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National Museum of the American Indian Announces Lineup for 2009 Native American Film and Video Festival

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian announced today the complete lineup for its 2009 Native American Film and Video Festival. Fourteen features and 43 shorts representing 10 countries were chosen from more than 350 submissions. This year's festival celebrates its 30th anniversary and the richness and growth of indigenous film and media. The works reflect vibrant contemporary voices of Native filmmakers telling their stories and histories and sharing their unique, individual dreams and concerns, as well as those of their communities. The festival will run from Thursday, March 26, through Sunday, March 29, at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the George Gustav Heye Center.

All screenings are free and open to the public. Reservations for evening programs are strongly suggested. For reservations, e-mail fvc@si.edu or call (212) 514-3737.

The festival opens with the world premiere of "We Shall Remain: Trail of Tears" directed by Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho), Thursday, March 26, at 7 p.m. The screening will be introduced by Eyre, executive producer Sharon Grimberg and lead actor Wes Studi (Cherokee). The screenings will be introduced by the producers and community members. During the four-day festival, the voices of least 100 members of the geographically widespread, but deeply connected, community of Native American filmmakers will be heard.

Features will include "Older Than America" by Georgina Lightning (Cree), starring Adam Beach (Saulteaux) and Studi. Lightning tells the story of a woman's haunting visions that bring to light a plot to conceal atrocities that occurred at a Native American boarding school. "Pachamama" by Toshifumi Matsushita is a coming-of-age story that takes place along the salt route of the Andes in Bolivia, where a boy confronts the complexities of adult life, including death, suffering and, most sweetly and powerfully of all, first love.

Among the highlights of the short films presented will be "Sikumi/On the Ice" by Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (Inupiaq), a story of an Inuit hunter who witnesses a murder; "Mémère Métisse/My Métis Grandmother" by Janelle Wookey (Métis), in which the filmmaker leads her own grandmother to

finally embrace their Native heritage; “The Colony” by Jeff Barnaby (Mi’kmaq), a graphic depiction of a displaced Native man; and Dustinn Craig’s (White Mountain Apache/Navajo) experimental “4 Wheel War Pony.” “A Gente Luta mas Come Fruta/We Struggle but We Eat Fruit” by Bebito Piãko (Ashaninka) and Isaac Piãko (Ashaninka) is a loving portrait of the videomakers’ community in Acre, Brazil, and “A Cielo Abierto/Under the Open Sky,” a documentary by José Luis Matías (Nahua) and Carlos Perez Rojas (Mixe), documents how community landowners successfully win concessions from a gold-mining company.

Festival details can be found at www.nativenetworks.si.edu and www.redesindigenous.si.edu.

Sponsors

Funding support for the festival has been provided by the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Ford Foundation. The festival also has been made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and has received federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center. Additional funding support has been provided by the Alcaldía Indígena Bolivariana, Big Soul Productions, Canada Council for the Arts, Four Directions Charter School, Páez Fundacite, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Native American Public Telecommunications, On Screen Manitoba and WGBH’s American Experience.

About the Film and Video Center

The Film and Video Center of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian is an international leader in the presentation of indigenous film and video projects. National and international programs include the Native American Film and Video Festival, the annual Native Cinema Showcase in Santa Fe, N.M., and daily screenings for youth and general audiences. Media information is provided through the web site, by phone and e-mail; on-site research and video viewing are available by appointment.

About the George Gustav Heye Center

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, the George Gustav Heye Center, is located at One Bowling Green in New York City, across from Battery Park. The museum is free and open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays until 8 p.m. Call (212) 514-3700 for general information and (212) 514-3888 for a recording about the museum’s public programs. By subway, the museum may be reached by the 1 to South Ferry, the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green or the R or W to Whitehall Street. The museum’s Web site is www.americanindian.si.edu.