

MVFF

EDUCATION

October
6-16

GROW EXPLORE CONNECT DISCOVER



WE DREAM
OF ROBOTS

CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 5-12

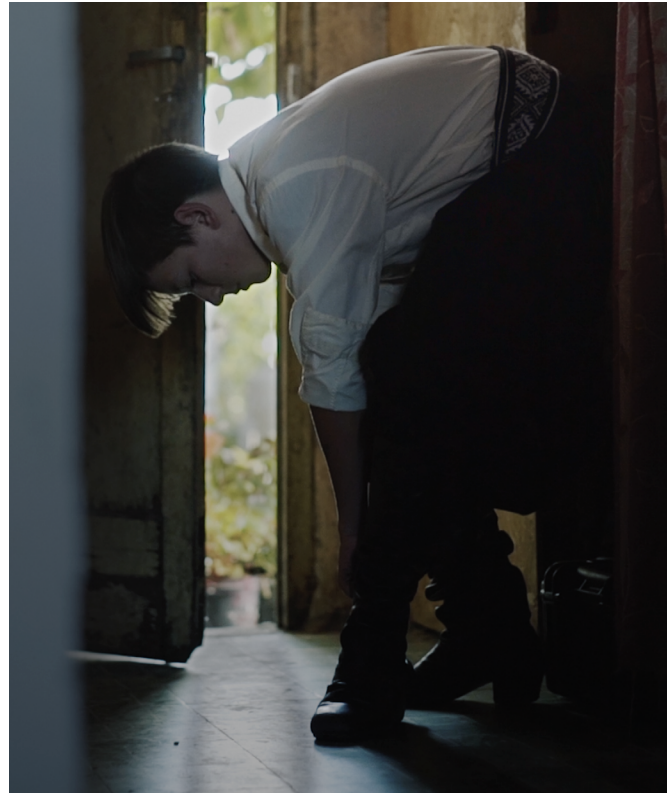
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instructor Resources

A Letter to Educators	ii
Discussion Questions	iii
Interpretive Essay Prompts	iii
Standards	iv
About CAFILM	iv

Student Handouts

About the Film	1
Contextual Information	2
Viewing Activities	3
About Film Festivals	8



Dear educators,

Thank you for attending the 45th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of *We Dream of Robots*. We are excited to return in our 2022 fall season with a combination of both in-person screenings for local schools and online screenings for those of you joining us from afar.

This year, our film selections for school screenings continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before, during, and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the main events that occur in this film? What has changed between the start and the end?
2. Does this film feel real? Why or why not?
3. What are the primary emotions you felt during this film? What are some secondary emotions?
4. Consider the editing and the tempo of this film. Did things move quickly or slowly? How come?
5. What do you see in this film that reminds you of other stories from your life or other stories you know?
6. What are some background details you noticed in this film? How do these details provide information about the time or place in which this film was made?
7. Consider other films you've seen. What makes this film unique or important? What are some connections between this film and other films?
8. If you were to give this film another title, what would you title it?
9. Did the schools in this film seem more or less rigorous than your school experience? How so?
10. In what ways does this film challenge conceptions people may have about robotics and engineering? In what ways does this film challenge conceptions people may have about rural life?
11. What was something one of the students in the film said that gave you a fresh perspective on science, robotics, or the natural world?
12. Do the students in this film seem optimistic about the future? How could you tell? Do you feel similarly to them?

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. How does participation in robotics shape the lives of the youth in this film?
2. In what ways does this film show how a connection to tradition and rural life can inform design and innovation for the future?

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9.B

Apply grades 9-10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).

ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

The California Film Institute and Mill Valley Film Festival are located in Marin County, California, on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary homelands of the Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples. This includes the Southern Pomo and Graton Rancheria Tribes. These tribes were removed or displaced from their lands. We recognize this history and the harm to present-day Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples and to their ancestors. The California Film Institute commits to moving forward from a place of authenticity and working with present-day tribes to elevate their stories, history, and present-day legacy through film.

Follow the Mill Valley Film Festival on social media

 @millvalleyfilmfest  @MillValleyFilmFestival

 @mvfilmfest  californiafilmstitute #MVFF45



Name: _____



ABOUT THE FILM

A determined group of teenagers from the Uruguayan countryside tackles math, science, and the physics of friendship as they conquer the world of robotics. *We Dream of Robots* showcases the hopes and dreams of young people whose rural daily lives inspire them to embrace the challenge of building a better future for all. Imagine having no cell phone but learning to assemble and program a robot. Imagine walking or biking three hours to school, then staying an additional three hours to brainstorm robotic solutions to local flooding. The film documents the journeys of two teams from such humble origins that vie for glory against 70 other squads in the first robotics competition ever held in Latin America. The collaboration, commitment, national pride, and creative spark these kids share will lift your heart—and may just send you scurrying for a robot-building kit of your own.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Pablo Casacuberta

Pablo Casacuberta, born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1969, is a filmmaker, writer and visual artist. He was awarded the National Literature Prize from Uruguay twice. He has published nine fiction books and directed three feature-length films. He has received a Clio Award and was nominated for a Latin Grammy in the Best Video category. He also directed second unit scenes and images for Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu and Terrence Malick. Casacuberta is also the director of GEN, an Uruguayan institution created to produce interdisciplinary projects in order to build bridges between Art, Science and Technology.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I always think of filmmaking as a process that turns a rarely visible aspect of human nature tangible and personal. I want to make films that help us to ponder about what aspects of life are truly worth our effort. I think self fulfillment is often greatly overrated. The quintessential contemporary mantra, "find something you are really passionate about and then devote to it all your energy", not always results in the pursuit of something meaningful. Or even good. Very often, it doesn't even guarantee self-fulfillment. And I think big personal quests can only be truly meaningful if you are actually paying attention to the world around you. Building bridges. Because self-fulfillment should never be entirely about you. That is why I try to find subjects that invite the viewer to reconsider assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes.

That is exactly what happened when I discovered the rise of a very robust national robotics scene in Uruguay, implemented by educational national institutions as a learning tool, but also as a source of pride and team spirit. The program has been particularly successful in rural areas, and it has fostered a generation of truly deep kids that have managed to flourish into technological wizards in the most unexpected place.

We Dream Of Robots is a film that follows some of those incredibly idiosyncratic, tender, sensible and inspiring teenagers in their path towards success and self betterment, but also shows them in the context of a Latin American country that is changing fast and seeking a more influential role in the design of a new way of doing things.

Along the process through which they design and master their robots, these often charismatic characters develop astonishingly contemporary worldviews, even in the context of relatively poor and deprived communities in the countryside. As they have to follow intricate paths to become international champions, they often also become precociously wise. Our film shows that some of the most notable characters in the robotics scene in Uruguay can rightfully be considered intuitive philosophers. They often have to confront the characteristic traditions of their local communities in search for more contemporary and compassionate ways to care for the environment, produce food, innovate and design a sustainable future.

What is the future of automation, how to build truly intelligent cities, how can we produce food with respect for nature and with technologically improved methods, what is the place of biology in our understanding of our role in the planet... Those are some of the subjects addressed in the film, that is also an adventure of both collaboration and self reliance. The themes themselves would be interesting enough, but what makes the experience truly miraculous is the incredibly fortunate selection of characters shown in the film. It is impossible to watch them speak and interact without thinking: 'In what kind of country are these kids even possible? What can I do to help them along their very challenging paths?'

I hope that audiences can connect to the incredible characters presented in this journey, and share their challenging and often wild dreams.

BEFORE VIEWING: JOURNAL ENTRY

Directions:

The film you are about to watch follows Uruguayan teenagers who are involved in competitive robotics. Before watching, reflect on your current thinking about robotics and engineering by reflecting on the following questions in a journal-style response.




In your experience, what type of person is best suited or most attracted to studying engineering and robotics? In your community, what groups get the most support in studying these fields? Why do you think that is? What skills or personality traits are most important for success in science?







DURING VIEWING: NOTEATCHER

Directions:

As you watch the film, pay attention to the variety of teens who are involved in robotics. Fill out each box to keep track of the teens and their personalities/opinions.

	Describe their personality in three words	How are they influenced or shaped by their local community/environment?	Why is this student interested in robotics?
Lautaro 			
Paulina 			
Juan Manuel 			

	Describe their personality in three words	How are they influenced or shaped by their local community/environment?	Why is this student interested in robotics?
Agustín 			
Nicolás 			
Emiliana 			
Juan Andrés 			

AFTER VIEWING: RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Directions:

Respond to each question, referring to specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your interpretation.

1. What features of the teens' environments (home, school, landscape, or community) were most striking or memorable to you? How do you think these features informed the personalities or interests of the teens?

2. What challenges did the students have to overcome due to where they grew up? What advantages did they have based on where they were from ?

3. What do you think was the significance of the robotics competition for the Uruguayan students? What lessons do you think they learned from this experience?

4. What does this show about the relationship between the past and the future?

5. What similarities and differences did you notice between the schools in the film and your school? Were there any resources your school has that theirs didn't? Or vice versa?

AFTER VIEWING: FOUR C'S

Directions:

Respond to each prompt in complete sentences, citing specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your response.

CONNECTIONS

What connections do you draw between the film and your own life or other learnings?

CHALLENGE

What ideas, positions, or assumptions do you want to challenge or debate in the film?

CONCEPTS

What key concepts or ideas do you think are important and worth holding on to from the film?

CHANGES

What changes in attitudes, thinking, or action are suggested by the film, either for you or others?

Adapted from Harvard Project Zero's Think Routine Toolbox:

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/the-4-cs>

ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

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What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

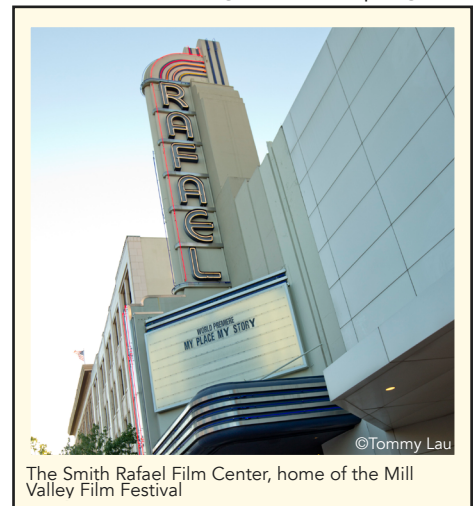
History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

©Tommy Lau

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.