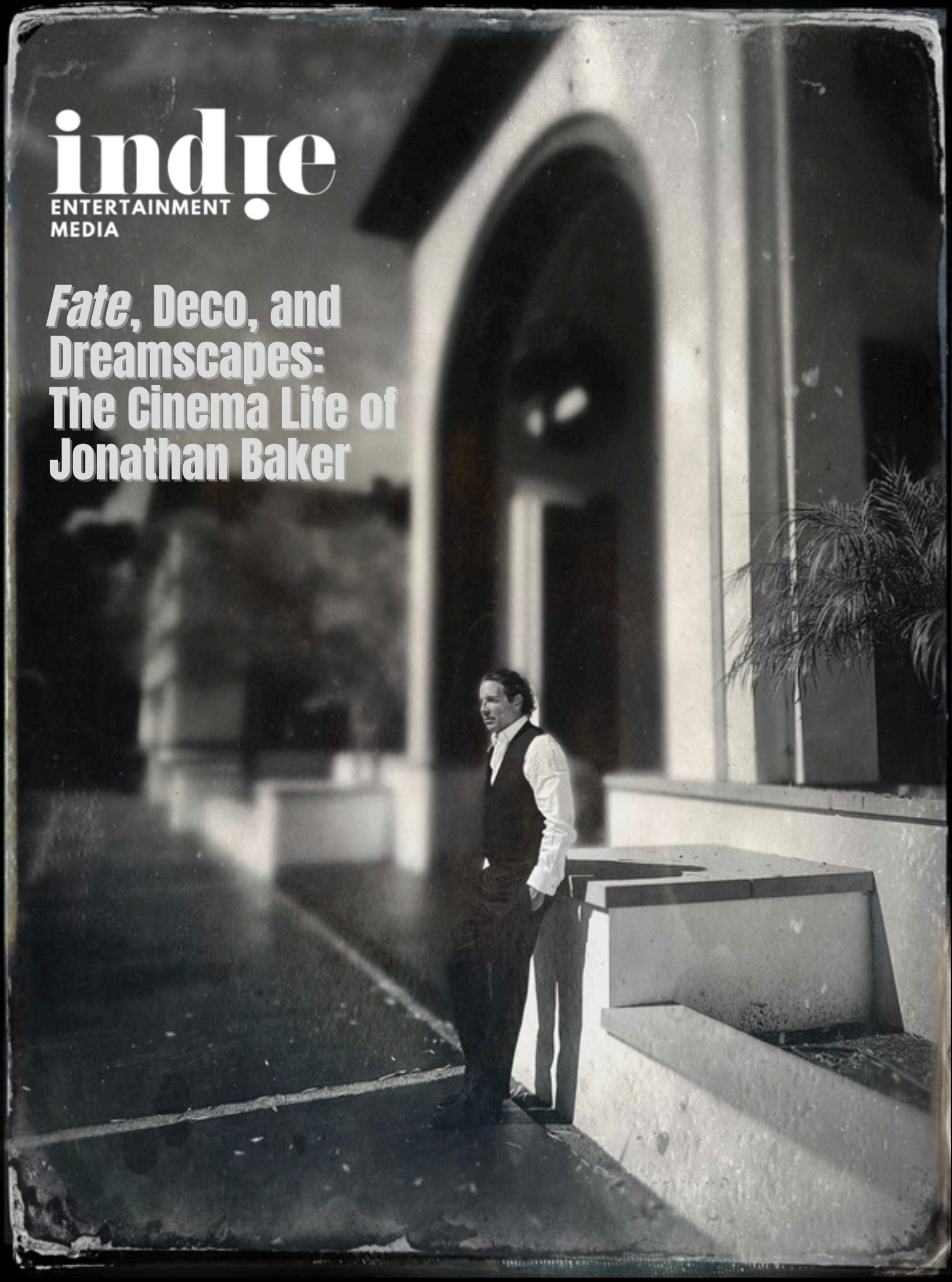
indie
ENTERTAINMENT
MEDIA

Fate, Deco, and Dreamscapes: The Cinema Life of Jonathan Baker



Indie Entertainment Media
indieentertainmentmedia.com

Publishers	Gotham Chandna Nicole Goesseringer Muj
Editor-in-Chief | Managing Editor:	Nicole Goesseringer Muj
Chief Digital Editor:	Kate Elfatah
Contributors:	Claude Brickell Dr. Laura Wilhelm Lena Basse Nicole Goesseringer Muj Rehna Azim
Graphic Design:	Kate Elfatah
Cover Photo:	Eric Minh Swenson
Photos Courtesy of:	Eric Minh Swenson Getty Images Movie Stills DB Tshombe Sampson

Follow us on Instagram @indieent and Facebook @indieentmedia

Kultura PR International | Cloud 21 International ©2026. All Rights Reserved.

FRFF

FRENCH RIVIERA FILM FESTIVAL

May 15 & 16, 2026 | CANNES, FRANCE

www.frenchrivierafilmfestival.com



KULTURA

CLOUD 21

HDM

BEL AIR FINE ART

indie ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

FILMFESTIVALS.COM

EDEN HÔTEL & SPA ★★★★ CANNES

FATE, DECO, AND DREAMSCAPES:
THE CINEMA LIFE OF JONATHAN BAKER







Fate is a supernatural love story that spans over 60 years; it's about love finding itself in any incarnation. For me, working with Donald Sutherland, Harvey Keitel, Faye Dunaway, Andrew McCarthy, Mena Suvari—this is the moment where casting becomes everything.

I love the entire process of making movies, but writing is where I get to dream first. On the page, I test whether those dreams can become real by hearing someone else speak the words, and when an actor interprets them as a character, that alchemy is the magic of writing.







Oscar night is my favorite night of the year. In 2026, *Fate* will open in theaters around the world, and the documentary *Standing on the Shoulders of Fate* will travel the festival circuit. Bringing people together on that night to talk about the past while celebrating the present is something I've loved since childhood.

Photos by Eric Minh Swenson

Wine & Sunsets in Croatia



CROATIA
Full of life

www.CroatianPremiumWine.com

Experience Croatia through a glass: learn about **Croatian Wine Club**, tastings, dinners & plan your visit

Shipping over 101 indigenous Croatian winesin US,within a week

FollowusonFBandIG@*CroatianPremiumWine*



(L-R) Courtney LaBarge Bell, Executive Director, BAFTA North America, Jane Millichip, CEO, BAFTA, Leonardo DiCaprio & Joyce Pierpoline, NA Board Chair, BAFTA

BAFTA North America Hosts Annual Tea Party, Celebrating Film Excellence in Beverly Hills

by Nicole Goesseringer Muj

In January, BAFTA North America hosted its annual Tea Party at The Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills — a beloved highlight of the awards season circuit. The elegant event celebrated excellence in film while uniting industry professionals, creatives, and talent from the UK, US, and beyond. Timed to follow the announcement of the EE BAFTA Film Awards Longlist, the gathering honored this year's nominees and fostered connections among those championing creative achievement during Hollywood's most prestigious season.

Attendees included BAFTA Breakthrough US Cohort Members Brandon Wilson, Brittany Shyne, Chase Infiniti, Eva Victor, Mia Cioffi Henry, Miles Caton and Paige Bethmann along with Aimee Lou Wood, Chris Perfetti, Dylan O'Brien, Erin Doherty, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jane Levy, Jessie Buckley, Joel Edgerton, Kate Hudson, Kristen Stewart, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Hamill, Rashida Jones, Rose Byrne, Ryan Coogler, Stephen Graham, Teyana Taylor, Yvett Merino, and others.

> "We are elated to continue BAFTA's annual celebration, bringing together creatives from across the US and UK," said Courtney LaBarge Bell, Executive Director of BAFTA North America. "Each year, our Tea Party gathers the industry for a celebration of accomplishments in film ahead of the EE BAFTA Film Awards in February, in London."

BAFTA CEO Jane Millichip added, "It's great to be back at the BAFTA Tea Party in LA to celebrate the announcement of the 2026 EE BAFTA Film Awards Longlist, and to welcome the brilliant array of talent involved in this year's awards season. Our global film community shares a passion for storytelling that inspires and connects with audiences worldwide, and we look forward to welcoming this community to London next month to honour this year's outstanding filmmakers."

BAFTA's Tea Party continues to shine a spotlight on actors, producers, directors, and industry leaders from the UK, US, and beyond, celebrating their outstanding contributions to film.



Jessie Buckley



(L-R) Teyana Taylor and Leonardo DiCaprio

Additional attendees included Chloe Zhao, Ginnifer Goodwin, Imogen Poots, Jay Duplass, Jerry Bruckheimer, Paulina Aguirre, Park Chan-Wook, Robin Wright, Stellan Skarsgard, Thora Birch, Tiziana Rocca, Ugo Bienvenu, and Wagner Moura.

The event was presented by Delta Air Lines and Virgin Atlantic and sponsored by Bentley Beverly Hills, The Four Seasons, Tequila Don Julio, Heineken, Maison Perrier, and Threads.



(L-R) Paulina Aguirre, Tiziana Rocca & Nicole Muj

BAFTA's mission as a 501c3 charity is to champion the creative and cultural importance of the screen arts across film, games and television. Through its awards ceremonies and year-round program of talent initiatives and learning events that include masterclasses, lectures, scholarships, bursaries and mentoring schemes in the UK and North America, BAFTA identifies and celebrates excellence, discovers, inspires and nurtures new screen talent, and enables learning and creative collaboration.

Kate Hudson - An Appreciation

By Rehna Azim



It should have been Chase Infiniti. It should have been Jennifer Lawrence. It really should've been Amanda Seyfried. It could even have been Julia Roberts. That was the awards chatter on the Internet.

But it wasn't any of them. On 22nd January, Kate Hudson took her place in the list of five nominees for Best Leading Actress in the Oscars race. A week later, as if to seal her inclusion, she was nominated by the British Academy (BAFTA). The Oscar nom was no fluke. She had already secured her place as a contender in the Actor award nominations (formerly known as the SAG awards) and she had attended the Globes ceremony as a nominee.

The nominations are for her heartwarming performance in *Song Sung Blue*, the film about a Neil Diamond tribute act, based on a true story. Hudson plays Claire Sardina, a divorced woman bringing up her children alone, while performing as a tribute act to country stars such as Patsy Cline. When she meets Mike (Hugh Jackman) she gets a second chance at life. Together they form the duo Lightning and Thunder and take the act on the road to much local acclaim until tragedy strikes.

Calling her performance heartwarming is not to diminish it in any way. To bring an ordinary person to life in a film is a lot harder than it looks. Claire Sardina is not a showy role full of huge melodrama. It's a portrayal of ordinary, everyday life with its ups and downs, banalities, small successes and big tragedies that hit like a ton of bricks because there isn't the cushion of huge success and money there might be in a biopic of a celebrity. So, for us to believe in her and root for her small-time dreams Kate Hudson has to make it look easy, as if Claire is someone we might know. And she does make it look effortless because she is a very good actress.



Despite her fantastic early bow in the 2000 film, *Almost Famous*, the roles since have not always matched her considerable talent. Hudson is a triple threat actress. She can sing and dance and in in her acting she is equally at home in both drama and comedy.

She was nominated for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Almost Famous*. She didn't win but the promise of her beguiling Penny Lane was so great that a fantastic career was envisaged for her. Although she has worked steadily since, the high-profile roles haven't been regular. She has a string of very popular but lightweight romantic comedies behind her, and she was one of the nine women in the film *Nine*, opposite Daniel Day Lewis but when the big roles didn't come through, Kate Hudson didn't stop working. She honed her craft in small, independent films in which she was always the standout performer. That willingness to keep working, keep expanding her repertoire and filmography with bold choices when she could have rested on her laurels as part of Hollywood royalty has brought her to this second Oscar nomination and a place in the awards conversation.

Her warmth and charm on screen are matched only by her warmth and charm when you meet her in person. Despite now being 46, she's still exudes the playful attractiveness of an ingenue as well as a sunny beauty that radiates approachability.

This will have served her well during awards season, which is a long and arduous round of screenings, parties and talks at which you have to be careful not to put a foot wrong so that you don't alienate voters. Hudson has breezed through the season, charming the people she meets at social events but also at the smaller gatherings where there aren't voters. She delighted guests at the after party for the *Song Sung Blue* in New York by enthusiastically performing with the real Claire Sardina and her co-star Hugh Jackman.

It's the sort of interaction with people that voters notice as much as they do the more curated slots on late night talk shows. Between the film and her personal appearances, Kate Hudson has more than earned her position in the Best Actress category and one senses that she is both grateful and appreciative of all that the nomination offers. Plus, the red-carpet game is second to none!







Chloé Zhao: "The Value of Being Present with One Another"



by Lena Basse

As the Academy Awards approach on March 15, one name returns to the center of the conversation — not for the first time, and perhaps not for the last.

Chloé Zhao has never looked like she was chasing any spotlight. Eleven years ago, she was quietly premiering her debut at Sundance, filmed almost without a budget and with a largely nonprofessional cast. Now *Hamnet* has earned eight nominations — Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Actress for Jessie Buckley — and standing at the center of awards season, she looks exactly as she always has: unhurried, unpolished in the Hollywood sense, and entirely herself.

I have never met a director whose strength lies so clearly in her own vulnerability. Chloé Zhao is not afraid to be open, even though she does not feel the need to reveal every detail of her life. At the same time, she is genuinely open to dialogue and sincerely curious about the other person's perspective. She seems completely free from the need to project herself as a "successful" figure. Her appearance is far removed from the polished Hollywood image often expected of someone whose films have grossed millions at the box office. She carries no luxury handbags, wears no statement shoes. Her long black hair falls naturally. She wears no makeup, and nothing about her presence feels calculated or performative. And yet, it becomes clear that what she does wear — her clothes, her jewelry — carries personal meaning.

What she offers instead is something rarer: she never feels intimidating. On the contrary, she has a way of gently drawing you in. Very quickly, you find yourself opening up, listening closely to what she is saying — and she has a great deal to say. Above all, she is a remarkable storyteller.

Zhao's path to this moment has never followed a straight line. Born in China and educated across the UK and the United States, she arrived in American independent cinema without a clear lineage to claim. She had to build one — slowly, through proximity, observation, and trust.



Her first feature, *Songs My Brothers Taught Me*, premiered in 2015 at Sundance and immediately marked her as a filmmaker with an unusually patient eye — a restrained, observational portrait of everyday life on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation. The film almost did not happen. Days before shooting, the financing collapsed. Around the same time, burglars broke into her apartment and stole some of her equipment. For a first-time director, newly arrived and without institutional backing, this could easily have ended everything. Instead, Zhao stayed and adapted. The film that was eventually made was not the one originally imagined, and that became its defining strength.

That approach reached new clarity with *The Rider*, inspired by the life of Lakota rodeo rider Brady Jandreau. Zhao met Brady before his life-altering injury and spent time with him and his family long before deciding to make the film. When the accident happened, the story shifted, and Zhao followed reality. The *Rider* is often described as a film about the broken American dream, but it is more precisely a film about what comes after a dream breaks. There is no recovery arc, no restoration. What remains is dignity, routine, and the quiet labor of continuing. This attention to what does not resolve neatly would become central to everything that followed.

*****

With *Nomadland*, which premiered at Venice in 2020, Zhao reached a global audience. A story of a woman displaced by the Great Recession, traveling the American West out of a van, it struck a nerve during the pandemic with a directness and gentleness that felt almost impossible to manufacture. Frances McDormand won her third Oscar for the role, working alongside nonprofessional actors who played versions of themselves — sharing the screen with her rather than being framed by her. The film's emotional gravity came not from performance in the traditional sense but from lived reality.

The success — including Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director, making Zhao only the second woman in history to win the directing prize — did not alter her pace. When she moved on to *Eternals*, she carried the same sensibility into a radically different scale, infusing the Marvel universe with stillness, attention to landscape, and bodies that age and tire. The move was deeply personal. Since childhood, Zhao had been immersed in Japanese Manga, using it as a refuge from loneliness.

The sudden access to an enormous budget felt, she has said, like an unexpected gift. She has never distanced herself from the film:

> *"The sequence of the creation of the universe in Eternals was very humbly inspired by The Tree of Life. There are two ways to go about it: either you deny your influences, or you acknowledge where you come from. I know where I come from."*

After that, Zhao stopped. For nearly four years, she did not move quickly into another project. She turned down work that felt externally motivated and waited for something that emerged from a more honest place. That something turned out to be *Hamnet*.

*****

Based on Maggie O'Farrell's acclaimed 2020 novel, the film imagines the inner life of Shakespeare's family — his wife, Agnes; their son, Hamnet; and the grief that would eventually shadow the greatest writer in the English language. Almost nothing is historically known about this domestic world, and it is precisely that silence that drew Zhao in. She did not want to fill the gaps. She wanted to honor them.

Zhao has spoken about what drew her so deeply into this particular silence: "When Hamlet was staged back then, it was around the time of two plagues, not just one. And what we also believe is that it was written a few years after his son had died. So it's not some genius idea from the sky — this was a man who had lived in a time when the collective grief was so immense, and he had also been living with a broken heart himself. Recently someone said to me that grief is the chrysalis. You must allow yourself to rest in it, to sit in it, to be reborn. And if we don't — like Agnes, she was frozen in her grief. And we can assume that the 300 audience members at that time, many of them were frozen in their grief, having lost so many loved ones. And when you sit in that, being ground down — for a child to be reborn is excruciating. And what do you do? You reach for poetry. You reach for music and storytelling and metaphor. Something, a mystery, something that cannot be explained."





The project was brought to her by producers including Steven Spielberg, who saw in her an ideal match for O'Farrell's material. Zhao hesitated — she did not feel qualified to tell a story about a mother losing a child. That hesitation, she later realized, was the point. Spielberg, introducing the film at a special Academy Museum screening, was characteristically direct: "The power of empathy, which is Chloé's superpower, made this match inevitable." At the Los Angeles premiere that followed, Zhao arrived not in a statement gown but in a simple, romantic off-white lace dress — a choice that felt entirely in keeping with everything she is: present, personal, and unbothered by expectation.

The cast reflects the same instinct. Paul Mescal, whom Zhao first envisioned as a young Shakespeare at a screening of *Aftersun*, had already read and fallen in love with the novel. Jessie Buckley, whose performance as Agnes is widely considered a frontrunner for Best Actress, brought the kind of presence Zhao has always sought — not performance in the conventional sense, but something rawer, more alive. "It's so delicate," Buckley has said of the film's quieter moments. "Sometimes the slightest shift in the eyes becomes the beginning of an entire story." Mescal describes Zhao as "the most spiritual director" he has worked with: "She's not interested in talking scenes to death. She wants to feel them."

Audience response has been unusually quiet and intense. Since its premiere at Telluride, screenings have ended in long silences and visible tears. At events where Zhao was present, she introduced the film by guiding the audience through a brief meditation — not as a gesture or performance, but as preparation. "The value of being present with one another," she explained. "Right here. Right now. Because life can be beautiful. And life can also be heartbreaking." Having experienced it myself, I can only say: when an entire theater slows down at once, something genuinely shifts. The usual restlessness of a screening disappears, and the room turns inward.

This year, Zhao returns again to the unexpected with a new reboot of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* — a project that, on paper, seems far removed from *Hamnet*. And yet, it fits her pattern perfectly. Zhao has never stayed where she is expected to remain. Independent filmmaker. Oscar laureate. Marvel director. Period drama auteur. The labels accumulate and never quite hold.

On March 15, the industry will gather to celebrate the year in cinema. Zhao will be there — unhurried, present, and almost certainly moved by something she notices that no one else does. Whether or not she takes home another award, she has already offered something rarer: a reminder that the most enduring films are not made by those who move fastest but by those who know how to stay present.

A personal note.

I first met Zhao in November for a television interview ahead of the Los Angeles premiere of Hamnet. The interview lasted four minutes — not nearly enough. But what happened afterward stayed with me in a way that few encounters in years of film journalism have.

After the cameras stopped, I thanked her briefly for her support of Ukrainians and quickly left the room. I knew how precious every minute was in that setting. But Zhao ran after me. I heard her asking, "Where is she? Where? I need to tell her something important."

I was sitting in a corner, trying to hide the tears that had come when I began speaking about Ukraine on camera. She found me, sat down, and spoke quietly about how Hamnet was also shaped, in part, by the tragedy unfolding there — and how she had been influenced by the war in Ukraine, a country she had visited not once but a couple of times. She spoke about how grief consumes the light inside people, and about how important it is to know that the darkness is not forever.

I don't remember her exact words. Because at some point, I stopped hiding the tears and began telling her about the guilt — the particular guilt that spreads through a nation at war like water through cracks. I told her I felt guilty for sitting under cameras rather than under bombs, the way some of my former classmates are. And those sitting in Kyiv feel guilty before those dying at the front. And those at the front feel guilty before the fallen, simply for still being alive. And only those who are responsible for this tragedy seem to feel no guilt at all.

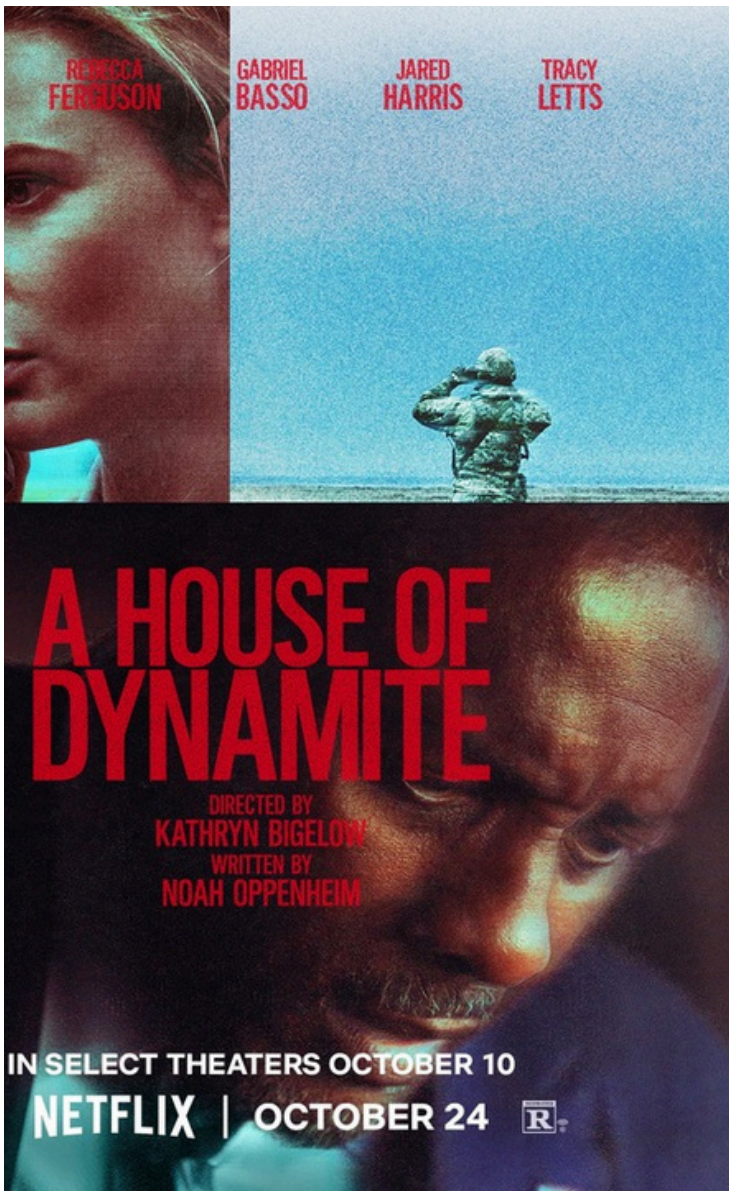
I spoke quickly, without restraint, without worrying that this was too much to bring to someone from Hollywood. Because I already knew: she would understand. She is not like most people in that world. She is, simply, a human being.

Steven Spielberg has called empathy Zhao's superpower. With respect to Spielberg, I would put it differently. Empathy is not a superpower. It is simply what it means to be human.

And the darkness is not forever.



(L-R) Chloé Zhao & Lena Basse





An Honorable Mention to Kathryn Bigelow's *A House of Dynamite*

by Dr. Laura Wilhelm, LauraWil Intercultural

Film awards seasons always have their adored darlings and their overlooked delights. These wallflowers that have so much going on inside may be too perceptive, honest, and real to be popular. Yet they often repay the attentions of more discerning observers.

Such a film is Kathryn Bigelow's *A House of Dynamite* now streaming on Netflix. This underrated pre-apocalyptic political thriller astutely conceives some very plausible scenarios when a nuclear missile of unknown origin is launched at the city of Chicago. Three of these are as follows.

--The U.S. might not even have time to ascertain the origin of a nuclear attack, let alone strategize an effective response.
--The U.S. might be forced to negotiate cooperative nuclear containment plans with sworn enemies such as Russia and China at the eleventh hour.
--The U.S. might be required to sacrifice millions of innocent American lives in major target cities in order to preserve even more.

Idris Elba delivers a typically excellent performance as the President of the United States, first seen shooting some hoops with schoolchildren at a public sporting event. He appears only after the rank and file have run through the doomsday script not once but twice with him and his staff from afar. This liberal African-American POTUS combines the star power of Barack Obama and Kamala Harris with the well-intentioned ineffectuality of many recent Democratic Presidents and candidates who will not be named.

His FLOTUS, played by the beautiful Renee Elise Goldsberry of *Hamilton*, is on safari in Africa when the attack occurs. This choice of locale seems very deliberate to suggest a possible safe haven for survivors after the developed world has succeeded in blowing itself up.

The anti-heroic tone of *A House of Dynamite* is its most noteworthy feature. Seasoned leaders with substantial civil service paychecks must constantly defer to experts far below their pay grades and humbly ask their advice about how to save the whole world from melting down. Significantly, the POTUS and the FLOTUS are never even named.





The feeling in the film recalls card counters in Las Vegas blindly playing the probabilities and sometimes relying upon gut instinct to avert catastrophe. But the house of dynamite will always win no matter what the costs to the players once the first stick is ignited.

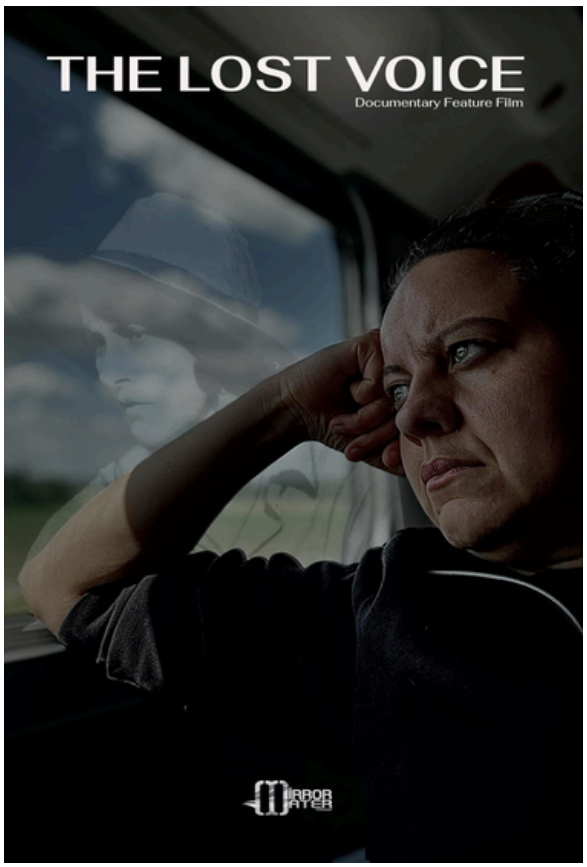
> The film's inconclusive ending has been widely criticized, but seems very much to the point. There is no way for the U.S. to win a nuclear war no matter what hasty moves we might try to make. One plan of action would be no better or worse than any other.

While Idris Elba is unquestionably the star of the show, he is surrounded by top notch talents such as Gabriel Basso, Jason Clarke, Kaitlyn Dever, Rebecca Ferguson, Jared Harris, Jonah Hauer-King, Greta Lee, and Tracy Letts. Most have been seen in other epic thrillers, with Clarke co-starring alongside Jessica Chastain in Bigelow's own 2012 film *Zero Dark Thirty*.

True to Bigelow's post-feminist sensibility, the women and minority characters in *A House of Dynamite* often display the most grace under pressure. About halfway through the film pointedly showcases a circular shot of the female Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. Ferguson and Goldsberry embody this vision of strong and smart yet sensitive womanhood in their memorable performances.

So there you have it. One of the better films made about the end of world in recent memory was created by a woman and reviewed rather indifferently. Should the nuclear apocalypse ever come, we may have seen it already thanks to Bigelow's brave outside the box film. We couldn't say we weren't warned.

Echoes Across Time: Christina Rose Revives the Forgotten Journey of Pola Brückner



by Nicole Goesseringer Muj

CEO/Co-founder MirrorWater Entertainment LLC Christina Rose is an American-German director, producer, and screenwriter, and is part of the new Hollyworld Movement, bringing entertainment to the global stage. She has worked in North America (USA, Canada), Europe (Denmark, France, Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Bulgaria), Africa (at the famous Atlas Studios in Ouarzazate), and Asia (India's Bollywood). Together with her brother Michael, she co-founded MirrorWater Entertainment LLC.

Prior to setting up a production company, Rose worked at such prestigious companies as Arad Productions (*The Amazing Spider-Man*), Exclusive Media (*Rush, Ides of March*), and in distribution at ZDF-Enterprises, where she developed numerous projects with Michael Hirst (*Vikings*) and William J. MacDonald (*Rome*). She also served as an executive at the European network Sky, acquiring new projects for development.

Since starting MWE, she has produced a number of documentaries and TV shows for the international market, including the six-part documentary series *Wonder Women*, where we meet young women leaders in underrepresented industries around the world who are redefining leadership for a better future.

Her new documentary *The Lost Voice* uncovers the true story of her great-grand aunt Pola Brückner, who is thought to be the first woman ever to film in the Amazon.

Inspired by the book by Pola Brückner, *A Woman Went into the Jungle* (Eine Frau ging in den Urwald), Rose sets out on a journey to discover who her great-grand aunt Pola was. She searches archives and traces her steps in the Berlin film industry, but with every new document she finds, more questions arise. As she searches for answers, she realizes that to learn what really happened during the expedition, she too must take the journey that Pola and filmmaker August Brückner, her then husband, took almost 100 years ago. Rose decides to travel to Brazil, tracing their fateful journey on the Amazon River—not just to find out what really happened but to verify whether what Brückner recounts in her book is truth or fiction.

Following is Rose's interview with *IEM*.



Pola Brückner & Alfred Riedeberger- 1941

IEM: *The Lost Voice* explores both a personal and historical journey. What inspired you to use the documentary format to uncover Pola Brückner's forgotten story, and how do you think documentary filmmaking uniquely preserves truth and memory?

CR: Documentary filmmaking is truly a powerful tool—if done correctly, it can lead to understanding something unknown or unfamiliar, and maybe even result in change. As I started working on the story about Pola, realizing that she is my great-grand aunt, who was a filmmaker almost 100 years ago, I couldn't stop holding up a mirror to myself and questioning my own purpose as a filmmaker. Naturally, I wanted to try to understand Pola—who she was, what she accomplished, what she believed in. I wanted to understand how much we share in common, how much we differ. I needed to understand what her life meant to film history, and the only way to do this was to tell it as a documentary. So, the story is really my search for her—from visiting archives to finding people who knew her—but, of course, the underlying questions I seek are internal, and it's through letters I write that I try to express my own inner emotions as I search for her. Unexpectedly, I found myself in doing this project.



Haroldo Baleixe, Christina Rose & Diego Barros

IEM: As a filmmaker, what responsibility do you feel when bringing women's untold stories—like Pola's—back into the cultural conversation?

CR: It's given me the opportunity to better understand how things have changed from the time Pola lived to today. People say, "Women have so many more opportunities than in the past—what are women complaining about?" I can, unfortunately, only agree with this partially. Sure, Pola lived in a time when she could not learn how to drive a car. It wasn't even a question for me to get my driver's license. So yes, certainly, that shows progress. However, if we really dig deep and peel away the layer of opportunities for women when it matters, I would argue that what women were fighting for 100 years ago remains at the core today.

> I have seen when women's voices are pushed aside, not taken seriously, disrespected, silenced. We, both men and women, need to stop doing this—full stop. We must recognize that uplifting women's voices—all voices in our society, no matter their nationality, religious background, or race—everybody in this world should have the opportunity to be heard, seen, respected, and listened to. Is that utopia? Maybe... but we have to strive for something, and that's what I am dedicated to doing, even if I fail trying. But I have to try.

IEM: In ***The Lost Voice***, you discover key pieces of history that even local communities were unaware of. How does this reflect the broader role of documentaries in redefining historical narratives and connecting generations?

CR: When we started doing research for this documentary, we obviously didn't know what we would find or what impact we would have. Having been able to be part of these discoveries that truly go well beyond this documentary itself shows how important it is to understand our past and see how connected we are. Certainly, it also demonstrates how important historical narratives are. It's absolutely mind-boggling to think that because of a story Pola wrote about, there's this wave of discovery that resulted from it. Along the way, I met extraordinary people and explored a world I was never exposed to. It certainly makes you question what this means, but at the same time, I see it as my purpose to allow people to understand how important even these small things are—how impactful documentary stories are, how vital they are in understanding our ancestors, and in understanding our role in society today.

IEM: You've been recognized for using film to spotlight "women shaping the future." How has ***The Lost Voice*** deepened your understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by women filmmakers, both past and present?

> Anything I can do to tell stories about lost or unknown women who have done amazing things—or are doing them—is my goal in life. There are so many women before me who have sacrificed so much for me to be in the position I am today. At the same time, though, women are far from being treated and respected equally. I know because I experience it every day of my life. Whatever I can do to uplift these women brings us one step closer to making a difference.

IEM: What do you hope audiences will take away from Pola's story and your personal journey—both as a filmmaker and as a woman reclaiming a lost voice in cinema history?

CR: Every person has a purpose in life; sometimes it takes time to find what that is. Nonetheless, I do believe we are meant to fulfill a purpose in our lives, and hopefully, people will recognize that and strive to make a difference in whatever they wish to do. That is what learning, studying, researching, and life are all about.

There is a deeper meaning to this documentary. It is not just about Pola or her adventure in the Amazon. I found myself through this project and confirmed my role in making women more respected and admired for the challenges and risks they take. I hope others will be inspired to do the same.



Harmony Beyond Exile: Director Veronika Emily Pohl on Rediscovering Weinberg and Korngold



Veronika Emily Pohl

By Nicole Goesseringer Muj

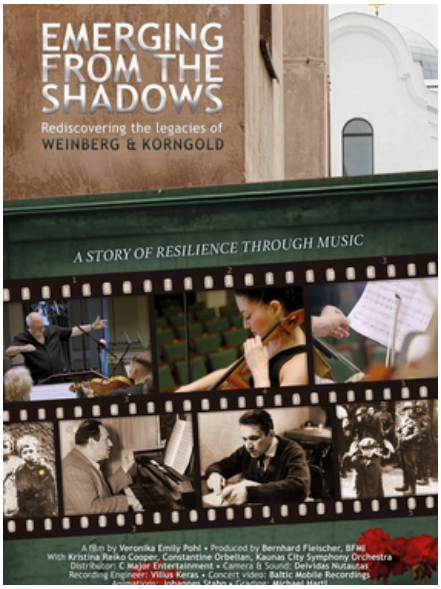
Veronika Emily Pohl is a US-German journalist and documentary film director whose specialty includes artist portraits, music documentaries, and multi-camera directing of concert and stage productions.

Emerging from the Shadows: Rediscovering the Legacies of Weinberg & Korngold, a new documentary directed by Pohl, celebrates the intertwined stories of two extraordinary yet historically overlooked composers — Mieczysław Weinberg and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Produced by Bernhard Fleischer Moving Images GmbH (BFMI), *Emerging from the Shadows* follows acclaimed cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper and four-time GRAMMY®-nominated conductor Constantine Orbelian as they record with the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania, performing key orchestral works by both composers.

Among the most celebrated composers of his generation, Erich Wolfgang Korngold won two Academy Awards® for Best Original Score and remains a cornerstone of early Hollywood film music, blending symphonic grandeur with cinematic storytelling. His combination of lush orchestration and emotional scope continues to influence film composers today.

The film intertwines poignant musical performance with an exploration of the composers' shared Jewish heritage and exile during World War II. Both Weinberg and Korngold faced persecution and displacement — Weinberg escaped to Moscow after the murder of his family in the Holocaust, while Korngold fled Vienna and revolutionized Hollywood film scoring with his operatic lyricism.



We had the chance to speak with the director about the new film.

IEM: ***Emerging from the Shadows*** blends musical performance with historical storytelling. What drew you to use the documentary form to honor Weinberg and Korngold's legacies, and how do you feel this medium deepens our understanding of their music and times?

VEP: The beauty in music as an art form usually lies in the fact that it touches us emotionally without the need for words or visuals. For me, watching a musician produce the sounds that are now moving through me as their listener deepens this experience: being able to witness Kristina Reiko Cooper, Constantine Orbelian, and the orchestra musicians express themselves so uniquely and personally.

And then there's a third party in the room that we might sense but cannot see: the composers' character, shaped by their life circumstances. As Weinberg and Korngold are not with us anymore, their story can only be told historically. So, really, it's a triangle of a shared experience between audience, musicians, and composers, and I feel the documentary brings all of this together beautifully: the music itself, the story behind its production, and Weinberg's and Korngold's personal history — which, if you know it, you can hear imprinted into their compositions. After watching the documentary, I'm certain we will listen to these pieces differently — hopefully more personally connected.

IEM: Both Weinberg and Korngold endured exile and loss yet continued to create profoundly human works. How did exploring their resilience through film shape your own perspective on art as an act of survival and connection?

VEP: I'm in deep awe of this. When it can be so easy to feel discouraged over much smaller things and under absolutely regular conditions — how do people find this unbelievable strength to persevere in the most dire situations and stay human, sensitive, and creative instead of turning bitter and violent themselves? What I take away from Weinberg's and Korngold's life story is that to keep creating beauty in a cruel world is an act of defiance. Because it's a sad truth that we, as humans, have proved capable of the most horrendous atrocities — but it's just as true that we have this incredible capacity for compassion, connection, and the ability to create beauty. And each day, we make a choice about which side to contribute to. Coming back to your question: having worked on this film encourages me to stay authentic to myself and create art as a contribution to the beautiful side of humanity.

IEM: Documentary filmmaking often serves as both discovery and preservation. What responsibilities do you feel a filmmaker holds when reintroducing these overlooked composers to contemporary audiences?



Recording Engineer Vilius Keras, Kristina Reiko Cooper & Maestro Constantine Orbelian

VEP: Apart from the responsibility to tell another person's story as truthfully as possible, I'd say the feeling of responsibility is tied to which values we hold. After all, how we perceive history is curated — whose stories we tell is shaped by our belief systems and the keyholders defining them. I'm thankful to have been brought up in a democratic mindset, so I believe all humans have the same inherent value and everyone should be heard. After all, our understanding of history can only be complete when we know of all the different ways people have lived through it. Korngold and Weinberg are two of these voices we have yet to hear — and there are many more stories to tell.

IEM: The film interlaces music, history, and emotion. How did you approach visually translating these composers' inner worlds and musical voices for today's viewers?

VEP: First of all, it was a gift to have Kristina Reiko Cooper and Constantine Orbelian in front of the camera: they are incredibly eloquent, educated, and passionate. They speak so thoughtfully that it was clear they should be the sole narrators of the film. To convey the interconnectedness of the composers' music and their personal lives, I chose a structure of alternating segments of musical performance and historical narrative. The more we discover of their music, the more we also learn about Korngold and Weinberg. And having Kristina and Constantine speak over parts of their performance lets us witness the musical structures of the works in real time. It forms a deeper understanding and feeling of the pieces — and of the overall, fascinating compositional process.

IEM: Beyond the concert stage, what do you hope audiences take away from this film about the enduring power of creativity — and about the necessity of remembering voices that history nearly silenced?

VEP: I believe we are wired for connection, and that in difficult times music can help us come back together. While violence, repression, and discrimination rob us of people and the gifts they would have given to this world, we shouldn't give up on supporting each other to fully and freely live out our lives and potentials. It is what we're really meant to do.

A Filmatic Masterpiece Vying for This Year's Best Picture Oscar

By Claude Brickell

IMDb's description of Oscar-winning director Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* adaption of Mary Shelley's classic tale by the same name, has "Victor Frankenstein, a brilliant but egotistical scientist, bringing a creature to life in a monstrous experiment that ultimately leads to the undoing of both the creature and himself." Nick Riganas, also on IMDb, gives a more in-depth interpretation. "God created life and He, alone, can take it away. However, Baron Victor Frankenstein, the arrogant son of the renowned physician Leopold Frankenstein, thinks otherwise: inspired manipulation of the human body and its intricate system by physical and chemical means equals life eternal. His audacious plan is visionary, yet it is hanging by a thread and only he knows the answers. With so much death out there and destiny calling, Frankenstein embarks on a blasphemous mission to disrupt God's rhythm and intimate life. But what was once alive should remain dead, forever; or should it be the other way around—?"



Every film interpretation of Shelley's classic has used her plot to create its visual depiction. But del Toro, obviously an astute intellectual, takes his interpretation a step further and deeper into psychoanalysis to create his own depiction. And it is a visual masterpiece of filmatic-excellence from the first frame on. Although Shelley's novel was pinned years earlier before Sigmond Freud coined his groundbreaking Oedipal Complex, the author was obviously aware of the psychology and obsession the male holds for his father, however subconscious, and for the father's longing to create an offspring of his idea liking.

Freud described the source of this complex in his Introductory Lectures beginning with, "You all know the Greek legend of King Oedipus, who was destined, by fate, to kill his father and take his mother as his wife, who did everything possible to escape the oracle's decree then punishes himself by blinding when he learns he has unwittingly committed both these crimes…" In my own treatise *The Womb Obsession*, a theory of sexual preferences and orientation (available on Amazon and also free on the web), I deal extensively with the Oedipal complex. And del Toro, no doubt, was keen to Shelley's underlying awareness, as well, of the male's unresolve paternal rejection of the father's love and repudiation of his offspring's lack of perfection in his eyes.







From the film's beginning, del Toro has young Victor experiencing paternal refute with the father punishing him for contradicting him by striking the boy with a lash of his cane across Victor's cheek, drawing blood: "Never forget that you carry my name!" Therein lies Victor's awareness that he is imperfect in his father's eyes, and the boy's obsession to create an offspring, one day, of his own perfection.

This is a story, laid out by Shelley and so brilliantly interpreted by del Toro in his *Frankenstein* film masterpiece. It is a depiction of the offspring's hopeless desire to gain his father's love that he never had. And, at the film's end, the offspring, able to tracts down his creator, at long last, tirelessly seeks his father's love. The aging Victor, though, simply begs his offspring for forgiveness in ever having creating him (the Oedipal dilemma), at which his offspring reluctantly responds, "(father) I forgive you…"

No other writer/director has ever grasped the underlying essence of Shelley's literary classic until del Toro, and why *Frankenstein* is, not only heartwarming, but a veritable film masterpiece.

The Last Dance at Sundance: Inside the Defining Events of Sundance 2026

By Nicole Goesseringer Muj

As the Sundance Film Festival bids farewell to its storied home in Park City, Utah, before relocating to Boulder, Colorado next year, its final edition delivered a heartfelt celebration of creativity, community, and the cinematic legacy established by the late Robert Redford. From intimate art talks to star-studded soirées, here's a look at the standout events that defined Sundance's unforgettable last dance in Park City.

The Elvis Mitchell Suite: Cinema's Inner Circle

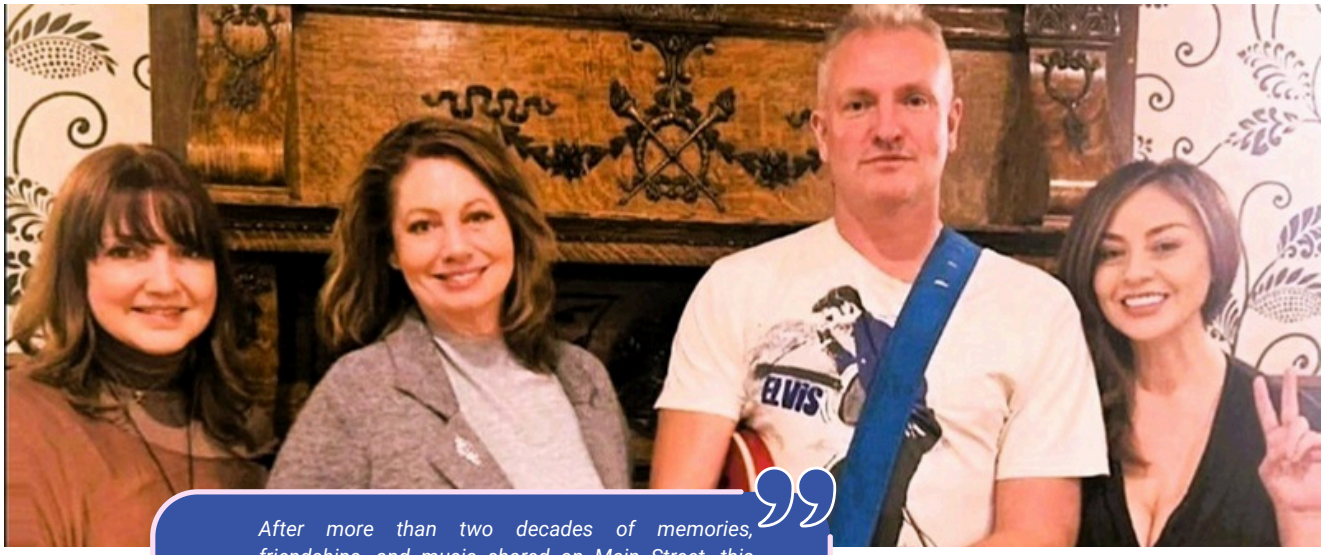
Back by popular demand, The Elvis Mitchell Suite at The Cabin on Main Street was once again one of Sundance's most coveted destinations. Hosted by renowned curator, critic, and KCRW's The Treatment host Elvis Mitchell, the suite offered intimate, unfiltered conversations with some of the industry's most compelling voices.

Highlights included:

- *Bait* — A sharp and soulful exchange between Sound of Metal star Riz Ahmed and comedian Guz Khan.
- *Little Walnut* — Music icon Moby and producer Lindsay Hicks explored the evolution of their storytelling ventures.
- NBCUniversal's *The Fall and Rise of Reggie Dinkins* — Erika Alexander joined Mitchell for a thoughtful dialogue on comedy, culture, and representation.

Music Lodge & Music Lodge Live!

A Park City institution since 2004, Music Lodge at Treasure Mountain Inn on Main once again fused film, music, and media with its signature high-energy atmosphere.



L-R - Nicole Muj, Lisa Precious, Joe Sumner, Paulina Aguirre

> *After more than two decades of memories, friendships, and music shared on Main Street, this final year was very special," said founder Lisa Precious.*

Its finale concert, Music Lodge Live! on January 23rd, was a night worthy of festival legend. Indie favorites Kris Gruen, Byland, and Kendall Jane Meade warmed up the stage before Foxy Shazam brought down the house with their electrifying performance — including a nod to their track "Oh Lord," made famous by HBO Max's Peacemaker. The late-night after-hours, curated by Kultura PR International, spotlighted Brooklyn Dylan, Ashley Paul, and Latin Grammy winner Paulina Aguirre, who premiered a new genre-blending track alongside a surprise duet with Joe Sumner to kick-off the special night of music.

FC | HQ: Where Film Meets Location

The lodge's FC | HQ connected filmmakers and global film commissions in a welcoming, collaborative space. Visitors mingled over locally roasted coffee, entered destination giveaways—from Vermont's Goddard Film Complex to Bora Bora's Four Seasons Resort—and sampled chili served from Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission. Presented by the Montana Department of Commerce and supported by FilmUSA, the HQ embodied Sundance's global spirit.

Heretic Films Lounge & The Justice Reform Summit

At the Downstairs Club, Heretic Films Lounge affirmed its role as a hub for inclusive storytelling. On January 23rd, the venue hosted Joe Sumner for a live concert, followed by a private acoustic set the next day.

The Lounge also presented The Justice Reform Summit on January 24th, a powerful intersection of media, justice reform, and reentry advocacy led by Noella Sudbury, J.D., Founder & CEO of Rasa Legal. Among the standout sessions was Beyond the Background Check: Supporting Successful Reentry and Building the Future of Work, featuring RBIJ CEO Maha Jweied, CSG's Jesse Kelley, Flagger Force CEO Mike Doner, and Obama Leader Royal Ramey — moderated by Shea Zwerver of Goodwill International.



Meredith & Seth Marks


Nicole Muj

Relévant Galleries: The Albion x David Yarrow

Luxury met artistry when The Albion, Bourbon Lore, and acclaimed photographer David Yarrow hosted an exclusive one-night event that blended visual storytelling, craft cuisine, and rare whiskies. The evening's theme — the enduring lore of the American West — felt like a poetic tribute to Park City's cinematic past and the festival's next frontier.

Meredith Marks Presents: Glamour Meets Advocacy

At her namesake boutique (511 Main St.), designer and *Real Housewives of Salt Lake City* star Meredith Marks brought both sparkle and substance to Sundance. She hosted an Evening of Cocktails & Caviar benefiting the Alzheimer's Association and Miss Maude's, followed by the 4th Annual GLAAD Celebration at Sundance, honoring LGBTQ+ creators and changemakers in partnership with UBS.

Additional Highlights

- *A Road Map to Happiness* — World of Hyatt House hosted the uplifting sizzle reel debut of this limited docuseries featuring Jason Momoa, Shailene Woodley, Elijah Wood, Alec Baldwin, and host-producer Darin Olien. The post-screening Q&A, moderated by Rotten Tomatoes' Jacqueline Cooley, delved into the project's intersection of sustainability, wellness, and fame. In our opinion, Baldwin had the best joke of the festival!
- By Invitation Only — The festival's closing nights saw a flurry of private celebrations, including the *Night Nurse* world premiere party, where guests toasted Georgia Bernstein's new feature with light bites, live music, and a dash of Sundance nostalgia.

As the curtain fell on Park City's final act, Sundance 2026 proved that goodbyes can be both grand and intimate. Amid the conversations, performances, and bittersweet tributes, one lasting truth remains: the town that once shaped independent cinema will echo long after the lights fade.



Elvis Mitchell and Erika Alexander

Embodying Both Worlds: Delia Niya on Heritage, Art, and Strength



Balancing grace and power, actress, model and writer Delia Niya brings her Romanian-Chinese heritage to the global stage with authenticity and boldness. From classical theatre in London to the heart of Hollywood, Her journey reflects a fearless embrace of dual identity and creative independence. With training in wushu, experience as a high-fashion runway model, and a deep dedication to her craft, she continues to redefine what it means to be a truly international artist.

Your Romanian-Chinese heritage gives you a truly global identity. How has growing up between these two cultures influenced the way you approach acting and storytelling?

Growing up half Romanian and half Chinese shaped everything about me. My Romanian side made me bold, funny, and gave me this very open way of expressing myself. My Chinese side, on the other hand, made me more focused and disciplined.

As I got older, I realized I didn't want to choose one culture—I wanted to represent both. America felt like the place where that kind of multicultural identity is powerful, not limiting. I wanted to bring that blend here and show that both sides of me can exist fully on screen.

You began your artistic journey at a young age, leaving Romania at 16 to study acting in London. What was that transition like—both personally and professionally—and how did classical theatre training shape you?

Leaving Romania at 16 to study in London was scary, but it made me grow up fast. Seven hours of training every day—classical theatre, contemporary work, especially Shakespeare—gave me real technique: voice, breath, control, and text work. It taught me discipline and respect for the craft.

Even then, I knew the U.S. was my end goal. Hollywood felt like the biggest stage—not just creatively, but globally. Moving to Los Angeles to finish my studies felt like stepping into the arena I'd been preparing for. Being here has opened doors to projects at a level I always dreamed of.

In *Code Pink*, you portrayed Chloe, a character masking deep struggles beneath a composed exterior. How did you prepare to capture those layers of vulnerability and humor within such a high-intensity environment?

Oh, I really struggled portraying her at first. She was fascinating to me because she looks strong and composed, but she's actually holding so much inside. I think a lot of women understand that feeling. I focused on contrast—keeping her exterior controlled while letting little cracks show underneath. My training at my acting academy in Los Angeles really helped me with this role. We worked a lot on emotional truth, scene analysis, and using personal memory without overplaying it.

I love roles where vulnerability isn't obvious—where it slips out naturally. That tension is what makes a character feel real.

Beyond acting, you've trained in Wushu and modeled for Art Hearts Fashion. How do movement and discipline from martial arts and runway performance feed into your presence as an actress?

Wushu gave me discipline, but runway really changed my confidence. Walking for Art Hearts Fashion taught me how to own a room without saying anything. On a runway, it's just you—your posture, your energy, your walk. That made me completely comfortable being seen.

It helped me understand presence in a feminine way—how subtle movements, eye contact, or stillness can shift the entire energy of a space. Now, when I step onto a set or stage, I don't feel small. I feel grounded, confident, and fully in my body.

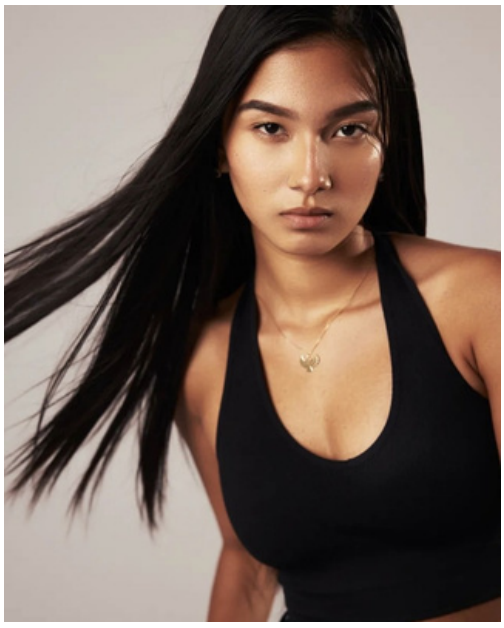
You've spoken about your upcoming feature film with a major Hollywood producer—a turning point in your international career. Without revealing specifics, how are you preparing for this next phase in your life, and what kinds of roles excite you most going forward?

Securing this upcoming feature with a major Hollywood producer feels like everything I've been building toward since I left home at 16. I can't share details yet, but it's a big step.

I'm preparing by training more, physically and emotionally, because I take this very seriously. I'm most excited about roles that combine strength and depth. I love action because of my martial arts background, and I want to play women who are fun but fearless.

You've also written your own short, *Girls' Guide to the City*. What inspired you to step into writing, and how does creating your own material empower you as an artist in today's film industry?

> *I wrote Girls' Guide to the City because I got tired of waiting around. I thought, "Why not just create it myself?"*
>
> *Writing feels playful to me—it's where I get to be honest, messy, funny, and real without asking for permission. As someone building a career in America with a multicultural background, creating my own material makes me feel in control of my narrative.*



What's the best advice anyone has ever given you—and if you could pass on one tip to someone beginning their journey in entertainment, what would it be?

Take risks. Most people are so scared of being judged, seen, or called "crazy" that they end up playing it safe—and safe is boring!

Be fun. Be bold. Be a little unpredictable. The industry doesn't remember the careful ones—it remembers the brave ones. If it scares you a little, do it.

Delia Niya embodies a dynamic blend of cultures that deeply informs her artistry and storytelling. As one of the very few Romanian-Chinese artists working internationally—and the only one of her kind actively bridging both cultures through film and performance— Delia brings a truly global perspective to her craft, uniting Eastern discipline with European expressiveness in every role she undertakes. We cannot wait to see what's next for this rising young talent.

JONATHAN BAKER

—EST 1962—

THANK YOU TO OUR
OSCARS 2026 PARTNERS

ART E$TATE
CURATED MAGAZINE

FRFF

indie
ENTERTAINMENT
MEDIA

VOSS
Choose Extraordinary™

HIVE H_2O

CARDINAL DU FOUR
— ARMAGNAC —

CROATIAN
PREMIUM WINE

STATUS
WINES

Fat Sal's
WE'RE MAKIN' SANDWICHES OVER HERE

C&C
Charles & Company

KULTURA
PR INTERNATIONAL

CLOUD 21

kateelfatah
HOM
CONSULTING

VELVET

COTRINI
Salmon DNA Skincare

THE
STYLE
DEN
FASHION • WELLNESS • COMMUNITY

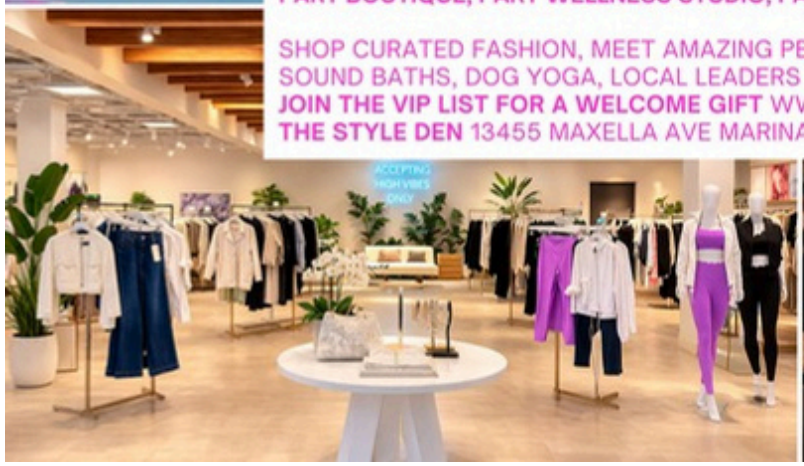






WE'RE THE NEW VIBE IN TOWN —
PART BOUTIQUE, PART WELLNESS STUDIO, PART SOCIAL CLUB.

SHOP CURATED FASHION, MEET AMAZING PEOPLE, AND ELEVATE YOUR ENERGY AT SOUND BATHS, DOG YOGA, LOCAL LEADERS EVENTS AND SUNSET SOCIALS.
JOIN THE VIP LIST FOR A WELCOME GIFT WWW.SHOPSTYLEDEN.COM/VIPLIST
THE STYLE DEN 13455 MAXELLA AVE MARINA DEL REY, CA 424•888•7333





LOCAL
LEADERS
COLLECTIVE

A PRIVATE CIRCLE FOR WESTSIDE ENTREPRENUERS + CREATORS

CONNECT • COLLAB • GROW

HOSTED AT
THE STYLE DEN MARINA DEL REY


COTRINI
SALMON DNA SKINCARE
Cotrini & The Power Of Salmon DNA
Discover the secret behind Korea's coveted 'injectable' glow — now in a luxurious, needle-free cream. PDRN from salmon DNA delivers rapid hydration, visible collagen support, and soothing anti-inflammatory benefits. Blended with ancient herbal botanicals for clinically proven, hypo-allergenic repair. Trusted by professionals and for daily use. No needles. No travel. Just radiant results.
COTRINI
Ultra Hydrating Night Cream
LEARN MORE!


eugenia kuzmina
photo: jamie howren
VELVET®
www.velveteyewear.com


CARDINAL DU FOUR
ARMAGNAC
BE FILLED WITH WONDER, BE MESMERIZED BY TASTE
NEW YORK
WORLD WINE & SPIRITS COMPETITION
2023
DOUBLE GOLD
21 REBELLION
CONCOURS GÉNÉRAL AGRICOLE
MÉDAILLE D'OR
PARIS
MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE L'ALIMENTATION
MÉDAILLE D'OR
PARIS
97
ADMIRATIO
HARMONIA
ILLUMINATIO
CdF
CARDINAL DU FOUR
ARMAGNAC