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www.waterfrontfilm.org

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Seventh Annual Waterfront Film Festival Dates Announced

SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN – Independent filmmakers and thousands of fans who appreciate their work will converge on the Lake Michigan resort community of Saugatuck, Michigan **June 9-12, 2005** for the seventh annual Waterfront Film Festival.

"In many cases, Waterfront provides West Michigan audiences their first or only chance to see some of the best films of the year on the big screen," according to festival co-founder Kori Eldean. For instance, two of Waterfront's official 2004 selections, *Story of a Weeping Camel* and *Born into Brothels*, received Oscar nods as best documentary features, she said, with *Born into Brothels* taking home the coveted award. Several other selections have been released on video but never made it to theatres on this side of the state.

Born into Brothels — the documentary on the experiences of prostitutes in a red light area of Kolkata, India made its Michigan debut at the festival last June. While documenting the experiences of prostitutes in Sonagachi, Zana Briski, who produced and directed the documentary with Ross Kauffman, befriended many of their children and decided to give them cameras to take photos of the world they lived in. The results were surprising with the children presenting unique and insightful portrayal of their harsh world. Accepting the award said, "We thank the kids. They are watching in Calcutta." When asked about Waterfront Film Festival they replied, "We love the Waterfront Film Festival!"

With six solid years under its belt, Waterfront has become the talk of the industry for its laid-back atmosphere. "Our industry guests have been raving for years about our festival and the word is really getting around in Hollywood and New York," said Eldean. Submissions are pouring in from all over the country, and the field will be narrowed down to approximately 30 full-length films and 30 shorts.

Besides the films that will be shown, the festival also offers seminars in filmmaking, acting, and screenwriting featuring panels of industry professionals from L.A. and New York.

"Waterfront offers festival-goers two things: great independent films they may otherwise not have a chance to see, and access to the people who are part of the creative filmmaking process," said Eldean, "We encourage mingling with the filmmakers and artists, and we structure our events to make this type of exchange easy and fun for everyone involved."

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FESTIVAL FOUNDERS

Dana DePree • Dori DePree • Hopwood DePree • Kori Eldean • Judy Smith

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And new to the festival this year, she added, is Waterfront's first screenwriting competition. Preliminary judging is underway with over 100 submissions from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. The 2005 Waterfront Screenplay Competition was created as a way to discover and promote new screenwriting talent in the four Lake Michigan "waterfront" states. Scripts have been submitted from graduates of the various university film and writing programs in the area as well as from in and around the Saugatuck area. The winning script will be presented as a staged reading by professional actors during the festival followed by a reception honoring the winning writer.

"The popularity of the festival's screenwriting panels the frequently asked question "how can I break into the business, and get my script onto the desks of agents and producers, without industry connections?" was the catalyst for the competition," says Dina Marie Chapman, competition co-chair. "We decided that the festival had the opportunity to become that connection for our local aspiring writers."

Saugatuck, located midway between Detroit and Chicago is considered one of the top 20 arts and crafts destinations in the U.S. This charming village known as the Art Coast of Michigan is nestled in the beautiful white sand dunes of Lake Michigan and curled around an inland bay. With its beautiful beaches, diverse shopping, eclectic cuisine and nightlife – all within easy access of festival venues - the area's relaxed atmosphere has charmed visitors for nearly a century. For more information, visit the official festival Website at www.waterfrontfilm.org.

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