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The 2021 San Luis Obispo International Film Festival Announces A Program of Diverse Voices

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

PRESS RELEASE

Film festival teams with City of San Luis Obispo to amplify discussions of inclusion and racial equity



San Luis Obispo, CA (March 8, 2021) â?? On the eve of the 27th Annual San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (March 9-14), SLO Film Fest teams with the City of San Luis Obispo to highlight the brand new free-to-the-public ***Short Films, Big Stories: A Program of Diverse Voices***, designed to amplify discussions of inclusion and racial equity in the arts and elsewhere.

As the film festival begins the transition process to bringing back beloved events like Wednesday nightâ??s Surf Nite celebration, which will be held at the Sunset Drive-in (255 Elks Lane), Festival Director Skye McLennan and Artistic Director Wendy Eidson have also worked to take more of a leadership approach regarding engaging the community and connecting them with filmmakers and notable speakers in the interest of furthering discussion and inspiring change in terms of illuminating the issues, concerns, and hopes among an array of under-represented groups.



San Luis Obispo Film Festival Director Skye McLennan

San Luis Obispo Film Festival Director Skye McLennan said, â??The intent of this program is to continue to be a platform for diverse voices in our community of San Luis Obispo. The murder of George Floyd last year and the increase in the Black Lives Matter protests that followed only amplified the need for more diversity within the arts and how crucially important representation can be. We designed this program to be free and accessible to all and an opportunity for all audiences to fall in love with film festivals and the power of the cinema. This collection of films and panels aims to inspire, stimulate and engage our community and others to participate in creating change. Through the grant received by the City of SLO we are able to pay the filmmakers, programmers, and panelists and this is something we hope to continue to expand and grow and be able to offer more opportunities in the future.â?•

Programmed by Courtney Haile, the Co-Founder of R.A.C.E Matters, ***Short Films, Big Stories: A Program of Diverse Voices***, the short film program features both narrative and documentary films from BIPOC filmmakers, whose visions amplify unique stories and experiences. The accompanying panel discussions promise lively conversations from both grassroots and studio motion picture creative change-makers.



PHONY

The films include; Kris Bowers and Ben Proudfootâ??s **A CONCERTO IS A CONVERSATION**, about a virtuoso jazz pianist and film composer who tracks his familyâ??s lineage through his 91-year-old grandfather from Jim Crow Florida to the Walt Disney Concert Hall; Orion Rose Kelly and Pedro Cotaâ??s **IN THEIR FIGHT**, which follows a group of women bravely fighting back as they track the growing violence, learn self-defense, and challenge the systems failing to keep them safe; Keith Powellâ??s **IN WHITE PLACES**, about a young black man receiving a mysterious package upon moving into a new community; Jess de la Mercedâ??s **PHONY**, which focuses on a young Asian American woman with anger issues trying to keep in together during a shopping trip with her mom; and Ciara Lacyâ??s **THIS IS THE WAY WE RISE**, which follows a Native Hawaiian slam poet who utilizes her art to protect sacred mountaintop sites atop Maunakea, Hawaii.



Virtual free-to-the-public panels include **From the Bottom Up: Building Representation in Film** on Thursday, March 11 at 6:00PM PST, with film experts discussing ways to build racial equity and diversity from production to distribution, and **Power of Media to Promote Social Justice** on Saturday, March 13 at 4:00PM PST, which will bring together local organizations to talk about the power and pros and cons of media for activism.

SLO Film Fest also announced an impressive lineup of jury members, including journalists Richard Propes (The Independent Critic), Rebecca Pahle (Boxoffice Pro), Tim Molloy (MovieMaker Magazine), Jack Moulton (Letterboxd), Glen Starkey (New Times), and Kirk Honeycutt (Former Film Critic, Hollywood Reporter), filmmakers Beth & George Gage (A HOME CALLED NEBRASKA, BIDDER 70), Sky Bergman (LIVES WELL LIVED), and Patrick Lawler (BLEEDING AUDIO) and industry veterans Erica Thompson (Executive Director, Ashland Film Festival), Logan Taylor (Acquisitions, Screen Media Ventures), Robin Robinson (Programmer, Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival & Mountainfilm), and Ryan Suffern (Head of Documentaries, Lucasfilm).

Passes are now on sale and information on the film festival can be found at https://slofilmfest.org**.**



SHORT FILMS, BIG STORIES: A PROGRAM OF DIVERSE VOICES

A CONCERTO IS A CONVERSATION

Directors: Kris Bowers, Ben Proudfoot

Country: USA, Running Time: 13 min

IN THEIR FIGHT

Directors: Orion Rose Kelly, Pedro Cota

Country: USA/Brazil, Running Time: 23 min

IN WHITE PLACES

Director: Keith Powell

Countries: USA, Running Time: 10 min

PHONY

Director: Jess de la Merced

Country: USA, Running Time: 8 min

THIS IS THE WAY WE RISE

Director: Ciara Lacy

Country: USA, Running Time: 12 min

FREE PANELS

From the Bottom Up: Building Representation in Film

Thursday, March 11 at 6:00PM PST (virtual presentation)

Film experts discuss ways to to build racial equity and diversity from production to distribution.

Moderator: Brian Khan (Director of Strategic Partnerships and Engagement, Full Spectrum Features)

Panelists include:

Sohini Sengupta (Group Creative Director, Amazon Studios)

Ivette Rodriguez (Founder, American Entertainment Marketing)

Fanshen Cox (Actor, *One Drop of Love* & Producer and Development Executive, Pearl Street Films)

Power of Media to Promote Social Justice

Saturday, March 13 at 4:00PM (virtual presentation)

Discussions with local organizations on the power and pros and cons of media for activism.

Moderator: Fanshen Cox (Actor, *One Drop of Love* & Producer and Development Executive, Pearl Street Films)

Panelists include:

Harold Brown (Lorde Santcus) (Music Licensing, Connect the Coast)

Alisa Heraldo (Co-Founder, Community Roots Project)

Courtney Haile (Co-Founder, R.A.C.E Matters)

Karen Garcia (Editor, New Times)

2021 SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FF JURY

Narrative Features

Richard Propes (Founder & Film Critic, The Independent Critic)

Erica Thompson (Executive Director, Ashland Film Festival)

Logan Taylor (Acquisitions, Screen Media Ventures & Professor, Austin Community College)

Documentary Features

Beth & George Gage (Directors, A HOME CALLED NEBRASKA, BIDDER 70)

Rebecca Pahle (Deputy Editor, Boxoffice Pro)

MarÃa Elena de las Carreras (Lecturer, Cal State Northridge, UCLA)

Narrative Shorts

Robin Robinson (Programmer, Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival & Mountainfilm)

Kirk Honeycutt (Former Film Critic, Hollywood Reporter)

Jon Eidson (Writer/Actor, Extremely Decent)

Documentary Shorts

Tim Molloy (Editor-in-Chief, MovieMaker Magazine)

Jack Moulton (Contributing Writer, Letterboxd)

Ryan Suffern (Head of Documentaries, Lucasfilm)

Sky Bergman (Director, LIVES WELL LIVED & Professor, Cal Poly)

Music Videos

Suzanne Schonig (Program Director, American General Media)
Glen Starkey (Journalist, New Times)
David Hardberger (SLO Film Fest Board of Directors)
Patrick Lawler (Cinematographer/Visual Effects, BLEEDING AUDIO)

Central Coast Filmmaker Showcase:
Jody Nelson (Director, IRON BOY, HERO OF THE GAME)
Cindy Kitagawa (Writer, COAST & Festival Programmer)
Wendy Eidson (Artistic Director, SLO Film Fest)

Filmmakers of Tomorrow Showcase:
Grace Tucker (Industry Relations Coordinator, SLO Film Fest)
Nancy Ross-Joynt (Former Coordinator, SLO Film Fest)

ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Located half-way between Los Angeles and San Francisco, San Luis Obispoâ??s laid-back vibe and serene natural beauty is the perfect setting for this highly regarded annual film celebration. Filmmakers rave about the warmth and attentiveness that is so much a part of the SLO Film fest experience, as does the swelling tide of industry pros and film critics who are fast discovering the film festivalâ??s thoughtful audiences and unique programming sensibility.

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Category

1. #SLOFilmFest
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