

THE UK'S LEADING DEAF-LED FILM & ARTS FESTIVAL

DEAFFEST 2026

16TH EDITION

8-10 MAY 2026

PROGRAMME




**10TH
FILM & TV
AWARDS**

www.deaffest.co.uk





ZEBRA
access

Zebra Access is proud to host and support Deaffest 2026, the UK's leading Deaf-led Film & Arts Festival. Deaffest supports and develops the talents of emerging and established deaf filmmakers and artists from the UK and around the world.

Zebra Access is here!

**Swing by our stall, meet the team,
and explore how our services can open new possibilities for you!**

DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, TRIPS AND COFFEE MORNINGS

HERITAGE PROJECT

ADVOCACY / IAG

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Zebra Access is a Deaf-led charity based in Wolverhampton, proudly serving the Black Country and surrounding areas. We're dedicated to breaking down communication barriers so that Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing, and Deafened people can fully participate in life. Through accessible services, activities, campaigns, and events, we create opportunities for connection, inclusion, and empowerment across our community

**SCAN TO DONATE
TO ZEBRA ACCESS.**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.ZEBRA-ACCESS.COM

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA: [@ZEBRA_ACCESS](https://www.instagram.com/ZEBRA_ACCESS)

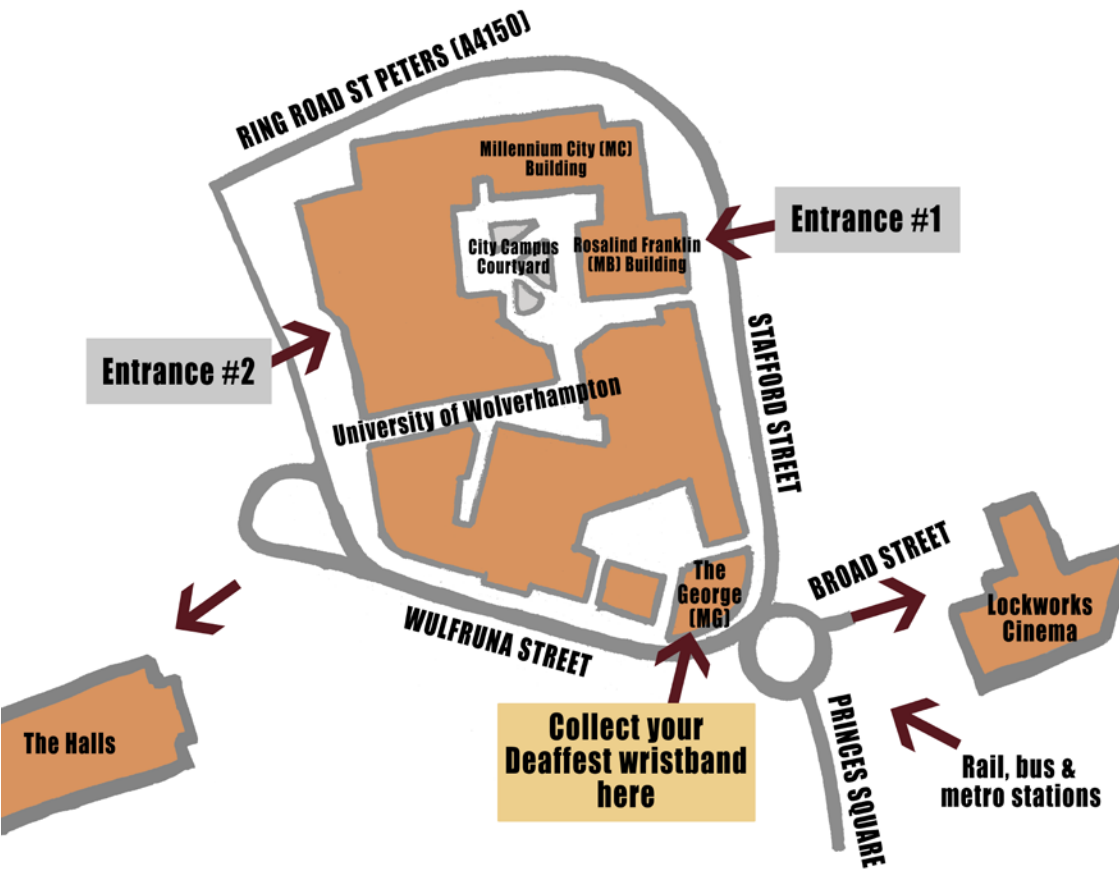
**ZEBRA ACCESS IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER
1149181**

Deaffest



www.deaffest.co.uk

Map of Deaffest 2026 Venues



**APPLY NOW FOR
COURSES STARTING
IN 2026**



Find out more about studying at the University of Wolverhampton by visiting our stand at **Deaffest**, online at www.wlv.ac.uk/apply, or at our **Open Days**.

Join us for an Open Day, where you can:

- meet teaching staff
- find out what to expect as a student
- experience our teaching facilities
- take a tour of the campus
- see our accommodation
- attend talks on a variety of topics
- and more

**NEXT OPEN DAY:
SATURDAY 4TH JULY**



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Sign language communication solutions
using today's technology



“Just because we can't hear you...”



A unique, creative business focused on digital media and
communication closely linked to the Deaf Community



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- Lipspeaking
- Note-taking
- Speech-to-text
- Deafblind
- Deaf-relay
- International Sign Language

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Award winning Deaf media specialists

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- Hand held BSL guides
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- Video to DVD conversion
- DVD Duplication

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- Animation
- TV Presentation
- TV In-Vision Interpreting
- Performing Arts

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Training for both hearing & Deaf people

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- Deaf Awareness Training
- Health Seminars
- Employment Training

“Find out more...”

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signvideo.co.uk

Ticket Information

GET YOUR TICKETS

Buy your Friday & Saturday tickets online before you arrive by visiting:
www.deaffest.co.uk/deaffest-2026-ticket-information/

Available until 3:00pm, Saturday 9th May (tickets are subject to availability)

IMPORTANT: NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR

Scan the QR code to
buy your tickets.



Important Information

All tickets are non-refundable

Workshops

Some workshops require
pre-booking: visit

<https://deaffest.co.uk/deaffest-2026-events-workshops/>

Need Help?

Visit the Deaffest stall at The
George and the team will be
happy to assist you.

After Booking

Bring your confirmation email -
either on your mobile or printed
- to collect your wristband.

Collect Your Wristbands at The George

University of Wolverhampton,
Stafford Street, Wolverhampton
WV1 1LZ

Opening Times:

Friday 8th May 2026
2:00pm - 9:00pm

Saturday 9th May 2026
8:00am - 8:00pm

**PLEASE WEAR YOUR
WRISTBAND AT ALL TIMES**

**LOST WRISTBANDS
CANNOT BE REPLACED**

Deaffest 2026

Friday 8th May 2026

Sign in Style

at Deaffest

2026

Launch Night



Doors open: 6:30pm

Event start time: 7:30pm

Event end time: 2:00am

Lockworks Cinema, 18 Fryer Street,
Wolverhampton WV1 1HT

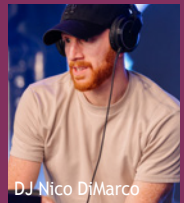
Age: 18+ only (ID required)

Wristband
required for
this event -
refer to
Page 7.

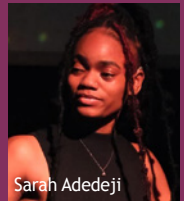
Deaffest returns to where it all began - the iconic Lockworks Cinema (formerly the Light House) - to launch its 16th edition with a bold, immersive celebration of Deaf culture across film, fashion, music and performance.

Setting the tone with the 2026 theme *Sign in Style*, the opening night is tailored as a visually led creative programme that unfolds on screen, on stage and throughout the courtyard. From a high-energy courtyard launch featuring DJ Nico DiMarco and live performances by VinzSlam, Iain Scott-Burdon, Julia Pelhate, Sarah Adedeji, Roshan Singh and Frank Singh, to fashion and visual expression taking centre stage as powerful forms of storytelling and identity, the evening promises a dynamic and inspiring experience.

Curated film screenings are woven together with opportunities to connect with creatives and audiences, all set within in a vibrant social atmosphere. Enjoy complimentary light refreshments (subject to availability).



DJ Nico DiMarco



Sarah Adedeji



VinzSlam

Sign in. Stand out.
Celebrate Deaffest in style!

Friday 8th May: Your Festival Guide

6:30pm: Entry to Deaffest 2026 at the Lockworks Cinema

Sign in Style social networking event.

7:30pm: Launch of Deaffest 2026

by Deaffest Co-founders Nikki Stratton & Marilyn Willrich.

8:00pm or 9:30pm: Premiere Film Screenings

Due to capacity restrictions the same films will be shown at both times. Approx. 55 minutes.

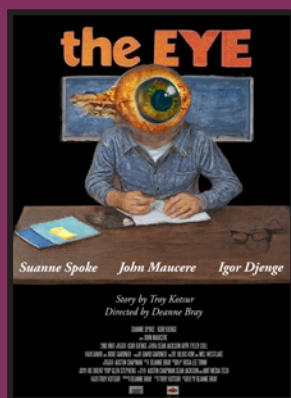
The Eye

Dir. Deanne Bray, USA, 2026 (Dur.25min)

In this sly comic zinger from Director Deanne Bray and Executive Producer Troy Kotsur, a hearing Hollywood casting director is having no luck casting a Deaf role, whom she thinks are inexperienced. When an actor named Frank (played by John Maucere) walks in, however, the casting director gets more than she bargained for.

Content warning: This programme contains language and behaviour that may be triggering for members of the signing community. Some signs used in the film may be inaccurate or differ from internationally recognised signs. The story is loosely based on true events from the 1990s.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)



Green Grass

Dir. Aram Atkinson, UK, 2025 (Dur.17min)

Declan, a disengaged university coaster, must confront his long-hidden identity when forced to work with the fiercely independent new Deaf student, Claire. Opposite in so many ways, it is only a matter of time before their differences bubble to the surface, but so will their similarities that make them question everything they knew to be true in this coming-of-age drama.

Content warning: This programme contains swearing.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)



DJ Nico DiMarco and Live Performances

PLEASE NOTE:

Filming and photography by the Deaffest media team will take place throughout the weekend.

Events & Workshops

Saturday 9th May 2026 (10:00am - 5:00pm)

PLEASE NOTE: There are TWO venues for the festival screenings (10:00am - 4:45pm) See pages 18-23

FOR WORKSHOPS/EVENTS: University of Wolverhampton,
Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1LY

**WRISTBAND REQUIRED FOR
SATURDAY DAYTIME EVENTS -
REFER TO PAGE 7.**

If you haven't booked your workshop place, visit the Deaffest stall at The George - refer to page 7 for opening times or book online <https://deaffest.co.uk/deaffest-2026-events-workshops>

**10:00am - 5:00pm
Deaffest Stalls Fair**

Rosalind Franklin (MB), Millennium City (MC) Buildings & Courtyard, University of Wolverhampton

Sign in Style by stepping into a vibrant festival marketplace at the 16th edition of Deaffest! Discover a lively space where creativity and community come together.

**Connect with inspiring
businesses and charities,
explore creative stalls,
and discover what our
stallholders have in store!**



10:00am - 11:15am

Film With Nearly Empty Pockets
MC228, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 16 and over

This workshop, led by filmmakers Danny Murphy, Samuel Ash, and Sam Arnold, offers an insight into developing and realising film projects with limited resources. Through close looks at Danny Murphy's 'Don't Look' and Samuel Arnold and Sam Ash's 'Eremos Trilogy', participants will learn the journey from early concepts to public showcases. The session examines practical processes and creative strategies used in low-budget filmmaking, including planning, collaboration, and problem-solving. Selected film excerpts will be screened, alongside discussion of the festival theme, with a focus on production design - exploring how visual choices support storytelling, atmosphere, and authenticity on screen.

(Content warning: This workshop may include strong language and references to sexual content and blood).

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.

Deaffest is for everyone. We champion stories from a wide range of perspectives and aim to make our events accessible, inclusive, and welcoming (i.e. subtitled screenings, BSL interpretation, International Sign interpretation and voice-over where possible).



**BFI
DIVERSITY
STANDARDS**

We encourage audiences and participants of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities to join us and be part of the immersive experience.

10:00am - 11:30am

Deaffest X Wonderment Beauty

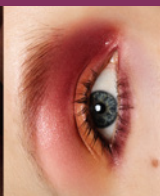
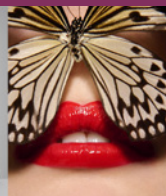
MC418, Millennium City (MC) Building

Suitable for ages 14 and over

Join Wonderment Beauty for an inspiring live workshop, led by Deaf professional make-up artist Nicky Weir, exploring the art of make-up and storytelling.

Learn from Nicky as she shares her make-up journey - from working with world-renowned talents like Amy Winehouse and Becky Hill, to her role in the first Deaf dating show 'Hold My Hand'. Experience a live make-up demo on Deaf model Imy Harris - starting with natural fashion looks and building to bold, expressive styles. Behind her, a curated beauty board will showcase Nicky's career highlights and creative projects, giving you an inside look at her journey in the beauty and fashion industry. Whether you're a make-up enthusiast, a creative professional, or curious about the world of Deaf talent in beauty and media, this workshop offers inspiration, techniques, and a front-row seat to the artistry behind the looks.

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.



10:30am - 11:45am

Acting Out: Finding Comedy in Life's Stories

MC226, Millennium City (MC) Building

Suitable for ages 16 and over

Join comedian, actor, and BSL teacher John Smith in an interactive workshop that blends the art of acting with the healing power of comedy. Using his unique comedic lens and acting expertise, John will guide participants through improvisation, character work, and storytelling exercises designed to explore personal experiences with humour and heart. This workshop creates a supportive environment where participants can step into different roles, discover new ways to communicate their stories, and find humour and connection in life's challenges. Laugh, express, and connect as John brings his craft to life - showing how acting and comedy can be powerful tools for understanding, coping with, and sharing mental health experiences.

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.

10:00am - 3:00pm

Play in Motion with The Cirque Trio

Courtyard, University of Wolverhampton

Suitable for ages 3 and over

Move. Clown. Spin. Laugh. The Cirque Trio bring together imaginative circus skills, playful clowning and expressive movement in a vibrant circus experience. Led by Terry Brand, Jennifer Manning and Anabela Canica, this dynamic, hands-on workshop invites participants to experiment with new skills, stretch their creativity and build confidence.



JENNIFER MANNING



TERRY BRAND



ANABELA CANICA

11:15am - 12:00pm

Support to Study at University

Meeting point:

Outside of Alan Turing (MI) Building,
University of Wolverhampton

The University of Wolverhampton has a long history of supporting deaf people on both undergraduate and post graduate courses. Find out about different types of support - there will be information about reasonable adjustments that the University can offer as well as information about Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and how to apply for it and the support it can offer. There will be opportunities to learn more about the Wolverhampton Screen School.

(This event will be interpreted)

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.

11:30am - 12:30pm

Film Marketing With Nearly Empty Pockets

MC228, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 16 and over

Filmmakers Danny Murphy, Samuel Ash, and Sam Arnold share their experiences promoting films in this masterclass on reaching audiences through both festivals and online platforms. Using their own projects as examples, the session explores DIY methodologies, low-budget strategies, and step-by-step approaches to submitting films, building visibility, and generating engagement from start to finish. While traditional industry routes can be exclusionary, digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram offer additional opportunities for recognition and audience outreach - particularly for low-budget and independent films. The workshop also considers how filmmakers can ensure their work reaches diverse audiences, engaging both Deaf and hearing viewers, and maximising the impact of their storytelling across multiple channels.

(Content warning: This workshop may include strong language and references to sexual content and blood)

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.



Danny Murphy

Samuel Ash



Sam Arnold

11:30am - 12:45pm

The Art of Social Media & Photography

MC201, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 16 and over

Nathan Rollinson is a former TV presenter and established lifestyle brand, now specialising in social media strategy, including building and engaging audiences, content strategy and accessibility, creator-business partnerships, monetisation and brand readiness, as well as analytics, growth, and community-building. Drawing on his experience across television, fashion-led storytelling, and digital branding, Nathan will share practical insight into how creative professionals can position themselves, promote their work, and grow visibility in today's digital landscape. Using real-world examples, short clips, and case studies from his career, Nathan will demonstrate how creative work can be amplified online without compromising authenticity. The session will be practical and interactive, offering actionable tips that attendees can immediately apply to their own projects.

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.

12:00pm - 12:15pm

CONEXIONIS

Courtyard (grass area), University of
Wolverhampton
Suitable for all
ages

A fully visual clown
performance
by Canadian
performer
Jennifer Manning
and French
performer Anabela
Canica. Telling
the story of two



clownettes - a fairy and an elf. As the fairy practices casting spells on the elf, the audience is treated to a rich display of emotions through engaging and expressive visual storytelling.

Deafblind audience members will have the opportunity to meet and interact with the performers before the performance.

12:20pm - 12:35pm

Shakespeare by The Deaf Bard

Courtyard (grass area), University of
Wolverhampton - Suitable for all ages

A visually expressive performance by William Grint - aka @TheDeafBard. Blending BSL and visual vernacular, the piece explores the depth of Shakespeare's language through storytelling. Across 15 minutes, William will perform three different excerpts from Shakespeare's works; showing the power and beauty of the Bard through contrasting tones and characters.



1:15pm - 2:45pm

Rap, Rhythm & Signs: Bringing Music to Life Workshop

MC232, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 14 and over

Learn the basics of music translation with French rapper VinzSlam alongside DJ Nico DiMarco! Discover how English song lyrics can be turned into Sign Language using creativity, rhythm, and expression. Through rap and hip-hop, you'll explore how beats, words, and emotions come alive through movement and style. Nico DiMarco will share his real-life experiences in music, and you'll get to know both artists' passion for music through videos that showcase their on-stage performances. **PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.**

12:40pm - 2:10pm

Visual Vernacular: Stories in Motion

MC226, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 16 and over

This workshop introduces the basics of Visual Vernacular (VV) and demonstrates simple ways it can be used. Led by Deaf French VV and theatre performer Julia Pelhate and Deaf creative artist Iain Scott-Burdon, the session explores physical movement, eye focus, and expressive gestures without relying on sign language, helping you build clear visual storytelling skills. It strengthens body control, confidence, and creative expression, giving you practical tools to shape vivid narratives through movement alone.

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.

2:15pm - 3:15pm

Vision and Scale: Filmmaking Across Boundaries - Panel Discussion

MC001, University of Wolverhampton

A discussion with Deaf producers and directors exploring distinct approaches to vision, scale, and storytelling. The panel will examine how budgets and resources shape creative decisions, and the ways small or large productions can support - or challenge - ideas. Panellists will address practical realities such as funding, industry access, maintaining authenticity, and inclusion of Deaf talent. They'll also discuss strategies for advancing Deaf talent in film, particularly new directors and producers, and highlight the importance of representation and authenticity in their work. They will also share why they made their film, its impact after release, and how they promote it, while reflecting on how experiences differ depending on production scale and resources.

(BSL and International Sign interpreted)

12:45pm - 2:15pm

Camerawork & Visual Design: Shaping Story Through the Lens

MC401, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 17 and over

DoP Will Clark and director/camera op Teresa Garratty lead an interactive workshop exploring the role of visuals in filmmaking. Participants will gain hands-on experience with camera work, lighting setups, and the DoP's perspective, with a focus on how production design elements - costumes, backgrounds, props, and more - interact with camera and lighting to support storytelling. The session will include examples from Will Clark and Teresa Garratty's work, alongside whiteboard demonstrations that engage participants in theoretical discussion and analysis. Through practical exercises and visual breakdowns, the workshop highlights how thoughtful design and lighting choices contribute to a film's atmosphere, authenticity, and impact.

PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.



Teresa Garratty



Will Clark

Framing the future of sign-presented storytelling and entertainment.

LumoTV, formerly the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust is home to sign-presented film and TV available to stream online.

We are the world's only sign-language-based commissioning body, supporting bold, pioneering programmes that centre deaf talent, culture, and authentic representation.

Come see us today to find out how you can get involved.



@watchlumotv
www.lumotv.co.uk

lumotv

3:00pm - 4:30pm

Upcycle & Style: Recycled Denim Pencil Case Workshop

MC225, Millennium City (MC) Building
Suitable for ages 11 and over

Have a go at designing and making something unique with recycled denim alongside Laura Tailor! Latvian-born and London-based, Laura is a Deaf fashion designer and bespoke tailor specialising in sustainable denim clothing for men and women. Discover the craft of transforming recycled materials into a stylish, one-of-a-kind pencil case and explore your creativity in this hands-on workshop - then take your creation home with pride! **PRE-BOOKING REQUIRED.**



4:00pm - 4:45pm

Seen on Screen: The Power of Visual Storytelling - Panel Discussion

MC001, Millennium City (MC) Building
University of Wolverhampton

Rooted in the festival programme, this panel brings together curated screening clips and a bold discussion on the role of visuals and cinematography in shaping screen storytelling. It examines how key visual creatives, from costume designers to directors of photography, define character, identity, and meaning on screen, while foregrounding Deaf representation across these roles and identifying clear, actionable pathways to advance Deaf creatives and inclusion across the film industry.

(BSL and International Sign interpreted event)

3:15pm - 4:00pm

Beyond Visibility: Deaf LGBTQ+ Creatives in Film & TV - Panel Discussion

MC001, Millennium City (MC) Building
University of Wolverhampton

This panel brings together Deaf LGBTQ+ filmmakers and creatives to explore queer representation and access in Film & TV. Drawing from lived experience, panellists will examine the gaps in storytelling, employment, and decision-making, with a focus on Deaf creatives. The discussion will cover how intersecting Deaf and LGBTQ+ identities shape creative practice and career pathways, challenges around visibility and disclosure, and what remains underrepresented or unexplored on screen and behind the scenes. Panellists will identify barriers, share strategies for change, and discuss what meaningful inclusion and access should look like moving forward. Attendees will gain insights into industry realities, emerging opportunities, and practical ways to support and strengthen Deaf LGBTQ+ participation in Film and TV.

(BSL and International Sign interpreted event)



ASSOCIATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

We are a professional membership association and support network for British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters and Translators in the UK.



We exist to represent, support and promote the BSL Interpreting and Translation profession.



DEAFFEST ONLINE CINEMA

With the support of the BFI Audience Projects Fund, awarding National Lottery funding, festival screenings will be available to watch for **FREE** on the Deaffest Online Cinema (DOC) (account registration required).

Selected festival screenings, including the Film & TV Awards nominees, will be available on the DOC from **1 April to 31 May 2026**.

Please refer to pages 18-23 and 26-27 to see which screenings are available online.

Some titles will remain available after 31 May, including the 'Deaffest Classic Showcase' - a celebration of the vibrant legacy of Deaf cinema.

Scan the QR code to get started!

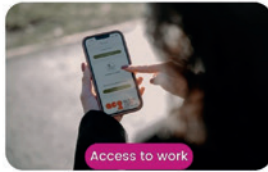


Sign Solutions

Enabling Communication between Deaf and Hearing People



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Translations



Deaf awareness training

InterpretersLive!

Reasons why you should download the InterpretersLive! app

- Connect to organisations on our InterpretersLive! directory for free!
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- Learn more about Access to Work and how it can support you



Video Relay Service (VRS)



Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)



Phone



Tablet

You can download our app on the App Store or Google Play NOW!



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



Shortlisted Nominees for Deaffest 2026 Film & TV Awards

BEST FILM

Eremos Trilogy

Dir. Sam Arnold, UK, 2025

JESUS: A Deaf Missions film

Dir. Joseph D. Josselyn, USA, 2024

Retreat

Dir. Ted Evans, UK, 2025

Salt&Pepper

Dir. Con Mehlum, Norway, 2024

BEST UK SHORT FILM

Deliverance

Dir. Bim Ajadi, UK, 2025

Don't Look

Dir. Danny Murphy, UK, 2025

Familiar Stranger

Dir. Ace Mahbaz, UK, 2025

Remember Me

Dir. Lisa Kelly, UK, 2025

BEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM

Glass Cage

Dir. Jules Dameron, USA, 2025

Oh Girl, It's Hurt

Dir. Pernille Vogt, Norway, 2024

Quiproquo

Dir. Marie Bertrand & Sébastien

Lamigou-Gratiaa, France, 2024

Serendipity by Sofia

Dir. Audrey Sangla, Norway, 2024

BEST DOCUMENTARY

A Quiet Love

Dir. Garry Keane, Ireland, 2025

Echoes Between Land and

Blue Sky: The Lives of

Mongolian Deaf Nomads

Dir. Itgel Byambadorj, Mongolia, 2025

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore

Dir. Shoshannah Stern, USA, 2025

The Making of Night Bloom

Dir. Cathy Mager & Alice Hu,

UK/China, 2024

BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY

Becoming Jazzy Whippis

Dir. Bim Ajadi, UK, 2024

Eye of the Game

Dir. Ramas McRae, Australia, 2025

Medal Chase

Dir. Kevin Shiva, Sweden, 2025

Turn Up The Bass

Dir. Ted Evans, UK, 2024

BEST ARTISTIC SHORT FILM

a love letter to the light

Dir. MJ Kiego, USA, 2024

Ghost Sandwich

Dir. Lymon Thorn, USA, 2024

Sense

Dir. Adrean Mangiardi & Mark Levin,

USA, 2025

The Tales of Victor The

Misfits Creator

Dir. Paul Miller, UK, 2025

BEST DIRECTOR

Bim Ajadi

Deliverance, UK

Con Mehlum

Salt&Pepper, Norway

Shoshannah Stern

Marlee Matlin:

Not Alone Anymore, USA

Ted Evans

Retreat, UK

BEST SCREENWRITER

Con Mehlum

Salt&Pepper, Norway

Rebecca A. Withey

Where The Light Gets In, UK

Ted Evans

Retreat, UK

William Mager

Reunion, UK

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHER

Eric Calbert & Michael

Davis

Jesus: A Deaf Missions film, USA

Ruan Du Plessis

Glass Cage, USA

Samuel Ash

Don't Look, UK

Stanko Pavlica

Salt&Pepper, Norway

BEST ACTRESS

Anne Zander

Retreat, UK

Diana Martin

Remember Me, UK

Henrianna Jansen

Beyond Silence, Netherlands

Iwona Cichosz-Yggeseth

Salt&Pepper, Norway

Sophie Stone

Retreat, UK

BEST ACTOR

Brian Duffy

Eremos Trilogy, UK

Gideon Firl

Jesus: A Deaf Missions film, USA

James Boyle

Retreat, UK

Matthew Gurney

Reunion, UK

Pål Henning Winge

Salt&Pepper, Norway

Screenings - Film & TV Awards Nominees

PLEASE NOTE: there are different venues for the screenings.
All screenings are subtitled.

SCREEN 1 - Saturday 9th May 2026 Lockworks Cinema, 18 Fryer St, Wolverhampton WV1 1HT

BEST DOCUMENTARY

10:30am: A Quiet Love



Dir. Garry Keane, Ireland, 2025 (Dur 95min)

In this intimate feature documentary, three Deaf couples share their remarkable love stories, through sign language: a 50 year forbidden love



affair between a couple from both side of a religious divide, an LGBT couple traversing the challenges of parenting Deaf and hearing daughter, and a Deaf boxer and her hearing partner faced with an impossible decision. This collection of cinematic love letters explores the complexities of Deaf relationships and presents and uplifting portrait of enduring love. An immersive soundscape challenges conventional perceptions of sound.

Content warning: This programme contains archive material from the Northern Ireland conflict and references to pregnancy loss.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:05pm: Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore



Dir. Shoshannah Stern, USA, 2025 (Dur. 97min)

In 1987, Marlee Matlin became the first Deaf actor to win an Academy Award and was thrust into the spotlight at 21 years old.



Reflecting on her life in her primary language of American Sign Language, Marlee explores the complexities of what it means to be a trailblazer.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

BEST FILM

1:50pm: Eremos Trilogy



Dir. Sam Arnold, UK, 2025 (Dur. 24min)



Eremos Trilogy is the first-ever Deaf short film anthology, and entirely self-funded.

Eremos derived from the Greek word for “solitude” is the central theme that connects all three films. The trilogy follows three different Deaf protagonists as they navigate various forms of isolation in modern society. Each story explores challenges unique to the Deaf community, blending gritty, thought-provoking narratives with a touch of dark humour.

Content warning: This programme contains references to suicide attempts, sex addiction, and drug abuse.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

2:14pm: Salt&Pepper



Dir. Con Mehlum, Norway, 2024 (Dur. 75min)

On a winter evening in Oslo's elegant Oscars gate, three couples reunite for dinner after years apart due to the pandemic.



All in their forties, five of them share childhood bonds. What begins as light conversation soon reveals deeper changes: life choices have reshaped their relationships, and the sense of unity they once had is fading. As the evening unfolds, buried secrets and past traumas surface, sparking tension and conflict. The atmosphere grows increasingly charged, culminating in a shocking climax no one could have foreseen when the night began.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

BEST ARTISTIC SHORT FILM

3:40pm: Ghost Sandwich

Dir. Lymon Thorn, USA, 2024 (Dur. 4min) 

A Deaf woman struggles to order a sandwich.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)



3:44pm: Sense

Dir. Adrean Mangiardi & Mark Levin, USA, 2025 (Dur. 5min) 

Mark Levin's poem "Sense" explores the idea that our perceptions and sensory experiences may not reflect reality as we believe. It questions the reliability of what we see, hear and feel, suggesting that our understanding of the world is shaped by illusions or misconceptions. Through reflective and thought-provoking language, Levin challenges viewers to reconsider how they interpret their surroundings and the truth behind their senses.

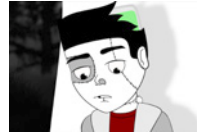


Content warning: This programme contains thought-provoking themes about perception and reality.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

3:49pm: The Tales of Victor The Misfits Creator

Dir. Paul Miller, UK, 2025 (Dur. 14min) 



In a dark forest beneath a crooked castle, Victor brings a misunderstood monster to life in a crackling laboratory

experiment. When communication fails, the lonely creature escapes into the enchanted woods in search of connection. There, he meets Lily, sparking an unexpected friendship. Together they face danger, uncover secrets within the eerie castle, and stand against Victor's sinister plans. This is a magical story of friendship, resilience, and how love can overcome fear and adversity. *(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)*

4:03pm: a love letter to the light

Dir. MJ Kiego, USA, 2024 (Dur. 9min) 

a filmmaker redefines the essence of cinema by questioning the role of sound, inviting audiences to rediscover the power of imagery and light in storytelling. *(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)*



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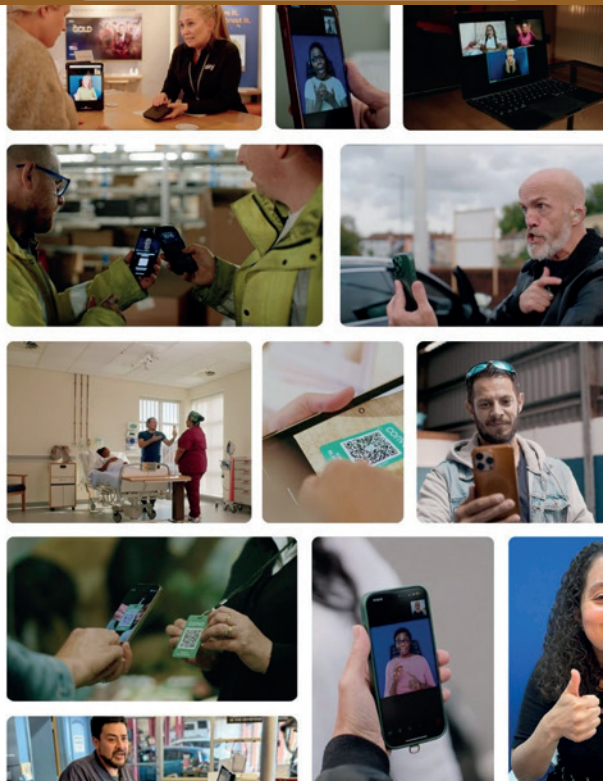
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BEST FILM



10:30am: Jesus: A Deaf Missions film

Dir. Joseph D. Josselyn, USA, 2024 (Dur. 147min)



For the first time in history, viewers can experience the story of Jesus as a feature film entirely in American Sign Language. JESUS: a Deaf Missions film follows Jesus and His disciples through miracles, rising tension under Roman rule, and His challenge to the religious elite. The Jews anticipated a Messiah, but Jesus was not what they expected. Experience His love as He offers hope, forgiveness, and eternal life. Produced for Deaf by Deaf, the film features a fluent ASL cast. Deaf producer/director Joseph D. Josselyn and Deaf producer Michael Davis bring this historic film to life for Deaf audiences.

Content warning: This programme contains a bloody scene with depictions of fluffing and crucifixion.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:57pm: Retreat



Dir. Ted Evans, UK, 2025 (Dur.107min)



Raised in a secluded Deaf community, cracks begin to appear in Matt's world when the arrival of enigmatic outsider Eva forces

him to question his own 'Deaf identity' and lived experience.

Content warning: This programme contains swearing, blood, kidnapping, violence, strobe effects, and material that may be distressing
(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

BEST DOCUMENTARY

2:44pm: Echoes Between Land and Blue Sky: The Lives of Mongolian Deaf Nomads



Dir. Itgel Byambadorj,
Mongolia, 2025 (Dur. 31min)

Echoes Between Land and Blue Sky: The Lives of Mongolian Deaf Nomads documentary spotlights the lives of Deaf herders in Mongolia, an overlooked community uniquely affected by climate change. Set against the backdrop of Mongolia's breathtaking yet unforgiving landscapes, the film introduces herders who navigate the challenges of isolation, environmental shifts, and cultural preservation.

The documentary is structured into four acts, each focused on a different herder family, interconnected by overarching themes of climate resilience, cultural identity, and social inclusion.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

3:15pm:

The Making of Night Bloom



Dir. Cathy Mager & Alice Hu,
UK/China, 2024 (Dur. 20min)

The Making of Night Bloom is an award-winning documentary about the creation of an immersive artwork led by Deaf artists from China and the UK. Winner of Best Documentary at Toronto's Unify Film Festival, the film weaves creative process with powerful personal stories. It features Deaf Chinese elders who find connection through a vibrant Deaf club gathering beneath the trees of a city park, alongside young Deaf dancers carving out careers in a challenging mainstream world.

Through Chinese Sign Language, movement and digital projection, the documentary reveals resilience, intergenerational



exchange and the transformative power of Deaf-led collaboration across cultures.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

BEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM

3:40pm: **Glass Cage**



Dir. Jules Dameron, USA, 2025 (Dur. 13min)



A Deaf woman battles an internal force gnawing at her will to live, in a haunting cinematic mood piece that explores isolation and resilience.

Content Content warning: This programme contains content related to suicide.

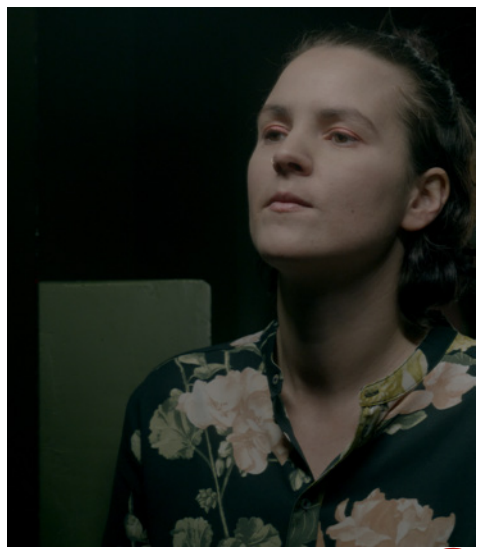
(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

3:53pm: **Serendipity by Sofia** 

Dir. Audrey Sangla, Norway, 2024 (Dur. 9min)

Sofia is an imaginative woman. She likes to imagine stories during her break, offering a playful perspective on everyday life. One day, Saga sits down on her bench. Determined to flirt, Sofia tries several humorous and awkward approaches to start a conversation. A book becomes an opportunity to deepen their relationship. However, their blossoming relationship takes an unexpected turn, leading to a brutal twist that reveals the unpredictability of human relationships.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)



4:02pm: **Oh Girl, It Hurts** 

Dir. Pernille Vogt, Norway, 2024 (Dur. 16min)

Coming to terms with being queer isn't always easy. Therese finds this out the day she meets Alex.

As she dares to open her heart to another woman for the first time, she's faced with an unexpected obstacle – her own sister.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

4:18pm: **Quiproquo** 

Dir. Marie Bertrand & Sébastien Lamigou-Gratiaa, France, 2024 (Dur. 19min)

A making-of of the making-of of a making of
(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

SCREENINGS FEATURING NOMINEES

10:15am: Beyond Silence



Dir. Marnie Blok, Netherlands, 2024

(Dur. 16min)

Two women, two generations, same trauma. One has been silent for over thirty years, the other 'only' for a year and a half. Where one decides to remain silent after a confrontation, the other finds the courage to break the silence.

Content warning: This programme contains discussions of sexual assault.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

10:31am: Where The Light Gets In



Dir. Clare-Louise English, UK, 2024 (Dur. 28min)

A Deaf mum's anxiety threatens to overwhelm her, as it affects her relationships with those she loves, she risks losing her son.

Content warning: This programme contains references to mental health.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

10:59am: Reunion



Dir. Luke Snellin, UK, 2025 (Dur. 56min)

REUNION is a four part revenge thriller made for the BBC by WARP FILMS the producers of ADOLESCENCE and THIS IS ENGLAND, told through the unique point of view of a deaf man isolated from society, both physically and emotionally. We meet Brennan, a convicted murderer, as he leaves prison, unable to live in the hearing world and unwanted by the deaf world that he once loved so much, with one clear mission on his mind.

Content warning: This programme contains strobe effects and loud noises, scenes of bereavement and violence, and other material some viewers may find distressing.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)



BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY

12:00pm:

Becoming Jazzy Whipps



Dir. Bim Ajadi, UK, 2024 (Dur. 11min)

An uplifting and inspiring film that goes behind the scenes with Jazzy Whipps, the UK's biggest Deaf social media influencer as she tells us the story of how she got there and what comes next.

Content warning: This programme contains references to mental health, bullying, and online abuse.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:11pm: Eye of the Game



Dir. Ramas McRae, Australia, 2025 (Dur. 14min)

Born profoundly Deaf, an Australian Rules footballer defies expectations by playing in an all-hearing team, striving to break out of the reserves and claim a position in the seniors.

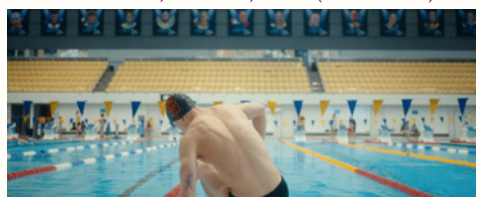


(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:25pm: Medal Chase



Dir. Kevin Shiva, Sweden, 2025 (Dur. 10min)



Meet Rudolfs, currently one of the top deaf swimmers in the world. Medal Chase is a short film that dives into his ambitious journey, the emotional and physical hurdles and the profound personal sacrifices he had to make along the way.

The film explores not just what Rudolfs has endured, but why he continues to push forward. What truly motivates someone to give everything for a dream?

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)



12:35pm: Turn Up The Bass

Dir. Ted Evans, UK, 2024 (Dur. 12min)

A documentary telling the remarkable and little-known story of Troi Lee, aka DJ Chinaman, the unstoppable force behind the UK's Deaf music and rave scene. Twenty years of archive footage is interwoven with interviews and actuality, charting Troi's evolution from underground raver to festival headliner.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

BEST UK SHORT FILM

12:55pm: Deliverance

Dir. Bim Ajadi, UK, 2025 (Dur. 14min)

Kemi, a mother torn between love, tradition and modernity, seeks a cure for her Deaf daughter, risking family bonds in the process.

Content warning: This programme discusses attitudes to Deafness, heritage, and religion, and contains implied use of a razor blade and depictions of blood.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

1:09pm: Don't Look

Dir. Danny Murphy, UK, 2025
(Dur. 14min)



A group of friends plays 'Don't Look,' a game where opening your eyes summons deadly spirits. Their thrill turns to terror as they unleash supernatural forces and must confront

their worst fears to survive.

Content warning: This programme contains some swearing, gore, and scenes of death.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)



1:23pm: Familiar Stranger

Dir. Ace Mahbaz, UK, 2025
(Dur. 15min)

Familiar Stranger is an intimate, dialogue-light drama about identity, belonging, and the unexpected ways two people can find connection across discomfort and time.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

1:38pm: Remember Me

Dir. Lisa Kelly, UK, 2025 (Dur. 15min)

Remember Me is an intimate monologue that tells the story of Emma, a Deaf BSL user who lives alone with her Father who is also Deaf.

Content warning: This programme contains references to domestic violence.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)



Saturday 9th May 2026 7:00pm - 4:00am
University of Wolverhampton at The Halls, North Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1RD

DEAFFEST 2026

10TH FILM & TV AWARDS GALA

Celebrating Sign in Style

Age: 18+ only
(ID required)

Saturday Night

A spectacular evening where Sign in Style comes alive
- from the red carpet to the stage & screen.

EVENT SCHEDULE

7:00pm:

Doors Open & Networking

Wulfrun Suite Bar



John Smith

8:00pm - 11:00pm:

Film & TV Awards Gala

Wulfrun Hall

(Including intervals)

Doors close at 8:15 PM - No late entry

MCs

John Smith and Jean St Clair



Jean St Clair

LIVE PERFORMANCES

Frank Singh • Jayden Reid • Iain Scott-Burdon

Julia Pelhate • Roshan Singh • VinzSlam

AWARDS

Featuring 11 Award Categories

DRESS CODE

Gala Attire

Suits • Tailored Smart Wear

• Cocktail Dresses • Evening Elegance

IMPORTANT

Wristband required for Saturday evening events

(See page 7 for details)

**NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR,
PLEASE PURCHASE ONLINE OR VISIT THE GEORGE (SEE PAGE 7)**

LATE-NIGHT PARTY

11:00pm - 4:00am
(Wulfrun Hall)

LAST
ORDERS
3:30am

Late-Night Party
with hosts,
DJ Nico DiMarco &
live performances.



SCREENINGS Sunday 10th May 2026

SCREEN 1, Lockworks Cinema, 18 Fryer Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1HT
All screenings are subtitled.

PLEASE NOTE:
SUNDAY EVENT
IS SOLD OUT,
WRISTBAND IS
REQUIRED.

10:00am: Detachable

Dir. Joshua Carver, UK, 2025 (Dur. 28min)



A young Deaf woman wakes up hungover in the back of her car. She can't find the processor for her cochlear implant and is unable to hear anything without it, so she attempts to retrace her steps from the night before. Meanwhile, two children find an unfamiliar magnetic object in the grass, but don't know what to do with it.

Content warning: *This programme contains mild adult themes.*

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

10:28am: Dinner Table Syndrome

Dir. Charlie Ainsworth, USA, 2025 (Dur.13min)



A lonely Deaf boy armed with "miracle cure" cochlear implants navigates a Thanksgiving dinner with the strangers who call themselves his family.

Content warning: *This programme contains references to audism, oralism, and dinner table syndrome.*

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)



10:41am:

Language is Life

Dir. Stanko Pavlica,



Switzerland, 2025 (Dur. 6min)

Growing up in silence, a 14-year-old Deaf refugee



has never known school, writing, or spoken language. In Switzerland, an interpreter discovers him and opens the door to a language school in Zurich. There, he encounters sign language for the very first time - unlocking communication, identity, and a sense of belonging. Based on a true story, Language is Life is a powerful testimony to how language can restore not only words, but an entire life.

Content warning: *This programme contains themes of mild emotional distress.*

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

10:47am: My Deaf Papa

Dir. Anthony Cheung, Hong Kong,



2024 (Dur.20min)



Wyatt is a Deaf father who works quiet night shifts, coming home only to share breakfast with his daughter, Allison. As a CODA, Allison navigates a world Wyatt can't hear, finding her own voice by teaching sign language on content creation platforms. But when her videos go viral, the sudden exposure leads to a heated clash. In a moment of anger, Wyatt accidentally breaks Allison's camera. Now, he must find a way to repair more than just a lens, bridging the gap between his silence and her world.

Content warning: *This programme contains depictions of physical and emotional abuse.*

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

11:07am: たちを祝福してください (Please Bless us)



Dir. Tomomi Yokoo, Japan, 2024 (Dur. 62min)



This is a film that artistically depicts the hardships faced by Deaf women in Japan, such as forced sterilization through eugenic surgery, the era when the use of sign language was prohibited, and the decline in court compensation for women with disabilities. It's a silent movie. Sometimes the screams of Deaf old women are included.

Content warning: This programme contains references to miscarriage and violence.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:09pm: Remote Strutting



Dir. Lorna Fitzsimons, Ireland, 2024 (Dur. 12min)



An imaginative young IT professional battles self-limitations that prevent her from stepping out of her comfort zone and into the real world.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:21pm: Smothered Hands



Dir. Iléana Pansiot-Villon, France, 2024 (Dur. 20min)

When Maya and Nora join Lucas to plan a dinner at an Italian restaurant, latent tensions emerge between them. What should have been a moment of camaraderie takes an unexpected turn, casting doubt on the future of their friendship.

Content warning: This programme contains themes of a toxic relationship.

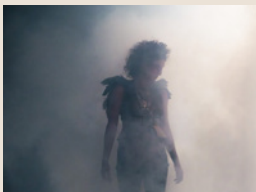
(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:41pm: So Beautiful



Dir. Sofya Gollan, Australia, 2025 (Dur. 10min)

An experimental short documentary about an



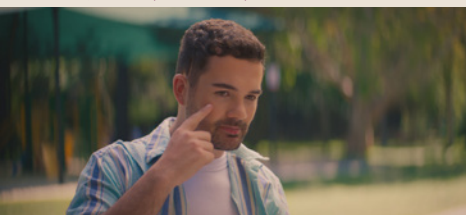
Auslan Sprite who must protect her sign language in order to survive.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

12:51pm: Strawberry Cheesecake



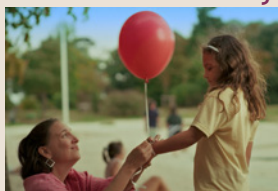
Dir. Sean L. McParland, Australia, 2025 (Dur. 9min)



An ice cream cart, a sunset, and a shared memory—two strangers rediscover a connection that speaks louder than words. This film was made in collaboration with Bus Stop Films participants in Gold Coast, QLD.

(Available on Deaffest Online Cinema)

1:00pm: The Power of Goodbye



Dir. Audrey Sangla, France, 2025 (Dur. 23min)

When Christiane learns that

her daughter Margot, who is suffering from a degenerative disease, wants to end her life, she is forced to confront a profound challenge to her maternal love.

Content warning: This programme contains references to illness and death.

(Unavailable on Deaffest Online Cinema)

You can also watch the screenings via the Deaffest Online Cinema please refer to page 16

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Film & TV Awards Judges:

Bhulla Beghal

Caroline O'Neill

Charlotte Bogard Macleod

Sofya Gollan

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