

NEWS RELEASE
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Oakland International Film Festival Salutes Hispanic Heritage Month as "Soul Searchin'" Returns for Day 8

Second OIFF24 Screening Celebrates the Chicano Love Affair with R&B and Soul Music; Day 8 Continues the Festival's Global Journey Through Stories of Family, Migration, Music, Memory and Cultural Identity

OAKLAND, CA — As Hispanic Heritage Month gets underway, the **24th Oakland International Film Festival (OIFF24)** continues its 11-day celebration of independent filmmaking Wednesday, September 16, with a timely salute to the cultural connections between Black and Chicano communities through the return screening of **"Soul Searchin'," by filmmakers Jesus Cruz and Alex Vigano.**

The 68-minute documentary screens tonight at **8:00 p.m. at the Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Concert Hall at Northeastern University Oakland**, 5000 MacArthur Blvd. It is the film's **second screening at OIFF24**, following a special Sunday, September 13 presentation at **Geoffrey's Inner Circle**, the legendary downtown Oakland Black cultural venue.

"Soul Searchin'" explores the passionate world of rare soul record collectors and the people who have dedicated themselves to finding, preserving and sharing music that might otherwise have disappeared. At the heart of the documentary is the enduring connection between **Black-created R&B and soul music and generations of Chicano listeners and collectors** who embraced the music, preserved rare recordings and helped carry that musical legacy forward. The film follows collectors rescuing overlooked recordings by Black and Chicano soul artists and turning forgotten songs into living history. Trailer Link: https://youtu.be/o0mqYZbSnJg?si=784qzODetDW08JDl

That cultural connection took on added meaning during the film's **first OIFF24 screening Sunday at Geoffrey's Inner Circle, 410 14th Street in Oakland**. The special matinee included a filmmaker Q&A and vinyl-record after-party, bringing a film about preserving soul music into a venue that itself represents decades of Oakland Black cultural history.

The encore screening comes just as the nation begins the annual observance of **Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 through October 15**, giving OIFF audiences another opportunity to experience a story about how music crosses communities while retaining the history and contributions of the people who created and sustained it.

Tonight's **8:00 p.m. program** opens with **"Betta Fish,"** directed by Louvinia Robinson. The 13-minute film follows Elle, a recent college graduate whose plans for the future are interrupted when a family crisis leaves her caring for her younger sister, Cassidy. The intimate story examines sisterhood, grief, responsibility and the ways love can unexpectedly redirect a life. **"Soul Searchin'" follows "Betta Fish."**

Day 8 Begins at 5:00 p.m. With Oakland, Mexico, Jazz and an Immigrant Love Story

Earlier Wednesday, OIFF24 presents four films beginning at **5:00 p.m. at Northeastern University Oakland**, expanding Day 8's exploration of culture, migration, family and memory.

"Oakland Ilokana," directed by Elenita Makani O'Malley, follows a 90-year-old Filipina American grandmother, among the first Filipino children born in Oakland during the 1930s, as she reflects on migration, displacement and the women of her community. Through four generations of Bay Area Filipinas, the documentary explores the power of memory to connect families across generations and geography.

"Ashes of The Monarca," directed by Erica Mendoza, adds another Hispanic Heritage Month connection to Day 8. The 18-minute film follows an undocumented filmmaker returning to her rural hometown near Apatzingán, Michoacán, Mexico, for the first time since childhood. Her journey forces her to confront family memories, the disappearance of her uncle and the political violence that shaped the place she once called home.

Oakland's rich musical history takes center stage in **"Brewin' Stew — Calvin Keys — Life of Guitar," directed by Isaac Pingree.** Built in part around interviews recorded before Keys' death in 2024, the 30-minute documentary celebrates the acclaimed jazz guitarist whose career connected generations of musicians, from Earl "Fatha" Hines and Ahmad Jamal to Terrace Martin, while exploring mentorship, collaboration, memory and musical legacy.

Completing the 5:00 p.m. program is **"I Was Thinking of You," directed by Devendra Rathod.** The 64-minute film follows a son retracing his parents' unlikely journey between post-independence India and mid-century America, discovering how two seemingly divided worlds ultimately became part of his own identity and sense of belonging.

Together, the Day 8 films continue OIFF24's mission of bringing diverse independent voices to Oakland and creating a screen where stories from different communities can illuminate both their distinctive histories and their shared human experiences.

The **24th Oakland International Film Festival**, presented by the **Oakland Film Society**, continues through **Saturday, September 19, 2026**.

Today's Day 8 screenings at Northeastern University Oakland are sponsored by Mills Performing Arts and Northeastern University. The campus, formerly Mills College, offers a beautiful, welcoming and secure setting, with a campus security checkpoint before entering the grounds.

DAY 8 — WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026
Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Concert Hall
Northeastern University Oakland
5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94613

5:00 p.m. Program:
Oakland Ilokana
Ashes of The Monarca
Brewin' Stew — Calvin Keys — Life of Guitar
I Was Thinking of You

8:00 p.m. Program:
Betta Fish
Soul Searchin'

Festival Information, Schedule & Tickets:
Oakland International Film Festival — OIFF.org
Free admission is available on campus for Northeastern University ID holders subject to limited ticket availability at the door.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Presented by the Oakland Film Society, the Oakland International Film Festival promotes independent filmmakers and showcases diverse voices and stories from Oakland, the Bay Area and around the world through screenings, filmmaker conversations, panels, networking and special events.

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EDITORS' NOTE-JESUS CRUZ ALSO SPEAKS FLUENT SPANISH

24th OIFF EPK 2026 (Includes Soul Searchin' EPK)
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tRrowFFRRyJBJQTF9I-OG51tWJEI_KDN?usp=drive_link

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, SEPTEMBER 9-19

From Paris to a San Francisco Cable Car: Mario and Mandela Van Peebles Pay Tribute to Melvin Van Peebles
https://tinyurl.com/OIFF24SunMonPrograms

On 9/11, Oakland International Film Festival Screens Stories of Resilience, Strength, Community & Love
https://tinyurl.com/a911TypeResilienceFilmsatOIFF

Lights, Camera, Oakland! 24th Oakland International Film Festival Opens 11-Day Global Celebration of Film
https://tinyurl.com/24OIFFUnderwayThruSept19th

NBC Bay Area Interview of OIFF Co Founder & Executive Director David Roach 9/8/2026
https://www.nbcbayarea.com/video/news/local/oakland-international-film-festival/4139495/