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**MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES
WINNERS OF JURIED COMPETITION AND AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARDS**

Specially designed awards given out for the first time to Minnesota-Made Films

MINNEAPOLIS—April 27, 2015—The Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) announced the winners of the festival's juried competition, handing out the first physical, artist-designed award statue in the festival's history.

The Festival, the largest film event in the region and one of the largest and longest running film events in the nation, showing over 200 feature, short length and documentary films from more than 60 countries, named the winners of the juried competition April 24, at the MSPIFF Filmmakers Lounge in St. Anthony Main.

The awards were designed by Minnesota artist Timothy Jay Hamilton, who attended the ceremony to speak on the inspiration behind his design.

The winners of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival 2015 juried competition are:

MN Made Documentary Feature

Miss Tibet: Beauty in Exile

Director: Norah Shapiro USA

MN Made Narrative Feature

Knucklehead

Director: Ben Bowman USA

Emerging Filmmaker

Nena

Director: Saskia Diesing Netherlands/Germany

Documentary Feature

The Songs of Rice

Director: Uruphong Raksasad Thailand

Special Documentary Jury Prize:

The Russian Woodpecker

Director: Chad Gracia UK/Ukraine/USA

Short Narrative

Day One

Director: Henry Hughes USA

Muted

Director: Rachel Goldberg USA

Short Documentary

The Gnomist

Director: Sharon Liese USA

The winners of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival 2015 Audience Choice Awards determined by audience ballots:

Narrative Feature

Belle and Sebastian

Director: Nicolas Vanier

Documentary Feature

Medicine of the Wolf

Director: Julia Huffman

Narrative Short

Stealth

Director: Bennett Lasseter

Documentary Short

Not Done Loving

Director: Jeff Brandt

Animation Short

Wire Cutters

Director: Jack Anderson

The jurors for the Emerging Filmmaker Competition were:

Claudia Puig, Lead Film Critic, USA Today

Claudia has been a film critic at USA Today since 2001, becoming lead film critic in 2006, and is also a regular contributor for National Public Radio's Film Week. She has discussed movies on NBC, CBS, CNN and on Mitch Albom's syndicated radio show and radio programs in Boston and Washington DC. She was named Entertainment Journalist of the Year in 2009 by the Publicists Guild. Claudia began her journalism career at the Los Angeles Times covering city government, crime and courts and was part of the team that won a Pulitzer for its coverage of the L.A. Riots in 1991. In 1993 she began covering the movie business at the LA Times.

Tim Horsburgh, Director of Communications and Distribution, Kartemquin Films.

Since 2009, Tim has driven all external marketing, public relations and social media for Kartemquin and all their films. In 2014 he began overseeing distribution, working with filmmakers on festivals, theatrical, broadcast and digital releases. He is also responsible for assessing and managing potential new Kartemquin projects. He has led audience building campaigns for award-winning films including *Life Itself*, *The Interrupters*, *Typeface*, *The Trials of Muhammad Ali*, *The Homestretch*, *Almost There*, *No Crossover: The Trial of Allen Iverson*, *As Goes Janesville*, *A Good Man*, *Prisoner of Her Past*, and many more. Tim is a founding member of the Indie Caucus.

Helen du Toit, Artistic Director, Palm Springs International Film Festival

Helen has more than 15 years of experience in independent film and TV production, international festival programming and consulting. Helen has programmed for the Toronto and Seattle International Film Festivals, has created and hosted panels of international experts and taught Independent Producing for the Canadian Screen Training Centre, and currently holds the position of Artistic Director for the Palm Springs International Film Festival. As a producer, she has developed original ideas with writers and directors, worked closely with distributors and sales agents and pitched projects at international film financing conferences. Helen produced *Treed Murray*, a Genie award-winning feature film distributed internationally by Alliance Atlantis.

Emerging Filmmaker Competition Jury Statement:

Our selection for Best Emerging Filmmaker was Saskia Diesing's pitch-perfect, emotionally -layered *Nena*, a story of a 16-year-old girl, impeccably played by Abbey Hoes, as she comes of age while simultaneously coming to terms with the suicidal depression of her paraplegic father, terrifically portrayed by Uwe Ochsenknecht.

Hoes is astounding in this break-out role and her scenes with the scholarly father she adores and is deeply angry at are fascinating in their complexity, wit and believability.

Whether Nena spends time across a chessboard with her complicated father, or in the company of Carlo (Gijs Blom), the uncomplicated blue-haired teen charmer from her baseball team, or her unemotional, independent mother (Monic Hendrickx), Nena is a mesmerizing, fully-drawn character.

She must face and absorb the shattering realization that her father cannot bear his existence. The story is profoundly intelligent, filled with empathy and humor, but never predictable. Diesing and co-writer Esther Gerritsen's masterful script is nuanced, remarkably economical. The ensemble cast is terrific.

Nena's headlong rush into life and youthful lust is contrasted poignantly with her father's physical decline. The right to determine one's own life—and death—is a key component of the film, but this is no polemic. A celebration of life in the most unorthodox sense, it is modest and direct and yet deeply artful and provocative.

The jurors for the Documentary Competition were:

Deirdre Haj, Director, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival

At Full Frame, Deirdre created the year-round screening series and PNC Roadshow, the "Teach the Teachers" program, "The School of Doc" and the "A&E IndieFilms Speakeasy" venue. Under her leadership the festival is an Oscar qualifying festival for short documentary. Engaging local business leaders, she created the Full Frame Theater. She serves on the boards of the Film Festival Alliance, the first not-for-profit organization of Film Festival professionals and has moderated/participated in panel discussions at several universities and film festivals. Previously, she consulted for the Motion Picture Association of America and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and worked as a film producer.

Peter Kinoy, Principal, Skylight Pictures

Peter founded Skylight in 1981 and produced and edited numerous documentaries about social transformation. In the 1980's Kinoy made films about the US involvement in Central America including WHEN THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLE (Special Jury Prize Sundance). In the 1990s he made documentaries about poor people organizing in the US – TAKEOVER, POVERTY OUTLAW, OUTRIDERS (Sundance and national PBS). Recent international work includes STATE OF FEAR, THE RECKONING and GRANITO: HOW TO NAIL A DICTATOR. Kinoy has a passion for teaching, a founder of the Media College of the University of the Poor, and member of The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

Michael Tuckman, Principal, mTuckman Media (www.mtuckmanmedia.com)

Michael is a fifteen-year veteran of the independent film industry, beginning his career at The Cinema Guild where he started the company's theatrical distribution division, and going on to serve as Vice President of Theatrical Sales for THINKFilm, handling theatrical release strategies for Oscar-winning and nominated films including SPELLBOUND, BORN INTO BROTHELS and TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE. He now operates his own distribution services company, mTuckman Media, working directly with filmmakers under their own banners. Most notably, he has handled Rory Kennedy's Best Documentary Academy Award nominee LAST DAYS IN VIETNAM; Shane Carruth's UPSTREAM COLOR; and DETROPIA, from the Academy Award nominated directors Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady.

Documentary Competition Jury Statement:

We award SONGS OF RICE with the MSIFF Documentary Award. This film is visually stunning, and conveys a broad range of emotion through expert cinematic storytelling. Without benefit of narration or dialogue, the director explores a world few see and allows us to "hear" the story of a food staple so familiar with many

cultures via the people who grow, live and celebrate the cultivation of rice. The filmmakers succeed in reminding us how intricately connected the worlds of work and culture are.

About MSPIFF:

The largest film event in the Upper Midwest, and one of the largest and longest running in the country the MSP International Film Festival (MSPIFF), produced by the Film Society of Minneapolis and St. Paul, presents more than 300 feature-length and short-form narrative and documentary films from 70+ countries around the world. MSPIFF provides an opportunity for audiences to experience new cultures and ideas through the medium and art of film. The Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival is supported by Legacy Amendment Funding through the Minnesota State Arts Board, The McKnight Foundation, The Star Tribune, Cedarwoods Foundation, Piper Jaffray, Dark Horse Wines, Revel Avila, Crash+Sues, numerous international Consulates and generous members of the Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul, among many others. For more information about the Festival, visit mspfilm.org/festivals/mspiff-2015.

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