

# SCREAMFEST

## 23RD ANNUAL SCREAMFEST® HORROR FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2023 LINEUP

*The Los Angeles-based horror festival will open with Eddie Alcazar's Mind-Bending Phenomenon **DIVINITY** from Utopia and Sumerian*

**LOS ANGELES, CA (September 25, 2022)** - Screamfest® Horror Film Festival, the largest and longest-running horror film festival in the United States, today announced its first-wave lineup of competitive features and shorts for its 23rd edition. Running October 10 through 19 at the TCL Chinese Theater, Screamfest® welcomes horror cinephiles to experience twisted tales and frightening films together on the big screen. Tickets will be on sale soon and can be purchased via the festival website:

<https://screamfestla.com/>

Considered the "Sundance of Horror," Screamfest® is proud to showcase new work from independent filmmakers from across the globe. This past year the festival screened the following films, which acquired distribution including *KillHer*, *Sung Kang's Shaky Shivers*, *8 Found Dead*, and *Goldsmith*.

The festival will kick off on October 10th with a screening of Utopia and Sumerian's **DIVINITY**, which was one of the most talked about films at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. Written and directed by Eddie Alcazar and executive produced by Steven Soderbergh, **DIVINITY** stars Stephen Dorff, Moises Arias, Jason Genao, Michael O'Hearn, Karrueche Tran and Emily Willis, with Scott Bakula and Bella Thorne. Set in an otherworldly human existence, **DIVINITY** follows scientist Sterling Pierce (Scott Bakula) who dedicated his life to the quest for immortality, slowly creating the building blocks of a groundbreaking serum named "Divinity." Jaxxon Pierce (Stephen Dorff), his son, now controls and manufactures his father's once-benevolent dream. When two mysterious brothers (Moises Arias and Jason Genao) arrive with a plan to abduct the mogul, and with the help of a seductive woman named Nikita (Karrueche Tran), they will be set on a path hurtling toward true immortality.

"For over 20 years, Screamfest has brought the best independent horror and genre films to our thriving Los Angeles film community. This October, we are excited to continue our legacy of presenting our audiences with high-caliber festival frights kicking off with the thrilling **DIVINITY** by visionary Eddie Alcazar," stated festival founder Rachel Belofsky.

Another highlight of the lineup is **Howdy, Neighbor!** featuring former Disney Channel stars Debby Ryan, Matthew Scott Montgomery, and Alyson Stoner. Directed by Allisyn Snyder, this LGBTQ+ horror film follows a former child actor, Benjamin Caldwell (Matthew Scott Montgomery), who is recognized by his new neighbor. When the lines between friend and fan become blurred, Benjamin's number one fan quickly transforms into his number one nightmare.

World Premieres at this year's festival include **Alone Together**, from director William Kresch about a couple who flee a pandemic-ravaged city to a remote cabin to encounter a vengeful spirit **Lord of Misrule**, a pagan horror story from director William Brent Bell (*The Devil Inside*, *The Boy*) set in a rural English village, where a child goes missing and **The Piper**, directed by Erlingur Thoroddsen about a young

composer who is tasked with finishing her late mentor's concert but discovers that playing music will summon deadly consequences.

Making their North American debuts is the dark satire on contemporary Russian culture and global capitalism **Empire V**, directed by Victor Ginzburg, which is banned in its home country. **The Well**, a neo-gothic horror set in Italy about a young American (Lauren LaVera of *Terrifier II*) working on the restoration of a fire-damaged painting for an aging Duchess (Claudia Gerini of *The Passion of Christ*), and the psychological thriller **Loop Track** from New Zealand, written and directed by Thomas Sainsbury, about a man on the verge of a nervous breakdown who retreats to the bush, only to encounter other explorers. Additional titles include **Mimi the Prince of Darkness**, about a shy 18-year-old boy Mimi (Domenico Cuom) who is abandoned by his family because of his deformed feet, and the Japanese psycho fantasy **My Mother's Eye** by director Takeshi Kushida, about a mother and daughter who share a single vision of the universe through the use of a new, futuristic contact lens device with a built-in camera inserted into the eyes and set up with VR Goggles.

West Coast Premieres at the festival include the upcoming Spanish film **The Wait** directed by F. Javier Gutiérrez which has been listed as one of 'The 14 Most Anticipated Horror Movies of Fall 2023' in *Time Magazine*. This sinister folk horror tragedy follows Eladio (Victor Clavijo), a hunting estate keeper, who takes a bribe from a veteran hunter. Additional West Coast Premieres include the blood curdling horror **The Puppetman** by Brandon Christensen about a convicted killer who claims to be possessed, **Faceless After Dark**, the killer clown horror film by director Raymond Wood, and **The Deep Dark**, the unnerving Mathieu Turi film about a group of miners who find themselves trapped in a coal mine and discover they are not alone.

Highlights from this year's shorts program include **Rezar** by Carlos Garcia (Forbes 30 Under 30), **Robbie Ain't Right No More** starring Madeleine McGraw (*Black Phone*), **Abominations** by Mike Fontaine (Academy Award Nominee for 'The Batman') **Wake** starring Elliot Fletcher, **Thin Skinned** by Richard Kind and Joe DeRosa, and **The Green Ribbon produced** by Heather Matarazzo.

Formed in August 2001 by film producer Rachel Belofsky, **Screamfest® Horror Film Festival** is a female-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that gives filmmakers and screenwriters in the horror and science fiction genres a venue to have their work showcased in the film industry.

**Please find the 2023 Screamfest® feature line-up below:**

#### **Divinity (US, 2023) – LA Premiere**

Directed by Eddie Alcazar

Written by Eddie Alcazar

Produced by Eddie Alcazar, Raphael Gindre, Javier Lovato, Steven Soderbergh, Johnny Starke

Cast: Bella Thorne, Stephen Dorff, Caylee Cowan, Scott Bakula, Moises Arias, Karrueche Tran, Michael O'Hearn, Emily Willis

Centers on two mysterious brothers, who abduct a mogul during his quest for immortality. Meanwhile, a seductive woman helps them launch a journey of self-discovery.

#### **Alone Together (US, 2023) – World Premiere**

Directed by William Kresch

Written by William Kresch, AV Bach

Produced by Eric Reitz, DeAnna Wright

Cast: DeAnna Wright, Matthew Kresch

After fleeing their pandemic-ravaged city for the safety of a remote family cabin, a physically and emotionally abused woman and her volatile boyfriend are forced to face the vengeful spirit that haunts it—and each other.

### **The Deep Dark (2023, France) – West Coast Premiere**

Directed by Mathieu Turi

Written by Mathieu Turi

Produced by Eric Gendarme, Thomas Lubeau, Samuel Le Bihan

Cast: Samuel Le Bihan, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Diego Martin, Amir El Kacem, Thomas Soliveres, Marc Riso, Bruno Sanches, Phillippe Torretton

1956, northern France. When a group of miners find themselves trapped in the depths of a coal mine, they quickly realize that they are not the only ones.

### **Eight Eyes (US, 2023) – US Premiere**

Directed by Austin Jennings

Written by Austin Jennings, Matt Frink

Produced by Justin A. Martell, Matt Manjourides

Cast: Emily Sweet, Bradford Thomas, Bruno Veljanovski

A mysterious local crashes a couple's vacation through the former Yugoslavia, pulling them deeper into his web of psychic rituals.

### **Empire V (2023) – US Premiere**

Directed by Victor Ginzburg

Written by Victor Ginzburg, Victor Pelevin

Produced by Victor Ginzburg, Andrei Trubitsyn, Maria Kapralova, James Steel, Alexei Tylevich

Cast: Pavel Tabakov, Miron Fyodorov, Taya Radchenko, Vera Alentova

Set in modern-day Moscow, "Empire V" is a metaphysical vampire story and a reflection of a world ruled by the cult of beauty, money, and blood. A dark satire on contemporary Russian culture and global capitalism. A universal coming-of-age story of an average young man challenged by a Faustian gift of power and knowledge, forced to make his way in a post-moral world.

Based on a novel by Russia's leading contemporary writer Victor Pelevin.

### **Faceless After Dark (US, 2023) – West Coast Premiere**

Directed by Raymond Wood

Written by Jenna Kanell, Todd Jacobs

Produced by Jenna Kanell, Randall Blizzard

Cast: Jenna Kanell, Danny Kang, Danielle Lyn, Michael Aaron Milligan, Jason MacDonald, Catherine Corcoran

Following her breakout success as the star of a killer clown horror flick, Bowie now finds herself struggling to capitalize on its success. But when she is suddenly held hostage by an unhinged fan posing as that same killer clown, horror becomes her reality as she fights to survive the night and escape before he completes his sinister plan to recreate the film's fatal plot.

### **Howdy, Neighbor! (US, 2023) – LA Premiere**

Directed by Allisyn Snyder

Written by Matthew Scott Montgomery

Produced by Dylan Snyder, Charles M. Barsamian Esq.

Cast: Debby Ryan, Matthew Scott Montgomery, Alyson Stoner, Grant Jordan, Sterling Sulieman, Adam Faison, Tim Bagley, Greer Grammer, Kevin Chamberlin

When former child actor, Benjamin (Matthew Scott Montgomery), is recognized by his new neighbor (Grant Jordan), the lines between friend and fan become blurred, turning his number one fan into his number one nightmare. With no help from law enforcement, Benjamin begins investigating the oddly familiar man with his best friend Harley (Debby Ryan).

### **Loop Track (New Zealand, 2023) – North American Premiere**

Directed by Thomas Sainsbury

Written by Thomas Sainsbury

Produced by Gabriel Lunte, Jonathan Potton, Milon Tesiram

Cast: Thomas Sainsbury, Hayden J. Weal, Tawanda Manyimo, Kate Simmonds, Noa Campbell, Bianca Seinafo, Gaby Solomona

A man on the verge of a nervous breakdown retreats to the bush, only to encounter other trampers—and someone or something else entirely—in this psychological thriller.

### **Lord of Misrule (UK, 2023) – World Premiere**

Directed by William Brent Bell (The Devil Inside, The Boy)

Written by Tom de Ville

Produced by William Brent Bell, Nik Bower, Deepak Nayar, Jason Newmark, Laurie Cook, James Tomlinson, Alison Brister

Cast: Tuppence Middleton, Ralph Ineson, Matt Stokoe, Evie Templeton

LORD OF MISRULE is a pagan horror story set in a rural English village, where Rebecca Holland has recently taken over the parish church. When her young daughter goes missing at a winter festival, villagers and local police join in the desperate search. However, the closer they edge towards finding the girl, the more secrets emerge from the town's dark past; soon Rebecca must decide just how much she is willing to sacrifice to rescue her daughter from the grip of evil.

### **Masacre en Teques (Mexico, 2023) – International Premiere**

Directed by Rodrigo Hernandez Cruz

Written by Rodrigo Hernandez Cruz, Solrac Niram, Alfredo Mendoza

Produced by Rodrigo Hernandez Cruz

Cast: Tatiana Del Real, Florencia Rios, Danae Reynaud, Juan Ugarte, Jerry Velazquez, Francisco de la Reguera, Ramon Medina

### **Mimi the Prince of Darkness (Italy, 2023) – North American Premiere**

Directed by Brando De Sica

Written by Ugo Chiti, Brando De Sica, Irene Pollini Giolai

Produced by Marco Cohen, Benedetto Habib, Fabrizio Donvito, Daniel Campos Pavoncelli

Cast: Domenico Cuomo, Sara Ciocca, Mimmo Borrelli, Giuseppe Brunetti, Abril Zamora, Dino Porzio, Daniele Vicorito

Mimi is an orphaned teenager born with deformed feet who works at a pizzeria in Naples. One fateful day, he meets Carmilla, a young girl convinced she is a descendant of Count Dracula. Together, they decide to escape the cynical and violent world they live in

### **Monolith (Australia, 2023) – LA premiere**

Directed by Matt Vesely

Written by Lucy Campbell

Produced by Bettina Hamilton

Cast: Lily Sullivan

A headstrong journalist whose investigative podcast uncovers a strange artifact, an alien conspiracy, and lies at the heart of her own story.

### **My Mother's Eye (Japan, 2023) – North American Premiere**

Directed by Takeshi Kushida

Written by Takeshi Kushida

Produced by Shin Nishimura, Yosuke Sato

Cast: Akane Ono, Mone Shitara, Takuma Izumi, Shusaku Uchida

A mother and daughter share a single vision of the universe through the use of a new, futuristic contact lens device with a built-in camera inserted into the eyes and set up together with VR Goggles. This is a psycho-fantasy that weaves together the lives of the mother and daughter with their shared vision as they ultimately find a true bond while transcending the boundaries of body and mind.

### **Onyx the Fortuitous and the Talisman of Souls (US, 2023) – Cineverse/Bloody Disgusting Special Screening**

Directed by Andrew Bowser

Written by Andrew Bowser

Produced by Andrew Bowser, Michael Mobley

Cast: Andrew Bowser, Olivia Taylor Dudley, Jeffrey Combs, Barbara Crampton, Rivkah Reyes, Terrence "TC" Carson, Arden Myrin, Melanie Chandra

The story follows fledgling occultist Marcus J. Trillbury (Onyx) as he attends a once-in-a-lifetime ritual at his idol Bartok the Great's dark mansion. Once there, Marcus meets a group of other occultists and they are led in a series of rituals meant to "better them." But as terrible things begin to happen, it soon becomes clear that Bartok's intentions are more nefarious. As Onyx and his new friends battle to keep their souls, a question of great destiny looms over Onyx's head: is he doomed to be a nobody or will he rise to defeat Bartok and save his friends from damnation? The film is based on director Andrew Bowser's viral character of the same name, Onyx, who has racked up over 300 million views online and has over 1 million TikTok followers.

### **Pandemonium (France, 2023) – US Premiere**

Directed by Quarxx

Written by Quarxx

Produced by Isabelle Guenezan, Sandra Ianigro, Martine Melloul

Cast: Hugo Dillon, Arben Bajraktaraj, Manon Maindivide, Ophélie Kolb, Sidwell Weber, Carl Laforêt

Following a car accident Nathan realizes he is dead. He will discover Hell and encounter the sufferings of the tormented souls that he will meet there. Will he be able to escape?

### **The Piper (UK, 2023) – World Premiere**

Directed by Erlingur Thoroddsen

Written by Erlingur Thoroddsen

Produced by Tanner Mobley, Bernard Kira, Les Weldon, Jeffrey Greenstein, Jonathan Yunger, Yariv Lerner, Avi Lerner (EP), Boaz Davidson (EP), Trevor Short (EP)

Cast: Charlotte Hope, Julian Sands, Aoibhe O’Flanagan, Oliver Savell, Kate Nicols, Philipp Christopher, Alexis Rodney, Louise Gold, Pippa Winslow

A young composer is given the opportunity of a lifetime when she is tasked with finishing her late mentor’s concerto. But she soon discovers that playing the music summons deadly consequences, leading her to uncover the disturbing origins of the melody and the evil force it has awakened... The Pied Piper.

### **The Puppetman (US, 2023 ) – West Coast Premiere**

Directed by Brandon Christensen

Written by Brandon Christensen, Ryan Christensen

Produced by Matt Manjourides, Justin Martell

Cast: Alyson Gorske, Kio Cyr, Michael Pare, Anna Telfer

The Puppetman, a convicted killer on death row, always maintained his innocence and that it was an evil force controlling his body as he slaughtered his victims. Now Michal, the killer's daughter, begins to suspect that there may be some truth to her father's claim when those around her begin to die in brutal ways. She must try and break the curse of The Puppetman before all her loved ones are killed.

### **The Wait (Spain, 2023) – West Coast Premiere**

Directed by F. Javier Gutiérrez

Written by F. Javier Gutiérrez

Produced by Antonio Perez Perez, Adrian Guerra, F. Javier Gutiérrez,

Cast: Victor Clavijo, Ruth Diaz, Pedro Casablanc

Eladio, a hunting estate keeper, takes a bribe from a veteran hunter. Weeks later, his whole life falls apart. What looked like the opportunity of a lifetime turns into a macabre descent to hell, where Eladio will test his boundaries.

### **The Well (Italy, 2023)– North America Premiere**

Directed by Federico Zampaglione

Written by Federico Zampaglione and Stefano Masi

Produced by Stefano Masi

Cast: Lauren Lavera, Claudia Gerini

When novice art restorer Lisa Gray goes to a small Italian village to bring a medieval painting back to its former glory after fire damage, little does she know she is placing her life in danger from an evil curse of myth and brutal pain.

### **You’ll Never Find Me (Australia, 2023) – Premiere**

Directed by Josiah Allen, Indianna Bell

Written by Indianna Bell

Produced by Josiah Allen, Indianna Bell, Jordan Cowan, Christine Williams

Cast: Brendan Rock, Jordan Cowan, Elena Carapetis

A sharp and twisted thriller featuring outstanding central performances from Jordan Cowan & Brendan Rock. An isolated man living in the back of a desolate caravan park is visited by a desperate young woman seeking shelter from a violent storm. As the savage storm worsens, these solitary souls begin to feel threatened- but who should be afraid? A bold directorial debut from the filmmaking duo Josiah Allen & Indianna Bell.

### **What You Wish For ( US, 2023 ) – LA premiere**

Writer/Directed by Nicholas Tomnay

Produced by Nicholas Tomnay, Kevin Chinoy, Francesca Silvestri

Starring: Nick Stahl, Tasmin Topolski, Randy Vasquez, Penelope Mitchell

A chef with gambling problems flees to the Latin American villa of an old friend who appears to be living an extraordinary life. Envy soon turns to greed and then to something more unsettling for the chef when he assumes his friend's life and discovers the truth.

For more information or the latest news, visit [screamfestla.com](https://screamfestla.com)

***To apply for press credentials, please visit: <https://screamfestla.com/festival/press-credentials>. The deadline for credential applications is September 30, 2022.***

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## **ABOUT SCREAMFEST HORROR FILM FESTIVAL:**

Formed in August 2001 by film producer Rachel Belofsky, Screamfest Horror Film Festival is a female-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that gives filmmakers and screenwriters in the horror and science fiction genres a venue to have their work showcased in the film industry. Among the numerous films that have been discovered and/or premiered at the festival include "Tigers Are Not Afraid.", "The Wretched", "We Summons the Darkness", "Pledge", "The Master Cleanse", "Tragedy Girls", "American Mary", "Paranormal Activity," "30 Days of Night," "Trick 'r Treat" and "The Human Centipede." Screamfest hosts monthly screenings year-round such films include "Mom and Dad" starring Nicolas Cage and Selma Blair and many retrospective screenings.

## **ABOUT 2022 SCREAMFEST PARTNERS:**

ABOUT 2022 SCREAMFEST PARTNERS Screamfest is sponsored by Birns & Sawyer, Angel of Flight LA, ELMA, HorrorPack, DeadHead Rum, Sangre De Vida, Deadly Grounds, Liquid Death, Celsius, Screenplay.com and InkTip. Screamfest is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture. Screamfest is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs. This activity is supported in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency. Learn more at [www.arts.ca.gov](http://www.arts.ca.gov).

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