. Talk**

We're bringing our high-quality, innovative programming into digital realms, offering a new dedicated Virtual Reality mini-fest for kids and families. A dynamic, interactive experience presented over the course of a full weekend, VR JR. will feature exciting VR projects, special talks, and demos. Just as we've made the enjoyment of artful, international films an accessible experience for young audiences, we're excited to do the same for VR. Explore a new facet of creative production with the latest VR projects that place kids at the helm of their own immersive story world. Projects include the East Coast premiere of the Neil Gaiman picture book adaptation *Wolves in the Walls*, directed by Pete Billington, and Golden Globe-nominated director Jorge Gutiérrez's *Son of Jaguar*, a new Google Spotlight Story placing viewers into the story of a family of Mexican wrestlers.

FEATURES (LISTED ALPHABETICALLY):

- **BELLE AND SEBASTIAN, FRIENDS FOR LIFE**, dir. Clovis Cornillac (France) – 2018, North American premiere, Live Action, 91 minutes

A Festival favorite returns with the conclusion of this celebrated French trilogy, capping the adventures of Sebastian and his devoted dog, Belle. In the French Alps circa WWII, Sebastian, happy in his rural village with Belle and her pups, is unsettled when he overhears news of a potential move. Even more disturbing is the stranger who appears, claiming Belle as his own. It will take all of Sebastian's determination and devotion to those he loves to surmount these challenges in this stunningly filmed series culmination.

- **THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES**, dirs. Benjamin Renner & Patrick Imbert (France) – 2017, New York premiere, Animation, 80 minutes

From the director of Oscar®-nominated *Ernest & Celestine* (NYICFF 2013), *Big Bad Fox* is a three-part tale that will have you howling! A pig takes over a stork's duties, hopping planes, trains, and automobiles to make a delivery. A fox strives to be seen as big and bad instead of sweet and silly. And a bird is desperate to swap roles from Christmas Duck to Father Christmas in this hilarious trifecta of animated stories about farmyard animals with big dreams.

- **BIG FISH & BEGONIA**, dirs. Xuan Liang & Chun Zhang (China) – 2016, East Coast premiere, Animation, 105 minutes

An astonishing work over a decade in the making and China's second-highest-grossing locally produced animated feature, *Big Fish & Begonia* crosses worlds, unleashes the elements, and pushes our understanding of fate itself. Thoughtful Chun comes from an unseen world responsible for Earth's wellbeing. When she crosses into our planet, she develops a bond with a human boy who sacrifices his life for hers. *Big Fish & Begonia* draws on fascinating Chinese mythology to show Chun's epic journey to return the favor.

• **HILDA, dir. Luke Pearson (USA) – 2018, World premiere, Animation, 44 minutes**

Join us for this exclusive World Premiere of *Hilda*, adapted from UK author Luke Pearson's captivating and best-selling series of graphic novels by Mercury Filmworks/Silvergate. Follow the adventures of bright and fearless blue-haired Hilda, her adorable deerfox Twig, and her artist mom as they travel from their home in a vast magical wilderness full of elves and giants to the bustling city of Trolberg. This vividly animated fantasy adventure is inspired by strange Scandinavian folklore and evokes the films of Studio Ghibli.

• **HORUS, PRINCE OF THE SUN, dir. Isao Takahata (Japan) – 1968, Animation, 82 minutes**

NYICFF's Festival Flashback celebrates the golden anniversary of a mythical tale from famed Studio Ghibli founders Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki—a film some say sparked the birth of anime. In this East-meets-West take on *The Sword in the Stone*, Japanese Ainu legend is transposed to a Norse setting filled with adventure. Enter our hero Horus, who ventures through snowy land and Ghibli-esque sea journeys to save a village from evil Grunwald. He meets a new friend, the regal but mysterious Hilda, who may be more complicated than Horus could ever imagine...

• **LIYANA, dirs. Aaron Kopp & Amanda Kopp (Swaziland/USA/Qatar) – 2017, Documentary/Animation, 77 minutes**

*Liyana* is a thrilling, beautifully-illustrated fictional tale of a young girl on a perilous quest to reunite with her brothers. At the same time, it's a compelling documentary following the lives of five amazing children from an orphanage in Swaziland. Together with their wonderful storytelling teacher, these bright and captivating youngsters transform their difficult experiences through narrative to collectively craft Liyana's tale. An ode to the power of storytelling and the strength of the human spirit, *Liyana* is an uplifting, genre-defying film not to be missed.

• **MARCH OF THE PENGUINS 2: THE NEXT STEP, dir. Luc Jacquet (France) – 2017, North American premiere, Documentary, 77 minutes**

Twelve years after its first big splash, *March of the Penguins* returns in grand form with its inimitable narrator Morgan Freeman, and NYICFF offers the unique opportunity to see the film gloriously on the big screen prior to its HULU premiere March 23. The emperor penguins' arduous journey is even more urgent in the face of climate change, and more impressive, featuring awe-inspiring imagery made possible by cutting-edge 4K cinematography and underwater camerawork. Now a new generation of black-and-white heroes steal the show, sometimes fuzzy, sometimes sleek, but ever charming, curious, dignified, skillful, and devoted. Follow parents and children alike as they heed nature's call to bridge sea, land, and generations to survive.

• **NEXT DOOR SPY, dir. Karla von Bengtson (Denmark) – 2017, East Coast premiere, Animation, 77 minutes**

Girl detective—check! Skater boy—check! You think you've got the stock characters down, but snoop around with the witty and wise *Next Door Spy* and you'll find that things aren't quite what they seem. Ten-year-old Agathe-Christine (AC, if you ask her) loves a good mystery. When her family moves to a new town that's seemingly full of them, AC will need to turn her crackerjack detective skills inward to go beyond first impressions and unlock the key to friendship.

• **ROOM 213, dir. Emelie Lindblom (Sweden) – 2017, US premiere, Live Action, 81 minutes**

Room 213 has been unoccupied for 60 years. That is, until 12-year-old Elvira and her camp roommates Bea and Meja move in. Soon enough, mysterious things begin happening that might be explained by a

jealous tween camper... or a good old-fashioned haunting! As the spooks and stakes reach a fever pitch, the girls' friendship blooms into a formidable force for good.

● **SING SONG, dir. Mischa Kamp (Netherlands/Suriname) – 2017, North American premiere, Live Action, 96 minutes**

Breathing life into the musical genre and shining light on a rarely represented corner of the world, *Sing Song* is a celebration of finding your roots and voice. When 16-year-old Jasmine is invited to participate in a singing contest in Suriname, she accepts the chance to visit the homeland she's never seen. But she's not there just to sing. She's on a secret search for her family, developing artistic self-discipline and deepening her cultural and self-awareness in this uplifting tale that hits all the right notes.

● **ZOMBILLENIUM, dirs. Arthur de Pins & Alexis Ducord (France) – 2017, East Coast premiere, Animation, 80 minutes**

Sprung from comic book pages and crypts alike, celebrated French graphic novelist Arthur de Pins' characters come to life, or er, undeath, on the big screen with a wickedly wry story of monster liberation. Challenges abound when amusement park Zombillennium is threatened by a corporate buy-out. Fortunately, high-minded ghoul dad Hector, tenacious witchboarder Gretchen, and a collective cohort of zombies rise up and fight in true French form for worker rights--above and below ground--in this clever genre and monster mash up.

● **ZOO, dir. Colin McIvor (Ireland/UK) – 2017, East Coast premiere, Live Action, 96 minutes**

Delve into the Irish WWII experience by following a group of determined youngsters who band together for a cause bigger—much bigger—than themselves. When Tom's father, a veterinarian for the Belfast Zoo, is called away to war, Tom feels it's his duty to ensure the well-being of the animals, including its newest addition, a baby elephant. But the impending German air raids and short-sighted decisions of the Zoo staff threaten to endanger the animals, and Tom must act quickly in this inspired-by-true-life tale of family, friendship, and empathy.

**ABOUT NEW YORK INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL**

Distinguished by its unique mission and high-caliber programming, New York International Children's Film Festival was founded in 1997 to support the creation and dissemination of thoughtful, provocative, and intelligent film for young people ages 3-18. Celebrating its 21st year, the 2018 Festival takes place February 23 - March 18. The Festival's dynamic film program, drawn from roughly 2,500 international submissions, boasts over 120 short and feature films, filmmaker Q&As, retrospective programs, parties, premieres, audience voting, and a Closing Night celebration. NYICFF is an Academy Award® qualifying festival, one of only two children's film festivals in the country, with the Festival's esteemed jury selecting the qualifying films. The largest film festival for children and teens in North America, NYICFF cultivates an appreciation for the arts, encourages active, discerning viewing, and stimulates lively discussion among peers, families, and the film community.

Goldfish® Colors is a Presenting Sponsor of the 2018 Festival. New York International Children's Film Festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, with support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, a Humanities New York Action Grant, and a grant from the NYC & Company Foundation. Girls' POV programming is supported by EILEEN FISHER and Sony USA Foundation. Film-Ed is supported by AMC Cares.

In addition to presenting the annual event, New York International Children's Film Festival is a multifaceted arts organization that offers year-round engagement, including a nationwide touring program, filmmaking camps, and

Film-Ed educational field trips for public and private schools, with free or reduced cost school programs offering equal access to the art of film for all.

**NYICFF 2018 information:**  
**[www.nyicff.org](http://www.nyicff.org) / 212-349-0330**

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