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Greater Sudbury's international film festival, known as Cinéfest, [\(opens in a new tab\)](#) gets underway this weekend.



The scene outside of Silver City Cinemas on Marcus Drive in Greater Sudbury, Ont., on September 13, 2024 as organizers prepare for the 36th annual Cinéfest Sudbury international film festival. (Amanda Hicks/CTV News Northern Ontario)

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The festival, now in its 36th year, will screen 115 movies from around the world over eight days – with roughly half being Canadian.

“I think we have a great lineup, and it's really resonating with people,” said Patrick O’Hearn, the festival’s executive director.

“There's a lot of great films that people are talking about already. We're seeing that on social media.”

As one of Canada’s major film festival, O’Hearn told CTV News there’s a lot of hard work that goes into its preparation.

“To be able to maintain that status, you know, for a community that's smaller in size when com-

pared to Montreal or Vancouver, Toronto, places like that, it takes a lot of work,” he said.

“You have to always reaffirm, you know, the quality of the programming. Talent is a big part of what we do. I think we're looked at as one of those festivals in Ontario and across Canada. That really puts filmmakers first. So that's an important part of reaffirming that status.”

O'Hearn said ticket sales are on par with pre-pandemic levels and Cinéfest saw its largest turnout in 2019.

“We know that our box office is up,” O'Hearn said.

“You know, obviously coming out of the pandemic, it's just been about rebuilding and growing that audience space back to where it was had, you know, prior to the pandemic and I think we've made great strides.”

New this year is ‘North Bay Day’ on September 19, where there will be four films featured that were shot locally.

“There's obviously just a great excitement about what's being produced here in Northern Ontario,” he said.

First up on Saturday, Sept. 14, is the CTV sponsored opening night gala featuring the Canadian science fiction film ‘The Invisibles.’

The Andrew Currie directed film tells the story of a married couple on the brink of divorce when one person begins to literally disappear.



The movie poster for the Canadian science fiction film ‘The Invisibles,’ directed by Andrew Currie which will be the feature film for Cinéfest Sudbury 2024 festivals opening night gala on September 14, 2024. (Supplied)

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Currie said the movie was produced on a tight budget, leading to a furry family member being cast.

“We couldn't afford to hire a dog because, it's really expensive to hire a film dog, so instead, we, used our dog, Charlotte, who's a golden retriever,” he said.

“She's never acted in a film before, but she was amazing and everyone on the crew was like, ‘this is the best film dog I ever worked with.’”

Additionally, the other challenge was finding a spacesuit.

“We really needed a NASA spacesuit for Tim Blake Nelson, our lead,” said Currie.

“The only way one we could get one was from California and it was really expensive to travel because of insurance.”

Currie said a friend ended up flying down to California using air miles to pick up the suit.

“Everyone helps. That's kind of what you need when you make independent films, right?” he said with a laugh.

The film depicts themes of grief, resilience and hope – and for Currie, it's deeply personal



Director Andrew Currie talks with CTV News via Zoom ahead of his film, 'The Invisibles,' Cinéfest Sudbury opening night gala presentation on Saturday. (Amanda Hicks/CTV News Northern Ontario | Image Date: September 13, 2024)

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“15 years ago, my, wife and I had twin boys, and, 10 days after they were born, one of them died, which was really obviously hard,” he said.

“It caused me personally to kind of disconnect, you know, from the world a little bit. I didn't really know how to handle it. So, I started to feel like I was disappearing and so, I wrote this as, as a response to that.”

Currie said, in sharing his experience, he realized the feeling of ‘invisibility’ is universal.

“People feel invisible for all kinds of reasons, you know, like getting older, getting passed over for a promotion,” he said.

“Or, it could be just being a mother or a father or being discriminated against or marginalized in some way, or having a disability.”

Currie said he hopes the message viewers take away, is one of hope.

“No matter how dark things get, that there's always a path forward,” he said.

“It is about hope and resilience and the idea that there's always light out there if you if you want to find it and just reach out to people and reconnect because it's always about connection.”

Cinéfest runs Sept. 14 to 22 with screening at Silver City Cinemas on Marcus Drive and galas host at various Greater Sudbury venues.

More information, including the schedule, tickets and an FAQ, can be found on the festival website.