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## Waterfront Film Festival Unveils Competition Lineup at ArtPrize

*Inaugural partnership offers 21 films including many with Michigan ties*

**Grand Rapids, Mich., June 23, 2015** – ArtPrize OnScreen: Presented by Waterfront Film Festival announced the official film competition lineup today that will showcase 21 films, many with Michigan ties, including six feature narratives, five documentaries and 10 short films.

The new endeavor will provide the opportunity for audiences to vote on the best films in three categories: Best Feature, Best Documentary and Best Short Film. Each competition film in the lineup also will be eligible for large cash awards in a variety of ArtPrize categories. More details on the logistics will be released in the coming weeks.

“We are looking forward to adding a brand new offshoot to the Waterfront Film organization by launching a film competition in collaboration with ArtPrize. Both non-profit organizations have been promoting the arts in Michigan for many years, so this is a perfect way to combine our efforts,” WFF Co-founder Hopwood DePree said.

The main hub for Waterfront will be the Ladies Literary Club, 61 Sheldon Blvd SE, next door to the ArtPrize HUB.

Waterfront’s selections consist of more than 20 hours of independent film from seven states and four countries, including two SXSW selections, three selections and a prize winner from Sundance and one selection each from the Slamdance and Cannes film festivals.



Following are the list of ArtPrize OnScreen/Waterfront films to be included in the competition:

### **DOCUMENTARIES**

#### **“Still Dreaming”**

Follows the return to the stage by a group of elderly entertainers living at the Lillian Booth Actors Home just outside Manhattan. These retirees embark on a journey through Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” as an opportunity to boost their quality of life. Directed by Hank Rogerson and Jilann Spitzmiller.

#### **“selectED”**

A look into the lives of students who put it all on the line to be selected, proving that a free education can come with a cost. Through unprecedented access in a Chicago public school, selectED explores leadership, triumphs and losses in one of the most culturally and economically diverse schools in the country. Directed by Kayla McCormick.

#### **“20 Years of Madness”**

Jerry White Jr., the founder of ’90s public access cult TV show, “30 Minutes of Madness”, returns to Detroit for a reunion episode on the show’s 20th anniversary. In the process, he finds the majority of the cast of disturbed characters struggling with mental illness, drug addiction, homelessness and other dilemmas. Directed by Jeremy Royce, filmed in Michigan and with Michigan topics. A Slamdance selection.

#### **“T-Rex”**

17-year old Claressa “T-Rex” Shields from Flint, Michigan dreams of being the first woman in history to win the gold medal in Olympic boxing. To succeed, she will need to stand her ground in and outside the ring. Produced and directed by Zackary Canepari and Drea Cooper, filmed in Michigan and with Michigan topics. A SXSW selection.

#### **“Exported from Michigan”**

A story of resilience and innovation that explores the new economies of Michigan, from local art and music to big business engineering and manufacturing, including many Grand Rapids residents and businesses. Produced by Jon Vander Pol, filmed in Michigan and with Michigan topics.



## **NARRATIVES**

### **“Last Days in the Desert”**

Golden Globe nominee Ewan McGregor is Jesus - and the Devil - in an imagined chapter from Jesus' 40 days of fasting and praying in the desert. On his way out of the wilderness, Jesus struggles with the Devil over the fate of a family in crisis, setting for himself a dramatic test. Directed by Rodrigo Garcia. A Sundance selection. *“Last Days (in the Desert) leaves space for its audience to lose themselves, to look on what Christ might have seen and consider what it might have been like to be him. It is a warm, generous, and unexpected story.”* – *Christianity Today*

### **“Décor”**

This unique black and white film is a psychological drama about an Egyptian production designer named Maha. The film takes an unnerving turn when she finds herself transported into a completely different persona – a married housewife. Directed by Ahmad Abdalla and starring Khaled Abol Naga and Maged El Kedwany.

### **“Imperial Dreams”**

A 21-year-old reformed gangster's devotion to his family and his future is put to the test when he is released from prison and returns to his old stomping grounds in Watts, Los Angeles. Directed by Malik Vitthal and starring John Boyega and Rotimi. A Sundance Best of NEXT Audience Award.

### **“Night Owls”**

After workaholic Kevin has a drunken one night stand with the beautiful trainwreck Madeline, he's horrified to discover she's actually his boss' jilted mistress. When she takes a bottle of sleeping pills, Kevin has to keep her awake...and over the course of the night they begin to fall for each other. Directed by Charles Hood and starring Adam Pally and Rosa Salazar. A SXSW selection.

### **“The Strongest Man”**

A Miami-centric comedy about an anxiety-ridden Cuban man who fancies himself the strongest man in the world. In a quest to recover his most beloved possession, a stolen bicycle, he finds and loses so much more. Directed by Kenny Riches. A Sundance selection.



“Wildlike”

Mackenzie, a troubled but daring teenage girl is sent by her struggling mother to live with her uncle in Alaska. Although he seems like a supportive caretaker and friend, the relationship turns and Mackenzie is forced to run. Lost and with nowhere else to turn, she shadows a loner backpacker, Bartlett, an unlikely father figure with scars of his own. Together, they cross the wilderness and discover sanctuary in the last frontier. Directed by Frank Hall Green and starring Bruce Greenwood, Brian Geraghty and up-and-coming British teen star Ella Purnell. Winner of multiple Audience Awards.

**SHORTS**

“Dust” directed by Mike Grier

“Stealth” directed by Bennett Lasseter

“Speed Dating” directed by Meghann Artes

“Hotwire” directed by Erin Brown

“The Haircut” directed by Alexis O. Korycinski

“Dissonance” directed by Bryan Fox

“Moths” filmed in Michigan and directed by Andy Fortenbacher, a Michigan native.

“Follies of Youth” directed by Melina Curi

“Day One” directed by Henry Hughes

“Bedbugs: A Musical Love Story” directed by Matthew Kowalchuk, with producer/writer/lead actor Shauna Johannesen, a Calvin College (Grand Rapids) alum. A Cannes selection.



“In the future, we are aiming to grow the ArtPrize film competition even larger, as well as returning to hosting the annual film festival on the Lakeshore. Waterfront has a lot of big plans in the works” Hopwood DePree said.

Film schedule, additional events, ticketing information and special guests will be announced in August. For more details on Waterfront Film please visit:  
[www.WaterfrontFilm.org](http://www.WaterfrontFilm.org)

ArtPrize is an independently organized international art competition that takes place during 19 days in metropolitan Grand Rapids, offering a novel and entirely intriguing cultural experience for artists and art enthusiasts alike.

#### **About WaterfrontFilm.Org**

The non-profit Waterfront Film organization has been offering unique film experiences, education and opportunities for the past 17 years. Based in West Michigan, Waterfront Film organization founded and hosts one of the leading destination film festival in the Midwest, regularly hosting Midwest premieres of Academy Award-winning and nominated films. Recognized as a top five film festival by SAG Indie in the Screen Actors Guild magazine, WFF is a volunteer event committed to creating a “middle-coast” venue for independent filmmakers while further enhancing the cultural draw of West Michigan. For more information on Waterfront Film organization visit [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org), “like” us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/WaterfrontFilm](https://www.facebook.com/WaterfrontFilm) and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/WaterfrontFilm](https://twitter.com/WaterfrontFilm)