

## Aesthetica Short Film Festival: Day One

ASFF has launched, promising to be its boldest edition yet

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# AESTHETICA SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

With over 300 films and 100 events across 15 of some of the most beautiful venues in York, Aesthetica Short Film Festival strikes again and never ceases to amaze us. ASFF developed from an arts and culture magazine of the same name, which is still in circulation both online and in print. Almost a decade ago, the directors of the publication were eager to showcase talented film work but found themselves constricted by the format of the magazine, where even though they could send out CDs together with the printed edition, it wasn't enough space to allow for all the amazing shorts that were being submitted. Aesthetica Short Film Festival then saw its inauguration in November of 2011, hosting masterclasses with some of the industry's leading professionals such as Mark Herman (Screenwriter, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*) and Ivana Mackinnon (Executive Producer, *Slumdog Millionaire*) despite it being the festival's first edition. On its 8th edition, the festival now promises to be bigger and better than ever.

This year, the festival has made the bold innovate decision of including several documentary and narrative drama features in its programme. These films cover a variety of diverse subjects, spanning from a 17-year-old Chinese boy who is terrified of ghosts but training to be a mortician (*Almost Heaven*) to a masterpiece of 21st century dance with no dialogue (*Gieselle*). Aesthetica has also expanded its horizons to include a Virtual Reality lab to highlight the ever changing nature of cinema.

Over the next 5 days, our team at Nouse will bring to you daily roundups featuring the best from each day of the festival, divided into their respective genre categories. Below are our first reviews to give you a teaser of what this year's festival has to offer.

Any film festival would be incomplete without the pleasures of watching several animated fantastical worlds in a timespan of only 45 minutes.

Animation 2: Importance of Memory deals with much more than that, it portrays the troubles of dementia, grief battles, and traumatic past experiences. Each with its own unique style of animation, these films encapsulate in beautifully choreographed visual sequences the troubles of our inner selves, ranging from fear to social anxiety. Sam Gainsborough's Facing It makes you feel a whole range of emotions: from utter delight in its opening scene to extreme compassion in its flashbacks. Apart from being visually interesting, it has an amazing sound design, both of which help the film to depict the struggles of a man with anxiety in a pub. Louise Bagnall's Late Afternoon is also worth a mention with its adorable characters, exquisite use of colour and borderline experimental and striking camera techniques that keep you captivated throughout the film. Matthew Lee's Cabin Pressure was the shortest and funniest of the short films in this selection, making the audience in the cinema collective laugh out loud at several instances. Besides having a wonderfully quirky storyline, it is incredibly successful in its character exposition, portraying the protagonist's genuine and identifiable personality.

'Comedy 6' had the theme of 'Artistic Streak' with films mostly based on artists, or men with overcoats, not all these films are easily classifiable. One that fit the theme perfectly was Wade Shotter's 'I Will Not Write Unless I am Swaddled in Furs' was an enjoyable little exploration into procrastination that as a student it's all too easy to sympathise with. However some films subverted the title, 'Goodbye, Brooklyn' directed by Daniel Jaffe is knowingly artistic bordering on pretentious as it's central character is that too - a dance teacher about to leave Brooklyn. But this artistic sheen is all a facade for the underlying struggle of moving to a big city and failing and then having to move back home. Finally, was 'The Overcoat' directed by Patrick Myles and starring the always fantastic Jason Watkins in this strange, surreal fable surrounding a new overcoat and the social status this gives him. It's based on the short story by Nikolai Gogol and indeed the setting and narrative does scream 'based on a Russian story' and therefore does not instantly lend itself to comedy. However the film does manage to find comedy in the absurd and the tragic. It's strange, funny and slightly sad, also stay for after the credits.

All the films reviewed above will be screened again throughout the festival, refer to [timetables](#).

For more information, visit the ASFF [website](#).



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