

AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL®
CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT NATIVE CINEMA WITH
DIVERSIFIED PROGRAMMING INCLUDING 100 FILMS, SPECIAL SPOTLIGHT SCREENINGS AND A STAR- STUDED AWARDS SHOWCASE

San Francisco, CA - The American Indian Film Institute (AIFI), announces the 35th annual American Indian Film Festival, **November 5-13, 2010**. The American Indian Film Festival will premiere over 100 innovative feature films, shorts, public service, music videos and documentaries of USA American Indian and Canada First Nation communities. Founded in 1975, AIFI has established itself as the premiere Native film festival in North America. This year's selection continues to celebrate the Festival's tradition for excellence and diversity with powerful performances and new cinematic expression by cutting-edge media makers.

"We curate our film festival to be *inclusive*, rather than *exclusive*. We promote new and established media-makers and artists to *support* their professional growth, visual /artistic integrity and *livelihood*. Indian Peoples *core power* is our innate ability to re-imagine and produce stories in our own words and images." Founder/ Director Michael Smith.

Prominent Sponsors of the 2010 American Indian Film Festival; **The Seminole Tribe of Florida (Title Sponsor); Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, CA; San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, CA; Jackson Rancheria,CA; CBS Television, NY; and Grants for the Arts,CA.**

Public screenings and events will be held for nine days, beginning **Nov. 5-10** at the Landmark Embarcadero Center Cinema, One Embarcadero Center, Promenade Level; and conclude **Nov. 11-13** at the Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon St. @ Bay Street.

Opening the Festival on Nov. 5, is the feature film *A Windigo Tale* dir. Armand Garnet Ruffo (93 min) – starring Andrea Menard (*The Velvet Devil*) and Gary Farmer (*Dead Man, Powwow Highway*). Taking its inspiration from Ojibway spiritualism, *A Windigo Tale* is a chilling and redeeming drama, with its backstory --- the residential school era, where generations of Native children were forcibly removed from their families and assimilated into Euro-Canadian society. *A Windigo Tale* will be preceded by the short film *Windigo* (11min) dir. by Kris Happyjack-McKenzie, based on the Indigenous creation myth. Also included will be the music video *The Road Forward* (10 min) dir. by Marie Clements and documentary short *Potlatch: To Give* (10 min) dir. by Barbara Cranmer.

Concluding the film portion of the Festival on Nov. 12, is the feature film *Of Mice and Men* (74 min) dir. by Kyle Hudlin-Whelan – a Native adaptation of John Steinbeck's classic novel, takes place in Winnipeg, where George (Stan Wood) and Lennie (John Cook) are displaced Aboriginal teenagers who decide to leave their remote Northern community to look for work. As their destiny unfolds tragically, they keep dreaming, not of their own farm, but of the home they left behind. This film was made entirely by an in-house student production at Argyle Alternative High School in Winnipeg, Manitoba. **Actors Stan Wood and John Cook in attendance.** Preceding will be the documentary feature *Buffy Sainte-Marie: A Multimedia Life* (60 min) dir. Joan Prowse – This one hour documentary chronicles Buffy Sainte-Marie's remarkable career as she rises to prominence in the 1960s Greenwich Village folk music scene and blazes a groundbreaking path as an Aboriginal activist, digital artist and popular songwriter. **Director Joan Prowse and Buffy Sainte-Marie in attendance.**

Other Noteworthy Film Selections:

Nov. 6:

12noon Matinee Screenings - Animation Program: AIFI presents a collection of over 13 films told using a mix of traditional animation, computer-generated effects, stop-motion, and everything in-between.

The Legend of Secret Pass* (75 min) dir. Steve Trenbirth – A computer generated animated feature film that follows the incredible journey of an American Indian boy Manu, as he battles the forces of Darkness and defies all odds by embracing his destiny as keeper of the key to the Secret Pass.Red Ochre* (3min) dir. Jerry Evans –a personal rendering of growing up Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland.**Dancer of the Grass* (2min) dir. Melanie Jackson – A stunning display of a stop motion animation that depicts the majesty of the hoop dance.

Festival Fright Night@7pm – Spotlight on Horror, Sci-fi and Thriller

* *A Flesh Offering* (85min) dir. Jeremy Torrie – A chilling story about four teenagers who are isolated at a remote cabin and are hunted by an unknown entity. Each of the friends is forced to face their own demons or one by one will fall victim. **Director Jeremy Torrie in attendance.** * *The Cave* (11min) dir. Helen Haig-Brown – A hunter on horseback accidentally discovers a portal to the afterlife in this sci-fi version of a true Tsilhqot'in story.**File Under Miscellaneous* (7min) dir. Jeff Barnaby – Set in a metropolitan hellscape, a spiritually exhausted and destitute Mi'gmaq man has resolved to assimilate into the ruling culture by undergoing a gruesome procedure to rid him of his red skin.

After Dark – Special Spotlight Presentation @10pm

* Late-night screening of director/writer Rodrick Pocowatchit's, *The Dead Can't Dance* (102 min). This zombie adventure follows three Native American men who discover they are somehow immune to a mysterious plague that is turning everyone else into zombies. **Director Rodrick Pocowatchit in**

attendance. This screening is **FREE** with an **Unwrapped New Toy or Money Donation**. All proceeds from this screening will benefit AIFI's annual **Holiday Toy Drive** for families in-need.

Nov.7 @ 7pm: **Two Indians Talking* (95 min) dir. Sara McIntyre – A comedic drama about the conflicting opinions of two First Nations men as they prepare to set up a roadblock. **Reel Injun* (85min) dir. Neil Diamond – an insightful documentary that takes an entertaining look at the Hollywood Indian through a century of cinema.

Nov. 8@7pm: **Behind the Door of a Secret Girl* (100 min) dir. Janessa Starkey & Jack Kohler – Sammy (Carly Kohler) is a teenage cutter living with her meth addicted mother and her mother's drug dealer. Her best friend David (Winter Fox Frank) decides to help her escape from the dysfunctional life she's had to endure since her father died. **Directors Janessa Starkey and Jack Kohler in attendance.**

Nov. 9@7pm: AIFI Retrospective – **Special Spotlight Presentation: AIFI 1979 Best Film and Official Selection Cannes Film Festival, 1979.**

**Spirit of the Wind* (98 min) dir. Ralph Liddle –Set in the rugged but beautiful Alaskan wilds, the film chronicles the true life story of George Atla, a famous Alaskan dog sled driver, who tries to overcome his own demons as a young man by seeking solace through dog- sled competition. Starring Pius Savage and Chief Dan George. Director Ralph Liddle in attendance.

Nov.10

Shorts Program @12noon: AIFI presents over 19 short stories that range from the highly comedic to the subtle and dark all through Native perspective.

**Cousins* (17min) dir. Sally Kewayosh – A coming of age story about two young girls, their crush on one boy and the lessons of young love and friendship.

Director Sally Kewayosh in attendance. **Savage* (6min) dir. Lisa Jackson – A residential school musical. **Ikwé* (5min) dir. Caroline Monnet – experimental film that weaves the narrative of one woman's intimate thoughts with the teachings of her grandmother.

For the evening program at 7pm, documentary feature *Hearing Radmilla* (82min) dir. Angela Webb – an in-depth portrait of Miss Navajo Nation, Radmilla Cody, from her early childhood to the scandal that shook the Navajo nation. In-person Radmilla Cody. Preceding will be award-winning short film *Shimasani* (15min) dir. Blackhorse Lowe – Set in the 1920's, the story follows Mary Jane's difficult decision to either stay at home on the reservation or leave to go to boarding school.

Nov.11@7pm: **A Good Day to Die* (92min) dir. Lynn Salt & David Mueller –The film presents an intimate look at Dennis Banks' life beginning with his early experience in boarding schools, through his military service in Japan, his transformative experience in Stillwater State Prison and subsequent founding of the American Indian Movement that, through confrontational actions in Washington DC, Custer, South Dakota and Wounded Knee, changed the socio-political status of Native Americans in the US. **Introduced by Marshall McKay, Chairman, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Executive-Producers).** **In attendance, directors Lynn Salt & David Mueller and activist Dennis Banks.**

Special Events:

Nov. 12 – Tribal Touring Program – Theatre 39@Pier39 (Beach St. and The Embarcadero)@10am. Free Admission.

The American Indian Film Institute (AIFI) is proud to celebrate its tenth year of youth film programs during this year's Festival. AIFI is able to engage hundreds of Native youth each year, where aspiring student filmmakers participate in a ten-day long film workshop supported by AIFI's tribal host partners. This year AIFI's Tribal Touring Program will showcase youth films from – **Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Brooks, CA; Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Rohnert Park, CA and Nisqually Indian Tribe, Olympia, WA.**

Nov.12 – CBS, Casting Workshop @ Radisson Fisherman Wharf @ 3:00pm – Fern Orenstein, CBS VP of Casting, NY, will conduct an intensive actor's workshop that will focus on analyzing actors' headshots and offer specific critiques on the principles of acting and casting auditions. **This program is free and open to the public. Must Register in Advance.**

"The film festival and awards show are the cornerstone of what we do — provide an opportunity and national venue for emerging and established filmmakers, entertainers and performing artists to convene, renew their artistic spirit and share their gifts." - Founder/ Director Michael Smith.

Nov. 13 – American Indian Motion Picture Awards Show

AIFI's American Indian Motion Picture Awards Show, honoring filmmakers and showcasing contemporary Native American talent, will be held on Saturday **November 13, 2010 @ the Palace of Fine Arts** beginning at **6:00pm**. Guest awards host include actors Michael Horse, Andrea Menard and Michael Spears. Fourteen awards will be presented including Best Film, Best Actor and Best Documentary. The awards show will include a mix of live entertainment by established and emerging Native artists and performers. The line-up includes: Singer **Andrea Menard**, blues band **The Plateros**, singer **Paula Bowers- Sanchez**, **Yaaw Tei Yi Tlingit dancers** from Juneau, Alaska, singer **Jeremy Good Feather**, indie singer/songwriter **Samantha Crain**, and violinist **Swil Kanim**.

A complete schedule is available on our website www.aifisf.com. All programs are open to the general public and will require tickets for admission. **Advance Tickets available thru AIFI: 415-554-0525 Visa & Mastercard. On-site tickets available at the following theater venues (on day of show.)**

* Photos available upon request as well as interviews can be arranged.

