

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NATIVE WOMEN VOICES RISE AT THIS YEARS NATIVE WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION {FILM FESTIVAL } FOCUS ON THE CONVERSATION THAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN**

Native Women in Film & Television {Film Festival} is one of the fastest growing independent native women festivals in the country. A project of Red Nation Film Festival - The Authentic Voice of American Indian & Indigenous Cinema. Presented by Red Nation Celebration Institute - Celebrating 20 years of Native Arts & Culture.

Experience Native Women Filmmakers at Native Women in Film & Television {Film Festival}, Fest unveils 17 + Film Screenings. Tribute Ceremony, Program Initiatives, Retrospective. Host Venue: Laemmle Music Hall Theater.

Festival submissions came in from all over the world, U.S., Mexico, Guatemala, Canada, and Bolivia. Throughout the 5 days, the festivals diverse audience, made up of the public, journalists, educators, visiting filmmakers, A-list celebs, film distribution companies, will experience films produced by native women filmmakers, with a lineup of 2 features, 4 doc features, 2 narrative shorts, 8 native women short docs, 1 music video, screenings followed by Q & A sessions with directors, producers and cast. In addition there will be 2 Native Women Conversation Series: The Conversation That Needs To Happen. #NativeWomenMatter

The Festival's focus this year is on "Where's the Image of Native Women on prime-time television, feature films including topic Violence Against Native Women {Murdered & Missing Women} on and off the reservations.

"There's so much Violence Against Native Women in all areas i.e. film, television, the theatre, radio including missing and murder women. Its as if – we do not exist", stated NWFTV founder/actress Joanelle Romero. "We are not cast in prime-time shows not even as an extra". "It hasn't gotten better. In the '70's and '80's there were roles for naive women on television however sadly to say there hasn't been any roles for us since then. This has to change". #NativeWomenRISE

Romero has a long extensive career in the film industry going on four decades with her debut role as an actress in the first contemporary Native Woman's story ever produced "A Girl Called Hatter Fox" (CBS TV Movie) and George Harrison's Award-winning cult film "Pow Wow Highway", to name a few.

A Special Retrospective on Rita Rogers. An Apache actress and mother to Joanelle Romero who was featured in Elvis Presley films Viva Las Vegas", "Harum Scarum", "Spinout", "Clambake", "Kissin' Cousins", "Roustabout", "Speedway" with Nancy

Sinatra. In the wake of the counterculture sensation "Easy Rider" Rita Rogers (January 10, 1937 – June 11, 2012) was offered a role in both Hopper's controversial masterpiece "The Last Move" and Fonda's "The Hired Hand". For personal reasons Rita chose the latter. Released in 1971 by Universal Pictures, "The Hired Hand" marked Peter Fonda's directorial debut and follow-up to Dennis Hopper's directorial smash hit "Easy Rider". "The Hired Hand" (Filmed in New Mexico) was restored, re-mastered, and re-released for its 30-year anniversary in 2001 on Sundance Channel, and premiered at the Sundance Film Festival that same year. The festival will screen Rita Rogers co-star role in "The Hired Hand".

Native Women in Film & Television {Film Festival} will give special Tribute to Misty Upham. Misty Anne Upham (July 6, 1982 – October 5, 2014) was an American actress best known for her role in the 2008 film Frozen River, for which she was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Female. She won outstanding Actress of her role in Frozen River at 8th Red Nation Film Festival.

Upham's film credits include Expiration Date, Edge of America, Skins and Skinwalkers. In 2010, she appeared on HBO's Big Love. In 2013, she played a major supporting role in Arnaud Desplechin's Jimmy P: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian, selected in competition for the Palme d'Or at the 66th Festival de Cannes.[1] She played housekeeper Johnna in August: Osage County. She also played Liz in Cake with Jennifer Aniston.

"Misty Upham passing is a tragic one in that we lost a huge talent, in giving tribute to her life and success at this year's festival, hoping it will bring attention to the emergency we are all in as a nation. Our missing and murdered Native women and bring voice to the diversity issue that desperately is lacking within the entertainment industry, Native Women Matter," quotes Joanelle Romero.

The Festival opens Wednesday, March 25th with three feature films "Crying Earth Rise Up"(2015); "101 Indian"(2014), "The Hired Hand"(1971).

Closing night screenings, March 27th, special screenings of Highway of Tears and Frozen River + A Tribute to Misty Upham, panel to follow screening "The Conversation That Needs To Happen - Where's the Image of Native Women"

NWFTV panel discussion on Violence Against Women in all areas i.e. film, television, radio and missing and murdered women.

NWFTV Panel: Charles Upham (Misty Upham father), Joanelle Romero, John L. Tsosie, Ernest Tsosie, Jr., Elder Mary Lyons, Kathy Wilcuts, Pearl Means, Christina Wilson, including special guests.

The 5 day Festival will close Sunday, March 29th in Malibu with a day long ceremony for our sacred water.

## **SPOTLIGHT (Features)**

### **RETROSPECTIVE: HONORING RITA ROGERS**

#### **\*THE HIRED HAND\***

Harry Collings returns home to his farm after drifting with his friend, Arch. His wife, who had given up on him, reluctantly allows him to stay, and soon believes that all will be well again. But then Harry has to make a difficult decision regarding his loyalties and priorities.

Starring: Peter Fonda, Warren Oates, Verna Bloom, Rita Rogers.

### **A TRIBUTE TO MISTY UPHAM**

#### **\*FROZEN RIVER\***

Takes place in the days before Christmas near a little-known border crossing on the Mohawk reservation between New York State and Quebec. Here, the lure of fast money from smuggling presents a daily challenge to single moms who would otherwise be earning minimum wage. Two women – one white, one Mohawk, both single mothers faced with desperate circumstances – are drawn into the world of border smuggling across the frozen water of the St. Lawrence River. Ray and Lila – and a New York State Trooper as opponent in an evolving cat-and-mouse game.

Starring: Misty Upham, Melissa Leo, Micheal O’Keffe, Charlie McDermott, Mark Boone Junior.

## **DOCUMENTARY FEATURES**

### **\*A THOUSAND VOICES | USA\***

Narrated by Irene Bedard

This is the story of Native American women in New Mexico, from the creation stories of the beginning of time, through the invasions from Spain, Mexico, and United States. The power remains and the story continues. “At the center of all is Woman, and nothing is sacred without her blessing, her thinking.” —Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*

From the proverb, “It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story,” this is a documentary that builds from thousands of voices to present one universal story of New Mexico’s Native American women. Native American women have been purveyors of culture since creation. In spite of Western invasions, Native American women remain strong and grounded in traditional values by enduring courage and wisdom. The voices and advisers are from the Navajo Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Kiowa Tribe, Pueblo de Cochiti, Ohkay Owingeh, and Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna, Jemez, Santo Domingo, Pojoaque, Santa Clara, Taos, Nambe and San Ildefonso.

Director David Aubrey  
Produced by Pamela A. Pierce

**\*CRYING EARTH RISE UP | USA\***

Crying Earth Rise Up is an intimate portrait of the human cost of uranium mining and its impact on sacred water. It tells a timely story of protecting land, water and a way of life.

Suree Towfighnia, Director / Producer / Camera  
Debra White Plume, Consulting Producer

**\*HIGHWAY OF TEARS | CANADA\***

Narrated by Nathan Fillion

Matt Smiley's hard-hitting documentary chronicles the notorious, decades-long string of murders and disappearances of young Aboriginal women along British Columbia's Highway 16, and how the systemic racism that defined their lives also contributed to their deaths. Since the late 1960s, at least eighteen young women — many of them from disadvantaged First Nations communities — have disappeared or been found murdered along the 724-kilometre stretch of Highway 16 in northern British Columbia. None of these cold cases were ever solved until 2012, when a special RCMP investigation was able to link DNA from one of the murder victims to deceased US criminal Bobby Jack Fowler; but this single answer has done little to heal the wounds of Aboriginal communities who have seen dozens of their young women vanish along the "Highway of Tears," victims not only of murderous predators but of the systemic racism of a federal government that keeps them trapped on impoverished reservations and, as critics charge, evinced little interest in apprehending their killers. Matt Smiley's hard-hitting documentary *\*Highway of Tears\** not only movingly relates the personal stories of the victims, but investigates how the legacy of generational poverty, high unemployment and endemic violence in their communities contributed to their tragic fates — and how contemporary First Nations leaders are striving to cure those ills.

Director/Producer Matt Smiley  
Producer Carly Pope

**\*LADONNA HARRIS: INDIAN 101 | USA\***

A documentary film about Comanche activist LaDonna Harris, who led an extensive life of Native political and social activism, and is now passing on her traditional cultural and leadership values to a new generation of emerging Indigenous leaders.

LaDonna Harris: Indian 101 is a feature documentary film about Comanche activist LaDonna Harris, who led an extensive life of Native political and social activism, and is now passing on her traditional cultural and leadership values to a new generation of emerging Indigenous leaders. Harris' introduction to the federal government began when President Lyndon Johnson assigned her to educate the executive and legislative

branches of the U.S. government on the unique role of American Indian Tribes and their relationship with the federal government. This course was called “Indian 101” and was taught to members of Congress and other agencies for over 35 years.

Director Julianna Brannum  
Producers Johnny Depp, Julianna Brannum

## **NATIVE WOMEN NARRATIVE SHORTS**

### **\*NIGHTS LIKE THESE | USA\***

When a night's escapade takes a disturbing turn for two girls, we learn just how disconnected and desensitized social media has made them.

Director/Writer  
Hannah Macpherson

### **\*UNMATCHED | USA\***

Devastated by the death of her mother, a young girl is abandoned by her alcoholic father and forced to live life on the streets. All that she carries with her are memories of a better time. Always dreaming and still hopeful, she tries to heal her father's anguish and bring them closer to what they could be as a family. Through a series of events and heartbreaks, she will try to survive one more night alone, illuminated by a single flame.

Director/Writer: Bella King  
Producer Neal Fischer

## **NATIVE WOMEN SHORT DOCS SERIES**

9 shorts from U.S., Mexico, Guatemala, Canada, Bolivia.

### **\*COVERED | CANADA\***

This docudrama reimagines an unaired TV interview from 1966, between folk singer, activist and legend, Buffy Sainte-Marie and CBC interviewer John O'Leary. Born on Piapot Cree First Nations Reserve, Saskatchewan, Buffy released her first hit 'Universal Soldier' in 1964, a pacifist song that was covered by Donovan, Joan Baez, and Glen Campbell among others. The film interprets Sainte-Marie's inquiring mind, political activism and the influence of her Aboriginal roots that formed the foundation of her career.

Director Jonathon M.B. Hunter  
Writer Tara Beier  
Producer Dennis Beier

**\*HER FATHERS LAND | CANADA\***

The story of Sylvia McAdam, co-founder of the Idle No More movement, and the land that inspires her to continue fighting for Aboriginal rights. Winner of the 2014 Best of Saskatchewan Ruth Shaw award at the Yorkton Film Festival.

Director Derek Cornet  
Producer Tiffany Cassidy

**\*RESILIENCE | MEXICO\***

A documentary that shows the trauma of sexual abuse through the testimonies of three women who recount their negative emotions and beliefs that block their relationships with their bodies and souls. This short film shows stories of traumas, or traumatic patterns, that have been inherited generation after generation, and that get in the way of leading a full life. It also explores the first steps to fighting against this reality and finding a way to transform it.

Director: Flor de María Álvarez Medrano

**\*THE STRINGS OF LIFE OF THE JAQUAR WOMEN | MEXICO - GUATEMALA\***

Violence in all its forms is one of the threads with which the lives of Mayan women have been woven. It has marked the colors and designs of their lives, but the intensity of the feminine energy (Ix, jaguar) has given them the strength and the wisdom to carry on living, and to erase the marks it leaves. It is necessary to eliminate violence that has been a fundamental part of these women's lives; it is essential to mitigate it, for the fullness of the women themselves, the new generations, the peoples and humanity.

Director Mujeres Mayas Kaqla

**\*THE FIGHTING CHOLITAS | BOLIVIA\***

The Fighting Cholitas received an honorable mention in Short Filmmaking at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. It won the Jury Award for Best Documentary at the 2007 Aspen Shortsfest; the Jury Award for Best Documentary Short at the 2007 Atlanta Film Festival; and the award for Best Documentary Short at the 2007 Nashville Film Festival. It was also a finalist for a 2007 International Documentary Association award.

The Fighting Cholitas is a documentary short about a group of bold and fierce Bolivian wrestlers. These indigenous, Indian women jump into the ring every Sunday in their traditional vibrant multilayered skirts and perform the acrobatic maneuvers of Lucha Libre. Fighting Cholitas documents this weekly fight and goes behind the scenes to find out who these women are and what draws them to this unusual sport. Every Sunday, hundreds of men, women and children pack the Multifunctional Auditorium in El Alto, Bolivia, a sprawling lower income extension of La Paz. They come to watch fights between good and evil where good is usually triumphant. Families attend regularly

every week and for an entry fee of \$1 per person, escape for an afternoon of live entertainment and "justice served in the ring."

Director Mariam Jobrani

**\*KOLTAVANEJ | MEXICO\***

Rosa López Díaz, a Tsotsil woman who was tortured during her pregnancy so that she would claim the fault for a crime of which she pleads innocent, was introduced to many faces of violence against women far before she went to prison. From cell number 5 in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, her voice breaks walls and illustrates her dignity.

Director Concepción Suárez Aguilar  
Producer Gemma Estrella

**\*ROUTINE CHECK UP | CANADA\***

This 5 minute short comedy features Evan Adams as Dr. Wilson and Glida Morgan as Auntie Jane who is worried about her arthritis.

Written & Directed by Michelle St. John  
Produced by Evan Adams & Michelle St. John

**\*APIKIWIYAK | CANADA\***

Violence against Indigenous woman is something we'd all like to sweep under the rug ... both in mainstream Canadian society and within Indigenous families ourselves. It's occurred for hundreds of years and is now ever present, and it is brutal and disgusting. Maria Campbell, an acclaimed Metis author from Saskatchewan, knows much about these sad realities in our communities. In this work, Maria sets out to hold a mirror out for Indigenous people and non Indigenous people to peer into the never-ending legacy of colonial violence. In collaboration Shane Belcourt, the video is a series of heartbreaking vignettes, all wrapped around the imagery of a man in ceremony looking for hope and calling for the ancestors to help us all get back on the good road home.

Directed by Shane Belcourt  
Written by Maria Campbell & Shane Belcourt  
Produced by Michelle St. John

**MUSIC VIDEO**

**\*WE SHALL REMAIN | USA\***

WE SHALL REMAIN is a music video created to address the effects of historical trauma in our tribal communities. Many times, these untended wounds are at the core of much of the self inflicted pain experienced in Native America. Much like fire, this pain can either be devastatingly destructive or wisely harnessed to become fuel that helps us to rise up and move forward in life with joy, purpose and dignity.

++ Native Womens Conversation Series, a program of onstage discussions with native artists and celeb voices.

The Festivals Cultural Out-Reach & Industry partners include "Honest Engine Films", "Sony Pictures Classics", "Native Wellness Institute", "Walking the Healing Path", "Native Max Magazine", "DJ Rain", "StromStudio", "Red Nation Film Festival", "Red Nation Television Channel".

The festival also released its official schedule. For buyers and journos.

Native Women in Film & television {Film Festival} runs March 25-29. For more information tickets and passes: <http://nativewomenfilmtv.com/purchase-tickets/>  
Festival schedule and more visit: [www.nativewomenfilmtv.com](http://www.nativewomenfilmtv.com)

See you at the movies – Attend, Become a Member, Support Native Cinema on the Silver Screen, Support Native Women Filmmakers, help us bring the bigger picture of the American scene to mainstream audiences.  
<http://nativewomenfilmtv.com/support/>

Native Women in Film & Television launched in 2005 and is a intuitive of Red Nation Film Festival and program of Red Nation Celebration Institute.

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ABOUT NATIVE WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION  
[www.nativewomenfilmtv.com](http://www.nativewomenfilmtv.com)

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[www.rednationff.com](http://www.rednationff.com)

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