

10 Arts and Culture

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Three Chinese men will do anything to find love in *The Dating Game*.

Top picks at Doc Edge Festival

From a look at the legacy of cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to an elegy for a Japanese pool, these documentaries are well worth seeking out, writes **James Croot**.

New Zealand's annual celebration of documentary-making is marking its 20th anniversary this year.

Starting in Auckland this week, the 2025 edition of the Doc Edge Festival will unfurl at Wellington's Roxy Cinema and Christchurch's Lumiere from July 16 to 27, before all titles will be available virtually across Aotearoa between July 28 and August 24.

In all, the Oscar-qualifying festival's lineup includes 78 features and shorts (many of them world premieres) selected from submissions from across the planet.

Doc Edge executive director Dan Shanahan said rather than celebrating the past, reaching the milestone of two decades has made the organising team even more focused on "pushing the boundaries of what documentary can achieve". "This year's festival is a celebration of bold storytelling, with films that challenge, inspire and ultimately transform how we see the world," Shanahan said.

Having had the chance to preview a selection of titles, *The Post* has come up with eight great tales we believe are well worth seeking out.

Chaplin: Spirit of The Tramp
Made by the actor's granddaughter,

Carmen, and mainly featuring his eldest son, Michael, this is a fascinating look at the off-screen life of the man who captivated the world with movies such as *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*. Making great use of home movies, film clips and interviews with other family members, it particularly details how his Romany roots influenced his work.

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As he initially reveals in this deep dive into the world of online marketing, Norwegian film-maker Audun Amundsen just wanted to raise US\$30,000 to help him finish his 15-year odyssey on an Indonesian jungle tribe "without having to sell a kidney". However, as he embarks on his mission, mentored by digital millionaire Akbar Sheikh, he discovers he may have got himself into more than he bargained for.

The Dating Game

Debating at this year's Sundance Film Festival, Emmy Award-winning film-maker Violet Du Feng's latest feature follows three men looking for love in a Chongqing, China – a city known for its "spicy food and spicy women". As they embark on a seven-day dating camp with one of the

country's most popular dating coaches, it's hard not to become invested in their successes and failures.

Full Support

Women of all shapes, sizes and perspectives feature in this enlightening and entertaining fly-on-the-wall tale set in Noa's Bras, a store in Jaffa, Israel. The shop's fitting room becomes a confessional as customers open up about their lives and relationships, including the one they have with their breasts.

Marriage Cops

Forget *Real Housewives* and *Love Island*, this is the most compelling portrayal of modern-day relationships you'll see this year. Dehradun police station is the setting for heightened emotions, tense negotiations and blunt assessments, as women working in a special office are charged with attempting to solve seemingly irreconcilable differences and avoid divorces.

Mr. Nobody Against Putin

Winner of the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award at this year's Sundance Film Festival, this disturbingly and chillingly documents the rise of "patriotism"

and "educational whitewashing" in Russian schools in the wake of the country's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Capturing it all – and risking his own safety – is Karabash Primary School #1's videographer and events co-ordinator Pasha Talankin.

Numakage Public Pool

Poignant and elegiac, this look at the last days of Saitama, Japan's beloved 52-year-old inner-city outdoor swimming pool complex is filled with heartfelt, memorable imagery and moments. Told via psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' six stages of grief, it lets staff and regular users detail what the due-for-demolition (to make way for a new school) facility means to them.

Strange Journey: The Story of Rocky Horror

"It's astounding, time is fleeting," sang former Hamilton barber Richard O'Brien in the stage show-turned-movie that made him a cult figure. Directed by his son Linus, this gathers together all the main players still standing (including Tim Curry and Susan Sarandon) to look at *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*'s genesis, the highs and lows of its formation and release – and its enduring and powerful cultural legacy.

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