



MediaRights.org

**CLICK> STREAM> ACTION> MEDIARIGHTS.ORG PRESENTS  
THE THIRD ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL**  
Offline, Online & Broadcast Brings Media That Matters to the Masses

- Primary Underwriting from Sundance Channel, The Glaser Progress Foundation, and Sony Corporation of America

**New York, NY, April 28, 2003**—On June 13, 2003, MediaRights.org presents the third annual *Media That Matters Film Festival*, which will stream online at [www.MediaThatMattersFest.org](http://www.MediaThatMattersFest.org) and will launch simultaneously via computer installations at the Walter Reade Theater in conjunction with the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. The Festival's unique mission is to celebrate moving, engaging and sometimes humorous films and new media that encourage social action and inspire dialogue. The online format enables viewers to *click* on the films, *stream* them online, and take *action* via links that encourage viewers to volunteer, sign petitions, write to Congress, or donate to organizations. In addition, viewers will have access to a list of more than 850,000 humanitarian and activist organizations, and MediaRight.org's database of more than 5,000 social issue documentaries. Media inquiries can be directed to Fatima Kafele at 917-723-1494 or [fatimakafele@aol.com](mailto:fatimakafele@aol.com)

The 2003 *Media That Matters Film Festival* attracted hundreds of submissions, which were reviewed by a ten-member jury of media professionals, activists and filmmakers. The twelve short films and four new media selections include dramatizations, documentaries, and parodies that tackle topics such as the environment (*Esmeraldas: Petroleum and Poverty*; *Diane Wilson: A Warrior's Tale*), criminal justice (*No Escape, Prison Rape*), September 11th (*Sonic Memorial Project*; *Face to Face*), AIDS Prevention (*Luv Me Latex*), and racial profiling and cultural expectations (*Is My Neighbor Latino?*; *Vision Test*). Even the kids get into the action with youth made films that deal with cultural differences (*Holla Back Dubai!*), and individuality (*Rebel*). (Please see attached document for full listing of festival selections.) Six of the selections (*Holla Back Dubai*; *No Escape, Prison Rape*; *Rebel*; *We Were Humans*; *Esmeraldas*; *Storm*) received cash awards of \$1,000, sponsored by Sundance Channel, Open Society Institute, gURL.com and Penguin Group, Paola Freccero, Free Speech TV, and Frank Marshall. Other notable awards include the Woody Harrelson Environmental Award given to the film *Diane Wilson: A Warrior's Tale*, and the Jury Award given to *Vision Test* that includes a DV camera sponsored by Sony Corporation of America.

The *Media That Matters Film Festival* jury consisted of Nancy Abraham (HBO Original Programming), Julie Anderson (HBO Original Programming), Bruni Burres (Human Rights Watch International Film Festival), Laura Flanders (Working Assets Radio), Joseph Gilmore (The Point), Meg Hourihan (Blogger, The Lafayette Project), Terry Scott (National Black Programming Consortium), Marcia Smith (Firelight Media), William Upski Wimsatt (Active Element Foundation), and Eden H. Wurmfeld (Producer, *Kissing Jessica Stein*).

"This is not your usual film festival," says MediaRights.org Executive Director Nicole Betancourt. "Audiences don't just watch—they get involved in the struggles these films portray. It's the perfect antidote to the helplessness you feel when you watch the nightly news."

The *Media That Matters Film Festival* sponsors include *Activators*: The Glaser Progress Foundation, Sundance Channel and Transit Media Communications; *Motivator*: Sony Corporation of America; *Celebrators*: Paola Freccero, Free Speech TV, gURL.com & Penguin Group, Frank Marshall, New York State Council on the Arts, and Open Society Institute; *Initiators*: Alexander Summer Family Foundation, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Filmmaker Magazine, Home Box Office (HBO), and Swete Studios. Paola Freccero, VP of Programming at Sundance Channel commented, "the *Media That Matters Film Festival* celebrates the intersection of information, politics, entertainment, and activism. In an age of increasingly fewer opportunities for social mission media to be seen and heard, this festival plays a critical role in showcasing important issues, and encouraging audiences not just to view, but to change." Actor Woody Harrelson added, "bravo to MediaRights.org for recognizing these talented artists and kudos to Ilana Trachtman [director of *Diane Wilson: A Warrior's Tale*] for making a provocative and uplifting film about an authentic modern day hero."

Partners for the Festival include 911 Media Arts Center, Bay Area Video Coalition, civilrights.org, Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, TechSoup, and WorldLink TV.

***The Media That Matters Film Festival can be viewed in the following ways:***

**Online**

**June 13, 2003-June 13, 2004:** Streaming all year at [www.MediaThatMattersFest.org](http://www.MediaThatMattersFest.org)

**Offline**

**June 13-15:** Computer installations in the Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater (165 West 65<sup>th</sup> Street), co-presented by the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

**Summer 2003:** Distribution of thousands of *Media That Matters Film Festival* DVDs sponsored by Sundance Channel to educators, community organizations, and libraries.

**Broadcast**

**June 2003:** Free Speech TV via satellite TV (Channel 9415 on the Echostar Communications Corporation's DISH® Network)

**June 2003:** WorldLink TV via satellite TV (Channel 375 on DIRECTV® and Channel 9410 on Echostar Communications Corporation's DISH® Network.)

**Twelve Films, Twelve Cities, Twelve Months—Traveling Film Festival**

**June 2003-June 2004:** *Media That Matters Film Festival* hits the road as a traveling exhibition—screening at schools, libraries, and regional events at twelve cities across the country including Ithaca, LA, Miami, and San Francisco.

**About MediaRights.org**

MediaRights.org builds the capacity of community organizations and filmmakers to reach, teach, activate, and educate their constituencies. MediaRights.org promotes the exhibition of documentaries in non-traditional venues and puts filmmakers in touch with new audiences. Equipped with the nation's most comprehensive database of politically and socially engaged films and videos, MediaRights.org provides educators and librarians with the tools they need to create video curricula, curate audio/visual collections and use film more effectively in the classroom. More than 30,000 users visit MediaRights.org each month making the site one of the most vibrant online centers for community/filmmaker collaborations.

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For press information about the third annual *Media That Matters Film Festival*, contact Fatima Kafele at (917) 723-1494 or [fatimakafele@aol.com](mailto:fatimakafele@aol.com) or [MediaRights.org](http://MediaRights.org) at 646-230-6288.



## OFFICIAL SELECTIONS OF THE THIRD ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL

**Diane Wilson: A Warrior's Tale**, 7:33 min., Documentary Short  
Ilana Trachtman, Director, Carole Hart and Marlo Thomas, Executive Producers and Roberta Morris, Coordinating Producer  
"I'm just a normal person," Diane Wilson says at the outset of this anything-but-normal story of community versus corporation. Through a hunger strike and a relentless campaign before the local legislature, Wilson forced Formosa Plastics and other polluters on the Bay of San Antonio to clean up their act.  
*Winner of the Woody Harrelson Environmental Award*

**Esmeraldas: Petroleum and Poverty**, 9:00 min., Documentary Short  
Josh Holst, Director  
For anyone who has gone numb to the effects of industrial pollution, "Esmeraldas" will be a startling wake up call. The film documents the intense human suffering that plagued an Afro-Ecuadorian community after a Texaco oil refinery exploded.  
*Winner of the International Human Rights Award*  
*Sponsored by Free Speech TV*

**How to Make a Bird**, 0:32 min., Public Service Announcement  
Juan Carlos Zaldivar, Director  
What happens when a woman tries to turn herself into a bird? Not much. This short video shows how all the feathers in the world can't bring back an extinct species.  
*Winner of the Wildlife Preservation Award*

**Rebel**, 8:00 min., Music Video  
Lower East Side Girls Club, Producer  
In this body-positive youth-produced film, the young women of the Lower East Side Girls Club take to the streets in celebration of their individuality and strength.  
*Winner of the gURL LOOKS BOOK Award*  
*Sponsored by gURL.com and Penguin Group*

**Holla Back Dubai!**, 8:00 min., Video Dialogue  
Global Action Project, Producer  
Kids from the United Arab Emirates "holla back" to a class of sixth-graders in Washington Heights, New York in this touching video letter exchange. Direct and honest, the children on both sides of the dialogue show that a stereotype is no match for a smile.  
*Winner of the Youth Media Award Sponsored by Sundance Channel*

**Luv Me Latex**, 1:30 min., Public Service Announcement  
Frame by Frame Fierce, Producer  
Two unprotected men in love and a gang of healthy T-Cells face off against the diabolical HIV virus. This clever animated short makes the case for condoms in a fresh and funny way.  
*Winner of the Safe Sex Award*

**Storm**, 7:57 min., Narrative Short  
Thomas Brown, Director  
For thousands of children school bullying is a serious problem that damages their hearts and their minds. The beleaguered hero of "Storm" finds himself without allies as he struggles to stave off an onslaught of classroom abuse.  
*Winner of the Peace in Our Classrooms Award in Honor of the Work of Peter Yarrow Sponsored by Frank Marshall*

**No Escape, Prison Rape**, 7:00 min., Documentary Short  
Gabriel London, Director / Gabriel Films, Executive Producer  
When Rodney Hulín set fire to a trash can he never imagined he would end up in an adult prison, serially raped, and brutally beaten. This disturbing film documents a young man's attempt to let the outside world know that his punishment did not fit his crime.  
*Winner of the Criminal Justice Award Sponsored by Open Society Institute*

**Copwatch**, 8:00 min., Documentary Short  
Guerrilla News Network, Producer  
Fed up with police brutality, the organization Copwatch decided to keep an eye on the authorities. This short film shows how peaceful observation of police behavior can change the way a neighborhood and its police force deal with one another.  
*Winner of the Media Activism Award*

**Vision Test**, 5:39 min., Satirical short  
Wes Kim, Director  
Who would you feel most comfortable with as CEO of a Fortune 500 company? What begins as a routine eye exam turns into an examination of subconscious attitudes towards race, gender, and power.  
*Winner of the Jury Award Sponsored by SONY*

**Is My Neighbor Latino?**, 1:00 min., Satirical short  
Jorge Aguirre, Director/Producer and Michael Grabowski, Co-Producer  
A news brief spoof that seeks to answer the question "How do I know if my neighbor is Latino?" Irreverent and funny, this high-spirited short pokes fun at preconceptions and shows us that there is no one type of Latino in a country with rapidly shifting demographics.  
*Winner of the Diversity Award*

**As We Sleep**, 7:52 min., Documentary Short  
Elizabeth McDonald, Director  
In 2000, 72% of Americans in living-assistance facilities were sexually abused. "As We Sleep" tells the story of Marcie and the tragic offense she suffered at the hands of a trusted caregiver.  
*Winner of the Public Health Award*

**Sonic Memorial Project**, Interactive Sound Archive  
Picture Projects, Producer  
An interactive audio landscape where oral stories, ambient sounds, voicemails, and archival recordings tell the rich history of the Twin Towers and help heal the collective wounds caused by the events of September 11th.  
*Winner of the New Media Award*

**We Were Humans**, Flash Animation  
Allysson Lucca, Producer  
This multimedia animation asks what would happen if the billions of dollars of military spending were redirected towards education and world hunger.  
*Winner of the New Media Award Sponsored by Paola Freccero*

**Face to Face: Stories from the Aftermath of Infamy**, Interactive Web site  
Rob Mikuriya, Producer/An ITVS Interactive Electric Shadows Project  
Sixty years separate Pearl Harbor and September 11th, but have things really changed in the interim? An interactive online documentary explores what it means to be an American with the face of the enemy.  
*Winner of the New Media Award*

**Silence Speaks**, Digital Storytelling  
Third World Majority, Producer  
Domestic abuse, hate crimes, poverty, political persecution, and war. Highly personal multimedia pieces tell the stories of survivors and witnesses of these many forms of violence.  
*Winner of the New Media Award*