



LUNAFEST 2022 Sample Discussion Questions

General reflections on the entire program:

Here are some suggested questions to get you started—feel free to modify these to fit your group.

1. How did the films make you feel? Empowered, excited, inspired, refreshed, sad, curious, confused? Which parts of which films brought up these feelings?
2. Did any of the films challenge your perceptions about the world and your place in it? Did you gain an insight, learn something new, or think about a familiar topic from a different perspective?
3. Do you have any questions that you would have liked to ask the director(s) or actor(s) of a particular film?
4. Which film was most memorable for you? What set it apart from the others?
5. Which (if any) character (protagonist) in a film resonated with you most, and why?
6. Do you feel any of these films are particularly insightful or relevant now? If so, why?
7. Perhaps it would be productive to compare and contrast the various approaches to themes that run throughout the program, including home, isolation, privilege, dreams, immigration/immigrants, support of family and community, connection.
8. Is there a film (or more than one) that is particularly relevant to the members of your group or audience? You may want to build your discussion by focusing just on those.

Suggestions for film-specific questions for group discussion:

How to Be at Home

Directed by Andrea Dorfman

1. Were you deeply touched by the way the words, tone, cadence, and images of this film came together? What was your response?

If you have pains in your chest 'cause your anxiety won't rest, take a moment, take a breath... If people are your nourishment, I get you. Feel the feelings that undo you while you have to keep apart... Lean into loneliness like it is holding you. Like it is a generous representative of a glaring truth... We are connected.



2. This film is rare because it expresses in an honest and wonderful way what we've been and are still going through. How does that affect you, what are your thoughts about what art can give us?

3. Some of us enjoy solitude when we get to choose it. Not so much when it's enforced. In any event, what kinds of things might one can gain from solitude? Is there anything you'd like to share about what you've learned during this time of isolation and stress, of staying at home? Do we actually require some time alone? Who has tried hugging a tree?

4. While the strict lockdowns of 2020 are fading (at least as of this writing), how are you adapting to being once again in the public commons?

Close Ties to Home Country

Directed by Akanksha Cruczynski

1. Let's discuss how this film extends the concepts of "home" and "connection" into the areas of absence from home and home country, physical distance from family, and the strains of immigration. The film exposes all kinds of emotional, financial, and support issues. It gets serious about what Akanksha has missed in this nine-year separation. How is she navigating the dilemma of missing her family and home country, and the threat that she can't return to the US if she leaves?

2. These days, it's tough to find anything funny about US immigration policy. But the issue of family separation far predates the current time, as thousands upon thousands of families have been torn apart by long-standing immigration laws for decades. Have you or someone you know had any experiences with US visa applications, even just to visit a member of the immediate family? Any experiences with immigration applications?

Note: In order to obtain a B-1/B-2 visitor visa, you must be able to show that you have "strong ties" to your country of origin. This is simply because US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) wants to be as certain as possible that you will indeed return home once your journey abroad is complete.

3. The film touches on several examples of privilege; for example, how easy it was for the charming British man of the house to become a citizen and why it was "more paperwork to adopt the dog."



It is truly a testament to time that for a nation made of immigrants, there is little knowledge of how confounding, calculatedly, systemically oppressive the process now is to become one—particularly if you come from a non-Western nation or are not white.

Have you encountered or noticed any other examples of this?

4. Talk about how the comic aspects of this film balance the tone of the film and contribute to our understanding of the human toll of policies.

Generation Impact: The Coder
Directed by Samantha Knowles

1. Such an inspiring film! How can we encourage and support young Generation Z people like Jay Jay who are working to help others and “are such a hope for the future”?

We make people in diverse and marginalized communities feel like this can be something for them. —Jay Jay Patton

2. The importance of human connection is very pivotal in this film as it is in others in the program. Here, it is very specific, and Jay Jay makes the point that kids should not be cut off from their incarcerated parents. There are other factors that conspire to do this as well; for example, the high cost of phone calls controlled by private companies to and from incarcerated people. This human connection also gets thwarted by difficulties associated with travel costs and restrictions on in-person visits. What else do we know about these problems; are there any possible solutions?

3. Sociologists and researchers point to several factors defining Gen Z. Technology, of course, plays a pivotal role. While the introduction of the laptop and the mobile phone had an enormous impact on earlier generations, Gen Z is more likely than their predecessors to creatively design ways in which today’s digital devices can serve their needs. Gen Z often reject labels, are more pluralistic and more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations; roughly 50% view binary gender labels as outdated. In a recent survey only 1 in 5 say they are interested in politics, yet at the same time 60% say they are worried about climate change and feel called to action, both environmentally and socially.

Whether you’re a member of Gen Z or a parent, relative, or friend, what’s been your experience with them? Does this film convey an accurate portrayal or is there something more that could be said?



4. Jay Jay's dad is also a pivotal figure in the film. What did you think of him? And does the film add anything to the story you tell yourself about incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people?

Proof of Loss

Directed by Katherine Fisher

1. A theme of the film is the (re)discovery, in the face of loss and grief, by each of the characters of what they truly value. We find that the desire for connection is a very primary urge, perhaps more important than possessions. How does this relate to the idea of home: What is home, where do we feel at home?

2. How do the characters in the film find and create connection, comfort, and the possibility of healing and hope? What other forms of comfort and healing have you witnessed, or perhaps experienced, after devastating events?

3. Wildfires, hurricanes, rising temperatures, landslides, floods, tornadoes, pandemics. What are the conversations you are having about the impact of cataclysmic events on your own immediate relationships and your community? Where or how are you and your community finding agency and hope?

When You Clean a Stranger's Home

Directed by Sharon Arteaga

1. How does your personal perspective or experience compare with that of the film's protagonists? Have you ever worked as a house cleaner? Have you employed a house cleaner?

2. The daughter participates in the work and narrates the film. As a next-generation Latina child of a female domestic worker, she observes the social, economic, and professional disparities at play. How does she start to clarify her values and chart her own and her family's future?

Between the Lines: Liz at Large

Directed by Abi Cole



1. Were you surprised that it took the *New Yorker* so long to publish the work of a Black cartoonist? Are there other domains where “the first” is yet to come? What about “the second, “the 25th, or ...

2. There are a lot of big ideas in this short and sweet film. Some are specific to Liz, but also interesting in and of themselves. For example: *You don’t have to be the Rosa Parks of cartooning, you can just be yourself...* invites us to think about the burden of representation and the relevant issues when it’s lacking.

A cartoon can communicate more than 1,000 words. How is it that a complicated narrative can be expressed with such resonance by a seemingly simple drawing? Are there any of Liz’s cartoons that gave you that experience?

Wearable Tracy

Directed by Emily McAllister

1. What was your first impression of Kim wearing her crown on the subway? How did your feelings change or develop?

2. Kim’s Wearable Tracy project feels like a subtle road map for how to reconnect both emotionally and sartorially (no more sweatpants?). How many conversations or connections with strangers have you started with a comment or compliment about apparel?

As we begin to emerge from a year of isolation and stretchy pants, the arc of Wearable Tracy feels like a subtle road map for how to reconnect, both emotionally and sartorially. In the aftermath of a terrible year, why not take a bold risk, or at least pursue a minor adventure, in your clothes? It does not have to be a pipe-cleaner hat to be a conversation piece—it can be the silver dress at the back of your closet, or the loud tie, or the beat-up denim jacket with punk-rock patches on it. Try stepping out in it and see what happens. – Kim

Kim’s story feels like an invitation to take a cue from the famous milliner Philip Treacy (whose name is poetically close to “Tracy”): “It’s all about change. A hat can completely change the personality of the wearer, make them stand differently and walk differently. A hat can make that person feel interesting.”

How did Kim’s film affect you? Any thoughts about what art can give us—whether we are practitioners or audience?



3. What started out as a whim became a project and then a practice, almost like meditation in action. I have a friend who describes her gardening practice of weeding in the same way. Do you have activities that work the same way for you?

To the Future, with Love
Directed by Shaleece Haas

1. As Hunter tells us his story, what surprised you most about it? Did you feel differently about him at the end from how you felt at the beginning of the film? Especially when he smiles?
2. All teenagers lead complicated lives, but the amount of stuff Hunter is dealing with is extreme. How can we help teens find support and community?
3. What's this film doing in a program of films by and about women? How do you feel about gender binaries expanding? As Hunter says, "Life is short and you should follow your ***dream."