



NEW HAMPSHIRE FILM FESTIVAL

PRESS KIT





MISSION

The New Hampshire Film Festival is a non-profit organization that celebrates the art of filmmaking. The festival strives to advance the quality and innovation of independent film internationally while simultaneously influencing educational cultural, and economic impact on the local community.

HISTORY

The New Hampshire Film Festival made its debut in 2001 in Derry, NH, but moved to its permanent home of Portsmouth, NH in 2004. Portsmouth was settled in 1623, and the layout of the downtown district could not be better suited for a film festival with everything: screening venues, party venues, headquarters, galleries, conference centers, shops, waterfront dining, hotels and inns, all within walking distance. The event takes place in the autumn, when the foliage is at its peak.

Through 2011, the four screening venues and headquarters locations have moved around the city, exploring different partnerships and accommodating the growth of the festival, but in 2012 NHFF proudly announced multi-year, long-term partnerships with each venue. The Festival's main stage theater, The Music Hall, is the region's premier performing arts center. This historic theater is beautifully restored, features the most up-to-date technology, and has a seating capacity of 800. One block away, the newly completed Music Hall Loft brings the prestige and technical standards of the main stage to a more intimate setting. At the entrance of the downtown district, The Moffatt-Ladd House is a National Historic Landmark retrofitted with projection equipment - and its warehouse has been sitting on the property of a prominent Georgian mansion built in the 1760's. Situated in the city's growing North End, 3S Artspace is a mid-sized performance space that each year effortlessly transforms into a cinema house for the New Hampshire Film Festival.

Festival Headquarters has found its home in the Discover Portsmouth Center, a non-profit cultural center that combines a multi-level gallery, conference hall, gift shop and community showcase on the corner of downtown's main street. NHFF headquarters offers complimentary meals and refreshments for filmmakers and festival attendees all day long. It is also the staging area for press conferences, photo shoots, and interviews. The festival layout is compact: all venues are conveniently accessible, none further than a five-minute walk along the winding brick sidewalks of Portsmouth.





NEW HAMPSHIRE DAY & NIGHT

Since the creation of the NH Day & Night Program in 2006, NHFF has begun on the Thursday after Columbus Day each year. New Hampshire has a vibrant filmmaking community, and the NH Day & Night program is dedicated to presenting films that are filmed on location in NH, or which have filmmakers, producers, or actors from the Granite State. This one-day mini-festival has historically taken place only at The Music Hall main stage, but in 2012, the program grew to need an additional venue, and expanded into The Music Hall Loft. The program culminates with an awards ceremony on that Thursday evening presenting distinctive ten-pound granite awards, “Grannys,” for: NH Filmmaker of the year, NH Documentary of the Year, and NH Performance of the Year. The most prestigious NH award, NH Film of the Year, is voted on by the NH Jury, made up of 5-6 NH industry professionals. The Van McLeod award is also given during the ceremony. This award is named after the late commissioner of the NH Department of Cultural Resources whose successful effort to save and grow the NH Film and Television Office has made an enormous impact on the film industry in the state. The Van McLeod award honors a NH native who has made a significant career contribution to film television, entertainment and culture. Notable Van McLeod winners have included: Mike O’Malley, Ken Burns, and Ernest Thompson.



OPENING NIGHT

The international portion of the film festival opens on Friday morning with screenings at three venues and continuing until Opening Night Ceremonies that evening. Opening Night ceremonies take place at The Music Hall main stage and is an event featuring anything from comedy routines, to musical acts, to video productions, to live action acrobatics, to special awards presentations. Notable opening night ceremonies presentations have included stand-up acts from acclaimed comedians Juston McKinney, John Michael Higgins and Tommy Chong, a video presentation from Adam Sandler, and a live performance of "Granite State of Mind" by the Super Secret Project. The executive director makes a statement, along with messages from headlining sponsors. The ceremonies conclude with the introduction of the opening night film.





INDUSTRY PANELS

The Friday of the festival also kicks off the NHFF industry panels program. Panels occur in the mornings and afternoons Friday through Sunday. They are held in one hour blocks throughout the weekend in the conference center at festival headquarters, each panel features industry professionals and is mediated by a local relevant experience representative. Panels are free and open to the public. Recordings of the panel are also posted online for those that can't be in attendance. The panels offer insight, knowledge and inside information into the fundamentals and advanced aspects of filmmaking. Some topics covered in previous years include: creating a compelling story, funding sources, transitioning into production, equipment essentials, editing programs, novel to screenplay adaptations and both traditional and non-traditional distribution avenues. Since the development of the panel program in 2008, the festival has brought panelists from Starz/Anchor Bay Entertainment, Film Threat, Berkeley School of Music, Emerging Pictures, Magnolia Pictures, A24 Films, IFC, Snag Films, Oscilloscope Laboratories and Shorts International.





YOUNG FILMMAKERS WORKSHOP

Launching on the Friday evening of the festival is the Young Filmmakers Workshop (YFW), a comprehensive, multi-day journey through filmmaking for 14-18 year olds. The workshop begins Friday evening at the opening night ceremony (until 8:30 P.M.), Saturday (9 A.M. to 8:30 P.M.), Sunday (9 A.M. to 7:30 P.M.). The workshop is part film school, part film race. Participants are put in teams to write, produce, act in, direct and edit an original short film that is completed and screened at The Music Hall mainstage during closing night ceremonies. The students learn as they go, utilizing state of the art equipment, sitting in intimate educational sessions with local filmmakers and attending industry professionals. YFW alumni have gone on to become writers, directors and producers of successful independent films and major motion pictures. The workshop is directed by communications media specialist and local filmmaker John Herman. The cost for participation in this workshop is \$150.



SCREENPLAY COMPETITION

The Screenplay Competition begins its special events at the festival on Friday as well. Leading up to the festival, submitted screenplays are narrowed down to four finalists and the grand prize industry judge selects the winner. The grand prize industry judge portion of the festival was added in 2009. The winning scribe of the competition receives two VIP level passes to the festival and provided accommodations, as well as a prize package of a two-week writer's residency on Star Island off New Hampshire's Atlantic coast. Notable grand prize industry judges have included Ernest Thompson and Joyce Maynard.

AWARDS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

On the Saturday of the festival, the fourth screening venue opens and films and panels continue morning until night through Sunday. Throughout the weekend film representatives and well-known independent film enthusiasts and supporters connect with audiences during Q&A sessions and at celebrations and networking events.

Notable film representatives and attendees have been Steve Bognar, Julia Reichert, Anne Cusack, Jordan Vogt-Roberts, Adrien Grenier, Patrick Creadon, TJ Miller, Austin Chick, Morena Baccarin, Tommy Chong, Dale Launer, Caitlin Fitzgerald and Mike O'Malley.

Sunday evening concludes the festival with Closing Night Ceremonies. The ceremony entails a screening of the YFW films, and Granny Award presentations for: Best Screenplay, Best Feature, Best Documentary, Best Short Drama, Best Short Comedy, Best Short Documentary and Best Animation. The festival's most prestigious award, the Grand Jury Award, is voted on by the Grand Jury comprised of regional and national industry professionals.

An NHFF-produced collage film from the festival weekend closes the ceremony, and the Closing Night Spotlight Film closes the festival weekend.



FESTIVAL PARTIES

There are several NHFF parties held throughout the weekend. These events take place at Portsmouth's finest clubs, bars, and restaurants highlighting the beauty of the city, and promoting filmmaker to audience connections in a relaxed yet lively environment.



NATIONAL AND LOCAL RECOGNITION

NHFF has already brought about national recognition by being named one of the “Top 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee” by MovieMaker magazine, and receiving support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The festival has grown exponentially since its inception and this growth has neither leveled nor slowed down which allows festival staff, sponsors and attendees to expect great things in the years to come. A crowd of 10,000 people is expected for the 2017 event.



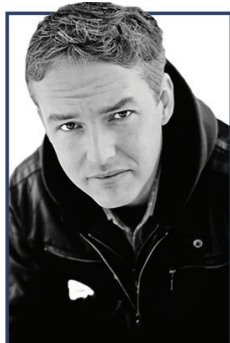


EXECUTIVE PROFILES:



NICOLE GREGG - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nicole Gregg began her career in the industry in the casting department at The Shooting Gallery independent film company. Since moving out of the city and to Portsmouth she has held leadership roles at the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, and various non-profit board positions. Gregg directs and oversees all facets of the festival, including strategic planning, operations, marketing and finance, holding final accountability for all logistics.



DAN HANNON - PANEL DIRECTOR

Dan Hannon is a New Hampshire based screenwriter and co-founder of the New Hampshire Film Festival. He has developed works for Paramount Pictures and Warner Independent Pictures, as well as highly successful production houses including Happy Madison Productions and Di Bonaventura Pictures. He currently directs and oversees all facets of the panel program including establishing topics, solidifying participants, technical production, and panelist travel and accommodation.



JOHN HERMAN - YOUNG FILMMAKERS WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

John Herman is an artist, writer, and teacher. He is a TEDx host and TEDx speaker on the subject of innovating the arts through Social Media, and currently produces the 48 Hour Film Project NH in addition to his role at NHFF. He oversees all portions of the Young Filmmakers Workshop, including managing registrants, coordinating all seminars and lectures, facilitating all equipment rental and use.

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