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Arpa Foundation for Film Music and Art (AFFMA)
2919 Maxwell Street, Los Angeles, CA 90027
www.affma.org

Press Contact for Interviews/More Information:
Beve Regas / Kalista PR
[\(818\) 566-9769](tel:8185669769) / b.regas@kallistapr.com

Press Credential Inquiries - <http://affma.org/news/press-credentials/>

ARPA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2011 PROGRAM

**SUSAN EDWARDS, VAHIK PIRHAMZEI AND BRYAN SINGLE
TO RECEIVE SPECIAL AWARDS**

(HOLLYWOOD, CA) - The 14th annual Arpa International Film Festival, presented by AT&T YP.com, (September 22-24, 2011 at the Egyptian Theatre located in the heart of Hollywood, CA) is pleased to announce this year's festival program and events. The 3-day fest offers 30 films including 6 feature films, 11 short films, 9 documentaries, 3 music videos, 1 animated film and World, North American, and West Coast premieres. The roster includes works from internationally celebrated award-winning filmmakers including Braden King, Mahsun Kirmizigul, Lars Knudsen, Jay Van Hoy, Marc Fusco, Michael Garrity, Levon Minasian, Eric Nazarian, Vahik Pirhamzei, Bryan Single, Steve Skrovan, Fred Stoller and Hrag Yedalian.

The Festival is dedicated to independent filmmakers that cultivate cultural understanding and global empathy. "We will present a worldwide line-up of dynamic films highlighting issues of Diaspora, human rights, and war as well as some good old-fashioned entertainment," states Armen Toumajan, Arpa's Director of Programming. "We are exceedingly impressed by the quality of this year's program and applaud our filmmakers for their singular vision and dedication to their craft."

Countries represented include Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uganda and USA

Fest opening night film on Thursday, September 22 marks the Los Angeles premiere of the romantic road movie **HERE**, directed by **Braden King** (*Dutch Harbor: Where the Sea Breaks Its Back*), followed by a Q&A with King and the film's co-writer Dani Valent. **HERE** follows the story of two loners - an Armenian art photographer and an expatriate American satellite-mapping engineer (played by Lubna Azabal and Ben Foster), who meet and are instantly attracted to each other. They become travelling partners embarking on a journey of self discovery and personal transformations.

This year's Centerpiece Film and making its N. American premiere on Friday, September 23 is the hilarious comedy **MY UNCLE RAFAEL** directed by **Marc Fusco**, a protégé and former assistant to Steven Spielberg. The film is the first American comedy in history to feature an Armenian character in the lead role—with an Armenian backdrop. **Vahik Pirhamzei**, who portrays film's titular character, will receive the

Festival's **2011 Breakthrough Performance Award**. Cast, director and producers will be on hand for a Q&A following the screening.

The Festival's closing night film heralds the N. American premiere of **Mahsun Kirmizigul's** (SAW THE SUN) action/drama **Five Minarets in New York** starring Haluk Bilginer, Mustafa Sandal, and Mahsun Kirmizigul. The film also stars Danny Glover, Gina Gershon and Robert Patrick. *Minarets* follows two Turkish police officers sent to New York to bring back a terrorist. The film was one of the highest-grossing Turkish films of 2010.

This year's recipient of the **AT&T Award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship** is the compelling documentary "**Marion Stoddart: The work of 1000**" by **Susan Edwards**. The film chronicles the advocate Marion Stoddart who lived next to one of America's most polluted rivers and transformed herself from a 1960s housewife to a citizen leader and environmental hero honored by the United Nations.

Accepting the **Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award** will be documentary filmmaker and producer **Bryan Single** on behalf of his acclaimed **CHILDREN OF WAR**. The documentary, set in Uganda, had its world premiere last fall at the United Nations in New York. Single will be on hand to accept the honor which will be presented following the film's screening.

Festival Presenting Sponsor AT&T Real Yellow Pages YP.COM will hand out the AT&T Award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship. "AT&T YP.com is honored to be the Presenting Sponsor of Arpa International Film Festival" says Laura Wills Ochoa, Southern California Area Marketing Manager. "AT&T commends AFFMA for its tireless efforts to promote the growth and development of the arts in Los Angeles and beyond."

MARION STODDART: THE WORK OF 1000 and **CHILDREN OF WAR** will screen consecutively on Saturday, September 24 beginning at 3pm and will be **free to the public**.

Awards for Best Feature, Documentary, Short, Screenplay and Director will be handed out throughout the festival.

Full schedule of films and events can be found at <http://www.affma.org>. Advance All-Access Passes can be purchased now through September 21 online at <http://www.affma.org/>

Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art (AFFMA), a non-profit organization, was founded in 1995 for the purpose of enhancing the Los Angeles community's environment and supporting artists who bridge the cultural divide. AFFMA annually stages concerts, art exhibits, networking events, film benefits and its signature event, **Arpa International Film Festival** which will be held from September 22 to 24 in Hollywood, CA. For more information or sponsorship and advertising opportunities, please visit www.affma.org or call [323-663-1882](tel:323-663-1882). To send AFFMA a tax-deductible donation, please mail donations to AFFMA - 2919 Maxwell St., Los Angeles, CA 90027. All donations go towards the production of Arpa International Film Festival.

ARMIN T. WEGNER HUMANITARIAN Award is named after German author and human rights activist Armin Theophil Wegner (October 16, 1886 – May 17, 1978).

AT&T Real Yellow Pages and YP.COM presents the festival's third annual AT&T Award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship. The award highlights the shared commitment between the Festival and its Presenting Sponsor, AT&T YP.com, to foster green initiatives in cinema. Visit YP.COM, the new YELLOWPAGES.COM website for more information.

2011 Arpa International Film Festival Official Selection includes:

*All Films in English unless specified *Subtitled*

FEATURE FILMS

FIVE MINARETS IN NEW YORK (N. AMERICAN PREMIERE)

TURKEY

Director: Mahsun Kirmizigül

Producer: Murat Tokat

Writer: Mahsun Kirmizigül

Istanbul, Turkey. Undercover cop Firat is actively investigating terrorist breeding grounds among fundamentalists and nationalists in Istanbul. Separately, anti-terrorism cop Acar follows a lead to a terrorist hide-out in one of the city's slums. After a bloody shootout, the cops fail to capture a notorious terrorist leader known only by his alias Decal. At the police station, Firat reveals that Decal's real identity is Haci Gumus, a man released from prison decades ago after serving a short sentence for murder. Interpol quickly issues an arrest warrant for Hali, currently residing in New York.

In Manhattan, an FBI SWAT team led by Agent Becker raids the apartment of Haci Gumus, a seemingly innocent Muslim scholar, and arrests him. Firat and Acar soon arrive in New York and take custody of Haci. On the way to JFK, their van is ambushed by a group of masked men led by Haci's close friend Marcus. The men rescue Haci and disappear. In their quest to bring this criminal to justice, the two cops realize that there is more to Haci than meets the eye...

Five Minarets in New York asks tough questions about present day Turkey, while holding a spotlight on the rampant paranoia in regards to Islam in the United States and rest of the world.

English, Turkish with English Subtitles*

FRED AND VINNIE

USA

Director: Steve Skrovan

Producer: Jerry P. Magana

Writer: Fred Stoller

Fred Stoller works as an actor in Hollywood, playing an assortment of deliverymen, clerks, and other oddball schnooks. The rest of the time he wanders the streets researching his pet book project, "Restaurants You Don't Feel Self-Conscious Eating Alone At." He has a long distance bond with his old friend from back East, Vinnie D'Angelo (Angelo Tsarouchas), who these days hardly ever leaves his rent-free basement apartment. Fred calls Vinnie whenever he has an odd anecdote to relate about some dumb thing he overheard a lady say at the post office or how the owner of a video store refused to wish him a "Happy Holiday" because Fred was renting a porno on Christmas. For Vinnie, these mundane stories are great adventures. It's a quirky, symbiotic relationship where Fred provides Vinnie with a window to the outside world, while Vinnie is the adoring parent Fred never had. That relationship is put to the test when Vinnie ventures cross country to stay with Fred to give show business a try.

HERE (L.A. PREMIERE)

USA, ARMENIA

Director: Braden King

Producers: Lars Knudsen, Jay Van Hoy, Braden King

Writers: Braden King, Dani Valent

Will Shepard (Ben Foster) is an American satellite-mapping engineer contracted to create a new, more accurate survey of the country of Armenia. Will meets Gadarine Najarian (Lubna Azabal) at a rural hotel. Tough and intriguing, she's an expatriate Armenian art photographer on her first trip back in ages, passionately trying to figure out what kind of relationship - if any - she still has with her home country and culture. There is an almost instant, unconscious bond between these two lone travelers; they impulsively decide to continue together. *HERE* tells the story of their unique journey and the dramatic personal transformations it leads each of them through.
English, Armenian with English Subtitles*

MY UNCLE RAFAEL (NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE)

USA

Director: Marc Fusco

Producers: Michael Garrity, Vahik Pirhamzei

Writers: Scott Yagemann, Vahik Pirhamzei

A desperate TV producer convinces an old Armenian Uncle to star in a new reality show. Cultures collide when Uncle Rafael is thrown into the Schumacher family household where he has one week to save a broken and dysfunctional American family from falling apart. The only rule—everyone must follow his rules. Starring Vahik Pirhamzei, John Michael Higgins, Missi Pyle, Anthony Clark, Rachel Blanchard, Joe Lo Truglio, Anahid Avanesian, Carly Chaikin, Sage Ryan, Ursula Taherian, and Lupe Ontiveros.

THREE VEILS (L.A. PREMIERE)

USA

Director: Rolla Selbak

Producer: Ahmad Zahra

Writer: Rolla Selbak

Three Veils is a film about three young Middle-Eastern women living in the U.S., each with her own personal story. Leila is engaged to be married, however as the wedding night approaches, she becomes less and less sure of how her life is playing out. Amira is a very devout Muslim, but is dealing with her deep repressions about her intimate feelings toward women. Nikki is acting out her promiscuity as she battles her own demons after a tragic death in the family. As the film progresses, all three stories unfold and blend into each other as connections are revealed between the three women.

ZENNE DANCER (WEST COAST PREMIERE)

TURKEY, AFGHANISTAN

Directors: M. Caner Alper, Mehmet Binay

Producers: M. Caner Alper, Mehmet Binay

Writer: M. Caner Alper

Zenne is the contemporary story of three unlikely friends: Ahmet, a masculine gay "bear," Can, a male belly dancer (Zenne), and Daniel, a German photo-journalist, who are confronted by a systemic, institutionalized and culturally embedded homophobia that leads to the tragedy.

German, Turkish, English with Subtitles

DOCUMENTARIES

40 DAYS OF MUSA DAGH: 94 YEARS OF GENOCIDE SURVIVAL

TURKEY

Director: Robert Davidian

Producer: Robert Davidian
Writer: Robert Davidian

A journey to Vakifli, the only Armenian village remaining in Turkey, to learn about its storied past.

CHILDREN OF WAR

USA, UGANDA

Director: Bryan Single - 2011 Armin T. Wegner Award Recipient

Producers: Bryan Single, Farzad Karimi, Timothy Beckett

Associate Producers: Anahid Aramouni Keshishian, Shannon McBrien, Grant Inglett

Filmed in northern Uganda over a period of three years, "Children Of War" is a unique and incandescent documentary which follows a group of former child soldiers as they escape the battlefield, enter the sanctuary of a rehabilitation center, and undergo a remarkable process of trauma therapy and emotional healing. Having been abducted from their homes and schools and forced to become fighters by a quasi-religious militia called the Lord's Resistance Army, the children struggle to confront their years of captivity, extreme religious indoctrination, and participation in war crimes with the help of a heroic team of trauma counselors. As these fearless allies guide the children forward into new lives, Children Of War illuminates a powerful and cathartic story of forgiveness and hope in the aftermath of war.

DILLI (WEST COAST PREMIERE)

USA, India

Directors: Sushmit Ghosh, Rintu Thomas

Executive Producer: Robin Raina

Dilli is a moving collection of heartfelt interviews with Delhi slum dwellers. Its lens focuses on a group of dwellers, bringing to life the untold story of the mass exodus of thousands who were bulldozed from their homes and transferred to a makeshift facade - Bawana - without water, shelter or drainage, while the city was being beautified for the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

*Hindi with English Subtitles

KOMITAS

USA

Director: David Deranian

Producer: Charles Andrews, David Deranian

Writer: David Deranian

An especially talented Armenian man, Komitas, who was a priest, singer, choir director, composer, musicologist, music ethnologist and music pedagogue, experienced a life filled with the passion of dreams pursued. Tragically, he also witnessed the devastation of that dream during the calamity of the Armenian Genocide.

THE LAST TIGHTROPE DANCER IN ARMENIA

ARMENIA

Directors: Arman Yeritsyan, Inna Sahakyan

Producer: Vardan Hovhannisyan

Writers: Arman Yeritsyan, Inna Sahakyan

Zhora and Knyaz were once the most celebrated masters of tightrope dancing in Armenia. Today, they are the only surviving performers who can keep this ancient art alive against the current of contemporary society, but all their students grow up and find other interests in life. Why is their art not important anymore?

MARION STODDART: THE WORK OF 1000 (WEST COAST PREMIERE)

Director: Susan Edwards - 2011 AT&T Award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship Recipient

Producer: Dorie Clark

Writer: Susan Edwards

Marion Stoddart lived next to one of America's most polluted rivers and transformed herself from a 1960s housewife to a citizen leader and environmental hero honored by the United Nations. The Work of 1000 is the documentary film chronicling her life, achievements, setbacks, and unwavering belief that one person can make a difference in the world.

OCCUPATION HAS NO FUTURE

USA

Director: David Zlutnick

Producer: David Zlutnick

Writer: David Zlutnick

Occupation Has No Future studies Israeli militarism, examines the occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, and explores the work of Israelis and Palestinians working against militarism and occupation. Featuring interviews with former IDF soldiers, Israeli conscientious objectors, and Palestinian grassroots organizers.

English, Hebrew, Arabic (with subtitles)

RETURN

Armenia, USA

Director: Robert Davidian

Producer: Robert Davidian

Writer: Robert Davidian

What happens when Armenian-Americans pick up and move to Armenia?

ROOTS (N. AMERICAN PREMIERE)

GREECE

Director: Vahagn Karapetyan

Producer: Vahagn Karapetyan

Writer: Vahagn Karapetyan

The identification of spiritual identity of every individual is directly dependent on the homeland, language, and culture. A sustained effort is required for Armenian Diaspora communities to preserve their culture. The Armenian community of Greece has allies in this struggle: schools, churches, newspapers, and syndicates. Through the collective efforts of dedicated compatriots the Armenian soul remains alive.

*Armenian with English subtitles

SHORT FILMS

THE ARMENIAN AND THE ARMENIAN

USA

Director: Armen Karaoghlanian

Writer: William Saroyan (adaptation)

The Armenian and the Armenian explores the Armenian identity and culture through experimental filmmaking.

THE BALLERINO (WORLD PREMIERE)

USA

Director: Hrag Yedalian

Producers: Burag Celikian, Shant Der Ashodian

Yakov Ostovsky is on his deathbed and his plug will be pulled by the end of the evening. At least, that was the plan until Sergey 'Sam' Belyakova decided to pay a surprise visit. Armed with a flask and a healthy dose of imagination, Sam unleashes a string of hereto-untold stories in an effort to keep Yakov alive for another day. Featuring performances by Ken Davitian (Borat) and Shavo Odadjian (System Of A Down), The Ballerino is a dark comedy that explores euthanasia through the eyes of a drunken, but well-meaning, fool.

BOLIS (WORLD PREMIERE)

USA, Turkey

Director: Eric Nazarian

Writer: Eric Nazarian

Producers: Huseyin Karabey, Sevil Demirci.

Armenak is a successful oud player who is in Istanbul for the first time for an important musical event. His feelings toward the city, which his Armenian grandfather fled at the tip of the sword in 1915, are very complex. Armenak arrives full of prejudice, expecting to hate the place, but instead finds it very familiar. The decision comes naturally to him to search for his grandfather's old musical instrument shop with only an old photo and a street name. Is it destiny or coincidence that leads him to his destination?

THE CROCODILE'S WIFE (ANIMATED)

AUSTRALIA

Director: Jody Cleaver

Producer: Robert Stephenson

Writer: Jody Cleaver

The Crocodile's Wife grows resentful of an ever-cheerful monkey; a newcomer to the riverbank. Her husband arranges a meeting between them, confident she will see the error of her judgment- but will she like him?

DEMON'S DILEMMA

USA

Director: Hanjin Park

Producers: Aisha Summers, Janet Lee, Shelley Patel

Writer: Ehren Parks

A demon walking amongst us. But demons and angels do not walk in lockstep with their masters. That is a fable told by the old peoples who knew enough to fear them. Celestial beings can act out. But there are consequences for disobedience. So what happens when a demon defies the natural order and inadvertently commits an act fit for an angel? Heaven knows.

FOLIE A DEUX

USA

Director: Armen Khechoumian

Producer: Jessica Goldenberg

Writer: Armen Khechoumian

The story of two strangers who escape their melancholy lives and embark on a series of imaginary dates.

HOPE

USA

Director: Artur Babayan

Producer: Artur Babayan

Writer: Shakeh Esmaelian

In the midst of countless misfortunes, a family learns the value of sincerity and discovers a return to unity.

I AM NEDA

USA

Director: Nicole Kian-Sadighi

Producer: Nicole Kian-Sadighi

Writer: Nicole Kian-Sadighi

I Am Neda is the true story of a woman who fearlessly pursues the cause of freedom in defiance of tyranny and oppression.

*Farsi with English subtitles

KOSU (L.A. PREMIERE)

USA, INDIA

Director: Saro Varjabedian

Producers: Christopher Dimitrov, Rob Richert

Writer: Rob Richert

An American, who volunteers with an Indian orphanage, disrupts the status quo, provoking the couple running it to work through their emotional scars.

English, Tamil with English Subtitles*

MISH MUSH (WEST COAST PREMIERE)

CANADA, SYRIA

Director: Amar Chebib

Producer: Amar Chebib

Writer: Amar Chebib

Upon being drafted for military service, Ahmad, a determined young Syrian poet, decides to flee the country.

*Arabic with English subtitles

LE PIANO (N. AMERICAN PREMIERE)

FRANCE, ARMENIA

Director: Levon Minasian

Producers: Boris Briche, Jennifer Sabbah

Writer: Levon Minasian

Thirteen years after the Armenian city of Leninakan was destroyed in an earthquake, Loussiné, a thirteen-year-old orphan, lives with her grandfather in a "domik" – a prefabricated small house. She is dumb, but a

talented pianist. To prepare for an international competition, the Ministry of Culture lends her a beautiful piano. But when the instrument is delivered, it becomes clear that the “domik” is too small to hold a piano... Starring Yervand Manaryan and Gerald Papasian.

*Armenian with English Subtitles

MUSIC VIDEOS

BABENAGAN GUILIGUIA

Armenia

Director: Ashot Arakelyan

Producer: Ashot Arakelyan

Babenagan Guiliguia tells the story of a people forced to leave their homeland but still longing for it. They praise the holy land they lost and hope one day to return. This provides strength through generations - the strength to live and hope for their lost homeland.

JUST ANOTHER THING

USA

Director: Jon Reno

Producers: Jon Reno, Shane Bartlett

The all original rock band, The Grayces, traverse through various realities while jamming out to their single 'Just Another Thing.'

TRANS-SIBERIAN STANDOFF - VIZA

USA

Director: Tadeh Daschi

Producers: Tadeh Daschi and Armen Aghaeian

Executive Producer: K'noup Tomopoulos

A group of idealistic resistance fighters take refuge inside a bunker, awaiting the unknown outcome of an apocalyptic war.