

*Join NFMLA for a film festival with a spotlight on cinema from Developing Nations in partnership with Film Liaisons In California Statewide (FLICS)*

Online PR News – 07-August-2018 – Los Angeles, California – NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) spotlights stories from Developing Nations and a selection of works by emerging local and US filmmakers, in partnership with the film commissioners' association Film Liaisons In California Statewide (FLICS).

The night begins with a powerful shorts program highlighting stories set in or about communities from developing nations, made by filmmakers who are either local to or intimately familiar with those communities. The themes in this program span the collision of worlds and cultures, the evolution of family dynamics, and the powerful bond between humans and the natural world.

Second in the night is Lonely Hearts Club, the feature directorial debut of award-winning director and NFMLA alumni Jason O. Silva. Three lives converge in this exploration of love and loss during a long flight layover in Los Angeles, starring Camille Guaty (Daytime Divas, Scorpion, Las Vegas)

The evening concludes with a shorts program offering a selection of surreal and comedic films that bring their own takes to topics including heartbreak, xenophobia and superstition, challenging us to look at them with fresh eyes.

#### Shorts Program #1: InFocus: Developing Nations

##### Geeta, Dir. & Writ by Sohil Vaidya, USA

After coming to United States to work as a housemaid, Geeta realises that her social, financial and personal freedoms are slowly being taken away from her.

About the Director - Sohil recently finished the MFA Film Production Program from the University of Southern California. He has been awarded the James Bridges Directing Scholarship and Edward Thomas Troutner Cinematography Scholarship for his achievements at USC. Sohil is one of the founders of Smita Patil International Film Festival for underrepresented voices in Indian cinema. He wants to bridge the gap between east and west with the universally relatable, visually compelling and unique stories.

##### Amazonia Dammed, Dir. by Ada Bodjolle, Brazil/UK

The story of the Munduruku people's urgent struggle to protect the heart of the Amazon against one of the largest mega-dam projects on earth.

About the Director - Ada Bodjolle is a filmmaker, photographer and motion designer. She recently completed the prestigious Wildlife Filmmaking Master at University of the West of England in association with the BBC Natural History Unit. As part of her course, she directed a short documentary called Amazonia Dammed (featured in BBC Points West and BBC Radio). She has a passion for our natural world and storytelling and truly believes that art is a powerful tool for conservation. With this film, she is hoping to bring awareness to the plight of the communities of the Tapajós River.

On Monday of Last Week, Dir. by Akosua Adoma Owusu, USA/Ghana

Adapting a short story from author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's The Thing Around Your Neck, we follow Kamara, a Nigerian woman, on her journey to self-realization.

About the Director - Akosua Adoma Owusu is a Ghanaian-American filmmaker, producer and cinematographer whose films address the collision of identities. Owusu re-interprets W. E. B. Du Bois' notion of double consciousness to create a third cinematic space for representing feminism, queerness and African immigrants interacting in African, white American and black American culture. She was a featured artist at the 56th Robert Flaherty Seminar programmed by renowned film curator and critic Dennis Lim. In 2015, she was named by IndieWire as one of '6 Avant-Garde Female Filmmakers Who Redefined Cinema.'

Disconnected, Dir. & Writ by Shema Deve, Rwanda

North American Premiere

During the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, a young man refuses to kill a girl he likes, even under his father's furious pressure to murder her.

About the Director - Shema Deve is a Rwandan author, screenwriter, director, and producer. One of the short films he produced won the best story at the Christian Film Festival Congo in 2018.

Disconnected is his second short film, and has screened in Durban international film festival in South African, Cefalu film festival in Italy and NewFilmmakers Los Angeles will be its North American premiere. And he worked on other films mostly as a producer.

Still Waters Run Deep, Dir. & Writ by Abbesi Akhamie, Nigeria/USA

A father must withstand his emotions and preserve his pride when his estranged son mysteriously disappears.

About the Director - Born in Heidelberg, Germany, Abbesi Akhamie is a Nigerian-American writer/director currently based in New York City. She received her MFA in Film from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and also holds a BA in Communications from George Mason University. Abbesi has a keen interest in topics involving the African continent and its diaspora which is reflected in her writings and films. In 2016, two short films she

produced met international acclaim on the festival circuit. Still Water Runs Deep premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and later won "Best Student Short" at the acclaimed Aspen ShortsFest.

#### Hairat, Dir. by Jessica Beshir, Ethiopia/ USA

Yussuf Mume Saleh journeys nightly into the outskirts of the walled city of Harar to bond with his beloved hyenas, a ritual he has practiced for over thirty-five years. Shot in black & white, HAIRAT is a meditation on this uniquely symbiotic relationship between man and wild beast.

About the Director - Jessica Beshir is a Mexican-Ethiopian writer, director and cinematographer based in Brooklyn, dedicated to immersive filmmaking. Jessica's films have played around the world at festivals including Sundance, Rotterdam, IDFA, Hot Docs, Tribeca Film Festival, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Glasgow Film Festival, Performa 17, and Eye Film Museum, Amsterdam and at the Museum of the Moving Image NY among others. Jessica made her directorial debut with Hairat, which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. The film was recently picked up by The Criterion Channel on Filmstruck.

#### Life in Other Words, Dir. & Writ by Abrar Athar, Bangladesh

When the ill-tempered Mr. Kabir and the rest of his family are having an extraordinarily terrible day, a game of cricket stands as their only hope of coming together.

About the Director - Abrar Athar is a Bangladesh based filmmaker and co-founder of the advertising firm Medium Rare. With an eye for breathtaking visuals and a knack for visual comedy, Athar found success directing commercials and TV shows. A self-proclaimed problem child, Athar's early childhood was spent in both Bangladesh and India. His offbeat worldview on family values is reflected in his debut short film Life in Other Words, a comedy drama exploring the dynamics of a Bangladeshi middle-class family on possibly the worst day of their lives.

#### Feature Film

#### Lonely Hearts Club, Dir. & Writ by Jason O. Silva, USA

Stuck in LA on a long layover back home to Texas after a huge break-up with her boyfriend, Jess (Remy Nozik) reconnects with an old friend (Camille Guaty) and learns she's not the only one dealing with major issues.

About the Director - Jason O. Silva is an award-winning commercial and narrative film & television director based in Los Angeles. Both his cinematic eye and his emphasis on actor-driven narrative have led to his unique style and perspective. Jason is thrilled to screen his first feature film, Lonely Hearts Club, at Newfilmmakers LA. He has two other films in active development for 2018/2019. Also due out this year is a new scripted 1-hr show for Lifetime called Crazy Love, where Jason was the series director. His short films have screened in dozens of festivals and events and garnered several awards.

## Shorts Program #2

Sole Addiction, Dir. by Kevin Palafox and Jacques Lamour & Writ by Kevin Palafox, USA

Four young men brave the harsh city streets just days before Christmas to satisfy their sneaker addiction and secure an extremely exclusive sneaker on its release date.

About the Director - Kevin Palafox was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. His passion for acting began after he graduated from UC Berkeley. He began his studies at Chabot College and in San Francisco at The Intersections for the Arts. On his journey he has worked in theatre, film and television. His passion for writing is fueled by his passion for acting. Writing allows him to delve deeper into a character and story. From this he is able to create characters who come from a place of honesty.

Numb, Dir. & Writ by Daniel Hayden, USA

World Premiere

Suffering from some dumb depression or whatever, Carrie loses the ability to feel. Anything.

About the Director - Daniel is from Dallas, Texas and is a graduate of the film program at the University of Texas at Austin. He currently resides in Los Angeles, where he works as a staff editor for Viacom; editing videos for Comedy Central, MTV, Logo and the Paramount Network. He's directed, written and/or edited over a dozen short films, commercials, and music videos as well as an unseen feature or two during the go-go mumblecore era.

Frenchies, Dir. by Kuan-Fu Lin & Writ. by Sam McGoldrick, Taiwan/USA

In an old apartment complex, a new family moves in to Arthur's next door. They are Frenchies. They act weird, make suspicious noise and - they have heads like French Bulldogs.

About the Director - Kuan-Fu "FT" Lin was born in Taiwan. After years of experience working on feature films, like Life Of Pi, FT started to share his vision to the world. As a protester and a filmmaker, he always tries to find a better approach to reach out different audience. He focuses on using fantasy elements to talk about social issues.

The Art (all feminine) to Lose Life with Grace (L'arte (tutta femminile) di perdere la vita con grazia), Dir. by Marina Rocco, Italy

World Premiere

A strange kind of Marilyn Monroe lives with three nuns in a strange kind of convent.

About the Director - Marina Rocco is an Italian actress, whose career began in theater, working with Teatro Franco Parenti of Mila, one of the most important vanguard theatres in Europe. She has been directed by Italian directors like Paolo VirzÃ¬, Sergio Castellitto and Carlo Mazzacurati, among others. The Art (all feminine) to Lose Life with Grace is her directorial debut.

The Heartbreak Factory, Dir. & Writ by So Young Shelly Yo, USA

Imagine a place where you could fix the pains of your broken heart with a quick stitch. Ava, a fiery worker, is determined to mend all the broken hearts of the world.

About the Director - So Young Shelly Yo is a Korean American filmmaker living in Los Angeles. In 2012 Shelly earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego, where she graduated with honors. She recently graduated from the Columbia University MFA program in screenwriting and directing. Her feature film was a part of the Alfred P. Sloan Mentorship program and was a top 3 finalist.

Smiley's, Dir. & Writ by Mike James, USA

A stressed student becomes obsessed with a vending machine in the middle of nowhere.

About the Director - Mike James is an independent filmmaker based out of Indianapolis, IN. He is a contributor to the comedy collective 5secondfilms.com, directed music videos, shorts and documentaries such as his first feature documentary "Open Mic Night After The Apocalypse". He is a co-star and co-writer of the feature comedy "Dude Bro Party Massacre 3".

Additional event information is available at [www.nfmla.org](http://www.nfmla.org)

Founded in 2007, NewFilmmakers Los Angeles is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. NFMLA's programs annually serve approximately 25,000 patrons in the Greater Los Angeles area. NFMLA has screened over 2,500 films from 75+ countries, highlighting local and international talent. NFMLA is supported by Presenting Venue Sponsor South Park Center, Executive Sponsors FilmLA and HBO, Airline Partner Norwegian Airlines and Producers Circle Sponsors SAG-AFTRA, 21st Century Fox Global Inclusion, The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), The Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).