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TAKE ISSUES

SECOND ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL LAUNCHES JUNE 14, 2002

June 10, 2002 - MediaRights.org will kick off the second annual Media That Matters Film Festival (MTMFF) on June 14, 2002 at www.MediaRights.org/Festival and stream online until June 2003. This year's festival showcases a juried selection of 12 shorts and 5 new media works that address timely social issues. The festival's unique format enables viewers to immediately learn about and take action on the issues presented in the works. Viewers can follow links to sign petitions, write to Congress, donate to organizations, and learn more through online informational resources including MediaRights.org's own database of over 4,500 social issue documentaries.

The MTMFF is co-presented by the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival (June 12 - 27, 2002), and can be viewed June 14-16 in the Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater. The films will also be broadcast on Free Speech TV from June 14 - July 14, 2002. AOL Time Warner joins forces with the festival for a second year as the Lead Sponsor while the Surdna Foundation and Filmmaker Magazine are first time supporters of the festival.

Culled from more than 150 submissions, this year's line-up was selected by a jury of 14 media professionals, activists, and filmmakers including Paola Freccero (S.v.P. of Programming, Sundance Channel!), Kelly De Vine (Supervisor, Film Acquisitions, Independent Film Channel), Majora Carter (Founder & Executive Director, Sustainable South Bronx), Andrew Blau (Consultant on Technology & Society, Flanerie Works), and Phil Bertelsen (Director, *Outside Looking In*). The MTMFF will reach a potential audience of over 8 million people via its Partners: the Association of Independent Video and Film (AIVF), Bay Area Video Coalition (8AVC), Benton Foundation, Connect for Kids, CTCnet, Diaspora Studios, Free Speech TV, Npower NY, and YouthNOISE.

Festival Selections

The slate includes works from young makers as well as highly seasoned professionals who engage critical issues facing us today. *SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER*, produced/ directed by Liz Garbus and Rory Kennedy, whose works have been broadcast on HBO, A&E, MTV, Lifetime Channel, and Showtime, calls attention to the need to make governments accountable for human rights abuses. Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning director/producer Nina Rosenblum looks at the devastating impact of the Rockefeller Drug Laws in *UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES*. The festival presents this timely film with links to information on the impending New York State vote to reform these laws.

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Young makers from Educational Video Center take the mainstream media to task for its hyped, tabloid like coverage of youth crime in *YOUTH VS. THE MEDIA*. They provide shocking evidence in their examination of the traditional media's discrimination against youth, citing the fact that while the national homicide rate decreased by 20% between 1992 and 1996, media coverage of youth homicide increased sevenfold. Another work produced by youth, *YOUTH PORTRAITS*, is a web project featuring audio stories of five young people who have served time on Rikers Island. MediaRights.org's Executive Director; Nicole Betancourt says, "Teens are making incredible films and new media works about issues that affect their lives daily, yet when was the last time you saw their work on TV, the Web, or at the movies? The youth works in our festival have a fresh approach that is rarely represented in mainstream media." (See attached for complete program.)

Focus On Youth

In an effort to encourage youth to take action, MediaRights.org, Web Lab and YouthNOTSE will host *reActions: Get Into the Issues*, an online discussion centered around the four youth-made films in the festival. In the *reActions* discussions, young people will respond to the youth-made films in small online groups, compare their own experiences, and start thinking together about how they can turn their interest into action.

New Cash Award

New this year, Connect for Kids will sponsor the Fight Family Poverty Award, which carries a \$1,000 cash prize. This year's winner is the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families' *MY FAMILY, MY NEIGHBORHOOD, MY STORY*, a personal film about a mother's aspirations for her family as she fights to improve conditions in her low-income community of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Cecilia Garcia, Project Director for Connect for Kids was "impressed with the quality and humanity of *MY NEIGHBORHOOD, MY FAMILY, MY STORY* and the frankness with which the video tackled its central issues and raised the larger context of community involvement and public policy."

About MediaRights.org

MediaRights.org, a not-for-profit media arts and activist organization, was founded in July 2000 to help media makers, educators, nonprofits, and activists use documentaries to encourage action and inspire dialogue on contemporary social issues. The organization's interactive Web site is organized around 15 social issues (racial justice, environmental issues, economic justice, etc.) and contains a collection of over 4,500 social issue documentaries. The site also provides an extensive database of over 850,000 nonprofits in the U.S., a list of funding and other resources, and original articles about successful outreach campaigns. MediaRights.org launched with initial funding from The Ford Foundation and current funders include The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Open Society Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Surdna Foundation.

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For more information about the Second Annual Media That Matters Film Festival, contact Wellington Love at 15minutes, (212) 366-4992 or wellingtonlove@15minutespr.com.

Media That Matters Film Festival

Films and Videos

Atrazine: Frogs, Fanns & Phannaceuticals, Documentary, 2002, 5:50 min. Produced and Directed by Tom Borden and Paul Aldridge
The number one herbicide in the U.S. is causing frogs to become hermaphrodites. Alarming? Endocrinologist Dr. Tyrone Hayes thinks so.

Ketchup Soup, Public Service Announcement (PSA), 2001, 30 sec. Produced by Ad Council.
In showing how a mother feeds her children, *Ketchup Soup* puts a face on the issue of child hunger.

Mann Ke Manjeere: An album of women's dreams, Music video, 2000, 5:30 min. Produced by Mallika Dutt and Breakthrough.
Nominated for an MTV award, this music video explores the role of women in Indian society and depicts one woman's quest for liberation.

My Family, My Neighborhood, My Story, Documentary, 2001, 8 min. Produced by Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, North Eastern Wisconsin in School Telecommunications/Cooperative Educational Service Agency 7. A chronicle of a mother's aspirations for her family, her neighborhood and herself as she fights to improve conditions in her low-income community of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Oil is Not Enough, Documentary, 2001, 6:18 min. Produced and Directed by Elizabeth Solomon.
An examination of how the current conflict in Afghanistan has paved the way for America's new rush for oil into Central Asia.

Reel Grrls, Youth media, 2001, 1:03 mins. Produced by 911 Media Arts Center and Reel Grrts.
A fresh take on the pressure put on young girls to put looks first.

Speak Truth to Power: Dianna Ortiz, PSA, 2001, 50 sec. Produced and Directed by Moxie Firecracker Films.
A call to action for holding governments accountable for human rights abuses.

Things Are Not Always As They Seem, Youth media, 2001, 3:31 min. Directed by Amber Genter.
A portrait of teenage "punks" challenging popular beliefs and misconceptions about their appearance.

Unintended Consequences, Documentary, 2002, 8 min. Produced and Directed by Nina Rosenblum.
Unintended Consequences tells the story of the devastating impact of New York State's Rockefeller Mandatory Minimum Drug Laws on families and communities.

The Unknown Killer, Youth media, 2001, 1:23 min. Directed by Kate Frasca.
The Unknown Killer addresses the high risk teenage girls face in developing cervical cancer and how they can avoid it through safe sex.

Venus of Mars, Documentary, 2002, 6:35 min. Produced and Directed by Emily Goldberg.
Venus, provocative lead singer of a glam rock band in Minneapolis, is a gender pioneer choosing to live "in between."

Youth vs. Media, Youth media, 2001, 8 min. Produced by Educational Video Center.
youth vs. Media investigates how traditional media discriminates against youth in their reports on crime.

New Media

Brown, New media, 2000, <http://www.digitaldocumentary.org/brown>. Created by Ian David Aronson.
Brown profiles a young bi-racial couple raising their son in New York City.

Clean Up GE, New media, 2001, <http://www.cleanupGE.org>. Created by Stewart Harris and Anthony Camino of Public Webworks and John Fiege. Spoofing General Electric's official web site, *Clean Up GE* informs the public about GE's PCB poisoning in the upper Hudson.

360degrees, New media, 2001, <http://360degrees.org>. Created by Sue Johnson and Alison Cornyn.
An examination of the impact of the growing incarceration rate on individuals, families, and communities in the U.S.

Juvenile Justice, New media, 2001, <http://www.pixelpress.org~juvenilejustice>. Created by Joseph Rodriguez and Pixel Press.
This project explores the lives of five ado/escents and their struggle within the California justice system.

Youth Portraits, New media, 2002, <http://youthportraits.org>. Created by Sound Portraits Productions.
Youth Portraits features five audio stories created by young people who served time on Riker's Island, a juvenile detention center located in New York City.