

ENTERTAINMENT

Despite COVID, the 2021 Miami Film Festival will go on as planned. Here's the lineup

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Marie (Kerline Alce) pushes Ludi (Shein Mompremier) into an impromptu prayer session during a work break in 'Ludi,' the opening night film for this year's Miami Film Festival.



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Last year, the Miami Film Festival had to pull the plug midway through the event due to COVID-related closures.

This year, organizers of the festival, which is presented by Miami Dade College, have figured out a way to proceed with the annual event despite the ongoing pandemic.

The 38th edition of the festival, which runs March 5-14, will screen a smaller slate of films than usual in a combination of in-person and online virtual screenings, allowing movie buffs to partake of the festival without leaving their homes.

The live screenings will be held at the Silverspot Cinema, 300 SE Third St., using safety precautions such as reduced capacity, socially distanced seating and mask requirements.

In total, 94 feature-length and short films will be shown, including nine world premieres and 17 North American premieres.

“In this year like no other, we all long for stability and a sense of continuity,” said Festival Executive Director Jaie Laplante about this year’s festival. “By redefining Miami Film Festival for the new era of film, we seek to continue our mission of shining a light on the most outstanding creative talents and new works of the season.”

The festival will open and close with two world premieres of films made in Miami. Opening night brings “Ludi,” the story of a private care worker struggling to send money to her family in Haiti. The film was directed by Haitian-American filmmaker Edson Jean and is the first finished feature to emerge from the [Oolite Arts](#)

[Microbudget Feature Films Cinematic Arts Residency](#), established in 2019 with the help of grants by the Knight Foundation.

The closing night selection is the documentary “Birthright,” about a musical duo invited to perform in Havana, Cuba, directed by Jayme Gersen, whose celebrated 2019 short film “Six Degrees of Immigration” previously screened at the festival and was aired nationally by PBS.

Other highlights in this year’s lineup include:



Tilda Swinton stars in ‘The Human Voice,’ the English-language debut of Spanish writer-director Pedro Almodovar.

- “The Human Voice,” director Pedro Almodov adaptation of a theatrical monologue by Jean (
- “Memories of My Father” (“El olvido que seré ...”) ... ng Spanish director Fernando Trueba, about a Colombian writer (Javier Cámara) looking back on the history of his family;
- “Tomorrow the Entire World,” Germany’s official entry to the 2021 Academy Awards, directed by Julia von Heinz;

- “Mogul Mowgli,” the story of a British Pakistani rapper who is laid low by an illness on the cusp of his big breakthrough;
- “A New Dawn,” a documentary about Miami Cubans reliving their memories of life on the island;



- “Plantados,” the true story of the plight of Cuban political prisoners before their exile to Miami.

The festival will also feature 15 special programs consisting of awards and master classes. Rita Moreno will receive the festival’s Precious Gem Award before a screening of the documentary “Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided To Go For It,” and Aldis Hodge will be honored for his performance as NFL running back Jim Brown in the current film “One Night in Miami.”

Andra Day’s acting debut in “The United States vs. Billie Holiday,” cinematographer Joshua James Richard’s work on the upcoming Oscar-bound drama “Nomadland” and actor Riz Ahmed (“Sound of Metal”) will also receive tributes during the festival.

Cash competitions, including the \$40,000 Knight Made in MIA Feature Film Award, the \$10,000 Jordan Ressler First Feature Award and the \$10,000 WarnerMedia Ibero-American Feature Film Award, will return this year.

For a complete lineup of events, including a schedule of screenings and ticket prices, visit www.miamifilmfestival.com.