

PLACEMAKING X

BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 5-8 2023



DOUBLE FEATURE WITH PLACEMAKINGX CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE GLOBAL PLACEMAKING MOVEMENT LAUNCHED FROM DETROIT.

DETROIT

WELCOME

Welcome to the **2023 Better Cities Film Festival** - our tenth anniversary!

When I first proposed the idea of this festival ten years ago, some people were slightly skeptical of the concept. "Are there enough films about urban planning and design to merit a whole festival?" Despite our naysayers, we pursued our idea with grit and determination. Just like Detroit itself, we used the pushback as a source for motivation and innovation. We held fast to the vision for our fest, to engage a broader audience on issues confronting our cities and neighborhoods.

Not only were there enough films for a festival that first year, but there has been enough films for 10 festivals! Over the past decade, I have personally reviewed over 2,500 films on the topic of making better cities, towns and neighborhoods. In addition, the festival has traveled all over the world, hosting about 100 screenings in cities large and small, from Shenzhen to Abu Dhabi, and from Oxnard to Laredo.

This year's tenth anniversary celebration brings us back to Detroit, where we are partnering with premiere placemaking organizations, like *PlacemakingX* and *Downtown Detroit Partnership*. I am excited to see how these partnerships will continue to expand the mission of the film festival.

This year's festival boasts a line up of 43 films focusing on projects in over 20 different countries. The diversity of topics and variety of locations has always been a hallmark of the festival's screenings.

I'm proud that our short film categories can reflect the diversity and complexity of issues emerging in our cities.

The *Rock This House* screening focuses on the issues of urban housing. The variety of perspectives shines light on the multifaceted nature of the housing crisis. These films bring heart and hope and will inspire you with new compassion and conviction to address at least one part of this complex problem.

The *Blue Horizons* film block focuses on the niche of water and cities. Water is the source of life for every city, but many cities by their nature are also the greatest threat to the bodies of water that drive their ecology and their economy. *Blue Horizons* shares stories of people reconnecting with water and finding the balance between resource and revitalization.



In addition to the superb line-up of films, a highlight of this year's festival are the creative collaborations with local urbanists who are working to make better neighborhoods here in Detroit. With these partners we've co-created a series of *More Better* events: presentations, tours, workshops, and after parties. These events are great ways to connect in-person and develop relationships that will only strengthen the projects we create here or at home.

Thank you for joining us this year at the fest. I hope you leave inspired with a new idea, new strategy and new hope for making our cities, towns and neighborhoods better places to live, work and play.

-Joshua Paget | Festival Director

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

MiCNU

MICHIGAN CHAPTER
CONGRESS FOR THE
NEW URBANISM

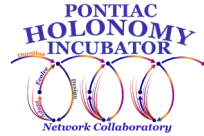


CNU

Congress for the
New Urbanism



PLACEMAKING 



**WOODWARD
ORIGINAL**
DETROIT



ENU
EMERGING NEW URBANISTS



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY OCTOBER 5	FRIDAY OCTOBER 6	SATURDAY OCTOBER 7	SUNDAY OCTOBER 8
	9:00-10:00am MORE BETTER Pastry Walk	9:00-10:00am MORE BETTER Riverfront Walk	
	10:00-11:30am MORE BETTER Civic Story Workshop w/ First+Main Films	10:00-11:00am MORE BETTER Downtown Detroit Walking Tour	
	12:00-1:00pm MORE BETTER Noodles & New Urbanism - Lunch	10:00am-12:30pm MORE BETTER Yes in God's Backyard	
	1:00-3:30pm MORE BETTER I-375 Design Workshop (part 1)	1:00-3:30pm MORE BETTER I-375 Design Workshop (part 2)	12:00-3:00pm MORE BETTER The Future of 3rd Places
			3:00-4:30pm MORE BETTER Filmmaker Happy Hour
5:00-6:30pm WORLD FESTIVAL PREMIERE <i>The Place Man</i> Opening Night Joint 10th Anniversary Celebration with PlacemakingX at CAMPUS MARTIUS	3:30-5:00pm SCREENING <i>Urban Innovation</i>		3:30-5:00pm MORE BETTER YIMBY Meet Up
	5:30-7:00pm SCREENING <i>Blue Horizons</i>	5:30-7:00pm SCREENING <i>Being Green</i>	5:30-7:00pm WORLD PREMIERE <i>Arbitrary Lines</i>
7:30-9:30pm FEATURE FILM <i>The Engine Inside</i> CAMPUS MARTIUS	8:00-9:30pm SCREENING <i>Directed by Detroit</i>	8:00-9:30pm SCREENING <i>I Saw the Design</i>	7:30-9:00PM SCREENING <i>Rock This House</i>
10:00pm MORE BETTER After Party with First+Main Films	10:00pm MORE BETTER After Party with ENU	10:00pm MORE BETTER After Party	10:00pm MORE BETTER After Party

MORE BETTER EVENTS

Co-created experiences and conversations to take the festival beyond the screen.
For more info about these events visit www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com/morebetter2023

THURSDAY

Opening Night After Party

Where: Checker Bar, 124 Cadillac Square

When: 10:00pm until late

Presented by: First+Main Films

Enjoy a post screening drink, conversation, at a local Detroit watering hole with fellow festival goers.

SATURDAY

Mama Ravin's Herbal Walk & Talk on the Detroit Riverfront

Where: Meet @ Cullen Plaza, 1340 Atwater St. Station, corner of Beaubien Blvd. & Monroe St.

When: 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Cost: \$31 (pay on the tour)

Presented by: Mama Raven and PHINCO

Downtown Walking Tour

Unofficial State of the City: Downtown Detroit Walking Tour with Mark Nickita

Where: Meet at Siren Hotel, 1509 Broadway

When: 10:00-11:00 AM

Presented by: CNU Michigan

Yes In God's Back Yard

Where: McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, Wayne State University, 495 Gilmour Mall

When: 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Presented by: CNU-Christian Caucus & UCC Church Building and Loan Fund

Workshop

Public Policy Innovation via I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project Workshop - Part 2

Where: Wayne State University, McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, 495 Gilmour Mall

When: 1:00-3:30PM

Presented by: PHINCO & CNU Michigan

Saturday Night After Party

Where: Bronx Bar, 4476 2nd Ave

When: 10:00pm until late

FRIDAY

Pastry Walk

Where: RSVP for location

When: 9:00 - 10:00 AM

Presented by: Josh Paget, the director of Better Cities Film Festival

Civic Story Film Workshop

Where: Wayne State University, McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, 495 Gilmour Mall

When: 10:00-11:30am

Presented by: First+Main Films

Noodles & New Urbanism

Where: RSVP for location

When: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Presented by: Josh Paget, the director of Better Cities Film Festival

Workshop

Public Policy Innovation via I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project Workshop - Part 1

with SPECIAL SCREENING: *The Road Ahead*

Where: Wayne State University, McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, 495 Gilmour Mall

When: 1:00 - 3:30PM

Presented by: PHINCO & CNU Michigan

Friday Night After Party

Where: Motor City Brewing Works, 470 W Cranfield St. #9

When: 10:00pm until late

Presented by: Emerging New Urbanists

SUNDAY

Workshop

The Future of 3rd Places

with SPECIAL SCREENING: *La Buena Cosecha (The Good Harvest)*

Where: The Congregation, 9321 Rosa Parks Blvd

When: 12:00 - 3:00 PM

Presented by: The Congregation & PHINCO

Filmmaker Happy Hour

Where: Jolly Pumpkin, 441 W Canfield St.

When: 3:00 - 4:30 PM

YIMBY Meet Up

Where: TBA - check website

When: 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Presented by: California YIMBY

THURSDAY

2023 OPENING NIGHT SPECIAL EVENT

THE PLACE MAN

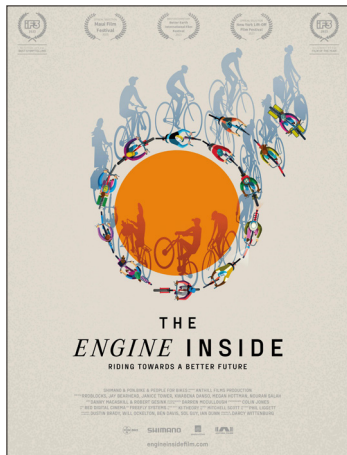
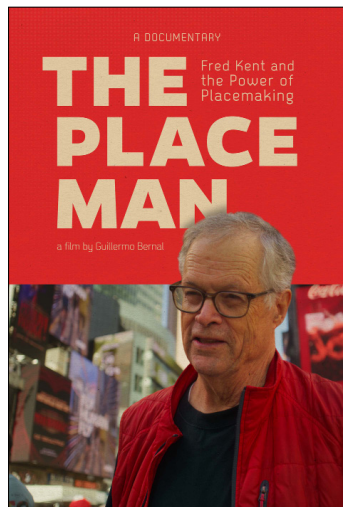
THURSDAY 5:00PM OCT 5 2023 | CAMPUS MARTIUS PARK, DOWNTOWN DETROIT

DIRECTED BY GUILLERMO BERNAL

It's a "double-feature" 10th anniversary! It's not only the 10th anniversary of *Better Cities Film Festival*, it's also the 10th anniversary of the global placemaking movement launched from Detroit. So we're celebrating with *PlacemakingX* – one of the organizations that was there at the start – and the *Detroit Downtown Partnership* at Campus Martius, the #1 public square in the US. This celebration is a free event, and includes the premiere of the film *The Place Man: Fred Kent and the Power of Placemaking*, "a documentary that explores the roots of the placemaking movement through the life of Fred Kent, who has devoted his life to creating public spaces for people."

The film's director, Guillermo Bernal, and other placemaking pioneers including Fred Kent, Ethan Kent, and Stephen Davis will host a discussion after the movie.

Presented by



THE ENGINE INSIDE

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

THURSDAY 7:30PM OCT 5 2023

CAMPUS MARTIUS PARK, DOWNTOWN DETROIT

The Engine Inside: Riding Towards a Better Future is an award-winning new feature-length documentary directed and narrated by "The Voice of Cycling" Phil Liggett.

For the past century, our society has grappled with the unintended consequences of a car-centric culture. Follow the lives of six individuals from diverse backgrounds who have devoted themselves to a simple, age-old machine - the bicycle. Through their struggles and challenges, witness how bicycles have the potential to transform lives and contribute to a better world.

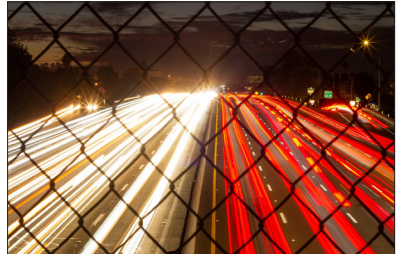
FRIDAY AFTERNOON

THE ROAD AHEAD

FRIDAY 1:00-3:30PM OCT 6 2023 | SHORT FILM BLOCK

McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, Wayne State University, 495 Gilmour Mall

Rolling, rolling, rolling! keep them cities rolling! How we get around the city shapes the city almost as much as the destinations we build. Find out how cities are reinventing themselves by rethinking transportation alternatives. These short films feature stories about the violent history of LA's freeways, the liberating power of cargo bikes, the beauty of subways, and the wisdom of 10-minute-walk cities. This block of short films will be screened during the first session of the I-375 Design Workshop.



FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

The Real Cost of Freeways in LA - Josh Vredevoogd

Driving Mr. Begley - Russell Bates

Love Letters for the Subway - Mary Hawkins

A New Path: The Journey Towards A Connected Sarnia -

Cong Nguyen, Joshua McDonald, Storm Astolfi

Presented by



URBAN INNOVATIONS

FRIDAY 3:30-5:30PM OCT 6 2023 | SHORT FILM BLOCK

McGregor Memorial Conference Center Room FGH, Wayne State University, 495 Gilmour Mall

Explore the dynamic landscape of Urban Innovation. These short films delve into the world of resilient cities, showcasing their ongoing journey of learning and adaptation. From cutting-edge material science to the power of big data, from grassroots community organizing to the transformative influence of digital platforms, these narratives vividly depict how cities are embracing innovative concepts to pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future.

Bare Metal - Brandon Gries

Gypsum Concrete - Simon Pénochet

Build Change - Gabriel Diamond

Jacks Solar Garden - Chad Weber

Wild Harmony - Whitney Beer-Kerr, Geoff Luck

Mosaics: Seeds of Change - Harry Pound

This Town Did The Impossible - Ruben Hanssen



FRIDAY EVENING

BLUE HORIZONS

FRIDAY 5:30-7:00PM OCT 6 2023 | SHORT FILM BLOCK

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, 450 Reuther Mall

Just as life itself emerged from the depths of water, our cities also owe their existence to it. Whether nestled along riverbanks, within deltas, nestled in harbors, or sprawling across oceanfronts, our cities have long depended on their intrinsic connection with water for their prosperity and growth. This series of short films embarks on an exploration of the rich narratives woven by rivers, harbors, and oceans, illuminating the profound impact they have on both people and the places they call home.

FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

Revitalizing Cities: Urban River's Rescue in Taichung - Jose Miguel Garcia Sanchez

Jubilee Pools - Jim Stephenson, Sofia Smith

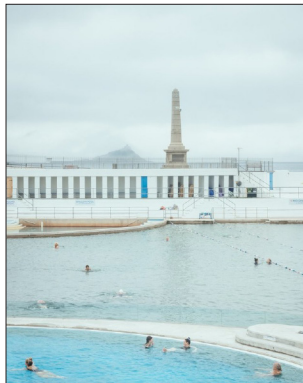
Save the Surf (We Are Shell Harbour) - Phillip Crawford

Community Revitalization: Great Lakes Areas of Concern - David Ruck

Our 100 Year Floods - Fernando Rocha

Rodney and the River - David Gantz

Presented by



DIRECTED BY DETROIT

FRIDAY 8:00-9:30PM OCT 6 2023 | SHORT FILM BLOCK

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, 450 Reuther Mall

Local stories for the whole world. These Detroit films encompass the transformative potential of innovative creative spaces, an exploration of the rise and fall of wildlife in reflection of our own journey, the impactful role of churches in shaping civic discourse with a moral compass, and a powerful reminder to unite against divisive forces rather than waging internal battles.

FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

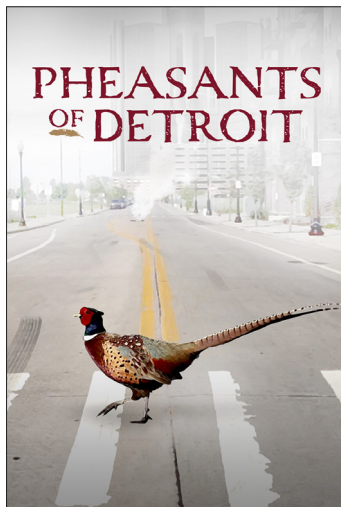
Brightmoor Maker Space - Michael Moegelin

Pheasants of Detroit - Diane Cheklich, Diane Weiss

Pollution Has No Boundaries - Rick Morrone

Not For Sale: A Witness Story - Brianne Turczynski

Detroit Will Breathe - Kate Levy



SATURDAY

BEING GREEN

SATURDAY 5:30-7:00PM OCT 7 2023 | SHORT FILMS

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, 450 Reuther Mall

PRESENTED BY THE PLACE INITIATIVE

It ain't easy being green, but there ain't no better way to be! See how living sustainably brings life to the fullest in this set of short films showcasing how different green heroes are saving their cities.

FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

Rooted in Justice - Whitney Beer-Kerr

I am Kanaka - Genevieve Sulway

Seagrass for Sea Change - Whitney Beer-Kerr

The Secret Garden - Kyle Decker

proTract Pittsburgh - Dean Bog



Presented by



I SAW THE DESIGN

SATURDAY 8:00-9:30PM OCT 7 2023 | SHORT FILMS

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, 450 Reuther Mall

Cities and city life are constantly evolving. See how good urban design and planning are helping cities and communities build on successes of the past so they can have thriving futures.

FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

The Making of Mahalia Jackson Court - Christopher Hoerdemann

Kelly Street Garden - Matthew Kohn

They Came From All Over - Rayka Zehtabchi

Thoughts on Reimagining Urban Sites: An Architect's Reflections - Daniel Lovering

At Britannia Courts - Thais Despont

Neighborhoods Now - Kate Levy

Building Opportunities | *Bridging Communities* - Jon Michael Shink, Michael Skinner

Look Up! - Brian Siskind



Presented by



SUNDAY

ARBITRARY LINES: THE FREE SPIRIT OF CAROLINE

WORLD PREMIERE

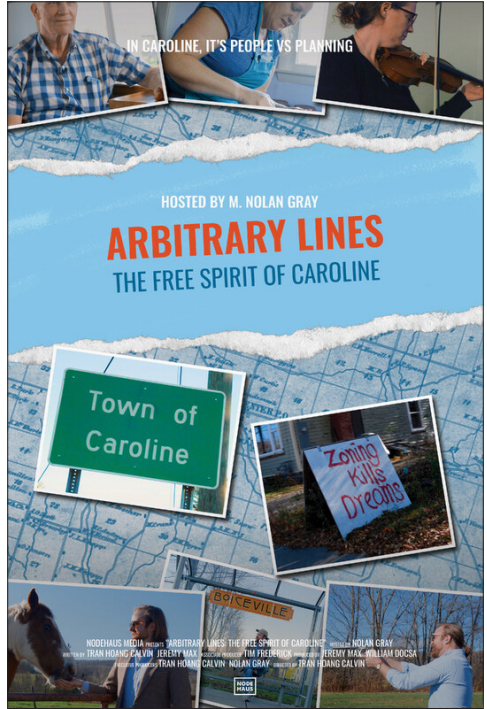
SUNDAY 5:30PM OCT 8 2023

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University,
450 Reuther Mall

Noted author and public speaker on issues of zoning and urban planning, M. Nolan Grey, meets his match in the small rural community of Caroline, NY. The anti-zoning battle in this small town becomes a case study for the author to apply his theory to the real life shops and farms and personalities of Caroline. This session will include the world premiere of "Arbitrary Lines" plus an extended conversation with the director, and the author and host of the movie.



Post-film Q&A with
director *Tran Hoang
Calvin* and author
/ host *Nolan Grey*



ROCK THIS HOUSE

SUNDAY 7:30PM OCT 8 2022 | SHORT FILMS

Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, 450
Reuther Mall

No matter what kind of house it is, it's a home to someone. As housing becomes the number one issue facing cities, these short films call us back to remember the powerful personal stories about people's homes.

FILMS IN THIS SCREENING

Tiny Victories 2.0 - A Tale of Empathy - Gustavo Bernal

Betances Residence - Bilyana Dimitrova

Overtown's Living Legacy - Gina Margillo

Guaranteed in Gary - Darryl Parham

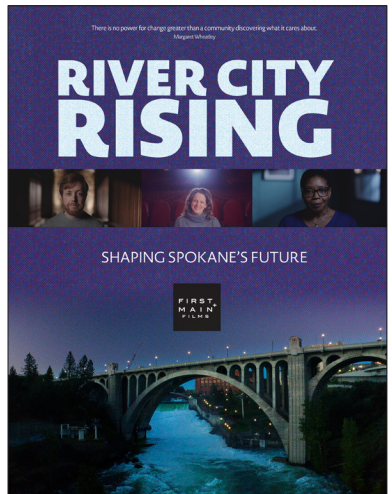
Georgswerder - Sarah Gorf-Roloff

River City Rising - John Paget

Cookie (from We are Shell Harbour) - Phillip Crawford

Ralph & Bug - Christine Thomas

Presented by



FILMS A-Z

FILM TITLE	DAY	TIME
A New Path: The Journey Towards A Connected Samia	Friday	1:00pm
Arbitrary Lines: The Free Spirit of Caroline	Sunday	5:30pm
Brightmoor Maker Space Film	Friday	8:00pm
Build Change	Friday	3:30pm
Building Opportunities Bridging Communities	Saturday	8:00pm
Community Revitalization: Great Lakes Areas of Concern	Friday	5:30pm
Cookie (from We Are Shellharbour)	Sunday	7:30pm
Detroit Will Breathe	Friday	8:00pm
Driving Mr. Begley	Friday	1:00pm
The Engine Inside	Thursday	7:30pm
Georgswerder - The Village in the Hamburg Metropolis	Sunday	7:30pm
La Buena Cosecha (The Good Harvest)	Friday	12:00pm
Guaranteed in Gary	Sunday	7:30pm
Gypsum Concrete	Friday	3:30pm
I am Kanaka	Saturday	5:30pm
It Takes A Village	Saturday	1:00pm
Jacks Solar Garden: An Agrivoltaics Model in the Shadow of the Rocky	Friday	3:30pm
Jubilee Pools	Friday	5:30pm
Kelly Street Garden	Saturday	8:00pm
Look Up!	Saturday	8:00pm
Love Letters for the Subway	Friday	1:00pm
The Making of Mahalia Jackson Court	Saturday	8:00pm
Mosaics: Seeds of Change	Friday	3:30pm
Neighborhoods Now	Saturday	8:00pm
Not For Sale: A Witness Story	Friday	8:00pm
Our 100 Year Floods	Friday	5:30pm
Overtown's Living Legacy	Sunday	7:30pm
Pheasants of Detroit	Friday	8:00pm
The Place Man	Thursday	5:00pm
Pollution Has No Boundaries	Friday	8:00pm
proTract Pittsburgh	Saturday	5:30pm
Ralph and Bug	Sunday	7:30pm
The Real Cost of Freeways in LA	Friday	1:00pm
Revitalizing Cities: Urban River's Rescue in Taichung	Friday	5:30pm
River City Rising	Sunday	7:30pm
Rodney and the River	Friday	5:30pm
Rooted in Justice	Saturday	5:30pm
Save the Surf (from We Are Shell Harbour)	Friday	5:30pm
Seagrass for Sea Change	Saturday	5:30pm
The Secret Garden	Saturday	5:30pm
They Came From All Over	Saturday	8:00pm
This Town Did The Impossible	Friday	3:30pm
Thoughts on Reimagining Urban Sites: An Architect's Reflections	Saturday	8:00pm
Tiny Victories 2.0 - A Tale of Empathy	Sunday	7:30pm
Wild Harmony	Friday	3:30pm



BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL

**STORIES TO SPARK THE IMAGINATION
OF YOUR COMMUNITY.**



SCREEN THE BEST OF THE FEST IN YOUR HOMETOWN.
BetterCitiesFilmFestival.com/screenings