



NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
FILM FESTIVAL



NEW YORK INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2019 OPENING NIGHT, OPENING SPOTLIGHT, SPECIAL COUNTRY FOCUS

OPENING NIGHT

East Coast Premiere of Chiwetel Ejiofor's *THE BOY WHO
HARNESSED THE WIND*

OPENING SPOTLIGHT

East Coast Premiere of Juan Antin's *PACHAMAMA*

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

Focus on the NETHERLANDS

NEW YORK (January 10, 2019) – The Oscar® qualifying New York International Children's Film Festival has announced the Opening Night, Spotlight, and special country focus for the 2019 edition of North America's largest film festival for children and teens. The 22nd annual Festival will run from February 22 through March 17 and will present animated, live action, documentary, VR, and experimental shorts, and features from over 30 countries. Tickets go on sale January 16 for members and January 23rd for the general public at www.nyicff.org.

The Festival opens on Friday, February 22nd, with the East Coast debut, directly from its Sundance premiere, of Oscar®-nominated actor Chiwetel Ejiofor's directorial debut, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. Based on the remarkable memoir of William Kamkwamba, the film shares the story of a young boy who relies on wit and ingenuity to save his Malawian village from famine. Ejiofor, who wrote the screenplay, also co-stars in the film, which will be available on Netflix on March 1, 2019.

Sunday, February 24th will mark the East Coast premiere of the Festival's Opening Spotlight film, Juan Antin's beautifully animated adventure quest, *Pachamama*, which will be distributed by Netflix. Inspired by indigenous culture and featuring vibrant colors, characters, and traditional music, *Pachamama* brings an ancient story to life with both 3D CGI and 2D animation against the richly depicted backdrop of the Peruvian Andes. The film follows a young shaman-to-be and his friend on a journey to safeguard their native ways.

NYICFF will also be presenting its third edition of *Friends & Neighbors*, a program spotlighting the distinctive artistry of a country of focus and partner festival. Following Canada's TIFF Kids and Mexico's Morelia International Film Festival, NYICFF is collaborating with the Netherlands Consulate General in New York, the Netherlands' premiere children's film festival Cinekid and EYE International to present a series of shorts by the Netherlands' most accomplished live action, animation, and documentary filmmakers for young audiences, as well as highlight new Dutch feature filmmaking for youth. *Friends & Neighbors: Netherlands* is part of *Never Grow Up!*, a yearlong initiative bringing an abundance of Dutch film, literature, and performing arts for young people to the United States. A wide range of work from the Netherlands for young audiences and families will be presented and shared at festivals, conferences, and other platforms, all representing a respect for young people and dedication to youth culture as an autonomous art form. For more information, visit dutchcultureusa.com/nevergrowup.

OPENING
NIGHT

THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND, dir. Chiwetel Ejiofor (Malawi/UK) — 2019, East Coast premiere, Live Action, 113 minutes

Written, directed, and co-starring Oscar-nominated Chiwetel Ejiofor, this inspiring true-to-life film, adapted from the bestselling book by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer, follows 13-year-old William Kamkwamba (newcomer Maxwell Simba) who is thrown out of the school he loves when his family can no longer afford the fees. Sneaking back into the school library, he finds a way, using the bones of the bicycle belonging to his father Trywell (Chiwetel Ejiofor), to build a windmill which then saves his Malawian village from famine. The emotional journey of a father and his exceptional son at its heart, William's tale captures the incredible determination of a boy whose inquisitive mind overcame every obstacle in his path.

OPENING
SPOTLIGHT

PACHAMAMA, dir. Juan Antin (France/Luxembourg/Canada) – 2018, East Coast premiere, Animation, 72 minutes.

Director Juan Antin in person February 24th.

Tepulpai's your average kid—headstrong and a bit naughty. It may seem unusual that he has a pet armadillo and wants to be a shaman, but not if you live in the ancient Peruvian Andes like he and his wise friend Naira do. The two embark on a young heroes' quest to locate their community's stolen treasure and must confront the Inca and newly arrived Spanish to retain their indigenous ways. With a vibrantly-hued palette and Pre-Colombian soundtrack of ancient flutes and condor wings—*Pachamama* exuberantly celebrates nature, culture, and community.

SPECIAL COUNTRY FOCUS

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS: NETHERLANDS FEATURE FILM PREMIERE

MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS, dir. Steven Wouterlood (Netherlands) – 2019, North American premiere, Live Action, 82 minutes

While Sam's family heads out for a Dutch island holiday of fun, the 10-year-old decides it's the perfect time to train himself to be alone. Even if his teen brother is a know-it-all, Sam's got a great family and no reason to worry. But as the youngest, he fears one day he'll outlive everyone. His training is interrupted when he meets spirited Tess, who, on a pressing quest of her own, pulls Sam into her madcap scheme. The two discover that, as messy and vulnerable as it is, perhaps togetherness isn't so bad.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS: NETHERLANDS — Two short film programs, approx. 70 minutes each

NYICFF is crossing the Atlantic to pair up with far-flung *Friends & Neighbors* this year. Cinekid, the Netherlands' premiere film festival for children and EYE International come ashore to share their best short films. Featuring a range of different cultures and themes—from Old Amsterdam to New York—and fresh stories that keep history alive.

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 children and teens ages 3-18. Celebrating its 22nd year in 2019, the flagship New York City Festival takes place February 22 - March 17, and has grown from one weekend of films into the largest film festival for children and teens in North America. Presenting consistently sold-out screenings for the general public and weekday screenings for school groups throughout New York City over the course of four weeks at venues throughout the city, the Festival's rich and dynamic film program — drawn from roughly 2,500 international submissions — boasts over 100 short and feature films, filmmaker Q&As, retrospective programs, parties, premieres, audience voting, and a Closing Night celebration. The Festival is an Academy Award® qualifying festival, one of only four film festivals in New York State — and only two children's film festivals in the country — to hold that honor with the Festival's esteemed jury selecting the qualifying films. The Festival experience cultivates an appreciation for the arts, encourages active, discerning viewing, and stimulates lively discussion among peers, families, and the film community.

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. 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, and a Humanities New York Action Grant. Girls' POV programming is supported by Sony USA Foundation. Film-Ed is supported by AMC Cares. Japanese films at the Festival are supported by Japan-United States Friendship Commission. Netherlands films are supported by *Never Grow Up!*, a joint effort of Dutch Performing Arts, the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York, EYE International, Netherlands Film Fund, Cinekid, Dutch Foundation for Literature, and DutchCulture.

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NYICFF 2019 information:

www.nyicff.org

Press Photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/phnux9vml661uzu/AAD0FnGlpDil72I9BuxsREZCa?dl=0>

Photo Credits:

- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (2019), dir. Chiwetel Ejiofor. Courtesy Ilze Kitshoff / Netflix.
- *Pachamama* (2018), dir. Juan Antin. Courtesy New York Int'l Children's Film Festival.
- *My Extraordinary Summer with Tess* (2019), dir. Steven Wouterlood. Courtesy New York Int'l Children's Film Festival.

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