

2009 NATIVE AMERICAN FILM + VIDEO FESTIVAL

Native Networks Symposium

Friday, March 27th, 2009

For more information, contact the NMAI Film + Video Center

www.nativenetworks.si.edu (English)

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212-514-3737

FVC@si.edu

11 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Auditorium

MOBILIZING FOR SURVIVAL

Many Native communities find themselves on the front lines in a struggle to maintain their lands and ways of life and languages. A number of Festival filmmakers have focused their lens on issues facing Native peoples and indigenous actions that have been taken in their regions in response to these concerns—land and water rights, the suppression of indigenous media and indigenous movements, the active community work involved in continuing indigenous language, and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- **Tonya Gonnella Frichner** (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan), American Indian Law Alliance, New York
- **Mario Murillo**, ACIN / Northern Cauca Indigenous Association, Colombia and WBAI-FM
- **Elias Paillan** (Mapuche), Observatory for Indigenous Rights and Jvkn Mapu, Chile
- **Paul M. Rickard** (Cree), director; executive producer, *Finding Our Talk* series, Canada and international
- *Moderator*: Jose Barreiro (Taino), head of the Research Unit, National Museum of the American Indian

Tonya Gonnella Frichner (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan) is the North American regional representative to the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and founder of the American Indian Law Alliance (AILA), an indigenous, non-profit organization that works with Native nations, communities and organizations in their struggle for sovereignty, human rights, and social justice. AILA has served as the coordinator for the international efforts of the Teton Sioux Nation Treaty Council at several treaty gatherings.

Mario Murillo is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Radio, Television, and Film department at Hofstra University. In 2008-2009, he spent six months in Colombia as a Fulbright Scholar, where he worked in close collaboration with the Communication Committee of the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN), focusing on the strategic uses of communication in the indigenous movement. Murillo is a veteran host/producer on WBAI 99.5FM Pacifica Radio in New York, where he hosts of the Friday morning edition of Wake Up Call (6:00-9:00am).

Elias Paillán (Mapuche) is a radio journalist and producer. He currently works with the non-governmental organization Observatory for Indigenous Rights (ODPI) in Temuco, Chile, and belongs to the cultural and activist organization Jvken Mapu. Paillán is a specialist in Mapuche language, culture, law, history and the current situation of the Mapuche people.

Paul M. Rickard (Cree) is from Moose Factory in northern Ontario, where he is the co-founder and director of the Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival. He is the president of his own production group, Mushkeg Media, based in Montreal. Rickard has written and directed a number of award-winning works, including *Okimah*, which won the Best of the Fest award at the Yellowknife Far North Film Festival. He also directed and co-produced the documentary *Finding My Talk: A Journey into Aboriginal Languages*, which led to the development of the series, *Finding Our Talk*, for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, now in its third season

Moderator: **Jose Barreiro (Taino)** is Assistant Director for Research and Director, Office for Latin America, at the NMAI. Barreiro, one of the leading scholars of American Indian policy and the contemporary Native experience, is a pioneer in Native American journalism and publishing. He helped establish the American Indian Program at Cornell University, serving as associate director and editor-in-chief of Akwe:kon Press and the journal *Native Americas* throughout the 1980s and 90s. In 2000, he left Cornell to join the staff of *Indian Country Today* as Senior Editor. He continues to serve as a member of the editorial board of *Kacike: The Journal of Caribbean Amerindian History and Anthropology*.

CREATING THE ALTERNATIVE: A CONVERSATION WITH FOUR DIRECTORS

Native American filmmakers are often motivated to make their films for entirely different reasons than usual – maybe to be radical in terms of politics, or deeply personal, or engaged in special community settings. By working to a great extent against the grain of the mainstream feature film world, these directors have seized the space to present alternative views of what modern storytelling can do.

- **Chris Eyre** (Cheyenne/Arapaho), director, *We Shall Remain: Trail of Tears*
- **Sterlin Harjo** (Seminole/Creek), director, *Barking Water*
- **Pavel Rodriguez** (P'urhepecha), director, *Xanchuka la/That Was All*
- **Georgina Lightning** (Cree), director, *Older than America*
- *Moderator*: Jason Silverman, director, Cinematheque of the Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe

Director **Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho)** has been described as "the preeminent Native American filmmaker of his time" by *People* magazine. Eyre's films include *Smoke Signals*, which won the Audience Award at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival; and *Edge of America*, which received the 2005 Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement from the Directors Guild of America. He has received numerous prestigious artist awards including the United States Artists Fellowship and the Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowship (now a fellowship program of the Tribeca Film Institute.) More recently, Eyre has directed three of the five films in WGBH's groundbreaking Native American history series *We Shall Remain*. The theatrical world premiere of one of these, *Trail of Tears*, opens this year's festival.

Director **Sterlin Harjo's (Seminole/Creek)** latest project, *Barking Water*, screened at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival where he was praised as "one of the most truthful and honest voices working in American cinema today." His other works include the short film *Goodnight, Irene*, which was cited for Special Jury Recognition at the Aspen Shortsfest; and *Four Sheets to the Wind*, which has been widely screened nationally and internationally at film festivals and art cinemas. Harjo was the first Native American recipient of the prestigious United States Artists Fellowship and also received a 2006 Media Arts Fellowship from Renew Media (now a fellowship program of the Tribeca Film Institute). Also in 2006 Harjo won the top Creative Promise Award from Tribeca All Access for his script *Before the Beast Returns* (working title).

Pavel Rodriguez (P'urhepecha) directs documentaries and short fictions about P'urhepecha history and traditions in Michoacán, Mexico. *Hidalgo Municipio con Historia*, which he co-directed with Tomás Pérez and Gildardo Vega, won the Best Michoacán Documentary Award at the 2004 Morelia International Film Festival. His video *Tarhiata Tsakapancha/El Viento en la región de las piedras* won special mention for its reconstruction of historical memory at the 1999 Festival Americano de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Rodriguez's latest film, *Xanchuka la/That Was All*, will have its U.S. premiere at the 2009 Native American Film + Video Festival.

Actress, producer, and director **Georgina Lightning (Cree)**, is founder of Tribal Alliance Productions, an independent film company dedicated to the production of projects that highlight the talents of indigenous communities. In 2007 she was named by *Filmmaker Magazine* in its annual survey as one of the year's "New Faces of Independent Film," and in 2008 her first feature film, *Older than America*, had its world premiere at South by Southwest. *Older than America* was also in competition in numerous other festivals, three times winning the award for Best Feature, and will have its New York premiere at the 2009 NMAI Native American Film + Video Festival.

Moderator: **Jason Silverman** is Director of the Cinematheque at the Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is co-director with Elizabeth Weatherford of the annual Native Cinema Showcase, presented in Santa Fe by NMAI and CCA as part of the SWAIA Indian Market. Silverman has curated programs and consulted for numerous film festivals including the Telluride Film Festival, South by Southwest, and the Sundance Film Festival. He is also co-creator with Samba Gadjigo of *SEMBENE!* (working title) a documentary about the great Senegalese filmmaker and novelist Ousmane Sembene.

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS BORDERS

For the next wave of Native production a creative push is toward collaborations, figuring out how to work together, beyond borders, beyond continents, on multiple platforms that mix media with other creative forms. This panel presents several creative projects that explore creating partnerships with possibilities—to develop shared financing and/or new forms of distribution and/or greater involvement in film of a wider range of Native communities and their stories.

- **Laura Graham, Caimi Waiassē** (Xavante) & **David Hernández-Palmar** (Wayuu), *Owners of the Water* Project, Brazil and Venezuela
- **Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson** (Iñupiat), **Dustinn Craig** (White Mountain Apache/Navajo) & **David Vadivelo**, *Project Chariot*, Alaska
- **Ivan Sanjinés** & **Marcelina Cárdenas** (Quechua), CEFREC and CAIB, Bolivia
- **Laura Milliken** (Ojibwe), executive producer, Big Soul Productions, Toronto
- **Ryan Red Corn** (Osage), NVision, Colorado and Oklahoma
- *Moderator*: Bird Runningwater, (Cheyenne), associate director of Native and Indigenous Program, Sundance Institute

Scholar **Laura Graham**, and filmmakers **Caimi Waiassē (Xavante)** and **David Hernández-Palmar (Wayuu)**, are co-directors of *Owners of the Water: Conflict & Collaboration Over Rivers*, a documentary about the work of numerous Xavante communities to care for their shared river. **Graham** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, where she studies the role of intangible culture and the impact of new technologies on indigenous peoples. She has won numerous fellowships for her work, including a Fulbright Research-Lecture Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship. **Waiassē** is a filmmaker from the Pimentel Barbosa village in Mato Grosso state, Brazil. For years, he has recorded ceremonies and meetings in his community. Waiassē directed the film *Tem Que Ser Curioso/One Must Be Curious* and was a member of the crew for the documentary series *Indian Program*, at the TV Channel of Mato Grosso University. **Hernández** is from Maracaibo, Venezuela. A professional photographer, he has participated in numerous photographic exhibits and is co-founder of the South American Art Company (SAAC). Hernández has also worked on various documentary productions about the Wayuu people, including the video *Sujuitaya Yosuu/The Liberation of Yosuu*, for which he served as director and producer.

Filmmakers **Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson (Iñupiat)**, **Dustinn Craig (White Mountain Apache/Navajo)**, and **David Vadivelo** have recently begun collaboration on a new project titled *Project Chariot*. **Edwardson** has taught video production in Iñupiat villages in Northern Alaska through the North Slope Borough School District's (NSBSD) Youth Speak program and is the director of a video series entitled *The History of the Iñupiat*. **Craig's** most recent film, *Geronimo*, will screen as part of WGBH's groundbreaking Native American history series *We Shall Remain*. *Geronimo*, along with his experimental video *4-Wheel War Pony*, was filmed at White Mountain Apache Reservation with community actors. *4-Wheel War Pony* is screening at the 2009 Native American Film + Video Festival. **Vadivelo** is the director of *Us Mob* (www.usmob.com.au), the world's first children's interactive indigenous content television and web series and Australia's first Indigenous children's television series. *Us Mob* is featured in the 2009 Native American Film + Video Festival in its Digital Universe/Native Web panel.

Since 1997, two organizations in Bolivia have worked together on indigenous production and national television programming, media training in indigenous communities in all parts of the country, and the development of a strong Native producers alliance and a national plan for indigenous film and media. The organizations are Cinematography Education and Production Center (CEFREC) and Indigenous People's Communication of Bolivia (CAIB). The purpose of the collaboration is to "strengthen and give value to Bolivia's indigenous cultures, identities, and collective visibility." **Ivan Sanjinés** is the director of CEFREC and the former coordinator of CLACPI (the Latin American Council of Indigenous Peoples' Film and Communication). He is also the director and co-director of several films, including *El Grito de la Selva/Cry of the Forest*, which will screen at the 2009 Native American Film + Video Festival. **Marcelina Cárdenas (Quechua)** is a video producer, community radio reporter, and member of CAIB. She was a selector for the 2003 Native American Film + Video Festival, and her first feature, *Llanthupi Munakuy/Loving Each Other in the Shadows*, had its U.S. premiere during the 2002 video tour *Ojo del Cóndor/Eye of the Condor*.

Laura Milliken (Ojibwe) is co-founder and President of the Aboriginal owned and operated film and television production company Big Soul Productions Inc, based in Toronto. Big Soul produces music videos, short features, and television series, including the Gemini Award nominated series *Moccasin Flats*, which portrays the contemporary lives of Aboriginal young people. Milliken is also the former associate producer and director of public affairs for Canada's National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

Ryan Red Corn (Osage) is the co-chairman of NVision, a Native-run non-profit youth media organization headquartered in Denver, which seeks to “empower the development of leadership among Native youth and young adults through traditional and contemporary methods of art, media, culture and educational platforms.” Red Corn has a background in graphic design and has worked with Demockratees, a political T-shirt company, and his own design firm, Red Hand Media, integrating Native American imagery to produce work that is both specific to the tribal culture and contemporary in design and message. He also recently appeared for the first time on screen in film in the feature *Barking Water*, directed by Sterlin Harjo.

Moderator: **N. Bird Runningwater** (Cheyenne/Mescalero) is the Associate Director of the Sundance Institute Native American and Indigenous Program. In this capacity he scouts, world-wide and across the United States, for indigenous artists with projects that can be supported through the Institute's programs. He also oversees both the Sundance Institute-Ford Foundation Film Fellowship established for emerging Native American filmmakers and the Indigenous Producers Initiative. Runningwater has also served as the executive director of the Fund of the Four Directions and as a program associate in the Ford Foundation's Media, Arts and Culture Program.

***Native Networks** is an initiative of the Film and Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian presenting workshops, symposia, and a bilingual website. Support for the 2009 Festival and Workshop has been provided 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; by the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; and by the Ford Foundation. Additional support has been provided by Alcaldía Indígena Bolivariana Paez, Canada Council for the Arts, Four Directions Charter School, In Progress, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Native American Public Telecommunications, On Screen Manitoba, Fundacite, and WGBH.*



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