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The Mill Valley Film Festival Returns for its 38th Year
Celebrating the Best in Independent and World Cinema
October 8 – 18, 2015

**FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE TO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS AND ACCLAIMED BAY AREA FILMMAKERS
AT THE 38TH MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL**

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (August 17, 2015) – Returning for its 38th year, the Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF), presented annually by the California Film Institute (CFI), will be held Thursday, October 8 – Sunday, October 18, 2015. Internationally recognized for showcasing the best in independent and world cinema, the Festival draws thousands of attendees every fall to Marin County for 11 days of films, panel discussions, and musical performances. The Mill Valley Film Festival provides attendees with a chance to catch an early glimpse of the Academy Award® contenders and discover some of the best films from around the world. Five out of the last seven Academy Award winners for Best Picture (*Slumdog Millionaire*, *The King's Speech*, *The Artist*, *Argo* and *12 Years a Slave*) made their California premieres at the Festival.

The California Film Institute is pleased to announce the following early-confirmed films, titles which have previously screened at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as a number of filmmakers from the San Francisco Bay Area who will premiere their films as official selections at the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival. The complete schedule will be announced and available online at www.MVFF.com on Tuesday, September 15, 2015.

Early confirmed films from the **Cannes Film Festival** at MVFF38 include:

Award-winning Italian Director Nanni Moretti's **MY MOTHER** (*Mia Madre*), a semi-autobiographical family drama starring Moretti's frequent muse Margherita Buy as a film director beset by personal trials, most notably her mother's failing health and a lead actor (John Turturro) who can't act or remember his lines. **MY MOTHER** teases with perception as the narrative moves between memory, dream, movie, and life.

Winner of the Grand Prix, **SON OF SAUL** is a debut film from Hungarian director László Nemes. A prisoner of Auschwitz in 1944 is forced to burn the corpses at the concentration camp, and finds among them the body of a boy he takes for his son. "A masterful exercise in narrative deprivation and sensory overload that recasts familiar horrors in daringly existential terms." – Justin Chang, *Variety*

Murder interrupts an intensely private man's ordered world in director Radu Muntean's (*The Paper Will Be Blue*, MVFF 2007) gripping drama **ONE FLOOR BELOW**. A central figure of Romanian New Wave cinema, Muntean builds the film's tension masterfully in this deftly acted drama about a middle-class Romanian family.

Crafted from events in his mother's life, master filmmaker Barbet Schroeder (*Barfly*, *Reversal of Fortune*, *Single White Female*) revisits his decades-long cinematic examination of moral culpability and the complexities of human nature in **AMNESIA**, a profound cross-generational exploration of historical memory and morality, set against the stark and spectacular Ibiza landscape.

Five beautiful sisters chafe under social and cultural strictures in the beautifully directed debut **MUSTANG** from Deniz Gamze Erguven. In a Turkish village situated along the Black Sea, Lale and her older siblings celebrate school's end by frolicking in the sea with some male classmates. At home, their grandmother and uncle find nothing playful in this harmless activity and set about finding eligible bachelors to marry them. Though **MUSTANG**'s focus is delicate and intimate, its themes and ramifications are nothing short of revolutionary.

Winner of Cannes' Un Certain Regard competition, **RAMS** is a touching and wry Scandinavian comedy that wittily portrays the connection between man and beast. Grimur Hakonarson's second film, with breathtaking photography, sly humor and pathos, evinces a documentarian's eye for the hardships and heartaches of rural farm life. From the put-upon sheepdog who serves as the protagonists' only mode of communication to the desperate acts each man takes to save his sheep, **RAMS** offers an indelibly artful depiction of animal husbandry.

In 1952, Ousmene Sembene, a dockworker and fifth-grade dropout from Senegal, began dreaming an impossible dream; to become the storyteller for a new Africa. **SEMBENE!** tells the unbelievable true story of the 'father of African cinema', the self-taught novelist and filmmaker who fought, against enormous odds, a monumental, 50-year-long battle to give African stories to Africans.

Todd Haynes' (*Poison*, *Safe*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Far From Heaven*) British-American romantic drama **CAROL** stars Cate Blanchett, Rooney Mara (tied for Best Actress at Cannes) and Kyle Chandler. This captivating, sensuous and richly observed film tells the story of a young shopgirl in the early 1950's who falls for an older, married woman.

Screened in the Director's Fortnight section, **A PERFECT DAY** from Spanish director Fernando León de Aranoa (*Mondays in the Sun*, *Princesas*), stars Benicio del Toro, Tim Robbins and Olga Kurylenko. This Balkan war comedy focuses on a group of aid workers called upon to resolve a crisis in an armed conflict zone.

Winner of the Palme d'Or, **DHEEPAN** is the latest film from celebrated director Jacques Audiard (*A Prophet*, *Rust & Bone*). Featuring novelist, and former Tamil Tiger child soldier Antonythasan Jesuthasan in a leading role, the story focuses on three Tamil refugees that have fled war-ravaged Sri Lanka in the hope of reconstructing their lives in France.

Mika Kaurismäki's **THE GIRL KING** paints a portrait of the brilliant, extravagant Kristina of Sweden, queen from age six, who fights the conservative forces that are against her ideas to modernize Sweden and who have no tolerance for her awakening sexuality.

Early confirmed **San Francisco Bay Area Documentaries** for MVFF38 include:

In her compelling and timely documentary, Robin Hauser Reynolds examines the history and current state of the technology and computer science industry in **CODE: DEBUGGING THE GENDER GAP** (California Premiere). Reynolds points her camera at the women and people of color within the industry (many local to the Bay Area) who are working to motivate diverse populations to understand what tech jobs have to offer them creatively as well as financially, while actively unpacking the cultural stereotypes, educational obstacles and rampant sexism which prevent so many young women and minorities from entering the computer science workforce.

Declared an elitist pursuit after the revolution, auto racing in Cuba survives as a clandestine, cop-dodging activity on remote streets and highways. Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter's vibrant, street-level

documentary **HAVANA MOTOR CLUB** (California Premiere) follows a handful of obsessed grease monkeys through the course of the Cuban Motor Federation's stop-and-go exertions to stage an organized drag-racing event.

For students, parents, educators, and anyone who cares about the future of the American education system, **BEYOND MEASURE** (World Premiere) is a call to action that demonstrates how innovation can break the stifling status quo. Bay Area director-producer Vicki Abeles has crafted a smart companion piece to her award-winning *Race to Nowhere* (MVFF 2009) that challenges the current education model of cookie-cutter teaching methods and narrow, test-driven culture that leave little room for creativity.

From Bay Area filmmaker Eli Adler and co-director Blair Gershkow **SURVIVING SKOKIE** (World Premiere), is a deeply personal documentary which follows the path of Eli's father, Jack Adler, a Polish immigrant and concentration camp survivor who built a life and family in Skokie, Illinois. In Adler's film, the quiet existence of hundreds of survivors is rocked to its core in the late '70s when a neo-Nazi group announces plans to march through this Midwest town.

In 1994, Edythe Boone was one of the seven women artists commissioned to cover San Francisco's historic Women's Building with a massive, iconic mural entitled *MaestraPeace*. Now in her 70s, the African-American artist supervises a restoration of the mural to its original brilliant colors and teaches public art to everyone from West Oakland middle schoolers to Richmond seniors. Marlene "Mo" Morris follows the veteran muralist whose art can be found all over the Bay Area commemorating the great events of her time. Those events keep coming, as we see when the death of Edy's nephew, Eric Garner, becomes a national symbol for racist policing in **A NEW COLOR: THE VERY PUBLIC ART OF EDYTHE BOONE** (World Premiere).

DOGTOWN REDEMPTION (World Premiere) captures the fascinating faces and sturdy souls of Oakland recyclers, including a former punk rocker and a misplaced minister, who often cover over 10 miles of city streets as they haul hundreds of pounds of recyclables for a modest payout. By focusing on the dramatic personal plights of these hard working individuals, the film also raises intriguing questions about the socio-economic reality of West Oakland. Filmmaker Amir Soltani combines intimate interviews and powerful all-access footage to craft an intense, heart wrenching, and occasionally hopeful portrait of society's forgotten people.

The Mill Valley Film Group returns to MVFF with a trio of compelling World Premiere documentaries addressing global issues: **THE NEW ENVIRONMENTALISTS – FROM MYANMAR TO SCOTLAND, SEA CHANGE** and **THE ROOTS OF 'ULU**.

Unconditional love might not seem a rigorous pedagogical principle, but it's the guiding precept of Lincoln High's approach to teaching troubled teens. Walla Walla, Washington high schoolers are the focus of Bay Area director/producer and MVFF alumnus James Redford's sixth documentary about uplifting responses to the acute problems of our times in **PAPER TIGERS** (California Premiere).

"Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." With that seven-word maxim, Berkeley-based journalist and healthy-planet advocate Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore's Dilemma*) distills a career's worth of reporting into a prescription for reversing the human and environmental ills of our unsustainable Western diet. In Michael Schwarz's illuminating, thoughtful documentary **IN DEFENSE OF FOOD** (World Premiere), Pollan travels the globe and the supermarket aisles to illustrate the principles of his best-selling "eater's manifesto."

Poet Robert Bly stands out even among the celebrated, revolutionary generation of American artists who burst forth in the 1950s, and Haydn Reiss' loving documentary **ROBERT BLY: A THOUSAND YEARS OF JOY** (World Premiere) charts his singular path from second son to a taciturn father on a wintry Minnesota farm to radical anti-Vietnam War activist to wild man of the 1990s men's movement.

He led one of Bob Dylan's favorite bands in the '60s, headlined shows with Willie Nelson, and was an early performer on *Austin City Limits*. So why isn't the brilliant, energetic Doug Sahn a household name? The rocking, two-stepping documentary **SIR DOUG AND THE GENUINE TEXAS COSMIC GROOVE** (California Premiere) careens through his whirlwind life and career and brings the audience along for the ride. *Live music event to follow the screening.*

Early confirmed **San Francisco Bay Area Narrative Features** for MVFF38 include:

Former UC Berkeley student Brian Perkins debuts his first feature, **THE GOLDEN KINGDOM** (US Premiere). Beautifully shot in Myanmar with non-actors, four young Buddhist monks and their abbot live peaceably in a remote mountain monastery. One day the abbot is summoned to the city and must make the dangerous journey on foot through the mountain pass. Spiritual life meets a troubled world with the keen eye of compassion.

YOSEMITE (California Premiere), based on short stories by James Franco, is the feature directorial debut from Gabrielle Demeestere. Set in suburban Palo Alto and featuring a rising cast of Bay Area locals and shot in and around the Bay Area, this nostalgic ode to boyhood weaves together the intertwined tales of three fifth-graders precariously navigating the shifting emotional grounds of their young lives in the fall of 1985.

Internationally renowned for his signature style: the emotionally intense character-driven, high-stakes approach known as Direct Action Cinema, in **PERMISSION TO TOUCH**, director Rob Nilsson (*Bridge to a Border* MVFF 2014, *A Leap to Take* MVFF 2013) spins the camera 180 degrees to focus the lens upon a fictional facsimile of himself, reprising the lead role in his 1987 Sundance Grand Jury prizewinning film *Heat and Sunlight*.

Early confirmed **San Francisco Bay Area Short Docs & Narratives** for MVFF38 include:

Meet **PENNY** Cooper (Bay Area Premiere) - "Champion of the marginalized": celebrated criminal trial attorney, lesbian and staunch supporter of the arts. Shot in the Bay Area by local filmmaker Elizabeth Sher.

In **DAY ONE** (Bay Area Premiere), director Henry Hughes—himself a combat veteran who served two tours in Afghanistan—vividly depicts a new translator's first day accompanying a US Army unit as it searches for a local terrorist.

After spending eight years at San Quentin, Ronnie Goodman turns his life around in **GOOD MAN** (World Premiere) by Doug Swope.

In **BOXEADORA** by Meg Smaker, one woman defies Castro's ban on female boxing to follow her dream of Olympic glory and become Cuba's first female boxer.

An internationally renowned artist, **IRINA ROZO** (World Premiere) is a full time sculptor and painter that lives in Napa Valley, CA. Filmmaker Ashley James documents her work and career.

In **MARATHON** by Theo Rigby and Kate McLean, Ecuadorean Julio Saucé trains for and competes in the New York City marathon.

Chris Siracuse's **FOUND** (Bay Area Premiere) is a short documentary about an Oakland-based artist who finds purpose by turning junk into imaginative kinetic sculptures.

FATHER'S DAY (World Premiere) by Emily Towers, is a dramedy about trying to patch foxholes with band-aids.

A KING'S BETRAYAL (Bay Area Premiere) by David M. Bornstein shares the tragic, final 24 hours in the life of a piñata, as told from the piñata's perspective.

In **NIETA** (*Granddaughter*) (Bay Area Premiere) by Nicolás Villareal, an incoming storm helps transform a young girl's perspective of the world

Clara Aranovich's **PRIMROSE** (Bay Area Premiere) is an unlikely love story between two creatures; one of which may or may not be human.

The complete schedule for the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival will be announced and available online at www.MVFF.com on Tuesday, September 15, 2015.

About the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute, the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 8-18, 2015 at the CinéArts@Sequoia (25 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (1118 Fourth Street, San Rafael), and other venues throughout the Bay Area. With a reputation for launching new films and creating awards season buzz, MVFF has earned a reputation as a "filmmakers' festival" by celebrating the best in American independent and world cinema, alongside high profile and prestigious award contenders. MVFF welcomes more than 200 filmmakers representing more than 50 countries.

Tickets are \$15.00 (CFI Members, \$12.50), unless otherwise noted and are available for purchase by the general public on September 20, 2015.

CFI members have an opportunity to purchase tickets prior to the general on-sale date by level beginning on the following dates:

- September 13 – Premier Patron Members and above
- September 14 – Director's Circle Members and above
- September 15 – Gold Star Members and above
- September 17 – Film Fan and Associate Members and above

For tickets and additional information, please visit www.mvff.com or call 877.874.MVFF (6833).

About the California Film Institute

The non-profit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through the presentation of the Mill Valley Film Festival and year-round exhibitions at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, film distribution by CFI Releasing, and building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through the CFI Education program. For more information visit www.cafilm.org or call (415) 383-5256.

For Calendar Editors

The 38th Mill Valley Film Festival

One of the Nation's Top 10 Film Festivals, celebrating the Best of Independent and World Cinema
Marin County, California

Thursday, October 8 through Sunday, October 18, 2015

On-Sale Date

For CFI Members: Starts Sunday, September 13, 2015 (dates vary by level)

For the General Public: Sunday, September 20, 2015

www.MVFF.com, www.CAFilm.org

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