

## WOFF and Virgin Atlantic

The Women Over 50 Film Festival and Virgin Atlantic are working together in 2024 to offer a specially curated series of short films on the airline's inflight entertainment system. The films have been specifically chosen to be soothing and engaging for passengers living with dementia.

The short films will be available inflight from 1 June until 31 December 2024.

## Images

For images to accompany the press release, [click here](#)

These images feature:

Thomasina Gibson, Board Member of Women Over 50 Film Festival

[Nuala O'Sullivan](#), Founder of Women Over 50 Film Festival

Natalie Burwell, Board Member of Women Over 50 Film Festival

Sharon Noyau, Manager - Inflight Entertainment Content, Virgin Atlantic

For images of all filmmakers, [click here](#)

## Filmmaker Biographies & Quotes

[Click here for images of all filmmakers](#)

### ***Adeyemi Michael director of Entitled***

Adeyemi Michael is a multi-award-winning filmmaker.

An NFTS Directing graduate, he was a Broadcast (2014) Hotshot with his breakout film Sodiq, winning Grierson (2013) & Al Jazerra (2014) awards, premiering at Sheffield DocFest.

His Fantasy film 'Entitled' played BFI London, LSFF and won Best Short at the Screen Nation Awards & Best Debut Director at Edinburgh TV Fest(2019). A Hot Doc's Blue Ice Fellow/Durban Film Mart alumni he directed BBC1's 'Murder On the Streets' (2018).

Adeyemi collaborated with Netflix(2020), curating a living collection 'Black British Stories'. His Sci-Fi 'The Future Isn't What It Used To Be'(2021) Film4 was nominated at TIFF, BlackStar, Chicago IFF. Other shorts include 'Dark Matter', and 'Photographer in Focus: Aida Muluneh'(Nowness).

In 2023, he directed BBC/Netflix 'Champion' and Amazon's 'Anansi Boys'. He recently directed the drama for Disney, Hulu & Nat Geo on a 4-part series 'Erased: WW2's Heroes of Color' whilst in development on two feature films 'Ibeji'(BBCFilms) a supernatural fantasy and 'Emi'(Film4) a supernatural Sci-Fi. [adeyemimichael.com](http://adeyemimichael.com)

“It’s an absolute pleasure to have my film *Entitled* in this program, and it’s such a joy to know that film will be made available to even more people on Virgin’s planes. It’s really a highlight of the film’s journey and opens a new door for a film I’m extremely proud of.” Adeyemi Michael

### ***Gloria Civantos director of Eulogy for the Dandelion***

Gloria Civantos was trained originally as an architect and practised for many years. After having children, her love for drawing became a tool to entertain them as well as record family stories. As a self-taught animator, Gloria often used family legends and myths as the storyline. She is the daughter of Cuban Immigrants and is married to a Ukrainian/ Russian mathematician. Her tri-lingual family consider drawing as another language with universal powers. She enjoys speaking to others through drawing and has been honored in many animation competitions for her unique work.

“When my father passed away, after having lived for 15 years with Alzheimer's, we wanted his wake and funeral to be a meaningful event for his 8 great-grandchildren, 20 grandchildren and 6 children. This made me wonder how other creatures would recall and honour those who have passed on before them. I wanted to create an animation that would help the great-grandchildren understand the meaning of a Eulogy to honour the life of another. Having read that scientists believe butterflies can remember their life as caterpillars, I created an animation of a Dandelion that cares for a caterpillar in many small ways. When the Dandelion dies, the butterfly recalls the generous life of this simple weed and honours it with a dancing swarm of butterflies.” Gloria Civantos

### ***Eve McConnachie director of Haud Close Tae Me***

After studying Animation at university in Dundee, Eve McConnachie joined Scottish Ballet as in-house filmmaker in 2009. Since then she has created many award-winning short dance films which have been screened at festivals around the world. [scottishballet.co.uk](http://scottishballet.co.uk)  
[evemcconnachie.co.uk](http://evemcconnachie.co.uk)

“Haud Close Tae Me examines the connection between our younger and older selves, what we keep and what we lose – themes which touch us all at some point in our lives. Of all of my films, it is especially meaningful to me, and I am excited for it to reach a new audience as part of this programme.” Eve McConnachie

### ***Veena Rao director of The Honeys and Bears***

Veena Rao is an award-winning filmmaker whose work has screened at festivals worldwide, been featured in The New York Times Op-Docs, The Atlantic, and Vimeo Staff Picks, and supported by Independent Television Service (ITVS), The NYC Women’s Fund for Media, Music and Theatre, and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). [veenarao.com](http://veenarao.com)

“I’m thrilled that *The Honeys and Bears* will be included in this program. I hope viewers will connect with the joy and freedom these fabulous ladies feel in the water.” Veena Rao

### **Marlene Millar director of *Lay Me Low***

The migration dance film project is the creative collaboration between two pioneers breaking conventions within their respective artistic practices: screendance film director Marlene Millar and percussive dance choreographer Sandy Silva. Performance-based narratives as lyrical poems — follow a cast of ten dancer-singers as they travel where song, rhythm and movement envelop us through communal voyage and the powerful storyline anchored in *m i g r a t i o n* — movement through journeying. [migrationdance.com](http://migrationdance.com)

“*Lay Me Low* is a meaningful film that we continue to share with a wide-ranging audience. The production was our first film project together and really bonded us as collaborators. Both of us had experience as caregivers to our mothers living with dementia, and *Lay Me Low* is particularly poignant as the performance was created during a period of grieving after Sandy's mother passed away and filmed during my caregiving time with my own mother. The performers dancing and singing together creates a communal space for one to feel care and support.”  
Marlene Millar

### **Sophie Bancroft director of *Old Mother Blackbird***

Sophie Bancroft is a singer and songwriter with a unique blend of jazz and folk influences. She has released nine CDs to date, including *Songs* which was listed as one of The Herald's top 50 Scottish albums of 2015. *Monday Nights*, the most recent release from her duo Bancroft & Lyne was listed in Jazzviews top jazz albums of 2020. Her music has been used on HBO's award-winning TV series *Six Feet Under* and recorded by top jazz vocalists, including Liane Carroll with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. More recently she has expanded her creative practice to include creative writing, photography and film-making. In 2019 she was awarded a Masters with distinction in Creative Writing. Her first short film release (*S*)*kin* was screened at the Women Over 50 Film Festival (WOWFF) in 2021 and Italian film festival Cinema D'Ida in 2022. She then received a bursary from Luminate Scotland to support furthering her filmmaking skills. She released the short film *Old Mother Blackbird* in 2022, which was again screened at WOWFF and is now being shown as part of a dementia-responsive programme of short films on Virgin Atlantic flights. Sophie is music director, songwriter and composer for *Dementia: The Musical* written by Ron Coleman which will tour major theatres around Scotland in autumn. She also co-leads The Pathhead Choir, is a founder member of the award-winning Pathhead Music Collective, and of Jazz Forward, a new collective music agency showcasing some of the original jazz being written in Scotland. [sophiebancroft.co.uk](http://sophiebancroft.co.uk)

“I am thrilled that my short film *Old Mother Blackbird* is part of this dementia-responsive programme. Inspired by an extraordinarily brave and loyal mother blackbird that set up nest in my garden in a wee village south of Edinburgh, Scotland, it is wonderful to see her universal story of maternal love and family taking flight across the world. Creating work that resonates is hugely important to me. The same sensibility shapes the music and words I write for projects such as with the arts organisation Deepness Dementia Media and creative ageing projects with my choir. This artistic pathway also helps me as I walk alongside those dear to me who are travelling on dementia journeys.” Sophie Bancroft

### ***Maike Mahira Koller director of Swim***

Maike Koller is a digital artist in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Besides creating animation short films, she enjoys illustrating and developing new characters. [maiekoller.de](http://maiekoller.de)

"With my film *Swim*, I want to show that you are never too old to learn something new. I was inspired by my own grandparents, who both learned how to swim at a very old age. My grandfather later had dementia, so I feel especially connected to this wonderful project and extremely honoured to be part of it." Maike Mahira Koller

### ***Kati Kallio director of Walks With Me***

Kati Kallio (she/her) is an award-winning dance filmmaker from Finland. Kallio lives in Helsinki and works internationally as an artist, curator and teaches dance filmmaking. Her films have been screened internationally in film, dance and dance film festivals and broadcasted on television. By May 2024, her film *Walks with Me* had received 18 awards. [katicallio.com](http://katicallio.com)

"I am excited that our film *Walks with Me* is part of the film program of WOFFF and Virgin Atlantic. The film was initiated by reminiscing moments on the couch of 94-year-old Mrs. Kyllikki Piira. From the idea of dance artist Elli Isokoski and Mrs. Piira, we grew up a script about the importance of shared memories and friendship in old age." Kati Kallio

## **Film Synopses**

### ***Entitled, Adeyemi Michael***

Filmmaker Adeyemi Michael pays homage to his mother, Abosede Ajao, who travelled from Nigeria to England more than 30 years ago.

In this fantasy documentary he re-imagines her first immigrant experience. Wearing traditional Yoruba ceremonial attire, she rides majestically on horseback through the streets of Peckham in South London. *Entitled* is vibrant, joyful and colourful. People living with dementia may find this beautifully-crafted, slow-motion film calming to watch and listen to.

### ***Eulogy for the Dandelion, Gloria Civantos***

A dandelion struggles to grow from a seed but doesn't hesitate to shelter and feed a caterpillar. The new butterfly doesn't forget this love and offers an act of support in return. The cycle of life is marked by small gestures until the circle is complete. This animation is filled with muted natural colours and a soothing soundtrack. If you live with dementia, you may find the sights and sounds of this gentle film comforting and soothing.

### ***Haud Close Tae Me, Eve McConnachie***

Two dancers unite across the generations. A connection is shared between younger and older selves in this dance film from Scottish Ballet. The dance is inspired by a specially-commissioned

poem by one of Scotland's Makars (National Poets), Jackie Kay, and the poem is recited by Jackie in Scots-English. The dreamy atmosphere surrounding the dancers and the tender music of the score create a film that people living with dementia may find relaxing and restful.

### ***The Honeys and Bears, Veena Rao***

The Honeys and Bears is a synchronised swimming team for people 55 and older. In this feel-good documentary, we witness the freedom that comes from being in the water. These performers can do all kinds of things that they can't do on land. As one member puts it, swimming with the team keeps her "92 years young." The women move in formation to "The Nutcracker Suite" by Tchaikovsky. If you're living with dementia, you may recognise and enjoy this music.

### ***Lay Me Low, Marlene Millar***

Lay Me Low brings people together in music and movement. Individual voices are woven together to make one song; steps are taken in rhythm to make one dance. This beautiful traditional Shaker lament is performed by dancers and singers. Each person expresses something different and together they create a sense of unity and belonging. If you're living with dementia, the gentle, rhythmic music and sounds of Lay Me Low may appeal to you.

### ***Old Mother Blackbird, Sophie Bancroft***

A blackbird and her family came to live in the garden of jazz singer and filmmaker Sophie Bancroft. The mother blackbird worked tirelessly to feed and protect her babies until they were ready to fly away. This love inspired Sophie to create Old Mother Blackbird, a film about a woman who watches over the comings and goings of a blackbird through the seasons. People living with dementia may be soothed by the gentle jazz vocals in this playful stop-motion animation.

### ***Swim, Maike Mahira Koller***

In this charming animation, an older woman longs to learn how to swim but when she dips her toe in the water, she awakens creatures deep in the ocean. Is she brave enough to take the plunge, or will she retreat to the safety of dry land? An enchanting film with no words is accompanied by "Music with No Words" by Mendelssohn. This jaunty classical soundtrack may be familiar to people living with dementia and might get some feet tapping.

### ***Walks With Me, Kati Kallio***

80-year-old Sanna lives alone with her memories and houseplants. One day she looks out her window and sees something that reminds her of her friends. Reality and memories become intertwined as a playground game of "Statues" - or "Grandma's Footsteps" - leads Sanna on a journey from childhood to old age. People living with dementia may enjoy the "Statues" game in this film and it may spark childhood memories for some viewers.

## **Nuala O’Sullivan, founder of WOFFF**

Nuala O’Sullivan is the founder of Women Over 50 Film Festival – a celebration of older women in front of and behind the camera.

At the BBC World Service she created, wrote and produced the interactive, online soap opera, The Flatmates, for English language learners.

Nuala is the author of Teaching English in South-East Asia and English Grammar Workbook for Dummies. She has written plays for theatre and has been a series writer for the BBC Radio 4 drama Brief Lives. She was a contributing author to Falling off a Cliff? Women, Ageing and the Screen Industries.

In 2014, she wrote and produced a short film, Microscope, and it was her experience of submitting this short to film festivals and attending festivals that brought home to her how underrepresented older women were on both sides of the camera. She set up Women Over 50 Film Festival as a positive and practical response to this lack of visibility so that older women in film would have a platform dedicated to them and their work.

Outside the festival, Nuala works in care homes and community venues to bring cinema to older people around the UK through WOFFF’s Moving Pictures initiative. Watching short films in small groups and participating in creative activities and conversations helps older people to feel more connected and less isolated.

Nuala is experienced and knowledgeable in working with people living with dementia, creating programmes of short films and activities to bring them moments of calm and joy.

## **Contact**

For more information about the partnership between WOFFF and Virgin Atlantic, to speak to key personnel or the filmmakers get in touch with us at:

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