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For Immediate Release

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

THAT'S A WRAP: THE 38TH MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL CONCLUDES

OVERALL AUDIENCE AWARD FAVORITE: LENNY ABRAHAMSON'S ROOM

FULL LIST OF AUDIENCE FAVORITES BELOW

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (October 19, 2015) – The 38th Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF) concluded last night with the California premiere of ***Suffragette***, capping 11 days of sold-out screenings with internationally acclaimed filmmakers and special guests. The 38th edition of the festival drew over 68,000 attendees to Marin County for the annual autumn showcase of films, panel discussions, and musical performances. Each year the festival provides attendees with an early look at the potential Academy Award® contenders and the opportunity to discover some of the best films from around the world.

“This was an amazing eleven days for film lovers, music enthusiasts, and members of the industry,” said Mark Fishkin, Founder/Director of the Mill Valley Film Festival. “We are so proud to be a festival that filmmakers—both local and international—return to year after year to present their films to our sophisticated and influential Bay Area audiences, who love to see and nurture these new works. Our programming team, led by Zoë Elton, has done an incredible job finding the finest films from around the world, helping make MVFF one of California’s best-known and most impactful film events of the year, offering a diverse selection of screenings, filmmaker appearances, workshops, panels, and music shows. With the beautiful backdrop of Marin County and a relaxed, non-competitive atmosphere, the Festival gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting. It’s gratifying to hear others say ‘It’s a festival second to none’”.

The festival launched on October 8 with two Opening Night films, Tom McCarthy’s investigative drama ***Spotlight***, starring Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo, and Rachel McAdams; and Tom Hooper’s transgender drama ***The Danish Girl***, starring Academy Award® winner Eddie Redmayne (MVFF37 Spotlight recipient) and Alicia Vikander. Both directors were in attendance for their screenings.

Over the course of the Festival, audiences were presented with special Spotlight presentations celebrating actress **Sarah Silverman** for her dramatic turn in *I Smile Back*, actress **Brie Larson** for her breakout role in *Room*, and actress **Carey Mulligan** for her recent work in *Suffragette*. The Festival also presented tributes to director **Catherine Hardwicke**, with a screening of her latest film *Miss You Already*; acclaimed actor **Sir Ian McKellen**; and Oscar®-winning documentarian **Marcel Ophuls**, with autobiographical film *Ain’t Misbehavin’*.

Other special guests and programs at the festival included acclaimed Iranian-born, Swiss-based filmmaker **Barbet Schroeder** with his latest film *Amnesia* as its Centerpiece presentation, **Sir Ian McKellen** delighted audience members with a special program he curated specifically for MVFF38, “Women I’ve Filmed With”, a unique presentation highlighting his work with actresses including Grace Kelly, Laura Linney, Ava Gardner and Meryl Streep.

MVFF Director of Programming Zoë Elton added, “The response to our women’s initiative, Mind the Gap, has been incredible—with engagement across the Festival. MVFF has had a long-term commitment to women in film, but in this year’s program we’ve upped the ante in the conversation about women, work, and film. Our goal was to step up and model what a film festival *can* do: We celebrated women creators from around the world in films such as Saskia Diesing’s *Nena*, Léa Pool’s *The Passion of Augustine*, and Malgorzata Szumowska’s *Body*; we identified great stories driven by female characters, including Todd Haynes’ *Carol* and Mika Kaurismäki’s *The Girl King*; we produced panels, tributes, an exhibit on Ingrid Bergman, and an installation on female role models. These events and programs galvanized audiences and filmmakers alike to engage in an issue whose time is now. Mill Valley has been a-buzz!”

“So many people stepped up: tributee Catherine Hardwicke offered an incredible master class on directing; Pamela Gray and Tom Schlesinger launched their “Heroine’s Journey” seminar; and there was a great only-in-Mill-Valley moment when Sir Ian McKellen, here to receive a lifetime achievement award, created an exclusive presentation for MVFF on “Women I Have Filmed With.” To have Sarah Gavron’s film *Suffragette* as our Closing Night film was truly serendipitous, and offered the opportunity for a full weekend celebration: the day before Closing Night, Carey Mulligan received the MVFF Award for her powerful performance in the film, and the creative team participated in a dynamic Variety Contenders panel. And to top it all off, after the *Suffragette* screening I saw Senator Barbara Boxer, who thought the film was spectacular, and felt educated, moved, and touched by it. Hearing that from someone who’s dedicated her life to women’s causes was a great way to conclude this year’s Festival and the Mind the Gap initiative.”

Additional Highlights from MVFF38 include:

Several local films and filmmakers had their world premieres and enjoyed sold-out crowds and added screenings due to popular demand for the films. Films included Oakland-based filmmakers Amir Soltani and Chihiro Wimbush’s *Dogtown Redemption*, a look at the homeless population in Oakland, California; Eli Alder and Blair Gershkov’s personal documentary about the rise of the neo-Nazi party in Skokie, Illinois, *Surviving Skokie*; and Marlene “Mo” Morris’ look at artist and activist Edythe Boone, *A New Color: The Art of Being Edythe Boone*.

Actress Jena Malone and director Mitchell Lichtenstein were in attendance for the US premiere of *Angelica*, and director Valerie Weiss was joined by her cast and crew for the world premiere of her film *A Light Beneath Their Feet*.

Writer/director Cary Fukunaga introduced his latest film, *Beasts of No Nation*, which is currently in release through Netflix, to a packed house. At the conclusion, Fukunaga welcomed the film’s 14-year-old star Abraham Attah, who won the Venice Film Festival’s Best Young Actor Award, to the stage for a post-film Q&A with MVFF Founder/Director Mark Fishkin. Attah was welcomed to the stage with a standing ovation by an emotional MVFF crowd.

Festival audiences enjoyed an exclusive photo and multimedia exhibition from Sweden celebrating the centenary of the birth of the magnificent Ingrid Bergman. *The Saga of Ingrid Bergman* will continue through October 22 in San Rafael, one of only two presentations of the exhibition in the United States. A retrospective of Ingrid Bergman’s films will also screen at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center immediately following the festival, October 19–22.

MVFF Music

Nine nights of live music at the Sweetwater Music Hall, including the Dean Ween Group with Primus’ Les Claypool, Bob Weir, Steve Kimock and friends, Tommy Igoe, Shawn Sahm and The Mother Truckers, Stroke 9, The Great Mill Valley Gospel Show curated by Grammy Award winning producer Narada Michael Walden, and more complemented the many music-focused films at the Festival.

Mind the Gap: Women | Work | Film

Taking its longstanding commitment to female filmmakers one giant step further, MVFF38 launched a festival-wide initiative on inspiring women in film. **Mind the Gap** programs were presented across the Festival, in screenings and onstage conversations, at big nights and festival honors, in panels and master classes, and in educational screenings.

Active Cinema

Each year MVFF's Active Cinema program uses the power of film to initiate and transform ideas into action. This year, issues such as sustainable food (*In Defense of Food*), gender inequality in the tech industry (*CODE: Debugging the Gender Gap*), and homelessness (*Dogtown Redemption*) engaged audiences and provided hope and opportunities for positive change.

Behind The Screens: Panels | Master Classes | Conversations

MVFF38 hosted a total of six panels, which included such luminaries as **Ed Arentz**, Managing Director Music Box Films; **Ira Deutchmann**, Founder Fine Line Features; production designer **Judy Becker**; director **Valerie Weiss**; **Russ Collins** Founder/Director Art House Convergence; producer/writer **Komal Minhas**; and director **Christopher Coppola** as well as three master classes, including **Bobby Roth: A Director Prepares**, a **Conversation with Catherine Hardwicke** and **The Heroine's Journey: Writing and Selling the Female-Driven Screenplay**, led by screenwriter Pamela Gray and story consultant Tom Schlesinger.

CFI Education at the Festival

The annual MVFF **Children's FilmFest** and CFI Education's **Filmmakers Go to School** program continue to introduce students to the power of film, with a wide range of topics that engage emotions, help change perceptions, and build understanding of communities across the globe. This year, the Filmmakers Go to School program brought local and international filmmakers and talent to **28 Bay Area schools**, including schools in Mill Valley, Tiburon, Emeryville, and San Francisco. Additionally, CFI Education invited schools from 13 Bay Area cities to free morning screenings held in Larkspur, Corte Madera, and San Rafael. Each screening was followed by live, on-stage discussions and audience Q&As with filmmakers and other guests, engaging **over 2,300 students** in first grade through college throughout the course of the Festival. Free buses were sponsored by Bellam Storage and Boxes.

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi

Star Wars fans came out in droves to enjoy a sold-out screening of *Return of the Jedi*, preceded by a costume contest and two sneak-peek trailers of *The Force Awakens*, and followed by an engaging chat with Academy Award® winning visual effects guru Dennis Muren.

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 welcomed more than 200 filmmakers representing more than 50 countries.

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, year-round exhibitions at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, film distribution by CFI Releasing, and the CFI Education program, building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences. For more information visit www.cafilm.org or call (415) 383-5256.

Supporters

As a nonprofit arts organization, CFI relies on the generosity of its community to sustain not only the Festival, but also the year-round programs of the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center and CFI Education. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundations, and individual donors ensures our continued success as we celebrated our 38th year.

CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith and Jennifer Coslett MacCready, and the continued major support of Ken and Jackie Broad Family Fund, Drusie and Jim Davis - Drusie Davis Family Fund, The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Gruber Family Foundation, Michael and Susan Schwartz Fund, The Christine Zecca Foundation and The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following Signature and Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Wells Fargo, Jackson Square Partners, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Maroevich, O'Shea & Coghlan Insurance Services, Zaentz Media Center/A Wareham Development, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Delta Airlines, and San Francisco Chronicle.



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MVFF Audience Awards 2015

The MVFF Audience Awards represent the people's choice favorites at this year's festival. The overall prizewinner scored highest across all categories; other winners scored top in each of the festival's sections: US Cinema, World Cinema, Valley of the Docs and Children's FilmFest, as well as specialty categories.

MVFF Overall Audience Favorite 2015

ROOM

Lenny Abrahamson

MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 US Cinema

SPOTLIGHT

Tom McCarthy

MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 US Cinema

TRUTH

James Vanderbilt

MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 US Cinema Indie

A LIGHT BENEATH THEIR FEET

Valerie Weiss

MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 US Cinema Indie

THE AUTOMATIC HATE

Justin Lerner

MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 World Cinema

BROOKLYN

John Crowley

MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 World Cinema

REMEMBER

Atom Egoyan

MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 World Cinema Indie

THE PASSION OF AUGUSTINE

Léa Pool

MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 World Cinema Indie

UNDER THE SAME SUN

Mitra Sen

MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 Valley of the Docs

SURVIVING SKOKIE

Eli Adler, Blair Gershkow

MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 Valley of the Docs

AN ACT OF LOVE

Scott Sheppard

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Special Mention – 2015 Valley of the Docs

A NEW COLOR: THE ART OF BEING EDYTHE BOONE

Marlene “Mo” Morris

PENNY

Elizabeth Sher

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 Children’s FilmFest

THE AMAZING WIPLALA

Tim Oliehoek

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 Children’s FilmFest

SHANA: THE WOLF’S MUSIC

Nino Jacusso

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 Mind the Gap: Women | Work | Film

SUFFRAGETTE

Sarah Gavron

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 Mind the Gap: Women | Work | Film

THE DRESSMAKER

Jocelyn Moorhouse

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Doc Award – 2015 Mind the Gap: Women | Work | Film

MAVIS!

Jessica Edwards

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Gold Award – 2015 Active Cinema

CODE: DEBUGGING THE GENDER GAP

Robin Hauser Reynolds

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 Active Cinema

DOGTOWN REDEMPTION

Amir Soltani, Chihiro Wimbush

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MVFF Audience Favorite, Silver Award – 2015 Animation

ANOMALISA

Charlie Kaufman