

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

23rd HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES JAMES VANDERBILT'S *TRUTH* AS OPENING NIGHT FILM

The Festival Also Announces Narrative and Documentary Competition Feature Films

East Hampton, NY (August 26, 2015) – The Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) announced today that James Vanderbilt's *TRUTH* will be the Opening Night film on Thursday, October 8th in East Hampton. The film stars Robert Redford, Cate Blanchett, Topher Grace and Elisabeth Moss and follows news anchor Dan Rather (Redford) during his final days at CBS News when he broadcast a report about how President Bush relied on privilege and family connections to avoid fighting in the Vietnam War. The Sony Pictures Classics film will open in theaters on October 16, 2015.

"We had the pleasure of having James Vanderbilt serve as a mentor in our Screenwriters Lab back in 2009, and we're thrilled to have him back as the director of our Opening Night film," said HIFF Artistic Director David Nugent. "He's made a sharp and insightful film with wonderful performances that makes audiences consider the ever-changing relationship between journalism and politics in today's media."

This year's Narrative Competition feature films include Matt Sobel's *TAKE ME TO THE RIVER*, Ciro Guerra's *EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT*, Avishai Sivan's *TIKKUN*, Grímur Hákonarson's *RAMS*, and Diastème's *FRENCH BLOOD*.

This year's Documentary Competition feature films include the World Premiere of Jon Fox's *NEWMAN*, David Shapiro's *MISSING PEOPLE*, Jean-Gabriel Périot's *A GERMAN YOUTH*, Michael Madsen's *THE VISIT* and Ilinca Calugareanu's *CHUCK NORRIS VS COMMUNISM*.

"This year's line up once again demonstrates our outstanding programming team's taste in film," said HIFF Executive Director Anne Chaisson. "We are back with smart, intriguing, and stimulating films from 10 countries from around the globe that continue to position our festival on a competitive landscape, while still staying faithful to our audience."

Featuring one of the most coveted awards in the U.S., our Narrative and Documentary Competition Awards are selected by a prestigious group of industry professionals. The Feature Jury Prize winner in each category receives a package of essential goods and

services valued at over \$85,000 to be used toward the making of his or her next feature film and a cash prize of \$3,000.

This year's jury includes Michael H. Weber, writer of 500 DAYS OF SUMMER and THE FAULT IN OUR STARS, Dan Guando, head of US Production and Acquisitions at The Weinstein Co., Josh Charles, star of "The Good Wife" and "Masters of Sex", Marshall Fine, renowned author, journalist and film critic and Sarah Lash, acquisitions consultant at Conde Nast Entertainment.

The 23rd Annual Hamptons International Film Festival, which will be held over Columbus Day Weekend, October 8th – 12th, 2015, greatly appreciates the support from their corporate sponsors, including Delta Air Lines, Altour International, The Wall Street Journal, and WNBC New York. Founders Passes went on sale August 17th and other passes will go on sale September 8th. Box office will open on September 26th in NYC, East Hampton and Southampton. Tickets to the Opening Night Film and After Party will be available for purchase in September.

FULL LIST OF NARRATIVE AND DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION FILMS

NARRATIVE FEATURE COMPETITION FILMS

Sponsored by the Wall Street Journal

EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT (Colombia)

East Coast Premiere

Director: **Ciro Guerra**

Inspired by the real experiences of explorers in the Amazon, EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT centers on the relationship between Karamakate, a shaman of an extinct tribe carrying secrets and traditions, and two scientists in search of a sacred plant, capable of immense healing. Opting for powerful black and white cinematography, director **Ciro Guerra** tracks their parallel stories over 40 years with trips deep into the jungle. Winner of the top prize at the Cannes Directors Fortnight, the film intimately captures the thirst for knowledge and the ravages of colonialism that have destroyed the harmony and balance at the heart of the indigenous way of life.

RAMS (Iceland)

East Coast Premiere

Director: **Grímur Hákonarson**

Brothers **Gummi (Sigurdur Sigurjonsson)** and **Kiddi (Theodor Juliusson)** live side-by-side but have not spoken in forty years. Stubborn and competitive, they only communicate via handwritten notes delivered by their loyal sheepdog **Somi**. When a deadly virus threatens their prize-winning sheep and livelihood, they are forced to come together to save their unique family breed, and themselves, from extinction. Winner of the Un Certain Regard Award in Cannes, RAMS details the hardships of daily farm work in remote Iceland with humanism and humor. Stunningly combining otherworldly landscapes and powerful performances, director **Grímur Hákonarson** expertly builds this gentle comedy to reveal a deeper and emotionally moving tale.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER (USA)

East Coast Premiere

Director: Matt Sobel

Accompanying his parents to a Nebraskan family reunion couldn't be more uncomfortable for Ryder (Logan Miller), a gay Californian teenager. For his mother's sake he agrees to act "normal," but nonetheless attracts some unwanted attention from his conservative relatives. The only one who seems to like him is 9-year-old Molly (Ursula Parker), but a strange encounter between the two of them raises many questions and places Ryder at the center of a long-buried family secret. A superbly acted drama from first-time filmmaker Matt Sobel, TAKE ME TO THE RIVER reveals itself through Ryder's perplexed point of view, unfolding in an atmosphere of mystery and trepidation.

TIKKUN (Israel)

East Coast Premiere

Director: Avishai Sivan

Haim-Aron (Aharon Traitel) is considered an illui (a prodigy) at his Yeshiva. He is absorbed in his studies to such a degree that he completely isolates himself from the outside world, going days without eating or sleeping. When a near death experience changes his perspective on life, he starts to slowly explore life outside of his secluded ultra-orthodox community and begins to doubt his faith. Seeing Haim-Aron's transformation torments his father (Khalifa Natour) with nightmares in which he is instructed to perform Tikkun (rectification). With its riveting performances and the arrestingly beautiful black and white cinematography, Avishai Sivan's haunting film is sure to linger long in your imagination.

FRENCH BLOOD (France)

US Premiere

Director: Diastème

Marco (Alban Lenoir) is a young Neo-Nazi and skinhead who, along with his friends, terrorizes the lower-class suburbs of Paris hoping to clear out the "scum" that is polluting the pure, white landscape of their beloved country. Spanning almost 3 decades in Marco's life as he struggles to understand his own anger and brutal actions, this evocative and moving portrait--the sophomore effort from writer-director Diastème--offers a rare and unsettling look into the rise of xenophobia in France. With a brilliant performance by Lenoir, this poignant drama distinguishes itself as a unique and powerful work by an emerging talent.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE COMPETITION FILMS

Sponsored by Investigation Discovery (ID) Films

CHUCK NORRIS VS COMMUNISM (United Kingdom, Romania, Germany)

New York Premiere

Director: Ilinca Calugareanu

In the 1980s, the last decade before the revolution overthrew communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania was marred by intense austerity, isolationism and a pervasive cultural blackout. For the oppressed population, a new form of escapism emerged: illicit video nights in which smuggled Western films were shown. The

majority of the films were dubbed by the same person, Irina Nistor, one of the most recognizable voices in pre-revolution Romania. First-time director Ilinca Calugareanu's endearing and entertaining documentary shows how the magic of film created an awakening that helped to instill the seeds of the revolution.

A GERMAN YOUTH (France)

East Coast Premiere

Director: Jean-Gabriel Périot

Covering a decade of worldwide political unrest (1965-1975), A GERMAN YOUTH is a fascinating portrait of the Baader-Meinhof Group (a.k.a The Red Army Faction), a radical movement which drew into its orbit not only disillusioned students, but also established journalists and intellectuals as well as important filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Jean Luc Godard and RW Fassbinder. Culled together from a fascinating pastiche of agitprop, news broadcasts, interviews, student films, and other archival footage, A GERMAN YOUTH provides the context for an ideology that shaped an entire generation.

MISSING PEOPLE (USA)

East Coast Premiere

Director: David Shapiro

MISSING PEOPLE follows Martina Batan, the director of a prominent New York art gallery, as she investigates her young brother's long unsolved murder while obsessively collecting and researching the violent work and life of Roy Ferdinand, an outsider artist from New Orleans. Driven by both a hunger for closure and an inexplicable fascination with Ferdinand as an artist, Martha's journey is truthfully captured by Shapiro's brave approach to this unusual and personal story. As Martina struggles to process the information she has dug up, the inevitable collision of these parallel narratives leads to a chain of dramatic events.

THE VISIT (Finland, Denmark)

New York Premiere

Director: Michael Madsen

Michael Madsen's engrossing new documentary imagines an event that has yet to happen — an alien invasion on Earth. Leading us on a captivating journey through surreal, slow-motion, dream-like tableaux intercut with interviews with scientists from NASA, SETI (Search For Extraterrestrial Life Institute) and experts from the UN, THE VISIT takes an imagined encounter and stimulates the implications and the potential response from humankind. With questions such as "What makes you happy?," "Do you know what is good and what is evil?," "How do you think?" and of course, "Why are you here?," Madsen constructs an unsettling scenario that forces us to reconfigure our insular mentality and reflect on humanity.

NEWMAN (USA)

World Premiere

Director: Jon Fox

Orphan. Entrepreneur. Recluse. Genius. Megalomaniac. Inventor Joseph Newman is all of the above. A controversial figure in the scientific community, Newman rose to notoriety with "The Newman Device," an electromagnetic machine that he claimed

produced more energy than it took to power it. What should have been a revolutionary discovery was stopped by a lengthy and disheartening legal battle with the United States Patent Office. In his enthralling debut, filmmaker Jon Fox deftly seeks to understand the enigmatic inventor — through intimate discussions with Newman's colleagues and, surprisingly, with the man himself.

ABOUT THE HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) is a year-round 501(c)3 non-profit organization with events, screenings, film workshops, comprehensive summer programs and an annual film festival each October. The Festival is the premiere film event on New York State's east end, and is an intimate showcase of some of the year's best offerings in contemporary cinema from around the world. With cash and in-kind prizes handed out totaling more than \$165,000, HIFF continues to attract some of the best films of the year. Selections from all of our programs continue to play an important role during awards season. 2014 marked the 6th time in the last 7 years that a film at the Festival has become the eventual Best Picture winner at the Oscars, making HIFF the only Festival on the East Coast with such a distinction.

Press Contact: FRANK PR

Phone | [646-861-0843](tel:646-861-0843)

Lina Plath | lina@frankpublicity.com

Clare Anne Darragh | clareanne@frankpublicity.com