

Film Feature: Preview for 27th Chicago Underground Film Festival, Running Nov. 9-22, 2020

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 9, 2020 - 10:51am

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CHICAGO – The one great off-the-beaten-track cinema festival remains the Chicago Underground Film Festival (CUFF). Like all festivals around 2020, CUFF 27 will be virtual and online from November 9th-22nd, 2020, with special Drive-In events.



Virtual/Online Programming



'Ghost of the Golden Groves' at CUFF 27

Photo credit: CUFF.org

For two nights, CUFF 27 goes to the Drive-In, the popular destination in Chicago in 2020, the ChiTown Movies Drive-In (location details below). On Thursday, November 12th, the documentary “Flannery” – about literary giant Flannery O’Connor – will begin at 6pm, followed by Chicago Shorts Program 1. On Friday, November 13th, Chicago Shorts Program 2 begins at 6pm, followed by the documentary “Sleaze Lake: Vanlife at its Lowest & Best.” For complete details and tickets, [click here](#) [23].

★ Live Stream Q&As



The 27th Chicago Underground Film Festival
Photo credit: CUFF.org

CUFF 27 will feature complete “live stream” coverage of their films with perspectives and filmmaker Q&As taking place after the premiere of the films at CUFF (and will be available later as part of the virtual screener package). For a complete schedule of live stream events, [click here](#) [22].

GO TO Page Two for an interview with Taila Howe, the 27th CUFF Festival Producer ... including details on the CUFF 27 afterparty!

HollywoodChicago.com: What were the challenges of producing this different type of film festival and what did you learn from how others have done it this year?

Taila Howe: The biggest challenge for me was the fact that there was no roadmap for how to do what we did. This is the first film festival for the team I've built that has had the opportunity of producing, and man, we literally have been making it up as we go along. But in that sense, the community of film festival producers and movers/shakers from all around the world has grown exponentially because we all were in the same boat ... WTF do we do and how do we safely bring people together to consume the awesome films?

We needed to figure this out real quick in order to ‘survive,’ AKA continue to exist in 2020 and beyond. I mean, since our festival has an ethos that is rooted in the DIY mentality, and experimenting with new approaches to established practices, we knocked those balls out of the park this year. The 27th Chicago Underground Film Festival looks nothing like any of the preceding 26 years, and I'd say I learned how from Bryan Wendorf [CUFF programmer & Artistic Director] – love you, dude – to see the resources we have around us and leverage them to find the silver linings in circumstances that seemed less-than-maneuverable.

HollywoodChicago.com: What are you doing differently than anyone else that you think will distinguish this year's fest?

Howe: We're throwing a music festival inside Minecraft as our ‘official’ CUFF 27 afterparty. I've brought on a handful of game developers from my home countries [England and France] to re-create a futuristic Chicago inside the game where plants and trees have taken over the city and people don't have to be afraid or skeptical of one another. It's all about love, meeting different weirdos from all around the world, and listening to dope music. COVID doesn't exist inside Minecraft. The societal boxes of who we are meant to be or what divides us in real life does not exist within Minecraft. What does exist in our developed Minecraft world is a recreation of some of our beloved independent music venues ... that we would have partnered with to throw after parties at this year if COVID didn't happen.

BUT, because of COVID and not being able to be at those venues in person, we've built Thalia Hall – where Billy Lemos will ‘perform’ in avatar form . That will be followed by Haiku Hands, who will be taking the The Garfield Park Conservatory stage that we've built. And then CHAI who will close out the festival at the virtual Empty Bottle.

HollywoodChicago.com: How do the afterparty attendees participate?



Taila Howe of CUFF 27
Photo credit: CUFF.org

Howe: You can pull up with your friends as Minecraft avatars and all go to a music festival together in the game, or if you don't have Minecraft, you should ask your little brother/sister/cousin/random kid from down the block if you can use theirs and tune in with them. Worst comes to worst and you can't get a Minecraft account, you can watch the show on Twitch via Elastic Art's Twitch stream. The show is on Tuesday, November 17th at 7:30pm and it's in partnership with Red Bull. It's also free. And it's also super sick.

HollywoodChicago.com: For a pandemic and election-weary film fan, how can the Chicago Underground Film Festival lift their spirits and bring some respite to their souls?

Howe: We're not adding more noise to the current climate of 'all things 2020.' CUFF 27 – because we're so beautifully weird with the films we've programmed – we're actually refreshing the 2020 scene. People have been stuck in front of their screens tuning into the same old shit for the last like, 9 months. In my opinion, the stuff we're going to show acts like a breath of fresh air. I promise you, you've never seen anything like the stuff you'll see at CUFF.

We're taste breakers, and we're the melon palate cleansers in a course that has left a nine-month plate of sour. I think what has helped me most during these times is staying creative. And what inspires creativity is looking at what other cool experimenters are doing, and seeing how you can pull bits and pieces of what you like from their shit and do your own remix on it. CUFF 27 isn't another thing you need to watch. CUFF 27 is an opportunity to refuel the depleted creativity tanks and hit the ground running with some fresh inspiration on how to make the world a dope-per place.

The 27th Chicago Underground Film Festival is virtual/online from November 9th through the 22nd, 2020. For Drive-In events, the ChiTown Movies Drive-In is located at 2343 South Throop Street, Chicago. For more information on CUFF 27, [click here](#) [24].



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