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Los Angeles CA - Red Nation Celebration Institute presents the Inaugural Native Women In Film & Television Film Festival (NWFTV), held during Women's History Month at the Laemmle Music Hall Theatre. This festival is sponsored by NBC Universal and Honest Engine Films.

NWFTV Film Festival, which runs this weekend March 29-31, will include three feature films, two documentary films, four shorts, two television films and one native women's talk show premiere, as well as *Native Women FilmLab Conversation Series "HOLLYWOOD & Women"*: Colonial Narrative, Tiger Lily, Racism, Stereotypes, Whitewashing, and Native Women & Chicanas UNITE!®

"Native Women in Film & Television was established in 2005 and is part of the annual Red Nation Film Festival, states Joanelle Romero (RNFF founder & president). "This year NWFTV has expanded to become its own film festival."

With 10 native films released last year, the first time in history that so many native films were produced, made for a great opportunity to launch the NWFTV Film Festival. The birth of NWFTV Film Festival provides the platform for Native women voices to be heard. To date there have only been 5 contemporary American Indian women stories ever produced in film history in the United States. Today, we have a full range of what native women filmmakers are making now.

"It was a very successful year for 10th Red Nation Film Festival this past November, with Benicio Del Toro opening the festival with the exclusive LA premiere of Jimmy P. and closing with our Red Nation Film Award of Excellence, to our partnership with Comcast Corporation in broadcasting our Awards Show led to being the first native awards show on television as well as highlighting our native women filmmakers" Romero says.

The year that Red Nation Film Festival was launched in 2003 there was a study that showed women made up only 17% of all directors, executive producers, writers, cinematographers and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films.

The lineup for NWFTV Film Festival is unveiled below and founder Joanelle Romero speaks on the need to have more native women filmmakers recognized and their stories heard. Among the Native Women independent narrative and documentary films that first played at the Red Nation Film Festival in November in Beverly Hills, CA, and NWFTV now has its own festival in Beverly Hills to coincide with Women's History Month in March.

Spotlight films include: "*Detained in the Desert*" from the creators of Real Women Have Curves; "*Dancing Salmon Home*"; "*Older Than America*"; "*Native Women Digital Stories*"; and The Four, the first All Native Women Talk Show.

For closing night, featuring "Honoring Hollywood Royalty" in Celebration of Cesar Chavez's Birthday and Edward Albert Jr. and family, join us for "Respecting of Life Water Ceremony", Native Women in Music & Poetry, at Plaza De La Raza.

Academy Award winner *Broken Rainbow* (Director: Victoria Mudd)

A documentary that chronicles the government relocation of 10,000 Navajo Indians in Arizona.

***Detained in the Desert* (Director: Iliana Sosa, Written by Josefina Lopez of Real Women Have Curves)**

This drama centers around two very different people on opposite sides of the immigration debate who find themselves lost in the desert. Under such drastic circumstances, the rhetoric of political ideology and judgment fade away to reveal the humanity and compassion necessary to understand another's perspective.

***Young Lakota* (Director: Marion Lipschutz & Rose Rosenblatt)**

Cecelia Fire Thunder, the first female President of the Oglala Sioux tribe, challenges a South Dakota law criminalizing all abortion and ignites a political firestorm that sets off a chain reaction in the lives of three young Lakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation, forcing each of them to make choices that define who they are and the kind of adults they are becoming.

***Cherokee Word for Water* (Directors: Tim Kelly & Charlie Soap)**

The Cherokee Word for Water is a film about the events surrounding the late Wilma Mankiller's life that led to her political career, and ultimately to becoming the first female Chief of the Cherokee Nation.

***Why the Women in My Family Don't Drink Whiskey* (Director Theda NewBreast)**

The Blackfoot Confederacy and Theda NewBreast's family were hurt by historical traumas and alcohol abuse. So much language and ceremony lost for a while. Blackfeet are now reclaiming and capturing their spirit, their soul, their children, ceremonies, and language. This short documentary film is dedicated to Theda's mother who is now 75 years old. Her mother helped her as a child in stopping the colonization with this generation.

***A Girl Called Hatter Fox* (Director George Schaefer)**

A doctor must battle against superstition and prejudice to try to save a young Indian girl, who has been sent to a state reform school as an incorrigible.

***American Holocaust: When It's All Over I'll Still Be Indian* (Director: Joanelle Romero)**

This powerful, hard-hitting documentary reveals the link between Adolf Hitler's treatment of German Jews and the U.S. government's treatment of American Indians depicts disturbing parallels between these two Holocausts and explores the historical, social and religious roots of America's own ethnic cleansing. The film also examines, through the words and experiences of contemporary Indian people, the long term lasting effects of this ongoing destructive process and the possible ramifications for the future of American Indian people in the 21st century.

***Dancing Salmon Home* (Director Will Doolittle)**

Dancing Salmon Home follows the emotional journey of loss and reunification of the Winnemem Wintu tribe of Northern California across generations and oceans as they reunite with their long-lost salmon relatives. From their ancestral McCloud River, below Mt. Shasta, tribal members travel to New Zealand to meet the descendants of the McCloud River Chinook salmon, which have been missing from their home river for 65 years. Along the way, the 28 tribal members hold four days of ceremony beside New Zealand's Rakaia River, forging enduring bonds with the Maori people of the region, sharing a message of respect for the natural world, and launching plans to bring their salmon home.

***Older Than America* (Director: Georgina Lightning)**

A woman's haunting visions reveal a Catholic priest's sinister plot to silence her mother from speaking the truth about the atrocities that took place at her Native American boarding school. A contemporary drama of suspense, *Older Than America* delves into the lasting impact of the cultural genocide and loss of identity that occurred at these institutions across the United States and Canada.

***In the Footsteps of Yellow Woman* (Director: Camille Manybeads Tso)**

A Docu-Drama about a young Navajo teenage girl who finds her own strength through the making of a documentary about her Grandmother and their ancestral history. She imagines what it would be like to be her Great-Great-Great-Grandmother, Yellow Woman, who lived through the Navajo Long Walk of 1864 - 1868.

***Lakota Woman* (Director: Frank Pierson)**

Mary Crow Dog, daughter of a desperately poor Indian family in South Dakota, is swept up in the protests of the 1960s and becomes sensitized to the injustices that society inflicts on her people. She aids the Lakota in their struggle for their rights; a struggle that culminates in an armed standoff with U.S. government forces at the site of an 1890 massacre.

The Four - First All Native Women Talk Show

Join four indigenous women as they share their individual perspectives and experiences on a variety of topics including parenting, women in leadership roles, sexual well-being and gratitude, all in the hope to engage, educate, inspire and empower.

Inside the Festival

Native Women FilmLab Conversation Series:

“HOLLYWOOD & Women” Colonial Narrative * Tiger Lily * Racism * Stereotypes * Whitewashing;
MODERATOR: Joanelle Romero, Actress, Award-winning Director, Founder Native Women in Film & Television

Panelists include:

- Ellen Gavin, Screenwriter/Producer Gavin Creative LLC
- Victoria Mudd, Director of Academy Award Winning *Broken Rainbow*
- Lenore Andriel, Star/Producer of Award-winning *Yellow Rock*
- Rosemary Soto Rodriguez, Director/Producer *The Taco Maker*
- Sharon Jimenez, President/Founder at Bring Hollywood Home and President at Icon Imaging PR

Native Women & Chicanas UNITE!

- Josefina Lopez, Writer & Executive Producer (Detained in the Desert & Real Women Have Curves, Founded Casa 101 Theatre)
- Iliana Sosa, Director and Screen Adapter (Detained in the Desert)
- Carey Fox, Actor (Detained in the Desert)
- Enrique Morones, Actor (Detained in the Desert)
- Evelina Fernandez, Award-winning actor and writer, found her niche in Chicano Theater. Ms. Fernandez has starred in film roles with Edward James Olmos, Paul Rodriguez and Cheech Marin.

Other Events

In Celebration of Cesar Chavez's Birthday and Edward Albert Jr. and family "Respecting of Life Water Ceremony", Native Women in Music & Poetry is calling all women (and the men who support them). Each woman is asked to bring a gallon of water from where they live. We will carry, walk, pray and connect with the spirit of the water. Bring your rattles, drums, and dress comfortable. (Free Event)

Romero is set to give added exposure to U.S. and to the international market in regards to American Indian and indigenous indie films, in spotlighting Native women filmmakers.

American Indian and indigenous indie films are adored outside of our borders and Red Nation Celebration Institute plans are set to explore Cannes, Berlin and Germany. First spot is Madeira Island in Portugal in partnership with the Madeira Film Festival, this April.

Red Nation Celebration Institute is best known for its signature event Red Nation Concert Series held during Grammy week since 1995; Red Nation Film Festival-The Authentic Voice of American Indian & Indigenous Cinema; Red Nation Television Channel-Native is Here and establishing the American Indian Heritage Month in the City of Los Angeles and in the State of New Mexico.

NWFTV Film Festival venue is the Laemmle family chain's Laemmle Music Hall Theatre. "*We have been screenings our festivals and academy considerations at Laemmle theatres since 2000. We have a great relationship with them*" states Romero.

Facts

To date there have only been 5 contemporary American Indian women stories ever produced in film history in the United States, they are: "*A Girl Called Hatter Fox*" (C.B.S. 1977) starring Joanelle Romero (this was the first contemporary American Indian Women story produced and the first time an American Indian woman carried a leading role); "*Lakota Woman*" (Ted Turner TNT 1994) starring Irene Bedard; "*Naturally Native*" in 1998 starring Valerie Redhorse; "*Imprint*" in 2007 starring Tonantzin Carmelo and the new feature film "*The Cherokee Word for Water*" in 2013 starring Kimberly Guerrero.

Joanelle Romero is the only American Indian director/producer to be close to an Oscar nod in 2000 for her film "*AMERICAN HOLOCAUST: WHEN IT'S ALL OVER I'LL STILL BE INDIAN*". Romero's film was entered into the Oscar's for consideration in 2000. That year 22 short films were entered and then the Academy's Documentary Branch determined the shortlist in a preliminary round of voting in which 9 films were chosen for consideration and Romero's film was included. Then five films were nominated for an Oscar. This documentary short has reached over 1.5 million views on YouTube to date.

Romero's film has received many awards, including the Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award in 2005.

About NWFTV

Native Women in Film & Television is a program of American Indian Arts and culture non-profit organization Red Nation Celebration Institute.

In order to inspire the next generation of film enthusiasts and, to encourage a genre of Native women filmmakers to create their own stories, Red Nation Celebration Institute launched Native Women in Film and Television (2005), to bring awareness and content to the film industry. Sustainability requires a bankable market. Founder Joanelle Romero, *“One cannot build on success with one film every ten years”* said Romero. *“We need to have one film, right after the other in order to create our market”*.

Red Nation Celebration Institute recognizes the original storytellers of this land. We know that women are the life-givers, visionaries, healers, and the first feminists. American Indian women carry the history of our culture.

For more information & tickets visit: www.nativewomenfilmtv.com. You can contact Red Nation Media Nadine Aragon at 747.888.4528.

For more information on Red Nation Celebration Institute visit:

www.rednationcele.org

and Red Nation Film Festival visit:

www.rednationfilmfestival.com

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