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7th Annual Global Peace Film Festival Announces 2009 Festival Line-Up

Program includes 39 films from six continents, K-12 student art exhibit, panel discussions and an int'l pet parade for peace

Orlando, FL - September 10, 2009 - The 7th Annual Global Peace Film Festival (GPFF) is proud to announce the films and events for the 2009 season, set for September 22nd - September 27th in select locations throughout Central Florida. With a mission to educate and inspire through the art of film, the GPFF strives to move people beyond their political, geographic and personal boundaries to embrace peace. Films will be shown at Bush Auditorium, SunTrust Auditorium, and the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College; at the Orlando Science Center; in the community room of the Winter Park Public Library; at the historic Garden Theater in Winter Garden; and at the UCF Center for Emerging Media screening room (*sponsored in part by UCF FILM and the UCF Center for Emerging Media*) across from the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, in downtown Orlando.

"This year's program takes a personal look at the many sides of peace, both local and global, and the efforts big and small that contribute to making a difference in the world," said Nina Streich, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Global Peace Film Festival.

The film program presents feature length and short films telling powerful stories from around the world. Thirty-nine films from six continents make up the program that also includes nine films from local Florida filmmakers, one of which is being shown as a work-in-progress.

The festival opens with a free outdoor screening on the Mills Lawn at Rollins College of *The Day After Peace* (UK, 2008, 81 mins.) that charts the ten year journey of director Jeremy Gilley to establish a worldwide ceasefire day on September 21st, the UN International Day of Peace, and features celebrities including Jude Law and Angelina Jolie.

The arts have always been at the forefront of movements for peace and justice. The arts again feature prominently in this year's film program. Two films by Polish documentarian Andrzej Fidyk bring stories from two countries living under dictatorships: North Korea and Belarus. *Yodok Stories* (Norway/Korea, 2008, 82 mins.) introduces us to a small group of people who have escaped from North Korean concentration camps and have relocated to South Korea where they decide to make an extraordinary and controversial musical about their experiences. *Belarusian Waltz* (Norway/Belarus, 2007, 74 mins.) follows performance artist Alexander Pushkin who in his art stands up to "Europe's last dictator." His audacious, comical exploits find him facing the hostility of the police and the consternation of his family.

Last March, thousands of concert-goers were brought together for 3 days by 2 brothers with 1 cause: The Harvest of Hope Foundation. *Uno: Harvest of Hope Fest* (USA, work-in-progress, approx. 75 mins.) shares this amazing concert and posits that while we know our doctors,

teachers and lawyers, we have little idea about our farm workers because of whose labor we enjoy low cost food.

Against the Grain: An Artist's Survival Guide to Peru (USA, 2008, 64 mins.) follows four Peruvian artists and raises the question: Is freedom of expression a right or a privilege? An unusual friendship between the filmmaker and 80-year old Japanese American artist Jimmy Mirikitani develops in ***The Cats of Mirikitani*** (USA, 2006, 74 mins.). A survivor of interment camps during World War II who lost much of his family in Hiroshima, this intimate portrait of the artist explores the lasting trauma of war and the healing power of art.

Japan features in several films in addition to ***The Cats of Mirikitani***. The short film ***Across the Sea, Across Time*** (Japan, 2009, 29 mins.) introduces us to Koshinomiya on the west coast of Japan and its cultural heritage from Buyeo County in Korea. The GPFJ-Japan takes place in Koshinomiya. ***Original Child Bomb*** (USA, 2004, 57 mins.) is inspired by the Thomas Merton poem of the same name and is a contemplation on the creation and use of the atomic bomb. And sacred temple bells become the conduit for peace and reconciliation between former enemies when they are returned from the US to Japan in ***Resonance: Odyssey of the Bells*** (USA, 2009, 29 mins., shown with *Expansive Grounds* - see below).

Two films from the Middle East show heartwarming relationships among Arabs and Israelis. On the eve of the birth of his first child, the film's director takes a journey to save his old and beloved Volkswagen in ***The Beetle*** (Israel, 2008, 70 mins.). ***Palestine, Beer and Oktoberfest Under Occupation*** (Australia, 2009, 42 mins.) introduces us to a father/daughter team who make Palestine's first beer and just want to get everyone drunk and happy.

Faith is inextricably linked to many people's views of peace and is touched on in many of the films in the program. ***With One Voice*** (USA, 2009, 78 mins.) brings together mystics from the world's great spiritual traditions to share their beliefs in the oneness of human civilization. ***With One Voice*** will be shown with the short film ***70 x 7: The Forgiveness Equation*** (USA, 2008, 36 mins.) that asks can we forgive what we cannot forget, introducing us to people who have lost loved ones to brutal murder. Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers from all corners of the globe come together to share their visions of healing the planet in ***For the Next 7 Generations*** (USA, 2009, 97 mins.); and in ***Fierce Light: When Spirit Meets Action*** (Canada, 2008, 97 mins.) award-winning filmmaker Velcrow Ripper explores the fusion between spirituality and activism.

The history and future of Tibet are explored in ***Tibet's Cry for Freedom*** (Australia, 2008, 52 mins.); ***The Dhamma Brothers*** (USA, 2008, 76 mins.) takes us behind the walls at a maximum security prison in Alabama where a unique program introduces inmates to an intense program of meditation, where for some an amazing transformation takes place; and a 17-day trip to South Africa transforms the lives of six grieving women from disparate parts of the US in ***Motherland*** (USA, South Africa, 2009, 80 mins.). ***Africa's Daughters*** (USA/Uganda, 2007, 25 mins.) introduces us to two Ugandan girls with one big dream: to lift themselves and their families out of poverty and ***12 Stones*** (Nepal/US, 2009, 22 mins.) shows the transformation of a group of illiterate women in southern Nepal through the work of Heifer International.

Narratives in this year's festival include ***Captain Abu Raed*** (Jordan, 2008, 102 mins.), Jordan's entry for the 2009 Best Foreign Film Oscar race; Giancarlo Esposito's directorial debut ***Gospel Hill*** (USA, 2008, 98 mins.) starring Angela Bassett, Samuel L. Jackson, Rza, Nia Long, Julia Stiles, Danny Glover and Esposito; and ***A Touch of Spice*** (Greece/Turkey, 2003, 108 mins.), an adventure and exploration of memory when an astrophysics professor returns from Greece to his childhood home in Turkey. ***A Touch of Spice*** will be shown the short narrative with ***Open Air*** (USA, 2008, 12 mins.)

A bicycle ride to work frames ***Dear Mr. Gore*** (USA, 2008, 65 mins.), a contemplative response to the film ***An Inconvenient Truth***. It will be shown with two short films from local filmmakers:

Epiphany at Chernobyl (USA, 2009, 11 mins.) and *Ideologies (The American Dream Song)* (USA, 2009, 4 mins.). *Expansive Grounds* (Germany, 2008, 66 mins.) is a personal exploration of the filmmaker's identity as a German citizen caused by the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the center of Berlin.

Two perspectives on the issue of immigration are considered in *Choosing Absalon* (USA, 2009, 27 mins.) and *The Other Side of Immigration* (USA/Mexico, 2009, 57 mins.) - the first reveals the impact of immigration laws on a gay couple; the second offers a perspective on undocumented immigration rarely witnessed by American eyes.

Filmmaker Kenneth Kokin (co-producer of *The Usual Suspects* and producer of *Captain Abu Raed*, also showing in the festival) introduces us to Blake Mycoskie and his company TOMS Shoes that gives a pair of new shoes to a child in need for every pair they sell in *For Tomorrow* (USA, 2008, 34 mins. Shown with *Tibet's Cry for Freedom*). Screenwriter Richard Willis, Jr. will be on hand to present *Prison Body... Freedom Soul* (USA, 2009, 33 mins.), the story of a World War II and Korea veteran who spent 44 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit and *In the Blood: Bridging the Generations* (USA, 2009, 33 mins.) about the crucial role played by African-Americans and immigrants of color in settling the American West.

The Burning Season (Australia, 2009, 90 mins.) is an eco-thriller about a young man not afraid to confront the challenge of global warming. The environment features in the programming of several films in the program, with a focus on local issues. A small fishing village fights the powerful cruise ship industry in *One Village Same Ocean* (USA, 2009, 44 mins.) while *Cracker - The Last Cowboys of Florida* (USA, 2007, 74 mins.) examines the changing landscape for this cattle producing state. *Celebrating a Forgotten Place: The Carr Family Cabin in the Florida Scrub* (USA, 2009, 12 mins.) and *Out Here in the Field: Quail Hill Farm* (USA, 2008, 10 mins.) reveal the importance of preserving ecological treasures and farmland.

Many filmmakers will be on hand to answer questions after the screening of their films. In addition to the films, the GPFF is host to four discussion panels held throughout the week. Topics range from "What is Peace?" that will include a dialogue among local Imams and Rabbis; "Making Films that Make a Difference" with the filmmakers of the upcoming film "Letters to God" that filmed in and around Orlando; a discussion of Sylvia Caminer's work-in-progress "Project Tanzania" is the focus of the "Peace Pitch;" and the "Media Day of Dialogue" will look at the issue of press coverage and the health care reform debate.

The GPFF has also entered into several local and global cross-promotional partnerships this year. Locally, the GPFF is now associated with the **Orlando Museum of Art's Global Lens** film series (running now thru November 2009). Its goal is to build new partnerships and give the community an opportunity to learn about diverse communities through the language of film.

On a universal level, the GPFF has joined forces with **PEACE in OUR Lifetime**, a Planting Seeds & The Kind Foundation Initiative, (www.planting-seeds.com), an organization that aims to count one billion people around the world who make a personal and conscious choice to stand together for peace, freely and uniquely; and to unite all: causes, people, cultures, nations, beliefs and non-beliefs' to one voice. They are achieving this via their website (www.peaceinourlifetime.org) where they acknowledge and thank each person who adds their voice to peace by providing them with a free personalized certificate' and unique voice number.

Other GPFF Events:

Sunday, September 20th ~ 2nd Annual Global Peace Street Fair and International Pet Parade for Peace. BullFish and New Broad Street in Baldwin Park. Street Fair is from 10am - 3pm. Pet Parade starts at 11am. FREE.

Monday, September 21st ~ For a fourth year, OCPS Service Learning/GPFF Peace Art Exhibit by students (K-12 from 20 schools in Orange County) will be on display in the Rotunda of Orlando's City Hall. This will include a reception/awards ceremony in the Rotunda at 3:00pm. FREE.

NOTE: This is in honor of the United Nations' International Day of Peace, a global holiday when individuals, communities, nations and governments highlight efforts to end conflict and promote peace. (www.internationaldayofpeace.org)

Tuesday, September 22nd ~ Opening Night Outdoor Screening at Rollins College on Mills Lawn. 8pm. FREE. Indoor venue in case of rain.

Wednesday, September 23rd ~ The Florida premier of the inspirational new Australian film "The Burning Season. Speaker at film by Dr. Noel Brown, President & CEO of Friends of the United Nations and former Director of the UN Environmental Programme. A benefit for GPFF, Windermere Prep School and Habitat for Humanity. Cocktail Party at 6:30pm (\$80pp includes film). Screening at 8:00pm (\$17pp) at the historic Garden Theatre in Winter Garden.

Thursday, September 24th ~ Special outdoor screening in Baldwin Park, sponsored by Rollins College. 8pm. FREE.

Saturday, September 26th ~ A day of environmental-focused screenings at the Orlando Science Center including a special guests from Gatorland. 10am - 5pm. Tickets available through Orlando Science Center

Tickets to the Global Peace Film Festival screenings are \$8 each, and are on sale now. Tickets may be purchased at Bullfish in Baldwin Park or on www.peacefilmfest.org/film. Tickets are available at all festival venues during festival hours - cash only. Patrons may also purchase a Silver Pass for \$99 and a Gold Pass for \$199 via www.redchairproject.com.

The Global Peace Film Festival is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Arts & Cultural Affairs Program and a grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. The GPFF is proud to be carbon neutral thanks to our sponsor, Southeast Carbon/Tradax Green Energy. Other sponsors include the Orlando Weekly, Florida Travel & Life magazine, Sustainable Synergy, Rollins College, BullFish in Baldwin Park, Doverwood Communications, Inc., and IDEAS.

For more information on the GPFF, visit the official website at: www.peacefilmfest.org, social media platforms: www.twitter.com/PeaceFilmFest or www.facebook.com/PeaceFilmFest or stop by the GPFF Headquarters at BullFish, 4899 New Broad Street, in Baldwin Park. BullFish's phone number is 407-894-3474.

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