



News Release

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Community Invited to Experience the World Through Film

The 2025 Reel Time Film Series follows LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, Afghan filmmakers, tenants of the iconic White Building in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Brazilian inmates in prisons with no guards or guns. Happening at 7pm every Tuesday night in February at the Knickerbocker Theatre, the free series of award-winning films is a program of the International Relations Commission and Hope College.

UNGUARDED

Tuesday, February 4, 7pm
Knickerbocker Theatre

In 1972 Dr. Mario Ottoboni established a restorative justice-based system in Brazil which dramatically decreased recidivism rates. UNGUARDED explores the unique method behind this system, now present in 23 countries across four continents. Observing the daily lives of the

“recuperandos” (recovering inmates) who live and work there, we see firsthand why—as one inmate puts it—“no one escapes from love.”

Kary Bosma, Co-Director of the Hope-Western Prison Education Program will lead audience discussions following the screening.

UNSETTLED: Seeking Refuge in America

Tuesday, February 11, 7pm
Knickerbocker Theatre

UNSETTLED follows four LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers who have fled intense persecution from their home countries and are resettling in the U.S. They’ve landed in the purported “gay mecca” of San Francisco, yet even there, building a new life in an adopted nation is a precarious undertaking. As new leadership in America continues to restrict immigrants and drastically cut the flow of refugees and asylum seekers, UNSETTLED sheds light on a little-known group of people. What are the costs persecuted immigrants pay for seeking refuge? And how are everyday Americans stepping forward to help those most in need?

A virtual Q&A with director and producer **Tom Shepard** will follow the screening.

WHAT WE LEFT UNFINISHED

Tuesday, February 18, 7pm
Knickerbocker Theatre

During the Communist era in Afghanistan (1978-1991), films were weapons, filmmakers were targets, and the dreams of constantly shifting political regimes merged with the stories told

onscreen. **WHAT WE LEFT UNFINISHED** explores five unfinished feature films from this period and pays tribute to a tight-knit group of Afghan filmmakers who loved cinema enough to risk their lives for art. Merging newly rediscovered and restored footage from these lost films with present-day interviews, the filmmakers take us behind the scenes with stories and new footage shot in the same locations by some of the same people—action scenes shot with real bullets, ex-agents hired to play spies, Afghani military restaging a Communist coup d'état. What price did the Afghan filmmakers pay for the benefits they gained under Communism? Why did they persist despite the risks they faced? And do they still believe that film can save Afghanistan from the divisions tearing it apart today?

A virtual Q&A with the filmmaker **Mariam Ghani** will follow the screening.

LAST NIGHT I SAW YOU SMILING

Tuesday, February 25, 7pm
Knickerbocker Theatre

The iconic White Building in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, faces demolition. Once the pride of the New Khmer Architecture, the concrete building stood three or four stories tall and spanned six blocks, connected by open bridge structures. Tenants fled during the Cambodian genocide in the 1970s but returned after the defeat of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. The White Building became one of the city's most vibrant communities, housing more than 2,500 residents, including classical dancers, master musicians, skilled craftspeople, cultural workers, civil servants, and street vendors. Now the once radiant walls are grey and damaged, demolition

looms. In the building's final days, director Kavich Neang follows his own family and neighbors as they pack belongings, share memories and anxieties, and prepare to leave.

A virtual Q&A with the filmmaker **Kavich Neang** will follow the screening.

For more information about these films and previous selections of the Reel Time Film Series, visit reeltime.cityofholland.com.

(Descriptions pulled from film websites.)

About the International Relations Commission:

The goal of the International Relations Commission is to build and maintain meaningful relationships between the people of Holland and the wider world through cultural, educational, and professional contact. Programs include Great Decisions, American's largest discussion program on world affairs; Reel Time film series; collaboration with our sister city Santiago de Queretaro, Mexico; and the International Festival of Holland. For more information visit Internationalrelations.cityofholland.com.