



## Festival tops 10,000 in attendance; indoor screenings record.

(Gimli, Manitoba; July 25, 2016) – Spotty rain showers did not keep film fans away from the last day of Festival. This year's Gimli Film Festival was capped off by *The Goonies!*, a final RBC Sunset Beach Screening which drew 1450 people to the shores of Lake Winnipeg on Sunday night.

In total, 10,300 attended this year's dynamic lineup of films and events.

The Festival's iconic beach films drew approximately 6000 people over the festival's five day duration. Indoor attendance hit an all-time high of 4,301 at GFF this year, showing a 10% rise in ticket sales from last year's numbers.

### Hottest & Most Talked-About Films at this Year's GFF

- **RAMS**, the Icelandic comedy-drama about two estranged brothers trying to save their beloved sheep herd, not only was the opening film of this year's festival, but had several sell-out shows and was voted Best of Fest, with an encore performance Sunday night.
- **IXCANUL**, a French-Guatemalan drama about a young Mayan woman unsure if she wants to continue her family's traditions or step into a wider world, evoked a powerful reaction from film-goers (notably the first screened in its language). With compelling imagery, *Ixcanul* was deeply appreciated by all who attended it at GFF, although some were shocked by the depth and accuracy of the portrayal of a pig slaughter.
- **ICE AND SKY** wins the audience choice for stunning cinematography, showcasing the stark beauty of Antarctica in a French documentary about Claude Lorius, the first scientist to draw focus to global warming. *Ice and Sky* was arguably regarded as 'the most beautiful screening of the festival'.
- **SPARROWS** is an Icelandic film with heavy subject matter (rated 18+ and bearing multiple warnings on explicit sexual content) that was handled with incredible care and delicacy. Those who braved *Sparrows* were rewarded with a compelling screening that challenged them and broadened their understanding.
- **THE HEART OF MADAME SABALI**, by Manitoba filmmaker Ryan McKenna, was one of the best-attended films of the entire festival, described as "a great blend of culture, sound, and imagery - imaginative, surreal, and a treat to see."
- **CLOSET MONSTER**, from first time feature film director Stephen Dunn, was part of this year's Reel Pride series and drew overwhelming positive feedback.
- **A SPACE PROGRAM** was highly successful for both screenings, attended by director Tom Sacks who held an engaging Q+A on Saturday afternoon. *A Space Program* was such an intriguing cinematic experience that some festival goers actually chose to see it twice!
- **A MAN CALLED OVE** was a festival favorite in its own right, and tremendously enjoyed by everyone who attended. It had the highest attendance rating of all films that screened at the festival (over 175 people at

two separate screenings in Gimli Theatre)

- **UNDER THE SUN** was the dark horse for Best of Fest. An incredible risk was taken by director Vitaly Mansky to bring the world an insider's look at North Korea. Film goers described it as 'austere, dry, disturbing, thought provoking, eye opening...' *Under the Sun* had excellent attendance at two separate screenings at GFF, with over 200 people viewing the film.

## **2016 Closing Reception & Awards**

Approximately 200 people attended Saturday night's Closing Reception at the Lakeview Resort Conference Centre. The annual Alda Award—a word which means 'wave' in Icelandic—was presented by Janis G Johnson, in celebration of excellence in circumpolar filmmaking. This year's Alda was awarded to native actress Tantoo Cardinal, and accepted by Tina Keeper at Saturday night's event, on behalf of Cardinal.

The annual Jack Clements "Livin' the Dream" Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to Claude Forest, whose company Multimedia Risk has been serving the Manitoba film community for two and a half decades. Forest's family was in attendance for his memorable acceptance speech on the evolution of Multimedia Risk and its importance in the film community.

## **Industry events & competitions draw Manitoba filmmakers to Gimli**

Two film competitions in this year's GFF brought short film fans and local filmmakers together in a high-energy celebration of immense raw talent that electrified Gimli Theatre.

The 48 Hour Film Contest, organized by Winnipeg Film Group, this year proved to be skyrocketing in popularity, selling out its Saturday showing with approximately 270 enthusiastic film-fans. Winners included Best Film & Best Score: Julie Epp, *Contents of the Heart*; Best Director & Audience Choice: BJ Verot, *Flashkick: A Kumite Revenge Story*; Best Cinematography: Vincent Allen, *Cut*; Best Sound and Best Actress: Lasha Mowchun, *Quilted Windowpane Pantyhose*; and Best Actor: Skye Pelletier, *Remotion*.

The RBC \$10,000 Filmmaker's Competition was won by Solmund MacPherson and Allegra Chiarella for their film pitch on "The Debut", an intriguing animated short film about colours and 'being blinded by a passion for music'.

## **Whimsical GFF poster, one of the most popular designs ever!**

This year's indigo and lemon poster design by UK children's book author Gillian Johnson encapsulated the spirit of GFF with a scene of tiny Vikings seated on Gimli beach watching film by moonlight. This design proved to be a best-seller, with the first order of our 2016 merchandise selling out before the festival even started.

Overall, the 2016 Gimli Film Festival marked a year of expansion and change. Not only do the RBC Sunset Beach Screenings continue to draw thousands to Lake Winnipeg's shores, but the eclectic, intelligent selection of indoor screenings and one-of-a-kind film series continue to build GFF's reputation as one of the most unique film festivals in Canada.

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***"See you under the stars next July for the 17th edition of GFF!"***