

**For Immediate Release**

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**MediaRights Launches the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual  
MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL**

**BAM to host premiere May 18  
Chuck D to host awards ceremony at HBO May 19**

**Sundance Channel, Netflix, National Film Network, Ford Foundation, Waitt Family  
Foundation onboard to sponsor expanded celebration of dynamic “take action” films**

New York, NY (April 6, 2004)—The fourth annual *Media That Matters Film Festival* begins on May 18, 2004 at BAM Rose Cinemas in a special screening at 7:00pm, the festival then launches online on May 20th at [www.MediaThatMattersFest.org](http://www.MediaThatMattersFest.org). Created by not-for-profit MediaRights—an organization dedicated to building communities between filmmakers and social activists—the *Media That Matters Film Festival's* unique mission is to celebrate moving, engaging and sometimes humorous films and new media that encourage social action and motivate concrete change. Films range from high impact shorts to stirring personal diaries and offer a glimpse into the grassroots battles that activists are waging to protect our environment, defend our civil rights and promote social change.

Fourteen films and two digital media works have been selected as winners out of three hundred entries. MediaRights Executive Director Nicole Betancourt is particularly pleased with this year's entries. “We were flooded with entries this year and we've put together a roster of films and new media work that are as hard hitting as they are high quality,” says Betancourt. “We're thrilled that rapper and activist Chuck D will be hosting the awards ceremony—he has done for music what we're doing for film—getting important risk-taking work to wide audiences.”

The premiere of the *Media That Matters Film Festival* at BAM is open to the public. Tickets can be purchased at the BAM Rose Cinemas or [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org) (starting April 19). The following day, May 19th, Chuck D will host an invitation-only awards ceremony at HBO's Manhattan headquarters. The rest of America (and the world) will get a chance to view the festival on May 20th when the online version goes live at [www.MediaThatMattersFest.org](http://www.MediaThatMattersFest.org). Online viewers will be able watch the festival films and take action via links that empower them to volunteer, sign petitions, write to Congress, or donate to organizations. (Please see below for additional ways to view the festival).

The fourteen short films and two new media selections tackle topics such as the environment (*The Matrix*, *Seeds of Hope*), criminal justice (*Books Not Bars*), September 11<sup>th</sup> and civil liberties (*Day of Remembrance*, *Bush for Peace*), AIDS Awareness (*I Promise Africa*, *iThemba*), Domestic Abuse (*Novela*, *Novela*), culture-jamming (*POPaganda: The Art & Subversion of Ron English*), immigration (*The Sixth Section*), the working poor (*Struggling to Survive*), and childhood obesity (*Laugh at the Fat Kid*). Even kids get into the action with youth produced films and new media (*Children of Birmingham*, *Lean on Me*, *Dedicated to My Family* and *Struggling to Survive*). (Please see official selection below for full listing of festival films.)

The festival submissions were reviewed by a jury of media professionals, activists and filmmakers including cult comic book artist David Rees and HBO Documentaries' Greg Rhem. Eight of the films will receive \$1,000 each in cash awards and all the filmmakers are receiving memberships to Netflix and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers.

Paola Freccero, Senior VP of Film Programming at Sundance Channel commented, "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 engage." The principal partner of the festival is The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. Additional partners include 911 Media Arts Center, Bay Area Video Coalition, and Third World Newsreel. The *Media That Matters Film Festival* sponsors include the National Film Network, Netflix, Sundance Channel, HBO, Alexander Summer Family Foundation, The Waitt Family Foundation, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Heifer International, Paola Freccero, and Frank Marshall. Additional support is provided by The Ford Foundation, Otto Haas Charitable Trust, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Open Society Institute, The Surdna Foundation, and Time Warner Foundation.

### **FESTIVAL LAUNCH EVENTS:**

- May 18 at 7pm:** Public premiere at the BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY). Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org), [www.moviefone.com](http://www.moviefone.com) or 718.636.4100 starting April 19.
- May 19:** Awards Ceremony honoring filmmakers hosted by Chuck at HBO.
- May 20:** Launch of [www.MediaThatMattersFest.org](http://www.MediaThatMattersFest.org), the festival's interactive Web site complete with streaming media and empowering Take Action links.
- June 11-13:** Computer installations in the Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater presented by the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

### **FESTIVAL PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (6/20/04 – 6/17/05)**

- ONLINE: Films stream online with "Take Action" links.
- TRAVELING: The festival hits the road as a traveling exhibition – screening at schools, libraries, and regional events at twelve cities across the country including Minneapolis, Seattle, Miami, and San Francisco.
- DVD: Distribution of thousands of the festival DVDs to educators, community organizations, and libraries all year long.
- BROADCASTS: The festival will broadcast all year long via satellite TV (Dates and channels to be announced).

### **About MediaRights**

The Media That Matters Film Festival is presented by MediaRights an organization which builds the capacity of community organizations and filmmakers to reach, teach, activate, and educate their constituencies. MediaRights 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 provides educators and activists with the tools they need to create video curricula, curate audio/visual collections and use film more effectively in the classroom and in lobbying campaigns. More than 30,000 users visit MediaRights each month making the site one of the most vibrant online centers for community/filmmaker collaborations. MediaRights and the *Media That Matters Film Festival* are projects of Arts Engine, Inc., a non-profit organization.

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For more information about MediaRights, visit [www.MediaRights.org](http://www.MediaRights.org) or call 646-230-6288.  
**Please contact Fatima Kafele at 917.723.1494 or [fatimakafele@aol.com](mailto:fatimakafele@aol.com)** for photos and information

## OFFICIAL SELECTIONS FOURTH ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL

**I Promise Africa**, 2:40 min., Public Service Announcement

*Jerry Henry, Director/Producer*

When Jerry Henry set off to Kenya to make a documentary about orphans he didn't realize that he would be preserving on tape the voices of a generation that would soon be silenced.

*Winner of the Jury Award Sponsored by National Film Network*

**iThemba**, 5:19 min., Documentary Short

*Keefe Murren, Director/Producer, Nelson Walker III, Director/Producer, Lynn True, Director*

Through the mesmerizing melding of their voices, the Sinikithemba Choir turns stage into soapbox, singing and speaking for the 5 million HIV+ South Africans in desperate need of medication and support.

*Winner of the Health Advocacy Award Sponsored by Sundance Channel*

**Seeds of Hope: South Africa**, 6:12 min., International Documentary

*Sarah Hesterman, Director/Producer, Produced by Gotham Pictures, Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

Solutions to poverty and malnutrition require resourcefulness and dedication. A group of women in a South African township learn how to sustain themselves and their children.

*Winner of the Environment Award*

**The Meatrix**, 3:47 min., Flash Animation

*Louis Fox, Director, Produced by Free Range Graphics in conjunction with the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment*

Will Leo the pig take the blue pill and remain in a fantasyland where quaint family farms produce food for our tables or will he take the red pill and get a cruel welcome to the real world?

*Winner of the Film for Thought Award Sponsored by Heifer International*

**Laugh at the Fat Kid**, 7:57 min., Narrative Short

*Kristina Schoentag, Director/Producer*

Whimsical and visually creative, "Laugh at the Fat Kid" intimately portrays a young boy caught in a cycle of ridicule and overeating, forcing the viewer to ask "What's wrong with this picture?"

*Winner of the Peter Yarrow Peace in Our Classrooms Award Sponsored by Frank Marshall*

**Lean on Me**, 1:46 min., Youth Digital Story

*Harold Clinton, Director, The Center for Reflective Community Practice at MIT and Creative Narrations, Producers*

When the mayor's office says "no," a group of kids find their own way to make their dream for a safe place to play basketball a reality.

*Winner of the SEE CHANGE, MAKE CHANGE Youth Digital Story Award Sponsored by the Waitt Family Foundation*

**Books Not Bars**, 3:44 min., Campaign Portrait

*Mark Landsman, Director/Producer for WITNESS*

A growing number of youth are questioning the way their state governments spend money. The teens of the Books Not Bars movement demand that education, not incarceration, be the priority, now and in the future.

*Winner of the Criminal Justice Award Sponsored by Open Society Institute*

**The Children of Birmingham**, 6:17 min., Animation

*Rebecca Yenawine, Director, Kids on the Hill, Producer*

Through stirring narration and beautiful illustrations, Baltimore middle-school students tell the story of their 1960s counterparts who fought for their civil rights.

*Winner of the SEE CHANGE, MAKE CHANGE Youth Video Award Sponsored by Open Society Institute and Time Warner Foundation*

**Day of Remembrance**, 8:00 min., Political Documentary

*Cynthia Fujikawa, Director/Producer*

The legislators behind the Patriot Act claim to have made America safer, but in the process they have destroyed the lives of thousands of innocent Arab and Muslim Americans. *Day of Remembrance* calls attention to this tragic phenomenon and reminds us that American history has a tendency to repeat itself.

*Winner of the Racial Justice Award*

**Dedicated to My Family**, 3:51 min., Personal Documentary

*Nicole Sobottke, Director, Reel Grrls at 911 Media Arts Center, Producer*

Nicole dreams about a perfect family. Living in a teen shelter, she has learned that family is where the heart is.

*Winner of the Family and Society Award*

**Struggling to Survive**, 7:37 min., Youth Documentary

*Dana Hall, Ashley Potter and Mary Profitt, Directors, Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute, Producer*

Having a job doesn't mean you make enough to get by. Teenagers in eastern Kentucky turn their cameras on the living wage crisis in their community.

*Winner of the Youth Documentary Award Sponsored by Time Warner Foundation*

**The Sixth Section**, 8:10 min., Social Documentary

*Alex Rivera, Director/Producer, Produced in association with P.O.V./American Documentary*

Sometimes the "American Dream" is realized on foreign soil. During the cold winters of upstate New York, a group of immigrants work together to give a baseball field, an ambulance and whatever else they can manage to their hometown of Boqueron, Mexico.

*Winner of the American Dream Award Sponsored by Netflix*

**Novela, Novela**, 7:20 min., International Documentary

*Elizabeth Miller, Director/Producer*

Every afternoon, millions of Nicaraguans gather around their TV sets to watch their favorite imported novela (soap opera). What would happen if a group of activists produced a homegrown novela about real issues like safe sex and domestic abuse?

*Winner of the Women's Rights Award*

**Bush for Peace**, 1:56 min., Satirical Short

*Sarah Christman, Director/Producer, Jen Simmons, Director/Producer*

It's Dubya as you've never heard him before in a re-mix of U.S. foreign policy created from the Commander-in-Chief's "Moment of Truth" speech. *Bush for Peace* is at once a fantasy, a satire, and an earnest plea to stop the violence.

*Winner of the Politics and Government Award*

**Spring in Awe**, 4 min., Experimental Short

*Martina Radwan, Director/Producer, Moira Demos, Producer*

The overpowering displays of Times Square put a spell on the world in a disturbing lullaby of global capitalism.

*Winner of the Media Awareness Award Sponsored by the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers*

**POPaganda: The Art & Subversion of Ron English**, 8:24 min., Portrait

*Pedro Carvajal, Director/Producer*

A modern-day Robin Hood of Madison Avenue, artist and satirist Ron English reclaims corporate billboards with uncanny canvases that force the man on the street to look twice...or maybe three times.

*Winner of the Media Literacy Award Sponsored by Paola Freccero*

# TAKE ACTION LINKS FOURTH ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL

from [www.mediathatmattersfest.org](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org)

## **I Promise Africa**

- Send a letter to the President demanding that funds be sent to Africa through Keep a Child Alive:  
[www.keepachildalive.org](http://www.keepachildalive.org)
- Get the facts through Artists Against AIDS Worldwide:  
[www.aaaw.org](http://www.aaaw.org)
- Join the DATA (Debt AIDS Trade Africa) action network:  
[www.data.org](http://www.data.org)

## **iThemba**

- Endorse equal access to HIV/AIDS medication through Health GAP:  
[www.healthgap.org](http://www.healthgap.org)
- Lend your voice to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative:  
[www.iavi.org](http://www.iavi.org)
- Show your support for the AIDSVote platform:  
[www.aidsvote.org](http://www.aidsvote.org)

## **Seeds of Hope: South Africa**

- Lend your voice to the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture:  
[www.sustainableagriculture.net](http://www.sustainableagriculture.net)
- Get the facts by sitting down at the Sustainable Table:  
[www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org)
- Contribute to the latest action at the Institute for Food and Development Policy:  
[www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)

## **The Meatrix**

- Join the fight against factory farms through the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment:  
[www.factoryfarm.org](http://www.factoryfarm.org)
- Help victims of the factory farm industry through Farm Sanctuary:  
[www.farmsanctuary.org](http://www.farmsanctuary.org)
- Find local organic alternatives through Local Harvest:  
[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

## **Laugh at the Fat Kid**

- Learn about overeating and good nutrition from KidsHealth:  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
- What you can do to stop bullying from the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center:  
[www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)
- Test your bullying prevention know-how through a fun game at Stop Bullying Now:  
[www.stopbullyingnow.org](http://www.stopbullyingnow.org)

## **Lean on Me**

- Get in on the action at YouthNOISE:  
[www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com)
- Learn how to tell your own story through the Center for Digital Storytelling:  
[www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)
- Make an impact with your digital story or film through the Youth Media Distribution Toolkit:  
[www.ymdi.org/toolkit](http://www.ymdi.org/toolkit)

## **Books Not Bars**

- Urge congress to fund educational programs through the National Education Association:  
[www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)
- Hard facts on spending from the Justice Policy Institute:  
[www.justicepolicy.org](http://www.justicepolicy.org)
- Join the struggle to end the prison industrial complex:  
[www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)

## **The Children of Birmingham**

- Learn more about Birmingham and the civil rights movement at Africanaonline.com:  
[www.africanaonline.com](http://www.africanaonline.com)
- Join the movement of student-led activists for social change at Sound Out:  
[www.soundout.org](http://www.soundout.org)
- Urge Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 2004 at civilrights.org:  
[www.ga3.org](http://www.ga3.org)

## **Day of Remembrance**

- Speak out on behalf of the post 9/11 detainees through the Human Rights Watch campaign:  
[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)
- Educate yourself and prevent anti-Arab discrimination at ADC.org:  
[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)
- Contact your representatives about issues affecting Japanese-Americans:  
[www.capwiz.com/jacl](http://www.capwiz.com/jacl)

## **Dedicated to My Family**

- Advocate for the homeless through the National Coalition for the Homeless:  
[www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)
- Support homeless teens by donating to Stand Up For Kids:  
[www.standupforkids.org](http://www.standupforkids.org)
- Are you a teen in need of support? Call Teen Line:  
[www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org)

## **Struggling to Survive**

- Take the Minimum Wage Challenge at Solutions for Progress:  
[www.solfopro.com](http://www.solfopro.com)
- Lend your voice to fight for a living wage and worker's rights at 9to5:  
[www.9to5.org](http://www.9to5.org)
- Sign the Universal Living Wage petition:  
[www.ru5.servadmin.com](http://www.ru5.servadmin.com)
- Demand a living wage in New York State through the \$5.15 Is Not Enough Coalition:  
[www.515isnotenough.org](http://www.515isnotenough.org)

## **The Sixth Section**

- Donate to Grupo Unión's well and water system project:  
[www.sixthsection.com](http://www.sixthsection.com)
- Defend the rights of Mexicans in America through the Mexico Solidarity Network:  
[www.mexicosolidarity.org](http://www.mexicosolidarity.org)
- Urge Congress to reform unjust immigration laws through the ACLU:  
[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

## **Novela, Novela**

- Get the facts about the abuse of women in Latin America from MADRE:  
[www.madre.org](http://www.madre.org)
- Fight violence against women through the American Civil Liberties Union:  
[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)
- Join the Feminist Majority:  
[www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)

## **Bush for Peace**

- Stop nuclear weapons proliferation through WagingPeace.org:  
[www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)
- Join the global peace movement through United for Peace and Justice:  
[www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)
- Take action for peace:  
[www.peace-action.org](http://www.peace-action.org)

## **Spring in Awe**

- Get alternative coverage of the War on Iraq:  
[www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org)
- Ten ways to become media literate from the Center for Media Literacy:  
[www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)
- Fight for media democracy through the Just Media Project:  
[www.mediarights.org/justmedia](http://www.mediarights.org/justmedia)

## **POPaganda: The Art & Subversion of Ron English**

- Sign the Media Carta from Adbusters:  
[www.mediacarta.org](http://www.mediacarta.org)
- Fight for corporate accountability through CorpWatch:  
[www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org)