

The Understory Film Festival has been developed to encourage local independent, student, emerging and professional filmmakers in the Cairns and Far North Queensland region to create a short (under 8 minutes including credits) film to enter a competition for awards and prizes.

The objectives of the festival are to showcase local talent, build local industry capacity, award achievement, and enhance audience development in short film culture.

The 24 finalist films have been shortlisted by a professional team of judges from an amazing range of submissions and delivers a vibrant mix – from a small amount of horror and feel-good music videos, to clever animation, insightful documentaries, some heartfelt drama and plenty of laughs along the way.

The winners across 9 categories will be presented throughout the screenings.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Whilst the judges have made their collective decisions, we'd love to know what you think.

What's your favourite film?

After the screenings place your votes to come up with a winner for the People's Choice Award from your region.



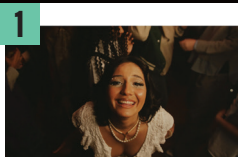
CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL PRESENTS THE 12TH ANNUAL

UNDERSTORY FILM FESTIVAL TOURING PROGRAM



Understory Film Festival is proudly supported by Screen Queensland and the Queensland Government and the Regional Arts Development Fund, a partnership between the Queensland Government and Cairns Regional Council to support local arts and culture in Regional Queensland.

We also acknowledge the generosity of our sponsors, Essential Screen Skills and Jonathan M. Shift Productions, and thank the filmmakers who contributed to this year's festival, building upon a strong and vibrant screen culture in Far North Queensland.



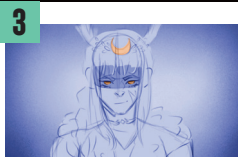
1

TELL ME
Elleni Geena Adams
Music Video – Duration 3:18
Rhythmic and emotionally charged, Tell Me captures the tension between desire and honesty.



2

BLOODY LOVE THE CLINK
Essential Screen Skills Crew
Documentary – Duration 7:33
A mini documentary about the cultural and social impact The Clink Theatre has had in Far North QLD. This film was produced as part of the future filmmaker's camp with post-production completed in 2024.



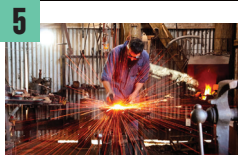
3

THE POPTART
Kaylee Gubb
Animation – Duration 3:05
An all-out brawl has broken out in Olympus. The 12 Olympian Gods have started attacking each other over who knows what! The story of how it all started will get told throughout the fight and who knows, maybe it will involve Poptarts.



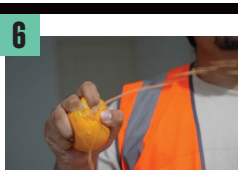
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SCOTOMA
James Panevin
Documentary – Duration 2:58
Scotoma explores the blind spots we carry in how we see others and highlights how labels can obscure individuality and diversity. Divided into four segments, it invites viewers to notice what they often overlook.



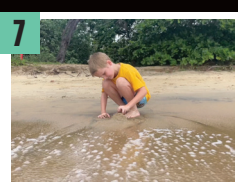
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THE STORY BEHIND STEEL
Samantha Kucurs
Documentary – Duration 3:58
A micro-documentary on a local Tableland's artist blacksmith.



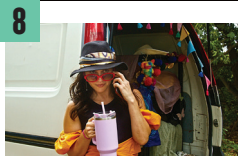
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FILLET-O-NO
Dan Paul
Narrative – 7:00
The choices we make when it's hard to make a choice.



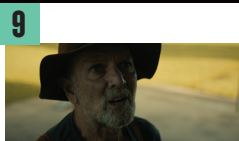
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LOST IN TIME
Akira Schwarz
Narrative – Duration 2:34
Youth, memories and age, may be washed away like a message from the ocean.



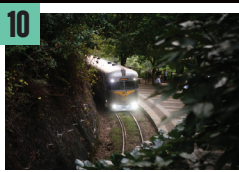
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UNFOLLOW
Liz Christensen
Narrative – Duration 4:00
Myra goes the extra mile to check on a friend who has deactivated their social media accounts.



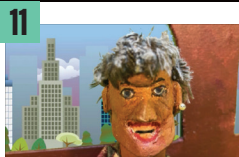
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ENEMIES OF PROGRESS
Pablo Wild
Narrative – Duration 5:18
In 1910s Australia, a cane farmer hides two Aboriginal children who have fled a mission. When a determined tracker arrives, he is forced to choose between silence and survival.



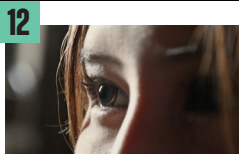
10

SAVE THE SAVANNAHLANDER
Eamon Kelly
Documentary – Duration 6:01
The Savannahlander has been in limbo for most of the year due to multiple bridge closures along the line, stopping the train from getting to certain places. With an unknown future we interviewed driver Wil Kemp for his thoughts on the situation.



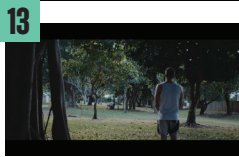
11

IGNITION POINT
David Jones
Animation – Duration 3:41
A fun view of road rage.



12

THE BLIND SYMPHONY
Kaleena Morris, Nina Decavalla, Kate Piquero
Non-narrative – Duration 1:12
A blind girl has a secret talent.



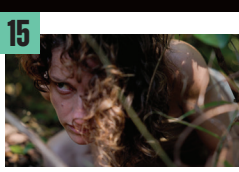
13

IDOL
Sam Pates
Narrative – Duration 8:00
Heph has always been a loner, until one day a new waitress starts working and she is happy to give him a chance, however, not everyone is happy about Heph's new friend.



14

TWO IS BETTER
Kerry Balzarolo
Documentary – Duration 4:31
In 1965, Lenny and Jackie start a new life on a remote Far North Queensland farm, building love, resilience, and a community around the crops of their Northern Italian heritage—barefoot and with a garden.



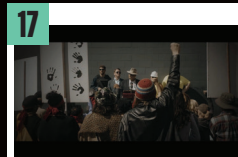
15

MEDUSA
Raquel Lobera Balbas
Experimental – Duration 6:21
A darkly poetic short filmed in the wilds of Northern Queensland, Medusa weaves cinema, performance, and original music to explore justice, vengeance, and the cost of retribution.



16

BLAST OFF
Baran Eftekhari
Animation – Duration :45
A short animation detailing the events leading up to a rocket launch.



17

THE FALL
Garth Edwards
Narrative – Duration 7:58
Inside The Sanctuary - In one of the world's last rainforests, a corrupt government threatens nature for profit. As the people rise, Celeste emerges to lead them, her bond with the legendary Tree of Life revealing a hidden power.



18

HAND TREE
Alister Karl, Patrick Tonks
Animation – Duration 2:16
The work responds to the theme of stormy weather, speaking both to the escalating climate crisis and to internal struggles: weathering mental health challenges and finding a way through to the other side.



19

TAMMY TOOTH
Rachel Terry, Tnee Dyer
Narrative – Duration 6:02
Tammy is in the middle of a mid-life crisis. through the power of a mixtape, she travels back in time to 1987 where she comes face to face with her 15-year-old self.



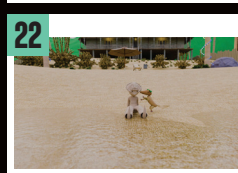
20

SUMMER
Kerry Balzarolo
Music Video – Duration 4:15
Music video for the original song "Summer" written and performed by Aurelle Brunjes. "Summer" depicts the harsh yet breathtaking monsoon in Far North Queensland.



21

JASPER
Janne Ryttonen
Documentary – Duration 4:36
Tropical Cyclone Jasper brought a severe, 1-in-100-year flood to the north of Cairns, Australia, on the morning of 17th December 2023. Two years later, flood-affected residents are in various stages of picking up the pieces and moving on.



22

BEYOND THE WAVES
Oliver Marsden, Karen Jackson, ARC Creative Ensemble
Animation – Duration 6:40
When a boy watches his four-legged best friend get swept off a beach in a storm, he must go on a courageous journey beyond the waves and into a world of unexpected magic.



23

PEPPER X
Tristan Barr
Narrative – Duration 4:21
Teens Max and Jules swipe a bag from Brian's Family Diner, only to discover it holds Pepper X, the world's hottest chilli and a biosecurity threat. As Officer Sandra, Max's mum, investigates, loyalties are tested and the stakes—and heat—are high.



24

AGE
Ella Carney
Non-Narrative – Duration 6:50
The wonder of aging.