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# barbican

## CHRONIC YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ITS 10th EDITION

### [CHRONIC YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL 2025: \*Against All Odds\*](#)

*Resilience, community, and memory on screen*

Sat 26 & Sun 27 April

Barbican Cinemas

Barbican Young Film programmers are happy to present the **tenth anniversary edition** of **Chronic Youth Film Festival** programmed around the theme **Against All Odds**, championing emerging and underrepresented filmmakers and celebrating the many faces of resilience and the power of collective agency across communities in different corners of the world.

A record 20 [Young Film Programmers](#) have worked together since last October to curate this year's festival. This free, six-month scheme, which is organised by the Barbican's Creative Collaboration and Cinema teams and guided by course leader Isra Al Kassi, an experienced programmer and co-founder of T A P E Collective (who took part in the first Young Film Programmers scheme), aims to equip and inspire new young voices to the art of film programming. Film industry leaders across distribution, programming, exhibition and marketing also joined sessions throughout the six-month programme to share knowledge and create a wider network for these young aspiring curators.



Barbican Young Film Programmers, 2025

The bold and exhilarating Chronic Youth weekend includes one **UK premiere**, two **previews**, **an archive feature**, **documentaries**, and a **shorts programme** which showcase the journeys of a multitude of characters, reclaiming their narratives and shaping hopeful legacies for the future. The festival also includes a rich programme of **events** including

Q&As, workshops, a live music experience and a scavenger hunt relating to all the films in the festival in the Barbican Conservatory and Cinema 2/3 Cafe.

The festival kicks off on Saturday 26 April with the **UK premiere** of **José María Cabral's *Tiger***, a powerful coming-of-age feature examining a teenager's act of defiance towards machismo culture in the Dominican Republic. This is followed by a double-bill screening of ***Apostles of Cinema*** and **Suhaib Gasmelbari's *Talking About Trees***, which both portray the playful journeys of East African film workers striving to broaden access to cinema in their communities while questioning the very meaning of cinematic heritage and legacy.

The day closes with a **preview** in Cinema 1 of director **Neo Sora's** debut fiction feature ***Happyend***. Pulsating to the beat of techno music and earthquake warnings, *Happyend* follows a group of teenagers trying to find their political agency in a dystopian Japan. A pre-recorded Q&A with Neo Sora will follow the screening.

The **Sunday** programme includes **Sarah Maldoror's *Dessert for Constance***, a heartfelt yet playful exploration of migration and community featuring two Senegalese street sweepers in 70s Paris who compete in a cooking show to raise money for a friend, followed by the shorts programme ***Not Here, But Everywhere***, showcasing award-winning and emerging filmmakers reconceptualising absence as a form of agency through archival footage, animation, and digital film.

Chronic Youth Film Festival closes on Sunday evening in Cinema 1 with a preview of **Jazmin Jones' documentary *Seeking Mavis Beacon***, led by two unconventional investigators looking for the elusive woman behind the titular character from the popular how to typing game.

The Barbican Young Film Programmers say: "*This festival coinciding with the Chronic Youth's 10th consecutive year has given our team a healthy dose of perspective on its importance, particularly for young filmgoers and emerging creatives. It is invigorating to look back on the great efforts undertaken by prior cohorts, who have all gone on to do great things.*

*Opportunities for young people to get involved in arts leadership and curation within establishments the size of the Barbican can often feel distant and rare, so we are incredibly excited to be able to come together and demonstrate the importance of amplifying young voices within the arts sector. The programme has enabled us to form a wonderful network alongside other like-minded passionate people, allowing everybody to actively flex their creative powers.*

*Our cohort has also placed a great emphasis on championing emerging or underrepresented filmmakers and on choosing films that lie beyond the confines of mainstream cinema. In a moment when Hollywood films still dominate our screens, we wanted to use this programme to present our audience with experiences that will hopefully leave them thinking long after they have left the cinema."*

## **Festival Film Programme**

### ***Tiger* (15\*) (UK Prem) + free Creative Writing Workshop**

Dominican Republic, 2024, dir José María Cabral, 84 min

**Sat 26 Apr, 1.45pm**

**Cinema 2**

A breathless exploration of toxic masculinity. Cabral's unflinching semi-autobiographical film unpacks the making and unmaking of machismo in a 'Tigueres' bootcamp.

In this UK premiere, 14-year-old Pablo is pushed to become a 'real' man at his father's brutal 'Tigueres' boot camp. As the group are violently pitted against each other, Pablo defies the dangerous masculine ideal. This enthralling drama explores resistance and friendship in the face of societal expectations.

***Apostles of Cinema + Talking About Trees (PG\*)***

**Sat 26 Apr, 3.45pm**

**Cinema 2**

Overall run time: 111 min

Earnest and spirited, *Apostles of Cinema* and *Talking About Trees* put the spotlight on two passionate groups of East African film workers bringing cinema back to the community.

As a brief yet incisive journey into Tanzanian film culture, short film *Apostles of Cinema* makes for an exciting introduction to the deeper reflections on what community access to cinema means, as presented in feature *Talking About Trees*. Subtly political and delightfully exuberant, these pieces offer a piercing commentary on the value of cinematic legacies and celebrate humanity's enduring love of film.

***Talking about Trees***

Sudan/Chad/France/Germany/Qatar, 2019, dir Suhaib Gasmelbari, documentary, 94 min

A tender portrait of four Sudanese filmmakers reuniting to revive Khartoum's cinema scene after decades of censorship and political unrest.

In this heartfelt documentary, the Sudanese Film Group embarks on a mission to rebuild Khartoum's 'Revolution Cinema'. Their long-standing friendships and passion for film stand as a beacon of hope against repression. Amid playful reenactments and serious detective work to track down their archival footage, the group's enthusiasm infects the whole community, planting the seeds for a flourishing future of Sudanese cinema.

***Apostles of Cinema***

Tanzania, 2023, co-dirs Darragh Amelia, Cece Mlay, Jesse Gerard Mpango, and Gertrude Malizana, documentary, 17 min

Forget the director's cut, Swahiliwood is all about the DJ in this short showcasing the work of film 'translators' and their distributors in Tanzania's vibrant underground film scene.

Moving from bustling city streets to 'film libraries' and informal cinemas, a group of film workers shine a light on a cinema culture that is all about community. Following the dynamic DJ Black, who contextualises films for working-class cinephiles, this short celebrates the importance of cinematic legacy and access, attesting to the Bantu proverb 'Ubuntu', or "I am because we are."

***Happyend (12A\*) (Preview) + recorded Q&A with director Neo Sora***

Japan/US, 2024, dir Neo Sora, 113 min

**Sat 26 Apr, 6.05pm**

**Cinema 1**

Neo Sora's breathtaking fiction feature debut explores a dystopian near-future Tokyo through the eyes of a group of teenagers rebelling against societal expectations.

Set against an impending earthquake, the film follows best friends Yuta and Kou in their interrogation of societal standing and what it means to have fun in an authoritarian society. Driven by the natural chemistry of the film's first-time actors, Neo Sora's narrative offers a light-touch and hopeful approach to futurism that reverberates with the pulse of its techno soundtrack.

***Dessert for Constance (U\*)***

France, 1980, Sarah Maldoror, 61 min

**Sun 27 Apr, 1.30pm**

**Cinema 3**

Exploring themes of male friendship, this archival film centres on two Senegalese street sweepers who stumble into the world of French cuisine - raising questions of migration and belonging in 70s Paris.

In this playful take on the realities of the timeless immigrant experience, the inseparable duo Bokolo and Mamadou go on a quest to help their ill friend fulfil his wish of returning home by competing on a French cooking quiz show. Satirical and sweet, Sarah Maldoror departs from her staunchly revolutionary cinema for a charming and tongue-in-cheek portrayal of anti-colonial resistance.

### **Not Here, But Everywhere (15\*) + Q&A**

**Sun 27 Apr, 3.45pm**

#### **Cinema 3**

Overall run time 73 min + live Q&A

A collection of shorts exploring how absence lingers—through rest, censorship, loss, miscommunication, and erasure—followed by a Q&A with some of the filmmakers.

What is suppressed will always find its way to the surface. Through experimental and narrative films, this programme challenges dominant perspectives through acts of defiance. Surreal yet evocative, these works redirect the gaze, resist controlling forces, and affirm that the lost are never completely gone.

#### ***The Ban***

United Kingdom, 2024, dir Roisin Agnew, 25 min

A blip in Thatcher's censorship era saw actors hired to dub the voices of IRA members for broadcast media during the conflict in Northern Ireland. Through unseen archival footage and present-day interviews with key figures like Gerry Adams and Stephen Rea, revisit people's power against the British government's use of censorship to justify 'terrorism'.

#### ***Creekmouth***

United Kingdom, 2024, dir Yasmine Djédjé-Fisher-Azoumé, 4min

The 1953 North Sea flood, is remembered, retold, and reanimated. The everyday stories of those who were displaced from Creekmouth village come to life in this beautiful illustration of oral histories.

#### ***Receiver***

Ireland, 2019, dir Jenny Brady, 14min

An assemblage of deaf history that considers how we speak and listen, revealing communication to be a violent and fragile operation.

#### ***Resistance Meditation***

Canada, 2024, dir Sara Wylie, 4min

Bending space and temporality, Sara Wylie envisions a world where time is reimagined outside of capitalism's agenda of productivity and non-disabled norms. A pulsing and evocative meditation on agency found through stillness and crip time.

#### ***The Flowers Stand Silently, Witnessing***

Palestine, 2024, dir Theo Panagopoulos, 17min

Through early 1930s archival footage, Scottish missionaries unknowingly captured the enduring spirit of Palestine. Panagopoulos weaves these coloured images into a tender meditation, where 'Flowers of the Holy Land' stands as silent witnesses to a people's unbroken connection to their soil. Here, beauty and resistance intertwine in a landscape both occupied and beloved.

#### ***Deadlock***

Algeria, France, 2025, dirs. Lucien Beucher and Mahdi Boucif, 9min

Childhood friends Sifou and Mahrez are left with the shadows of their brothers who fled from Algiers to Europe. The hazy uncertainty of what lies ahead leaves them wondering: Can they escape the cycle or are they doomed to follow the same deadlock?

### **Seeking Mavis Beacon (15\*) (Preview) + Panel Discussion**

US, 2024, Jazmin Jones, 102 mins

**Sun 27 Apr, 6pm**

#### **Cinema 1**

Hey Siri, have you heard of Mavis Beacon? Jazmin Jones' debut feature follows two chronically online investigators as they search for the Black woman behind the iconic 80s typing game.

More in tune with a group chat than a documentary, this vivid journey takes us through a digital wormhole to adventurously confront the intersections of big tech, identity, artificial intelligence, and community. A meditation on Black representation online, the ghostly nature of digital avatars, and the surprisingly spiritual dimensions of online community.

This preview screening will be followed by a panel talk about cyberfeminism, online communities, and resistance.

### **Festival Workshops & Events programme**

All workshops and events across the festival are free, please book a free ticket to confirm your spot. Minimum age 14.

#### **Sat 26 Apr, 12-5.30pm Barbican Conservatory**

The Conservatory and Cinema 2 & 3 foyer will become a living hub for film, music and discovery with events that explore the themes of the festival.

#### **Scavenger Hunt 12-4pm, Barbican Conservatory**

Navigate this one-of-a-kind scavenger hunt through the Conservatory to uncover hidden items inspired by the films in this year's Festival. Where is Mavis Beacon? What is that noise coming from the trees? Track down the *Dessert for Constance* cookbook in time to save a friend, and avoid the tigers lurking around the concrete corners.

#### **Tiger Writing Workshop 12.15-1.15pm, Barbican Conservatory**

Taking place before the screening of José María Cabral's *Tiger*, this creative writing workshop encourages participants to explore ideas of masculinity. Open to everyone, regardless of writing experience.

#### **Happyend Live Music Experience 4.30-5.30pm, Barbican Conservatory**

Echoing the soundscape of Neo Sora's *Happyend*, be transported to a world of hypnotic techno futurism in the Barbican's concrete garden.

#### **Collage Corner & Community Cookbook Sat 26 Apr 2025, 2-6pm & Sun 27 Apr 2025, 12-6pm Cinema 2 & 3 Café**

Food, film, and art bring us together in ways words cannot. Make a visual collage or share a cherished recipe at The Collage & Cookbook Corner.

### **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

**Barbican Young Film Programmers, 2024/25 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary cohort:**

Abeera Qureshi (she/her)  
Afra Nuarey (she/her)  
Afrin Ahmed (she/they)  
Angelica Meneely (she/her)  
Dalia Kebire (she/her)  
Emilian Isibo (she/her)

Emily Simmons (she/they)  
Isabelle Baker (she/her)  
Josh Osman (he/him)  
Kathryn Blair (she/they)  
Lara Anand (she/her)  
Lilianne Mutwarasibo (she/her)  
Mariana Enriquez Denton Bustinza (she/her)  
Marta Cappozzo (she/her)  
Olgalessia Riley (she/her)  
Paxina Tuvuka (she/her)  
Pippa Sterk (they/them)  
Rageh Ali (he/him)  
Sahar Hamidollah (she/her)  
Sally Zarzour (she/her)

Chronic Youth Film Festival images available to download [here](#).

**For further information contact:**

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Box Office: [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

Young Barbican: £6  
Standard: £13  
Members: £10.40  
Concessions: £11

All workshops and events across the festival are free, please book a free ticket to confirm your spot.

There is £1.50 booking fee for purchases made online

\* This film has been locally classified by the City of London Corporation

**Access:** All films in the shorts programme **Not Here, But Everywhere** will have descriptive captions and the intro and on-stage Q&A will be live captioned.

### **Barbican press room**

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our website at [www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room](http://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room)

### **About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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