Brooklyn Film Festival Announces Lineup for 2018 Edition: THRESHOLD

Brooklyn, NY (May 9, 2018) - Bad times make great art, so this year’s Brooklyn Film Festival (BFF) should be amazing! And so BFF announces today the film lineup for its 21st edition: THRESHOLD. Like an aircraft entering the threshold on runway “21,” BFF takes off on Friday, June 1st at returning venue: Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg. Over the course of the 10-day festival, BFF proudly presents film programs at Wythe Hotel, nearby returning venue Windmill Studios in Greenpoint, and five more screening venues throughout Brooklyn. BFF will announce its opening night film soon. Festival tickets go on sale on Monday, May 14, 2018, at http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/tickets/.

“Division, bigotry, the wall, Trump. WTF? But luckily, some great things usually come from bad times,” said Brooklyn Film Festival Executive Director Marco Ursino. “The Spanish Civil War gave us the Guernica; the NYC defaults in the 70’s gave us the best graffiti in the world. Even the Great Depression gave us swing dancing. It doesn’t matter how bad it looks, art always wins. In the middle of this undeniably appalling time in American history, Brooklyn Film Festival aims to amplify the voices of its films and filmmakers by shedding light, spreading love and celebrating diversity.”

This year’s festival is comprised of approximately 125 features and shorts from 30 countries spread over all continents, except Antarctica. The lineup includes 19 world premieres, 21 USA bows, 37 east coast debuts and 30 first-time screenings in NYC. In addition to the feature narratives and documentary films highlighted in this release, the festival will present 36 short narrative films, 16 short documentary films, 25 animated films and 20 experimental films.

The festival will run from June 1 through June 10 at two main venues: Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg and Windmill Studios in Greenpoint. Additional programming will be presented on June 5 at Syndicated in Bushwick and on June 8 at UnionDocs in Williamsburg. On June 6 and 9, BFF will present a total of five shows at Made in NY Media Center by IFP in Dumbo, where it will also present the 14th annual kidsfilmfest on June 2.

On June 4, BFF welcomes CUNY’s Graduate School of Journalism with a block of short documentaries at the Alamo Theater in downtown Brooklyn. The evening starts at 6pm with a special presentation and mixer on the Alamo’s rooftop deck for filmmakers and audience members interested in learning more about the documentary program at CUNY. Showtime starts at 8:30 pm with a special
screening of student work from CUNY followed by the block of short documentaries curated by BFF Short Doc Programmer Brandon Harrison. Stick around after the screening for the presentation of the inaugural CUNY Best Short Doc Award.

On June 9, the 7th annual BFF Exchange (BFFX) program will be hosted at Kickstarter in Greenpoint. Join us for an afternoon of informative and interesting panels of, by and for filmmakers. We’ll close out the afternoon with a happy hour sponsored by Brooklyn’s own Sixpoint Brewery. This year, we’ll have two discussion panels, Women Working "Below the Line" and Film Finance in the US and Latin America. We’re also happy to continue our “Lunching with Lawyers” session and our ever-popular BFFX documentary pitch session. And in an effort to bridge the city of Brooklyn with Mexico, BFFX is proud to feature as special guest Mexico City’s film commissioner Mauricio Aguinaco. All BFFX events are free of charge, but require an RSVP at http://bit.ly/2KDW70o.

This year, BFF features a number of special events and networking parties. A big indoor/outdoor party will follow the screenings at Wythe Hotel on June 1 (Opening Night) sponsored by Sixpoint Brewery and Line 39 wine. On Saturday June 2, an intimate party will be organized at the 184 Kent complex from 6-9pm with complimentary drinks. On June 6 in between screenings, a reception will be organized at Made in NY Media Center by IFP with complimentary drinks. On June 7, a filmmaker reception will be held at the G-Star Raw store in Williamsburg from 7-9:30pm with complimentary drinks and appetizers. And an after-party will be held at Loosie Rouge, also in Williamsburg, from 10pm-1am. On June 8, there will be a reception at UnionDocs prior to the screenings. On June 9, the big Threshold DJ dance party associated to a BFF vintage clothing and posters sale blow out will be held at Brooklyn Bazaar in Greenpoint from 9pm-1am. And finally, after the award ceremony at Windmill Studios, a farewell party with complimentary drinks will wrap the the festival.

BFF’s list of sponsors for 2018 includes WNET, Eurochannel, G-Star Raw, AbelCine, VER, NYC Camera Company, Sixpoint Brewery, Line 39 wine, Via and for the 6th consecutive year, TBWA/CHIAT/DAY, which has created another compelling and innovative promotional campaign tied to the theme: “Bad times make great art.” Watch this year’s campaign videos at: http://bit.ly/2FVlPtK and http://bit.ly/2I0d8nB.

As a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, BFF is supported in part by (public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, Google for Non-Profit), CUNY and The Young Professionals of the Americas Society (and Techsoup). Several BFF events this year will be organized in collaboration with Brooklyn Filmmakers Collective, Brooklyn Documentary Club, Film Shop, Video Consortium, UnionDocs and Maysles Documentary Center.

In each of the six film categories, BFF’s judges will select Best Film, Spirit Award and Audience Award winners. From all the six categories combined, BFF will award one
of each of the following: Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Original Score, Best Editor, Best Cinematographer, Best Screenplay Writer, Best Producer, Best New Director, and Best Brooklyn Project. Through the resources of our sponsors, BFF will assign to the winning filmmakers $50,000 in prizes (products, services and cash).

Below is a partial line-up of films from the Narrative and Documentary Features sections. To view the full film line up, visit:

NARRATIVE FEATURES:

“Are You Glad I’m Here” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
Dir. Noor Gharzeddine, Lebanon, 85 min.
A millennial American girl befriends a Lebanese housewife and disrupts her ordered life; one night they become accidental partners-in crime.

“Birds Without Feathers” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
2018 Slamdance Film Festival, Spirit Award Winner
Dir. Wendy McCollm, USA, 92 min.
Unable to make a human connection, six broken individuals will give everything away in an attempt to receive love.

“Brothers” - USA PREMIERE
Dir. Bram Schouw, The Netherlands, 106 min.
When Alexander suddenly leaves on a road trip to France, Lukas decides to join him as he’s been trailing his charismatic brother for his entire life. But during this journey he discovers that he finally has to go his own way, not knowing this decision would be so all-encompassing.

“Can Hitler Happen Here?”
Dir. Saskia Rifkin, USA, 74 min.
Meddling neighbors, ambitious social-workers and real-estate vultures conspire to torment an eccentric old lady. Or maybe they’re just trying to help.

“Golnesa” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
Dir. Sattar Chamani Gol, Iran, 94 min.
Golmammad and Golnesa, a young Afghan couple, are illegal immigrants who are working in a traditional brick making kiln in Iran. Following the events happening to them, their lives undergo changes.

“Ice Cream” - WORLD PREMIERE
Dir. Saba Riazi, Iran, 63 min.
Maryam, a 30-year-old woman in Tehran, having lost her job and apartment, is forced to move in with her grandmother. She is trying hard to make things work and in doing so, she faces herself, eating ice-cream. This funny, semi-autobiographical film seamlessly combines animation and live action into a poetic meditation about
identity and belonging.

“Life is Fare” - WORLD PREMIERE
Dir. Sephora Woldu, USA, 61 min.
An experimental Tigrinya/English musical movie exploring three wildly different perspectives on the East African nation of Eritrea.

“My Country” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
2017 Route 66 Film Festival Audience Award Winner
Dir. Giancarlo Iannotta, USA/Italy, 78 min.
Two brothers - one American, one Italian who've never met - take a road trip from Rome to the unknown picturesque region of Molise on a journey to spread the ashes of their late father in the small town where he was born.

“Nosotros”
Dir. Felipe Vara de Rey, Spain, 93 min.
“Nosotros” follows a group of five friends during the weekend of the Spanish presidential election held in December 2015, probably the most important one in Spain’s recent history due to the deep political and financial crisis in Southern Europe.

“One Bedroom”
Dir. Darien Sills-Evans, USA, 83 min.
Writer-director Darien Sills-Evans combines humor and drama to create a portrait of a relationship at the end of its journey. Set in a gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood, and told through vivid flashbacks, the audience is taken through the whirlwind tale of Melissa and Nate’s courtship. Melissa and Nate have been through a lot together, but sometimes Black Love gets broken.

“Prison Logic” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
Dir. Romany Malco, USA, 91 min.
Released from prison and placed on probation, Tijuana Jackson sets out to fulfill his dream of becoming a world renowned motivational speaker but fails to comply with strict orders from his no-nonsense probation officer.

“Room For Rent” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
Chicago Comedy Film Festival, Best Feature Winner
Dir. Matt Atkinson, Canada, 89 min.
When a broke thirty-two year old ex-lottery winner (Mark Little, “Space Riders: Division Earth”) convinces his parents to rent their spare room to save from downsizing, a creepy stranger (Brett Gelman, “Lemon,” “Stranger Things”) with a hidden agenda moves in. Co-stars Mark McKinney (“Superstore”) and Stephnie Weir (“My Crazy Ex-Girlfriend”).

“Tommy Battles the Silver Sea Dragon” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
2018 Toronto International Spring of Horror and Fantasy Film Festival, Best Feature
& Performance Winner
Dir. Luke Shirock, USA, 110 min.
When a man finds himself on trial in a courtroom haunted by his own demons, he must reckon with the guilt of his mother’s death before it destroys him and the one he loves. A musical film directed by and starring Luke Shirock.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES:

“Afghan Cycles” - EAST COAST PREMIERE
Dir. Sarah Menzies, USA, 90 min.
Following a new generation of young Afghan women cyclists, “Afghan Cycles” uses the bicycle to tell a story of women's rights - human rights - and the struggles faced by Afghan women on a daily basis, from discrimination to abuse, to the oppressive silencing of their voices in all aspects of contemporary society.

“Fail State”
Dir. Alexander Shebanow, USA, 94 min.
In an expansive documentary exposé, “Fail State” investigates the dark side of American higher education, chronicling decades of policy decisions in Washington DC that have given rise to a powerful and highly-predatory for-profit college industry.

“My Name is Pedro”
Dir. Lillian LaSalle, USA, 96 min.
This film explores what public education meant to South Bronx Latino maverick educator, Pedro Santana, and what he, in turn, meant to public education. Infectious in his optimism, Santana becomes one of the most influential public school teachers and then administrators in the New York public school system after turning his troubled Bronx middle school, MS 391, around.

“Nos Llaman Guerreras”/“They Call Us Warriors” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
After becoming undefeated champions of the South American Women Under-17 Championship and overcoming one of the worst social and economic environments for sports practicing, the Venezuelan team takes a chance to win the first World Cup for their country, having the chance to give a voice to women football in their country and perhaps in all of South America.

“Silence is a Falling Body” - USA PREMIERE
Dir. Agustina Comedi, Argentina, 75 min.
The film follows Agustina as she finds the videotapes that her father Jaime recorded before the accident that took his life. The family secrets surrounding Jaime push Agustina to get involved. Her search will reveal a story marked by Jaime’s Homosexuality and political activism, completely visible until he got married at the age of 40, and then kept in absolute secret.
“Street Fighting Men” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
Dir. Andrew James, USA, 104 min.
Facing dwindling public services, growing inequality and escalating violence, three Detroit men must fight to build something lasting for themselves and future generations.

“The New Man” - INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE
Dir. Josh Appignanesi and Devorah Baum, United Kingdom, 75 min.
A creative documentary about becoming a parent...and how to reconceive yourself. Fiction director Josh Appignanesi turns the camera on himself and his wife as they undergo the ordeal of becoming parents in the era of man-children and assisted reproduction.

“Working in Protest” - NEW YORK PREMIERE
Dir. Michael Galinsky & Suki Hawley, USA, 74 min.
BFF alums Michael Hawley and Suki Galinsky (“Battle for Brooklyn”) have documented protests for over 30 years as observers rather than journalists or activists. Starting in North Carolina in 1987 and ending in DC in 2017, the film captures the discourse of modern political protest.

About Brooklyn Film Festival (BFF):
The organizers of the Brooklyn Film Festival have been staging International, competitive film events since 1998. BFF’s mission is to provide a public forum in Brooklyn in order to advance public interest in films and the independent production of films, to draw worldwide attention to Brooklyn as a center for cinema, to encourage the rights of all Brooklyn residents to access and experience the power of independent filmmaking, and to promote artistic excellence and the creative freedom of artists without censure. BFF, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

For more info about the festival please visit www.brooklynfilmfestival.org.
For more info about kidsfilmfest, visit www.kidsfilmfest.org.

For BFF press inquiries and interview requests with Executive Director Marco Ursino and Festival Programmers, contact:
Brian Geldin, BFF PR Manager, at 917-549-2953 or brian@wbff.org.

Film screener links and film images available upon request for curtain raiser/preview coverage including capsule reviews, festival highlights/picks and filmmaker interviews.

For more information on kidsfilmfest, contact: Lisa King at 646-234-5080 or lisa@wbff.org.

For Festival Press Accreditation, visit:
http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/press/registration/

BFF Social Media Links: http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org/follow/