



**Double Exposure investigative documentary film festival and  
symposium  
returns for in-person screenings and presentations for 8<sup>th</sup> edition  
(October 13-16)**

**Gabriela Cowperthwaite's THE GRAB  
is the Opening Night selection**

**Matt Heineman's RETROGRADE  
is the Closing Night selection**

**Darren Foster's AMERICAN PAIN  
is the Centerpiece selection**



## *The Grab, Retrograde, American Pain*

**Washington, DC (September 20, 2022)** –Double Exposure announces the 11 investigative feature films selected for the highly curated film festival and symposium series' eighth season, taking place in-person October 13-16 in Washington, DC. Gabriela Cowperthwaite's ***The Grab*** is the Opening Night selection, Matt Heineman's ***Retrograde*** takes the Closing Night spot, and Darren Foster's ***American Pain*** will be the Centerpiece screening.

Based in Washington D.C., the epicenter of power in the United States, if not the world, Double Exposure is the first and only U.S. film festival solely dedicated exclusively to investigative storytelling. A project of the investigative news organization 100Reporters, Double Exposure combines film screenings for the public followed by in-depth filmmaker Q&As that frequently include film protagonists and subject experts, and that dig much deeper than traditional Q&As. These are paired with a professional conference for filmmakers and journalists whose work is driven by the investigative instinct.

The 2022 slate illuminates urgent stories from across the globe. These films look deeply into our common humanity, in the future of democracy and of our planet. Drawing on a range of cinematic styles, from reportage to cinema verité to footage from citizen journalists meshed with fictionalized clips by filmmakers, the lineup for 2022 pulls viewers inside the pressing stories of our times and our lives.

This year's slate is a testimony to the incredible dedication of journalists and filmmakers who risk it all to go beyond the headlines," said Double Exposure founder and co-director Diana Jean Schemo. "From an eight-year long investigation of cross-border land grabs, to an anonymous collective documenting the death of democracy in Myanmar, to a documentary on the devastation of Mariupolis, Ukraine, that cost the director his life, these films all embody a commitment to convey deeper truths at any cost."

"This year's lineup reveals the value of long form storytelling to offer depth and nuance to headline news," says festival co-director Sky Sitney. "The films take us viscerally and visually into the stories that shape our world today, often at the profound risk and extraordinary sacrifice of the filmmaker and journalist behind the lens. One film in our lineup, *Myanmar Diaries* is credited to an anonymous filmmaking collective to protect their identity: a group of local filmmakers working tirelessly in Myanmar to expose crimes committed by the military. While Mantas Kvedaravičius, the Lithuanian director behind *Mariupolis 2*, was tragically killed during the filming of his project – arrested by Russian soldiers when he attempted to leave the city and reportedly murdered. The film was completed by co-director Hanna Bilobrava."

Gabriela Cowperthwaite's ***The Grab*** will open the film festival on Thursday, October 13 at the Naval Heritage Memorial Center (701 Pennsylvania Ave NW). The film follows award-winning journalist Nathan Halverson and his team at the Center for Investigative Reporting as they look at the land and resources grab of governments and other powerful entities around the world desperate to ensure access to food and water for their people. Academy Award-nominated

director Matt Heineman returns to Double Exposure to close out the festival on Sunday, October 16 with **Retrograde**. Co-presented with National Geographic, the film chronicles the last days of the war in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of our country's forces there. With amazing clarity and immediacy, the film captures the destruction of military weaponry to prevent it from being used by the Taliban and the peril of the Afghans who had supported the U.S. efforts there, now certain to be targeted for death by the Taliban. Emmy Award-winner Darren Foster's **American Pain** will be the Centerpiece presentation on Saturday, October 15. The true crime documentary traces the rise and fall of Chris and Jeff George, identical twins who are believed to be America's most prolific opioid kingpins. In just a remarkably short span of time, the shockingly arrogant duo ran a pill mill empire that attracted clients from around the country and spawned a prescription drug trafficking network with an estimated street value of more than \$500M, destroying countless lives in the process.



*Body Parts, Hazing, The Killing of a Journalist*

Other highlights include Kristy Guevara-Flanagan's **Body Parts**, which studies how sex, sexuality, and nudity have been traditionally presented onscreen through the confines of the male gaze featuring interviews with high-profile figures in the film industry — such as Jane Fonda, Rose McGowan, and director Karyn Kusama. Byron Hurt's **Hazing** weaves his own personal experience with hazing as he explores the function, politics, and consequences of pledging rituals. The film examines what happens when pledging and the effect it has on those who have participated, by engaging in a discussion of both the joys and perils of affiliations with exclusive groups. Matt Sarnecki's **The Killing of a Journalist** chronicles the targeted brutal killing of an investigative journalist and his fiancée in Slovakia, and how the public outcry that

resulted began a house clearing of public officials as it uncovered honey-pot schemes, paid assassins, and dubious political appointees.

Additional titles include Jennifer Baichwal's *Into the Weeds*, Anna Shishova's *The New Greatness Case*; Mantas Kvedaravičius' *Mariupolis 2*; Anonymous' *Myanmar Diaries*; and Sinéad O'Shea's *Pray for our Sinners*.



*Into the Weeds, The New Greatness Case*

Along with its highly curated film lineup, Double Exposure's symposium has become known nationwide for the conversations and deep dive explorations of the themes that arise from the festival's programming, as well as evergreen topics of documentary filmmaking, storytelling, and pitching led by the attending filmmakers, journalists, industry veterans, and more. Themes explored this year will include filmmaking that poses "David vs. Goliath" subjects, the challenges of attempting to capture the death of Democracy, and what happens to whistleblowers as they become participants in documentary films. In addition, real talk regarding obtaining material via public records searches, world building, safety tips, and the never-ending hurdles and challenges of securing funding for making films today will all be on the docket for this year's attendees.

Passes are now available.

For more information visit: <http://doubleexposurefestival.com>



*Mariupolis 2, Myanmar Diaries, Pray for our Sinners*

### **2022 Double Exposure Official Selections**

#### **OPENING NIGHT**

##### ***The Grab***

Director: Gabriela Cowperthwaite

Country: USA, Running Time: 102 min

An investigative journalist uncovers the money, influence, and alarming rationale behind covert land grabs by some of the world's most powerful countries.

#### **CLOSING NIGHT**

##### ***Retrograde***

Director: Matt Heineman

Country: USA, Running Time: 94 min

The story of the last months of the 20-year war in Afghanistan through the intimate relationship between American Green Berets and the Afghan officers they trained.

## **CENTERPIECE FILM**

### ***American Pain***

Director: Darren Foster

Country: USA, Running Time: 106 min

*American Pain* traces the rise and fall of twin bodybuilders from Florida who became the kingpins of the largest oxycodone trafficking network in US history.

## **ADDITIONAL FEATURES**

### ***Body Parts***

Director: Kristy Guevara-Flanagan

Country: USA, Running Time: 90 min

An eye-opening investigation into the making of Hollywood sex scenes, shedding light on the real-life experiences behind classic scenes of cinema and tracing the legacy of exploitation of women in the entertainment industry.

### ***Hazing***

Director: Byron Hurt

Country: USA, Running Time: 103 min

Byron Hurt's new film explores underground hazing rituals that are rooted in abuse and sometimes turn deadly. The journey to understand hazing culture reveals a world of toxic masculinity, violence, humiliation, binge drinking, denial, and institutional coverups.

### ***Into the Weeds***

Director: Jennifer Baichwal

Country: USA, Running Time: 96 min

Dewayne Johnson, a Bay Area groundskeeper, suffered from rashes in 2014 and wondered if they were caused by the herbicide, he'd been using for the past couple years. As his health deteriorated, Johnson became the face of a David-and-Goliath legal battle to hold a multi-national agrochemical corporation accountable for a product with allegedly misleading labeling.

### ***The Killing of a Journalist***

Director: Matt Sarnecki

Countries: Denmark/Czech Republic/USA, Running Time: 100 min

In 2018, investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová, both just 27 years old, were brutally murdered in their home. It was the first targeted killing of a journalist in Slovakia's history, prompting shocked citizens to protest on a scale not seen since the fall of communism. Leaked files, Kuciak's posthumous reports and civic outcry led to scandalous discoveries of decades-old corruption networks, forcing the ouster of the police chief, high-ranking bureaucrats, and the prime minister himself.

### ***Mariupolis 2***

Director: Mantas Kvedaravičius

Country: Ukraine, Running Time: 112 min

In 2022, Mantas Kvedaravičius went back to Ukraine, Mariupol, at the heart of the war, to be with the people he had met and filmed in 2015. Following his death, his producers and collaborators have put all their strength into completing and transmitting his work, his vision, and his films. Also, a PhD in anthropology, Mantas Kvedaravičius wished to testify as a filmmaker as far as possible from the agitation of the media and the politicians. With huge force and sensitivity, *Mariupolis 2* depicts life as it continues amidst the bombing and reveals images that convey both tragedy and hope.

### ***Myanmar Diaries***

Director: Anonymous

Country: Myanmar, Running Time: 70 min

Hidden from the world's TV cameras, life under Myanmar's junta of terror in the aftermath of last year's military coup has been largely invisible. As an act of creative resistance, the anonymous Myanmar Film Collective composed this feature-length film by blurring reality and fiction, all segments from their first-person perspective, woven together with blood-chilling eye-witness footage in the form of citizen journalism.

### ***The New Greatness Case***

Director: Anna Shishova

Country: Russia, Running Time: 92 min

Anya was an ordinary teenager, discussing Russian politics and social issues on the internet with a group of friends, when a secret agent joined their chat group and rented them a meeting space – pushing them towards direct physical action. Police storm their homes to arrest and jail the teens, accusing them of plotting to overthrow the government and fabricating charges of extremism.

### ***Pray for our Sinners***

Director: Sinéad O'Shea

Country: Ireland, Running Time: 81 min

Through the stories of everyday citizens resisting the status quo, the new documentary from filmmaker and journalist, Sinéad O'Shea confronts Ireland's recent history of brutality against children and women ranging from corporal punishment to state-sanctioned mother and baby homes.

## **SYMPOSIUM PANELS LINEUP**

### ***REFRAMING REPRESENTATION***

Participants: Patricia Aufderheide, Rintu Thomas, Sushmit Ghosh, June Cross

Academy Award-nominated filmmakers Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh's decade-long work has focused on developing a new visual and narrative language for telling stories of

under-represented voices in India – ranging from farming communities and journalists working to create transformative change for their communities to refugees and LGBTQ artists finding ways of platforming critical issues around citizenship. In this session, Thomas and Ghosh will talk about how they maintain the delicate balance between filmmaker–participant relationships and the stakes and challenges of storytelling in a dynamically evolving and complex democracy. With Patricia Aufderheide, media scholar and a member of the Documentary Accountability Working Group, they will look at the internal process of working with subjects, and the external pressures that swirl around films that challenge power in an increasingly polarized and dangerous world.

### ***WHISTLEBLOWERS AND THE CREATOR ECONOMY***

Participants: Karim Amer, Ed Pierson, Mary Inman, and Amber Scorah

Theranos. WeWork. Uber. Anna Delvey. Harvey Weinstein. Over the past year, the entertainment industry has brought true stories of corporate fraud, scandal, and power abuse to the screen, as part of a growing trend in Hollywood to transform adaptations of non-fiction journalism into film and television. Whistleblowers are also beginning to take to storytelling via social media and podcasts, transcending the gatekeepers of book agents or journalists to share valuable information with the public and achieve virality on their own terms. This panel will explore what it means to incorporate the whistleblower into the process of making a movie – narrative or documentary – or a television show or series about their story.

### ***DOCUMENTALITY FOR FILMMAKERS AND JOURNALISTS***

Participants: Malikkah Rollins, Dr. Meryl Heyliger

Documentary filmmakers, as well as journalists, often engage with issues related to trauma, injustice, and abuse, but there has been very little institutional or even community support, let alone recognition of the burden of witnessing. DocuMentality, an initiative of The D-Word, Film in Mind and Malikkah Rollins, recognizes the hidden impact of this work on the frontlines. We seek to normalize a conversation about mental health and well-being in the documentary industry, and to provide best practice guidance and information for documentary filmmakers – and for journalists as well – to become more resilient resources for themselves, their teams and the people who entrust them with their stories.

### ***FACING GOLIATH***

Participants: Byron Hurt, Jennifer Baichwal, Nate Halverson, Amanda Pike

Investigative filmmakers and journalists are committed to holding power to account and following a covert trail of misdeeds wherever it may lead. But what happens when the trail lands them on the doorstep of the most powerful governments, corporations, and institutions in the

world? In three remarkable films in this year's lineup, filmmakers and their subjects dare to stand up to powerful, perhaps even untouchable institutions.

### **REFLECTION IS KEY: HOW VALUES-BASED FILMMAKING CAN REDUCE HARM**

Participants: Natalie Bullock Brown, Molly Murphy

Filmmakers come up with ideas for new documentaries every day. But should they be made? This panel will explore how the Documentary Accountability Working Group's framework for values, ethics, and accountability in non-fiction filmmaking can be utilized to deeply consider the merits and possibilities for harm during the very first phase of production: reflection.

### **LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION: READING THE SUPREME COURT ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

Participants: Max Mishkin, Jennifer Nelson, Alison Scharly

First Amendment at a Changing Supreme Court: Discussing what the new, right-leaning Supreme Court means for First Amendment issues, including potential changes to anti-SLAPP laws and the "actual malice" standard in defamation liability.

### **VANISHING ACT: CAPTURING THE DEATH OF DEMOCRACY**

Participants: Anna Shushova, Matt Sarnecki

In *Myanmar Diaries*, anonymous filmmakers mix chilling footage of police arrests and killings filmed by citizen journalists with fictionalized scenes by an anonymous filmmaker collective that gave voice to fear and despair, struggle and resistance, following that country's military takeover in February 2021. Anna Shushova, in *The New Greatness Case*, zeroes in on a KGB sting that entrapped teenagers into challenging the authority of Vladimir Putin, landing them in prison, to convey how fear can be engineered to rise and choke civic engagement. *The Killing of a Journalist* begins with a very tight focus on two people in Slovakia, 27-year-old investigative journalists and his fiancée, coldly murdered at home. Their killing prompts a sprawling investigation and nationwide protests, with surprising results. Each of these films tackles an increasingly urgent question for filmmakers in an age of crisis: How do you capture the death of freedom, when it becomes a way of life?

### **MEET THE FUNDERS WHO ARE MEETING THE MOMENT**

Participants: Eric Ferrero, Keisha Knight, Lauren Pabst

This year's edition of a perennial favorite at Double Exposure, the Meet the Funders panel, comes with a particular focus, in response to assaults on freedom across the planet, captured so vividly in this year's film slate, and the looming threat to democracy closer to home. We've

asked participating funders to talk about their grantmaking as it supports work to investigate and expose efforts to dismantle democracy and freedom.

### ***OBTAINING AUDIO & VISUAL MATERIALS THROUGH PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS***

Participants: Gunita Singh, Ken Klippenstein, Lauren Feeney

Police body cam footage, military training videos, surveillance recordings from government buildings — these are just a few examples of the types of audio/visual material that can be obtained via public records requests and incorporated into your documentary films and video journalism. In this workshop, we'll talk about what sorts of materials you might be able to find and offer helpful tips on how to navigate the notoriously complex process. This workshop will have a special focus on audio and video material but will also explore how to access other types of documents.

### ***WORLD BUILDING FOR STORYTELLERS: A VIEWERS LIKE US CASE STUDY***

Participants: Olivia Aylmer, Grace Lee, Tony Patrick

As storytellers, documentarians, and investigative journalists, we are also world builders: actively shaping the future and seeding change through the questions we raise, the histories we document, and the fresh perspectives we gather. In this interactive workshop, Tony Patrick will walk attendees through the basic tenets of a world-building session, wherein a group of participants connect with each other and collectively envision the future of XYZ organization/industry/city/institution, unlocking a blueprint for actionable change, consensus, and problem-solving in the process.

### ***LEGAL BOOT CAMP: INVESTIGATIVE BASICS FOR FILMMAKERS***

Participants: Jennifer Nelson, Lisa Zycherman

A primer on journalists' legal rights and responsibilities, including safety tips for investigative journalism, recording laws, and common legal issues that may arise while filming (e.g., intrusion, trespass, recording laws), how to avoid them, and related resources. Lawyers will field your questions at the end of the presentation.

### ***NAVIGATING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES IN DOCUMENTARY FILM***

Participants: Tom Hentoff, Jen Nelson

Legal experts will provide intellectual property training, including advice regarding fair use, clearance of music, and visuals and archival materials, with a focus on issues affecting the investigative documentary film community. Time will be set aside for questions from the audience.

### ***FOR PRINT JOURNALISTS: BEYOND THE PITCH***

Participants: Douglas Blush, Erica Berenstein

So, you've just seen your groundbreaking investigation in print, and you believe it would make a riveting film. But how do you get there? This session will demystify the process. You'll learn how to evaluate your story's cinematic and storytelling potential and tease out creative points of entry for a visual story.

### ***THE ART, CRAFT AND HEART OF A GREAT PITCH***

Participant: Judith Helfand

A two-hour pitching workshop led by Judith Helfand, award-winning filmmaker. Helfand will lead a series of exercises meant to engage the storyteller in you. This session will prepare you for round table meetings and fast intros at the festival, in part by showcasing examples of pitches that incorporate best practices while honoring the unique voice of the filmmaker and proposed film. Helfand believes in the wonder of wordsmithing and the power of context, in using words with edges and delighting in detail. She will push you to identify the core inquiry and fundamental question at the heart of your story.

### ***TENDING THE UNSPOKEN WOUNDS: THE ROLE OF SELF-REFLECTION IN CULTIVATING A HEALING-CENTERED ETHIC IN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM & DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING***

Participant: Dr. Kameelah Mu'Min Rashad

Many in the industry find themselves standing (or struggling) at an exquisitely perplexing crossroad: how do we document and share the stories unfolding in a world which is experiencing such upheaval and uncertainty? How do we both bear witness and process the painful AND joyous events in the lives of our storytellers? How does one acknowledge and cope with vicarious trauma in a field which prioritizes (the myth of) objectivity as the gold standard of professionalism? This workshop will explore these questions from the lens of self-awareness, critical consciousness, and healing justice.

### ***About Double Exposure***

Double Exposure, a project of the nonprofit investigative news organization 100Reporters, showcases the best new films inspired by the investigative instinct, in a bid to raise public recognition of this vital form of reporting that doesn't just ask tough questions, but delivers answers. It pairs film screenings with a concurrent symposium for journalists and filmmakers to connect with each other, and with the producers, editors, funders, and experts who can advance their work.

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