

Creative Guts Short Film Festival 2025 Final Report

By Red River Theatres and Creative Guts

OVERVIEW

Red River Theatres and Creative Guts teamed up to present the Creative Guts Short Film Festival on Friday, August 22nd. Because of the generous grant from the City of Concord, tickets were free to this event. We're pleased to share all tickets were reserved for the festival, making this a sold-out event. Attendees were primarily from Concord or other towns in New Hampshire, though we did have some folks from neighboring states attend, and even one filmmaker who traveled here from Texas for the festival. Many of the attendees shared they had dined in Concord prior to the event.

18 films from 16 filmmakers were exhibited at the festival, and many of the filmmakers were in attendance. For some, this was a milestone in their creative journey as their first time exhibiting their work at a festival. Three of the films shown were international films, from Ireland, India, and Australia. There was a wide array of subjects, styles, and stories, as well as student films, solo filmmakers, collaborative efforts with bigger crews, and more seasoned storytellers. From animation to live action and fiction to documentary, there was no shortage of creativity among the works shown at the festival. All films were shown with open captions.

This event included networking before the films, during intermission, and many folks chatted after the films concluded. It was impactful to hear attendees discussing the works they saw and supporting the work of indie filmmakers. Six awards were presented to select filmmakers at the end of the night, which recognized outstanding films.

This year, we purchased a step repeat to ensure photographable moments that would enhance the experience for all and elevate the atmosphere of a film festival. We had a volunteer photographing attendees and filmmakers and made the photos available to all after the event. Many shared these photos on social media, tagging Red River Theatres and Creative Guts, which not only helps spread the word of the festival itself, but also of these organizations.



FEEDBACK

At the end of the festival, the atmosphere was joyful, filled with excitement and lots of conversations. Upon exiting, many shared their appreciation for the event. A few days after, a survey was sent out to attendees and filmmakers, and unfortunately only a small percentage of the crowd completed our survey. From those who did comment, the overall feedback was positive. One person commented that they did not enjoy the darker films that were included, which we believe is a personal preference. A few others suggested adding the genre of the films to the brochure, which we will implement in future festivals. Some selected feedback:

"The films; the selection this year was fantastic. There were some that really stuck with me and I went home and told others about. Showing the name of the film before it played was helpful in the case of some not having a title card and having subtitles for every film was very helpful as well and appreciated." - Attendee

"I was pleasantly surprised about some of them. For example, I thought I would be bored with the film about the role of teachers: It was very interesting and professionally executed. I was also impressed with the variety of topics, media, length, ages of the directors and writers. For years I worked for nonprofits, and I realize that fundraising is a constant struggle. The quality of this event, and the fact that my husband and I often come to Red River Theater for the films and the excellent venue, prompted me to become a member - finally!" - Attendee

"A fun experience, some insightful, funny and well done films I would have otherwise never seen! I enjoyed being exposed to indie film makers to see unique and creative films." - Attendee

"This was a fantastic festival. The pre-event vibe was great, everyone was friendly and networking. The festival ran smoothly and the audience really enjoyed the programming. This was obvious to their interactions with each film while applied and the applause afterward. Definitely recommended!" - Filmmaker

"How well organized the festival was, and the films themselves. Also meeting and talking with members of the audience." - Filmmaker

"The lineup of films and the screening space as well as having the intermission. Also having it on a Friday night was great because I had friends and family that could attend." - Filmmaker

"Even though I didn't end up making it do to work obligations (so sad, I loved going to last year's event!) it still helped me feel more connected to a community of creators and encouraged me as a creator. It reminded me of the value of making and sharing work beyond just what I am doing in my professional career, and it got me to go back into old projects and revisit and critique them through a new lens. I also got to add captions to them, and in doing that, learned a useful skill and learned a lot about accessibility, which is so important!" - Filmmaker

