

See 48 Countries in 11 Days at the Children's Film Festival Seattle - ParentMap

Thursday, January 14 2016, 9:28 AM

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See 48 Countries in 11 Days at the Children's Film Festival Seattle

Two full weekends of the world's best new kids' movies, in Seattle and Renton

By Gemma Alexander



The documentary *Almost Friends*, about the friendship between an observant Jew and an Israeli-Arab, takes a truthful look at the difficulties of overcoming prejudices in a conflict zone. For ages 10 and older. Jan. 23, 1:30 p.m.

Filmmakers around the world are crafting imaginative and engaging films just for kids, but here in America an abundance of cynical merchandising tie-ins dominates the landscape. Thanks to Northwest Film Forum's annual **Children's Film Festival Seattle**, though, Puget Sound families are able to see some of the world's best films for children from Thursday, Jan. 21 to Sunday, Jan. 31.

Two festivals in one — now in Renton as well as Seattle!

The big news this year is that while the bulk of the festival will still be held at the Northwest Film Forum headquarters on Seattle's Capitol Hill, South Sound and Eastside families will be happy to know that the festival has expanded to Renton this year. Two days of screenings at Renton's Carco Theatre (Jan. 23 and 24) will emphasize international offerings that you won't be able to find anywhere else.

Find the **full lineup for Carco Theatre here**. On Saturday, January 23, the festival celebrates India, with a day of Indian films that defy Bollywood expectations. I'm especially excited for ***Crow's Egg***, about two Tamil boys' quest to obtain a slice of the exotic foreign food called pizza (Saturday, Jan. 23, 11 a.m., ages 8 and up). Jot's Indian Sweets and Restaurant will sell food in the lobby over the lunch hour and From Within Academy will perform classical Indian dance. The lineup on Sunday, Jan. 24, includes animated and foreign films.



Celestial Camel, the story of a little boy in Mongolia trying to help his family during hard times, is universal, even if his mission – retrieving his family's camel – is completely foreign to American kids. Jan 30, at 7 p.m. for ages 12 and older.

Pajama parties, breakfast screenings and more super film fun

With more than 160 films from 48 countries, it helps to have a strategy for picking which films to see. The Film Forum has put together some **special programs** to simplify the choice.

- On **opening night, Thursday, Jan. 21**, NWFF will screen a **one-hour silent movie** for all ages – the earliest version of *Snow White*, accompanied by a live performance on harp and violin.
- On **Friday evening, Jan. 22**, the festival hosts its annual **pajama party** with previews of animated films from around the world, cupcakes and DJ-supplied dance jams. Recommended for ages 3 and older.
- On **Saturday, Jan. 30**, replace “dinner and movie” with **breakfast and a movie**. Beginning at 9:30 a.m., pancakes, bacon and, of course, coffee will be served at a nearby church. Once bellies are full, the whole family can walk down to the theater for their preselected showtime of the all-ages film collection *Magic Potion*. Tickets for this event include all-day parking.
- On **Sunday, Jan. 31**, the **closing ceremony**, for ages 8 and older, will screen films made during the festival's workshops (see below) and a surprise selection of international shorts.



Fans of *Heidi* will want to see *Schellen-Ursli*, the movie adaptation of Germany's second most famous children's book. Jan. 30, 7 p.m. Ages 7 and older.

Short films galore

There are 17 **short film programs** throughout the festival, sorted by theme and age level.

Two of special note are ***Time Travelogue***, a series of all-ages shorts made by youth, many of them local, which will be screened on Sunday, Jan. 24 at 7 p.m., and ***Indigenous Showcase***, which looks at the experiences of indigenous youth around the world, screened on Saturday, Jan. 30 at 7 p.m.

Feature films



Hördur might look like a reboot of *Black Beauty*, but the girl in this horse story, set in Turkey, is a minority struggling with assimilation and the law. Jan. 24, 5 p.m. Ages 12 and older.

If you want to research individual films, each **feature** and **short** is described in detail on the Northwest Film Forum web page. In addition to a plot summary, you'll find video previews, age recommendations and notes describing any points of potential concern. Many of the films are subtitled, which could eliminate some otherwise age-appropriate options for early readers.

Filmmaking classes and more active viewing

Northwest Film Forum has sprinkled the festival with **classes** that get kids involved in the action.

- On **Saturday, Jan. 23**, kids ages 10-15 can join an **acting workshop with the director of *My Friend Raffi*** (a movie about a lost pet hamster, not the children's singer). Registration (\$50) includes a ticket to the screening.



During the film festival, tweens and younger teens can take an acting workshop with the director of *My Friend Raffi*. Kids can also watch this rollicking adventure about an 8-year-old who rescues his pet hamster from a bumbling criminal. Jan. 23, 3 p.m. Ages and older.

- On **Sunday, Jan. 24**, kids ages **8–12** can learn how to use iPads to make stop-motion films starring their own stuffed animals. They can come back on Jan. 31 to develop their own animated characters. \$40.

- On **Sunday, Jan. 31**, kids 8–12 can take an **animation workshop** in making characters come alive with Matt Orefice and Jan O'Neil. \$40.

Finally, if the festival and its workshops get your kid fired up about filmmaking, NWFF will announce its full schedule of summer filmmaking camps on Feb. 15. Another wonderful local film organization, the Seattle International Film Festival, has a **full-day filmmaking workshop** for 9- to 12-year-olds on **Saturday, Jan. 30**.

If you go ...

Where: The Northwest Film Forum's Children's Film Festival is divided between two locations, Seattle and Renton. Confirm which one your movie is showing at when you purchase your tickets.

Northwest Film Forum is located at 1515 12th Ave. in Seattle. Parking can be challenging. Consider taking the bus (a hassle to adults, an adventure for kids). NWFF has additional **parking information** on its web page.

With abundant parking, the two days of screenings at **Renton's Carco Theatre** may be more convenient, especially for South Sound families. Carco Theater is located at 1717 S.E. Maple Valley Hwy, in Renton just off I-405.

When: The festival runs from Thursday, Jan. 21 to Sunday, Jan. 31 with most screenings between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Cost: Buy tickets and a festival pass **online**. Single tickets are \$11 adult/\$8 child. There are several pass options, with the full pass costing \$180 adult/\$140 child. Seniors and students pay the child rate, and all tickets are deeply

discounted for Forum members.

January 13, 2016