

FILM INDEPENDENT'S

LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Film Independent:

Elise Freimuth, PR Manager, 310.432.1287, EFreimuth@FilmIndependent.org

Whitney Kimmel, Media Accreditation, 310.432.1267, WKimmel@FilmIndependent.org

mPRm Public Relations:

Alice Zou, 323.933.3399, azou@mprm.com

**FILM INDEPENDENT ANNOUNCES  
ADDITIONAL FILM SELECTIONS & PROGRAMMING  
FOR 2009 LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL**

**– Walt Disney Pictures' *PONYO* selected as Closing Night Film –**

**LOS ANGELES (May 18, 2008)** – Today Film Independent, the non-profit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards and the Los Angeles Film Festival, announced additional official film selections and programming for the 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival, presented by the *Los Angeles Times*. The Los Angeles Film Festival will run from Thursday, June 18 to Sunday, June 28.

Louie Psihoyos' *The Cove* and Rebecca Cammisa's *Which Way Home* will be a part of the Free Screenings section.

Walt Disney Pictures' *Ponyo* will close this year's Festival on Sunday, June 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Mann Village Theater. From the Academy Award®-winning director and world-renowned Japanese animation legend Hayao Miyazaki comes *Ponyo*, a story inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Little Mermaid." Already a box-office success in Japan, the story of a young and overeager goldfish named Ponyo (voiced by Noah Cyrus) and her quest to become human features an outstanding roster of voice talent, including Cate Blanchett, Matt Damon, Tina Fey, Cloris Leachman, Liam Neeson, Lily Tomlin, Betty White and Frankie Jonas as Sosuke, a young boy who befriends Ponyo. The movie opens in theaters on August 14, 2009.

"It was our ambition that the tentpoles of the Festival reflect the spectrum of great cinema and cinematic experiences. We couldn't be more proud to close the Festival with the special screening of this exquisite re-voicing of Hayao Miyazaki's *Ponyo*," said Festival Director Rebecca Yeldham.

The Los Angeles Film Festival also provides the movie-loving public with access to some of the most critically acclaimed filmmakers, film industry professionals, and emerging talent from around the world, through signature programs such as Poolside Chats, Director Lunch Talks, the Film Financing Conference, and more.

“The Festival conversations are a unique platform for film lovers and filmmakers to engage in a dialogue not only about cinema, but about the many ways in which it intersects with other art mediums, contemporary social issues, and the Los Angeles cultural scene,” said Director of Education Maria Bozzi.

Passes to attend the Festival are available immediately for Film Independent members and the general public. In addition to screenings and events, Festival passes provide access to a series of networking receptions and entry to the ZonePerfect live.create. lounge at 1028 Westwood Blvd. where Festival pass holders can interact with Festival filmmakers and professionals in the film community.

General admission tickets to individual films go on sale beginning May 29. Contact the Festival Ticketing Center for passes, tickets and event information by calling 866.FILM.FEST (866.345-6337) or visit LAFilmFest.com. Festival Passes and tickets can also be purchased in person beginning on Friday, June 12 at the Festival Ticketing Center located at 1038 Westwood Blvd.

## **ADDITIONAL FILMS & PROGRAMMING**

### **Closing Night Film:**

- ***Ponyo***, Hayao Miyazaki – Japan (Walt Disney Pictures)

### **Free Screenings:**

- ***The Cove***, Louie Psihoyos (Roadside Attractions)
- ***Which Way Home***, Rebecca Cammisa – Mexico/USA (HBO Documentary)

**Festival Conversations:** *These intimate conversations feature prominent industry figures and Festival filmmakers on a variety of subjects.*

- ***Family Man: Robert Rodriguez*** – Beyond writing, producing, shooting, editing, and scoring his movies, Robert Rodriguez has made filmmaking a family affair. The Rodriguez household has once again joined forces for the family movie ***Shorts*** and is coming to the Festival to talk about their collaboration and share an exclusive look at the making of the film. Join us for this exciting Q&A, where the kids take control.
- ***Spotlight on Ambulante Film Festival: Filmmaking without Borders*** – Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna’s Ambulante Film Festival comes to our Festival and highlights the work of Mexican documentaries. Ambulante filmmakers explore their role as storytellers in an increasingly global world with other Festival filmmakers.
- ***Graphic Explosion*** – Adaptations of comic books and graphic novels have proliferated in recent years, and it’s not all superheroes: *Sin City*, *300*, *Wanted*, and *Persepolis* all came from graphic novels. A group of filmmakers, artists, writers, and fans explore Hollywood’s fascination with the medium and the creative challenges of translating them to the screen. Panelists include Zak Penn (Screenwriter, *Incredible Hulk*, *X-Men: The Last Stand*) and Barry Levine (Publisher, Radical Comics).
- ***Propaganda & Satellite Class Reunion*** – Join us after our Propaganda & Satellite Tribute Music Video Screening with some of its founders and artists to reminisce on a great era of music videos and filmmaking. Sponsored by IFC.

- **An Evening with Thom Mayne** – Pritzker prize-winning architect Thom Mayne, founder of the Southern California Institute of Architecture and the renowned architectural firm Morphosis, comes to the Festival to share his passion for space, light, and cinema.
- **Post-Gay Hollywood?: Straight Talk about Gay Movies** – Now that gays and lesbians have achieved such high cultural visibility, a new crop of films and TV shows is blurring the line between gay and straight – from the buddy love of bromances, to dramatic ensembles that feature LGBT characters whose sexuality is no longer the primary plot point. In the wake of Prop 8, we examine how LGBT people in film and television are shaping the socio-political landscape and turning the once-closeted into the quotidian.

**Poolside Chats:** *As the sun sets over the pool at the W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel, sip a cocktail and listen in on some of the city’s most fascinating people discuss their passion for everything film and L.A. Topics will explore the interplay between contemporary art and film (Reel Art L.A.), transforming the everyday into the cinematic (Reel Life L.A.), and exploring the outer limits of Los Angeles beyond the film industry (Unreel L.A.). Panelists include: Judy Baca (Artist & Activist), Robbie Conal (Guerilla Artist), Kevan Hall (Fashion Designer), Alex McDowell (Production Designer, Watchmen), and Garth Trinidad (KCRW DJ), with additional names to be announced. Sponsored by the W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel.*

**Coffee Talks:** *On June 21 at the W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel, the Festival’s popular Coffee Talks are back with intimate conversations amongst some of today’s most interesting film figures...and, of course, coffee for everyone. Panelists include: Michel Gondry (Director, The Green Hornet), Alex Tse (Screenwriter, Watchmen), and Lyle Workman (Composer, Forgetting Sarah Marshall), with additional names to be announced. Sponsored by BMI, Directors Guild of America, SAGIndie/Screen Actors Guild, and Writers Guild of America, West.*

**Film Financing Conference:** *The Film Financing Conference, on Saturday, June 20 at the Landmark, is a day full of workshops and panels for both the novice and the seasoned producer. From a primer on film financing to detailed discussions on current trends in production and distribution, this conference will provide first-hand information on advice from the experts. This year’s keynote speaker is James D. Stern, CEO of Endgame Entertainment, co-producer & co-director of Every Little Step, and producer of An Education and I’m Not There. Panelists include Christian Gaines (Withoutabox), Sacha Gervasi (Director, Anvil! The Story of Anvil), Sten Iverson (Montana Film Office), Scott Kirsner (Author, Fans, Friends & Followers), Amy Lemisch (California Film Commission), Ted Mundorff (Landmark Theaters), Jean Prewitt (IFTA), Paula Schmit (Film Finances), Bob Teitel (Producer, Notorious), Ryan Werner (IFC Entertainment), and Adam Yauch (Oscilloscope), with additional panelists to be confirmed. Sponsored by Montana Film Office and Surpin & Mayersohn, LLP.*

**Director Lunch Talks:** *Los Angeles Times entertainment writer John Horn hosts conversations with some of Festival’s leading directors and producers. Bring your lunch and join us for informal chats with filmmakers. This year’s Lunch Talks will take place in the ZonePerfect live.create. lounge.*

**Kodak Focus:** *An afternoon conversation with a master cinematographer, focusing on the artistry and technology behind great film photography. Sponsored by Kodak.*

**Tech Talks:** *Drop by the ZonePerfect live.create. lounge and learn something new at our Tech Talks.*

## **ABOUT THE 2009 LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL**

Now in its fifteenth year, the Los Angeles Film Festival is widely recognized as a world-class event, showcasing the best in new American and international cinema and providing the movie-loving public with access to some of the most critically acclaimed filmmakers, film industry professionals, and emerging talent from around the world.

The Festival features unique signature programs including the Filmmaker Retreat, Film Financing Conference, Ford Amphitheatre Outdoor Screenings, Poolside Chats at the W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel, and more. Additionally, the Festival screens short films created by high school students and has a special section devoted to music videos.

Approximately 70 features, 70 shorts, and 50 music videos, representing more than 30 countries, make up the main body of the Festival.

Awards are given out in the following categories at the conclusion of the Festival: Target Filmmaker Award for Best Narrative Feature with an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target; Target Documentary Award with an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target; Outstanding Performance in the Narrative Competition; Best Narrative Short Film; Best Documentary Short Film; Best Animated/Experimental Short Film; and Audience Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best International Feature, Best Music Video, and Best Short Film.

The Los Angeles Film Festival is presented by the Los Angeles Times and is supported by Premier Sponsors Target and ZonePerfect® Nutrition Bars and Principal Sponsors Kodak, IFC, and Netflix. Special support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. American Airlines is the Official Airline Partner, WireImage is the Official Photography Agency of Film Independent, and W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel and the Hotel Palomar are the Official Hotel Partners of the Festival.

## **ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT**

Film Independent is a non-profit arts organization who champions independent film and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation, and uniqueness of vision. Film Independent helps filmmakers make their movies, builds an audience for their projects, and works to diversify the film industry. Film Independent's Board of Directors, filmmakers, staff, and constituents, is comprised of an inclusive community of individuals across ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Anyone passionate about film can become a member, whether you are a filmmaker, industry leader, or a film lover.

With over 250 annual screenings and events, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists who are driving creativity in the film industry. Film Independent offers free Filmmaker Labs for selected writers, directors, and producers; provides cut-rate services for filmmakers; and presents year-round networking opportunities. Film Independent's mentorship and job placement program, Project:Involve, pairs emerging culturally diverse filmmakers with film industry professionals.

Film Independent produces the Los Angeles Film Festival and the Spirit Awards. For more information or to become a member, visit [FilmIndependent.org](http://FilmIndependent.org).

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