

# Stony Brook Film Festival postponed; Other LI fests still mulling their options



This commemorative T-shirt was going to be a part of the Stony Brook Film Festival's now-postponed 25th anniversary celebration this summer. Credit: Alan Inkles

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the only one grappling with uncertainty. All of Long Island's film festivals that traditionally take place during summer and early fall are reshuffling their plans, holding their breath and hoping for the best. So far, none have canceled.

"There will definitely be a festival," says Anne Chaisson, executive director of the Hamptons International Film Festival, the region's largest. "What that festival looks like, remains to be seen."

The Hamptons fest is standing firm on its traditional pre-Columbus Day weekend dates, which this year means Oct 8-12. If theaters are open by then, Chaisson says, they will likely be only 30% full to maintain social distancing. Some screenings could take place outdoors. The festival has already announced plans for a summer-long drive-in series at a location yet to be determined.

One component that may not work this year: the live interview series “A Conversation With...,” which typically features well-known actors and filmmakers. “We just don’t see that anyone will be able to travel, or feel comfortable enough to travel,” Chaisson says.

Also sticking to its dates is the Long Beach International Film Festival, scheduled for July 29-August 1, according to director Craig Weintraub. But with virtually all possible screening locations currently closed – including local theaters, libraries and colleges – about the only thing certain this year are the outdoor screenings, such as the annual “Shorts on the Beach” program of short films.

The festival’s other popular event, “Chefs and Shorts,” featuring movie-inspired gourmet meals, is off the table. “It’s just impossible,” Weintraub says, citing the large kitchen staff and patrons who would be in close proximity to each other. “We’re thinking of everyone behind the curtain, and the audience.”

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Stony Brook’s Inkles says he’s looking at a truncated festival with roughly 25 films instead of the usual 40, but he isn’t yet ready to announce a date. As for those t-shirts, he isn’t sure what to do with them.

“Luckily we didn’t order that many of them,” Inkles says. “Maybe they’ll be souvenirs.”

**By Rafer Guzmán**

rafer.guzman@newsday.com

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