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Contact:  
Jill Golden  
Marketing & Communications Director  
jill@sonomafilmfest.org  
510.851.2374

**SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SIFF)  
ANNOUNCES POWERHOUSE PROGRAMMING TEAM FOR 2023 FESTIVAL**

Sonoma, CA October 14, 2022—Collectively, the new programming team at the Sonoma International Film Festival has screened more than 30,000 hours of films, and has more than 75 years of experience curating the best in new, international cinema for the likes of Sundance, San Francisco, Seattle, DocLands, Palm Springs, Orcas Island, Miami and Minneapolis St. Paul film festivals, among others. And on the side, they host podcasts, launch other film festivals, consult for noted festivals and film industry institutions and businesses, and sit on esteemed festival panels and juries around the world. This team knows films and how to pick them.

Rounding out the 2023 Sonoma International Film Festival programming team, led by Artistic Director Carl Spence, are Senior Programmer, Narrative Features Amanda Salazar, Senior Programmer, Documentary Films Ken Jacobson, along with Programming Coordinator & Shorts Film Programmer Oscar Arce.

“As an established Sonoma arts organization, we are committed to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers, and inspiring film lovers,” said Executive Director Ginny Krieger. “And while we are known for hosting a terrific festival for more than 25 years each March, for us it all starts with our audience in mind. It starts with the films we select—films that inspire, evoke and entertain. Under Carl’s leadership, our new programming team brings us to a new level of expertise, film knowledge, industry connection, and dedication to our mission.”

“It is such a pleasure to have the opportunity to collaborate with Oscar, Amanda, and Ken for the upcoming edition of the Sonoma International Film Festival,” said Artistic Director Carl Spence. “Their collective curatorial experience will raise the bar in bringing the best in cinema from around the world to our festival. With Ginny Krieger at the helm and Kevin McNeely continuing as Director Emeritus it is indeed an exciting time for the future of the Sonoma International Film Festival.”

**SIFF Programming Team**

**Amanda Salazar  
SIFF Senior Programmer, Narrative Features**

Amanda Salazar is a San Francisco-based arts advocate and independent film curator with over 15 years of experience in film festival and theatrical programming, arts organization administration, and digital distribution. While programming with Sonoma International Film Festival, she is also a Shorts Programmer for Sundance Film Festival and Co-Director of Camera Obscura. Her previous experience includes being Head of Programming and Acquisitions at Argo, VP of Acquisitions at Fandor, the Cinema Booker at the Northwest Film Forum, and Programmer at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

## **SIFF Programming Team (continued):**

### **Ken Jacobson SIFF Senior Programmer, Documentary Films**

Ken Jacobson has served as Documentary Film Programmer at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (since 2017) and at the DocLands Documentary Film Festival, a program of the California Film Institute (since 2019). He is also co-creator/co-host (with Michael Merrill) of the podcast “Top-Docs: Award-Winning Documentary Filmmakers” with presenting sponsor Netflix.

Previously, Jacobson was a senior member of the programming team at the American Film Institute from 2018-2021. From 2008-2013, he was Documentary Programmer and Programming/Education Outreach Coordinator at the Palm Springs International Film Festival and has served on numerous festival juries and as a reviewer of grant proposals for the National Endowment for the Arts, Sundance Institute, and the IDA Enterprise Fund.

### **Oscar Arce SIFF Programming Coordinator & Shorts Film Programmer**

Before joining SIFF, Oscar Arce was a screener and volunteer for the Sundance Film Festival (2019, 2020, 2022). He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Media from Universidad Aut6nomas de Baja California, Mexico in 2019, and has worked as an assistant director and programmer at the UABC International Film Festival (2016-2018). Arce has produced, directed, and written several short fiction and documentary films. His most recent short A DAY WITHOUT YOU (2020) was selected for film festivals internationally, including Provincetown Film Festival and Baja California International Film Festival.

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### **Carl Spence SIFF Artistic Director**

Spence's 28 years of experience in the festival world includes longtime leadership roles with Seattle International Film Festival as Co-Director | Artistic Director (2003-2016). During his 23 years with Seattle, the festival grew to one of the largest attended and most prominent North American arts nonprofits, moving from a once-a-year festival to a vital year-round presenting arts organization under his guidance.

Other prominent industry positions include programming roles with Palm Springs International Film Festival (Director of Programming 2003-2008; Lead Programmer 2008-2016); Miami Film Festival (Senior Programmer 2017-2022); San Francisco International Film Festival (Director of Programming 2001-2003); and Seattle, where he began his career (Film Programmer 1994-2001; Associate Director 1998-2001). Other areas of expertise include marketing, sponsorship, publicity, talent management and film acquisitions.

Concurrent to his new position with Sonoma International Film Festival, Spence is the Co-Founder, Co-Director, and Chief Curator of the Orcas Island Film Festival in the San Juan Islands, Washington. As a film festival subject matter expert, Spence serves as a consultant to key industry stalwarts including FilmFreeway, the film submission platform used by filmmakers globally; and has consulted with Eventive, an enterprise solutions provider specifically for the film festival ecosystem; as well as film companies, filmmakers and film festivals worldwide.

He has served as a jurist at internationally acclaimed festivals including Sundance Film Festival, The Berlin Film Festival, The SXSW Film Festival, The Savannah Film Festival, The Ashland Film Festival, The Cleveland Film Festival, The San Francisco International LGBTQ Film Festival (Frameline) and The Vancouver International Film Festival.

## **About Sonoma International Film Festival**

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers around the world, and inspiring film lovers. Blending a program of international film, food, wine, and fun, SIFF hosts its annual festival each March and year-round special screening events.

SIFF's signature initiative--the Media Arts Program started at Sonoma Valley High School in 2002--introduces students to the process of storytelling and provides the resources for them to create films. SIFF has granted more than \$725,000 to the program since its inception.

**Make plans for the 26th Annual Sonoma International Film Festival March 22-26, 2023.** Passes are on sale now, some at 50% percent off, during our Pass Flash Sale in October, at [sonomafilmfest.org/buy](https://sonomafilmfest.org/buy).

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103 EAST NAPA STREET | SUITE 2A | SONOMA, CA 95476 | TAX ID 68-0428999