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Film Festival returns to Malibu High

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The ninth annual Malibu International Film Festival returns to Malibu for a three-day celebration of films from around the world. The event runs Friday through Sunday. A total of 29 various films will be screened, including documentaries, feature films and short films.

In a press release, festival creative director Frank Giarmona said, "Malibu Film Festival is a destination festival that offers something for everyone. This is both a community and a film industry event."

The festival kicks off with two opening night films: "Sliding Liberia" and "The Run." "Sliding Liberia," which is directed by Britton Caillouette, is the story of four young surfers who "risk everything to explore the West African country devastated by decades of war." The screening represents the Los Angeles premiere of the film. "The Run" follows the experiences of a young couple who decide to smuggle cocaine into London. It is a United Kingdom film from director Tania Meneguzzi.

All movie screenings will take place at the Malibu High School Theater. Tickets for films range from \$5 to \$15. Tickets to several of the films are offered with a student discount, so students can watch some programs for \$5. The "All Screening Pass" costs \$100, and the VIP pass costs \$250.

Each year the film festival honors someone involved with the film industry. This year's honoree is actor Michael Madsen, who has appeared in numerous films such as "Thelma and Louise," "Reservoir Dogs" and "Kill Bill." Past honorees have included Pierce Brosnan, James Cameron, Charles Bronson and Nick Nolte.

The Malibu Film Festival began in 1997 and has since been celebrating films from around the globe. Location is key to the festival, according to Katz, who said Malibu is a place where the film industry lives. "Many of the decision-makers of the film industry are residents of Malibu, and the festival is a place where an independent filmmaker can have his work seen by these people," Katz said. The film festival bridges the gap between independent film makers and the film industry. "It's small enough that each filmmaker can get the attention they need and deserve, and it's established enough that we can draw in a good number of high-level people who can change their lives in an instant," Katz said.

The centerpiece film of the festival is "Africa Unite," which is a tribute to world-renowned reggae icon Bob Marley. In commemoration of his 60th birthday, the film focuses on Marley's family trip to Ethiopia in 2005.

While the festival will screen many short films, two of them have been directed by an 11 year-old, Malibu's own Dominic Scott Kay. A conversation about the young director's filmmaking will follow the screening of his two short films, "Grampa's Cabin" and "Saving Angelo."

Tickets for film festival screenings are on sale now. General admission ticket holders should arrive at least 20 minutes prior to show time.

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