

## *Narrative feature films*

### **A Handful of Water | Dir. Jakob Zapf | 94min | Germany**

KONRAD (85) has plenty of reasons for being grumpy. His wife died recently and now his only daughter is planning to adopt her girlfriend's kids to Konrad's disapproval. THURBA (12) has a very different set of problems. In order to avoid deportation she must jump from the second floor and run away during an investigation. Konrad hears something from the basement in the middle of the night and arming himself with a nail gun fires into the dark, wounding little Thurba. Somehow this girl touches long lost feelings from his own past. Thurba proposes a deal...

### **Hospital - Daughter's Mother | Dir. Rax Rinnekangas | 86min | Finland**

Helsinki, spring 1975: Author Jeanette Aspen arrives at the Lapinlahti hospital, one of the oldest mental hospitals in the world, to meet her only child, psychiatrist Karin Aspen, 36 years after sending her to Sweden as a war child at the start of the Winter War in 1939 while she herself traveled to Spain to begin a new life. The encounter sparks the drama between mother and daughter, now complete strangers to each other. The architectural beauty of the mental hospital serves as an eye-witness to the events where long locked up emotions between the women splash out.

### **Poppy | Dir. Linda Niccol | 95min | New Zealand**

Poppy Simpson, a young woman with Down syndrome, believes she's entitled to live a life like anyone else yet the person she trusts most puts her in the "disability" box forcing her to find support where she can and to employ secret strategies to achieve her goal of an independent life. Linda Niccol's joyful tribute to a quietly rebellious young woman who won't take no for an answer makes the point that everyone has the right to fulfil their potential. The script of Poppy was the winner of the Scriptwriting competition on our inaugural season of SRFF back in 2014.

### **Raise Your Hand | Dir. Jessica Rae | 91min | United States**

Gia and her best friend Lila survived a rough childhood in a neighborhood where every kid has a sad story to tell. Now, as teenagers, Gia struggles to use her gift of writing to reclaim what the world has brutally taken away.

### **The River You Step In | Dir. Jon Michaelson | 100min | Canada**

When a young First Nations client dies after being committed to police custody, social worker Stevie struggles to keep the troubled people she encounters away from the system she no longer trusts. Opening her East End Toronto home as a safe haven for 'at risk' people. They are George, an ex-con and chronic gambler, Tracy, a down and out musician, and Mina, a battered wife. Stevie tries to mend some broken lives, but she masks her own issues by burying herself in theirs. "I'd say get a life," says her paramedic boyfriend Ben, "but you already have more than one!" When she defends Mina against her abusive husband Karl, Stevie is confronted with the real dangers of crossing professional boundaries.

### **Road to the Lemon Grove | Dir. Dale Hildebrand | 89min | Canada/Italy**

A heartwarming story about an old-school Sicilian father trying to negotiate his way into heaven, where the only way in is to first go back and repair his relationship with his reluctant son, reunite his feuding family back in Sicily, and help everyone find love in places they never imagined. Starring Burt Young (Rocky), Nick Mancuso (Ticket to Heaven), Rossella Brescia (Italian TV star and Italy's Prima Ballerina), Charley Chiarelli (Sicilian "Spalding Grey"), Loreena McKennitt (Multi-Platinum Recording Artist) and Tomaso Sanelli (Cicada 3301, Titans), the film depicts the loss of culture and identity rekindled by reconnecting with who we are.