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**PRESS RELEASE**

**The 2023 San Luis Obispo International Film Festival**

**announces film lineup for 29th edition**

**(April 25-May 7)**

**Matt Johnson’s BLACKBERRY is the Opening Night**

**selection and Marvin Samel’s IMORDECAI**

**is the Closing Night selection**

**SLO Film Fest’s’s special screenings, events, and programs include**

**Hunter S. Thompson Tribute, Surf Nite at the Fremont,**

**MicroHorrors, Cal Poly Shortcuts, *E.T.,* *Roman Holiday, and***

**Oliver Stone’s *Nuclear Now***

** **

***Blackberry*, *IMordecai***

**San Luis Obispo, CA (March 22, 2023) –** The 29th Annual San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (April 25-30) announced this year’s robust film lineup, led by the Opening Night selection of Matt Johnson’s ***BlackBerry*** and the Closing Night selection of Marvin Samel’s ***IMordecai***. Also on tap are the return of SLO Film Fest’s famous Surf Nite to the historic Fremont Theater, the always popular **Central Coast films**, **Cal Poly Shortcuts**, and more special presentations and top lining film events featuring **MicroHorrors**, **Coastal Awakening: A Tribute to Hunter S. Thompson**, **R.A.C.E. Matters Textures of Love** program, and the **SLO Jewish Film & Learning** series which will extend the film festival following its traditional closing night date.

 Two people on a bicycle

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*E.T., Roman Holiday, Nuclear*

Additional Special Presentations include retrospective screenings of Steven Spielberg’s ***E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*** (1982), Daisy von Scherler Mayer’s ***Party Girl*** (1995), which introduced Parker Posey into indie film fame, a 70th Anniversary screening of William Wyler’s classic Audrey Hepburn/Gregory Peck starrer ***Roman Holiday*** (1953), Oliver Stone’s latest, the documentary ***Nuclear Now***, which looks at the use of Nuclear energy through new eyes disputing common held beliefs about its safety and viability, and Christopher Fitzpatrick’s festival hit music documentary ***Oklahoma Breakdown***, complete with a live performance by the film’s subject, midwestern music legend Mike Hosty.

San Luis Obispo Film Festival Director Skye McLennan said, “This year, the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival is focused on programming films and creating fun and exciting film events that are not available to our film fans every weekend at the multiplex. Film festivals give us an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the love of cinema and filmmaking and to see something unique or rare or inspired that can’t easily be found on our television screens or laptops at home. Seeing great films, meeting, and rubbing elbows with the filmmakers and actors responsible for them, and going to fun events built around all of it is what we promise to bring to SLO this year.”

Matt Johnson’s ***BlackBerry*** comes to SLO Film Fest on Opening Night following its debut at SXSW. The film is a decidedly funny take on the true story of the whirlwind ride through Silicon Valley that led to the creation and development and ultimate crash and burn of the Blackberry smart phone. Along with Johnson, the film stars Jay Baruchel (*How to Train Your Dragon*), Glenn Howerton (*It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*), and Rich Sommer (*Mad Men*). On Closing Night, Marvin Samel’s comedic drama ***IMordecai*** stars Sean Astin stars an ambitious cigar maker trying to support his own family while still being there for his aging parents, played by Academy Award-nominee Judd Hirsch and the beloved film icon, Carol Kane. When Mordecai’s ancient flip phone breaks, he starts to take lessons on his new iPhone, opening him up to all kinds of novel experiences and adventures, making him feel like a kid again.



*100 Foot Wave*

SLO Film Fest’s **Surf Nite**, the film festival’s signature one-of-a-kind surfing film event, will return this year to its traditional home at the historic Fremont Theater The event will be highlighted by a presentation of HBO’s ***100 Foot Wave*** series directed by and featuring legendary Big Wave Surfer Garrett McNamara and Nicole McNanmara. Along with the traditional celebration of surfing, it will be a rare opportunity to see the show on the big screen and hear from Garrett himself and what’s upcoming in Season 2.

**Coastal Awakening: A Tribute to Hunter S. Thompson** will screen three films in celebration of writer Hunter S. Thompson, whose appreciation for countercultures and consciousness expansion exemplifies the mission and vision of the Coastal Awakening, a loose collective of local writers, artists, historians, chefs, surfers, and philanthropists committed to preserving and promoting the unique creative spirit of the Central Coast from Ojai to Esalen. Accompanying screenings of Wayne Ewing’s ***Animals, Whores & Dialogue: Breakfast with Hunter Vol. 2*** (2010), Terry Gilliam’s ***Fear and Loathing In Las Vegas*** (1998), and Alex Gibney’s ***Gonzo*** (2008), will be audience talkbacks with David S. Wills, founder of the literary journal Beatdom and author of High White Noise.

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*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, Intruder*

Horror film lovers will enjoy a special treat at SLO Film Fest this year with the addition of **MicroHorrors**. Katie Neville and Jason Kaiser, founders of the killer annual October DIY Film Festival, will present a special evening of tricks and treats featuring some of the top films from the past two fests along with an exclusive retrospective slasher straight from the archives, Sam Spiegel’s influential 1989 underground classic, ***Intruder***.

**Cal Poly Short Cuts** films created by Cal Poly students under the mentorship of Screenwriter and Editor, Professor Randi Barros returns, R.A.C.E. Matters will team with the film festival to present **Textures of Love,** a free program of five contemporary short films that will evoke the experience of feeling the different textures of love. Before the program, there will be a brunch mixer with appetizers, bubbles, and exciting updates. Another exciting addition to SLO Film Fest is the **SLO Jewish Film & Learning** series (April 30-May 7) that will follow Closing Night. The presentation of Jewish themed films will be led by Amanda Kinsey’s ***Jews of The Wild West***. The documentary is a look at Western Jewish pioneers and the role they played shaping the expansion of the country.

A person holding an object

Description automatically generated with low confidence A group of people on a motorcycle

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*The Beehive, Rodeo, Dusty and Stones*

More film highlights include Alexander Lasheras’s ***The Beehive***, a Canadian sci-fi drama follows a family facing an unexplainable cosmic event and threat from an unusually large beehive growing on a branch of one of their trees. Justin Chon’s ***Jamojaya*** comes to SLO Film Fest following the film’s debut at Sundance. The film follows an aspiring Indonesian rapper, who must wrestle control of his career and life from his suffocating but loving stage dad, while trying to find his voice. Lola Quivoron’s ***Rodeo*** is an exciting French feature which debuted at the Venice Film Festival. The film focuses on a young woman in the high-octane world of urban ‘Rodeos’— illicit gatherings where riders show off their bikes and latest daring stunts. On the documentary side, Ahsen Nadeem’s ***Crows Are White*** finds the filmmaker seeking guidance at a Japanese monastery. However, the only monk who will help him prefers ice cream and heavy metal over meditation. Jesse Rudoy’s ***Dusty and Stones*** looks at the film’s subjects struggle to sustain a country music career in their tiny African kingdom of Swaziland as they are unexpectedly invited to record their songs in Nashville and compete in a Texas battle of the bands.

The San Luis Obispo International Film Festival will also once again put local filmmakers on a pedestal via its always-popular Central Coast Showcase and encourage the filmmaking ambitions of elementary, middle school and high school students with its Filmmakers of Tomorrow Showcase.

Passes are now on sale and information on the film festival can be found at https://slofilmfest.org**.**

**The 2023 San Luis Obispo International Film Festival official selections:**

**Opening Night Gala Selection**

***Blackberry***

Director: Matt Johnson

Country: USA; Running Time: 122 min

The story of the meteoric rise and catastrophic demise of the world’s first smartphone.

**Closing Night Gala Selection**

***Imordecai***

Director: Marvin Samel

Country: USA; Running Time: 102 min

Based on a true story, *IMordecai* is a comedy about a Holocaust survivor whose life changes when his son buys him an iPhone. Mordecai (Judd Hirsch) likes to fix things. It’s why his phone is 20 years old and held together with duct tape and tinfoil. It’s why he worked his entire life as a plumber and a painter. But this is a story about the things he cannot fix: Getting older, the Alzheimer’s diagnosis of his wife Fela (Carol Kane), his relationship with his son Marvin (Sean Astin). Sometimes, something small and unexpected can change your whole world. For Mordecai, this moment happens when his son, Marvin, replaces his ancient phone with a brand-new iPhone. This act sets off a series of unexpected events and magically changes both Mordecai and the people closest to him. Mordecai becomes friends with the “Einsteins,” led by Nina, who teach him to use this strange device with no buttons. He becomes open to new experiences and new perspectives. Ultimately, through letting go, he begins to heal the things he cannot fix and turn the pain of his past into something beautiful.

**SLO Film Fest’s Surf Nite**

***100 Foot Wave***

We’re excited to present the *100 Foot Wave* Experience with legendary Big Wave Surfer Garrett & his partner Nicole McNamara in attendance. McNamara’s Emmy award winning show exploring big wave surfing and the pursuit conquering the 100-foot wave. This is a rare opportunity to see the show on the big screen and hear from Garrett himself and what’s upcoming in Season 2.

**Coastal Awakening Presentations: A Tribute to Hunter S. Thompson**

***Animals, Whores & Dialogue: Breakfast with Hunter Vol. 2*** (2010)

Director: Wayne Ewing

Country: USA, Running Time: 91 min

Documentary goes deeper into Gonzo journalism with intimate scenes of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson at work writing, editing, and recounting the creation of classics like Hells Angels and Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.

***Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*** (1998)

Director: Terry Gilliam

Country: USA, Running Time: 118 min

An oddball journalist and his psychopathic lawyer travel to Las Vegas for a series of psychedelic escapades.

***Gonzo*** (2008)

Director: Alex Gibney

Country: USA, Running Time: 120 min

A portrait of the late gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson.

***Cal Poly Short Cuts***

Cal Poly Short Cuts features 10 short films (TBA) created by Cal Poly students under the mentorship of Randi Barros, screenwriter, editor, and ISLA Lecturer, and James Werner, Associate Professor and Chair of Art & Design. These films depict stories reflecting the promising filmmaker' shared sentiments and creative visions. Engage with emotionally charged stories exploring love, loss, discovery, and unexpected moments of connection. From writing the scripts to filming the scenes, students of different majors have come together to bring their stories to life. See tomorrow’s filmmakers at work today.

***MicroHorrors***

***Intruder*** (1989)

Director: Scott Spiegel

Country: USA, Running time: 88 min

The overnight stock crew of a supermarket are stalked and slashed by a mysterious maniac.

***MicroHorrors Shorts***

***Discernment*** (2021)

Director: Lakin Jacino

***Massacre Of the Sorority Babes*** (2022)

Director: Matt McGill

***Potty Mouth*** (2022)

Director: Ian Meyers

***Silence Your Phones*** (2022)

Director: Jason Kaiser

**Jewish Film Fest**

***Jews Of the Wild West***

Director: Amanda Kinsey

Country: USA; Running time: 80 min

Western Jewish pioneers are a largely forgotten chapter in US History, yet they have played a definitive role shaping the expansion of the country. Nationally known names such as Levi Strauss, Samsonite founder Jesse Shwayder and the Guggenheim family built their great fortunes in California and Colorado, and by the end of the 19th Century nearly every notorious Wild West town had a Jewish mayor.

***The Broken Candle***

Director: Felix Kiner

Country: USA; Running time: 9 min

The heartwarming tale of Nira, a broken Hanukkah candle, who becomes the shamash (lead candle) on the last night of the Festival of Lights.

***Omi***

Director: Adam Lebowitz-Lockard

Country: USA; Running time: 15 min

A comedic nightmare about a young man about to take his next step with his shiksa girlfriend but gets possessed by the dybbuk of his Yiddish grandmother, who has plans of her own.

**Additional Special Presentations**

***E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*** (1982)

Director: Steven Spielberg

Country: USA; Running Time: 115 min

After a gentle alien becomes stranded on Earth, it is discovered and befriended by a young boy named Elliott (Henry Thomas). Naming the extra-terrestrial E.T., he brings his new friend into his suburban home and introduces the alien to his brother and his little sister, Gertie (Drew Barrymore). Though the children decide to keep its existence a secret, E.T. soon falls ill, resulting in government intervention and a dire situation for both Elliott and the alien.

***Mama Bears***

Director: Daresha Kyi

Country: USA; Running Time: 91 min

Spread across the country but connected through private Facebook groups, over 30,000 mothers in America—many from conservative, Christian backgrounds—fully accept their LGBTQ+ children. And they call themselves "mama bears" because while their love is warm and fuzzy, they fight ferociously to make the world kinder and safer for all LGBTQ+ people. *Mama Bears* explores the journeys of two mama bears and a young lesbian whose struggle for self-acceptance exemplifies why the mama bears movement is vitally important.

***Moon Garden***

Director: Ryan Stevens Harris

Country: USA; Running Time: 93 min

When a little girl has a terrible accident and slips into a coma, she finds herself thrust into a darkly surreal industrial dreamworld. Haunted by a nightmarish spectre that feeds off her tears, she must follow her mother’s radio-static voice to find her way back to consciousness. Shot on expired 35mm film stock with vintage rehoused lenses, *Moon Garden* is a fantastical odyssey and a visionary, handcrafted, and fully practical work of art that shows how a child can shine light even in the darkest places.

***Nuclear Now***

Director: Oliver Stone

Country: USA, Running Time: 105 min

As fossil fuels cook the planet, the world is finally forced to confront a massive disinformation campaign about humanity’s cleanest, safest, and fastest energy source – nuclear energy. Beneath our feet, Uranium atoms in the Earth's crust hold incredibly concentrated energy. Science unlocked this energy in the mid-20th century, first for bombs and then to power submarines, and the United States led the effort to generate electricity from this new source. Yet in the mid-20th century as societies began the transition to nuclear power and away from fossil fuels, a long-term PR campaign to scare the public began, funded in part by coal and oil interests. This campaign would sow fear about harmless low-level radiation and create confusion between nuclear weapons and nuclear power. With unprecedented access to the nuclear industry in France, Russia, and the United States, director Oliver Stone explores the possibility for the global community to overcome the challenges of climate change and energy poverty to reach a brighter future through the power of nuclear energy.

***Oklahoma Breakdown***

Director: Christopher Fitzpatrick

Country: USA; Running Time: 92 min

Mike Hosty is a one-man band, freak of nature, comedian, and talented musician able to produce original pieces and performances on the fly. When Stoney LaRue turned Hosty's "Oklahoma Breakdown" into the #1 hit of 2007, few knew anything about the creator. *Oklahoma Breakdown* dives into why an underground legend has his reservations about fame and limelight.

***Party Girl*** (1995)

Director: Daisy von Scherler Mayer

Country: USA; Running Time: 94 min

A brand-new restored version of a cult classic that was the first film to ever premiere live on the internet in 1995! Parker Posey's stars as a 20-something, irresponsible party girl who bailed out of jail by her librarian godmother. To repay the loan, she starts working at the library and gradually turns her life around. This is a rare opportunity to see this unique film oozing with fashion, one-of-a-kind characters, and a non-stop party!

***Roman Holiday*** (1953)

Director: William Wyler

Country: USA; Running Time: 118 min

In celebration of its 70th anniversary, we bring back a cinematic classic in a beautiful, restored version. Audiences are invited to fall in love with Oscar®–winners Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck all over again in this romantic comedy classic. Roman Holiday features a legendary, Oscar®–winning performance from Hepburn (in her first starring role). Nominated for a total of 10 Academy Awards®, including Best Picture, it’s the story of a modern-day princess who, rebelling against the royal obligations, explores Rome on her own. She soon meets an American newspaperman (Gregory Peck) who pretends ignorance of her true identity, in the hopes of obtaining an exclusive story. Naturally, his plan falters as they inevitably fall in love.

***Searching For Sugar Man*** (2012)

Director: Malik Bendjelloul

Countries: Sweden, United Kingdom, Finland; Running Time: 86 min

This music documentary still remains as a captivating tale about the best singer- songwriter you've never heard of. An Oscar®-winning documentary that tells the remarkable story about a man by the name of Sixto Rodriquez. Rodriquez, the child of a Mexican immigrant with working class parents in Detroit, Michigan, had the voice and songwriting skills of Bob Dylan but his albums failed to sell in the United States in the 1970s. Little did he know that he was in fact a cultural phenomenon, in South Africa. Two South African record store owners go on a quest to get to the bottom of what happened to their musical hero.

***We Are Still Here***

Directors: Beck Cole, Dena Curtis, Tracey Rigney, Danielle MacLean, Tim Worrall, Renae Maihi, Miki Magasiva, Mario Gaoa, Richard Curtis, Chantelle Burgoyne

Country: USA; Running Time: 90 min

*We Are Still Here* is a unique Indigenous film that weaves together eight powerful tales to tell a sweeping story of hope and survival. Through the eyes of these protagonists, the film traverses 1,000 years (past, present, and future) to explore kinship, loss, grief, and resilience. In a universal story, *We Are Still Here* ultimately showing the strength of love and hope in overcoming shared traumas that Indigenous people from Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific continue to face.

**Additional Narrative Features**

***The Beehive***

Director: Alexander Lasheras

Country: Canada; Running Time: 86 min

A captivating science-fiction drama follows a family facing an unexplainable cosmic event on their farm. When the young, curious, and adventurous Rosemary discovers what she assumes to be a large beehive growing on a branch of one of their trees, she visits it each day to carefully document its unusual growth and soon discovers it’s not what she thought it was. Featuring up-and-coming Indigenous talent and a scenic Canadian landscape, as the hive and threat grows, so do tensions within the community and family.

***Everybody Wants to Be Loved***

Director: Katharina Woll

Country: Germany; Running Time: 80 min

On a blisteringly hot summer day, psychotherapist Ina notices something is wrong with her but doesn't have time to worry about it. With patients waiting at her practice, her daughter threatening to move in with her father, her boyfriend pressuring to move them to another country, and her self-centered mother's 70th birthday party closing in, Ina is desperate to please everyone without losing herself.

***Home Owners***

Directors: Pablo Aragues, Marta Cabrera

Country: Spain; Running Time: 72 min

In search of their forever home, Ana and Maxi are shown the house of their dreams for less than their budget. Everything is perfect until they realize that it is even better than they thought: the house gives them everything they ask for. This fast-paced, surrealist, and thrilling comedy leaves you on the edge of your seat as Ana and Max discover what happens when they stop asking the house for what they want.

***I Like Movies***

Director: Chandler Levack

Country: Canada; Running Time: 99 min

Teenage cinephile Lawrence dreams of attending film school in the Fall. To raise the hefty tuition fee, he gets his dream job at a local video store, Sequels. Wracked with anxiety about his future, he begins alienating the most important people in his life — his best friend Matt and his single mother Terri — all while developing a complicated friendship with his older female manager, Alana. As graduation looms, a series of painful realizations force Lawrence to realize that he has some growing up to do.

***Jamojaya***

Director: Justin Chon

Country: USA; Running Time: 90 min

Straight from Sundance, *Jamojaya* follows James, an aspiring Indonesian rapper, as

he records his debut album for a major U.S. record label. Accompanied in Hawaii by his father and former manager, who is still mourning the death of James’ brother and unwilling to surrender control of his career, James sinks deeper in debt to the label. Caught between the music industry’s commercial demands and a power struggle with his suffocating but loving stage dad, James is forced to find his voice.

***Land Of Gold***

Director: Nardeep Khurmi

Country: USA; Running Time: 105 min

First-generation Punjabi truck driver Kiran is a soon to be dad. When on the job he

hears pounding inside his shipping container and finds a young Mexican American girl inside, his already tumultuous life takes a drastic turn as he seeks to reunite her with her family. What begins as a road trip to Boston becomes much more as they form a friendship and teach each other unforgettable lessons.

***Mediterranean Fever***

Director: Maha Haj

Countries: Palestine/Germany/France/Cyprus/Qatar; Running Time: 108 min

Waleed, an aspiring writer suffering from chronic depression, develops a close relationship with his new neighbor, a small-time crook. Though having an ulterior plot in mind, the scheme turns into an unexpected friendship between the two men and leads them through a journey of dark encounters.

***Our Father, The Devil***

Director: Ellie Foumbi

Country: USA; Running Time: 108 min

An African refugee works as the head chef at a retirement home in small-town France, but her quiet existence is upended by the arrival of Father Patrick, a charismatic priest with whom she’s convinced she shares a traumatic past in her homeland. As Father Patrick charms all her co-workers, Marie must decide if she will exact her revenge or cling to the new life she’s built. Nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. Content Warning: Mature themes and sexual trauma.

***Rodeo***

Director: Lola Quivoron

Country: France; Running Time: 107 min

A unique and high-speed first-time feature from Venice Film Festival, *Rodeo* shares the story of a hot-tempered and fiercely independent Julia, who thrives in hostile environments and turns every situation to her advantage. Her obsession with the high- octane world of urban ‘Rodeos’— illicit gatherings where riders show off their bikes and latest daring stunts — sparks a chance meeting with a volatile clique. Striving to prove herself to the ultra-masculine gang, Julia performs cons and runs errands for their incarcerated ringleader.

***Scrapper***

Director: Charlotte Regan

Country: UK; Running Time: 84 min

Following her mother’s death, a resourceful 12-year-old girl, Georgie, continues to live alone in their London-outskirts flat. Making money stealing bikes and keeping the social workers off her back by pretending to live with an uncle, her plan works like a charm until Jason (Harris Dickinson, Triangle of Sadness), her long-estranged father, shows up. Sizing him up as a rubbish dad, Georgie wonders why he’s suddenly taking an interest. Straight from Sundance, this vibrant, joyful, imaginative father-daughter story beautifully brings together two emotionally tangled people: a grieving kid thrust into adulthood and a father in over his head.

***Unidentified Objects***

Director: Juan Felipe Zuleta

Country: USA; Running Time: 100 min

Peter is a misanthropic little person hiding from the world in his shabby New York City apartment. When an unexpected visit from his upbeat and unhinged neighbor Winona forces him out of his shell and onto an impromptu road trip to what she believes to be an upcoming alien visitation site, he reluctantly agrees. On their increasingly surreal odyssey, Peter and Winona encounter bickering lesbian cosplayers, shroom-addled survivalists, and even extraterrestrial highway cops. But the further they go and the more their trauma comes to light, it becomes clear that the only thing more nerve-wracking than being abducted is being alone in the universe.

**Additional Documentary Features**

***Body Parts***

Director: Kristy Guevera-Flanagan

Country: USA; Running Time: 86 min

In an industry historically dominated by the male gaze, *Body Parts*, featuring Jane Fonda and other prominent actresses in the industry, traces the evolution of intimacy on screen, uncovering the often invisible and uncomfortable realities behind some of the most iconic scenes in cinematic history. Exploring the toll, it takes on those directly involved and their impact on women in the real world, this insightful and revealing documentary celebrates the positive changes now rippling through the entertainment industry and the bold creators leading the way.

***Butterfly In the Sky***

Directors: Bradford Thomason, Brett Whitcomb

Country: USA; Running Time: 86 min

This nostalgic and feel-good documentary tells the story of the beloved PBS children’s series, Reading Rainbow, its iconic host LeVar Burton, and the challenges its creators faced in cultivating a love of reading through television. With the series focused on bringing books to life and finding fun in reading, Reading Rainbow and Burton became a conduit to learning for children of every background, delving behind the pages to the people, places, and things each story explored.

***Crows Are White***

Director: Ahsen Nadeem

Country: USA; Running Time: 100 min

After decades of living a secret life and struggling to reconcile his desires with his faith, a filmmaker travels to a strict Japanese monastery in search of guidance. But the only monk who will help him prefers ice cream and heavy metal over meditation. Together they forge an unlikely friendship that leads them to higher truths and occasionally a little trouble. Shot over five years on three continents, *Crows Are White* is an exploration of truth, faith, and love, from the top of a mountain to the bottom of a sundae.

***Dusty And Stones***

Director: Jesse Rudoy

Country: USA; Running Time: 83 min

Dusty and Stones struggle to sustain a country music career in their tiny African kingdom of Swaziland and yearn for greater recognition. When they are unexpectedly invited to record their songs in Nashville and compete in a Texas battle of the bands, the two cousins journey to the heart of American country music, determined to win big and turn their careers around.

***The Grab***

Director: Gabriela Cowperthwaite

Country: USA; Running Time: 104 min

In the newest documentary by the director of *Blackfish* (2013), an investigative journalist uncovers the truth behind the money, influence and rationale that goes into the covert efforts to control the most vital resources on the planet — food and water.

***Hollywood's Finest***

Director: Claire Hannah Collins

Country: USA; Running Time: 78 min

An intimate portrait of motherhood on the streets of Los Angeles, *Hollywood’s Finest* follows Mckenzie through pregnancy in a Hollywood unhoused encampment to the fight to recover her child from the custody of the city's Family Services. By detailing the support Mckenzie received from her street family, nomadic mom, and social worker with her own history of addiction and housing insecurity, *Hollywood’s Finest* investigates the complex network of social workers and bureaucracy she encounters while struggling to find her footing in mainstream society.

***In Pursuit of Flavor***

Director: Gerod Bond

Country: USA; Running Time: 61 min

An apologetic sommelier returns to his once-home of Georgia, to explore the humble and hidden truth about wine and its inception. In touring the lush countryside and documenting the deceptively simple process of Georgian winemaking and the unique fruits of its labor — namely, orange wine — Ashwin rediscovers the original magic that saved his life and brought him to the world of flavor.

***Lovely Jackson***

Director: Matt Waldeck

Country: USA; Running Time: 104 min

Following the longest wrongfully incarcerated person in U.S. history, *Lovely Jackson* is the harrowing true story of Rickey Jackson, a man who spent 39 years on death row and in prison for a crime he was convicted of based solely on the eye-witness testimony of a 12-year-old neighborhood paper boy. In a retelling of his experience, Jackson returns to the prison he was sent to as an innocent man and guides his younger self from death row to freedom.

***No Ordinary Campaign***

Director: Christopher Burke

Country: USA; Running Time: 82 min

At just 37, Brian Wallach was diagnosed with ALS and quickly discovered that there is no system built to help patients like him deal with this new reality. Instead, he found a broken and failed system in which doctors told patients to “get their affairs in order and get ready to die." From executive producer Katie Couric and featuring interviews with Barack Obama and Mark Zuckerberg, *No Ordinary Campaign* follows the formation of I AM ALS, Brian's patient-led nonprofit dedicated to patients taking control of the fight for their lives, breaking down walls and finding new solutions.

***Okay! The ASD Band Film***

Director: Mark Bone

Country: Canada; Running Time: 87 min

Following the members of The ASD Band, four talented musicians with autism embark upon the challenging journey of writing their first original album and gearing up to perform in their first live show.

***Pasang: In the Shadow of Everest***

Director: Nancy Svendsen

Country: USA; Running Time: 71 min

Though Nepalis assist as sherpas for tourists daily, Pasang Lhamu Sherpa risked everything to become the first Nepali woman to summit Everest. As an uneducated, indigenous woman and a Buddhist in a Hindu kingdom, Pasang’s dream to scale the legendary mountain pitted her against family, foreign climbers, her own government, and nature itself. Her determined pursuit of Everest plays out within the context of her nation’s quest for democracy and the emergence of the commercial climbing industry.

***Relentless Ride***

Directors: Brian Hill, Adam Harbottle

Country: USA; Running Time: 106 min

Every year, cyclists brave the Arkansas High Country bike-packing race on some of the

best and worst gravel roads in the state, riding 1,000 miles and climbing 80,000 feet. With little to no sleep and having to carry, find, or buy everything needed to complete the course, some cyclists push their limits to achieve the fastest known time while others simply try to finish the race and find themselves along the way. As bodies fail and minds betray, these cyclists explore the depth of their own humanity.

***Surf Nation***

Directors: Jessica Chen, Jeremiah Bogert Jr.

Country: USA; Running Time: 88 min

As China trains its first generation of Olympic surfers, two promising young athletes navigate adolescence, freedom, and their love of the sport. Filmed over a two-year period, *Surf Nation* follows as hundreds of young recruits leave their families and are paid to live together in a communal hotel, take classes six days a week, and become elite surfers. Though the recruits face extreme pressure to avoid being kicked out of the program, their Australian coaches teach not only technique, but surfing’s central attribute: individuality, in a culture that demands conformity.

***Vicuna Salvation***

Director: Luis Ara

Country: USA; Running Time: 65 min

At more than 5,000 meters above sea level, *Vicuna Salvation* tells the incredible story of the conservation of a species and the empowerment of a community that lives in the Peruvian mountains. With the vicuña producing the finest wool fiber in the world and its garments costing thousands of dollars, poachers and the black market led to the near extinction of the species. Alerting the Peruvian government to the situation, global brands and communities made a pact to only market garments that were made with certified fiber.

**Narrative Shorts**

***Crooked Trees Gon Give Me Wings***

Director: Cara Lauren Lawson

Country: USA; Running Time: 15 min

***Hit Man: Secrets of Lies***

Director: Elias Plagianos

Country: USA; Running Time: 19 min

***I Have No Tears, And I Must Cry***

Director: Luis Fernando Puente

Country: USA; Running Time: 13 min

***Keep/Delete***

Director: Kryzz Gautier

Country: USA; Running Time: 19 min

***Laika And Nemo***

Director: Jan Gadermann, Sebastian Gadow

Country: Germany; Running Time: 15 min

***The Mattress***

Director: Arash Hassanpour

Country: Iran; Running Time: 7 min

***Miso***

Director: Kelly Walker

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***My Dear Son***

Director: Wing Yan Lilian Fu

Countries: Hong Kong/UK; Running Time: 9 min

***My Eyes Are Up Here***

Director: Nathan Morris

Country: UK; Running Time: 14 min

***Mysore Magic***

Director: Abijeet Achar

Country: USA; Running Time: 14 min

***Other Half***

Director: Lina Kalcheva

Country: UK; Running Time: 14 min

***Out Of Tune***

Director: Portlynn Tagavi

Country: USA; Running Time: 15 min

***Rest Stop***

Director: Noah Sellman

Country: USA; Running Time: 15 min

***Rosemary A.D (After Dad)***

Director: Ethan Barrett

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***Smoke Eater***

Director: Gloria Mercer

Country: Canada; Running Time: 12 min

***The Sprayer***

Director: Farnoosh Abedi

Country: Iran; Running Time: 9 min

***They Grow Up So Fast***

Director: John F Beach

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***The Van***

Director: Bernard Badion

Country: USA; Running Time: 19 min

***Wei-Lai***

Director: Robin Wang

Country: USA; Running Time: 14 min

***Wild Ones***

Director: Hanly Banks Callahan

Country: USA; Running Time: 8 min

**Documentary Shorts**

***Below Surface***

Director: Lukas Hauser

Country: USA; Running Time: 19 min

***Dani's Twins***

Director: Brad Allgood, Steve Dorst

Country: USA; Running Time: 39 min

***Decolonizing Dinner***

Director: Alejandro Miranda Cruz

Country: USA; Running Time: 12 min

***Good Boy***

Director: Russell Chadwick

Country: USA; Running Time: 35 min

***Imalirijit***

Directors: Vincent L’Hérault, Tim Anaviapik Soucie

Country: Canada; Running Time: 27 min

***Kylie***

Director: Sterling Hampton

Country: USA; Running Time: 5 min

***Outside Line***

Director: Jack Gordon

Country: USA; Running Time: 17 min

***Until The Rain Comes Back***

Directors: Lauren Tyler Brimeyer, Jack Bushell

Country: USA; Running Time: 17 min

**Central Coast Presentations**

***The Amphora Project: Past Forward***

Director: Libbie Agran, Tim Clott

Country: USA; Running Time: 39 min

***Ángulos De La Hora***

Director: Kyle Novak

Country: USA; Running Time: 16 min

***Bread Bike***

Director: Beth Gage, George Gage

Country: USA; Running Time: 19 min

***Epic Bill***

Director: Quinnolyn Benson-Yates

Country: USA; Running Time: 92 min

A bankrupt self-made millionaire finds success again in extreme endurance athletics. Returning to a race that’s defeated him for years, Bill pushes beyond his limits and questions whether finishing these events defines his identity — or if he can discover a deeper reason for being in the arena.

***Fresh To Frightening - The Sharon Green Story***

Director: Gareth Kelly

Country: USA; Running Time: 20 min

***Friends Call Us Unlucky***

Director: Alyssa Toledo

Country: USA; Running Time: 30 min

***The Greatest of All Tina***

Director: Brody Gusar

Country: USA; Running Time: 94 min

A woman struggling with depression decides that life is too hard, and things will be better off if she becomes her spirit animal, a goat. Expertly balancing humor and heart, *The Greatest of All Tina* will take you on a wild and absurd journey filled with unexpected twists and turns.

***Jack Has a Plan***

Director: Bradley Berman

Country: USA; Running Time: 73 min

When Jack, a man with a terminal brain tumor for 25 years, decides to end his life, his family and friends struggle to accept his decision. Jack’s best friend documents his three-year quest to die a happy man in an inspiring story about self-determination, creativity, and transcendence.

***Shoe Shine Caddie***

Director: Leonard Manzella

Country: USA; Running Time: 63 min

*Shoe Shine Caddy* humanizes the homeless experience by capturing the irresistible spirit of 61-year-old Adrian Spears. After years of incarceration, he’s now homeless, surviving on the streets by shining shoes on a street corner, while fighting for custody of his 3-year-old daughter.

***Something To Crow About***

Director: Robin Smith

Country: USA; Running Time: 40 min

Every October, local artists stage hundreds of handmade scarecrows throughout Cambria for an acclaimed annual scarecrow festival. *Something to Crow About* follows the crow makers over the summer as they whip together unique works of art out of an array of random craft supplies.

***Whale-Roads***

Directors: Ethan Takekawa, Michael Lee, Meg Kievman, Emma Holm-Olsen

Country: USA; Running Time: 15 min

***Woodsman***

Director: Elliot Peters

Country: USA; Running Time: 25 min

**Music Videos**

***Better Now***

Director: Eric Alt

***Bones***

Directors: Jill Sachs, Angeline Armstrong

***Call It What You Will***

Director: Deanna Wardin

***Circle 12: Foam and Sand***

Director: Shawn Knol

***Clear***

Director: Jedediah Roberson

***Fade Into You***

Director: David M. Helman

***A Feast That Never Comes***

Director: Maria Juranic

***Good Day***

Director: Angelo Deprater

***Happy Song***

Director: Sasha Solodukhina

***Kje Med Are***

Director: Anika Salvesen

***Ramon***

Director: Katie Neville

***Wilderness***

Director: Andrea Diaz

**Texture Of Love Shorts**

***A Real One***

Director: McKenzie Chinn

Country: USA; Running Time: 16 min

***Dear Mama. . .***

Director: Winter Dunn

Country: USA; Running Time: 14 min

***Jahleel & Star***

Director: Monique Wilhoit

Country: USA; Running Time: 12 min

***The Marigolds Listen***

Director: Jacob Figueroa

Country: USA; Running Time: 6 min

***We Were Meant To***

Director: Tari Wariebi

Country: USA; Running Time: 28 min

**Filmmakers Of Tomorrow**

**HIGH SCHOOL**

***Beth***

Filmmaker: Ava Bounds

Country: UK; Running Time: 10 min

***Hardcore***

Filmmakers: Madeleine Case, Grace Rynerson

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***The Hole***

Filmmakers: Piotr Kaźmierczak, Łukasz Kościelny, Jacek Łuczyński

Country: Poland; Running Time: 3 min

***Lost: A Backyard Adventure***

Filmmakers: Coleman Seamus, Freeman Howe

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***Maximus***

Filmmakers: Brielle Lubin, Sarah Morton, Sophie Ramirez

Country: USA; Running Time: 7 min

***Mona***

Filmmakers: Lori Mae Hernandez, John Rourke, Cado Dhinsa

Country: USA; Running Time: 7 min

***A Piece of Ranch***

Filmmaker: Jiayang Liu

Country: USA; Running Time: 10 min

***Pistachio Ice Cream***

Filmmaker: Amira Kopeyeva

Country: USA; Running Time: 6 min

***The Reflection on My Screen***

Filmmakers: Abida Chowdhury, Leslie Gomez, Christell Pelico, Zaira OrtizCountry: USA; Running Time: 6 min

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

***Extra Cheese***

Filmmakers: Benny Eldridge, Maggie Cross, Otto Nixon, Phoebe Cross

Country: USA; Running Time: 2 min

***Magic Eraser: Delete!***

Filmmakers: Zi-Jun Wang, Yun-Yen Li, Zi-Fei Wang, Yun-Hua Li, Chia-Chao Li

Country: Taiwan; Running Time: 9 min

***Stop Pebble Mine***

Filmmaker: Mason Mirabile

Country: USA; Running Time: 5 min

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

***Badminton Journey***

Filmmakers: Sean Kang

Country: USA; Running Time: 1 min

***Playground***

Filmmakers: Walter Duncan, Marie-Pierre Bonniol

Country: Germany; Running Time: 2 min

**ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Located half-way between Los Angeles and San Francisco, San Luis Obispo’s laid-back vibe and serene natural beauty is the perfect setting for this highly regarded annual film celebration. Filmmakers rave about the warmth and attentiveness that is so much a part of the SLO Film fest experience, as does the swelling tide of industry pros and film critics who are fast discovering the film festival’s thoughtful audiences and unique programming sensibility.

**PRESS CONTACT**

John Wildman

Wildworks PR

FilmsGoneWild.com

[jswildman@hotmail.com](mailto:jswildman@hotmail.com)

(323) 600-3165