

Fact and Fiction: Two Not-to-Miss Family Films at SIFF - ParentMap

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Fact and Fiction: Two Not-to-Miss Family Films at SIFF

An all-ages documentary with a unique perspective on Istanbul; a girl's Arctic adventure

By [Gemma Alexander](#)


There are many reasons for families to get excited about the Seattle International Film Festival, which opens May 19. The film festival is a perfect opportunity to expand your family's cinematic horizons and watch something you normally wouldn't choose — or even have the chance — to see. Here are two movies to get you started: One is an all-ages documentary from Turkey, the other a feature-length animation with no connection to the typical story lines followed by giant animation studios of the U.S.

Kedi: Istanbul from a cat's perspective

KEDI - Trailer 1

from [Termite Films](#)

02:00



If ever a subtitled foreign documentary was perfect for kids, *Kedi* is it. Director Ceyda Torun explores the unique position of Istanbul's cats, who are treated as neither pets nor strays, but as neighbors by the humans who share their space. Like good neighbors, the people and cats are friendly without intruding too much into each other's business, but available to lend a helping hand — in the form of kibble or a trip to the vet — when one is needed.



Kedi features long, nonverbal sequences where the camera follows cats going about their business on the streets of Istanbul. Scenes in which humans talk about their cats provide heartwarming context to for those who can read the subtitles, but may not be entirely necessary for younger viewers to enjoy the film. (For context, my 7-year-old was able to keep up with the subtitles most of the time.)

Kedi is a quiet, sweet film that will leave the whole family happy — and looking for a cat to pet.

Screening times: Saturday, May 21, 11 a.m., SIFF Cinema Egyptian; Saturday, May 28, 3 p.m. SIFF Cinema Uptown – director in attendance; Monday, May 30, noon, SIFF Cinema Uptown – director in attendance

Language: Turkish with English subtitles

Buy tickets: siff.net/festival-2016/kedi

Long Way North: An Arctic adventure, starring a very human heroine

Long Way North is a story in the spirit of Jules Verne. A young woman who is a Russian aristocrat leaves home to search for her grandfather, who disappeared while attempting to reach the North Pole. It will look familiar to fans of *The Secret of Kells*, also directed by Rémi Chayé. It shares many elements of Disney's *Mulan* (even my 7-year-old noted the similarities between the two running away from home scenes). But the joy of foreign-language movies is that whatever familiar elements they may share, they do not conform to the storytelling tropes of American cinema.



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Young Sasha is not miraculously prepared for the challenges she will face in the Arctic. The grown men she accompanies do not automatically accept the leadership — or even the presence — of a teenage girl on their mission. Love interests do not develop along the familiar Hollywood path. Most importantly, instead of a tidy happy ending we are gifted with a story of adventure and courage that has a climax without a fight scene, no villain and a heroine who is strong and vulnerable in truly human ways.

Language: Dubbed in English (though the trailer is subtitled, the film is in English)

Screening times: Saturday, May 21, 11 a.m. at Pacific Place Cinemas in Seattle; Sunday, May 22, 1 p.m. at Lincoln Square Cinemas in Bellevue; Sunday, May 29, 1 p.m. at Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center

Language: English dubbed from French

Tip: If you miss the SIFF screenings, look for the commercial theatrical release of *Long Way North* in October.

Buy tickets: siff.net/festival-2016/long-way-north