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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE 51ST CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES
INTERNATIONAL FEATURE COMPETITION**

Sixteen Films from Around the Globe Compete for the Prestigious Gold Hugo

(CHICAGO, Sept 21, 2015) - The 51st Chicago International Film Festival (Oct. 15-29, 2015) announces the films selected for its **International Feature Competition**. Films in the competition are receiving their World, U.S., or Chicago Premiere at the Festival. Representing a wide variety of styles and genres, the films in the International Features Competition vie for the Festival's top honor, the **Gold Hugo**. This year's competition showcases an exciting mix of films from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Chile, Croatia, France, Israel, Iran, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, UK, and Uruguay.

The films in competition include works from veteran directors (Jia Zhang-ke, Corneliu Porumboiu, Arnaud Desplechin) to those from the next generation of new talents (Santiago Mitre, Gabriel Mascaro, Majid Barzegar). Highlights include the **world premiere** of Barzegar's **A Very Ordinary Citizen** (co-written by Jafar Panahi); the critically acclaimed relationship drama **45 Years**, starring Tom Courtenay and Charlotte Rampling; **Chronic**, the latest film by Mexican filmmaker Michel Franco who previously won the Festival's 2012 Silver Hugo Special Jury Prize for *After Lucia*; and Naomi Kawase's delightfully poetic film about life and sweet pastries, **Sweet Bean**.

"It has been a great year for movies, so far. The sixteen films competing for the Gold Hugo are strong and diverse," said **Founder & Artistic Director Michael Kutza**. "This year's competition includes some of the most anticipated films of the season as well as new discoveries from around the world and we can't wait to share them with Chicago."

"Year after year the submissions we receive demonstrate the great diversity and excellence of cinema today, making the process of selection for our international competition both challenging and exciting. I am inspired by the creativity and power of these filmmakers," added **Programming Director Mimi Plauché**. "I have no doubt that some of these films will be contenders in the upcoming awards season."

The **International Features Competition** is supported by the John and Jacolyn Bucksbaum Family Foundation.

INTERNATIONAL FEATURES COMPETITION

All films listed will receive their Chicago premiere at the Festival unless otherwise indicated.
Festival screenings will be held at the AMC River East 21 Theater (322 E. Illinois St.).
Program subject to change.

45 Years

Country: UK

Director: Andrew Haigh

Synopsis: On the eve of their 45th anniversary, a couple's marital equilibrium is threatened when the husband's past resurfaces in an unexpected way. Long-frozen secrets begin to thaw in this slow-burning domestic drama. Stars Tom Courtenay and Charlotte Rampling both won top honors at the Berlin Film Festival for their gripping performances.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 3:30pm
- Screening 2: Tuesday, October 20, 6:15pm

Body (Cialo)

USA PREMIERE

Country: Poland

Director: Malgorzata Szumowska

Synopsis: Balancing bleakness and mirth in equal measure, **Body** chronicles three haunted souls in Warsaw: an icy coroner who suspects his dead wife may be trying to contact him; his anorexic, suicidal daughter; and her hospital therapist, who moonlights as a medium. Playing unexplained phenomena for dry laughs, like a hanged man who miraculously regains consciousness, the film is a morbidly funny guide to the Great Beyond.

- Screening 1: Friday, October 16, 5:00pm
- Screening 2: Tuesday, October 20 12:15pm
- Screening 3: Wednesday, October 21, 3:15pm

A Childhood (Une Enfance)

USA PREMIERE

Country: France

Director: Philippe Claudel

Synopsis: In this tender, keenly observed look at growing up in poverty in small town France, 13-year-old Jimmy dreams of a bourgeois life with family vacations and games of tennis.

Trapped in an unstable household with a drug-addicted mother and her criminal boyfriend, Jimmy is forced to grow up too quickly. Over the course of a sweltering summer, Jimmy must find moments of hope in a world full of strife.

- Screening 1: Wednesday, October 21, 6:00pm
- Screening 2: Thursday, October 22, 8:15pm
- Screening 3: Monday, October 26, 3:30pm

Chronic

USA PREMIERE

Country: Mexico, France

Director: Michel Franco

A hospice nurse (Tim Roth) has a deeper connection to his patients than their own family members, but his above-and-beyond approach to emotional baggage shields his true problems from the outside world. Carrying traces of Amour, with stripped-down camerawork and naturalist performances, Michel Franco's restrained medical drama peers into the darkness and wonders about the last person to hold our hands as we step through.

- Screening 1: Wednesday, October 21, 8:15pm
- Screening 2: Thursday, October 22, 8:30pm

- Screening 3: Monday, October 26, 12:30pm

The Club (El Club)

USA PREMIERE

Country: Chile

Director: Pablo Larraín

Synopsis: Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Berlin Film Festival, this unsettling drama from director Pablo Larraín (No) centers on a group of disgraced Catholic priests sequestered in a beach house. The tranquility of their anonymous daily routine is disturbed when a young man materializes with charges of abuse. The priests' reaction to this unwanted interloper carries echoes of their institution's shocking past.

- Screening 1: Monday, October 19, 8:15pm
- Screening 2: Tuesday, October 20, 8:30pm

Full Contact

USA PREMIERE

Country: Netherlands, Croatia

Director: David Verbeek

Synopsis: Working from an Air Force base in the Nevada desert, halfway across the world from his targets, an emotionally reserved drone operator (Grégoire Colin) grapples with the psychological ramifications of a missile attack gone awry. But then events take an unexpected and surreal turn. This bold, arresting thriller from visionary Dutch filmmaker David Verbeek is a piercing portrait of dehumanization in the age of modern warfare.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 4:45pm
- Screening 2: Sunday, October 18, 12:00pm
- Screening 3: Tuesday, October 20, 2:30pm

Looking For Grace

USA PREMIERE

Country: Australia

Director: Sue Brooks

Synopsis: Grace, a rebellious teenager from a rich family, leaves home to attend a concert several days away. Everyone—from Grace's mother (Radha Mitchell) to the detective they hire to help track her—has secrets, fissures in seemingly perfect lifestyles. With a perspective-shifting script and gorgeous shots of rural Australia, the film is a surprising mystery about the wealthy and the damned.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 2:30pm
- Screening 2: Monday, October 19, 8:15pm
- Screening 3: Tuesday, October 20, 12:00pm

Mountains May Depart

Country: China

Director: Jia Zhangke

Synopsis: In this penetrating dissection of modern China from award-winning filmmaker Jia Zhangke (A Touch of Sin), a young woman chooses to marry a wealthy capitalist over a coal miner and names her firstborn son "Dollar." Across two continents, three chapters, and 25 years reaching into the near future, we watch one scattered family chase a vision of success that remains heartbreakingly out of reach.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17 8:00pm
- Screening 2: Tuesday, October 20, 8:00pm

My Golden Days (Trois souvenirs de ma jeunesse)

Country: France

Director: Amaud Desplechin

Synopsis: Returning from Tajikistan, Paul faces an interrogation that leads him to retrace three seminal moments from his past: his childhood, an eventful trip to the Soviet Union, and—most significantly—his love affair with the nymph-like Esther. This poetic Cannes award winner from French auteur Arnaud Desplechin unfolds as an intoxicating ode to romance.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 5:00pm
- Screening 2: Monday, October 19, 5:30pm

Neon Bull (Boi Neon)

USA PREMIERE

Country: Brazil, Uruguay, Netherlands

Director: Gabriel Mascaro

Synopsis: In the rodeos of northeast Brazil, two cowboys try to corral a bull by the tail in a whirlwind of gallops and dust. But behind the scenes, ranch hand Iremar lives a quiet, lonely life, accompanying the bulls from town to town and dreaming of becoming a clothing designer. With a unique blend of lived-in social realism, impressionist imagery, and sweltering eroticism, Neon Bull—filmed almost entirely in static long takes—is a wildly unconventional look at Latin American machismo.

- Screening 1: Monday, October 19, 2:30pm
- Screening 2: Saturday, October 24, 5:45pm
- Screening 3: Sunday, October 25, 1:30pm

Paulina (La Patota)

USA PREMIERE

Country: Argentina, Brazil, France

Director: Santiago Mitre

Synopsis: Paulina, a young, idealistic lawyer, leaves her cushy job in the city to teach at a rural high school. Her deep-seated beliefs are shaken when some students commit a horrific crime and she is forced to take a stance. Anchored by a complex, nuanced performance from Dolores Fonzi, this blistering drama reconsiders the line between wealth and poverty, chaos and order, victim and survivor. Winner of the best film award in Critics' Week at Cannes.

- Screening 1: Thursday, October 22, 5:30pm
- Screening 2: Saturday, October 24, 2:00pm
- Screening 3: Tuesday, October 27, 2:00pm

Schneider vs. Bax

USA PREMIERE

Country: The Netherlands

Director: Alex Van Warmerdam

Synopsis: In this hilariously deadpan cat-and-mouse game, hitman Schneider tries to finish an assignment in time to celebrate his birthday with his family. But the target, drug-addicted writer Bax (writer-director Alex Van Warmerdam), is packing too. An endless parade of unexpected visitors at Bax's swamp cabin turns this showdown into an entertaining, intricate puzzle- and, for Schneider, one heck of a headache.

- Screening 1: Wednesday, October 21, 8:30pm
- Screening 2: Friday, October 23, 5:30pm
- Screening 3: Wednesday, October 28, 3:00pm

Sweet Bean (An)

USA PREMIERE

Country: Japan

Director: Naomi Kawase

Synopsis: Red bean paste is the filling in this poignant tale of life, compassion, and sweet endings. An uninspired red bean pancake chef is re-energized when a plucky septuagenarian's irresistible homemade recipe makes his snacks a local hit. Both characters use their creations, photographed in mouth-watering close-up, to rebuild from traumatic pasts. The latest from poetic Japanese auteur Naomi Kawase is a delectable philosophical dish.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 3:45pm
- Screening 2: Sunday, October 18, 4:45pm

Tikkun

Country: Israel

Director: Avishai Sivan

Synopsis: A young Israeli ultra-Orthodox man experiences a crisis of faith in this formally daring black-and-white drama that employs bravura, often shocking imagery. Following a near-death experience, the formerly devout Yeshiva student begins wandering Jerusalem's empty streets at night without purpose, while his father—a Kosher butcher—experiences terrifying nightmares as retribution for saving his son.

- Screening 1: Sunday, October 18, 5:15pm
- Screening 2: Monday, October 19, 8:00pm

The Treasure (Comoara)

Country: Romania

Director: Comeliu Porumboiu

Synopsis: Armed with a metal detector and boundless determination, two neighbors go on the hunt for rumored buried bounty. Relentless in their search, they refuse to let general ineptitude, petty arguments or bureaucratic red tape stand in their way. Acclaimed Romanian director Corneliu Porumboiu's sharp, deadpan comedy sends up the value of wealth and stature in the new Europe.

- Screening 1: Friday, October 16, 6:15pm
- Screening 2: Monday, October 19, 6:00pm

A Very Ordinary Citizen (Yek Shahrvand-e Kamelan Maamouli)

WORLD PREMIERE

Country: Iran

Director: Majid Barzegar

Synopsis: Mr. Safari, an 80-year-old pensioner, lives alone and without direction. When his son, living abroad, tries to arrange for his elderly father to visit him, Mr. Safari becomes dangerously obsessed with a local female travel agent who is hired to help. Co-written by acclaimed filmmaker Jafar Panahi (Crimson Gold, Taxi), this provocative story delivers a quietly powerful statement about loneliness and those who get left behind in contemporary Tehran.

- Screening 1: Saturday, October 17, 8:30pm
- Screening 2: Sunday, October 18, 11:45am
- Screening 3: Thursday, October 22, 4:00pm

FESTIVAL PARTNERS

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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 Program. Celebrating its 51st anniversary this year, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

Festival passes are now available. The full festival schedule is available at ChicagoFilmFestival.com. Individual tickets go on sale on Fri, Sept. 25, 2015.

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