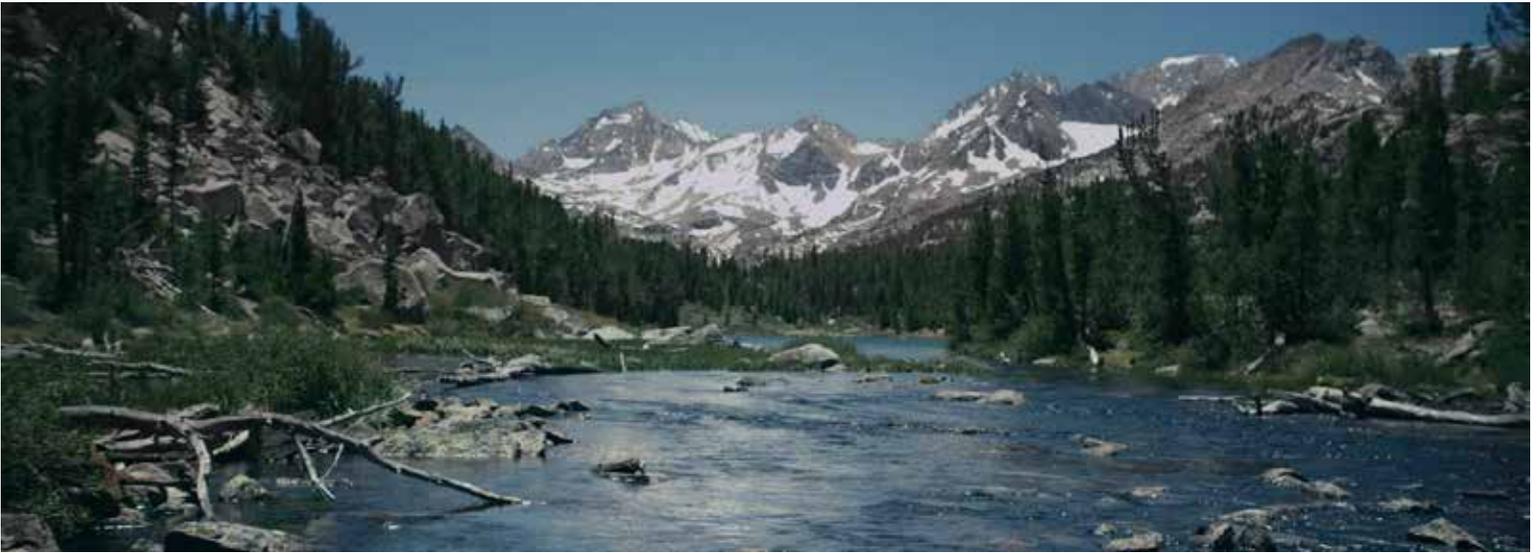


A large, ornate fountain in a park at dusk, surrounded by trees with Spanish moss. The fountain is the central focus, with water spraying upwards and outwards. The scene is illuminated by warm, golden lights, likely from street lamps or the setting sun, creating a serene and atmospheric setting. The trees are dense and covered in Spanish moss, adding to the park's historic and natural beauty.

L3 Exclusive
Documentary Film
Festival

Featured Films



A LETTER TO CONGRESS

Directed by: Christopher Newman

Christopher Newman's short, lyrical visual poem was inspired by and is an homage to Wallace Stegner's 1960 "Letter to Congress," in which the writer advocated for the preservation of the wilderness that then remained. "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed," Stegner wrote. In hindsight, the 1960s were hopeful. Today, the exhortation is more urgent than ever.



A NEW VIEW OF THE MOON

Directed by: Wylie Overstreet

Wylie Overstreet was hanging out in his L.A. apartment one night and, out of boredom, decided to take his high-powered telescope out to the street to peer at the moon. Pretty soon people began wandering up and asking him what he was up to. When he showed them, they nearly fell over in awe. A New View of the Moon is just the reminder we need to keep looking up. Because as Galileo said back in 1610, "it's a beautiful and wondrous sight to behold the body of the moon."



FELIX

Directed by: Allison Otto

Twice a month for the last 40 years, Felix Belmont has hosted a radio show on KVNF in the small town of Paonia, Colorado, spinning big band music of the '30s and '40s. Today, at 99 years old, he is believed to be the world's oldest public radio host. In this endearing short film, Belmont shares the ingredients to life well-lived: a great love affair, a rich relationship with music and just the right amount of top-shelf scotch.



FREE LIKE THE BIRDS

Directed by: Paola Mendoza

Precocious Sophie Cruz convinced her martial arts teacher to let her attend classes when she was just 3 years old. She is a luchadora, a fighter. So when her parents, who are undocumented immigrants, told her they don't have papers and could be deported back to Mexico, Sophie vowed to keep her family together. On a trip to Washington, D.C., Sophie, then just 6, cleared a security barrier to deliver her message to Pope Francis.



LIFEBOAT

Directed by: Skye Fitzgerald

“Another tragedy in the Mediterranean,” a newscaster reports after a flimsy boat carrying 600 migrants sinks in the dangerous central Mediterranean crossing between Libya and Italy. Masked men wearing gloves pull back huge white tarps covering some of the victims. Skye Fitzgerald’s Lifeboat, a 2017 Mountainfilm Commitment Grantee, goes on to chronicle a successful rescue by the German nonprofit Sea-Watch. “Libya is hell,” says a survivor.



RETURN FROM DESOLATION

Directed by: Justin Clifton

Garrett Eaton just doesn’t fit into a box. Which makes him a great subject for a short film. Especially for a filmmaker like Justin Clifton, who has a natural empathy for everyday heroes like Garrett and who knows how to let people — and places — tell their stories through his lens. The result: In the space of mere minutes we get to not only meet a man worth knowing but to become fully vested in his rich story.



SCIENCE FAIR

Directed by: Cristina Costantini, Darren Foster

Spoiler alert: Sleeper hit ahead. And don't think that's because I have a serious soft spot for science nerd documentaries. But, maybe. Bottom line: Do yourself a favor and find out. Find out if your heartstrings are strummed and your funny bones tickled by the goodness and the goofiness of teenage prodigies from around the world competing against 1,700 other of their brilliant Generation Z ilk (narrowed down from 7 million original hopefuls), to win recognition, prestige, opportunity and, for just one among them, a \$75,000 prize.



THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Directed by: Matthew Testa

"I can't escape the fact that coal made me who I am today," says photographer James Balog, whose grandfather died, at 62, in a coal-mining accident. In *The Human Element*, Balog ponders "the fifth element" (after water, earth, air and fire). By changing the other four elements, he says, humans are "shaping the Earth as we know it." Balog documents this collision between people and nature through stories ranging from Chesapeake Bay's dwindling Tangier Island to California's record-breaking wildfires of 2017 to last summer's three devastating hurricanes.

Nonprofit: Earth Vision Institute



FEAR US WOMEN

Directed by: David Darg

Hanna Bohman was living a comfortable existence in Canada when she learned about the horrors of ISIS. Outraged by the atrocities they committed, she decided to take the ultimate action, traveling to Syria and becoming a volunteer soldier with the YPJ, an all-female Kurdish army. Through dust storms and tedium, training and firefights, Bohman offers an unprecedented front-line look at the female soldiers fighting for women's liberation in the world's most dangerous country.



ON HER SHOULDERS

Directed by: Alexandria Bombach

As a girl growing up in a Yazidi village in Iraq, Nadia Murad worked the fields, studied and dreamed of one day opening a salon. But when ISIS mounted a brutal massacre on the Yazidis, the path of her life changed forever. Murad lost 18 family members in the genocide, became a sex slave and watched as ISIS destroyed her community. She survived, and fate brought another surprise; she became the face and the voice of her people, a hero to the Yazidis and poster child to the world. This remarkable film follows Murad as she travels the globe — from the stage of the UN to the chambers of politicians and set of television journalists — recounting her story again and again in an attempt to bring attention and aid to the Yazidi's desperate plight. For this young woman, whose dignity is profound, the burden is enormous, but the costs of doing nothing are even larger.



THIS IS HOME

Directed by: Alexandra Shiva

Only a fraction of the more than 5 million refugees from the Syrian civil war have been accepted in the U.S. Four families relocated to Baltimore are assisted for only eight months by the International Rescue Committee before they must become self-sufficient. As depicted in Alexandra Shiva's documentary, the Syrian refugees' adaptation and the support provided by IRS social workers can only be described as heroic. The American haven is challenging to navigate, but for this sliver of the world's dispossessed, the American Dream appears to be – tenuously – intact.

Nonprofit: International Rescue Committee