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## HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SHOWCASES THE NEW AMERICAN FILMMAKERS PROGRAM

### **Presented by Halekulani, with support from The Vilcek Foundation**

HONOLULU, HI (Thursday, October 4, 2012) – The 32<sup>nd</sup> Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF), presented by Halekulani will take place October 11-21 in Honolulu. The festival, in partnership with the Vilcek Foundation, will showcase six films--four features and two documentary shorts--as part of the New American Filmmakers (NAF) program.

The NAF program, previously called American Immigrant Filmmakers on Profile, continues to highlight the creative enterprises of talented foreign-born writers, directors, producers, actors and composers whose creative spirits enrich and inspire American cinema. Their work illuminates the immigrant experience and culture in this America as films depict men at work, friendships between women, and universal struggles for love, money, and happiness.

The screenings will take place at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Theaters & IMAX throughout the ten-day festival. On Monday, October 18, The Vilcek Foundation and HIFF will host a reception honoring the NAF delegates at the Halekulani Hotel from 5-7 p.m.

A delegate from each of the six films will be on hand this year at the first showing of their respective films. In attendance will be:

- **Nicholas Bruckman**, producer of VALLEY OF SAINTS, an engrossing drama with an ecological twist
- **Mridu Chandra**, director, producer, and screenwriter of INDIAN SUMMER, a warm documentary about the Hindu Heritage Summer Camp
- **Radium Cheung**, cinematographer for STARLET, an absorbing story of female friendship
- **Ronen Landa**, composer of PARAISO, a stunning documentary about men who work on the outside of Chicago's skyscrapers
- **Goh Nakamura**, screenwriter, actor, and musician from DAYLIGHT SAVINGS, a music-filled romantic comedy-drama
- **Alexandre Phillipe**, director, producer, and writer of THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PAUL THE PSYCHIC OCTOPUS, an amusing documentary about the football predicting title creature

After the screenings, these artists will take questions from the audience.

Goh Nakamura will also be speaking at HIFF's Guest Filmmaker Program, which offers students on O'ahu the chance to interact with film industry professionals.

"What the New American Filmmakers section does for this specific batch of immigrant talent is unique around the world," said HIFF Deputy Director Robert Lambeth. "Vilcek and HIFF have an ever-growing relationship that continues to expand each year. With NAF's launch last summer through its film tour, it really shows the range of stories and talents this type of film programming can produce."

"After the launch of the NAF National Film Tour in May 2012, NAF continues its sixth year at HIFF, with an extremely strong and diverse group of films and filmmakers," added Rick Kinsel. "The success of this program, as well as our partnership with HIFF, helps us validate the Vilcek Foundation's mission to celebrate foreign-born artists and scholars living in the United States. I admire the work that HIFF is doing in creating such a rich film culture on the island of O'ahu and in curating a yearly NAF film program that showcases the vibrant contributions of foreign-born filmmakers."

For more information on The Foundation please visit [www.vilcek.org](http://www.vilcek.org). For more information on HIFF and to purchase tickets to screenings, please visit [www.hiff.org](http://www.hiff.org).

### **Film Synopses and Delegate Bios:**

#### **VALLEY OF SAINTS**

Hawaii Premiere

NAF Delegate: Nicholas Bruckman

Sunday, October 13 | 4:30PM | Regal Dole

Monday, October 14 | 4:30PM | Regal Dole

Pakistan 2012 | Kashmiri with English subtitles | 82M

**Director:** Musa Syeed

**Screenwriter:** Musa Syeed

**Producers:** Nicholas Bruckman

**Cinematographer:** Yoni Brook

**Cast:** Mohammed Afzal, Gulzar Ahmed Bhat, Neelofar Hamid

Widely considered to be the crown jewel of Kashmir, Dal Lake is a sprawling aquatic community. Yet erupting political violence often detracts from the area's natural beauty. Gulzar, a young, working-class boatman, plans to skip town with his best friend in search of a better life. Unfortunately, a weeklong military curfew derails the friends' departure. Forced to wait it out, Gulzar takes a job assisting a pretty scientist named Asifa. As they navigate the floating landscape, collecting water samples for an environmental study, an unlikely relationship develops between the couple. When Asifa's research reveals harmful pollutants, Gulzar realizes that the ecology of the lake--and an entire way of life--face an alarming threat. Suddenly, unexpectedly, everything in Gulzar's life begins to take on a new hue.

Lush photography and splendid visuals enhance Musa Syeed's engaging feature debut. Intricately weaving contemporary issues with traditional culture and ancient myths, VALLEY OF SAINTS is a vibrant, lyrical film about discovering the meaning of home in a rapidly changing world.

**Nicholas Bruckman** (born in UK) is the producer of *VALLEY OF SAINTS* (2012), which won the Audience Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival. He previously directed and produced the feature documentary *LA AMERICANA*, which won best documentary at the New York and Los Angeles Latino Film Festivals. In addition to independent film, Nicholas' production company *People's Television* creates commercial content for brands including IBM, USAID, Nissan, Philips, and Facebook.

## **INDIAN SUMMER**

West Coast Premiere

Monday, October 14 | 4:30PM | Regal Dole  
United States 2012 | English, Hindi | 16M

**Director:** Mridu Chandra

**Producers:** Mridu Chandra

**Cinematographer:** Eliana Alvarez

*INDIAN SUMMER* chronicles the experiences of Indian American youths, ranging in age from 9 to 16, who attend the Hindu Heritage Summer Camp. At this upstate New York camp, these kids make other "brown" friends, and express their religious identity openly. The Hindu Heritage camp offers these kids activities ranging from meditation and yoga, to the opportunity to learn how to practice Hinduism in a largely Christian country. Often the only Indian person in their school, these campers come from all over the country to learn how to be South Asian in America from older counselors who are "just like them."

**Mridu Chadha** (born in India) is a filmmaker and writer based in New York. She has been producing award-winning documentaries and narrative films for the past decade. Her first screenplay was awarded the 2011 Tribeca Film Institute's All Access development grant. Most recently, she premiered the critically acclaimed multimedia performance "Himalaya Song" at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

## **STARLET**

Hawaii Premiere

NAF Delegate: Radium Cheung

Tuesday, October 16 | 6:45PM | Regal Dole  
Saturday, October 20 | 1:15PM | Regal Dole  
United States 2012 | English | 103M

**Director:** Sean Baker

**Screenwriters:** Sean Baker, Chris Bergoch

**Producers:** Blake Ashman-Kipervaser, Kevin Chinoy, Francesca Silvestri, Patrick Cunningham, Chris Maybach

**Cinematographer:** Radium Cheung

**Cast:** Dree Hemingway, Besedka Johnson, Stella Maeve, James Ransone, Karren Karagulian

Jane (Dree Hemingway, *THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGELS* and Mariel's daughter), is a 21-year-old adult film actress living in the San Fernando Valley. She hangs out with her tetchy roommates Melissa (Stella Maeve, *THE RUNAWAYS*) and Mikey (*THE WIRE*'s James Ransone), and cares

for her dog, Starlet. When Jane returns home from a yard sale with a thermos, she is surprised to discover \$10,000 inside her new purchase. She eventually returns to the sale to meet Sadie (Basedka Johnson), the elderly woman who sold her the thermos.

Sean Baker's (PRINCE OF BROADWAY, TAKE OUT) film is an unassuming look at the budding friendship between these two very different women. Infused with the golden light of sun-dabbled Southern California, and featuring a pair of quietly powerful performances, STARLET is a smart, sharp character study.

Fans of HIFF 2011's COLD WEATHER will definitely want to check this out.

*Warning: graphic sexual content in this film.*

A native of Hong Kong and a published photographer at 18, **Radium Cheung** took a detour from photography and spent the next 15 years in the US learning the craft of cinematography by working as a gaffer. He then pursued the study of Tibetan and Zen Buddhism leading him on a 2-year quest to unlearn all that he's ever learned. STARLET is his first full length feature film under the influence of his Buddhist re(un)-learning.

## **PARAISO**

Hawaii Premiere

NAF Delegate: Ronen Landa

**Director:** Nadav Kurtz

**Composer:** Ronen Landa

The poignant and gorgeously filmed short documentary, PARAISO, reveals the thoughts and experiences of a handful of immigrant window-washers who work on Chicago's tallest skyscrapers. Their stories of risk and reward--they take this dangerous job in the hope of providing a better life for their families--are all deeply emotional and universal.

Composer **Ronen Landa** draws on a breadth of influences to create music that is inventive and daring. The press has hailed his work as "astounding... an intricate and delightful aural treat" (Cinema Without Borders). A 2011 Sundance Institute Fellow, Landa has contributed music to films that have premiered at film festivals worldwide including Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca and Berlin International.

## **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS**

Hawaii Premiere

NAF Delegate: Goh Nakamura

Saturday, October 13 | 5:00PM | Regal Dole

Monday, October 14 | 4:45PM | Regal Dole

United States 2012 | English | 73M

**Director:** Dave Boyle

**Screenwriter:** Dave Boyle, Joel Clark, Michael Lerman, Goh Nakamura

**Producers:** Dave Boyle, Duane Andersen, Michael Lerman

**Cinematographer:** Bill Otto

**Cast:** Michael Aki, Yea-Ming Chen, Lynn Chen, Goh Nakamura

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS reunites writer-director Dave Boyle with his collaborator/muse/drinking buddy, Goh Nakamura. This dark, moody sequel to SURROGATE VALENTINE--the second film in a proposed trilogy--opens with indie musician Goh happy in both life and love. But when his relationship with a young professor in Los Angeles ends abruptly and unexpectedly, Goh goes into a funk; in fact, his usual blank hangdog expression gets droopier, and more expressionless.

Enter in Goh's loose-cannon cousin, Michael, who is hell-bent on a mission to get Goh to go on the road trip of his life. Soon, Goh is attending the San Juan Bautista Film Festival, and heading to Vegas to meet up with a potential new girlfriend, Yea-Ming. What transpires in DAYLIGHT SAVINGS is an existential journey that becomes a transformative experience for Goh, and a must-see for fans.

**Goh Nakamura** (born in Japan) is a San Francisco Bay Area based musician who writes ditties about parking tickets, impossible crushes, and faraway dreamlands. A 2007 feature on YouTube's front page

brought his music videos over a million views and earned him a worldwide fanbase. In 2012, Boyle and Nakamura developed the story inspired by Nakamura's eponymous song of his debut album DAYLIGHT SAVINGS.

## **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PAUL THE PSYCHIC OCTOPUS**

Hawaii Premiere

Monday, October 14 | 7:00PM | Regal Dole  
Wednesday, October 17 | 2:30PM | Regal Dole  
United States 2012 | English | 72M

**Director:** Alexandre Philippe

**Screenwriter:** Alexandre Philippe

**Producers:** Alexandre Philippe, Ewa Lee Bigio, Robert Muratore

An impressive prognosticator, Paul, the Psychic Octopus became a global superstar by repeatedly picking the winning football (soccer) team in the 2010 World Cup. One minute he was in his tank, minding his own business, and the next thing he knew, he was a media superstar.

This affectionate documentary by Alexandre O. Philippe, opens with Paul's cremation, before it creatively explores his legacy. Paul drew the attention of eccentrics around the world, including a Russian who offered £1 million to buy him. In contrast, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accused the West of using the prophetic octopus to spread propaganda.

Whether Paul is a honest-to-goodness 21st century oracle, or a tentacled sham, remains a hotly debated topic. What is certain, however, is that Paul's unmatched string of correct predictions, and he has greatly impacted popular culture--affected us, and making us dream. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PAUL THE PSYCHIC OCTOPUS is an unusual biopic of tentacular proportions--one that explores the science of probabilities, the possibility of higher powers, and celebrity

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mania at its most outrageous.

The director, writer, and producer of *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PAUL THE PSYCHIC OCTOPUS*, **Alexandre Philippe** was born and raised in Geneva, Switzerland. He holds a Masters in Dramatic Writing from NYU, and is creative director of Denver-based Cinema Vertige. Alexandre has written, directed and produced numerous award-winning films and documentaries—including *THE PEOPLE vs. GEORGE LUCAS* (HIFF 2010).