

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9th RURAL ROUTE FILM FESTIVAL BRINGS THE COUNTRY— AND OTHER COUNTRIES—TO QUEENS WITH FILMS, LIVE MUSIC, AND LOCAL FOOD

August 2–4, 2013, at Museum of the Moving Image, featuring new international films and restored classics, including Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* and a Les Blank tribute

Additional off-site programs include kick-off party at Strand Smokehouse, environmental screening at Queens Library, and closing night program at Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm

Astoria, New York, July 17, 2013—Whether it be a modern-day western set in a Chilean desert, a documentary about two Chinese women thrust into the worldwide economic downturn, or a drama about a forced marriage in a Senegalese village, the Rural Route Film Festival screens work about people and cultures normally overlooked by the mainstream media. Museum of the Moving Image will continue its partnership with Rural Route Films, to present the ninth edition of their annual film festival, from August 2 through 4, with screenings of 28 films from 13 countries, including five feature films and a program devoted to the late American documentarian Les Blank. This year, the festival will also have an outdoor component at the Museum, with free live music and local food for purchase in the Museum's new George S. Kaufman Courtyard.

Opening night of the festival at the Museum on Friday, August 2, will be a tribute to Les Blank, the award-winning American director, producer, and cinematographer who died in April of this year. The Museum will screen three of Blank's best-loved films—*Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe*, *Dry Wood*, and *Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers*—followed by a conversation with **Mark Toscano**, Academy Film Archive Preservationist, who oversaw the restoration of these and other films by Les Blank, and Blank's son **Harrod Blank**, who will share a preview of a work-in-progress biopic about his father, *Les Blank: A Quiet Revelation*. This program is part of a city-wide celebration of Blank's work; additional screenings will take place at the Academy Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music's BAMcinématek, and Union Docs.

Other highlights of this year's festival include:

- the New York premiere of *Baikonur* (2011), German director **Veit Helmer**'s offbeat science-fiction romance shot on the Kazakh steppes and the Baikonur Cosmodrome,

where Russia launches its rockets into space;

- ***Tall as the Baobab Tree*** (2012), a film by **Jeremy Teicher** (who will appear in person) set in Senegal, about a young woman who tries to save her eleven-year-old sister from an arranged marriage. The film was the much talked-about Closing Night film of the recent Human Rights Watch Film Festival;
- a new DCP restoration of ***Fitzcarraldo*** (1982), **Werner Herzog**'s stunning epic starring Klaus Kinski as a deranged European businessman obsessed with building an opera house in remote Peru;
- winner of Best Film at the inaugural First Time Fest, ***Salt*** (2011), directed by **Diego Rougier**, a modern-day western set in Chile's Atacama Desert, following a Spanish director trying to develop his screenplay who is mistaken for a local gunslinging hero;
- **Marlo Poras**'s documentary ***The Mosuo Sisters*** (2012), an intimate portrait of two spirited daughters from one of the world's last remaining matriarchal societies in the foothills of the Himalayas, with filmmaker in person, paired with ***Felt, Feeling, and Dreams***, a short film about a community of Kyrgyz women who pull themselves from poverty by making beautiful felt rugs, with director **Andrea Odezynska** in person (who will bring some of the special rugs) ;
- and additional short films from Canada, Ireland, Finland, Germany, and the United States, paired with each of the feature presentations.

The Rural Route Film Festival is organized by Alan Webber, an Astoria-based filmmaker who grew up in Elkader, Iowa. Through 2008-2009, he traveled to all seven continents presenting the Rural Route Film Festival. About this year's festival, Webber said, "Live music and great food will top off our best group of new features yet, a solid bunch all dealing with modernity vs. tradition in their own particular way. The whole event is laced with fun eccentricities like a director bringing special felt rugs from Kyrgyzstan, and a sibling theme runs through the festival with two great films about sisters and musical performances by a brother-sister alt. folk band and a Colombian twin brother guitar duo."

"The Rural Route Film Festival is a unique event with an admirable vision, bringing films about life outside the city to an urban audience," said the Museum's Chief Curator David Schwartz. "This year, we are pleased to have an outdoor component, with live music and local food in our brand new courtyard space."

Full descriptions of films are included below. With the exception of Friday evening, tickets are included with regular Museum admission: \$12 adults, \$9 senior citizens and students, \$6 children 3–12, and free for Museum members.

On Saturday, August 3, the festival features live music by Brooklyn's alt-folk brother-sister duo **This Frontier Needs Heroes** (playing from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. with intermission) and **Gimagua**, the twin Columbian brothers known by many subway riders for their subterranean rumba performances (5:30 to 7:30 p.m.). On Sunday,

August 4, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. (with intermission), **Vlada Tomova's Bulgarian Voices Trio**, featuring three women from Bulgaria, Russia, and the United States, will perform ancient Bulgarian and Cossack folk songs. Food vendors will include **Strand Smokehouse**, **William Hallet**, and **Astor Bake Shop**—all Astoria-based restaurants.

In addition to the events at the Museum, there will be a kick-off party on Thursday, August 1 at Strand Smokehouse in Astoria from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., a closing night screening and party at Brooklyn Grange in Long Island City on Sunday, August 4, and a screening at the Broadway branch of the Queens Library on Saturday, July 27. For information about these and other Rural Route Film Festival events, visit ruralroutefilms.com.

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RURAL ROUTE FILM FESTIVAL, AUGUST 2-4, 2013

Unless otherwise noted, film screenings take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater and in the Celeste and Armand Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street), Astoria, and are included with Museum admission. Advance tickets for some special screenings and events are available online at <http://movingimage.us> or by calling 718 777 6800.

SCREENING & LIVE EVENT

Les Blank Tribute Program

With Harrod Blank and archivist Mark Toscano in person

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 7:00 P.M.

Presented in collaboration with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Dirs. Les Blank, Maureen Gosling. 1973-1980, approx. 110 mins. 16mm. With Werner Herzog, Alice Waters. The great documentary filmmaker Les Blank (1935–2013) made poetic, vibrant films that captured the lives, culture, food, and music of people at the periphery of American society. This special tribute to Blank, who died this April, consists of three of his most beloved films:

Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe. Dir. Les Blank, 1979, 22 mins. 16mm. Yes, German film director Werner Herzog really does eat his shoe to fulfill a vow to fellow filmmaker Errol Morris—boldly exemplifying his belief that people must have the guts to attempt what they dream of. Inspiring.

Dry Wood. Dir. Les Blank, Maureen Gosling. 1973, 37 mins. 16mm. A fascinating look at black Creole life in French Louisiana, held together by the wild, insistent music of Bois-Sec Ardoin and Canray Fontenot.

Garlic is as Good as Ten Mothers. Dir. Les Blank, Maureen Gosling. 1980, 51 mins. 16mm. This lip-smacking foray into the history, consumption, cultivation, and culinary/curative powers of the stinking rose features visits to garlic festivals and feasts, the legendary chef Alice Waters

of Chez Panisse, and a flavorful musical soundtrack.

SCREENING & LIVE EVENT

Tall as the Baobab Tree

With director Jeremy Teicher in person

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2:00 P.M.

Senegal. Dir. Jeremy Teicher. 2012, 82 mins. With Dior Ka, Oumul Ka. Coumba and her little sister Debo are the first to leave their family's remote Senegalese village, where meals are prepared over open fires and water is drawn from wells, to attend school in the city. But when an accident suddenly threatens their family's survival, their father decides to sell eleven-year-old Debo into an arranged marriage. Torn between loyalty to her elders and her dreams for the future, Coumba hatches a secret plan to rescue her young sister from a fate she did not choose.

Preceded by **Preceded by:**

Home Turf. Dir. Ross Whitaker. 2011, 14 mins. A fascinating documentary about the ancient art of cutting turf by hand in the bogs of Ireland.

Beaver Creek Yard. Dir. Laska Jimsen. 2013, 6 mins. A poetic visual account of a Christmas tree processing facility provides insights into the human impulse to control, exploit, and profit from the natural world.

Fitzcarraldo

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 4:30 P.M.

Peru. Dir. Werner Herzog. 1982, 158 mins. DCP. With Klaus Kinski, Claudia Cardinale, Jose Lewgoy. Herzog's pictorially stunning—and stunningly ambitious—adventure film/comedy stars Klaus Kinski as the deranged Fitzcarraldo, a European businessman determined to build an opera house in Iquitos, Peru. To accomplish this he has to make a fortune in the rubber business, and his outlandish plan involves hauling an enormous river boat across a small mountain with help from local Indians. Through his numerous narrative and nonfiction works, shot on some of the most remote locations across the world, Herzog has captured an incredibly diverse set of people and cultures.

Preceded by:

Magnetic Reconnection. Dir. Kyle Armstrong. 2012, 12 mins. Spectacular footage of the Aurora Borealis is accompanied by Jim O'Rourke's evocative original score.

Salt

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 7:30 P.M.

Chile/Argentina. Dir. Diego Rougier. 2011, 112 mins. With Fele Martínez, Javiera Contador, Gonzalo Valenzuela. Sergio is a washed-up Spanish director obsessed with making a western in Chile's Atacama Desert. Producers in Barcelona tear his screenplay to shreds, sending him on a journey to northern Chile in search of the inspiration that will salvage his story. Once Sergio arrives, however, he is mistaken for the region's long-lost gunslinger hero, pitting him against thugs involved in 'shady business' across the Bolivian border. Sergio will have a good script... if he escapes alive. The acclaimed film *Salt* pays loving homage to Sergio Leone while playfully subverting the old-school western genre in contemporary South America.

Preceded by:

Free Door. Dir. Michael Schmidt. 2012, 8 mins. Jim finds a door by the side of a road that's marked "free," but decides he should still ask if it's okay to take it. (Part of *Rural Route Film Festival*).

Little Town. Dir. Michael Schmidt. 2013, 4 mins. A music video, echoing classic westerns, by the Canadian band Air Marshal Landing.

SCREENING & LIVE EVENT

The Mosuo Sisters

With director Marlo Poras in person

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2:00 P.M.

China. Dir. Marlo Poras. 2012, 80 mins. Juma and Latso are thrust into the worldwide economic downturn when they lose their jobs in Beijing. Left with few options, they leave for home, a remote village in the foothills of the Himalayas. Determined to keep their mother and siblings out of poverty, Latso sacrifices her dream of an education and stays home to farm, while Juma leaves again to try her luck in Lijiang and Chengdu. Ultimately, though, it's the sisters' relationship with one another that hangs in the balance, in this riveting documentary, as they struggle to navigate the vast cultural and economic divides of contemporary China.

Preceded by:

Felt, Feelings and Dreams. With director Andrea Odezynska in person. Dir. Andrea Odezynska. 2013, 30 mins. This documentary follows a small group of Kyrgyz women who pull themselves from crushing poverty by making shyrdaks (beautiful rugs composed of felt). Odezynska's film is a vivid snapshot of Kyrgyz culture.

Cathedral. Dir. Clea Roberts. 2013, 2 mins. Two women go for a walk together in the woods, often termed "forest bathing" in Zen Buddhism.

Baikonur

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 5:00 P.M.

Germany/Russia/Kazakhstan. Dir. Veit Helmer. 2011, 94 mins. With Alexander Asochakov, Marie de Villepin, Sitora Farmonova. "Whatever falls from heaven, you may keep." So goes the unwritten law of the Kazakh steppes. For the inhabitants of a small village, especially the youthful Iskander, living just downwind from the Baikonur Cosmodrome means that what "falls from heaven" is actually valuable space debris from Russian rockets. Iskander uses his radio expertise to follow launches and calculate where to find the cast-off material. Something goes wrong with the latest space millionaire tourist lift-off, and he is there to rescue the beautiful French woman inside the crashed capsule. He hides her in his yurt and, as she suffers from amnesia, Iskander is able to pretend they are engaged. In this offbeat romantic comedy, Iskander has turned the ancient law of the steppes to his own advantage, but even the most romantic lie cannot remain undiscovered forever.

Preceded by:

Reindeer. Dir. Eva Weber. 2011, 3 mins. An impressionistic, haunting portrait of Sámi reindeer herding in the twilight expanses of the Lappish wilderness.

Was du nicht siehst...I spy with my little eye. Dir. Gunda Aurich. 2012, 15 mins. After an

argument with her boyfriend during their countryside getaway, Laura meets a mysterious stranger picking mushrooms in the forest.

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In January 2011, the Museum reopened after a major expansion and renovation that nearly doubled its size. Accessible, innovative, and forward-looking, the Museum presents exhibitions, education programs, significant moving-image works, and interpretive programs, and maintains a collection of moving-image related artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, screenings are included with paid Museum admission.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: 718 777 6877, members@movingimage.us

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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