

KCFF

KINGSTON CANADIAN FILM FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE COST OF HEAVEN wins *Playback* Prize for Best Film at Kingston Canadian Film Festival

– Mathieu Denis’ powerful drama joins two other French-language films in Québec sweep of top prizes at KCFF26 –

KINGSTON, ON (March 2, 2026) – For the second year in a row, French-language films have won the major awards at [Kingston Canadian Film Festival](#), led by Mathieu’s Denis’ **THE COST OF HEAVEN**, winner of the \$5,000 [Playback](#) Prize for Best Film. The 26th edition of the festival wrapped up at a gala last night where Éric K. Boulianne’s **FOLLIES** was presented with the \$2,500 Visual Menace Best First Feature Award and Xiaodan He’s **MONTRÉAL, MY BEAUTIFUL** received the COGECO’s People’s Choice Award. Michèle Stephenson’s moving documentary **TRUE NORTH**, about 1969 student protests against racism at Montréal’s Concordia University, received a special mention from the jury. Overall, KCFF presented a record [13 awards](#) for projects at the at the largest all-Canadian film and cultural festival in the world.

KCFF’s five-day festival, held February 25–March 1, showcased more than 100 individual films and television episodes across 60+ screenings, 85% of which sold out. The event welcomed more than 300 industry professionals to Kingston and set a new attendance record with 16,000 tickets sold. In addition to the screenings, KCFF programmed more than 30 special events, ranging from live music performances and stand-up comedy to various industry-focused gatherings.



THE COST OF HEAVEN wins the *Playback* Prize for Best Film at KCFF26.

KCFF’s top awards [were juried by](#) filmmakers **Javiera Quintana** and **Patrick Cassavetti**, along with film programmer and curator **Emilie Poirier**. Their comments:

Playback Prize for Best Film:

THE COST OF HEAVEN (Mathieu Denis)

"THE COST OF HEAVEN (*Gagne Ton Ciel*) draws its audience into a grim financial vortex alongside its lead protagonist — a well-meaning family man whose chronic self-deception and fatally flawed judgment pull him into an ever-tightening downward spiral, one from which escape demands increasingly desperate measures. A totally engaging morality tale: complex, articulate, and confidently directed by Mathieu Denis, with an excellent cast, screenplay, and cinematography."

Special Mention:

TRUE NORTH (Michèle Stephenson)

"Integrating powerful archive footage with captivating and beautifully filmed interviews, TRUE NORTH unfolds the little-known, yet crucial, chapter in the fight for racial equality in Canada. Using a strong stylistic approach that seamlessly combines the extraordinary archive elements of the film and skillful editing as an engine, Michèle Stephenson's ambitious film delivers a story that is as relevant today as it was in 1969."

Visual Menace Best First Feature Award:

FOLLIES (Éric K. Boulianne)

"Making a film about relationships in 2026 feels less like a challenge than a kamikaze mission — the territory so well-trodden that genuine freshness seems almost impossible. Yet in FOLLIES (*Folichonneries*), Éric K. Boulianne pulls it off, delivering a tender, open, and disarmingly refreshing take on romantic, sexual, and family dynamics. With lustrous cinematography, precisely calibrated lighting, and a masterful cast, the film's form is as carefully considered as its exploration of interpersonal relationships and the search for gender and sexual identity."

COGECO People's Choice Award:

MONTRÉAL, MY BEAUTIFUL (Xiaodan He)

Joan Chen's extraordinary performance is the luminescent core of director Xiaodan He's second feature *Montréal, Ma Belle*. Chen mesmerizes as Feng Xia, a Chinese Canadian woman who takes a chance to escape the confines of others' expectations when she meets Camille (Charlotte Aubin), a French-Canadian woman who awakens long-dormant feelings. But Feng's not the only character undergoing a dramatic change, the film is remarkable for the grace and sensitivity with which it explores all its characters' lives.

ADDITIONAL AWARDS:

Kingston Script-to-Screen Pitch Competition (TIE)

PARKIES (Melissa Eapen & Mickayla Pyke) & SEEKING WHY (Kaycee Lee)

Best Canadian Short

NO MATTER THE WEATHER (Florence Lafond)

Best Local Short

VINCENT ON THE ISLAND (Emma Macklin and Daniel Karan)

Best Music Video from the [Slaight Music Video Showcase](#)

"Disco" by [Tiny Horse](#) (Little Friday)

Favourite Music Video from the [Slaight Music Video Showcase](#)

“You Will Be Found” by [Cantabile Youth Singers](#) (Al Bergeron in association with Skeleton Park Arts Festival)

Best Youth Short

THE DONUT VENANDI (Harrison Campbell)

TD Ready Commitment KCFF Doc Factory Award

NANCY IN PARTS (Lee Cunningham)

KCFF 18MM Award

BORROWER’S NAME (Emila Sofia)

Svitlana Chuchkova Award

LA SAINTE VILLE DE ST-JEAN (Camille Giasson)

Douglas J. Falconer Award of Excellence

Ryan Randall

The 2026 Kingston Canadian Film Festival is presented by TD Bank Group. Premier partners are the Slaight Family Foundation, Amherst Island Radio, and Cogeco. Major supporters are ACFOMI, Delta Hotels Kingston Waterfront, Downtown Kingston BIA, Kingston Community Credit Union, Homestead, Marriott Kingston, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, Shaftesbury, and Tourism Kingston. KCFF benefits from the patronage of Diane Blake & Stephen Smith, the Norman & Margaret Jewison Charitable Foundation, the McLean Smits Family Foundation, and the Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation. Join the KCFF Circle of Supporters [here](#) or learn about sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

About the Kingston Canadian Film Festival

The Kingston Canadian Film Festival (KCFF) is Canada’s premier all-Canadian film festival and the largest of its kind in the world. For more than a quarter century, KCFF has celebrated the diversity, creativity, and vitality of Canadian screen-based storytelling, presenting feature films, documentaries, shorts, and music videos that bring filmmakers, artists, and audiences together each year in a dynamic festival setting. More than a film festival, KCFF is a multi-disciplinary, intersectional cultural event that transforms traditional and unconventional venues across historic downtown Kingston into a vibrant, walkable festival hub, featuring live comedy and music, exhibitions, industry conversations, workshops, networking events, and community gatherings.

With nearly 100% of films screening at KCFF accompanied by live post-screening Q&As with visiting talent, the festival has welcomed leading Canadian filmmakers and performers including Atom Egoyan, Deepa Mehta, Alanis Obomsawin, Don McKellar, Mina Shum, Matt Johnson, Jay Baruchel, Brigitte Berman, Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor, Jeff Barnaby, Gerry Dee, Cathy Jones, Jeremy Hotz, Bif Naked, Donovan Woods, Gordon Pinsent, and casts from *The Kids in the Hall*, *Letterkenny*, *Trailer Park Boys*, *Baroness von Sketch Show*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, among others.

- KCFF -

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