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**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES
MVFF39 FESTIVAL FOCUS, INITIATIVES & SECTIONS
FESTIVAL DATES ~ OCTOBER 6 – 16, 2016**

SAN RAFAEL, CA (July 20, 2016) – The Mill Valley Film Festival (October 6 – 16, 2016), presented by the California Film Institute, announces a Festival Focus, Festival Initiatives, and Festival Sections today, including the **Focus**: *Smoke Screens: Cannabis*; **Initiatives** *Mind the Gap: Women + Film + Tech*; *Active Cinema*; and *Viva El Ciné*; and **Sections**: World, US, Encore, Valley of the Docs, 5@5 Shorts, Family Films, and MVFF Music.

FESTIVAL FOCUSES

Each year, the Festival Focuses emerge from common themes identified by programmers during the curation of the Festival. The first of our Focuses to be announced is *Smoke Screens: Cannabis*.

About *Smoke Screens: Cannabis*:

MVFF39 expands its reach and scope this year with a focus on cannabis: in the media, on film, and in our lives. This Focus includes documentary and international feature film programming as well as a selection of shorts, plus panels and conversations with leading experts in the field, discussing medicinal, historical, and contemporary legislative issues affecting our communities.

Early confirmed films include:

ONE WEEK AND A DAY (Israel - dir. Asaph Polonsky) - narrative feature
ROLLING PAPERS (USA - dir. Mitch Dickman) – documentary feature
GREEN IS GOLD (USA - dir. Ryon Baxter) - narrative feature
5@5 SHORTS COMPILATION - "I WANT TO TAKE YOU HIGHER"

FESTIVAL INITIATIVES

Initiatives serve as a call to action, prioritizing engagement along with the film viewing experience, inspiring advancement of cultural conversations through screenings, panels, partnerships, masterclasses, and mentorship opportunities.

About *Mind the Gap: Women + Film + Tech*:

MVFF takes its longstanding commitment to women filmmakers and female-centric stories one step further with *Mind the Gap: Women + Film + Tech*. Launched in 2015 as an official Festival Initiative, *Mind The Gap* focused on raising awareness and bridging the gap for women filmmakers. In its second year, the program expands to a festival-wide focus on inspiring women in film and technology.

The 2016 *Mind the Gap: Women + Film + Tech* program provides a platform for female filmmakers and tech leaders alike, showcasing stories with strong female characters, and offering a diverse representation of women on screen and in technology. *Mind the Gap: Women + Film + Tech* seeks to bridge the behind-the-scenes opportunity divide by hosting innovative panel discussions on gender disparity in the film and tech industries, providing mentorship for early career filmmakers and tech start-ups, and creating connections with established Bay Area 'changemakers'. Leveraging our geographic location and connections in the film and tech

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industries further encourages influential support and expansion on these issues, building and connecting diverse, young and engaged audiences.

Early confirmed films include:

SHE STARTED IT (USA – dirs. Nora Poggi, Insiyah Saeed) – documentary feature
5@5 SHORTS COMPILATION – “MY WORLD”

About Active Cinema:

Mobilizing ideas into action is what *Active Cinema* is all about. MVFF’s *Active Cinema* films are united in their commitment to explore the world and its issues, engage audiences, and transform society. Post-screening discussions offer audiences concrete steps to take to channel energy into effective change. Join us for screenings and discussions throughout the Festival, support the grass-roots activism of filmmakers, and interact with admirable work by special guests, co-presenters, and partners.

About Viva El Ciné:

The Festival’s exploration of current Latin American and Spanish-language cinema includes inspiring documentaries, compelling narratives, and exuberant dialogues. Celebrating universal stories through Latino and Hispanic cultures from around the world, *este es el cine moderno*.

FESTIVAL SECTIONS

Sections unite our many films into comprehensive categories that highlight common threads throughout the Festival, including our second year curating MVFF Music. Stay tuned for more information about all of our Sections: World, US, Encore, Valley of the Docs, 5@5 Shorts, and Family Films!

MVFF Music:

Just as music and film have been linked since the beginning of popular cinema, live music has played an integral part in the long history of the Mill Valley Film Festival. MVFF Music on screen includes films about a wide variety of musical styles and artists, many followed by performances by those featured in the films.

Early confirmed films and performers include:

BANG! THE BERT BERNS STORY (USA - dir. Bob Sarles, Brett Berns) - documentary feature – Live show to feature selections of Berns' 1960s hits performed by fellow Rock and Roll Hall of Fame members. Berns (1929-1967) contributed to many 1960's musical hits, including *Twist and Shout* and *Brown Eyed Girl*.

THE BALLAD OF FRED HERSCH (USA - dir. Carrie Lozano, Charlotte Lagarde) – documentary feature – Performer FRED HERSCH, solo piano

THE GROOVE IS NOT TRIVIAL (USA - dir. Tommie Smith) - documentary feature – Performers ALASDAIR FRASER and NATALIE HAAS, Scottish fiddle and cello

Note: Tickets for films and performances will be sold separately. Live performances will be at the historic Sweetwater Music Hall in downtown Mill Valley and tickets to these shows will be sold directly at www.sweetwatermusic hall.com.

About the Mill Valley Film Festival

For nearly four decades, the world-renowned Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF) has maintained its position as a vital showcase of the global film community, attracting iconic red-carpet talent, burgeoning filmmakers, passionate audiences, and astutely curated premieres often overlooked by larger festivals. An in-demand destination for film lovers, drawn by unmatched locale and a diverse program of mainstream studio features and new visions from independent voices from around the world, MVFF also hosts an exciting array of filmmaker and industry conversations, panels, parties, and live music performances, featuring the most acclaimed emerging and veteran actors, filmmakers, and musicians of our time. A destination event for cinephiles everywhere, and known for launching new films and creating awards season buzz, MVFF has earned a deserved reputation as a “filmmaker’s festival” by celebrating the best in American, independent, and world

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cinema alongside high profile and prestigious award contenders. Presented by the California Film Institute, this year's Festival runs October 6 – 16, 2016. Opening Night Gala will be held at Marin Country Mart and Closing Night Party will be held at Cavallo Point.

Screening locations include: CinéArts@Sequoia and The Sweetwater Music Hall (Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (San Rafael), Cinemark Century Larkspur Landing and Lark Theatre (Larkspur), and Cinemark Century Cinema Corte Madera (Corte Madera).

About the California Film Institute

The non-profit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the non-profit independent theatre, Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education programs. For more information, visit <http://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 celebrate our 39th 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 and Development, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Delta Air Lines and San Francisco Chronicle and Government Support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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#MVFF39

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For Calendar Editors

The 39th 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 6 through Sunday, October 16, 2016

Tickets & information: mvff.com