2016–2020
Mother Tongue
Film Festival
Five-Year Report
RECOVERING VOICES
Smithsonian
The Mother Tongue Film Festival is a collaborative venture at the Smithsonian and a public program of Recovering Voices, a pan-institutional program that partners with communities around the world to revitalize and sustain endangered languages and knowledge. The Recovering Voices partners are the National Museum of Natural History, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Through interdisciplinary research, community collaboration, and public outreach, we strive to develop effective responses to language and knowledge loss.

In 2015, NMNH curator and anthropologist Dr. Joshua Bell conceived of the Mother Tongue Film Festival as a way to highlight the work of language revitalization around the world through the most powerful medium now widely available to communities: the moving image. The first festival opened on February 21, 2016, which is the United Nations’ International Mother Language Day, and the festival continues to be presented around this date. Partnerships within and outside the Smithsonian have been core to the Festival’s success; over time, our partnerships have grown, involving more Smithsonian units and various consular and academic partners. When launched, it was the only festival of its kind, and it has since formed part of a small group of local and international festivals dedicated to films in Indigenous languages.

Over its five editions, the festival has grown, embracing a wide range of audiovisual genres and experiences, drawing audiences to enjoy screenings often at capacity at various venues around Washington, DC. We have screened at venues as far-reaching as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and as community-focused as the Mexican Cultural Institute. We have garnered support to welcome 74 filmmakers, producers, actors, and cultural leaders from 43 communities and nations, to present their films live and dialogue with diverse audiences. We have screened works with no dialogue, music videos in Indigenous languages, and works in the mother tongue of ASL. We have hosted behind-the-scenes tours of Smithsonian collections for our participants and offered local youth the chance to meet with guest artists and directors in informal sessions. We have opened the festival with drum and song and presented live cultural performances as part of our festival events.

We developed a dedicated, bilingual (English and Spanish) website for the festival in 2019, where we stream several works in full after the festival. And, given the changing reality of our world, we are exploring how to present the festival in a hybrid live/online model, or completely virtually, in years to come.

Our Mission

Honoring the United Nations’ International Mother Language Day on February 21, the Mother Tongue Film Festival celebrates language and cultural diversity by showcasing films and filmmakers from around the world. Through digital storytelling, the festival amplifies the work of diverse practitioners who explore the power of language to connect the past, present, and future.
An audience member at the Last Whispers screening, Terrace Theater, Kennedy Center. Photo courtesy of Lena Herzog
2016
Year 1: The Beginning

- 19 languages
- 8 regions
- 31 films

*Burning Sun*, dir. Elle Márjá Eira
The first Mother Tongue Film Festival launched on International Mother Language Day, February 21, to celebrate mother tongues of communities around the world. The week-long festival showcased both short and feature-length films representing nineteen languages and eight regions, presented by various directors. The festival presented seven screening programs in five venues around Washington, DC: the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the National Museum of American Indian (NMAI), the National Museum of the American History (NMAH), Landmark’s Atlantic Plumbing Cinema, and BloomBars, a community arts center. In addition to presenting varied film programming, each venue catered to different audiences, with several evening programs at capacity. The curatorial team consisted of Joshua Bell (NMNH), Melissa Bisagni (Media Initiatives, NMAI), Judith Andrews (Collections Program Assistant, NMNH), and Dr. Mary Linn (Curator of Language and Cultural Vitality, CFCH).

The festival opened on a Sunday at NMNH’s Baird Auditorium with a screening of five short films followed by a 2016 version of Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope (1977; George Lucas) dubbed into Diné bizaad (Navajo) with English subtitles. The team behind the translation and dubbing, Manuelito and Jennifer Wheeler (Diné), were joined by filmmakers Zoe Leigh Hopkins (Heiltsuk/Mohawk) and Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa/Choctaw) to discuss the making of Indigenous language films. The second program featured five short films followed by the premiere of the documentary Breath of Life: Revitalization of North America’s Native Languages (2015), which showcases the work and research by Native American community scholars involved in the National Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Language, hosted at the Smithsonian. Following the screening, National Breath of Life co-director and Curator of Linguistics Dr. Gabriela Pérez Báez (NMNH) and National Breath of Life Steering Committee member and Mary Linn discussed issues of language revitalization with director Gaston Lacombe.

Presented in partnership with the 2016 Smithsonian Folklife Festival’s Basque: Innovation by Culture program, Monday night’s screening of the documentary Loreak (2014; Jon Garaño and Jose Mari Goenaga) showcased the Euskara language. The DC Basque Club introduced the film in both Euskara and English at Landmark’s Atlantic Plumbing Cinema. The Tuesday evening program of nine dramatic shorts was co-hosted by BloomBars, a DC artist and non-profit incubator, performance space, and gallery. On Thursday, the festival featured films with an Arctic focus at NMAI’s Rasmuson Theater, with commentary by staff from NMNH’s Arctic Studies Center. On Friday night, NMAI hosted the DC premiere of the action-packed Māori drama The Dead Lands (2014; Toa Fraser). This program was presented with support from the Embassy of New Zealand, and we were pleased to have Tim Groser, Ambassador of New Zealand, offer introductory remarks. An in-depth discussion with one of the film’s producers, Tainui Stephens (Te Rarawa), followed the screening, and audiences were treated to outtakes from the film. The festival closed on Satur-
Sunday, February 21

Opening
12 pm—Baird Auditorium, NMNH
Shhh!
Neil Discovers the Moon
both dir. Steven Paul Judd
Star Wars Trash Compactor
dir. Zoe Leigh Hopkins
Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope
dir. George Lucas; in Navajo

3 pm—Baird Auditorium, NMNH
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Clouds of Autumn
dir. Trevor Mack
Shimášáni
dir. Blackhorse Lowe
Living Language: Menominee Language Revitalization;
Language Apprentice
both dir. Finn Ryan
Breath of Life
dir. Gaston Lacombe

Monday, February 22

Basque Program
7 pm—Atlantic Plumbing Cinema
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Sikumi/On the Ice
dir. Andrew Okpeaha Maclean
Loreak
dir. Jan Garafó and Jose Mari Goenaga

Tuesday, February 23

Narrative Shorts
7 pm—BloomBars
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Spelling Bee
dir. Zoe Leigh Hopkins
Little India
dir. Mahesh Pailoor
Search for the World’s Best Indian Taco
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Huyhuy (trade)
dir. Sky Hopinka
Neil Discovers the Moon
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Goldilocks and the Bears
dir. Zoe Leigh Hopkins
The Longest Sun
dir. Patrick Smith
Wapawekka
dir. Danis Goulet

Thursday, February 24

Arctic Focus
2 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
7 Sámi Stories
International Sámi Film Institute, Sámi Film Lab; dir. Elle Sofe Henriksen, Marja Bal Nan-go, Per Josef Idivuoma, Elle Marja Eira, Ann Holmgren, Silja Somby, Egil and Peterse

Friday, February 26

Dinner and a Movie
5:30 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Stones
dir. Ty Sanga
The Dead Lands
dir. Toa Fraser

Saturday, February 24

Music Program
12 pm—Coulter Performance Plaza, NMAH
Shhh!
dir. Steven Paul Judd
Byron Nicholai of I Sing, You Dance
dir. Tara Young
The Ways: Prayers in a Song: Learning Language Through Hip-Hop
dir. Finn Ryan
One Voice... Our journey begins with song
dir. Lisette Marie Flanary

2016 At a Glance

Attendance: ~600
2016 Budget Snapshot

The festival was carried out thanks to the combined efforts of the Mother Tongue Film Festival committee members. Financial support was provided by the collaborating Smithsonian units NMNH, CFCH, and NMAI as well as funds from the Smithsonian Folklife Festival’s Basque program. Additional support was provided by the Embassy of New Zealand, the Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment, Landmark’s Atlantic Plumbing Theater, and BloomBars.

### Budget Snapshot

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### Sponsors & Partners

Shimásáni

dir. Blackhorse Lowe
2017
Year 2: Growing Awareness

- 31 languages
- 12 regions
- 32 films

Before the Streets, dir. Chloé Leriche
A major goal of our second festival was to strengthen awareness of Mother Tongue across the Smithsonian Institution. Over the course of five days, more than 750 people gathered in various venues in Washington, DC, to watch 32 films in 31 languages from across six continents. Thanks to Smithsonian partnerships, internal pool awards, and external support, we were able to bring sixteen filmmakers and community cultural leaders from around the world to engage with audiences through discussions and panels, each showcasing a unique mother tongue. We were pleased to garner the support of the Smithsonian Latino Initiative Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center. The curatorial team consisted of Joshua Bell, Melissa Bissigni, Dr. Amalia Córdova (Latinx Digital Curator, CFCH), and Mary Linn.

The 2017 festival opened on Tuesday, February 21, at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, with a welcome and song from local Piscataway tribal member Sebi Medinya-Tayac, followed by introductory remarks by Acting Provost and Under Secretary for Museums and Research at the Smithsonian Richard Kurin. Joshua Bell introduced the program, which began with the shorts Wihoy Tañi Keww/Volví Mi Lengua (2014; Gonzalo Luanko, Leonardo Ramirez, and Anthony Rauld) and Four Faces of the Moon (2016; Amanda Strong), followed by the visually powerful and poetic documentary Mele Murals (2016). A post-screening Q&A featured Mele Murals director Tadashi Nakamura and the star of the film, renowned graffiti artist John “Prime” Hina, moderated by Michael Mason, Director of CFCH.

Prior to the screening, and in partnership with the Hirshhorn, the festival organized an invitational session with the ARTLAB+ digital art studio for teens. Local youth from the DC metro region met with Nakamura and “Prime” to hear about film production techniques, career options, and how the artists found their voices.

The Wednesday evening screening was held at Landmark’s Atlantic Plumbing Cinema. This program showcased two Canadian films, Grandfather Drum (2015; Michelle Derosier), an animated short in English and Anishinaabe, and the dramatic feature Avant les Rues/Before the Streets (2016; Chloé Leriche), about the troubles faced by an Atikamekw youth. This film was cast almost entirely with non-professional Atikamekw actors performing in their own language and in their own village. Janice Ottawa, an Atikamekw language teacher from Quebec featured in the film, participated in a Q&A session. Our third day presented the “Next Gen” shorts program at NMAI, bringing together eight geographically and linguistically diverse shorts targeted to a younger audience. A notable film from this program was A Kid Under the Tree (2014; Detsaje) about a Tibetan boy who creates an outdoor classroom, teaching rocks as his imaginary students after having to abandon school to take on family herding duties.

The Thursday evening program hosted at a new partnering venue, NYU Washington, DC, focused on the power of music, with a specific emphasis on global hip-hop. The powerful documentary Sonita (2015; Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami), about an undocumented Afghan immigrant living in the outskirts of Tehran and fighting to live as an artist, singer, and musician, was screened alongside music videos “Wall Building Song” (2016; Delek Norbu) and “Hablando” (2016; Viajeros del Tiempo). The Q&A featured panelists Mazi Mutafa, executive director of the local hip-hop nonprofit Words Beats & Life, and William Youmans, assistant professor at the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University. Our film festival program coordinator, Torell Taylor, facilitated an engaging discussion about hip-hop, identity, and film.

The festival garnered support to bring five directors who convened on our first Filmmaker Roundtable. On Friday, the festival screened an extended shorts program at NMAI, followed by a panel of filmmakers and language experts. This impressive panel included four groundbreaking filmmakers and cultural leaders, facilitated by curator Mary Linn and translated by Amalia Córdova. Panelists included Mexican director Ga-
Gabriela Badillo, creator of the 68 Voces/68 Voices project; Akosua Adoma Owusu, Ghanaian American director of the experimental short Kwaku Ananse; Alexandra Lazarowich (Cree), award-winning director of Cree Code Talker; Kayla Briet (Prairie Band Potawatomi/Neshnabe/Chinese/Dutch-Indonesian), director of Smoke that Travels; and traditional arts performer Gary Wiskigeamatyuk (Anishnabe/Neshnabe/Prairie Band Potawatomi), featured in Smoke that Travels. A major takeaway from this panel was the fact that many films about language revitalization were spearheaded by women directors.

The Friday evening program hosted by the Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington, DC, showcased the dramatic feature El Sueño del Mara’akame (2016; Federico Cecchetti), a Wixárika (Huichol) and Spanish-language story of a young Wixáritari musician whose dream is to play with his rock band in Mexico City. Preceding the feature were four animated shorts in the Seri, Mayo, Náhuatl, and Wixárika (Huichol) languages produced as part of the 68 Voces/68 Voices project. Masha Kostiurina, producer of El Sueño del Mara’akame, participated in a Q&A moderated by Gabriela Pérez Báez. Both directors’ travel was supported by the Embassy of Mexico in Washington, DC, and the Mexican Cultural Institute.

On Saturday, NMAI screened the award-winning feature film from the Venezuelan Amazon, Dauna: Gone with the River (2015; Mario Crespo) in in Warao and Spanish. Isabel Lorenz, the film’s co-producer and screenwriter, introduced the film and participated in a post-screening discussion with Amalia Córdova. That evening we closed with the documentary Poi E: The Story of Our Song (2016; Te Arepa Kahi), which was introduced by the Ambassador of New Zealand, Tim Groser. The film explores how a 1984 number-one hit song by the group Patea Māori Club set the stage for the revitalization of the Māori language. Tracy Maihi, Raiha Howard, and Lara Andrew, members of the Māori cultural group Tihei Mauri Ora, offered a song before the film, and participated in a discussion with Joshua Bell.
Tuesday, February 21

**Opening**
4 pm—Lerner Room, HMSG
Hirshhorn ARTLAB+ Program

7 pm—Ring Auditorium, HMSG
*Four Faces of the Moon*
dir. Amanda Strong
*Wiñoy Taríi Kewvn/Volvió Mi Lengua*
dir. Gonzalo Luanko, Leonardo Ramirez, and Anthony Rauld
*Mele Murals*
dir. Tadashi Nakamura

Wednesday, February 22

**Archival Screening**
2:30 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
*To Live with Herds*
dir. David MacDougall

7 pm—Atlantic Plumbing Cinema
*Grandfather Drum*
dir. Michelle Derossier
*Avant les rues/Before the Streets*
dir. Chloé Leriche

Thursday, February 23

**Next Gen Shorts Program**
11 am—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
*Kid Under A Tree*
dir. Detsaje
*Vowels and Consonants*
dir. Tsering
*Miwok Pride*
dir. Melissa Leal
*Chubby Bunny*
dir. Te Ao Kawharu

**Next Gen Shorts Program cont’d**

11 am—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
*Respondan a Esta Videocarta de Chicahuaxtla*
dir. Guillermo Monteforte
*Hawai`i Aloha*
dir. Ruben Carillo
*Story At Priest Point*
dir. Longhouse Media
*Soeur Oyo*
dir. Monique Mbeka Phoba

7 pm—Abramson Family Auditorium, NYU DC
*Wall Building Song*
dir. Delek Norbu
*Hablando*
dir. Viajeros del Tiempo
*Sonita*
dir. Rohsareh Ghaem Maghami

Friday, February 24

**Shorts Program and Panel**
2 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
*Osage Speaker*
dir. Ryan Redcorn
*Kwaku Ananse*
dir. Akosua Adoma Owusu
*Juka Tájiita Ánist Yew Maachiako/
About the origin of fire*
dir. Gabriela Badillo/68 Voices
*Nulla Nulla*
dir. Dylan River
*El primer amanecer/
About the first sunrise*
dir. Gabriela Badillo/68 Voices

7 pm—Mexican Cultural Institute
*68 Voces/68 Voices Shorts*
dir. Gabriela Badillo/68 Voices
*El sueño del Mara'akame/
Mara'akame’s Dream*
dir. Federico Cecchetti

Saturday, February 24

**Next Gen Shorts Program**
12 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
*Repeat Program*

2 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
*Dauna: Gone with the River*
dir. Mario Crespo

7 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
*Poi E: The Story of Our Song*
dir. Tearepa Kahi

2017 At a Glance

Attendance: ~750
The festival was carried out thanks to the combined efforts of the Mother Tongue Film Festival committee members and staff of Recovering Voices. Financial support was provided by the collaborating Smithsonian units NMNH, CFCH, and NMAI. This program received federal support from the Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center. External supporters included NYU Washington, DC; the Embassy of Mexico; the Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment; the Mexican Cultural Institute; and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation.

### Budget Snapshot

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**Sponsors & Partners**

Kwaku Ananse

dir. Akosua Adoma Owusu
2018

Year 3: Opening the Call

- 29 languages
- 14 regions
- 28 films

Waru, dir. Briar Grace-Smith, Casey Kaa, Ainsley Gardiner, Katie Wolfe, Renae Maihi, Chelsea Cohen, Paula Jones, Awanui Simich-Pene
The 2018 Mother Tongue Film Festival attracted over 600 people to engage with 28 films in 29 Indigenous or endangered languages. Recovering Voices brought awareness to the importance of mother languages by holding screenings in three locations across the Smithsonian and hosting several filmmakers at each screening. For the first time, the festival made an open call for films and reviewed ninety-five films submitted from around the world. We also welcomed the addition of Dr. Kālewa Correa, Curator of Hawai‘i and the Pacific at the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, to the Mother Tongue selection team.

Opening night was held at NMAI on Wednesday, February 21. Guests were welcomed with a reception and music by the local drum circle Uptown Boyz. Opening remarks were offered by David Penney, Associate Director of Museum Scholarship at NMAI; Recovering Voices director Gwyneira Issac (NMNH); and Joshua Bell. The festival opened with two powerful films and a discussion with directors and participants. Gabriela Pérez Báez, facilitated a conversation with the director of the documentary Ka Duu, Yolanda Cruz (Chatina), and the film’s subject, master weaver Porfirio Gutiérrez (Zapotec), along with Karen Lynn Weinberg, director of the award-winning documentary Niugaa Yugaa/Keep Talking, which explores the experiences of participants in a Kodiak language nest. Sadie Cole, an eighteen-year-old Kodiak Alutiiq language nest participant, and Aliasha Drabek, executive vice president of Afognak Native Corporation, also participated in the discussion. We are grateful to the Arctic Studies Center for their support of this screening.

Thursday began with a series of films from Kayapo communities in Brazil, followed by a conversation with filmmakers in conversation with scholars Richard Pace and Laura Zanotti in NMNH’s Q?rius Theater. The day concluded at NMNH with a screening of the award-winning documentary Out of State (2017) directed by Ciara Lacy (Native Hawaiian). The film follows the journey of two Native Hawaiians shipped thousands of miles away and incarcerated in the Arizona desert. Over time, they are introduced to their Indigenous traditions from a fellow inmate serving a life sentence. Out of State was preceded by several short films including The Wolf Dance with Ted Mayac, Sr., Aroha Bridge: Radical Bro by Jessica Hansell, and Shaagua/The Wind, part of the 68 Voices project. Kālewa Correa moderated the discussion that followed.

Friday included the programs Truth to Power, which presented seven short films, an inspiring Women Directors Roundtable in NMAI’s Rasmuson Theater, and an evening program called This, For You. Along with providing our audience with an insightful conversation on the role of women in mother-tongue film, the roundtable highlighted the augmented role that technology played at this edition of the festival, as the discussion was webcast and later uploaded for streaming. On two occasions, directors connected via video conference to discuss their films with the audience after their screenings. Out of State producer Beau Bassett joined remotely on Thursday night from Hawai‘i, and Paula Whetu Jones (Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Porou), one of the eight women directors involved in Waru (2017; Briar Grace-Smith, Ainsley Gardiner, Renae Maihi, Casey Kaa, Awanui Simich-Pene, Chelsea Cohen, Katie Wolfe, and Paula Jones), spoke to the Friday night audience from Aotearoa/New Zealand. The use of these technologies allowed filmmakers and audiences who could not travel to Washington, DC, to connect with the festival.

The festival concluded on Saturday with the programs Speaking the Land and In the Periphery, which screened in the Meyer Auditorium of the Freer Gallery of Art. The first program featured the animation Sicigorousawa un Cironnop/The Fox of Shichigoro-sawa (2014; Tune Sugihara) and the documentary Sailing a Sinking Sea (2015; Olivia Wyatt). Each film was centered on the varied relationships between Native peoples and their territories. The festival closed with the experimental feature Zerzura (2017) written, produced, and filmed entirely in Niger, followed by a Q&A with director Christopher Kirkley and moderated by festival advisor and film-
maker Mariano Bartolomeo. In partnership with the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital, five Mother Tongue Film Festival shorts that dealt squarely with environmental issues screened at NMAI on two weekends, to standing-room-only audiences. The program presented on Saturday, March 17, began with a short film from Panama called Identidad (2017; Iván Jarrpío), followed by the animation We Prayed in Water (2012; Joseph Erb), the Navajo-produced and directed documentary Shash Jaa'/Bears Ears (2016; Angelo Baca), and the documentary Then, Now, and Forever: Zuni in the Grand Canyon (2017; Daniel Byers). The screenings were followed by a discussion with directors Angelo Baca (Diné/Hopi), Daniel Byers, and special guest Octavius Seowtewa (Zuni), moderated by Melissa Bisagni.

On Saturday, March 24, we presented the feature documentary Los Ojos del Camino/The Eyes of the Journey (2017), followed by a Q&A with director Rodrigo Otero Heraud and producer Maja Tillmann Salas via Skype from Peru and facilitated by Amalia Córdova. This visual poem explores the fate of the Earth and her children through the journey of a paq’o (healer), Hipólito Peralta Ccama, through different parts of the Peruvian sierra, and narrated entirely in the Quechua language. These two programs added five Indigenous languages to the Mother Tongue Film Festival’s count and further broadened the reach of awareness of mother languages to new audiences.

About the Environmental Film Festival

The Environmental Film Festival in the Nation’s Capital (DCEFF) is the world’s premier showcase of environmentally themed films since 1993.

Mission

To advance understanding and stewardship of the environment through the power of film.
Wednesday, February 21

**Opening Ceremony**
5 pm—Potomac Atrium, NMAI

**Keep Talking**
7 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Ja b’ajlami sok ja chulchuli/
The Tiger and the Grasshopper
dir. 68 Voices
Ka Duu
dir. Yolanda Cruz
Niugaa, Yugaa/Keep Talking
dir. Karen Lynn Weinberg

Thursday, February 22

**Kayapo Video Talkback**
2:30 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
Kwyrykango Metoro A’Ukre/
Manioc Festival A’Ukre
dir. Pat-i Kayapo
A Festa no Meio da Amazonas/
The Festival in the Middle of the Amazon
dir. Bpunu Mebêngôkre

**Reclaiming Our Time**
7 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
The Wolf Dance with Ted Mayac, Sr.
dir. Anchorage Museum
Aroha Bridge: Radical Bro
dir. Jessica Hansell
Shaagua/The Wind
dir. 68 Voices
Out of State
dir. Ciara Lacy

Friday, February 23

**Truth to Power**
1 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Tarinakusun: Quechua in Seattle
dir. Chaska Rojas-Bottger
Karishwanoron: Precious Things
dir. Karonhianarokwas Roxann Whitebean
Aviliaq: Entwined
dir. Alethea Arnaquq-Baril
Listen
dir. Hanmy Ramezan and Rungano Nyoni
Mother Tongue
dir. Pamela Yates
Tifa
dir. Jeffta PATHIKAWA
Anyone Like Me
dir. Mimi d’AUTREMONT

**Women Directors Roundtable**
4 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
This, For You
7 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Te bin’ut’il ayin te k’aal sok te ue/
The Origin of the Sun and the Moon
dir. 68 Voices
Gwen ’bii Yern/It Will Be Yours
dir. Natalie Grube
Waru
dir. Chelsea Cohen, Ainsley Gardiner, Casey Kaa, Renae Maihi, Paula Jones, Katie Wolfe, Briar Grace-Smith, and Awanui Simich-Pene

Saturday, February 24

**Speaking the Land**
3 pm—Meyer Auditorium, FGA
Sicigorosawasun Cironnop/
The Fox of Shichigorosawa
dir. Tune Sugihara
Sailing a Sinking Sea
dir. Olivia Wyatt

**In the Periphery**
7 pm—Meyer Auditorium, FGA
Wire natzu/The Witch
dir. 68 Voices
Zerzura
dir. Christopher Kirkley

**Presentations at the Environmental Film Festival**
Saturday, March 17

12 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Identidad
dir. Iván Jaripio
We Prayed in Water
dir. Joseph Erb
Shash Jaa’/Bears Ears
dir. Angelo Baca
Then, Now, and Forever: Zuni in the Grand Canyon
dir. Daniel Byers

Saturday, March 24

2 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Los Ojos del Camino/
The Eyes of the Journey
dir. Rodrigo Oterô Heraud
2018
Budget Snapshot

The festival was carried out thanks to the combined efforts of the Mother Tongue Film Festival committee members. Financial support was provided by the collaborating Smithsonian units NMNH, CFCH, and NMAI. This program also received federal support from the Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center, as well as the Smithsonian’s Asian Pacific American Center, Freer Gallery of Art, National Museum of African Art, and the NMNH Arctic Studies Center. Additional supporters included Indigenous Media Initiatives, the Mexican Cultural Institute, the Embassy of New Zealand, Dr. Richard Pace, Middle Tennessee State University, Dr. Laura Zanotti, Purdue University, and the Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment.

Budget Snapshot

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Sponsors & Partners

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2019

Year 4: UN International Year of Indigenous Languages

- 66 languages
- 22 regions
- 60 films
The 2019 Mother Tongue Film Festival proved to be a highly successful and well-attended event. The year 2019 was proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, and the Mother Tongue Film Festival was proud to be an official event of this global endeavor. The festival also contributed to the first Smithsonian Year of Music, presenting numerous musical performances as part of the film festival, and presented two major stand-alone events across the year, nationally and internationally. Our fourth festival featured 60 films and audio-visual experiences from 22 regions in 66 languages, which doubled the number of languages in comparison to previous years. Through a carefully curated selection of films, and a new website developed at CFCH, the festival celebrated language revitalization around the world by exploring the relationship between language vitality and personal as well as community well-being.

Dedicated outreach to international partners resulted in the doubling of support for the festival, which contributed to our impact and reach, with several of our programs presented at maximum capacity. Attendance increased to 2,200, nearly quadrupling 2018’s audience. We attribute this jump to our improved curatorial process, our distinctive web presence and social media campaign, as well as the festival’s incorporation of cultural performance, and highly interactive discussions and Q&As with participants from diverse regions and backgrounds discussing issues of cultural relevance.

The festival opened Thursday, February 21, NMAI. The opening reception included remarks by Joshua Bell and Amalia Córdova, as well as Michael Mason and Denis Chouinard, public affairs counselor at the Canadian Embassy. The reception featured a buffet created by award-winning chef Freddie Bitsoie (Diné) of NMAI’s Mitsitam Café, and a performance by the Uptown Boyz. The evening’s film program, Renewal and Hope, included the first film to be made in the Haida language, SGagwaya K’uuna/Edge of the Knife (2018; Gwaai Edenshaw and Helen Haig-Brown), preceded by the animation Tq̱ Qoohx̱hii Zhit Tsyaa Tsł Dlidii/Bay in the Moon (2018; Sam Osborn), a traditional Athabaskan story told in the Gwich’in language. The screening was followed by a Q&A with Edge of the Knife co-director Gwaai Edenshaw (Haida), Sherri Dick (Haida elder and actor), Jay Bellis (Haida artisan and member of the film’s art department), and Sam Osborn, moderated by Melissa Bisagni. The Uptown Boyz closed the evening by inviting the audience on stage to participate in a traditional song.

Friday began at the Meyer Auditorium at the Freer Gallery of Art, opening with Pasts, Presents and Futures, a program focused on education, launching with the short films To Wake Up the Nakota Language (2018; Louise BigEagle) and episodes from the collaborative Zapotec learning project at Haverford University, Dížhsa Nabani/Living Language, followed by the feature documentary from Zambia Colours of the Alphabet (2016; Alastair Coie). The program was followed by a panel focused on language pedagogy called Breaking from the Past, moderated by Mary Linn. The second program featured the international shorts Blackbird (2015; Amie Batalis), Imfura (2017; Samuel Ishimwe Karemangango), and the stop-motion animation Biidaaban/The Dawn Comes (2019; Amanda Strong). The shorts were followed by a roundtable discussion moderated by Amalia Córdova with director Batalis (Australian-Solomon Islander), visiting filmmakers David Hernández Palmar (Wayuu) and Divino Tserewahu (Xavante) with translation and contextual support by Laura Graham of the University of Iowa.

The at-capacity evening program was held at NYU Washington DC’s Abramson Family Auditorium in coordination with NYU’s Stonewall 50 celebration. The theme of the program was Reclaiming Identities, featuring the short films Tama Kariva (2017; Jared Flicicraft and Jack O’Donnell) and Voicemail (2019; Robert Poleki), followed by the documentary Leitis in Waiting (2018; Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson). Leitis in Waiting follows a vibrant and resilient community of transgender women in Tonga known as leitis. The post-screening discussion was moderated by Jeanette Soon-Ludes, director of scholarships and programs at the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarships Fund, in dialogue with co-director Joe Wilson, as well as one of the film’s protagonists, Joey “Joleen” Mataele, and story creator and producer Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, who both joined remotely.
Saturday featured a mix of screenings and performances across NMAI and NMNH, attracting audiences of over 1,000. The morning program, Family Stories, screened at NMAI’s Rasmussen Theater, featured two short films from Dizhsa Nabani, followed by *The Girl Who Talks to the Moon* (2018; Rebecca Campbell), and closing with the animated feature *Maisy, the Chamoru Girl Who Saves Guåhan* (2015; Michael Q. Ceballos). The first animated film to feature the Chamorro language, the animation follows young Maisa, who must find the courage to lead the women of Guåhan (Guam) into battle and stop a powerful creature from devouring their island home. The screenings were followed by a panel featuring director Michael Q. Ceballos and art director Mathew Kawika Ortiz, with Brook Lillehaugen of Haverford College and Felipe Lopez (Zapotec) of Dizhsa Nabani, and moderated by Joshua Bell. The event opened and closed with a riveting Chamoru performance from Håle’ Para Agupa’, a local Chamorro community organization.

The Migrations program featured *Gue’ Bac/Tlacolula Market* (2018; Dizhsa Nabani), a short exploring Zapotec identity, and the dramatic feature *In Times of Rain* (2018; Itandeui Jansen) depicting a Mixtec family caught between the rural and the urban. These films were followed by a roundtable discussion with Lillehaugen and Lopez of Dizhsa Nabani, joined by lead actor of *In Times of Rain*, Alejandra Herrera, and moderated by Amalia Córdova. This program was made possible thanks to the support of the Embassy of Mexico to the United States and the Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington, DC.

Concurrently, a pop-up performance with Bhutanese dancers and musicians Khando, Tashi Tsering, Leki, Wangchuk, Sherab Jamtsho, Yeshi Wangchuk, Sherab Jamtsho, Yeshi Tangbi, Lhaki, Tshering Dema, Pema Yudon, and Tshering Choden took place at NMNH’s Rotunda. Some 500 visitors enjoyed a performance of Zhungdra (*zhung* meaning “center, mainstream,” and *dra* meaning “music”) and Drametse Nga Cham (mask dance of the drums from Drametse, *nga* meaning “drum” and *cham* means “mask dance”), a sacred dance that is inscribed in UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The performance was followed by a Q&A in the Q?rius Theater where museum visitors were invited to meet and speak with the performers. These performances were made possible through funding by the Smithsonian Year of Music.

The day closed at NMNH’s Baird Auditorium, featuring a second performance of Zhungdra and Drametse Nga Cham before filmmakers Drotttya Zurbó and Arun Bhattarai introduced their film *The Next Guardian* (2017). The immersive documentary follows the story of two siblings, Gyembo and Tashi, in a remote Himalayan village within the Kingdom of Bhutan, who must learn to navigate the expectations of their father and their own dreams. Following the screening, Zurbó and Bhattarai were joined on stage by Dawa Sherpa and Bruce Bunting of the Bhutan Foundation for a discussion of Bhutan representation in a global setting, moderated by Nafisa Isa (APAC). Bhutanese performers then closed the evening with Tashi Labay, a collaborative song/dance traditionally performed at the end of an event. This dance is performed on important occasions to summon the gods of prosperity by glorifying a place, natural elements, and the ancestors.

The festival closed with the U.S. premiere of the multimedia experience *Last Whispers* (2019; Lena Herzog) at the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater. *Last Whispers* is an oratorio, a virtual reality experience, and sound installation featuring forty-one languages, the greatest number of minority languages in any of our programs to date. Multimedia artist Herzog was joined by sound designers Marco Capalbo and Mark Mangini to introduce the cinematic experience, which was followed by the largest synced VR screening of a film to date. With close to 500 attendees, the venue was near capacity. The screening was followed by a discussion with Herzog, Capalbo, and Mangini, moderated by Mary Linn and Amalia Córdova.
Bhutanese dancers and musicians Khando, Tashi Tsering, Leki, Wangchuk, Sherab Jamtsho, Yeshi Tangbi, Lhaki, Tshering Dema, Pema Yudon, and Tshering Choden perform Drametse Nga Cham (mask dance of the drums from Drametse).

Photo by Joshua Bell
With funds from Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, Kālewa Correa led a Mother Tongue Film Festival collaboration with the Pasifika Film Fest in Salt Lake City (January 31–February 3). Fifteen films focused on the Pacific were screened to 150 people over five days at the Gateway in downtown Salt Lake City. This collaboration featured a 48 Hour Film Challenge resulting in the winning film, *Voicemail*, screening at the main festival.

From October 25–28 2019, the Mother Tongue Film Festival and Pasifika Film Festival collaborated at the Smithsonian/Auckland Museum Te Whāinga Culture Lab in Auckland, New Zealand, showcasing over twenty emerging Pacific Islander films from all corners of Oceania. This three-day intimate screening ran for ten hours a day, allowing for thirty hours of Pacific Island films to be presented to about 4,500 Culture Lab attendees.

This Pacific collaboration is a direct result of the Mother Tongue Film Festival breakout session in Salt Lake, which helped to decentralize and expand the reach of the festival to traditionally underserved communities. A complete list of the films screened at both events follows our 2019 schedule.

In partnership with the Environmental Film Festival, the Mother Tongue Film Festival screened *A House in the Fields* (2017; Tala Hadid) at NMNH on March 17. Following the screening was a discussion moderated by Joshua Bell with Georgetown University PhD student Mohamed Lamallam and Dr. Fatima Hadjji, Adjunct Professor in International Affairs at George Washington University, both of whom are members of the diasporic Amazigh community.

The last Mother Tongue event of 2019 was in partnership with the United Nations’ International Year of Indigenous Languages: Perspectives conference at Purdue University Fort Wayne. On November 1, the festival screened *Edge of the Knife* and *Boy in the Moon* at the historic Embassy Theater in downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana. The conference brought in 420 registered participants from six continents and presented over seventy-five languages. Mary Linn led a panel of language educators and storytellers from the Haida and Myaamia nations after the screening.
Thursday, February 21
Opening Ceremony
5 pm—Potomac Atrium, NMAI

Renewal and Hope
7 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Tōq Oozhiri Zhit Tsyaal Tsal Dhidii/
Boy in the Moon
dir. Sam Osborn
SGaawaay Ku’nuna/Edge of the Knife
dir. Gwoai Edenshaw, Helen Haig-Brown

Friday, February 22
Pasts, Presents, and Futures
11 am—Meyer Auditorium, FSG
My Heart Speaks Sauk
The Boarding School Experience
dir. Shawnee High School Students
To Wake Up the Nakota Language
dir. Louise BigEagle
Dizhsa Nabani: “Gal Ria’t Chuculat”/
Living Language: “Grinding Chocolate”
dir. Moisés García Guzmán and
Brook Lillehaugen
Colours of the Alphabet
dir. Alastair Cole
Education Panel: Breaking from the Past

Shorts Program and Panel
2 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Blackbird
dir. Amie Batalibasi
Imfura
dir. Samuel Ishimwe
Bidaaban (The Dawn Comes)
dir. Amanda Strong
Filmmaker Roundtable: Unbroken Lines

Friday, February 24 cont’d
Reclaiming Identities
7 pm—Abramson Family Auditorium, NYU DC
Voicemail
dir. Robert Poleki
Tama
dir. Jared Fitcroft and Jack O’Donnell
Korva
dir. Eutalia Raine
Leitis in Waiting
dir. Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer
and Joe Wilson

Saturday, February 23
Family Stories
11 am—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Dizhsa Nabani: “Gal Ria’t Chuculat”/
Living Language: “Grinding Chocolate”
dir. Moisés García Guzmán and
Brook Lillehaugen
The Girl Who Talks to the Moon
dir. Neil Grahn
Maisa: The Chamoru Girl Who
Saves Guåhan
dir. Michael Q. Ceballos

Migrations
3 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
Dizhsa Nabani: “Gue’ Bac”
Living Language: “Tlacolula Market”
dir. Moisés García Guzmán and
Brook Lillehaugen
Tiempo de Lluvia/In Times of Rain
dir. Itandehui Jansen

Saturday, February 23 cont’d
Across Generations
6:30 pm—Baird Auditorium, NMNH
Performance: Bhutanese Cham
The Next Guardian
dir. Dorottya Zurbó and Arun Bhattacharyya

Sunday, February 24
Reconciliation
2 pm—Eaton Cinema, Eaton Hotel
Performance: Bhutanese Cham
Sameblod/Sami Blood
dir. Amanda Kernell
“Goaskinviellja”
dir. Ernesto Calderón Dondero

Closing Night
7 pm—Terrace Theater, Kennedy Center
Last Whispers: Oratorio for Vanishing
Voices, Collapsing Universes and
a Falling Tree
dir. Lena Herzog

Presentations at the
Environmental Film Festival
Saturday, March 17
12 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
A House in the Fields
dir. Tala Hadid
January 31–February 3, 2019
Pasifika First Fridays
The Gateway, Salt Lake City

Banabans of Rabi
dir. Blessen Tom and Hele Ikimotu

Koriva
dir. Euralia Paine

The Education of Grayson Toki
dir. Glenill Burua

I Hinanao-ta
dir. Cara Flores

I Matai
dir. Mighty Island

Maisa: The Chamoru Girl Who Saves Guåhan
dir. Michael Q. Ceballos

Mou Piri
dir. Multinesia

Hae Hawai’i
dir. Ty Sanga

‘Aho‘eitu
dir. Jeremiah Tauamiti

Forgotten Dawn Children
dir. Joshua Iosefo and Corey Sio

Salamasina’s Daughters
dir. Aruna Po Ching

My Friend Michael Jones
dir. Ian Leaupepe and Samson Rambo

Too Familia
dir. Marie Chanel

Panguna
dir. Carmen Smith

Blackbird
dir. Amie Batalibasi

Attendance
~150
October 25–28, 2019
Te Whāinga Culture Lab
Auckland Museum, Auckland

Ali’s Wedding
dir. Jeffrey Walker

Crossing Spaces
dir. Lola Quan Bautista and Shirley Thompson

Culture Strong
dir. L-FRESH The LION & Erin Moy

Elders
dir. Tony Briggs

For My Father’s Kingdom
dir. Ve’a Mafite’o

Garage Barbershop
dir. Charles Lomu

Herbs – Songs of Freedom
dir. Te Arepa Kahi

In My Blood It Runs
dir. Maya Newell

Leitis in Waiting
dir. Hiratinoamoa Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, and Joe Wilson

Liliu
dir. Jeremiah Tauamiti

Making Good Men
dir. Fiona Apanui-Kupenga

Merata
dir. Heperi Mita

Milky Pop Kid
dir. Johanna Garvin

Mother, Child
dir. Tin Pang

Our Voices
dir. Dima Zeidan, Fahmi Seid, and Marah Zeidan

Slam
dir. Partho Sen-Gupta

The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open
dir. Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Kathleen Hepburn

The Final Quarter
dir. Ian Darling

Yesterday
dir. Danny Boyle and Richard Curtis

2040
dir. Damon Gameau

Attendance ~4,500

Photo courtesy of the Te Whāinga Culture Lab
2019
Budget Snapshot

<table>
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Sponsors & Partners

The festival was carried out thanks to the combined efforts of the Mother Tongue Film Festival committee members, staff, interns, and volunteers. Financial support was provided by NMAI, NMNH, and CFCH. Additional support was provided by New York University DC/Stonewall 50, the Embassy of Australia to the United States, the Embassy of Canada to the United States, the Bhutan Foundation, MoMA’s Doc Fortnight, Eaton Workshop DC, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Embassy of Mexico to the United States, the Mexican Cultural Institute, Perdue University Fort Wayne, the Georgetown University Department of Anthropology, Dr. Laura Graham (University of Iowa), and the Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment.

This program has also received federal support from the Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center; the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center; as well as the NMNH Arctic Studies Center; the Smithsonian Year of Music; Freer Gallery of Art & Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; and Q?rius, The Coralyn W. Whitney Science Education Center.
2020
Year 5: Women in Filmmaking

- 28 languages
- 22 regions
- 21 films
The 2020 festival featured a diverse set of films from 22 regions of the world featuring 15 languages not previously screened. The festival also saw sustained growth as in previous years with an audience of 1,520 over four days of screenings, with added partnerships both within and beyond the Smithsonian. We were pleased to establish a new partnership with the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), expanding our One Smithsonian reach to a total of six units.

Established partnerships with the Canadian Embassy to the United States and the Anthropology Department at Georgetown University were essential to the success of the festival. The 2020 festival saw improvements in several areas. The opening night reception was organized for 200 guests, twice the size of the previous year. Thanks to increased staff support from CFCH, we developed an evaluation plan, recruiting over twenty volunteers to conduct a comprehensive survey at every screening. Based on 501 responses, we found that the core objectives of the festival were met: to raise awareness of Indigenous and minority language in film, to establish an audience for those films in the DC metro area, and to amplify accurate representations of diverse communities.

Women writers, directors, and protagonists have always played a key role in the festival; the principal focus of 2020 was to highlight the accomplishments of women in filmmaking and the role they play in amplifying marginalized and Indigenous voices. Five of the seven feature films were either directed or co-directed by women, and a total of twenty women directors were featured. Notably, the feature film Vai was screened on February 21, in celebration of International Mother Language Day, in the Baird Auditorium of NMNH to an audience of nearly 400. The film portrays the lives of eight women from seven Pacific Island nations, by nine women directors. The film presents an uplifting look at the range of issues impacting women across the Pacific, allowing us to expand our theme of women’s empowerment through traditional and contemporary messages, reaching an intergenerational audience.

As is now customary, the 2020 festival began on Thursday, February 20, with a reception in NMAI’s Potomac Atrium and a performance by Uptown Boyz. The Associate Director of Museum Scholarship, Exhibitions, and Public Engagement at NMAI, David Penny, offered welcome remarks, followed by a land acknowledgment and words from Joshua Bell and Amelia Córdova, closing with comments by Denis Chouinard, Public Affairs Counselor of the Embassy of Canada to the United States. The reception included a tasting of wine from Nk’Mip Cellars, the first Indigenous winery in North America, generously donated by the Canadian Embassy. Thanks to ongoing mentorship initiatives, we welcomed stellar interns from near (The College of William and Mary, George Washington University, and the University of Maryland) and far (Auckland University of Technology).

The evening program began with “Pire” (2016; María Manzanares), a music video in the Mapuzungun language combining traditional instruments with contemporary influences. The feature was Restless River (2019; Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeleine Ivalu), a narrative film about a young Inuk woman who draws courage and strength from her rugged land to become a woman as independent as the river that cuts across it. Both films linked experiences of women and water, a theme prominent throughout the festival. A discussion following the screening featured Cousineau in person and producer Lucy Tulugarjuk (Inuk) participating virtually from her home in Nunavut, moderated by Melissa Bisagni. The Uptown Boyz closed the evening by inviting the audience onstage to participate in a traditional song wishing all safe travels home.

Friday began at NMNH with the program Moving Forward, Looking Back in the Q?rius Theater. This program focused on the lives of two distinct women in male-directed films. The program opened with the premiere of Felicia: The Life of an Octopus Fisherman (2020; José Carlos Pons), a documentary about a Malagasy fisherwoman of Madagascar whose life is increasingly threatened by political marginalization and climate
change. It was followed by *Ndai, The Story of a !Kung Woman* (1980; John Marshall and Adrienne Miesmer), an intimate portrait that reflects the experience of Ju/'hoansi communities, which Marshall began documenting in 1950. This chronicle of the Ju/'hoansi is held in the Human Studies Film Archive and is recorded in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register. A discussion followed with director Pons, and archivists Karma Foley, Director of Library & Archives, Smithsonian Channel; and Pam Wintle, Senior Film Archivist, NMNH, who shared their intimate knowledge of Marshall’s films with the public.

The program Cinemática Indígena was produced in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, which supported the English subtitling of four short films from Latin America: *Kiñe Rupa: Treng Kai Kai* (2018; Andrea Salazar, Lucía Pérez, and Marilén Llancaqueo), *Kat at Kat’ex/Where Are They?* (2017; Eduardo Mutzumá Say with Colectivo Cine en la Calle), *Puhi toprao/To be happy* (2018; Carol Cazares), and *Tata Jenaru Uajpa/The Son of Tata Jenaro* (2019; Raúl Máximo Cortés). The screening was followed by the Cinemática Indígena Roundtable on Translation & Collaboration, moderated by Mary Linn, featuring directors Marilén Llancaqueo (Mapuche), Eduardo Mutzumá Say (Ixil), Raúl Máximo Cortés (Purépecha), and José Pons, and Charlotte Gleghorn, Latin American film scholar from the University of Edinburgh, with interpretation by Amalia Córdova.

The day culminated with the Women Directors Panel featuring one of the directors of *Vai*, Becs Arahanga (Kai Tahu/ Ngati Raukawa ōku Iwi, Kati Mako te Hapū), Marie-Hélène Cousineau, Sidse Tortholm Larsen (director, *Winter’s Yearning*), and Naomi Mizoguchi, (director, *Ainu: Indigenous Peoples of Japan*), moderated by Amalia Córdova.

The evening program at NMNH’s Baird Auditorium honored the United Nations International Mother Language Day. The theme of the program was Sea of Islands, featuring the film *Vai*. Created by nine Pacific women directors, this portmanteau feature film was shot in seven dif-
different Pacific countries: Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Kuki Airani (Cook Islands), Samoa, Niue, and Āotearoa (New Zealand). In each of these nations, vai means water. The film represents a journey of empowerment through culture over the lifetime of one woman called Vai, played by a different Indigenous actress in each country. Guests were welcomed by NMNH Director Kirk Johnson, followed by NMNH intern Anahera Hare of the University of Auckland who introduced the film, giving a stirring welcome and opening remarks in her language (Te Reo) and in English. The screening was followed by a Q&A with director Becs Arahanga (Kai Tahu/Ngati Raukawa ōku Iwi, Kati Mako te Hapū), moderated by Joshua Bell.

The third day of the festival took place at various venues throughout the city. The morning program held at NMNH’s Baird Auditorium featured a short titled Grá & Eagla (2019; Caitríona Ní Chadhain), which in Gaeilge (Irish) means “love and fear.” Sparking thoughtful discussion and laughter, director Aíne Gallagher explores why so many Irish people feel passionate about their language but lack the confidence to speak it. This was followed by the premiere of a feature documentary, Ainu: Indigenous Peoples of Japan (2019; Naomi Mizoguchi), which explores Ainu life in Hokkaido through the stories of four elders. Mizoguchi sheds light on Ainu traditions, both past and present, and the efforts to keep the culture and language alive in Japan. Amália Córdova and Recovering Voices I2F Fellow Sydney Hamamoto moderated a Q&A with Mizoguchi.

We then moved to the Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium at SAAM for the festival’s shorts program, Returning Home. The documentary The Gringo Mapuche: Carlos Catrileo (2012; Anthony Rauld), established the theme of return by following Chris Culbertson, also known as Carlos Catrileo, as he travels to southern Chile to find his family. Uu?uu tah (2019; Chad Charlie) tells a pre-contact story of a young chief led by his grandmother along the hard path of growth. Two Diné-directed films followed, Mud/ Hashtl’ishnii (2017; Shaandiin Tome), a dark, experimental film about struggles with addiction and family, and Hooghan (2019; Blackhorse Lowe) which documents a Diné family as they build a traditional dwelling. The program closed with the dramatic short Beles (2019; Sam Gebremiche), starring a group of children collecting fruit from the mountains, and the playful fiction Mino Bimaadiziwin (2017; Shane McSauby) in which a transgender Anishinaabe man meets a mysterious woman who only speaks to him in their language. The shorts program featured the Nuu-chah-nulth, Diné/Navajo, Trgrinya, and Anishinaabe languages.

Our evening program at SAAM presented the feature documentary Winter’s Yearning (2019; Sidse Torstholm Larsen and Strurla Pilskog), a portrait of the Greenlandic town of Maniitsoq, caught in a holding pattern after an industrial project fails to materialize. Sidse Larsen participated in a Q&A with the audience, moderated by Mary Linn, discussing issues of dependency, survival, and the renewal of hope.

For the first time, Mother Tongue presented a horror film, Jeff Barnaby’s Blood Quantum (2019), at NYU DC. To honor the film, the Quebec Government Office in Washington, DC, sponsored a pre-screening “Zombie Happy Hour” with Canadian beer and snacks for guests over twenty-one. NYU PhD student and filmmaker Angelo Baca (Diné/Hopi) offered opening remarks on the colonial history of zombies and how Indigenous perspectives are making their mark on the genre. The music video “Uts tajwich/Te gusta” (2019), featuring Yucatec Maya hip-hop artist Pat Boy, opened the screening. Musician Jesús Pat Chablé, aka Pat Boy, forms part of ADN Maya, a collective of artists from the Yucatec Peninsula who all sing in Maya, carrying a message of Indigenous pride.

The U.S. premiere of Blood Quantum screened to a sold-out crowd. The dead come back to life outside the isolated Mi’gmaq reserve of Red Crow, except for its Indigenous inhabitants, who are strangely immune to the zombie plague. It falls to the local tribal law enforcement to protect Red Crow. Following the screening, we
connected with Barnaby (Mi’gmaq) via video conference for a discussion with Baca before taking questions from the audience.

The festival closed with a screening of One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk (2020; Zacharias Kunuk) at Georgetown University ICC Auditorium, co-presented with the GU Anthropology Department. The film is set in the Canadian Arctic and takes place over a single day in 1961. In Kappuivik, north Baffin Island, Noah Piugattuk’s nomadic Inuit band lives and hunts by dog team as his ancestors did. When an agent of the Canadian government arrives, what appears as a chance encounter soon opens up the prospect of momentous change, revealing Inuit-settler relationships humorously and tragically lost in translation. Our screening was followed by a discussion with Colleen Strawhacker, the program director of the Arctic Sciences Section, Office of Polar Programs at the National Science Foundation, in conversation with Joshua Bell.

The festival continued online, streaming eleven shorts available to audiences internationally.

Vai, dir. Becs Arahanga, Amberley Jo Aumua, Matasila Freshwater, Dianna Fuemana, Miria George, ‘Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Marina Alofagia McCartney, and Nicole Whippy
Thursday, February 20

Opening Ceremony
6 pm—Potomac Atrium, NMAI

7 pm—Rasmuson Theater, NMAI
“Pire”
dir. María Manzanares

Restless River
7 pm—Potomac Atrium, NMAI

dir. Marie Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu

Friday, February 21

Moving Forward, Looking Back
11 am—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
Felicia: The Life of an Octopus Fisherwoman
dir. José Carlos Pons

N!ai, The Story of a !Kung Woman
dir. John Marshall and Adrienne Miesmer

Cinemática Indígena
1:30 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH
Kiñe Rupa: Treng Treng Kai Kai
dir. Andrea Salazar, Lucía Pérez, and Marién Llancaqueo

Puhi toprao/To Be Happy
dir. Carol Cazares

Kat At Kat’ex/Where Are They?
dir. Eduardo Mutzumá Say, and Colectivo Cine en la Calle

Tata Jenaru Uajpa/
The Son of Don Jenaru
dir. Raúl Máximo Cortés

Translation & Collaboration
2:30 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH

Filmmaker Roundtable

Friday, February 21 cont’d

Directors Panel
4 pm—Q?rius Theater, NMNH

Sea of Islands
7 pm—Baird Auditorium, NMNH

Vai
dir. Becs Arahanga, Amberley Jo Aumua, Matasila Freshwater, Dianna Fuemana, Miria George, ‘Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Marina Alofagia McCartney, and Nicole Whippy

Saturday, February 22

Resurgence
12 pm—Baird Auditorium, NMNH

Grá & Eagla
dir. Caírina Ni Chadhain

Ainu
dir. Naomi Mizoguchi

Returning Home
3 pm—Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium, SAAM

The Gringo Mapuche: Carlos Catrileo
dir. Anthony Rauld

Uu’puu’tah
dir. Chad Charlie

Mud/Hashtł’ishnii
dir. Shaandiin Tome

Hooghan
dir. Blackhorse Lowe

Beles
dir. Sam Gebremiche

Mino Bimaadiziwin
dir. Shane McSauby

Saturday, February 22 cont’d

Seizing the Future
3 pm—Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium, SAAM

Winter’s Yearning
dir. Sidse Torstholm Larsen and Strurla Pilsag

Beyond Dispossession
8 pm—Abramson Family Auditorium, NYU DC

“Te gusta (uts taj wich)“
dir. ADN Maya Films with Jaime Magaña

Blood Quantum
dir. Jeff Barnaby

Sunday, February 23

In Real Time
3 pm—ICC Auditorium, GU

One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk
dir. Zacharias Kunuk

2020
At a Glance

Attendance: ~1,520
2020
Budget Summary

Budget Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Fees</td>
<td>$3,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>$8,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>$32,844</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sponsors & Partners

Financial support was provided by NMAI, NMNH, and CFCH. This program received federal support from the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Q?rius, The Coralyn W. Whitney Science Education Center. Additional support was provided by the Embassy of Canada to the United States, the University of Edinburgh, New York University at Washington DC, the Québec Government Office in Washington DC, Eaton Workshop DC, the Georgetown University Department of Anthropology, the Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment, and Ferring Pharmaceuticals, as well as anonymous donors.
Looking Ahead

We wish to thank the Smithsonian units, staff, interns, volunteers, and advisors who have generously contributed to making the Mother Tongue Film Festival a successful annual event. We are proud of the efforts that we’ve made over the past five years to advance our mission and the goals of Recovering Voices, and to play an active role in the United Nations and UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages.

We are committed to continuing our work in raising awareness of language diversity through our growing network of filmmakers, scholars, and partners, and to expanding audiences for these extraordinary films.

The sixth Mother Tongue Film Festival will be presented as a virtual event in 2021.

Languages and cultures are essential to the flourishing and well-being of Indigenous peoples in the United States and around the world. Looking to the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), Mother Tongue will continue to amplify the work of storytellers who explore the power of language to connect the past, present, and future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region Represented</th>
<th>Regions &amp; Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Āotearoa (New Zealand)</td>
<td>20. Guam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Australia</td>
<td>22. Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Belgium</td>
<td>23. Iran</td>
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<td>5. Bhutan</td>
<td>24. Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Brazil</td>
<td>25. Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Canada</td>
<td>26. Kuki Airani (Cook Islands)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Chile</td>
<td>27. Madagascar</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Colombia</td>
<td>29. Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cook Islands</td>
<td>30. Morocco</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>31. Myanmar (Burma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Denmark</td>
<td>32. Netherlands</td>
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<td>15. Fiji</td>
<td>34. Niue</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Germany</td>
<td>36. Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ghana</td>
<td>37. Palestine</td>
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<td>19. Greenland</td>
<td>38. Panama</td>
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<td>39. Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>41. Republic of Namibia</td>
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<td>42. Rwanda</td>
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<td>43. Samoa</td>
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<td>44. Sámpi (Sweden/Norway)</td>
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<td>45. Solomon Islands</td>
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<td>46. Spain</td>
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<td>47. Switzerland</td>
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<td>48. Thailand</td>
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<td>49. Tibetan Plateau</td>
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<td>50. Tonga</td>
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<td>51. Uganda</td>
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<td>52. United Kingdom</td>
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<td>53. United States</td>
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<td>54. Venezuela</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55. Zambia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 1
### Regions & Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Áarjelsaemien gïele (South Sami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ahom</td>
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<td>3. Ainu</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. American Sign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Anishinabemowin</td>
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<td>6. Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Atikamekw</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ayoreo</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Bathari</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Bemba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bodewadiminwen (Potawatomi)</td>
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<td>12. Burmese</td>
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<td>13. Bwanaba</td>
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<td>14. Central Balsas Nahuatal</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Chamacco (Ishir Ibitoso)</td>
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<td>16. Chamorro</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Cherokee</td>
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<td>18. Chichitín</td>
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<td>19. Chinuk Wawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Chocotaw</td>
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<td>21. Cook Island Māori</td>
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<td>22. Cree</td>
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<td>23. Dalabon</td>
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<td>24. Danish</td>
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<td>25. Diné (Navajo)</td>
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<td>26. Dinju Zhuh K'yuu (Gwich’in)</td>
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<td>27. Duaxu</td>
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<td>28. Dutch</td>
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<td>29. Dzongkha</td>
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<td>30. Embera</td>
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<td>31. English</td>
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<td>32. Enxlet Norte</td>
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<td>33. Euskara (Basque)</td>
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<td>50. Kanien'kéha/Mowhawk</td>
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<td>59. Laklânõ Xokleng</td>
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<td>87. Ojibwe</td>
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<td>93. Pite Saami</td>
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<td>94. Purhépecha</td>
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<td>95. Qaqel</td>
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<td>96. Quechua</td>
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<tr>
<td>97. Roviana (Solomon Islands)</td>
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<td>98. Sadu</td>
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<td>101. Saqal</td>
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<td>102. Selk’nam (Ona)</td>
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<td>103. Selkup</td>
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<td>105. Soli</td>
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<td>112. Tomazight</td>
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<td>129. Warao</td>
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<td>130. Warlpiri</td>
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<td>131. Wawazhze (Osage)</td>
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<td>132. Wixárika (Huichol)</td>
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<td>133. Xung (Kurung)</td>
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<td>134. Yanetsa</td>
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<td>135. Yanomami</td>
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<td>136. Yaoos Quechua</td>
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<tr>
<td>137. Yoloxóchitl Mixtec</td>
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<td>138. Yucatec Mayan</td>
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<td>139. Yup'ik</td>
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<tr>
<td>140. Zapotec</td>
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<tr>
<td>141. Zoque–Ayapaneco (Tabasco)</td>
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<td>142. Zuni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>BloomBars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eaton House Cinema</td>
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<td>Embassy Theatre</td>
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<td>The Gateway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgetown University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (HMSG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landmark’s Atlantic Plumbing Cinema</td>
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<td>Mexican Cultural Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York University, Washington DC (NYU-DC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Staff

Curatorial & Organizing Team

Joshua A. Bell
Co-Director and Founding Committee Member, Mother Tongue, Curator of Globalization, NMNH

Amalia Córdova
Co-Director, Mother Tongue, Latinx Digital Curator, CFCH

Mary S. Linn
Founding Committee Member, Mother Tongue, Curator of Language and Cultural Vitality, CFCH

Melissa Bisagni
Founding Committee Member, Mother Tongue, Media Initiatives Manager, NMAI

Kālewa Correa
Curator of Hawai’i and the Pacific, APAC

Elisa Hough
Web Developer and Editor, CFCH

Laura Sharp
Founding Committee Member, Mother Tongue, Program Manager, Recovering Voices, NMNH

Judith Andrews
Founding Committee Member, Mother Tongue, Program Assistant, Recovering Voices, NMNH

2016

Mariano Bartolomeu
Filmmaker, Advisor

Torell Taylor
Program Assistant, Recovering Voices, NMNH

2017

Sarah Baburi
Program Assistant, Recovering Voices, NMNH

Haley Bryant
Festival Project Manager, Recovering Voices, NMNH

2018

Emily Cain
Festival Project Manager, Recovering Voices, NMNH

2019

Nafisa Isa
Curatorial Committee Member, Program Manager, APAC

2020

Ethan Karnes
Festival Project Manager, Recovering Voices, NMNH
Appendix 3

Staff

Fellows and Interns

2016

Timothy Thurston
Postdoctoral Fellow, CFCH

2017

Zene Finch
Mother Tongue Extern, CFCH

2018

Vanessa Quintero
Latino Center Intern, CFCH

Nat Grube
Mother Tongue Intern, NMNH

2019

Cristián Castro-Brizendine
Mother Tongue Extern, CFCH

Sarah Sues
Mother Tongue Intern, CFCH

Mariángel Villalobos
Mother Tongue Intern, CFCH

Jamey Bailey
Recovering Voices Intern, NMNH

2020

Sydney Hamamoto
Recovering Voices I2F Fellow (2019–2020), NMNH and CFCH

Cecelia Halle
Indigenous Media Hub Intern CFCH

Anahera Hare
Recovering Voices Intern, NMNH

Emily Johnson
Recovering Voices Intern, NMNH

Avery Rodriguez
Recovering Voices Intern, NMNH

Additionally, we are grateful to our volunteers who help each year with the festival.
Appendix 4
Partners

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**Smithsonian Institution**

National Museum of Natural History (2016-2020)
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (2016-2020)
National Museum of the American Indian (2016-2020)
Arctic Studies Center (2016, 2018-2019)
Asian Pacific American Center (2018-2019)
Freer Gallery of Art (2018-2019)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2017)
Smithsonian American Art Museum (2020)
Smithsonian Latino Center (2017-2019)
Smithsonian Year of Music (2019)

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**Embellished and NGOs**

Bhutan Foundation (2019)
DC Basque Club (2016)
Embassy of Canada to the United States (2019-2020)
Embassy of Mexico to the United States (2017-2019)
Embassy of New Zealand to the United States (2016-2018)
Mexican Cultural Institute (2017-2019)
Quebec Government Office in Washington DC (2020)

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**Universities**

Auckland Technical University (2017-2020)
Georgetown University (2019-2020)
New York University-Washington DC (2017-2020)
Purdue University Fort Wayne (2019)
University of Edinburgh (2020)

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**Organizations**

BloomBars (2016)
Eaton Workshop (2019-2020)
The Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan Endowment (2016-2020)
Ferring Pharmaceuticals (2020)
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2019)
Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (2017)
MoMA DOC FORTNIGHT (2019)
2016

“The Mother Tongue Film Festival, Playbackthetape’s latest event, and where to see the movies you missed in 2016,” Washington Post, February 16, 2017.

2017

“Osage directed film about the Osage language to be shown at NMAI Film Festival,” Osage News, January 6, 2017.

2018


“Smithsonian Presents Third Annual Mother Tongue Film Festival,” Web-Wire, February 20, 2018.

2019


“See Movies From Around The World At The Mother Tongue Film Festival,” DCist, February 20, 2019.


“Mother Tongue Film Festival,” The Georgetowner, February 20, 2019.

2020


“Mother Tongue Film Festival,” DowntownDC, February 20, 2020.


“Things to Do in DC This Weekend (February 20–23): Native Women Artists, Overwatch, and The Mother Tongue Film Festival,” Washingtonian, February 20, 2020.

The Next Guardian
dir. Dorottya Zurbó and Arun Bhattarai

This report was compiled by Ethan Karnes, designed by Cecelia Halle, and edited by Elisa Hough.