

EDUCATORS GUIDE, OSCAR SHORTS 2016

FILM THEMES & DESCRIPTIONS

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"... the Oscar Shorts offer a more accurate, more complete glimpse of the state of cinema than the features. The shorts did not enter the world on a cushion of prestige or a vapor trail of hype, and they offer concentrated doses of visual ingenuity and narrative discipline.

"[While] the live-action shorts are characterized by realism and local knowledge – each offering moments of immersion in the particulars of individual or family life – their animated siblings explore the universality of film language. They provide a reminder of how expressive, how moving, pictures can be."

~ **A.O. SMITH**, *film educator and principal cinema critic, the New York Times*

Conveyed via comedy, romance, drama and suspense, the overarching theme of the 2016 Oscar Shorts is connection and engagement – the human need to connect via relationships: love, friendship, common goals, common hardship, problem solving, etc.

THEMES

Animation – Program A

1. **Sanjay's Super Team** Father – son, acceptance, mutual respect.
2. **World of Tomorrow** Importance of memories, caring.
3. **Bear Story** Family – dealing with separation and loneliness.
4. **We Can't Live Without Cosmos** Friendship, working for common goals.
5. **If I Was God** Self-awareness, expressing feelings, adolescence.
6. **The Short Story of a Fox and a Mouse** Animal allegory where natural enemies become friends.
7. **The Loneliest Stoplight** Conquering loneliness, having a friend.
8. **Catch It** Teamwork.
9. **Prologue** Anti-war. Optional viewing: brief nudity/violence – will not be shown to those under 18.

Live Action – Program B

1. **Ave Maria** Members of conflicting cultures cooperate to solve a problem.
2. **Shok** The strain of war on two young boys friendship.
3. **Everything will be OK** Parent-child relationship in a divorce/custody situation.
4. **Stutterer** The awkwardness of dating and overcoming a disability.
5. **Day One** Overcoming cultural differences in a crisis to connect on a personal level.

(Next page: Program descriptions from <http://www.cincyworldcinema.org/OscarShorts2016>)

~ PROGRAM A, Animated Shorts ~

Sat, Mar 12 - 4:00 PM, Sun, Mar 13 - 7:00 PM Mon, Tue & Wed, Mar 14, 15, 16 - 6:00pm TRT 90 min.



1. **Sanjay's Super Team** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Sanjay Patel, USA, 13 min.

The only PIXAR short based on a true story, accomplished artist Sanjay Patel uses his own experience to tell the story of a young first-generation Indian-American boy whose love for western pop-culture comes into conflict with his father's religious practices. Young Sanjay is absorbed in the world of comics, cartoons and television, while his father tries to draw him into the family's Hindu tradition. Reluctance quickly turns into an awe-inspiring adventure as the boy embarks on a journey he never imagined, returning with a new perspective that both father and son can embrace.



2. **World of Tomorrow** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Don Hertzfeldt, USA, 11 min.

In this dreamy meditation on the significance of memory, a little girl named Emily Prime is taken on a mind-bending tour of the distant future by an adult, third-generation clone of herself, visiting a place where copies of humanity seek answers that only their original selves can provide. This is the only nominated animation with dialog – and for good reason. Pay close attention to the words in this film.



3. **Bear Story** *Oscar Winner*

Director Gabriel Osorio, Chile, 11 min.

In this heart-rending story, every day a melancholy bear takes a mechanical diorama out to his street corner. For a coin, passersby can look into his invention, which tells the story of a circus bear who longs to escape and return to the family from which he was taken.

But audiences in director Osorio's native Chile know it's an allegory for the way families were torn apart during the murderous Pinochet regime in Chile in the 1970s. "The idea was mainly inspired by the story of my grandfather," said Osorio, "he was exiled from Chile in the '70s – I knew I had a grandfather, but didn't meet him when I was a kid."



4. **We Can't Live Without Cosmos** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Konstantin Bronzit, Russia, 16 min.

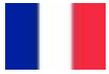
A touching and enigmatic film about friendship and loneliness. Two best friends have dreamed since childhood of becoming cosmonauts, and together they endure the rigors of training and public scrutiny, and make the sacrifices necessary to achieve their shared goal. Nice write up in [The New Yorker](#).



5. **If I Was God** *Bonus Film*

Director Cordell Baker, Canada, 6 min.

While dissecting a frog in biology class, a 12-year-old boy who senses the approaching power of adulthood speculates about what he would do if he were God. This darkly whimsical, semi-autobiographical 3D animated short was directed by two-time Oscar-nominated animator and long-time National Film Board filmmaker Cordell Baker.



6. **The Short Story of a Fox and a Mouse** *Bonus Film*

Directors Hugo Jean, Juliette Jourdan, Kévin Roger, Marie Pillier, Camille Chaix, France, 7 min.

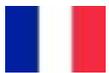
A hungry grey fox sets out for a morning hunt, hoping to find a tasty rodent to snack on. But the mouse he finds is no ordinary mouse...



7. **The Loneliest Stoplight** *Bonus Film*

Director Bill Plympton, USA, 6 min.

The life and times of a neglected stoplight, voiced by Patton Oswalt.



8. **Catch It** *Bonus Film*

Directors Paul Bar, Marion Demaret, Dadege Forner, Pierre-Baptiste Marty, Julien Robyn, Jordan Sole, France, 7 min.

A group of frisky meerkats guards its beloved fruit near their burrow, but a vulture intrudes and a chase begins in the savannah.



9. **Prologue** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Richard Williams, UK, 6 min.

The story of an incident in the Spartan-Athenian wars of 2,400 years ago. A young girl bears witness as warriors battle to death. The dialog-free project utilizes natural sounds to complement the intense animation. Williams – is best known for his work as animation director on "Who Framed Roger Rabbit." **See Parent's Note, below.**

PARENT'S NOTE: *Prologue* is intentionally the last film in the program. In a beautiful, hand-drawn depiction of a battle scene, there is violent swordplay and some brief male nudity, and it may not be good for young children. **This film is not rated, but consider it an "R." We'll have a Parental Guidance warning prior to this short, so that parents and caregivers can usher children out of the theater if they wish.** Other than *Prologue*, this program is acceptable for kids of all ages.

~ PROGRAM B, Live-Action Shorts ~

Sat, Mar 12 - 7:00 PM, Sun, Mar 13 - 4:00 PM Mon, Tue & Wed, Mar 14, 15, 16 - 8:00pm TRT 105 min.

1.  **Ave Maria** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Basil Khalil, Palestine/France/Germany, in Arabic, English & Hebrew with English subs, 15 min.

What happens when opposing cultures *have* to cooperate, if only to get away from each other? A delightful comedy with a hidden message that targets the social and religious traditions hindering communication and understanding, in the West Bank, and everywhere.

The routine of 5 Palestinian Carmelite nuns in the West Bank wilderness is disrupted when a family of Israeli settlers come to their door for help after crashing their car into the convent wall and decapitating a statue of the Virgin Mary. The Israelis can't operate a phone to call for assistance due to the Sabbath laws, and the Nuns have taken a vow of silence. What to do? Together they have to come up with an unusual plan to sort things out.

2.  **Shok** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Jamie Donoughue, Kosovo/UK, in Albanian and Serbian with English subs, 21 min.

Based on real events, in Kosovo in 1998, two young boys are best friends living normal lives, but as war engulfs their country, their daily existence becomes filled with violence and fear. Soon, the choices they make threaten not only their friendship, but their families and their lives.

3.  **Alles Wird Gut (Everything will be OK)** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Patrick Vollman, Germany/Austria, in German with English subs, 30 min.

It's Friday and eight-year-old Lea is impatiently waiting for her father – common with many divorced families – he is to pick her up for the weekend. At first everything goes as expected but gradually strange things start to happen. Her dad tries to compensate with new Legos and a trip to the fair, which helps for a while, but the contentment and joy fades and things are not quite right.

Patrick Vollrath's excellent film unfolds the drama of a child and parent whose relationship is damaged by a bad decision that may never be put right. Intense, well told and exceptionally well performed, this touching film hurts, fascinates and remains in your memory.

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4.  **Stutterer** *Oscar Winner*

Director Benjamin Clearly, Ireland, in English, 12 min.

A comedy with universal appeal about online romance and awkwardness when dating, with a delightful twist.

For a lonely typographer, an online relationship provides a much-needed connection without revealing the speech impediment that has kept him isolated. Now he is faced with the proposition of meeting his online paramour in the flesh, and revealing the truth about himself.

5.  **Day One** *Oscar Nominee*

Director Henry Hughes, USA, in English, 25 min.

On the heels of a painful divorce, an Afghan-American woman joins the U.S. military as an interpreter and is sent to Afghanistan. On her first mission – "day one" – she accompanies troops pursuing a bomb-maker, and must bridge the gender and culture gap to help the man's pregnant wife when she goes into labor.

Directed by a US Army veteran with service in Afghanistan and inspired by a true story, filmmaker Henry Hughes writes, "*This woman, my interpreter ... she is so many things: American, Muslim, female, combat veteran. She is also my muse.*" Learn more about the story, director and interpreter [here](#).