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The Destiny City Film Festival Announces Full Film Slate and Special Events

Tacoma, Wash. - Jan. 15, 2021 - The Destiny City Film Festival (DCFF) today unveiled the film lineup for its eighth annual event. Continuing its tradition of celebrating the ingenuity of independent filmmakers, the Festival will showcase 39 features and short films from ten countries. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Destiny City Film Festival will take place virtually from Feb. 26 to March 7, 2021.

“While we’ll miss our in-person celebration, we are excited about what our audience will be able to enjoy this year. Each of the films was selected because of their exceptional storytelling and the impact we believe they’ll make on our audience,” says Festival founder and executive director Emily Nakada-Alm. “This is your chance to escape, to dream, and to experience another life that you’d always wanted or been curious about.”

DCFF is particularly proud to highlight films by Washington state filmmakers, including *Limelight* directed by Claire Gostin (Gig Harbor), *The River* produced by Heather Pilder Olson (Seattle), *AJE IJO SERIES (4th INSTALLMENT FINALE): IMMORTAL* directed by Kiana Harris (Seattle), *What We See in the Clouds* directed by Barb Hoffman (Seattle), *Skipping Shorewood* directed by Evan Kubena (Seattle) and *All For One* directed by Luke Grigg (Quincy).

All films will be considered for DCFF’s 1st Prize Storyteller’s Award, Excellence in Narrative Feature Storytelling Award, Excellence in Documentary Storytelling Award, Excellence in Narrative Short Storytelling Award, and the Evergreen Storyteller Award - eligible to works by a Washington state filmmaker. Award winners will be selected by DCFF’s jury of veteran film industry professionals.

In addition to 10 days of film screenings, the Festival, funded by Tacoma Creates, will present the following free, public events curated by DCFF’s Advisory Board:

- Sunday, Feb. 28 at 2 p.m. - A New Generation of Storytellers, Co-Presented with The National Film Festival for Talented Youth (NFFTY)
- Saturday, March 6 at 1 p.m. - Beyond Inclusion: Equity, Opportunity and Film
- Saturday, March 6 at 4 p.m. - Foundations of a Screenplay Workshop: The Logline

[Early Bird VIP passes](#) are currently on sale at a discounted rate of \$50 until Feb. 1. Students are eligible to receive free passes by applying [here](#). To view the film lineup, purchase passes or register to attend any free events, please visit destinycityfilmfestival.com. See below for the full film guide.

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DESTINY CITY FILM FESTIVAL: FULL SCHEDULE

Feature Film Program

Beast Beast | Dir. Danny Madden, 87 min, Narrative (USA)

Three interwoven stories of youth navigating identity, first love, petty crime, and gun violence in the American South.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

Dave Not Coming Back | Dir. Jonah Malak, 95 min, Documentary (Canada)

In October 2004, two cave divers and long-time friends, Don and Dave, dive in Boesmanggat, a mythical cave in South Africa. Dave was breaking a world record for depth. It would take them 15 minutes to reach the bottom, but 12 hours to surface. Once he touched bottom, against all odds, Dave finds a body.

The two friends decide to come back and retrieve it. They call the parents, enroll 8 support divers, and hire a cameraman to document the historic dive in its entirety – from the preparation on the surface to the operation at the bottom of the cave.

Little did they know that, from that dive, Dave would not be coming back.

In a time of over-performance driven by self-promotion and self-filming, *Dave Not Coming Back* is a story of loss and mourning where ego and altruism, hubris and self-control, risk-taking and spirituality all go hand in hand. A chain of paradoxical choices that lead to a tragedy long foreseen, yet impossible to prevent.

The Donut King | Dir. Alice Gu, 90 min, Documentary (USA)

Ted's story is one of fate, love, survival, hard knocks, and redemption. It's the rags to riches story of a refugee escaping Cambodia, arriving in America in 1975 and building an unlikely multi-million-dollar empire baking America's favorite pastry, the donut. Ted sponsored hundreds of visas for incoming refugees and helped them get on their feet teaching them the ways of the donut business. By 1979 he was living the American Dream. But, in life, great rise can come with great falls.

Available to viewers in Washington state only.

The Falconer | Dir. Annie Kaempfer, 76 min, Documentary (USA)

This intimate portrait film follows master falconer Rodney Stotts on his mission to build a bird sanctuary and provide access to nature for his stressed community. The Falconer weaves Rodney's present-day mission with the story of his past, both of which are deeply rooted in

issues of social and environmental injustice, and consistently orient the viewer to his worldview: nature heals. The Falconer captures beauty and hope in a forgotten corner of our nation's capital, as Rodney takes the time to break through to those too often dismissed as "hard to reach". This is a story of second chances: for injured birds of prey, for an abandoned plot of land, for a group of teenagers who have dropped out of high school, and for Rodney himself.

The River | Dir. Rick Walters and Heather Pilder Olson, 91 min, Documentary (USA)

The River is a documentary about how communication and purpose play into the success and failures of managing the homeless encampment in Aberdeen, Washington. Director Rick Walters goes to The River Camp to live with and talk with the displaced inhabitants to search for meaning in their experience, and to find catharsis for his own battles with addiction and security.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

Surviving the Silence: the Untold Story of Two Women in Love Who Help Change Military Policy | Dir. Cindy L. Abel, 79 min, Documentary (USA)

Surviving the Silence tells the story of two women in love who played a part in changing military policy, shining light on the unknown history of how a closeted colonel forced to expel an Army hero for being lesbian did so in a way resulting in re-instatement via federal court.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

Take Out Girl | Dir. Hisonni Johnson, 98 min, Narrative (USA)

Tera Wong delivers Chinese food for her mother's struggling restaurant located in the "Low Bottoms," an infamous Los Angeles project. And everyone around her, including her unpredictable brother (Saren), are financially trapped in this crime and violence-ridden neighborhood. That is until, Tera takes a job from the local drug Kingpin, moving his "product" inside her takeout food boxes. With the cash rolling in, Tera intends to move the family restaurant to the suburbs and go clean. But after a series of tragic events, the dream that Tera built on a foundation of lies, may crumble.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

Toprak | Dir. Sevgi Hirschhäuser, 106 min, Narrative (Turkey)

Toprak is the dramatic story of a simple family in rural Turkey dealing with poverty, family traditions, and religious heritage. Since the death of his parents, the teenage Burak has lived with his uncle Cemil and grandmother in a remote Turkish village. The small family unit has been trying to make a living by selling fruits. While the religious Cemil is satisfied to live his life in poverty, Burak struggles to leave for the city and attend university. When grandmother falls sick, both Burak and Cemil have to make tough decisions that will change their lives forever.

Short Film Program

SHORTS BLOCK: DCFF After Dark, 74 min, Mature Audiences Only

Sunday Dinner | Dir. Kevin Mead, 14 min, Narrative (USA)

After the recent death of their parents, a passionate Italian-American family reunites to enjoy their customary Sunday dinner. But one of them has a major confession that threatens to unravel their beloved tradition.

Woodland Cemetery | Dir. Niels Bourgonje, 10 min, Narrative (The Netherlands)

A photographer has the assignment to shoot Skogskyrkogarden, a cemetery located in the woods of Stockholm. There she sees an old woman placing a lantern on a grave. When the photographer shoots a picture of this very private moment, she soon finds out that this haunting image is more haunted than she bargained for.

BABYDYKE | Dir. Tone Ottilie, 19 min, Narrative (Denmark)

16-year old Frede goes with her queer older sister to a hardcore gay techno party to try and win back her ex-girlfriend Rosa. When this goes wrong, she decides to follow her sister's less romantic advice on how to get over your ex and not be a "babydyke". This leads to Frede violating her own boundaries and results in a big confrontation between the two sisters. In the end Frede can finally go through with her original plan - but does she really want her ex back?

Tooth Fairy | Dir. Alice Bédard, 2 min, Narrative (Canada)

A young boy hears some noises at the end of the corridor. Seems like the tooth fairy came...

Redemption | Dir. Seora Hong, 4 min, Narrative (USA)

A man who feels like he has lost all reason to live. As he stands on the precipice of life and death, he faces an unexpected situation that may just save his life.

The Internet Kills | Dir. Ari Costa and Eren Celeboglu, 8 min, Narrative (USA)

Euphoria meets *The Ring*. When Victoria and her friends discover an app that kills you, they accidentally unleash something truly evil...

Flex | Dir. Matt Porter, 16 min, Narrative (USA)

After a break-up with his long time girlfriend, Charles explores parts of his sexuality that he never allowed himself to explore before.

SHORTS BLOCK: Real to Reel Shorts, 82 min

Bryan Zanisnik's Big Pivot | Dir. Nick Ravich, 7 min, Documentary (USA)

Recently returning to New York City after several years of living in Sweden, artist and storyteller Bryan Zanisnik comically chronicles the highs and lows of life as a contemporary artist, discovering a love for mushroom foraging and the pleasures of inner stillness along the way.

Say You Will | Dir. Mariel Sosa, 16 min, Documentary (USA)

Following his release from the juvenile hall at fourteen, Jeovany "Jeo" Salgado finds out he is subject to a gang injunction - a secretive law enforcement tool that will follow him for the rest of his life.

Fast forward to fourteen years later, his mother and youngest brother unveil Jeo's chronicle and how their three lives were shaped by the enduring abuse of the criminal justice system in America.

All for One | Dir. Luke Grigg, 12 min, Documentary (USA)

As part of the 1% of Asian American females playing her sport, it seemed as if UCLA women's basketball player, Natalie Chou, would never have a role model to look up to on the court... but that hero was closer than she thought.

Los Otros | Dir. Monica Pendergrass and Eric Baldetti, 13 min, Documentary (USA)

Hundreds of thousands of undocumented Americans are deported from the United States to "their country of origin" every year. What happens to these "non-citizens" after they return to a country they barely know? The short documentary *Los Otros* profiles three such undocumented individuals as they rebuild their lives in Mexico City. Separated from family and starting all over with nothing, they attempt to forge new lives in the shadow of a broken immigration system and a country not prepared for their return

Endure the Suck | Dir. Isaac Mead-Long, 16 min, Documentary (USA)

A short documentary that tells the story of two disabled military veterans, Danny and Frances, who go out sailing together in Coconut Grove, Florida.

Ava & Bianca | Dir. Rachel Fleit, 14 min, Documentary (USA)

Ava Benjamin Schorr and Bianca Cline who are cinematographers who also happen to be trans women. The film explores who they are beyond their trans identity, what it means to be a female cinematographer and last but certainly not least, what it means to be a woman in this moment in time. *Ava & Bianca* explores the complex dimensionality of identity, the magic that unfolds when

two people can find deep identification with one another, the experience of feeling seen and understood and the power of two women forging ahead in a very difficult landscape, as women, as trans people and as cinematographers.

SHORTS BLOCK: Around the World in 83 Minutes, 83 min

Roseline Like in the Movies | Dir. Sara Bourdeau, 15 min, Narrative (Canada)

Roseline is a renowned actress with an impressive career. After a lifetime on camera, she gets ready to play her greatest role yet. Fiction and reality blur together, surfacing a deeply buried secret—then: lights, camera, action.

Inès | Dir. Élodie Dermange, 4 min, Animation (France, Switzerland)

Inès is facing a difficult choice, and this evening she thinks a last time about the decision that she will make.

Good Thanks, You? | Dir. Molly Manning Walker, 13 min, Narrative (UK)

In the aftermath of an attack, Amy is left voiceless, trapped in a whirlwind of incompetence. She must find a way to confront what has happened, in order to save what matters to her most.

Sticker | Dir. Georgi M. Unkovski, 19 min, Narrative (North Macedonia)

After an unsuccessful attempt to renew his car registration, Dejan falls into a bureaucratic trap that tests his determination to be a responsible father.

The Music Video | Dir. Camille Poirier, 14 min, Narrative (Canada)

In order to be in her older brother's music video, Clara, a 13-year-old tomboy, agrees to undergo a radical change of style. She soon notices that this transformation changes her brother's friend's behaviour towards her.

Red Bean Soup | Dir. Kadi Tsang, 18 min, Narrative (USA)

In the backdrop of present-day New York, the film follows a couple in their 70s who immigrated from Hong Kong, happily married for decades. The husband (Chun), who has been suffering from Dementia, has slowly forgotten his wife (Lin). Harkening to the old days in Hong Kong selling their iconic Red Bean Soup, Lin hopes to bring her husband's memory back through the nostalgic bowl of this heartwarming desert.

SHORTS BLOCK: The Stories We Tell, 92 min

Pillars | Dir. Haley Elizabeth Anderson, 18 min, Narrative (USA)

After seeing a boy she likes before church, Amber sneaks out to the Sunday school bathroom during the service and is given her first kiss.

Lost Kings | Dir. Brian Lawes, 16 min, Narrative (USA)

Searching for food, a boy breaks into a neighborhood home. But when the homeowners return, he becomes trapped inside with those he's stealing from.

AJE IJO SERIES (4th INSTALLMENT FINALE): IMMORTAL | Dir. Kiana Harris, 14 min, Narrative (USA)

'AJE IJO' Short Dance Film Series centers the humanity, resiliency, vulnerability of Black & African diasporic people [of all genders], interrogating the western gender binary and interrupting accompanying notions of masculinity and femininity. Our individual and collective complexity, survival, thriving, and ultimately our healing as a people are at stake, and compel the elaboration of this narrative. To this end, the film elicits elements of spiritual cosmologies of the African diaspora, particularly those that emerge from the Yoruba divine consciousness, Ifa, and the Orisa (deities) that comprise it.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

The Shift | Dir. Laura Carreira, 9 min, Narrative (Portugal, UK)

Anna, an agency worker, takes her dog for a morning walk before doing her shopping. Searching through the discounted items, Anna wanders through the supermarket trying to find the most affordable necessities. As her groceries edge towards the checkout, her agency calls; she has lost her shift. The Shift aims to capture the vulnerable condition of a temporary worker and to reveal the immediate consequences of the dangerously short and ever-present distance separating employment and poverty, security and tumult.

Skipping Shorewood | Dir. Evan Kubena, 8 min, Narrative (USA)

A lovable small-town musician decides to take up the family mantle of becoming a professional athlete.

Includes filmmaker Q&A.

DỌLÁPỌ IS FINE | Dir. Ethosheia Hylton, 15 min, Narrative (UK)

Soon to leave her very British boarding school, Dọlápọ is pressured to conceal her natural hair, and to change her name in order to get a job in the City. Dọlápọ buys a wig, but the hair leaves

her questioning its uncertain origins and she is forced to reconsider her own assumptions about identity.

David | Dir. Zach Woods, 12 min, Narrative (USA)

David needs help. So does David.

SHORTS BLOCK: The Best of NFFTY, 63 min

Misfits | Dir. Ciani Rey Walker, 18 min, Narrative (USA)

When they learn their friend has kidnapped a cop on the night of MLK Jr.'s assassination, two sisters and leaders of the Black Panther Party must set aside their differences to navigate one of the most turbulent nights in history.

What We See in the Clouds | Dir. Barb Hoffman, 7 min, Animation (USA)

A lonely animator seeks companionship through asking her friends to tell her what they see in cloud pictures. She then proceeds to animate their visions.

The Mood in the United States Today | Dir. Ward Kamel, 13 min, Narrative (USA)

When a live-in nurse fears her immigration status is in jeopardy, she reluctantly agrees to her elderly patient's Green Card marriage proposal — and must quickly learn to navigate the shifting dynamics of the relationship.

Limelight | Dir. Claire Gostin, 14 min, Narrative (USA)

In the midst of a rebellion in the Republic of Congo, two young women must grapple between their political allegiances and their love for each other.

Practice | Dir. Moira Fett, 11 min, Narrative (USA)

A dystopian story of two young girls who face mounting pressure from their school's administration after a moment of sexual experimentation is documented by the body cameras pinned to their uniforms.