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SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SIFF)
SOLDOUT SUMMERFEST EVENT HIGHLIGHTS NEW FILMS | LIVE EVENTS
Audience Award Winners Selected
Lissette Feliciano Named Bay Area Filmmaker Award Recipient

Sonoma, CA August 10, 2021—Sonoma International Film Festival (SIFF) recently hosted SIFF Summerfest, its new, smaller scale live event, to sold out passholder audiences. The event was made possible, in part, with funds from Creative Sonoma and National Endowment for the Arts.

“We wanted to be one the of first organizations to celebrate and showcase all that Sonoma has to offer with a slate of new films, and our signature food, wine and live music events,” said Kevin W. McNeely, SIFF Artistic Director. “Our thanks go to our passholders, filmmakers, sponsors, board of directors, staff and volunteers for a safe, successful and memorable event.”

Festival highlights included Audience Award selections for Best Feature and Best Documentary with voting among 40 films from 15 countries, including 16 films making their premieres; outdoor winery screenings featuring filmmakers and live music from bands Petty Theft, The Mermen and Ari Eisenberg; and three free to the public events—the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts Showcase and student/parent reception; the UFO Program; and the silent Buster Keaton film COPS with live musical accompaniment by composer John Partridge.

The Audience Award Best Feature was the North American premiere of JUNE AGAIN from writer director JJ Winlove screened at Viansa Winery on Closing Night. In the heartfelt comedy, a twist of fate gives family matriarch June, a reprieve from a debilitating illness. June, played by Noni Hazlehurst, was last seen in SIFF’s 2019 Opening Night film WOMEN IN BLACK. The film was picked up by France’s StudioCanal for theatrical release.

“I am thrilled that JUNE AGAIN has won the SIFF Summerfest Audience Award for Best Feature,” said writer director JJ Winlove. “The audience award suggests it resonated with the crowd and for that I’m particularly proud. Thank you SIFF, and thank you, Sonoma. I can’t wait to brag about it.”

The Audience Award Best Documentary was FRIES! THE MOVIE by directors Michael Steed and Gillian Brown. Subtitled “A Love Story”, the film, from Chrissy Teigan’s Suit & Thai Productions, extolls the universal love for fried potatoes and featured free French fries from Sir Kensington’s before the screening.

On Opening Night, the Bay Area Filmmaker Award, presented by Mark Walter of Cinelease, was given to writer, director, producer Lissette Feliciano for her feature film *WOMEN IS LOSERS*. Feliciano, a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, was named one of *Shoot Magazine's* new directors to watch. Her production company, Look At The Moon Pictures, develops original content that shines a lens on underrepresented groups and one of the first companies to mandate 50 percent BIPOC representation across leadership positions on and off camera. The award, made from original remnants of the Golden Gate Bridge by Golden Gate Furniture Company, includes a production completion grant from Cinelease.

"This really means a lot to me; I'm a Bay Area girl," said Lissette Feliciano. "I especially want to thank SIFF and Mark Walter at Cinelease for the grant, it will be very, very helpful on the next one we make."

Sponsors of the event included: Aer Lingus, Berkeleyside, Big Joe, Bungalows 313, Chateau St. Jean, Christine Curry Design, Cinelease, Creative Sonoma, Euphoria Retreats, Film Mare Island, Folktale, Golden Gate Furniture, Guinness, Hempacco, The Krush 95.9 FM, Landers Curry, MacArthur Place, Manitou Fund, Napa Sonoma Magazine, National Association of Social Workers, National Endowment for the Arts, Pets Lifeline, PG&E, Pushpak Motors, Reel & Brand, San Francisco Magazine, Sebastiani Theatre, Shiftboard, Sir Kensington's, Social Sonoma, Sojourn Cellars, Sonoma Community Center, Sonoma Conservatory of Dance, Sonoma County, Sonoma Magazine, Sonoma Tourism Improvement District, Sonoma Valley Authors Festival, Sonoma Valley Education Foundation, Sonoma's Best Hospitality Group, Sophienwald, Spritz, The Lodge at Sonoma, The Oaklandside, Tito's Handmade Vodka and Viansa.

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 world-class film, food, wine and fun, SIFF hosts an annual festival in March, as well as year-round live and virtual events such as SIFF Summerfest and SIFF Saturdays, a monthly virtual film screened on the last Saturday of every month.

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 \$650,000 to the program since its inception.

Sonoma International Film Festival celebrates 25 years March 23-27, 2022. Passes go on sale in September at sonomafilmfest.org.

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