

# 29th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival November 9- 15

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ST. LOUIS - Below: films and events that will only be available on select dates and times this weekend at the St. Louis International Film Fest.

[Transhood](#) – available through Nov 11

- Q&A with director Sharon Liese, moderated by Dr. Mark Schoen, founder of Sex Smart Films and author of “Bellybuttons Are Navels,” an award-winning children's sexual-anatomy book and video.
- Documentary
- Filmed over five years in Kansas City, “Transhood” follows four transgender kids — beginning at ages 4, 7, 12, and 15 — as they redefine “coming of age.” The documentary’s quartet of trans kids face typical growing pains — acne, sibling rivalry, divorcing parents, crushes, and breakups — but unlike their cisgender peers, they also must navigate body dysphoria, hormone treatments, threats of violence, and the weight of making life-altering decisions. And their struggles take place in the buckle of the Bible Belt, where the pursuit of political and social

equality often meets stiff resistance. These trans kids and their families provide a privileged view into the intimate realities of how gender is re-shaping the family next door. A never-before-told chronicling of growing up trans in the heartland, the film is a nuanced examination of how parents and children tussle, transform, and sometimes find unexpected purpose in their identities as trans families.

[Dramarama](#) – only available Nov 14 & 21

[The Reunited States](#) – available through Nov 15

- Q&A with director Ben Rekhi and subjects Erin & David Leaverton and Greg Orman.
- Documentary
- “The Reunited States” — both heartwarming and heartening — provides a much-needed balm in a time of bruisingly combative political division. Over the past several years, every aspect of American society — our communities, our workplaces, our friendships, even our own families — seems to have become increasingly polarized. “The Reunited States” consciously works to combat that movement to the extremes by profiling people who have dedicated their lives to promoting depolarization and communicating across the political divide. The film seamlessly toggles among a quartet of activists who are building bridges rather than erecting barriers. In addition, Mark Gerzon, whose book “The Reunited States of America” inspired the film, periodically offers brief but perceptive commentary.

[The Dark Divide](#) – only available Nov 15 & 22

- Q&A with director Tom Putnam.
- Narrative
- Based on the true story of renowned butterfly expert and nature writer Dr. Robert Pyle (David Cross), “The Dark Divide” recounts his perilous 1995 journey across one of America’s largest undeveloped wildlands. Pyle is struggling to finish his next book and help his wife, Thea (Debra Messing), navigate a relapse of her ovarian cancer. He’s a quiet introvert, and she’s a daredevil, and Thea pushes her husband to get out of the classroom and into the forests he writes about but seldom visits. After Thea’s death, Pyle finally accepts her challenge and spends a month hiking across Washington’s Gifford Pinchot National Forest — known as the Dark Divide — in search of new species of butterflies. The area also houses a rare species of spotted owl among its old-growth timber, creating a heated battle between environmentalists and big-business concerns. Between encounters with the warring factions and other forest-dwellers, Pyle glimpses something else in the wilderness, which is infamous for its many Bigfoot sightings. Turning his considerable skills toward solving the mystery of whether Sasquatch truly exists,

Pyle finds out a few things about the notorious creature but discovers a lot more about the need for wilderness in our lives. The Hollywood Reporter writes: “For a movie about a lepidopterist, ‘The Dark Divide’ is awfully entertaining. The gorgeous and often forbidding scenery (there’s a harrowing episode set in an underground lava tunnel) should provide a visual balm to those suffering the claustrophobic effects of quarantining.”

[9.75](#) – available through Nov 15

[Mayor](#) – available through Nov 15

[Here We Are](#) – only available Nov 13-15

[On Broadway](#) – only available Nov 13-15

[The Sign Painter](#) – available Nov 13-15

[Master Class - Directing with Ken Kwapis](#)

- Nov 14 at 1:00pm only
- Ken Kwapis, who grew up in Belleville, Ill., and attended Saint Louis University High, is a former Cinema St. Louis Award winner. This master class on directing will draw on material from his terrific new book, “But What I Really Want to Do Is Direct: Lessons from a Life Behind the Camera.”

[Master Class - Behind the Camera with Rachel Reichman](#)

- Nov 15 at 1:00pm only
- When she encountered the work of Antonioni and Bergman, Rachel Reichman was electrified by the emotionality and beauty of cinema. For a teenager in St. Louis, this was life-changing.

[And I Was There](#) – available Nov 15-22

*Special Events (opening-night event, closing-night awards presentation, New Filmmakers Forum roundtable, and master classes) will be offered as livestreams at specific times/dates and weekly reminders will be sent for these.*

*The following 18 films have limited time windows of availability:*

*“9to5: The Story of a Movement,” “9,75,” “And I Was There,” “Asia,” “The Crossing,” “The Dark Divide,” “Dramarama,” “Here We Are,” “Mayor,” “Omar and Us,” “On Broadway,” “Paper Spiders,” “The Reunited States,” “Sapelo,” “The Sign Painter,” “Thou Shalt Not Hate,” “Transhood,” and “Zappa”*