



HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA, DEC 6, 2017 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“Hollywood Film Festival announces its 2017 Jury Prize Winners
and Jury Class Honors at the Paramount Theater with Honorary Chair Ed Asner”**

The Hollywood Film Festival recognized its 2017 Prize Winning Films and Filmmakers during its **“2017 Jury Class Honors”** at the Paramount Theater in Hollywood on Saturday evening, December 2nd followed by two international Virtual Honors presentations Dec 6th.

The Ceremony in Hollywood was presided over by 2017 Honorary Chair Ed Asner, winner of 8 Prime Time Emmys, 3 Golden Globes and former President of the Screen Actors Guild of America with Jury Prizes presented by Festival CEO, Brad Parks.

The evening also included a special celebration screening of *In Vino* starring Ed Asner and Sean Young, the Festival’s winner for Best Comedy Feature directed by Leonardo Foti and produced 7-Waves Entertainment and FJ Productions with Executive Producer Marco Gomez. *In Vino* was the official opening film of the Festival’s 2017 Jury Screening Season with three major upcoming Hollywood events beginning with its **Winter Wrap** in February, **Spring Showcase** in May, and runs through its **Summer Spotlight Series** in July of 2018.

This year’s Jury Class Honors also unveiled the Festival’s new “Best Hollywood” Global Grand Jury Prize category and “Exceptional Emerging Artist” honors in preparation for its upcoming 2018 Hollywood Global Grand Jury Competition. This much-expanded international filmmaking competition was first announced by the Festival’s CEO, Brad Parks, at Variety’s “Welcome to Cannes Party” during the 2017 Cannes Film Festival in May of 2017. The inaugural Global Grand Jury Competition opening event was then held in China in June of 2017 during the Shanghai International Film Festival.

With a that new global focus, and in celebrating the inspiring, impactful, and innovative artists from over 30 nations that represented our 2017 Jury Class Film Submissions, the Hollywood Film Festival is very proud to announce our **2017 Jury Class, Jury Prize Winners, and Exceptional Emerging Artist Honors:**

GLOBAL GRAND JURY HONORS

BEST HOLLYWOOD FILM

Virginia Minnesota, Directed by Daniel Stine

This ambitious, beautifully shot, and exceptionally well-acted story is the first feature film of American Director Daniel Stine. *Virginia Minnesota* is told through the eyes of two young women who unexpectedly reunite after 15 years and embark on an illuminating 24-hour journey where they unlock memories of long-forgotten innocence. Played wonderfully against each other with exceptional craft and suspense by Aurora Perrineau and Rachel Hendrix, the characters revisit a tragedy that robbed them of their inspirational friend, Virginia, the 9-year-old orphan in the story who symbolizes the childhood innocence of unconditional faith. What is unique in this film is it explores ideas of friendship and faith not as a "message" to the audience but instead as an open "question" of trust and self discovery made more poignant through the experience of two young women facing the lingering shadows of abuse and tragedy with courage and understanding. For their outstanding performances, **Aurora Perrineau** and **Rachel Hendrix** were also granted Exceptional Emerging Artists honors.

BEST HOLLYWOOD DOCUMENTARY

I am Jane Doe, Directed by Mary Mazzio

Narrated by Academy Award-nominee Jessica Chastain and directed by award-winning filmmaker Mary Mazzio, this exceptional documentary follows the epic battle waged by several American mothers waged on behalf of their middle-school daughters who became victims of sex trafficking on Backpage.com, the adult classifieds section that for years was part of the iconic Village Voice. It provides a fresh look at a social and legal issue that affects every community in America while taking it's audience on a gut-wrenching real-time journey as these young girls and their mothers run headlong into a collision course with not only Backpage but with judges, powerful corporations, special interest groups, and an outdated internet freedom law that has been interpreted by federal judges to protect websites from any responsibility for hosting ads which sell underage girls. *I am Jane Doe* is a film every American Elected Official should see and every Parent should discuss with their teenage children...and it represents a level of cinematic storytelling that every documentary filmmaker should strive to reach.

BEST HOLLYWOOD SHORT FILM

90 Days, Directed by Jennia Fredrique & Nathan Hale Williams

This riveting story of love, integrity and compassion is very kind of human storytelling that should represent the very highest ambitions of Hollywood filmmaking. *90 DAYS* explores a young couple's beautiful relationship and their life altering decision after ninety days of dating. Fueled with gripping performances by an extraordinary cast of actors led by Teyonah Parris and Nic Few with wonderful supporting contributions by Paulette Washington and Veronica Bozeman, *90 DAYS* is a groundbreaking cinematic piece of art that confronts the human experience of overcoming one of life's greatest perceived challenges. Written by Nathan Hale Williams and directed by Williams and Jennia Fredrique Aponte, the film is entertaining, authentic and a visual masterpiece. *90 Days* is a film that will touch hearts while navigating the definition of ultimate compassion. For her riveting portrayal of a young woman facing impossible circumstances with raw emotion and unwavering courage, **Teyonah Parris** was also granted Exceptional Emerging Artists honors.

HOLLYWOOD FILM FESTIVAL HONORS

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE

LUCID, Directed by Adam Morse

With artful cinematography and excellent screenwriting this very human story follows Zel (Laurie Calvert) a lonely young man whose life drastically changes when an enigmatic doctor teaches him how to lucid dream. Isolated in a big city with no friends, timid Zel simultaneously fears and craves intimacy yet develops a pitiful infatuation with dancer Jasmine until he is caught spying on her by his eccentric neighbor Elliot (Billy Zane) who offers to help him win her heart. Young Zel begins an experimental form of dream therapy and Elliot teaches him how lucid dreaming can be used to practice the art of seduction made more complicated by a budding friendship with workmate Kat (Sophie Kennedy Clark). Lust leads Zel on an intense subliminal adventure but will he be able to charm Jasmine in reality? For their outstanding performances **Laurie Calvert** and **Billy Zane** were also granted **Exceptional Emerging Artists** honors, as was **Producer Adam Rose** for his efforts behind the creation of this amazing film.

BEST COMEDY FEATURE

In Vino, Directed by Leonardo Foti

Ed Asner and Sean Young star in this smartly written "Who-Done-It" suspense comedy. Asner delivers a hilarious performance as the indefatigable and unpredictable Charles, patriarch of a plotting family as entertaining as they are peculiar. After almost being killed by one of his own, billionaire Charles convenes his family to discuss their inheritance, only to die in the meeting. In the aftermath, the family squabbles over who should take the fall, and who should inherit the dead man's fortune. For her outstanding performance acclaimed Broadway veteran **Brooks Almy** was also granted **Exceptional Emerging Artists** honors.

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT

Cold Hearts, Directed by Yolanda Ramke & Danielle Baynes

Pitted against the harsh terrain of Australia's Snowy Mountains, two colonial women haul a coffin to its final resting place, only to be confronted with a deadly surprise upon reaching their destination. Originally conceived by Raqmke and Baynes to honor the importance of strong female narratives this extraordinary short film showcases strong performances against the natural majesty of Australia in a suspenseful vignette that artfully delivers the full grandeur of great cinematic storytelling. For their outstanding performances **Yolanda Ramke** and **Danielle Baynes** were granted **Exceptional Emerging Artists** honors.

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Fallen, Directed by Thomas Marchese

A humanizing look at line-of-duty police deaths across the country, and how these losses affect those close to the fallen, as well as the communities they serve. In an era where cultural tensions are escalating and mass shootings are afar too common fate on the evening news this well crafted and thoughtful look at the lives of fallen officers from all races, genders and creeds is a stark reminder of the fragile nature of our democracy...and the true depth of courage and sacrifice of those sworn to defend it..

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Sprayed, Directed by Craig Leon

As Miami residents worry about being sprayed with chemicals in the War on Zika, a journey to Brazil and Vietnam reveals new insights. Perspectives of doctors, scientists, and politicians are balanced with voices of ordinary citizens and victims to explore concerns about the potential consequences of disease control.

BEST BREAKOUT INDIE FILMMAKER

Lyle Howry. Skinfly Entertainment

Los Angeles based Producer, Lyle Howry is the 2017 honoree for "Best Breakout Indie Filmmaker". Recognition well earned by for his exceptional work in the independent marketing and distribution the 2016 action film, *Street* and upcoming project *Street 2*. As Producer & Franchise Owner, Howry's efforts made *Street* an international best seller across all platforms including Walmart.com where it sold out in just three days, beating even Marvel's "Deadpool" in online sales. Based on that success *Street 2* is now about to begin production with acclaimed Director Dwight Little (*Last Rampage*, *Rapid Fire*) at the helm.

MOST INSPIRING NARRATIVE FEATURE

September Morning, Directed by Ryan Frost

When the world was falling apart, they came together. In the first dark hours of September 12th, 2001, five college freshmen stay up all night in a dorm room confronting the promises of youth that have been severed by national tragedy.

MOST INSPIRING NARRATIVE SHORT

The Circle, Directed by Sheldon Schwartz

A street artist and his estranged son reconnect as a result of their common interest, art. With that great storyline as a backdrop, and exceptional cinematography and direction, another very inspiring fact about this film is that it was shot 100% on drone. It is a must see piece cinema for any inspiring Director or budding drone operator. The cross-cultural **Chinese/American DIT & Drone Team** behind this film also received **Exceptional Emerging Artist** honors.

MOST INSPIRING DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Purple Dreams, Directed by Joanne Hock

Black youth stereotypes are turned upside down in the feature documentary film *Purple Dreams*. A two and a half year journey serves as an inspirational window into the lives of inner-city, at-risk students who succeed at their passion while embracing the transformative power of their arts education.

MOST INSPIRING DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Saber Rock, Directed by Matthew Locastro & Thomas Locastro

A flamboyant, fiercely loyal interpreter named Saber Rock helps turn the tide of Helmand Province, Afghanistan against the Taliban and towards the support of coalition forces. As his successes mount, so do the threats against him. Recently granted safe harbor in America Mohammad Saber Nasser "Saber Rock" was in attendance at the 2017 Jury ceremony where he also received Most Exceptional Human Being honors from the Festival to a standing ovation from the audience.

MOST IMPACTFUL NARRATIVE FEATURE

Rockaway, Directed John Budion

Inspired by true events, a man recounts the summer of '94, when he and his brother plotted revenge against their abusive father.

MOST IMPACTFUL NARRATIVE SHORT

Chocolate, Directed by Thiago DaDalt

A suburban housewife and mother suddenly finds herself homeless and lost in the Skid Row neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles. A beautiful story of family and hope and a critical message of social crisis.

MOST IMPACTFUL DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

The Heart of Nuba, Directed by Kenneth A. Carlson

The war-torn Nuba Mountains of Sudan are where American Doctor Tom Catena selflessly and courageously serves a forgotten people, as the region is bombed relentlessly by an indicted war criminal, Omar Al-Bashir. Two things remain constant: Dr. Tom's faith and his enduring love for the Nuba people.

MOST IMPACTFUL DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Hotel Everest, Directed by Claudia Sobrel

In Israel and Palestine, the road to peace is a steep climb. For three activists, one Israeli, one Palestinian and one American, the challenges seem insurmountable. And yet they try to see and understand the humanity in "the other" and forge connections that promote empathy, understanding and, in their wildest hopes, peace. Hotel Everest is their story.

MOST INNOVATIVE NARRATIVE FEATURE

Time Trap, Directed by Mark Dennis & Ben Foster

A group of students venture into the deep caves of remote Texas to locate a favorite archaeology professor who inexplicably has gone missing while searching for the Fountain of Youth. In the course of their pursuit, the group unwittingly rappels into a break in the space-time continuum, where time passes much slower than on the surface. With no hope for rescue, they descend further into the cave and uncover the most coveted urban legend in history and find themselves in the crossfire for its control.

MOST INNOVATIVE NARRATIVE SHORT (TIE)

Wink, Directed by Monica Petrillo

This ingenious short film tells the delightful story of a lonely and slightly repressed housewife who discovers an unusual way to spice up her afternoon...and is not at all what you might think. Unless that is of course you are a married woman with a husband who after watching this film might be a bit baffled at your laughter as you pat him on the back and tell him everything will be alright.

REPAIRations! - The Musical, Directed by Courtney Miller

REPAIRations! is a story about the power of optimism against forces that are seemingly more powerful than yourself. It follows the story of a man named Isaac who lives during the end of slavery (1860's), end of segregation (1960's), and President Obama's inauguration in 2008. Through song and dance, we see how Isaac navigates through an ever-changing America as he discovers what he needs to do to get his slice of the "American Pie".

MOST INNOVATIVE DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Legends of Baja, Directed by Jack Cooperman

In 1969 Steve McQueen and James Garner entered an off-road race in Baja, California, Mexico. It has come to be known as the longest, toughest and most dangerous race in the world, The Mexican 1000. More than 200 people entered the race, but less than half would finish & some would pay with their lives. This recently unearthed 16mm film shows a glimpse of a bygone era and features not only movie stars, but notable racers of the time like Parnelli Jones, Bruce Meyers & Rod Hall. Today 3 generations of racers, with dust in their veins, come back to Baja year after year to test their skills and machines on the punishing desert course.

MOST INNOVATIVE DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Saving Banksy, Directed by Colin M. Day

Internationally known graffiti artist, Banksy, left his mark on San Francisco in April 2010. Little did he know that this act of vandalism would spark a chain of events that includes one of his rats being removed from a wall, Museums ignorantly turning down a free Banksy street work, and a NY gallerist who has made it his business model to remove Banksy street works from all over the globe doing whatever it takes to get the rat in his possession.

EXCEPTIONAL EMERGING ARTIST HONORS

PRODUCING

Adam Rose - *Lucid*

SCREENWRITING

J.R. Niles - *No Apologies Writers of Rebellion*

COMPOSING

Debra Haden & Princess Frank
- *Is This Real, Scumbag*

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Justin Ward - *Meanest Man in Texas*

CINEMATOGRAPHY (DP)

Justin Ward - *KAP G "Big Racks"*

TECHNOLOGY

DTI & Drone Team - *The Circle*

EDITING

Chris Callister - *Hotel Everest*

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Bushka on Blitz on Patreon / YouTube

VR/VFX/ANIMATION

New York Times & LEGEND VR - *We Who Remain*

HISTORY

Now in its 20th year, the Hollywood Film Festival celebrates today's most inspiring independent films while introducing the world's most exceptional emerging artists to the vast resources of the Hollywood community.

MEDIA CONTACT

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EVENT PHOTOS: HollywoodFilmFestival.com

ACTING

Laurie Calvert - *Zel, Lucid*

Billy Zane - *Elliot, Lucid*

Aurora Perrineau - *Addison, Virginia Minnesota*

Rachel Hendrix - *Lyle, Virginia Minnesota*

Teyonah Parris - *Jessica, 90 Days*

Nic Few - *Taylor, 90 Days*

Yolanda Ramke - *Cold Hearts*

Danielle Baynes - *Colds Hearts*

Brooks Almy - *Miss Pruitt, In Vino*

Karl Girolamo - *The Good Ones*

DIRECTING

Vincent Sabella - *Elizabeth Blue*

Kate Didenko - *Good Boy*

Rob & Bryce Harow - *El Banditos*

Jordan Horowitz - *Painless*

Brooklyn Hudson - *The Good Samaritan*

J.R. Niles - *No Apologies Writers of Rebellion*

Tara Lynn Orr - *He Said*

Emily & Lauren Parsons - *Basically Bad*

Daniel Sarkissian - *What is Classic Rock*

Choice Skinner - *Black Lightni*