



Media Contacts

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*(Above numbers and emails are not for publication)*

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15, 10:30am (PST)**

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

***Festival press conference will be held  
Tuesday, September 15, 2015 10:00 AM in San Francisco***

**SAN RAFAEL, Calif.** (July 21, 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 premiere at the Festival.

#### **MVFF Music – Live at the Sweetwater Music Hall**

This year, MVFF will be in residence for nine nights at the Sweetwater Music Hall, offering world-class live entertainment for attendees and guests. Music, film premieres and live concerts have played an integral part of the Festival's long history. Past MVFF music events have featured artists from festival films as well as other special guests including Elvis Costello, Bob Weir & RatDog, Bonnie Raitt, Dan Hicks, Don Was, Charlie Haden, Blind Boys of Alabama, Taj Mahal, Les Claypool, Thomas Dolby, Maria Muldaur, Narada Michael Walden, among many others.

#### **Mind the Gap – Women, Work and Film**

MVFF takes its longstanding commitment to women filmmakers one step further in a festival-wide focus on inspiring women in film. Screenings and onstage conversations with directors, producers and actors; big nights (Spotlight on Sarah Silverman); stories driven by female characters (including an intergenerational classic, *The Wizard of Oz*); docs addressing inequalities and issues (*CODE: Debugging the Gender Gap*; *La Prenda/The Pawn*); panels (Dr. Stacy Smith of USC's Annenberg School returns to MVFF38 to report on her newest research) and educational screenings are all being curated with a view to raising awareness and celebrating women's work.

Early confirmed **Feature Films** for MVFF38 include:

**I SMILE BACK** (Bay Area Premiere), featuring a career-defining performance from Sarah Silverman as a woman in a downward spiral of reckless hedonism seeking a chance for redemption. Director Adam Salky provides no easy answers in this unflinching exploration of depression. Spotlight on Sarah Silverman and presentation of the MVFF Award.

*Orange is the New Black* star Taryn Manning delivers an emotional performance as a woman struggling to stabilize her bipolar disorder in **A LIGHT BENEATH THEIR FEET** (World Premiere), a coming-of-age drama which sets itself apart in its bold exploration of mental illness. Director Valerie Weiss assuredly elicits strong

performances from the entire cast, especially the young female lead, Madison Davenport, whose performance has firmly established her as a rising star to watch.

**YOSEMITE** (California Premiere), based on short stories by James Franco, is the feature directorial debut from Gabrielle Demeestere. Set in suburban Palo Alto and starring a rising cast of Bay Area locals, 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.

A dynamic, nuanced narrative feature debut from filmmaker Pascal Tessaud, **BROOKLYN** shares the story of young Coralie, a Swiss runaway finding her feet in the Parisian hip hop and spoken word scene. A touch of Cassavetes mixed with an unmistakably French style and a rousing, spectacular soundtrack featuring real-life Parisian hip hop artists (all of whom make appearances in the film as fictional versions of themselves), **BROOKLYN** marks the arrival of two up-and-coming artists: writer/director Tessaud and star KT Gorique, a successful MC making her first big screen appearance.

Since 2007, more than 75 people have committed suicide in the Welsh valley of **BRIDGEND** (California Premiere), most of them teenagers. What made them do it? That question haunts this dark tale, based on fact but suffused with brooding subjectivity. Hannah Murray (*Game of Thrones*) stars as Sara, a wide-eyed outsider drawn into the insular culture of Bridgend's dead-end youth. Escalating in tone from romantically dank realism to nightmare, acclaimed Danish documentarian Jeppe Rønede's first fiction feature is less an investigation than an empathetic evocation of ordinary adolescent desires driven to inexplicable extremes.

Early confirmed **Documentaries** for MVFF38 include:

Local filmmaker 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.

In Guatemala, one person is kidnapped every day. Targets are frequently children who have family in the United States. Ninety-eight percent of the kidnappers are never punished. Swiss journalist and documentarian Jean Cosme Delaloye examines the problem of abductions for ransom in **THE PAWN (LA PRENDA)** (US Premiere).

In **SURVIVING SKOKIE** (World Premiere), director Eli Adler's deeply personal documentary follows the path of his father, Jack Adler, a Polish immigrant and concentration camp survivor who built a life and family in Skokie, Illinois. But 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).

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 Cuban revolution, auto racing survived as a clandestine, cop-dodging activity on remote streets and highways. Drivers endlessly tweak the souped-up, tuned-up engines in their 1950s U.S. sedans, dreaming of the day their underground sport is sanctioned again by the authorities. 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.

**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.

Academy Award winner Barbara Kopple (*Harlan County, USA*; *American Dream*) turns her incisive lens on *The Nation*, America's oldest continuously published weekly magazine, and the brainy, impassioned team keeping it relevant in its second century in **HOT TYPE: 150 YEARS OF THE NATION** (West Coast Premiere). An American institution that debuted in 1865, the magazine has housed the voices of nearly every prominent writer and thinker of each modern moment, including Albert Einstein, Emily Dickinson, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Luther King Jr., Toni Morrison, Gore Vidal, Barbara Ehrenreich, and many more, remaining the torch bearer for the political left. Watch this polished doc to learn things you may not know about *The Nation*, but celebrate its true value in exploring the still-beating heart of the American free press.

The complete schedule for the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival will be announced and available online at [www.MVFF.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.MVFF.com), [www.CAFilm.org](http://www.CAFilm.org)