RFF 2024 Complete Content

All films are screened in person at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, with a selection of films screened at venues throughout the NYC metro area. Selected films are available to stream virtually on demand April 3 - 10 and are geo-blocked to the Tri-State Area. All films will be followed by a Q+A.

Additional information and Ticket links are available at [www.reelabilities.org/newyork](http://www.reelabilities.org/newyork)

# FEATURE FILMS

## Opening Night: Ezra

*New York City Premiere*

Dir. Tony Goldwyn

Narrative | English | US | 2023 | 100 min

*Ezra* follows Max Bernal (Bobby Cannavale), a stand-up comedian living with his father (Robert De Niro), while struggling to co-parent his autistic son Ezra (introducing William Fitzgerald) with his ex-wife (Rose Byrne). When forced to confront difficult decisions about their son’s future, Max and Ezra embark on a cross-country road trip that has a transcendent impact on both their lives. Directed by Tony Goldwyn, who also appears in the film alongside additional cast members Vera Farmiga, Rainn Wilson and Whoopi Goldberg, Ezra is an endearing and often funny exploration of a family determined to find their way through life’s complexities with humor, compassion, and heart.

TC: Wed, Apr 3, 6 pm Reception | 7 pm Screening

## Daruma

Dir. Alexander Yellen

Narrative | English | US | 2023 | 104 min

When day-drinking, unemployed paraplegic Patrick finds out he is the father of a 4-year-old girl he never knew existed, he enlists the help of his double amputee veteran neighbor Robert to drive him and his newfound daughter across the country to live with her maternal grandparents.

MMJCCM: Sat, Apr 6, 8:30 pm
SIJCC: Tue, Apr 9, 7 pm

## Is There Anybody Out There?

Dir. Ella Glendining

Documentary | English | UK | 2023 | 87 min

While navigating daily discrimination, a filmmaker who loves her unusual body searches the world for another person like her and explores what it takes to love oneself fiercely despite society's misconceptions.

MMJCCM: Thu, Apr 4, 8:15 pm

MAYSLES: Fri, Apr 5, 7 pm

DCTV: Sun, Apr 7, 2 pm

## La Lucha

Dir. Violeta Ayala

Documentary | Spanish | Australia/US/Bolivia | 2023 | 93 min

*New York Premiere*

Feliza, Mareele, Rose Mery, and Miguel spearhead a movement advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. They gather and motivate hundreds during a 35-day, 250-mile journey across the Andes to reach the Bolivian capital, battling harsh conditions and hunger along the way. Confronting barricades, riot police, and hostility from fellow citizens, these activists persist and ultimately arrive in La Paz, rewriting national history.

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Fri, Apr 5, 6:00 pm

MOMI: Sat, Apr 6, 1:30 pm

## Left Alone Rhapsody - The Musical Memoir of Pianist John Bayless

Dir. Stewart M. Schulman

Documentary | English | US | 2023 | 100 min

At 25, Leonard Bernstein's protégé, John Bayless, debuted at Carnegie Hall, launching a 30-year-long recording career as a solo pianist, composer, and improviser. At 54, after a left-brain stroke immobilized his right side, John is determined to reinvent himself as a one-handed musician and storyteller.

Streaming April 3–10, $15

MMJCCM: Mon, Apr 8, 6 pm

BPL: Thu, Apr 4, 7 pm

## Loud Love

Dir. Bing Wang

Documentary | English + ASL | US | 2024 | 90 min

*World Premiere*

Pushing back against ongoing prejudice, deaf gay couple Alan and Brian pursue parenthood, raising two hearing children through international surrogacy. *Loud Love* follows their journey of fatherhood, family, and relationships.

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Sun, Apr 7, 5:30 pm

Name Me Lawand

Dir. Edward Lovelace

Documentary | British Sign Language, English, Kurdish | UK | 2022 | 82 min

Deaf since birth and unable to communicate with those around him, five-year-old Lawand undertakes a treacherous journey with his family from Iraq to Derby, home of the Royal School for the Deaf. When this new life comes under threat of deportation, they begin a new quest – a fight to stay in the place they now call home.

MMJCCM: Tue, Apr 9, 6 pm

JBFC: Mon, Apr 8, 7 pm

## Okthanksbye

Dir. Nicole van Kilsdonk

Narrative | Dutch, Dutch Sign Language, French | Netherlands | 2023 | 92 min

Classmates at a boarding school for the deaf, shy Jamie and bold Imane set off on an unexpected road trip to Paris. When things do not go as planned, and the trip takes an adventurous turn, Jamie must come out of her shell.

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Thu, Apr 4, 6 pm

MC: Wed, Apr 3, 5:30 pm

## Rally Caps + Deaf Giants

MMJCCM: Sun, Apr 7, 2:45 pm
GCAC: Tue, Apr 9, 7pm

### Rally Caps

Dir. Lee Cipolla

Narrative | English | US | 2023 | 95 min

*New York Premiere*

In this star-studded family coming-of-age drama, young Jordy, who is recovering from a serious Little League baseball injury, goes to summer camp where he forms a friendship with Lucas, who just had Cochlear Implant surgery. Together, they form a special bond as friends and pitcher/catcher duo and lead their team in the camp championship game.

### Deaf Giants

Dir. Peter Hoffman Kimball

Documentary | English | US | 2023 | 10 min

*New York Premiere*

Baseball-loving 10-year-old Bracken and his younger deaf brother investigate the contrast between early 1900s inclusion of deaf players in baseball and the present, seeking to understand why representation has regressed.

Streaming April 3–10 as part of ReelAbilities “Out of the Box”

## Sexual Healing

Dir. Elsbeth Fraanje

Documentary | Dutch | Netherlands | 2022 | 55 min

*New York Premiere*

Evelien, a 53-year-old woman with cerebral palsy, sets out on a disarming and often funny quest for intimacy and exploration of her sexuality, unearthing needs she has been suppressing her entire life.

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Mon, Apr 8, 8:30 pm

## Tell Them You Love Me

Dir. Nick August-Perna

Documentary | English | US | 2023 | 103 min

*New York City Premiere*

This true-crime documentary follows the story of an esteemed university professor who becomes embroiled in a controversial affair with Derrick Johnson, a non-verbal man with cerebral palsy, leading to a criminal trial that would challenge our perceptions of disability and the nature of consent. Through exclusive footage and interviews, this feature documentary weaves a riveting and nuanced story about communication, race, and sex.

MMJCCM: Sat, Apr 6, 6:15 pm
MAYSLES: Thu, Apr 4, 7 pm
CHELSEA: Fri, Apr 5, 7 pm

## Closing Night: Good Bad Things

Dir. Shane D. Stanger

Narrative | English | US | 2023 | 96 min

*New York Premiere*

Danny, a young man with muscular dystrophy, steps out of his comfort zone and into the world of online dating after being disillusioned by failed relationships. An unexpected match with Madi, an enigmatic photographer, challenges him to be vulnerable and sparks a profound journey of self-acceptance, discovering the extraordinary beauty of his unique body.

Streaming April 3–10
MMJCCM: Wed, Apr 10, 6 pm Pre-Reception | 7 pm screening

# REELSHORTS: SHORT FILM PROGRAMS

## ReelShorts: Out of the Box

Q+A info:

Ticketing:

Streaming April 3–10 (excluding *Carpenter*, including *Deaf Giants*)
MMJCCM: Sat, Apr 6, 2 pm, FREE

### **As You Are**

Dir. Daisy Friedman

Narrative | English | US | 2023 | 14 min

When an interabled queer couple spend the night together for the first time, they must confront their complex relationships with desire, sexuality, bodily autonomy, and what it means truly to love another person.

### Carpenter

Dir. Xelîl Sehragerd

Documentary | Kurdish | Kurdistan | 2023 | 14 min

In a remote mountainous region of Iran, Kurdish carpenter Hussein Mahmood trudges through the snow, searching for the best wood to craft artificial legs. In an area plagued by landmines, his careful work brings peace to victims of these indiscriminate weapons of war.

### Donald

Dir. Dylan S. Tuccillo

Documentary | English | US | 2023 | 9 min

*World Premiere*

A dancer moves with his wheelchair in surprising ways, pushing the art form's boundaries, as he prepares for a live performance.

### My Eyes Are Up Here

Dir. Nathan Morris

Narrative | English | UK | 2022 | 13 min

A broken condom sends a woman and her one-night stand out for the morning-after pill. Except it's not so simple: she's disabled, a woman of color, and around her, people magically transform into jerks. An eye-opening odyssey for him, just another day for her.

### Sea Legs

Dir. Sam Dijkstra

Narrative | Dutch | Netherlands | 2022 | 8 min

*US Premiere*

When Marius meets his girlfriend's group of friends for the first time, he tries to hide his insecurities, but when the whole group decides to go swimming, he faces a diﬃcult choice. Will he swim or stay on the beach and hide? What starts for Marius as a careless summer’s day evolves into a confrontation between his insecurities and self-acceptance.

### To My Father

Dir. Sean Schiavolin

Documentary | ASL, English | US | 2023 | 23 min

In March 2022, Troy Kotsur became the first Deaf man to win the Best Supporting Actor Academy Award for *CODA*. During his emotional acceptance speech, Troy paid tribute to his dad, his “hero”. *To My Father* is the story of Troy’s father’s influence on him beyond the speech that moved millions.

### We Care

Dir. Clare-Louise English

Narrative | English | UK | 2022 | 16 min

*New York Premiere*

Annie is surprised to find that her new care-taker happens to be a man, a very manly man. This poignant and humorous narrative takes a dark turn as Annie struggles with the shortcomings of the system designed to care for her.

## ReelShorts: Mental Health

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Sat, Apr 6, 4:30 pm

### Dear Ani

Dir. Micah Levin

Documentary | English | US | 2022 | 39 min

More than 20 years ago, an aspiring songwriter, Keith Wasserman, began a creatively obsessive correspondence with music icon Ani DiFranco, believing her reply letters were encoded in the lyrics of her songs. *Dear Ani* is an odyssey of music, art, and mania.

### Dosh

Dir. Radha Mehta

Narrative | English, Hindi | US | 2023 | 16 min

*East Coast Premiere*

When her son’s life is put at risk at their family’s pre-wedding ritual, a mother with hearing loss must decide how to seek help for her husband to keep her family safe.

## ReelShorts: (Neuro)Divergent

Streaming April 3–10

MMJCCM: Sun, Apr 7, 1 pm

### BEAR

Dir. Kate Hammer

Narrative | English | UK | 2023 | 11 min

*International Premiere*

Jude, a neurodivergent creative, tries her best to fit into a typical world. While desperately in need of a job, an already tense interview is made even worse by the fact that no one wants to mention the bear in the room.

### Dungeons, Goblins and Broccoli

Dir. Dan Sanguineti

Narrative | English | Australia | 2022 | 8 min

*North American Premiere*

A group of avid Dungeons and Dragons players embarks on their next quest, but their game takes a turn when a newcomer arrives. Distracted by her presence, the players become embroiled in a competition for her attention, but how far will they go to win her hand?

### How To Build A Life

Dir. Matthew Reese

Documentary | English | UK | 2023 | 10 min

*North American Premiere*

Louis, a young man with Asperger’s, talks candidly to his older brother about a decade-long struggle with bullying that nearly ended his life. He finds strength in his unique passion for Legos and his loyal dog, creating an outlet for his creativity and healing.

### Working Differently

Dir. Hannah Currie

Documentary | English | UK | 2023 | 24 min

*World Premiere*

Through a series of interviews with crew and established industry figures, we are exposed to the importance of accessibility and inclusion within the film and television industry and shown why this should become the industry standard.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### REELABILITIES INDUSTRY SUMMIT: DISABILITY INCLUSION AND EQUITY IN FILM + PERFORMING ARTS

Join industry professionals as we discuss topics of inclusion, representation, and accessibility in the film industry and performing arts.

For full schedule + info visit **reelabilities.org/summit**

April 8 + 9, 1-6 pm, MMJCCM

### Inclusive Beauty Fashion and Design

The panelists will examine and discuss the not only current state of accessible design within fashion and beauty but also their own contributions and their vision for the future of the industry. Moderated by Xian Horn. Presented in partnership with Give Beauty Wings.
Wed, Apr 10, 5 pm

### Comedy Night

Join us for a night of laughter. Full lineup of performers will be announced shortly

*Drinks available for purchase.*

Tue, Apr 9, 8:30 pm, MMJCCM

## VENUE KEY:

MMJCCM: Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

BPL: Brooklyn Public Library

CHELSEA: Chelsea Factory

DCTV: Firehouse Cinema

GC: Gold Coast Arts Center

JBFC: Jacob Burns Film Center

JCCSI: JCC of Staten Island

LCPA: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

MAYSLES: Maysles Documentary Center

MC: Manhattan College

MOMI: Museum of Moving Image

TC: Times Center