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Vancouver International Film Festival 2007 Preview

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA: August 22, 2007 - The 26th annual Vancouver International Film Festival will be held September 27 - October 12, 2007. VIFF is pleased to present films that were highly acclaimed at Cannes this year, including *Palme d'Or* winner 4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS, AND 2 DAYS by Romanian filmmaker, Cristian Mungiu (a story about illegal abortion in the waning days of the Soviet Bloc); Best Screenplay winner THE EDGE OF HEAVEN a German / Turkish co-production and the fifth feature by Fatih Akin; and Special Jury prize winner, PERSEPOLIS, by Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud (punk rock rebellion in the midst of Iran's Islamic Revolution) from Iran, where it has been banned. In Sundance and Berlin was THE WALKER (UK) by Paul Schrader, in which Woody Harrelson plays an escort for rich society, also featuring Kristin Scott Thomas, Lauren Bacall and Willem Dafoe.

With its new Kyoto Planet series, VIFF presents more films about our planet's environment, both nonfiction and fiction. Among those confirmed are THE UNFORESEEN by Laura Dunn (USA), a documentary from Austin, produced by Robert Redford and screened at Sundance, about a confrontation between developers and those preserving an aquifer and a favourite swimming hole. KHADAK (aka, The Colour of Water) by Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth, in a Belgium/Germany/Netherlands co-production, uses drama to explore the fate of Mongolia's nomads pushed into the city to avoid a livestock plague, with a remarkable East-West fusion soundtrack.

Our highly regarded Dragons and Tigers series this year will have an expanded program on China, a stellar example of our ongoing program of bridging BC and Asia. This includes films made in China and international films that reflect the Chinese diaspora. From BING AI, filmed over a decade about a Chinese peasant woman who lives near the Yangtze River's Three Gorges Dam Project and refuses to move when ordered by the authorities, to Wang Ming's documentary FENGMING : A CHINESE MEMOIR about the post-revolutionary 50s and 60s, to Ping Guo's LOST IN BEIJING about wife-swapping, we see old China and much of the new.

The 2007 VIFF will have a significant number of films from Latin America, the Middle East, Germany and Italy. Our Nonfiction programming, long known for cutting edge documentaries, particularly on the themes of the loss of human rights and damage to our planet, will yet again balance the negatives in human nature with a great number of inspiring films about music and the arts.

Canadian films already confirmed this year include TAMING TAMMY, a lively modern adaptation of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew", by Tracy D. Smith; GREEN CHAIN from director Mark Leiren Young, where nothing is ever clear-cut in the battle between loggers and environmentalists; SHE'S A BOY I KNEW by transgendered filmmaker Gwen Haworth; and NORMAL, Carl Bessai's psychological drama exploring the fallout of a deadly car accident, starring Carrie-Anne Moss.

The convergence of technologies presents VIFF with a new opportunity to partner with Vidfest, Vancouver's 4th annual digital content festival presented by New Media BC, running just ahead of VIFF.

More than 150,000 people are expected to attend approximately 550 screenings of 350 films from more than 50 countries. The 2006 VIFF lineup included 242 feature and mid-length films and 119 shorts.

The broad spectrum of fiction and nonfiction films from around the world, under the theme *Same Planet. Different Worlds*, is divided into the following sections:

NEW

- **Climate for Change**— an environmental film series sponsored by new festival partner Kyoto Planet. Nominated feature length films from the series will be eligible for a \$25,000 juried environmental award, one of the largest cash prizes at any film festival in North America. The series will include both dramatic features and documentaries and emphasize fresh information, vision and cinematic artistry.
- **Dragons and Tigers: The Cinemas of East Asia**— the largest annual exhibition of East Asian films outside Asia.
- **Nonfiction Features**— internationally recognized as one of the largest and most successful showcases of nonfiction cinema in a general festival context.
- **Canadian Images**— one of the biggest showcases of Canadian film in the world.
- **Cinema of Our Time**— our general international section comprises the most innovative and exciting cinematic developments from around the globe.
- **Spotlight on France**—This annual sidebar celebrates the unique achievements of France's strong national cinema.

Adjudicated Awards

- Citytv Western Canada Feature Film Award (\$12,000)
- Dragons & Tigers Award for Young Cinema, sponsored by Brad Birarda (\$5,000)
- Kyoto Planet "Climate for Change" Award (\$25,000)
- Women in Film and Video Vancouver Artistic Merit Award

Audience Awards

- Rogers People's Choice Award for Most Popular International Film
- People's Choice Award for Most Popular Canadian Film
- Most Popular International Documentary Award
- NFB Most Popular Canadian Documentary Award (\$2,500)

Films are shown on ten screens around Vancouver.

Many more features and shorts will soon be announced. The advance program guides will be available September 1st, and Souvenir Program Guides will be available from noon, September 15. The Starbucks Hotline 604-683-FILM (3456) will open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, September 6 to October 12. This number is for information only. VISA Charge-by-phone line, noon to 7pm daily, opens September 8 at 604-685-8297. Online up-to-the-minute news, ticket purchasing and more will be available at www.viff.org.

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