



Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival Honors AAPI Experience

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Colorado's only all-Asian and Asian-American film festival returns March 9-12 to the Denver Sie Film Center and Denver Botanic Gardens.

The Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival features movies that reflect the 2023 theme "Celebrating Our Stories" and foster a connection between the different parts of the Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.

"Especially after the past few years, it's so important to find ways to engage and show support for your local humans here in Colorado to get a better understanding of different cultures and traditions," said Sara Moore, the Colorado Dragon Boat executive director. "I think people will be surprised to find out that you'll share a lot of stories with people from other cultures."

The annual film festival is one of Colorado Dragon Boat's three facets, along with the annual Dragon Boat Festival at Sloan's Lake and the Emerging Leader Program. In order to improve communication between AAPI communities and the general public, Colorado Dragon Boat launched operations in 2001 with a focus on cultural education, leadership development and athletic competition.



Community conversations are also part of the Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival, taking place March 9-12 at the Sie Film Center. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival

In 2006, the board of directors decided to start the film festival to support their mission, and they began a valuable partnership with Denver Film in 2020 that helped take the festival to the next level.

Though the pandemic forced the festival to go online in 2021, they were able to return in 2022 and are excited to once again host this year's event at the Denver Sie Film Center.

“You just can’t beat being in person,” Moore said. “At any event, but especially our film festival, AAPI communities enjoy getting together over a film and food. Attendees can expect corresponding culinary experiences along with each film we are showing.”

This year’s festival features films from across Asia, a local short-film showcase, a closing ceremony at the Botanic Gardens, two community conversations, an Asian marketplace and more. The festival schedule is curated by Moore in collaboration with Matthew Campbell, the artistic director of Denver Film, and other Denver Film staff members.

“We’re looking for stories that resonate with our theme and try to get a good sampling from all over Asia,” Moore said. “Unless they’re from the U.S., the films are played in their specific language and subtitled. I love that we do this because it allows audiences to be fully immersed in the films the way the artists intended them to be experienced.”

Along with celebrating art, Moore said she has felt the rise in anti-Asian sentiment over the past few years, which makes the festival even more crucial now.

“It was tragic to hear about the recent mass shooting in Monterey Park (California) at a Lunar New Year celebration,” Moore said. “It’s been a challenge for not just the festival but the entire community. We are resilient; however, it still feels like we are constantly being poked and tested. I think the festival’s theme this year, ‘Celebrating Our Stories,’ is what we need right now. Everybody has a story that somebody can relate to, and it’s important to showcase them to bring us together.”

For more information on the festival’s schedule and to acquire tickets, check out cdbf.org.

“I think everyone should come because it’s not only an amazing time but a great way to support your local community,” Moore said. “You’ll cry and laugh and experience a whole range of emotions during all of our films. Overall, it’s just a wonderful way to come share a story with Colorado’s AAPI community.”

Learn more about the Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival at coloradodragonboatfilmfestival.eventive.org