

Aotearoa Poetry Film Festival

2025

Kia ora and welcome to the third edition of the Aotearoa Poetry Film Festival!

Our festival is entirely devoted to the celebration and showcase of poetry film in all its myriad forms, and we are enthralled to have you tag along as we showcase unique projects from all around the world. Over the next two days, we will screen 42 films, hear Professor Marco Sonzogni discuss the historical relationship between image and word, and watch burgeoning students' promising poetic creations. So, as we say... get comfortable, open your mind, and prepare to engage with some brilliant artwork!

Sincerely,

Tyler Shane Tesolin and Alfio Leotta

Co-Directors, APFF

**Opening Celebration begins 5:30 pm at
Vogelmorn Bowling Club Upstairs.**

Organisers

Alfio Leotta

Alfio is a scholar and film-maker based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Alfio has written several books that deal with topics such as New Zealand cinema, fantasy cinema and the relationship between film and tourism. Alfio is also an award-winning filmmaker who produced and directed a number of poetry films and fantasy short films that have screened at festivals both in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas. Alfio is the founder and co-director of the Aotearoa Poetry Film Festival.

Tyler Shane Tesolin

Tyler was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. He studied Cinema and Media at York University in Toronto. Tyler makes films that focus primarily on the intersection between poetry and film. On top of screening his movies in various cities across Canada, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and New Zealand, he has written an apologia for experimental film, and has published two books of poetry. Tesolin currently resides in Wellington, where he is completing a PhD in Film at Victoria University. He runs monthly experimental film screenings with Film Adjacent.

Jury

Gwen Isaac

Gwen Isaac is a documentary filmmaker whose work includes the award-winning *Where There is Life*, *Siouxsie & the Virus*, and her most recent feature *Ms. Information*, selected for *Whānau Mārama 2023* and *FIFO Tahiti*. Based in Aotearoa New Zealand, she teaches at Massey University and is currently developing a new feature and a docu-series.



Hannah van Seventer

Hannah is an Ōtaki based writer working at the intersection of creative nonfiction and ecological art practice. At present, she is working on a visual research project exploring lithium mining and intimacies in climate crisis. She holds an MA in Art History from Te Herenga Waka.



Marco Sonzogni

Marco Sonzogni is a widely published and award-winning scholar, literary translator, poet, editor and cultural activist. He researches and teaches evolutionary translation and intercultural communication at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington.



Arvid Eriksson

Swedish-born, Auckland-based director Arvid Eriksson is known for films that feel intimate, immediate, and emotionally authentic - often seeing the beauty in the mundane. For over twenty years, Arvid has created award-winning work in New Zealand, Sweden, and the UK, with films funded and distributed by the British Film Council, Swedish Film Institute, and Canal Plus.



Thursday, November 20th, 2025

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Opening Night Drinks

A soiree of snacks and drinks to celebrate the opening of the festival on November 20th at Vogelmorn Upstairs.

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Programme One ~ New Zealand & International
Post-screening drinks with the community at
Vogelmorn Upstairs.

Friday, November 21st, 2025

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Image and Ekphrasis: A discussion with juror
Marco Sonzogni about historical and aesthetic
relations between image creation and poetry
writing.

5:15 PM - 6:15 PM

Programme Two ~ Student Programme

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Programme Three~New Zealand & International
Awards to be announced.

Post-Festival Celebration at Vogelmorn
Upstairs.

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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
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TE HERENGA WAKA



Thank you

We would like to thank those who helped to bring a third poetry film festival together. First and foremost, we would like to thank our esteemed jurors for their time watching hundreds of films over and over again so that we here could enjoy the best and most interesting creations. We would also like to thank Marco Sonzogni for his illuminating talk on November 21st. We would like to thank Christopher Thompson and Ciara Bowkett for their commitment to the success of this festival. We could not have done it without them. We would like to thank all our sponsors, which include Vogelmorn Bowling Club, Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University, and Smoked and Pickled. We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped us in any way over the two days of the festival. They are always the backbone of the festival. As for the heart of the festival, it is you, the viewer, and for that, we sincerely thank you. Your continued support of poetry, film, and the arts in Wellington is vital for the cultural success of our beautiful city.

Programme One ~ New Zealand and International November 20th. 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Runtime: 1h20m

City of Angles — Imprisoned Lightning Redux

Amos Mann, New Zealand. 1993. Super8. 3m
New Zealand Competition
“City of Angles is an experimental short film by Amos Mann shot from the hip one frame at a time in New York City in 1993. The film’s fast-paced and fleeting imagery creates a heightened immediacy that connects us to a time from before the authoritarian ‘clean-up’ of New York in the years that followed filming. City of Angles celebrates the ethos of New York City as a creative and synergistic safe harbour for immigrants, refugees, those escaping oppression and persecution, and those seeking safe space for creative life.”

Ephemory

Andy Harrison, United Kingdom. 2025. Digital. 9m59s
International Competition
“Loneliness creeps up on all of us; in our quietest times and in our busiest. Ephemory is a visual poem that explores three expressions of contemporary isolation and the fleeting moments of self reflection that allow people to connect. Quiet and introspective, the film holds a mirror to its characters - what they see is up to them.”

Light Ghazal

Jake Alexander McAfee, United States. 2025. Digital. 2m47s
International Competition
“Hala Alyan performs her poem “Light Ghazal” to her reflection on a street in New York City”

UNSEEN

Helmie Stil, Netherlands. 2024. Digital. 2m26s
International Competition
“a poetry film about the feeling of isolation, struggle and being unseen. 1 in every 5 women endures domestic violence....unseen.”

The Simultaneity of Breathing

Mersolis Schöne, Austria. 2024. Digital. 4m14s
International Competition
“In “The Simultaneity of Breathing”, Mersolis Schöne envisions experimental film production as a place of encounter where drawings and press photos byAustrian artist Lisa Est and Thomas Ballhausen’s poetry come together in a shared philosophical experiment. Through the voices of Apollina Smaragd (German) and James Delaney (English), lines such as “words / that always keep us alive” lead us to the threshold of a semantic breath. The film itself takes shape as a living, poetic being that explores those fleeting moments when reality and possibility meet in the blur between breaths.”

Florida

Olivia Evenden, Canada. 2025. Digital. 8m21s
International Competition
“After accepting an invite to holiday with relatives, a filmmaker documents her first-ever experience of the sunshine state. As she explores what it is like to be an alien in an alien place, the beauty of seeing the world through your own eyes is revealed.”

HAPPY DAY

Boru Zheng, China. 2025. Digital. 4m44s
International Competition
“HAPPY DAY is a film about knowing meaninglessness yet choosing to celebrate it. Through the lens of celebration culture — with cakes, festive decorations as protagonists — the story unfolds. It contemplates existence while documenting growth; it speaks of loss and possession; hides personal easter eggs yet reveals identity...”

Wandering Feelings

Rendro Aryo, Indonesia. 2025. Super8. 5m
International Competition
“On a journey, a man and a woman share wandering feelings to celebrate the beautiful absurdity.”

Love Sonnet

Aislinn Furlong, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 2m54s
New Zealand Competition
“Three women find themselves trapped in a Shakespearean sonnet- the writing is on the wall, the bathroom wall to be exact... (inspired by Shakespeare’s Sonnet 145).”

The Goring

Kevin Romond, New Zealand. 2024. 16mm. 2m52s
New Zealand Competition
“The Goring pairs Sylvia Plath’s poem with 16mm footage shot in Tijuana, Mexico—left unprocessed for three decades. The result is a ghostly visual texture, layered with AI-generated voices and an original droning score. A meditation on mortality and memory, the film becomes a hypnotic collision of text, texture, and time.”

Janet Leigh Is Afraid of Jazz

Matt B. Mullins, United States. 2024. Digital. 5m23s
International Competition
“We will all have to face the music.”

We Are All Drowned Out

Kimberly Reyes, Gary De Buit Ireland, United States. 2022. Digital. 5m36s
International Competition
“A Poetry Film for the poem of the same name from the book ‘vanishing point.’ by Kimberly Reyes. The poem explores the complicated identity and ancestry of descendants of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.”

Amergin

Jonathan Brennan, Ireland. 2025. Digital. 10m
International Competition
“‘Amergin’ transposes the mythological first poet of Ireland to the semi-desert settings of northeastern Mexico. Loosely inspired by the fascinating story of Irish soldiers in 19th Mexico, Amergin weaves together lyrics, images, flora and fauna of the poet’s two countries (Ireland and Mexico) to create a hallucinogenic sense of estrangement and cross-pollination.”

SuperImposed

Ouater Truong Sand, United States. 2024. 16mm. 2m58s
International Competition
“Superimposed is the result of a collaboration between Ouater Sand and Lucia Coppola. Sand’s images are part of an ongoing artistic journey with ways of seeing. In Superimposed he plays with the space within shadows and at the intersection of dreams and reality. His work strives to explore qualities of movement and light that ultimately also invite the gaze of the spectator.”

Bike ride

Ibrahim Selman, Netherlands. 2024. Digital. 5m27s
International Competition
““Bike Ride” is a poetic film portraying a meditative journey through the mist — both literal and metaphorical. As the cyclist moves through a foggy landscape, the boundaries between reality, memory, and reflection blur. The poem touches on existential themes such as faith, sacrifice, animal rights, and the absurdity of existence, referencing Nietzsche, religious figures, and Samuel Beckett.”

The Girl with the Matches

Britta Pollmuller, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 1m31s
New Zealand Competition
“Using charcoal hand drawing, and stop-motion Dragonframe, and AI voice (Kling), it’s inspired by Heinrich Hoffmann’s tales and reflects on Germany’s legacy of “black pedagogy”—a culture where fear-based discipline taught obedience as survival and curiosity as risk.”

Cassandra

Gwen Isaac, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 3m
New Zealand Competition
“An intimate portrait of artist Sacha Lees as she prepares for her final graduation exhibition. Through fleeting yet potent moments, the film traces Lees’ creative process as it unfolds toward a major work.”

Programme Two ~ Student Programme November 21st. 5:15 pm - 6:15 pm. Runtime: 1h

Programme begins with Victoria University Student Film Screening. 15m

I THINK ABOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE EVERY DAY

Sophia Ditzler, Germany, Switzerland. 2025. Digital. 3m40s
Student Competition
“I THINK ABOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE EVERY DAY is a media-archeological poetry film that responds to the viral 2023 social media trend revealing an everyday male preoccupation with the Roman Empire. While the meme often circles around humorous gender norms, the work traces its deeper cultural currents: Rome as a mythic ideal in certain, often more conservative spaces, but also as an ongoing civilizational substrate shaping basically everything from law, architecture, social norms to collective imagination.”

Echoes of a Narcissist

Georgia Mae Normington, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 1m59s
Student Competition
“Interwoven with visual and poetic ties to the Greek myth of a forgotten voice, Echoes of a Narcissist explores the lingering effects of being in a relationship with someone who never cared much for you. It reveals how this apathy seeps into who you are years on, as sounds and sensations bring you back to those formative moments.”

REINCARNATION

Sukie Gethin, United States. 2025. Digital. 1m14s
Student Competition
“Experimental film and poem by Sukie Gethin, exploring the belief that human energy is shared with the stars.”

crash course on numbers

Isabel Boutiette, United States. 2025. Digital. 4m24s
Student Competition
“This is a Maya animation project with performance video and text installed, and a poem voice over. It’s about the formation of identity alongside technology, and materializes communicative technology as a part of the body and built environment.”

The Road We Walked

Shi Chen, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 3m10s
Student Competition
“This is a poetic short film about... emotional vulnerability and the impermanence of connection. Set on a street that once held shared steps, it becomes both literal and symbolic—a physical journey through memory and emotion.”

Two Lines

Prema Cottingham, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 2m
Student Competition
“A poetry film. In the aftermath of a loss, a woman stands on a beach. She allows her grief to engulf her, in a hope that she can move on.”

Denial of Extinction

Jasper Riley Bruce, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 1m49s
Student Competition
“The last person on Earth reconciles hope and existential dread as he meanders with his feet and his mind.”

09.01.berkovich

Anya Ryzhkova, Germany. 2024. Digital. 6m
Student Competition
“The film is based on a speech by the Russian theater director Evgenia Berkovich. Together with the playwright Svetlana Petriychuk, Evgenia Berkovich has been under arrest and jailed since May 2023 on charges of “public calls to terrorism”. On the ninth of January 2024, before the verdict was supposed to be announced, she read her final speech in verse.”

Settler Trips Home

Alex Feliciano Mejia, United States. 2025. 16mm. 3m26s
Student Competition
“Using 16mm images processed by hand with eucalyptus homebrew, this cine-poem follows a settler’s search for a colonial mansion now overtaken by eucalyptus trees. As the protagonist encounters these trees, their identity becomes fluid, expressed through digitally synthesized voices that shift between masculine and feminine expressions of settler coloniality. A poetic meditation on place and the precarity of place-based identities, Settler Trips Home invites reflection on time, space, and build environemnt, questioning our closest attachments.”

Memory

Tiso Ross, New Zealand. 2025. VHS. 3m12s
Student Competition
“A time traveling response to a 30 year old memory.”

Programme Three ~ New Zealand and International November 21st. 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm. Runtime: 1h16m

Ferryman

Daniel Duque, Australia. 2025. Digital. 4m40s
International Competition
“After descending through a fiery flash of disastrous flames, a lost soul wakes and wanders through the purgatorial forest where he has landed. Startled by the summoning pulse of a mysterious light, he follows it deep into the forest hoping that it will guide his way out of this self-inflicting limbo.”

The Yellow Dress

Anna Frances, Australia. 2023. Digital. 2m55s
International Competition
“Fabric daydreams interrupt an afternoon tea.”

An Ode to Tony MacMahon’s Den

Luke De Brún, Ireland. 2024. Digital. 5m46s
International Competition
“Poet Stephen James Smith performs his poem in homage to locally-performed traditional Irish music, “An Ode to Tony MacMahon’s Den.” His words weave through a background of music and the people and businesses of Dublin’s Liberties neighborhood.”

Dynamics of a Field

Amos Mann, New Zealand. 2024. Digital. 4m6s
New Zealand Competition
“Evocative, nostalgic, and suitably spooky, this video art piece was shot at an abandoned stables in rural Aotearoa New Zealand. The intriguing visuals play with perceptions of movement and time through contemporary dance, subtle and repetitive performative actions, and

experimental film techniques, bringing the site to life and into relationship with the multilayered poetics of the song lyrics.”

We Send Our Signal

Andrew Demirjian, United States. 2020. Digital. 2m12s
International Competition
“We Send Our Signal draws upon an abandoned utopian vision as a setting for future sonic rituals. In this video poem, a former Soviet era diving board is reimagined as a communal antenna to signal other life forms. The music is a vertical composition written for performers to broadcast on radios from each of the six diving boards. The text is a remix of transmission messages during interstellar communication scenes from Soviet sci-fi films. The film is a plea from the future to any listening life forms.”

To Hold

Peter Whittenberger, United States. 2024. Digital. 4m58s
International Competition
“To Hold is a metaphorical self-portrait based on a series of poems written by the director after the sudden death of his wife. The poems are inspired by a decade of journal entries that reflect the process of grieving and the search for normalcy in the aftermath of loss. The film follows a lone figure wandering through the desert landscape of Northern Nevada”

Wandering Houses

Lilián Pallares, Charles Olsen, New Zealand, Colombia. 2025. Digital. 9m24s
New Zealand Competition
“One poet visits the house of her friend, also a poet, in Lisbon. Both migrants from Barranquilla, Colombia, they journey together between books, pegs, mango and waves.”

The Listeners

Tommy Creagh, United Kingdom. 2024. Digital . 3m45s
International Competition
“A haunting rendition of Walter de la Mare’s eerie poem “The Listeners,” performed by Freddie Fox.”

Vā Hina

Nālanī Wilson-Hokowhitu, New Zealand. 2025. Digital. 5m55s
New Zealand Competition
“Vā Hina is a voyage through time and space - dreamscape, wide awake – the film describes various shapeshifting manifestations of the ancestor, Hina. Illuminated pathways, the journey begins and ends in the moon.”

Blame

Emily Munro, 2025. Digital. 4m51s
International Competition
“A love poem at the end of the world, navigating an ecological break-up.”

Chapter 2

Tom Hackett, United Kingdom. 2025. Digital. 4m19s
International Competition
“Reflections on a trip to Norfolk in 2020 with my fragile dad and wife exploring small often slow moments of observation around the trip written down at the time.”

Ars Animalis for Troubled Times

Anne Ciecko, United States. 2025. Digital. 3m44s
International Competition
“The observed animal kingdom reveals artful resourcefulness, inspiring human curiosity—and even hope—amidst tumult and crises.”

Blood Hounds

Janet Lees, United Kingdom. 2025. Digital. 3m10s
International Competition
“A film based on the poem ‘Blood Hounds’, by Michael Martin.”

Wind Rabbit January

Marie Rogers, Canada. 2025. Digital. 7m11s
International Competition
“As a train rider enthusiast, and Haudenosaunee person, January remains in conflict with herself knowing the laying of train tracks displaced Indigenous people from their traditional lands, and often times were never compensated for this grave colonial disruption. Train travel affords the rider time to reflect on passing scenery superficially while going inwards with personal matters given long stretches of time in motion while remaining stationary.”

When I Came to your Door

Antonio Paoletti, Ethiopia. 2024. Digital. 10m
International Competition
“A woman searches for her partner among the ruins of a neighborhood in Addis Ababa, caught in the waves of forced evictions sweeping through the city’s informal settlements. “When I Came to Your Door” captures real images from one of the most recent demolitions that displace low-income communities to make way for large-scale urban projects in a rapidly expanding city”