

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

23rd HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NEW SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

COMPASSION, JUSTICE & ANIMAL RIGHTS PROGRAM TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

FESTIVAL HONORS LATE DIRECTOR, PRODUCER AND LONGTIME HIFF SUPPORTER GARY WINICK BY RENAMING TALKS SERIES

UNITED NATIONS PARTNERSHIP EXTENDS EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Festival will run from October 8th-12th, 2015

East Hampton, NY (August 10, 2015) – The Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) announced today new signature programs for its 23rd year. HIFF launched the Compassion, Justice & Animal Rights program, which will provide filmmakers the opportunity to advocate social justice issues and animal rights. Also, HIFF has renamed the morning talks to Winick Talks at Rowdy Hall in honor of late director and producer Gary Winick. In addition, the festival will also partner with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s PLURAL+ International Youth Video Program as it continues to extend its education initiatives in the Hamptons. This year's festival will run from October 8th through 12th, 2015.

The Compassion, Justice & Animal Rights signature program will showcase three narrative or documentary films, one of which will receive the annual Zelda Penzel "Giving Voice to the Voiceless" Award at the festival's Awards Ceremony. The platform will look to awaken respect for the dignity and rights of living beings, and will allow filmmakers to share information and tools to create a safe and humane world.

This year, the festival has chosen to World Premiere Darcy Dennett's *The Champions* in the new signature program. The documentary follows the pit-bulls rescued from the brutal fighting ring of NFL quarterback star Michael Vick, and those who risked everything to save them, despite pressure from PETA and The Humane Society to euthanize the dogs.

"Billions of animals continue to be abused every day and denied their basic right to life and protection against violence and cruelty," said David Nugent, HIFF Artistic Director. "This new signature program will allow the festival to join the important film

movement that brings justice to animals, an effort that has been increasing impact and visibility worldwide.”

The festival also announced the Winick Talks at Rowdy Hall. Gary Winick (director: *Tadpole*, *13 Going on 30*; producer: *Tape*, *Chelsea Walls*), who premiered multiple films at the festival and who won the HIFF Audience Award in 1999 for his drama *The Tic Code*, was a longtime supporter of the festival and considered the Hamptons his second home. The Gary Winick Memorial Fund, which was established to help young filmmakers hone their craft and further the art of cinema, will support the Winick Talks at Rowdy Hall. The fund previously created scholarships at AFI and Tufts University, both schools Winick attended. Winick Talks at Rowdy Hall will take place Friday, October 9th, Saturday, October 10th and Sunday, October 11th between 10:00AM and 11:00AM, where each morning guest artists will be featured in a moderated conversation.

Focusing on the themes of migration, diversity, and social inclusion, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s PLURAL+ festival annually showcases films selected from a pool of over 200 submissions. Each year, approximately 25 films, which are a maximum of 5 minutes in length and in any language with English subtitles, receive awards selected from an International Jury.

"We are delighted to expand our on-going local student initiatives through our partnership with the UNAOC and IOM. It is part of our mission to enlighten our audiences with issues happening both worldwide and within our own backyards," said HIFF Executive Director, Anne Chaisson. "The art of film has always been a catalyst in change for a better world and understanding the human condition, and these films provide the basis for open discussion, plus informative curricula for the classroom."

HIFF will showcase these films during the film festival as well as throughout the year in East End schools. HIFF began advocating for local youth's participation in the film festival in its inaugural years. This vital connection, mainly driven by educator and HIFF Board of Directors' member Linda Biscardi Fuller, has reached thousands of students in the festival's 23-year history. This year, students will continue screening films made by youth from all over the world that address issues including challenges in their communities related to migrant integration, inclusiveness, identity, diversity, human rights and social cohesiveness.

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 go on sale August 17th and other passes September 8th. Box office will open on September 26th in NYC, East Hampton and Southampton.

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.

ABOUT PLURAL+

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival is an initiative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) focusing on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion. Recognizing youth as powerful agents of social change in a world often characterized by intolerance and cultural and religious divisions; PLURAL+ invites youth to address key challenges related to migrant integration, inclusiveness, identity, diversity, human rights and social cohesiveness - both at local and global levels. Please visit pluralplus.unaoc.org

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