

## **Whistler Film Festival Announces Lineup; Includes Record Number of Premieres** *Highlight includes Tribute to Borsos Competition President Ivan Reitman*

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**Whistler, BC (November 4, 2009)** – The Whistler Film Festival (WFF) is proud to announce that it will screen 80 films at the ninth annual film festival December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, with more than 80 percent being screened for the first time in British Columbia. The line-up includes 36 feature and mid-length films and 44 shorts, more than 60 percent of which are Canadian. With a record 33 premieres, including 3 world premieres, 1 North American, 5 Canadian premieres, 4 English Canadian, 11 Western Canadian and 9 BC premieres, the festival emerges once again as a force on the Festival circuit.

Whistler Film Festival screenings are organized in eight categories: Borsos Competition for Best New Canadian Feature; World Cinema; Documentary; Late Nite; Mountain Culture; Shorts; Whistler Stories; and Family.

One of Canada's leading film events, the Whistler Film Festival's innovative programming, in-demand industry Forum and first-class galas draw industry leaders from around the globe. The festival continues to celebrate cinematic achievements awarding more than \$54,000 in cash prizes and commissions - the \$15,000 Borsos Award for Best New Canadian Feature presented by the Directors Guild of Canada – BC District Council and supported by Telefilm Canada; the MMPIA Short Film Award presented by MMPIA and BC Film (\$15,000 cash prize plus up to \$100,000 in services); the \$2,500 Best Documentary Award; the \$1,000 Best Short Film Award; the \$500 Best Mountain Culture Film Award presented by Whistler Blackcomb; and \$500 Best Actor and Actress Awards, Borsos Competition presented by the Union of BC Performers.

“We are thrilled to be introducing so many great new films to our audience,” says Festival Artistic Director Stacey Donen. “The caliber and diversity of this year’s program is unprecedented There’s a strong crop of documentaries, new voices in cinema and some truly amazing films in a variety of genres that it will inspire filmmakers and audiences alike.”

The **three** films making their **world premieres** at the festival are: Brian Nash's **OUT OF THE WOODS** (Canada) a lyrical montage, feature film that explores the inherent connection that exists between our elders and our old growth trees, while illuminating the tenuous relationship between us and the forests; René Brar's **TAYLOR'S WAY** (Canada) a feature length thriller inspired by countless true stories of women who disappear into the Canadian wilderness; and Andrew Nisker's **CHEMICAL: REDEFINING CLEAN FOR A NEW GENERATION** (Canada) an eye-opening documentary that looks at the over-use of chemicals in our daily lives and how it affects our lifestyle and environment.

The **five** films making their **Canadian premieres** at the festival include: veteran director, Ken Loach's **LOOKING FOR ERIC** (England) that tells the story of a lost postman that finds his way by turning to his hero and footballing genius, Eric Cantona; Bill Kerig's highly anticipated documentary **EDGE OF NEVER** (Canada), the real life coming of age of 15-year-old Whistler resident Kye Petersen who decides to ski the route that killed his father Trevor Petersen in Chamonix, France nine years earlier; Asghar Farhadi's **ABOUT ELLY** (Iran) the Iranian Academy Award Nominee for Best Foreign Language Film that explores the malaise of middle-class Iranian society; Hilla Medalia's **AFTER THE STORM** (USA) follows a group of New York Broadway actors who were inspired to help the youth of New Orleans post Katrina; and Tony Coleman's **MIGHTY UKE** (Canada) a fascinating documentary about the ukulele and how it has profoundly

affected music around the world from the Redwoods of California through the gritty streets of Paris, from swinging London through Tokyo's high-rise canyons to Langley, BC.

Documentary fans can look forward to a diverse range of thought-provoking non-fiction features including the English Canadian Premiere of Eye Steel Films' **LAST TRAIN HOME** directed by Lixin Fan, that follows the difficult journey of Chinese migrant workers to return to their ancestral home and unite their family; Denis Delestrac's **PAX AMERICANA AND THE WEAPONIZATION OF SPACE** (Executive Produced by Mark Achbar, Betsy Carson and Lucie Tremblay) which examines the origins and reality of the militarization of space; and the Western Canadian Premiere of Brigitte Berman's **HUGH HEFNER: PLAYBOY, ACTIVIST AND REBEL**, an intimate look at the outspoken, flamboyant, founder of the Playboy empire.

The **nine films** making their **British Columbia premieres** include: Sook Yin Lee's **YEAR OF THE CARNIVORE** (Canada), which is part of the Borsos Competition, about a girl with an unrequited crush on a boy who thinks she's bad in bed, so she goes out to get more "experience"; **MOUNT ST. ELIAS** (Austria/USA) dir Gerald Salmina; **SMASH CUT** (Canada) dir: Lee Gordon Demarbre; **HIGH LIFE** (Canada) dir: Gary Yates; **PASSENGER SIDE** (Canada) dir: Matthew Bissonnette; **BEST WORST MOVIE** (USA) dir: Michael Paul Stephenson; **WHERE ARE YOU GO: CAIRO TO CAPE TOWN BY BICYCLE** (Canada/USA) dir: Benny Zenga, Brian Vernor; **A TOWN CALLED CALLED PANIC** (Canada) dir: Stéphane Aubier & Vincent Patar; and **GNOMES AND TROLLS: THE SECRET CHAMBER** (Sweden/USA) dir: Robert Rhodin.

The **16 films** making **additional premieres** include:

**North American Premiere:**

**44 INCH CHEST** (England) dir: Malcolm Venville

**Western Canadian Premieres:**

**BIG FAN** (USA) dir: Robert D. Siegel

**DEFENDOR** (Canada) dir: Peter Stebbings

**A GUN TO THE HEAD** (Canada) dir: Blaine Thurier

**HUGH HEFNER: PLAYBOY, ACTIVIST AND REBEL** (Canada) dir: Brigitte Berman

**NEIL YOUNG TRUNK SHOW** (USA) dir: Jonathan Demme

**LAST RIDE** (Australia) dir: Glendyn Ivin

**MACHOTAILEDROP** (USA/Canada) dir: Corey Adams, Alex Craig

**A SINGLE MAN** (USA) dir: Tom Ford

**SUCK** (Canada) dir: Rob Stefaniuk

**THE TROTSKY** (Canada) dir: Jacob Tierney

**THE WILD HUNT** (Canada) dir: Alexandre Franchi

**English Canadian Premieres:**

**LAST TRAIN HOME** (Canada/China) dir: Lixin Fan

**THE LIVING RATE** (Les Signes Vitaux) (Canada) dir: Sophie Deraspe

**PAX AMERICANA and the Weaponization of Space** (Canada/France) dir: Denis Delestrac

**SKID LOVE** (Canada) dir: Ryan Arnold

This year's family program includes the B.C. premiere of **GNOMES AND TROLLS: THE SECRET CHAMBER** (Sweden/USA), dir: Robert Rhodin, an action-adventure animated fairy tale about a teenage gnome who wants nothing more than to invent gizmos and gadgets in his tree-house laboratory; and **SHINE OF RAINBOWS** (Canada) dir: Vic Sarin, an enchanting story about an extraordinary woman helps an orphan boy find self-acceptance and love through her unique gifts of colour and magic.

Enjoy the final edition of **Whistler Stories**, including 22 commissioned short films, four will premiere the Opening Gala and four at the Family Program. Whistler Stories is the Whistler Film Festival's legacy

program and commission competition leading up to the 2010 Olympic Games where each year, from 2005 to 2009, up to four BC filmmakers received a \$5,000 commission to create short films based on stories from Whistler and the surrounding area. This year's Whistler Stories premieres include: **GROWING UP WHISTLER** (dir: Peter Harvey), **THE TURNING SEASON IN WHISTLER** (dir: Nicole Fitzgerald), **WHEN HUGH MET JOE** (director: Jim Budge | Writer Cindy Filipenko), and **WHISTLER'S CRAZY CANUCKS** (dir: Liz Thomson).

With **THE TROTSKY** and **EDGE OF NEVER** bookending the Festival as the Opening and Closing Galas, special events at this year's festival include a **Tribute** to Borsos Competition President and legendary Canadian director/producer **Ivan Reitman**, who has shaped the Canadian and international film industry, directing some of the most popular films of our time, the **Celebrity Challenge Dual Slalom Ski Race**, the free **Outdoor Screening** which will include a showcase of ten Olympic-themed Whistler Stories followed by the musical documentary **NEIL YOUNG TRUNK SHOW**, and the highly anticipated **Awards Brunch**.

The ninth annual Whistler Film Festival, presented by American Express, runs from December 3rd to 6th, 2009. The complete program will be announced on November 5; simultaneous to the ticket packages being available exclusively for American Express card members. The Festival's early bird offer for Festival and Industry Passes and See & Stay Packages is available online until November 13. Individual film and special event tickets go on sale online on November 12 (until December 5). The Festival Box Office opens November 19 for walk-in and phone sales and is located directly in front of the Whistler Conference Centre. For information, call 1.877.838.FILM (3456) or visit [www.whistlerfilmfestival.com](http://www.whistlerfilmfestival.com)

The Whistler Film Festival is sponsored by Cadillac, Directors Guild of Canada, Whistler Brewing, Vancouver Sun, Whistler Blackcomb, Dose.ca and Quick Mobile, and is supported by Telefilm Canada, Canadian Heritage, BC Film and the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

The Whistler Film Festival Society (WFFS) is a charitable, not for profit cultural and educational organization committed to promoting, developing and celebrating a strong film industry in Western Canada, and to showcasing the best films from Canada and around the world. WFFS offers two main programs for the international community to discover Canadian filmmakers and do business with the Canadian film industry: the Whistler Film Festival (December 3-6, 2009), and the Forum at the Whistler Film Festival, Western Canada's premier industry event (December 2-5, 2009).

For details, visit [www.whistlerfilmfestival.com](http://www.whistlerfilmfestival.com)

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**WFFS Media Contacts:**

**Media Interview Requests**

Kate Perkins, Festival Publicist  
604.808.6283 / [kathrynperkins@shaw.ca](mailto:kathrynperkins@shaw.ca)

**Media Accreditation Inquiries and Requests**

Jeanette Miller, Publicity Manager  
778.786.1495 / [Jeanette@limelitepr.com](mailto:Jeanette@limelitepr.com)