

For Immediate Release

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What: Ninth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival Premiere – Open To The Public
When: Wednesday, June 3rd, 2009
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. - Screening followed by filmmaker Q&A
6:00 – 7:00 p.m. – impact Salon – Meet the filmmakers and learn how to get involved in the issues explored in this year’s festival films
Cost: \$10.00
Where: School of Visual Arts Theater, 333 W. 23rd Street (b/t 8th and 9th Ave.)
Web: <http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/9>

SHORT FILMS, BIG ISSUES: WORLD PREMIERE OF
NINTH ANNUAL MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL
AT SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS THEATER ON JUNE 3RD

*Tackling Topics from Climate Change to Urban Planning,
Trailblazing Online Film Festival Inspires Audiences to Take Action*

www.mediathatmattersfest.org/9

New York, NY (May 11, 2009) – The Media That Matters Film Festival, one of the world’s first and largest online film festivals, kicks off its ninth year with an offline world premiere at the School of Visual Arts Theater in New York City on Wednesday, June 3rd. The screening 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 jury prize winner NEXT WAVE, director Jennifer Redfearn and Tim Metzger’s alarming documentary about the world’s first climate change refugees from the Carteret Islands, and LOCUSTS, a rousing docu-musical on the effects of ill-planned urban planning featuring hotly-tipped Detroit hip hop artists Invincible and Finale.

Other films spotlight the impact of gun violence on young people, an immigrant family torn apart by deportation, the burden imposed on Bolivia by America’s war on drugs, and Middle Easterners whose diverse outlooks defy common stereotypes. All of the shorts, which range from traditional documentaries to animated films, are 12 minutes or less. (See complete festival lineup below.)

Following the New York world premiere on June 3rd, all of the films will be screened online in their entirety at www.mediathatmattersfest.org/9. Each short is accompanied by “Take Action” tools which empower viewers to become activists at the click of a button. Additionally, the collection will be distributed nationwide on DVD through Netflix and via “do-it-yourself” screenings in classrooms, living rooms and by community organizations. Last year, more than a million people participated in the festival online and through over 100 local screenings held around the world.

Since its launch in 2001, several festival films have gone on to create change, including playing a role catalyzing national legislation and informing corporate hiring practices. 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*.

The Ninth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival is co-presented by Arts Engine and Cinereach, two innovative non-profits dedicated to supporting socially conscious filmmakers.

“The Media That Matter Film Festival aims to not only entertain, but to also motivate audiences to learn more and get involved,” said Katy Chevigny, co-founder and executive director of Arts Engine. “All of the films explore difficult and challenging topics in ways that will surprise, delight, and inspire.”

“This year’s program exemplifies how great filmmaking can humanize critical issues,” said Michael Raisler, creative director of Cinereach. “Media That Matters continues to provide an exciting and unique opportunity for audiences to encounter vital perspectives too often ignored.”

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

The Next Wave

Pacific Islands & USA | 8:03 | Documentary

The Carteret Islanders, some of the world’s first climate change refugees, struggle to relocate.

Bits and Pieces

Jordan | 4:38 | Experimental / Animation

Traditional mosaics illustrate a collage of contemporary Jordanian sentiments, challenging common misperceptions of the Middle East.

Lone Wolf

USA | 5:29 | Documentary

The rights of an independent journalist are compromised by the government's attempts to control media content.

Locusts

USA | 6:33 | Docu-music video

Hip Hop artists join Detroit citizens to speak up about the effects of ill-planned urban developments.

Exiled in America

USA | 9:25 | Documentary

Five siblings living in America struggle to support themselves after their mother is deported to Mexico.

Why Do White People Have Black Spots?

Ghana & USA | 6:24 | Documentary

Youth in Ghana pose questions to people outside of their borders and spark an ongoing dialogue through film.

La Hoja

Bolivia & USA | 9:59 | Documentary

The United States' war on drugs challenges Bolivian traditions with broad and damaging results.

Will I Be Next?

USA | 6:31 | Documentary

Chicago youth explore the effects of gun violence in their neighborhoods and demand change for the future.

Immersion

USA | 12:00 | Narrative

Moises, a ten-year-old student, struggles to communicate in his new English-only school with limited access to his native language.

The Secret Life of Paper

USA | 5:36 | Documentary

Why does the United States consume far more paper than any other country on the globe?

Knock Knock, Who's There?

India | 0:59 | PSA

What would you do to stop domestic abuse in your neighborhood?

Looking Back

USA | 5:31 | Documentary

Homeless veteran Albert Lewis photographs his life and sheds light on the support of his community.

About Media That Matters

The Media That Matters Film Festival, a project of Arts Engine, 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. Co-presented by Cinereach, the ninth annual Media That Matters Film Festival is made possible by the generous support of: Adobe Youth Voices, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Foundation, Netflix, HBO, Utne Reader, NEED Magazine, Peppermint Magazine, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Bay and Paul Foundations, Ford Foundation, Center for Social Media, Working Films and Docurama.

About Arts Engine

Celebrating over ten years of producing, supporting and distributing social-issue media, Arts Engine consists of four principal programs: Big Mouth Films, the Media That Matters Film Festival, MediaRights.org and DocuClub. 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. www.artsendine.net.

About Cinereach

Cinereach was created in 2006 by a group of young filmmakers and philanthropists. Its mission is to support and produce artful films that depict underrepresented perspectives, cross cultural boundaries and inspire action. Cinereach has awarded close to \$2 million in grants and awards since its inception. Past recipients include: *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)*, a 2009 Academy Award nominee for Best Documentary; *A Jihad for Love*, the acclaimed documentary exploring the complex global intersections of Islam and homosexuality; and *Hometown Bagdad*, the recipient of four 2008 Webby Awards. Through its Reach Film Fellowship, it funds and mentors young filmmakers making meaningful short films with artistic merit. Cinereach's first in-house documentary, *The Road Ahead: The First Green Long March*, was a selection of the Hamptons, Queens (Best International Documentary Film), and Cleveland International film festivals and has screened in connection with leading environmental organizations. www.cinereach.org.

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