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NEWS

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**The 50th CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
INTRODUCES THE ROGER EBERT AWARD**

**Inaugural Annual Award Will Celebrate the Fresh and Uncompromising Talent of
the Next Generation of Filmmakers from Around the World**

CHICAGO, IL (October 1, 2014)—In the spirit of film critic Roger Ebert’s sense of discovery, the **50th Chicago International Film Festival** introduces the **Roger Ebert Award**. The award will be presented annually to emerging filmmakers with a fresh and uncompromising vision. The 13 films eligible for the award are also competing in the Festival’s **New Directors Competition**. The Roger Ebert Award will be presented during the Festival’s annual Awards Night on Friday, October 17 at The Sofitel Chicago Water Tower, 20 E. Chestnut Street.

Ebert fearlessly championed movies by the new and adventurous. He supported directors with challenging visions that, without his encouraging words, may never have seen the projection light of a movie theater. Ebert helped launch filmmakers of all kinds, embracing cinema’s ability to allow audiences to enter—and empathize with—the lives of all types of people. It was a vision and a mission that he shared with the Chicago International Film Festival. It was at the Festival, seven months after being appointed the “Chicago Sun Times” film critic, where he saw the movie, “I Call First,” from a young director named Martin Scorsese. Since then he continued to play an integral role at the Festival, serving as jury and presenter.

“Through the Chicago International Film Festival, Roger fell in love with the idea of a space where audiences and filmmakers were treated as equals, where discoveries could be made,” said Founder and Artistic Director of the Chicago International Film Festival **Michael Kutza**. “This award is one more way to keep his memory, and his contributions, alive.”

“Roger was so perceptive about new ways to see the world, and when he spotted that talent in filmmakers he would go out of his way to introduce the world to those exciting, fresh visions,” said **Chaz Ebert**, wife of the legendary film critic and publisher of RogerEbert.com. “I know he would be happy to know that the Festival is honoring him in this manner.”

The 50th Chicago International Film Festival runs October 9-23, 2014.

NEW DIRECTORS COMPETITION AND ROGER EBERT AWARD

The 50th Chicago International Film Festival Introduces “Roger Ebert Award”

“Ablations” France/Belgium (Director: Arnold de Parscau) — After waking up to discover one of his kidneys has been removed, a pharmaceutical salesman sets out on a strange and unsettling journey to piece together what happened. Like a mix of David Lynch and Park Chan-Wook, this surrealist thriller shows how one man’s obsessive quest leads to his own undoing. Virginie Ledoyen co-stars, along with Philippe Nahon (Gaspar Noe’s “I Stand Alone”) as a menacing senior citizen. *North American Premiere*

“The Boss, Anatomy of A Crime” Argentina/Venezuela (Director: Sebastián Schindel) — A hard-working man is allowed to run his own butcher shop, but his sleazy boss subjects him to a series of escalating exploitations and abuses that build to a violent climax. Assured new director Sebastián Schindel expertly captures beautifully understated performances with a naturalistic, unobtrusive camera, while detailed close-ups of meat being ground up underscore this incisive story about the unfair treatment of the working-class. *North American Premiere*

“El Cordero” Chile (Director: Juan Francisco Olea) — When Domingo, a mild-mannered, highly devout Catholic, accidentally kills his secretary, he suffers... from a lack of remorse. Tormented by not feeling a sense of guilt, he sets out, ironically, on a spree of unlawful and increasingly bloody acts in order to recover his moral compass. “El Cordero”—which literally means “the lamb”—is a pitch-black comic character study and skillful inquiry into the double standards of Catholic guilt and repentance. *North American Premiere*

“The Evolution Of Bert” USA (Director: Jeffrey Wray) — Bert, an African-American first-generation college student, struggles to define himself. Diving headfirst into a world of campus poetry readings, jazzy beats, and unavailable women, Bert tries to avoid the stereotyped social roles that so often pigeonhole black men. Employing a free essayistic style, bold new director Jeffrey Wray offers a witty and poignant meditation on the cultural factors that shape African-American identity. *World Premiere*

“A Few Cubic Meters of Love” Iran, Afghanistan (Director: Jamshid Mahmoudi) — In a shantytown encampment comprised of sheet metal and abandoned tires, Sabar, an Iranian worker, and Marona, the daughter of an illegal Afghan laborer, meet for chaste romantic encounters in a shipping container. But faced with the threat of Marona’s deportation and the prejudice of their communities, can their dreams of marriage be realized? This year’s breakout film from Iran’s Fajr Film Festival is a bittersweet tale of pure love and racial tolerance. *North American Premiere*

“A Girl at My Door” South Korea (Director: July Jung) — Doona Bae (“Cloud Atlas”) and newcomer Kim Sae-ron deliver electrifying performances in this penetrating drama about a complicated relationship between two young women. Taking up post at a small seaside town, policewoman Lee Young-nam finds herself coming to the rescue of Do-hee, a local girl damaged by abuse at the hands of family and peers. As the two form a close, controversial relationship, Young-nam confronts a broader tapestry of social discrimination and destruction. *U.S. Premiere*

“Next to Her” Israel (Director: Asaf Korman) — Chelli is the sole caretaker for her mentally disabled, self-destructive sister Gabby. When Chelli begins a romantic relationship with the kindly Zohar, a fascinating triangle develops between the threesome, as Chelli loses her controlling grip on her vulnerable sibling. With stellar performances and startling plot twists, “Next to Her” is a compelling, complex and affecting drama about co-dependency and learning to let go. *U.S. Premiere*

The 50th Chicago International Film Festival Introduces “Roger Ebert Award”

“Paris of the North” Iceland/Denmark/France (Director: Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson) — Relocated from Reykjavik to a dilapidated rural fishing village, former alcoholic Hugi spends his time teaching elementary school and attending AA meetings. His path to recovery, however, is derailed by the arrival of his philandering, beer-guzzling dad. A droll and gentle character study, “Paris of the North” is a captivating account of fathers and sons mending their stunted relationships while finding the courage to push forward with their own lives. *U.S. Premiere*

“Pink Noise” Colombia (Director: Roberto Flores Prieto) — In the dilapidated small town of Barranquilla, Colombia, amid rolling electrical blackouts and torrential downpours, Luis, an elderly repairman, and Carmen, an aging hotel-worker, briefly come together and rekindle long dormant passions. Bolstered by its exquisitely framed compositions and two amiable characters, *Pink Noise* is a beautiful and bittersweet portrait of aging, loneliness, and love, as gently paced as its characters’ tender lives. *North American Premiere*

“Still” UK (Director: Simon Blake) — A powerhouse performance from Irish actor Aiden Gillen (“Game of Thrones”) fuels this dramatic thriller about a photographer, reeling from the death of his teenage son. One day, a chance encounter with a street gang sends him down a dangerous path. In his breakout debut film, director Simon Blake paints a gritty, menacing portrait of North London’s cruel urban environs, where the dividing lines between evil and innocence are blurred. *North American Premiere*

“Supernova” The Netherlands/Germany/Belgium (Director: Tamar van den Dop) — Frustrated with her isolated, rural existence, 15-year-old Meis spends her days thinking about exploding stars and reveling in erotic fantasies, while she and her family live in fear (and hope) that a car will come careening through their front window, and reinvigorate their torpid lives. With everyday events portrayed on a cosmic scale, this sexy coming-of-age film sumptuously chronicles one girl’s sexual awakening within the context of the larger universe. *North American Premiere*

“La Tirisia” Mexico (Director: Jorge Pérez Solano) — Set amid the surrealist cacti-filled landscapes of Oaxaca, Mexico, this sensual, subtle drama follows the interwoven stories of two women, impregnated by the same uncaring man and unsure of whether they want to keep their babies. Driven by its beautiful cinematography and evocative imagery, “La Tirisia” is both a melancholic portrait of rural Mexico and a poignant tale of feminine pain and triumph. *U.S. Premiere*

“Titli” India (Director: Kanu Behl) — In the cutthroat environs of Delhi, a young man named Titli struggles to escape from his brutal and abusive family. But his plans are complicated when his criminal brothers instigate an arranged marriage, bringing the unsuspecting bride Neelu into their domestic rat’s nest. Acclaimed at its Cannes 2014 premiere, this outstanding debut film is a gritty and absorbing drama ripped straight from the hardscrabble mean streets of contemporary India. *North American Premiere*

“Underdog” Sweden/Norway (Director: Ronnie Sandahl) — A financially strapped, disaffected young Swede lands in Norway in search of employment. When she begins work as a housekeeper at middle-class Steffan’s home, neither anticipates the impact she will have on their lives and his family. Ronnie Sandahl’s emotionally satisfying debut features an urban modern-day romance while tackling issues of class, privilege and the changing balance of power between Sweden and Norway. *North American Premiere*

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ABOUT CINEMA/CHICAGO

Cinema/Chicago is a not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to encouraging better understanding between cultures and to making a positive contribution to the art form of the moving image. The Chicago International Film Festival is one of the year-round programs presented by Cinema/Chicago, which also include the Chicago International Film Festival Television Awards, CineYouth Festival, INTERCOM Competition, International Screenings Program, and Education Outreach Program. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

The Festival and its parent organization, Cinema/Chicago, were founded in 1964 by filmmaker and graphic artist Michael Kutza to showcase great international film, which was conspicuously absent from the city's theaters, and to bring celebrated filmmakers from around the globe to Chicago. Over the past half century, as we have grown to become a world-renowned event and evolved to reflect the changing times, the Festival has remained dedicated to its founding vision: to discover new and rising talents in filmmaking and to bring the best in international cinema and the artists behind the work to Chicago audiences. This year's 50th anniversary Festival will feature a selection of “50th anniversary screenings,” featuring the work of returning filmmakers presenting past Festival films and/or personal favorites and important repertory films as well as new films by emerging and celebrated filmmakers alike.