

## Miami Herald

# Jazz singers, two Rakontur joints and #MeToo: Here's what's showing at the 2019 Miami Film Festival

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Haitian-American jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant in a scene from the documentary “Singular,” which will screen at the 2019 Miami Film Festival.

A documentary about gender inequality in the entertainment industry, films by international filmmakers such as Olivier Assayas, Zhang Yimou, Matteo Garrone and Jennifer Kent, and a slew of new movies made in Miami are among the highlights of the 2019 Miami Film Festival, to be held March 1-10 at various venues around the city.

The opening night selection of the 36th edition of the festival, which is presented by Miami Dade College, is “[This Changes Everything](#),” director Tom Donahue’s study of gender disparity in Hollywood, featuring Meryl Streep, Cate Blanchett, Jessica Chastain, Natalie Portman, Gillian Anderson and other famous actresses.

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“The cultural reckoning of our current times has irrevocably and positively changed sensibilities surrounding inclusiveness and diversity,” festival director Jaie Laplante said in a statement about the opening night selection. “[‘This Changes Everything’] is a vital and inspirational showcase of values that reverberate throughout the program of our 36th edition.”



Meryl Streep is one of the actresses interviewed in “This Changes Everything,” the opening night selection of the 2019 Miami Film Festival.

The closing night selection is the North American premiere of “[Gigantes](#),” director Enrique Urbizu’s drama about warring drug dealers in present-day Madrid.

More than 160 feature-length films and documentaries and shorts from 40 different countries will screen at the festival, which is relocating from its longtime home base at the Regal Cinemas South Beach 18 to [the new Silverspot Cinema at 300 SE Third Street](#) in downtown Miami.

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Other venues will include the historic Olympia Theater, O Cinema Miami Beach, the Coral Gables Art Cinema, the Tower theater and a new venue, the [Nite Owl Cinema](#) at 3930 NE Second Avenue in the Design District.

Highlights of this year's lineup include:



"What She Said: The Art of Pauline Kael" examines the legacy of the influential New Yorker movie critic.

- "[What She Said: The Art of Pauline Kael](#)," a documentary about the influential New Yorker movie critic, directed by Rob Garver.
- "[The Nightingale](#)," a revenge drama about an Irish woman (Aisling Franciosi) hunting down the British officer (Sam Claflin) who wronged her family, written and directed by Jennifer Kent ("[The Babadook](#)").

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- [“Non-Fiction,”](#) a French comedy about a book editor (Guillaume Canet) and his actress wife (Juliette Binoche) dealing with infidelity and a mid-life crisis, written and directed by Olivier Assayas (“Personal Shopper,” “Clouds of Sils Maria”).



Gael Garcia Bernal and Lali Esposito star in the Argentine drama “The Accused,” which will make its U.S. premiere at the Miami FilmFestival.

- [“The Accused,”](#) an Argentine thriller about a young woman suspected of murdering her best friend, starring Lali Esposito and Gael Garcia Bernal.
- [“Shadow,”](#) a visually lavish historical drama set during China’s Three Kingdoms era, directed by Zhang Yimou (“House of Flying Daggers”).
- [“Dogman,”](#) a violent thriller about a dog groomer tempted to embark on a life of crime, directed by Matteo Garrone (“Gomorrah,” “Tale of Tales”).

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“The Most Beautiful Couple,” a German drama about a married couple dealing with a traumatic event from their past.

Photographer: Thomas von Klier

- [“The Most Beautiful Couple,”](#) director Sven Taddicken’s German drama about a married couple reeling from a traumatic event in their past.

Directors Barry Jenkins (“Moonlight,” “If Beale Street Could Talk”) and Boots Riley (“Sorry to Bother You”) and screenwriter Aaron Stewart-Ahn (“Mandy”) will talk about their respective careers in [the inaugural edition of Knight Heroes](#), a two-hour, in-person discussion at the Olympia Theater intended to inspire and education South Florida content creators.

Actress [Patricia Clarkson](#) will be honored for her 30-year career with a special Estrella Damm Precious Gem Award ceremony to be held on March 4 at the Tower Theater.

MIAMI SPOTLIGHT



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The lineup includes a record number of films directed by locals, fueled in part by the second year of the Knight Foundation's Knight Made in MIA Awards competition, which grants \$30,000 to the best feature-length film and \$10,000 to the best short film that devotes a substantial portion of its content to South Florida.

Among the roster of this year's Miami movies (not all of them competing for the Knight award):

- The Rakontur team of director Billy Corben and producer Alfred Spellman ("Cocaine Cowboys") will host their first-ever double-feature: The Miami premiere of "[Screwball](#)," the playful exposé of the 2013 Major League Baseball doping scandal that screened at last year's Toronto Film Festival, and the world premiere of "[Magic City Hustle](#)," which follows former Miami Hurricanes trying to go pro via a new sport: Jai Alai.



Nate "The Great" Brooks and Tanard Davis are two former Miami Hurricanes trying to master a new sport in "Magic City Hustle."

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“It’s like ‘The U’ meets ‘Broke’ meets ‘[Dawg Fight](#),” Corben said. “But instead of backyard fighting, it’s Jai Alai. Because Miami.”

- “[Singular](#),” a documentary portrait of the Haitian-American jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant, co-directed by Dennis Scholl and Marlon Johnson, who previously collaborated on the music documentary “Deep City: The Birth of the Miami Sound,” which premiered at the festival in 2014. The movie will be followed by a [live concert](#) performed by Salvant.
- “[Huracán](#),” a shot-in-Miami psychological thriller about an aspiring mixed martial arts fighter with Multiple Personality Disorder, which marks the debut of director Cassius Corrigan.
- “[Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am](#),” a portrait of the Nobel Prize-winning novelist, directed by Miami native Timothy Greenfield-Sanders.
- “[A Name Without a Place](#),” about a young man retracing his late twin brother’s excursion to the Florida Keys, starring Elizabeth McGovern and Patrick Fugit and written and directed by Kenny Riches (“[The Strongest Man](#)”).
- “[Miami Basel: Art’s Winter Playground](#),” a documentary about the impact the international art fair has had on Miami’s cultural scene, directed by Aaron Glickman.
- “[Errol Flynn’s Ghost: Hollywood in Havana](#),” an affectionate look at the cultural impact of Hollywood movies on Havana in the 1940s and 1950s, directed by Gaspar González (“[Muhammad Ali: Made in Miami](#)”).
- “[Vandal](#),” an [independent feature film](#) about a Miami graffiti artist, written and directed by Jose Daniel Freixas.

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- [“Chasing the Thunder,”](#) a documentary recounting the epic, 110-day pursuit of a notorious poaching vessel across two seas and three oceans by a crew of marine activists, co-directed by Marc Levin and Miami native Mark Benjamin.

### OTHER COMPETITIONS

The finalists for the \$10,000 HBO Ibero-American Feature Film award include:



A scene from the Spanish comedy “The Best Summer of My Life.”

- [“The Best Summer of My Life,”](#) the Spanish box-office hit about a broke salesman trying to live up to his promise to take his son on a summer vacation, directed by Dani de la Orden.
- [“Perro Bomba,”](#) the story of a young Haitian man living in Santiago, Chile, whose life is upended after a violent incident goes viral, directed by Juan Caceres.
- [“Wandering Girl,”](#) director Ruben Mendoza’s road movie about a 12-year-old girl on a cross-country trip in Colombia with her three older stepsisters.



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- [“Breathe,”](#) about a single mother in Argentina raising a child with Asperger’s, directed by Arturo Castro Godoy.

The entries for the \$10,000 Jordan Ressler First Feature Award, which goes to first-time filmmakers from around the world, include:



A scene from “Dead Pigs,” a comedy directed by Cathy Yan.

- [“Dead Pigs,”](#) a comedy about a community reacting to a virus that wipes out the pig population of a farming town near Shanghai, from director Cathy Yan.
- [“Freaks,”](#) a sci-fi action drama set in a near-future when humans have developed alarming mutations, directed by Adam Stein and Zach Lipovsky.
- [“Chuskit,”](#) an Indian drama about a paraplegic girl who wants to defy family tradition in her Himalayan village and attend school, directed by Priya Ramasubban.

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- [“Journey to a Mother’s Room,”](#) about a woman trying to fill the empty nest left behind after her daughter moves out, by Celia Rico Clavellino.

Other special events at this year’s festival:



Harry Dean Stanton stares down his doom in a scene from 1979’s “Alien.”

- A [40th anniversary screening](#) of Ridley Scott’s seminal 1979 sci-fi monster mash “Alien, to be held at 11:59 p.m. March 8 at O Cinema Miami Beach.
- Fashion in Film Festival, in partnership with the Miami Design District, will feature six programs of screenings, talks and live performances exploring the intersection between dance, film and fashion.
- A day-long symposium on the trends in the contemporary Chinese film market, sponsored by Beijing Hainabian Culture & Arts Development Corp. and the Confucius Institute at Miami Dade College.

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▪ DOC NYC's Make Your Documentary, a day-long workshop about how to conceive, produce, finance and distribute a non-fiction film, by festival documentary programmer Thom Powers.

Festival tickets go on sale to the general public on Feb. 8. For a complete lineup of festival screenings and events, visit [www.miamifilmfestival.com](http://www.miamifilmfestival.com).

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