

BY JAMIE MARSHALL

HIGH FIVE!

AS THE **GREENWICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** HEADS INTO ITS FIFTH YEAR, WE LOOK FORWARD TO WHAT'S IN STORE AND TAKE A LOOK BACK AT ALL THE FACES, FILMS AND PHILANTHROPY

date

FIVE DAYS FOR
FIVE YEARS:
WEDNESDAY, **MAY 29** –
SUNDAY, **JUNE 2**

screenings & event locations

BOW TIE CINEMA
COLE AUDITORIUM
J HOUSE
BETTERIDGE
L'ESCALE

featuring

MORE THAN 70 EVENTS,
INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL
AND DOMESTIC FILM
PREMIERES, PANELS AND
NETWORKING GATHERINGS

highlights

SOFT OPENING FILM PREMIERE AND Q&A / WEDNESDAY, **MAY 29**

CHANGEMAKER GALA & AWARDS CEREMONY / THURSDAY,
MAY 30 / L'ESCALE

OPENING NIGHT PREMIERE AND AFTER PARTY / FRIDAY, **MAY 31**

EPIC ANNIVERSARY PARTY / SATURDAY, **JUNE 1** / CAPITOL THEATRE

Special celeb performances, DJs, local bands and highlights from past years, plus light bites and cocktails. For a full schedule of events and ticket prices, please check greenwichfilm.org

tickets

All-access VIP passes and tickets to the anniversary party are available this month. Film tickets will be available Wednesday, May 1.

It was six years ago this May that Greenwich residents Wendy Stapleton, Colleen deVeer and Carina Crain hatched an ambitious idea: create a film festival for the community of Greenwich and the tristate region that would bridge the worlds of film, finance and philanthropy. The goal was to give filmmakers an effective platform to showcase their work and ultimately find financing opportunities for future projects. Equally important, the festival would seek to spark change by showcasing films with a global conscience, covering topical subjects such as human rights, education, the environment and health care. From the outset, the founders were also committed to finding a way to incorporate a charitable component into the mix, which they did by forging partnerships with both local and international nonprofits. With these goals in mind, they hoped that one day Greenwich International Film Festival (GIFF) would be on par with such top-tier festivals as Cannes, Venice, Sundance. Now, on the cusp of its fifth anniversary, GIFF has achieved all that its founders set out to achieve, and more.

"From the beginning GIFF was fueled by our passion to share stories that tackle critical issues facing the community and our world," says Stapleton, cofounder and chairman of the board. "You may not have the desire or the ability to go see firsthand what is going on in some far off war-torn area, or what it's like to be born in the ghettos of the United States trying to gain equal access to education and job opportunities, but if you see



Colleen deVeer,
Wendy Stapleton and
Ginger Stickel

a film that exposes your mind to these realities, you can't unsee them. We passionately believe in the power of film to change people's minds and hearts."

As farfetched as the idea may have seemed at first—an international film festival in a suburb of New York City?—Greenwich was a natural fit for many reasons. "There is a robust financial community here, a deep appreciation for art and film and a strong philanthropic bent," says Ginger Stickel, the festival's executive director and chief operating officer. "Logistically, Greenwich is a great town for a festival village. It's easy to navigate, there are wonderful venues for screenings and panels,

and the parking and trains make Greenwich very accessible."

Indeed, since its inception GIFF has attracted plenty of star power and industry insiders, from A-list actors and actresses like Will Arnett, John Turturro and Kristin Davis to Grammy-winning musicians such as Flo Rida and Ms. Lauryn Hill. It's an important forum for emerging talent, as well; each year, the film screenings and panel discussions featured throughout the festival have served to showcase up and comers like Quinn Shephard, director of the 2017 narrative feature *Blame*, and her lead actress, Nadia Alexander.

For organizers, GIFF is a year-round undertaking. A

general call for entries goes out in November; submissions are accepted through January, which happens to coincide with the Sundance Film Festival in Park City. "Every year the GIFF team travels to Park City," says Colleen deVeer, cofounder and director of programming. "It's a wonderful opportunity to scout emerging filmmakers and innovative films. The Sundance programming crew has great taste, and we are able to fill in the holes from the online submissions we select, which in turn allows us to curate a very diverse program that will appeal to everyone in our audience."

That program comes together in April when the programming team and prescreening committee select which films will be part of the lineup in six categories: Narrative Feature, Narrative Short, Documentary Feature, Documentary Short, Connecticut Short and Social Impact. During the festival a jury comprised of industry experts and leaders in their fields selects each category winner, with cash prizes ranging from \$1,000 (Connecticut Short) to \$10,000 (Social Impact). In 2017, the prestigious Social Impact award went to *City of Ghosts*, which was directed by Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning filmmaker, Brunswick alum Matthew Heineman. "It's always interesting to see how the cash awards are used," says Stickel. "Matthew donated his money to the charity in the film—Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently. The director of *Crime + Punishment* used the money to finance a social media campaign."

Making a Difference Near and Far

EVERY YEAR, GIFF HONORS MEN AND WOMEN IN THE FILM INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITY WHO USE THEIR VOICES TO IMPACT POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE. HERE ARE WHO WE'VE MET SO FAR

2015



←.....| **HARRY BELAFONTE**
and **MIA FARROW**
On behalf of UNICEF

2016



←.....| **TRUDIE STYLER**
Founder of the Rainforest Fund



FREIDA PINTO →.....|
Advocacy work with Girl Rising



ABIGAIL BRESLIN →.....|
On behalf of National Coalition
Against Domestic Violence

2017



←.....| **CHRISTY**
TURLINGTON BURNS
Model, activist and founder of Every
Mother Counts; And—for the first time—
a community changemaker



RENÉE ZELLWEGER →.....|
Actress and humanitarian for her
work on behalf of ALS



←.....| **ANDREW NIBLOCK**
Director of schoolwide initiatives at
Greenwich Country Day and former head of the
lower school. Niblock had been diagnosed with
ALS and the school responded by organizing the
largest ice bucket challenge on record

2018



ASHLEY JUDD →.....|
Actress and author for her work as
the Global Goodwill Ambassador with
the United Nations Population Fund



←.....| **DUNCAN EDWARDS**
Community leader and executive director
of the Waterside School in Stamford



HIGHLIGHT REEL

FAVORITE MOMENTS FROM THE FOUNDERS

"The give-back aspect of GIFF has been very important to me since the very first time we discussed building a festival in Greenwich.

I'M INCREDIBLY PROUD OF THE CHARITIES WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT AND THE EXPOSURE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THEM."

—Wendy Stapleton

"After our Connecticut premiere of Kim Snyder and Maria Cuomo Cole's documentary, *Newtown*, about the aftermath of one of our country's deadliest school shootings, we were saddened to learn the news of the Orlando nightclub shooting—just hours before our second screening of the film.

WITH FIRST RESPONDERS, EDUCATORS, DOCTORS, AND VICTIMS' FAMILIES PRESENT, AN EVEN MORE PRESSING URGENCY FOR OUR AUDIENCE AND OUR GOVERNMENT TO HELP TIGHTEN FEDERAL GUN CONTROL LAWS WAS PALPABLE. JIM HIMES' ATTENDANCE THAT AFTERNOON MADE TREMENDOUS IMPACT following the screening, and in the words of Kim Snyder, points to the incredible value of festivals like ours."

—Colleen deVeer

"There have been many special moments over the past five years, but one that stands out occurred at our first Changemaker Gala. Harry Belafonte was our honoree for his work as a UNICEF Ambassador. Up-and-coming musician Connell Cruise sang one of Harry's songs to him. It was a beautiful moment that I'll always remember. **REGIS PHILBIN AND KATHIE LEE GIFFORD WERE SERVING AS MASTERS OF CEREMONY THAT YEAR, AND FRANK GIFFORD MADE A SURPRISE APPEARANCE DURING THEIR PERFORMANCE."**

—Ginger Stickel

GIFF Must-Sees

Colleen deVeer, director of programming, shares some of GIFF's best films you may not have heard of—a mix of narrative and documentary features—but should see ASAP

40-LOVE/"TERRE BATTUE"

France/Belgium 2014

Stéphane Demoustier's psychological portrait of a down-on-his-luck father and his gifted son is thrilling from beginning to match point.

VICTORIA

Germany 2015

Shot in a single, pulse pounding take in Berlin, *Victoria* is a masterful feat of filmmaking as well as a thrilling, action-packed bank heist film. What starts off as a relatively innocent courtship between Victoria and one of the guys quickly evolves into a tense crime drama, as the naive but game protagonist gets drawn into an escalating series of illicit activities.



THE GUILTY

Denmark 2018

When police officer Asger Holm is demoted to desk work, he expects a sleepy beat as an emergency dispatcher. That all changes when he answers a panicked phone call from a kidnapped woman who then disconnects abruptly. He is forced to use others as his eyes and ears as the severity of the crime slowly comes into focus.

THE STRANGE ONES

USA 2017

Mysterious events surround two travelers, seemingly brothers, as they make their way across a remote American landscape. On the surface all seems normal, but what appears to be a simple vacation soon gives way to a dark and complex web of secrets.

THE DAWN WALL

Austria, USA 2017, Documentary

In January 2015 American rock climbers Tommy Caldwell and Kevin Jorgeson

captivated the world with their effort to climb the Dawn Wall, a seemingly impossible 3,000-foot rock face in Yosemite National Park, California. The pair lived on the sheer vertical cliff for weeks, igniting a frenzy of global media attention. But for Caldwell, the wall was more than just a climb. It was the culmination of a lifetime defined by overcoming obstacles. Caldwell and his partner Jorgeson spend six years plotting and practicing their route. On the final attempt, with the world watching, Caldwell is faced with a moment of truth. Should he abandon his partner to fulfill his ultimate dream, or risk success for the sake of their friendship?



CRIME + PUNISHMENT

USA 2018, Documentary

Amid a landmark class-action lawsuit over illegal policing quotas, *Crime + Punishment* intimately observes the real lives and struggles of a group of black and Latino whistleblower cops known as "The NYPD 12" and the young minorities they are pressured to arrest and summons in New York City. Over four years with unprecedented access, the film exposes the interconnected stories of systemic injustice in New York City policing, through the bold efforts of a group of active duty officers, an innocent young man stuck in Rikers and one unforgettable private investigator.

UNSEEN

USA 2016, Documentary

In 2009, Cleveland police discovered the decomposing bodies of eleven women inside and around the home of known sex offender Anthony Sowell. With the help of the surviving victims of the serial killer, this powerful and chilling documentary drama brings to light how little we value the lives of women on the margins of society and why they went "unseen" for so long.

AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...

SOME OF THE MAJOR BOX-OFFICE FILMS THAT EACH WON NUMEROUS INDUSTRY NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS AFTER THEIR GIFF SCREENINGS

2018

I, TONYA

Oscar for best performance by an actress in a supporting role (Allison Janney), and nominated for Oscar, best performance by an actress in a leading role (Margot Robbie)

IN THE FADE

Golden Globe for best motion picture foreign language

2017

20TH CENTURY WOMEN

Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay and numerous Golden Globe nominations including best performance by an actress (Annette Bening) in a motion picture musical or comedy.

THE ARRIVAL

Multiple Oscar, BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television) and Golden Globe awards and nominations in everything from sound editing, film editing and cinematography to best leading actress, best original score and best film.

2016

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Oscar and BAFTA film award for best achievement in visual effects. Critics' Choice Award for best visual effects.

LIFE, ANIMATED

Oscar nominated for best documentary feature

2015

SPOTLIGHT

Oscars for best writing, original screenplay and best motion picture as well as numerous nominations including best performances by an actor and actress in a supporting role (Mark Ruffalo and Rachel McAdams). Won BAFTA Film Award and Golden Globe for best original screenplay, among other awards and nominations.

A GOOD NEIGHBOR

THE FESTIVAL'S IMPACT ON THE TOWN HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT



COMMUNITY

As the premier film event in the state, GIFF enhances the cultural life of the town in a number of ways, from providing educational opportunities to hosting free community events. "We have at least six free screenings a year and four free panels a year," says Stickel. More than 150 volunteers return each year to help put on the festival.



SOCIAL

More than half the film lineup at the festival has a social-impact focus. "We hope this inspires the audience to create positive social change in their own communities," says Stickel.



CHARITABLE

The festival has raised nearly half a million dollars for nonprofit organizations both locally and internationally. "We donate a portion of our proceeds, and we also encourage people to donate privately," says Stickel. "We give tremendous exposure to our charity partners throughout the week." Among them: Americares, The U.S. Fund for Unicef, Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich, Waterside School, Family Centers, ALS Finding a Cure, the Rainforest Fund and many more.



ARTISTIC

The festival provides support to filmmakers by offering cash awards in six genres (Best Social Impact Film, Best Documentary Film, Best Narrative Feature Film, Best Documentary Short, Best Narrative Short and Best Connecticut Short) as well as numerous networking opportunities.

GIFF BY THE NUMBERS

40K+

Number of people who have attended festival events

200+

Number of screenings

275+

People from the film and entertainment industry who have participated in GIFF

\$500K

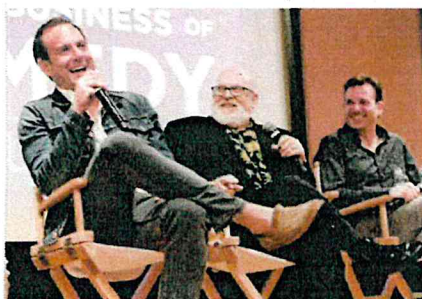
Amount raised for charity partners

\$120K

Amount awarded to winners

4.5B

Positive media impressions generated to date



Talk It Over

Panel discussions and post-screening Q&As give the audience a rare look inside the complicated and exciting world of filmmaking

INSPIRING THOUGHT

"The social impact films that GIFF screens are so moving that our audience often needs to talk about them, WHICH IS WHY Q&As AND POST-SCREENING RECEPTIONS ARE OFFERED. Some of the films that stand out in my mind that RESULTED IN THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSIONS ARE *1985*, *THE LIGHT OF THE MOON*, *GERMANS & JEWS*, *HOOLIGAN SPARROW*, AND *LITTLE STONES*."

—Ginger Stickel

FUNNY BUSINESS

"THE BIG BUSINESS OF COMEDY PANEL, COMPRISED OF THE BEST COMEDIC DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS AND ACTORS, SURE MADE OUR AUDIENCE LAUGH OUT LOUD. They talked shop, dishing on the funny experiences they had making some of the greatest comedies of the last three decades."

—Colleen deVeer

LOCAL LOVE

"Our largest and MOST POPULAR FILM SCREENING TO DATE WAS GREENWICH RESIDENT ROB BURNETT'S *THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CARING*. We had to screen the film at the GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER BECAUSE 1,100 PEOPLE ATTENDED. The night included a Q&A with Rob, and two of the actors he's worked with over the years."

—Ginger Stickel