



THOMAS EDISON FILM FESTIVAL

LEWIS  
CENTER  
PRINCETON | arts

**Thomas Edison Film Festival 40th Anniversary**  
**Selected animated shorts from the 2021 touring season**  
**Ramapo College of New Jersey**  
**Mahwah, NJ**  
**Tuesday and Wednesday - March 9 and 10, 2021**  
**Q&A with Festival Director Jane Steuerwald at 6:00PM March 10<sup>th</sup>.**  
***Thomas Edison Film Festival Introduction***

***The Ephemeral Orphanage***

15 min. by Lisa Barcy, Chicago, IL, US

A group of tattered paper dolls daydream alternate realities and surreptitiously explore the hidden lives of their strict and secretive caregivers. Hijinks ensue and discoveries are made as the characters live out their childhood fantasies.

Created with found paper dolls cut from a 1920's newspaper and found in an attic, the film explores the adults attempt to dictate what girls learn, and the children's talent for discovering forbidden knowledge.

***The Chimney Swift***

5 min. by Frédéric Schuld, Hamburg, Germany

Until the end of the 19th century children between four and eight were used as chimney sweepers. In this allegorical film, a child climbs up a chimney while a bird sails down into it to build a nest. An encounter with no way back. We hear a British chimney sweeper describing his everyday routine - forcing young children to become workers. While we observe a child cleaning a chimney, the master's statement gets more personal with every sentence, until we understand that he is speaking about his own past.

### ***One of Their Own***

4 min. by Allen Colombo, LA, CA, US

A digital boy gets into trouble trying to fit in with the human kids.

### ***Metro6***

8 min. by Geoff Hecht, San Francisco, CA

Today is an important day for Zak, but everything is going horribly wrong. During his adventurous bus ride, Zak goes through a deeply personal metamorphosis. Below the comedic surface lies a warning for all of us to not lose the importance of human connections. As Zak becomes more socially aware and appreciative of his diverse community, so do we.

### ***Metamorphosis***

4 min. by Wang Xi, LA, CA, US

A butterfly is resurrected from a rare specimen collection and explores the ruins of an ancient civilization that leads to a mysterious underground frozen cave. In the cave, the butterfly meets the Butterfly Man, who is an amalgamation of many other butterflies. The film explores philosophical ideas about life forms decomposing and then transforming into new organisms, between dreams and reality, and between humans and non-human creatures.

### ***Lost Lula***

3 min. by Steven Vander Meer, Arcata, CA

“Having practiced life drawing (the study of the live human figure in art) for many years, I felt the need to animate my figures, but not in the typical way that a human being moves.” Steven Vander Meer’s figures flow in and out of existence, much like their ephemeral poses during drawing sessions. The rhythm and tempo of the music, results in a kind of two-dimensional dance of lines on a surface.

### ***Whirlwind***

2 min. by Adolfo Ruiz, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

“Whirlwind” is a hand-drawn animation, consisting of over 700 ink drawings, rendered during the early stages (from March to July) of the 2020 global pandemic. The film’s visuals were elicited by unfolding events during these months. The process of drawing this film, frame by frame, coincided with a unique sense of time and space that emerged during the pandemic. Influenced by early twentieth century animation, this film attempts to visualize new rhythms of life emerging during a time of rapid sociocultural change—shifting away from carefully controlled perspectives and vanishing points, while depicting a constant sense of movement and transformation.

### ***Green Grass***

8 min. by Michael Greco, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Poignant, powerful, and told without dialogue, "Green Grass" is a thought-provoking allegory that follows two hopeful migrants who make the arduous journey to what they believe must be a better life only to discover their destination may no longer be the place they thought it was.

### ***A Family That Steals Dogs***

7 min. by John C. Kelly, Knoxville, TN, US

Strange experiences and realizations lead a grieving artist to reconsider his identity and beliefs in this meditation on grief, family and mental illness.

### ***Three***

2 min. by Soyeon Kim, Lake Balboa, CA, US

"Three" is an experimental film that visualizes the relationships with one another. The film's concept was originated from a phase in 'Walden' by Henry David Thoreau: "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." Using the chairs as metaphors, the abstract imagery symbolizes how our relationship evolves among us and allow us to re-evaluate ourselves in current days. The film was created using an object stop-motion and traditional & digital drawing techniques.

### ***Beyond Noh***

3 min. by Patrick Smith, NY, NY and Kaori Ishida, Osaka, Japan

"Beyond Noh" rhythmically animates 3,475 individual masks from all over the world, beginning with the distinctive masks of the Japanese Noh theater and continuing on a cultural journey through ritual, performance, utility, and politics.



For 40 years the Thomas Edison Film Festival (formerly known as the Thomas Edison Black Maria Film festival) has been advancing the unique creativity and power of the short form. The Festival was founded in 1981 and was originally named for Thomas Edison's West Orange, NJ, film studio, whose resemblance to black-box shaped police paddy wagons sparked the nickname "black maria." The Festival's relationship to Thomas Edison's invention of the motion camera and the kinoscope and his experimentation with the short film is at the core of

the Festival. Thomas Edison Film Festival is an international juried competition celebrating all genres and independent filmmakers across the globe.

The Festival's touring program reaches out to diverse audiences in diverse settings with screenings of cutting-edge, cross-genre films - narrative, experimental, animation, and documentary. Films in the Festival's collection include issues and struggles within contemporary society such as the environment, public health, race and class, family, sustainability, and much more. These exceptional works range from animation, comedy, and drama to the exploration of pure form in film and video.

To learn more about the Thomas Edison Film Festival and the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium, visit [www.blackmariafilmfestival.org](http://www.blackmariafilmfestival.org), **Jane Steuerwald Executive Director – 201-856-6565, [jane@TEFilmFestival.org](mailto:jane@TEFilmFestival.org)**.

