



PRESS RELEASE

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SIDEWALK ANNOUNCES COMPETITIVE FEATURE FILM LINE UP

Lineup spans the spectrum of comedy, drama, science fiction, suspense, horror and documentary

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival, recently recognized as one of TIME magazine’s “Film Festivals for the Rest of Us”, announces the stellar line up for the 8th annual festival, set for September 22 – 24 in downtown Birmingham.

Included in this year's competitive lineup are 10 narrative features and 9 feature-length documentaries. These films will be eligible for the juried awards in their category, including **Best Feature Film** and **Best Documentary**, each accompanied by a cash prize of \$1,000. Additionally, **Audience Choice Awards** will be presented in both the feature film and documentary categories.

Sidewalk's mantra to “bring new films to a new audience” continues for its eighth year.

The competition features, selected from more than 130 entrants, are:

THE BIG BAD SWIM (93 min.) directed by Ishai Setton. A group of Connecticut locals meet at an adult education beginner's swim class in this comedy-drama about conquering fears, making friends and growing wiser. Starring Paget Brewster of Showtime’s “Huff”.

CHALK (85 min.) directed by Mike Akel. In the comedic tradition and “documentary” shooting style of “Arrested Development” and “The Office”, CHALK tells the frenetic and awkwardly painful journey of three novice teachers as they navigate one memorable public school year. In a country where 50% of teachers quit within the first three years, CHALK delivers an enormous dose of heart, hilarity, and hope for America’s most important institution.

FIREFLY (105 min.) directed by Pete Marcy. FIREFLY interweaves the stories of three people seeking the mysterious truth about what happened one fateful Halloween night. Del woke up in his truck, hung over and covered in dirt. Brandt was found floating in a river. Susan was rushed to the hospital, bloody and cold. Now, a week before Christmas, Del is having nightmares, Brandt is losing confidence in his relationship, and Susan's memory of her assault is met with a mix of pity and doubt. There's also a little bald guy, whose unexplained clairvoyance leads him to those in need.

*** Producer Adam Anderson scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

THE GUATEMALAN HANDSHAKE (95 min.) directed by Todd Rohal. Following the confusion of a massive power outage, an awkward demolition derby driver vanishes, setting in motion a series of events affecting his pregnant girlfriend, his helplessly car-less father, a pack of wild boy scouts, a lactose intolerant roller rink employee, an elderly woman in search of her lost dog, and his best friend – a ten-year-old girl named Turkeylegs.

*** Director Todd Rohal and other cast and crew scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

- more -

Sidewalk Announces Competitive Lineup –add one

IN MEMORIUM (73 min.) directed by Amanda Gusack. Two months after being diagnosed with terminal cancer, a struggling filmmaker decides to document his illness. Still free from symptoms, he and his girlfriend, sublet a house and install motion-triggered security cameras throughout. A few days later, the cameras capture something unsettling: noises and movement in empty rooms. The next morning, Dennis' cancer begins to advance at an inexplicable rate.

*** Director Amanda Gusack scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

JUST LIKE THE SON (86 min.) directed by Morgan J. Freeman. A poignant story of unlikely friendship and redemption, JUST LIKE THE SON chronicles a petty thief's attempt to help an eight year-old find a better life. Starring Mark Webber and Rosie Perez. **11:30 am, Sun. 9/24 @ Birmingham Museum of Art.**

LOL (81 min.) directed by Joseph Swanberg. Alex, Tim and Chris view the women in their lives through the dimensions of a computer screen or the lens of a camera-phone. They struggle to balance their online fantasies and addictions with the demands of real life. LOL offers an honest portrait of how the latest tools of communication can either help us click or turn us off.

PUZZLEHEAD (81 min.) directed by James Bai. In a dreary world that has been depopulated and where technology has been outlawed, a reclusive scientist secretly creates a self-aware robot he calls Puzzlehead. The film shows us a man, a woman, a robot, a love triangle and the ultimate betrayal.

*** Director James Bai scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

SOMEBODIES (89 min.) directed by Hadjii. SOMEBODIES is a coming-of-age comedy about Scottie, a twenty-two year old African American college student who's just living life as it comes. Eventually his nonchalant approach towards life lands him in hot water. Encircled by a wild group of friends, an eccentric love-interest, off-the-wall family members, in-your-face convicts, and a fire and brimstone preacher, Scottie's road to recovery becomes something more -- a riotous journey toward self-discovery.

*** Director Hadjii and other cast and crew scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

WE GO WAY BACK (80 min.) directed by Lynn Shelton. A funny, tender character study about a young actress whose refusal to admit to her romantic and professional dissatisfaction leads to a surreal confrontation with her past, WE GO WAY BACK explores the comedy and pain of finding the courage to face up to yourself.

*** Director Lynn Shelton scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

The competition documentaries, selected from more than 90 entries, are:

10 MPH (90 min.) directed by Hunter Weeks. In this comical documentary, a pair of aspiring filmmakers quit their jobs and turn a friend's ludicrous idea into a movie. The impulsive purchase of a two-wheeled Segway scooter sets the story in motion as the two friends decide to travel from Seattle to Boston at 10 MPH in an attempt to change their lives forever.

AWAKE, MY SOUL: THE STORY OF THE SACRED HARP (75 min.) directed by Matt and Erica Hinton. AWAKE MY SOUL is the first feature documentary about Sacred Harp singing, a haunting form of a cappella, shape note hymn singing with deep roots in the American south. Shape note singing has survived over 200 years tucked away from notice in the rural Deep South, where in old country churches, singers break open 'The Sacred Harp', a 160 year old shape note hymnal which has preserved these fiercely beautiful songs which are some of the oldest in America.

CLASS ACT (90 min.) directed by Sara Sackner. CLASS ACT weaves the national story of the arts disappearing from America's public school with the personal story of eccentric drama teacher, Jay W. Jensen. This humorous yet revealing look at America's schools as they abandon arts education includes a virtual who's who of Hollywood, including actor Andy Garcia and film director Brett Ratner.

Sidewalk announces competitive lineup – add two

DANIELSON: A FAMILY MOVIE (103 min.) directed by JL Aronson. A documentary about Christian faith vs. popular culture, underground music vs. survival, and family vs. individuality, DANIELSON: A FAMILY MOVIE follows Daniel Smith, an eccentric musician and visual artist, as he leads his four siblings and best friend to indie rock stardom, eventually facing the struggle to become viable as a solo act. Along the way he mentors Sufjan Stevens, a then unknown singer-songwriter, whose subsequent success contrasts sharply with Danielson's uneasy reception in the music world.

*** Director JL Aronson scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

DARKON (93 min.) directed by Andrew Neel & Luke Meyer. DARKON follows the real-life adventures of an unusual group of weekend "warrior knights," fantasy role-playing gamers whose live action battleground is modern-day Baltimore, Maryland, re-imagined as a make-believe medieval world named Darkon. These live action gamers physically act out their characters' exploits, both in intimate court intrigue and in panoramic battle scenarios involving competitive strategies, convincingly real props, and full contact "combat."

JAM (85 min.) directed by Mark Woollen. JAM follows the saga of the America Roller Derby League, a group of fading Roller Derby stars who, despite the fact that they are in their 50s and 60s, are determined to make the sport a national sensation once again. From the on-track battles, where long-time friends become gladiators engaged in vicious fistfights, to the off-track struggle to simply let the world know Roller Derby still exists, JAM shows how the pursuit of a dream can drive people to unbelievable extremes.

*** Director Mark Woolen scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

MUSKRAT LOVELY (60 min.) directed by Amy Nicholson. MUSKRAT LOVELY is an ironic and tender look at the yearly event of a close-knit community in a remote area of the Chesapeake Bay. Every year, contestants gather for two important competitions in the National Outdoor Show. Local high school girls compete to become "Miss Outdoors," queen of the show and its representative for the year and -- on that same stage -- the world's best muskrat skimmers compete to see who can skin the fastest.

THE TRIALS OF DARRYL HUNT (106 min.) directed by Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg. THE TRIALS OF DARRYL HUNT offers a deeply personal story of a wrongfully convicted man. A brutal murder leaves a white woman dead, and a young black man accused. This exclusive portrait of a harrowing wrongful conviction offers a provocative and haunting examination of a community – and a criminal justice system - subject to racial bias and tainted by fear.

*** Darryl Hunt and other subjects scheduled to attend and participate in a Q & A after the screening.**

TIME AND TIDE (60 min.) directed by Julie Bayer and Josh Salzman. TIME AND TIDE is a poetic and absorbing documentary about a land and its people as they head toward irreversible tragedy. After nearly 20 years of living away from their homeland of Tuvalu, a group of expatriates return to their island to witness profound changes driven by global warming and globalization.

The 2006 Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival is set for September 22-24 in downtown Birmingham's historic Theatre District. Opening Night tickets (\$10 in advance / \$13 at the door) and Weekend Passes (\$25 / \$20 for Sidewalk members and students with valid ID) are available by calling 1-800-590-4043 or online at www.sidewalkfest.com. Single Film Tickets will be available for \$7 each (or three for \$15) during the festival weekend. **Tickets are on sale now!** Additional information is available online at the festival website at www.sidewalkfest.com.

The 2006 Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival is sponsored by Stella Artois, EBSCO Industries, Black and White, Alabama Power Foundation, WBRC Fox 6, Charter Communications, Bright House Networks, al.com, Children's Hospital and Birmingham magazine and is made possible, in part, by the Jefferson County Commission through the Jefferson County Community Arts Fund administered by the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham.

The Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival is a project of the Alabama Moving Image Association, Inc., a publicly supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to inspire, encourage and support films and filmmaking in Alabama.

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***** High-res photos, interviews and screeners are available by request. Please contact Kelly Marshall at**

About Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival

The Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival, a celebration of new independent cinema in downtown Birmingham, takes place the last weekend of September. Since its debut in 1999, filmmakers from across the country and around the world have come to Birmingham to screen their work at Sidewalk and have been thrilled to discover fresh, enthusiastic crowds eager to devour new independent cinema. The atmosphere at Sidewalk is electric with creativity and collaboration as film-lovers and filmmakers mix and mingle between screenings, participate in SideTalk panel discussions at the Sidewalk Tech Center, or simply enjoy food and live music at the Sidewalk Cafe located at 'G'. Don't miss your chance to be a part of what the *Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide* calls "One of the Top 10 Film Festival Vacations."

In 2005, the Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival was honored to recognize Mr. John C. Reilly with the inaugural Spirit of Sidewalk award, for his amazing body of work. Other past attendees of the festival include: Peter Gilbert (HOOP DREAMS), Amber Benson (BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER), Mary Kay Place (THE BIG CHILL), Mary Lynn Rajbuski (24, PUNCH DRUNK LOVE, SWEET HOME ALABAMA), Dash Mihok (THE THIN RED LINE, ROMEO + JULIET), Dan Myrick (BLAIR WITCH PROJECT), Vincent Kartheiser (ER, ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE, ANGEL), Chris Gore (IFC, FilmThreat.com), Daniel Wallace (BIG FISH), Gill Holland (HURRICANE STREETS), Adrian Grenier (HBO's ENTOURAGE, Woody Allen's CELEBRITY), Louise Fletcher (ONE FLEW OVER THE CUKOO'S NEST), David Keith (AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMEN), Chris Mulkey (TWIN PEAKS) and many more up and coming award winning filmmakers and stars.