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Over 100 films to be featured in Guam Int'l Film Festival

MONDAY, 05 SEPTEMBER 2011 01:07 BY GERALDINE CASTILLO | VARIETY NEWS STAFF



IN JUST less than four weeks, the island's first-ever local film festival is about to take place.

The Guam International Film Festival (GIFF), organized by local filmmakers and brothers Don and Kel Muña, announced that the highly-anticipated event is set to begin Friday, Sept. 30 through Sunday, Oct. 2 at the Micronesia Mall Stadium Theaters.

The three-day cinematic event will showcase films from over 100 submissions from 18 different countries from around the world, including 20 Guam-related films.

GIFF will feature special events including screenings of international independent films, filmmaking workshops, gala events and awards ceremonies.

According to the GIFF website, the festival will be presenting feature length movies and short films in the following categories: Narrative, Documentary, Animation, Made in the Marianas, Student Under 18, Music Videos, and Mobile Short.

To kick off the event, opening night on Sept. 30 will feature the student-made film, "i Heart GU." The 113-minute narrative feature film was created by students of the John F. Kennedy Class of 2011. In attendance will be "i Heart GU" directors and writers Niel Romero and Justin Baldovino for introductions and a Q&A following the film.

The finale of the 2011 Guam International Film Festival will be the 2011 GIFF Award Ceremonies on Oct. 2. A grand jury comprised of film industry professionals will be judging the films in competition.

According to GIFF, leading the panel as head juror will be Guam's established artist and educator Baltazar Aguon. Also on the jury is Gabrielle Kelly, Associate Arts Professor at New York University, Tisch Asia School of the Arts. Kelly is also on the board of directors for the British Academy for Film and Television. Also included are Professor Tom Brislin, PhD, a Fulbright scholar and founder of the Academy for Creative Media, University of Hawaii at Manoa; and Daniel Ferranti, who has studied film at New York University and theater at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is a consultant for Warner Bros. Digital Distribution.

Awards will be presented in the following categories: Best Feature Narrative, Best Short Narrative, Best Feature Documentary, Best Short Documentary, The Pacific Islanders in Communications "Audience Choice Award," The IT&E "Life In Motion Award for Best Made In The Marianas," Best Animation Award, Achievement In Acting Award, and Best of Festival Award.



A Marshall Islands-made film, Lañinbwil's Gift, has been chosen as a finalist for the Guam International Festival. Photo shows Iohaan Anjok in the lead role as Lañinbwil, a homeless boy abandoned by his family who unwittingly gets embroiled in a war of mystical power between a demon and a shamanic older Marshallese woman. Photo courtesy of Jack Niedenthal

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"GIFF is committed to preserving our tradition in storytelling by bringing you the best in local and international films promoting creativity, cultural diversity and social responsibility," said GIFF Executive Director Don Muña in a press release.

"I couldn't be happier about the caliber of films that are in the festival, given that this is just our first year," added GIFF Program Director Kel Muña. "The films range from world premieres to U.S. premieres, meaning that Guam will be the first in the United States to showcase large studio films produced in Pacific Asia."

Finalist

Meanwhile, a film made in the Marshall Islands has been nominated as one of four finalists in the Guam International Film Festival.

The festival last week named "Lañinbwil's Gift" as a finalist for "Best Feature Narrative."

"Lañinbwil's Gift" features the story of Lañinbwil, a homeless boy abandoned by his family who unwittingly gets embroiled in a war of mystical power between a demon and a shamanistic Marshallese woman.

The 99-minute film was created by Majuro residents Jack Niedenthal and Suzanne Chutaro.



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