

For Immediate Release

Contact: Scott Piro (scott@mkpr.com)
Patrick Kowalczyk (patrick@mkpr.com)
MKPR, 212.627.8098

For high-res film images and artwork, contact scott@mkpr.com

What: Eighth annual Media That Matters Film Festival Premiere
When: Wednesday, May 28, 2008, 7 p.m.
Cost: \$11.00
Where: IFC Film Center, 323 Sixth Avenue (at West 3rd St.)
Web: <http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/>; <http://www.ifccenter.com>

SHORT FILMS IN THE BIG APPLE: MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL**KICKS OFF WITH PREMIERE AT IFC FILM CENTER ON MAY 28TH*****Tackling Topics from the Disappearance of Honeybees to the Role of Hip Hop in Politics, Pioneering Online Film Festival Aims to Turn Audiences into Activists***

New York, NY (April 29, 2008) – The Media That Matters Film Festival, one of the world's first and largest online film festivals, kicks off with an offline premiere on May 28th at New York's IFC Film Center. The premiere of the eighth annual Media That Matters Film Festival is open to the public.

This year's festival showcases twelve jury-selected shorts tackling a broad range of social issues with humor, humanity, and honesty. The films include Anwar Saab's HAMMOUDI, about an optimistic young boy in war-torn Lebanon, and Randy Vasquez's SOMETHING'S MOVING, which explores the untold story of Native Americans forced into boarding schools in the 1970s.

Other films highlight the role of hip hop in African politics, new solutions for dealing with electronic waste, the impact of harsh drug laws, the plight of the world's honeybees, and one teen's efforts to inspire activism among his peers. All of the shorts, which range from traditional documentaries to animated films, are 12 minutes long or less. (See complete festival lineup below.)

Following the New York premiere, all the films will be available online in their entirety at www.mediathatmattersfest.org/8. Additionally, the collection will be distributed nationwide on DVD through Netflix and via "do-it-yourself" screenings in classrooms, living rooms and community halls across the world.

The Media That Matters Film Festival was launched in 2001 by Arts Engine, a pioneering media organization behind the new generation of documentaries exploring social issues. Each short screened in the festival is accompanied by "Take Action Links," interactive tools that empower audiences to become activists at the click of a button. Last year, more than a million people participated in the festival online or at the more than 100 local screenings held around the world.

According to Katy Chevigny, co-founder and Executive Director of Arts Engine, past festival films have gone on catalyze national legislation, inform corporate hiring practices, and raise awareness of overlooked issues. Following its debut in the 2006 festival, *A GIRL LIKE ME*, a short video about young African American girls' perceptions of race, became an online phenomenon, ultimately reaching millions of viewers and earning its 16-year-old creator an appearance on *Oprah*.

“Media That Matters stands apart from other film festivals in that it really engages audiences and makes them feel part of something bigger, whether you’re participating at home or at a screening,” said Katy Chevigny, co-founder and executive director of Arts Engine. “These are films that not only entertain, but also inspire and motivate.”

The complete eighth annual Media That Matters Film Festival lineup is as follows:

HAMMOUDI

Lebanon | 9:25 | Documentary | Directed by Anwar Saab, Produced by Tima Khalil
A courageous boy rises above violence in Lebanon with wit, humor and the support of his best friend.

JURY AWARD

A LOUD COLOR

USA | 6:34 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by Brent Joseph
Louis Harding takes a tour of his neighborhood in post-Katrina New Orleans, recounting the contributions of notable African Americans to New Orleans culture and the long road ahead.

LEGACY AWARD

ARGENTINA TURNING AROUND

Argentina & USA | 9:18 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by Melissa Young & Mark Dworkin

Argentinean factory workers unite to bolster the economy, recreate jobs and stabilize communities after business owners abandon their factories during an economic downturn.

LABOR AWARD

SPONSORED BY SEIU

PERVERSION OF JUSTICE

USA | 7:44 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by Melissa Mummert

What can be said of a justice system that sentences a young mother of three to life in prison for a first-time and non-violent drug-related offense?

CHANGEMAKER AWARD

SPONSORED BY WORKING FILMS

DIANA

USA | 6:53 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by Project: Think Different

Mother, daughter, sister, friend and fighter. Diana and Kathy share their views about living with HIV.

EMPOWERMENT AWARD

SPONSORED BY NETFLIX

THE COUNTDOWN

USA | 5:49 | Spoken Word | Directed by Rene Dongo, Produced by ICA Fast Forward Boston
Sofia Snow's spoken word composition unleashes a hypnotic barrage of words and images about post-9/11 America.

EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

AFRICAN UNDERGROUND: HIP HOP IN SENEGAL

Senegal & USA | 6:14 | Documentary | Directed by Magee McIlvaine, Ben Herson, Chris Moore,
Produced by Nomadic Wax and Sol Productions

Step into the African Underground and listen to a new voice inspired by religion, politics, old school Hip Hop and Senegalese culture.

ROOTS & RHYMES AWARD

SOMETHING'S MOVING

USA | 7:14 | Documentary | Directed by Randy Vasquez, Produced by Jonathan Skurnik
Survivors of a U.S. boarding school for the Lakota are breaking the chain of trauma in order to heal their spirits, their community and the country.

UNSPOKEN TRUTH AWARD

A NOMAD'S LIFE

Tibet & U.S. | 9:23 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by Lynn True & Nelson Walker, Co-Produced by Tsering Perlo & Keefe Murren

A young Tibetan family questions whether their nomadic traditions can survive against the challenges of a rapidly modernizing world.

SUSTAINING TRADITIONS AWARD

SUPPORTED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN COFFEE ROASTERS FOUNDATION

AMERICA FOR DUMMIES

USA | 8:14 | Documentary | Directed by Niaz Mosharraf, Produced by Reel Works Teen Filmmaking

Niaz Mosharraf challenges his peers on their knowledge of current-affairs and asks questions like: "Why do we know more about K-Fed than Kofi Annan?"

YOUTH VOICE AWARD

Acknowledged for effectively employing fair use by the Center for Social Media

SUPPORTED BY ADOBE YOUTH VOICES

E-WASTE

USA | 1:41 | Animation | Animated by Ian Lynam, Produced by Morgan Currie & Lindsay Utz, GOOD Magazine

An animated film illustrates the environmental and human damage caused by electronic waste while offering solutions to this global problem.

ENVIRONMENT AWARD

EVERY THIRD BITE

USA | 8:53 | Documentary | Directed & Produced by The Meerkat Media Collective

In the past few years, millions of bees have disappeared from their hives. More than just a honey matter, the lives of bees are connected to us and our ecosystems in more ways than we can count.

GOOD FOOD AWARD

SUPPORTED BY CLIF BAR FAMILY FOUNDATION & W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

About Media That Matters

The Media That Matters Film Festival is the premiere showcase for short films on the most important topics of the day. Local and global, online and in communities around the world, Media That Matters engages diverse audiences and inspires them to take action.

About Arts Engine

Now celebrating ten years of producing, supporting and distributing social-issue media, Arts Engine consists of three principal programs: Big Mouth Films, the Media That Matters Film Festival and MediaRights.org. As a major innovator and contributor to the current independent media culture, Arts Engine's vision for the next decade is to shape and define that culture with reverence for the great tradition of social-issue documentaries as well as an eye toward the future of new technologies and new media. Katy Chevigny, co-founder and Executive Director of Arts Engine, recently directed the film ELECTION DAY, which will be broadcast by P.O.V. on July 1, 2008.

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