



VERMONT INTERNATIONAL FILM FOUNDATION

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS: 1985 - 2015

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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **The 2015 Vermont International Film Festival, Celebrating VTIFF's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Major Guests, Opening Night Film Announced**

Burlington, VT: (September 23, 2015): The Vermont International Film Foundation is pleased to announce the 2015 Vermont International Film Festival, October 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 in Downtown Burlington. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VTIFF and to celebrate, VTIFF will be presenting the largest film festival program in its recent history, featuring over 75 films from around the world, special guests, events, receptions, school programs and much more.

This 10-day celebration of cinema and community takes place at the Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center with screenings in both the Black Box Theater and the Film House and events in the Lobby and Atrium on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Main Street Landing. Other locations include The BCA Center on Church Street with Lunchtime Shorts screenings during the weekdays at noon, and VTIFF After Dark screenings at Arts Riot on Pine Street. The full schedule will be available online for viewing and ticket purchase on Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. The printed festival program will be inserted in every issue of Seven Days on Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, then available at the Festival Office at 230 College Street in Burlington. The Printed program will be available on site during the festival. Visit [www.vtiff.org](http://www.vtiff.org) for more information.

#### **Major Guest Announced**

VTIFF is very excited to welcome acclaimed director and cinematographer Tom DiCillo to the 2015 Festival. DiCillo will be here to present his latest film, *Down In Shadowland*, on Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup> at

1pm as well as at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary screening of his now classic independent feature *Living in Oblivion*, starring Steve Buscemi and Catherine Keener on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:30pm. He will also attend the opening night film and party. The director will be available for Q&A following the screenings and will be signing the newly remastered anniversary blu-ray release of *Living in Oblivion* at the festival. We are grateful to the Todd R. Lockwood Family Fund for sponsoring DiCillo's visit.

About the films:

*Down in Shadowland*

Tom DiCillo descends into the subterranean world of the NYC subway and records humanity passing by in a highly stylized, poetic film. Structured in eight parts, with a mesmerizing soundtrack, we delve deep into the psyches of the people who either inhabit this world or are merely passing through. No hidden cameras were used and mostly the people we see on screen are aware of being filmed and yet they remain unself-conscious. At no time do we feel voyeuristic. The camera constantly shifts and explores and, just as in real life, people come and go and we are left wondering what might happen to them.

*Living In Oblivion*

Whatever can go wrong does go wrong in Tom DiCillo's hilarious send-up of the maddeningly chaotic vicissitudes of ultra-low-budget filmmaking. Indie film stalwart Steve Buscemi stars as Nick Reve, DiCillo's directorial alter ego, who is in the midst of a disastrous film shoot with an absurdly unreliable cast and crew. DiCillo, who served as cinematographer on Jim Jarmusch's 1984 masterpiece *Stranger Than Paradise*, channels the frustrations he experienced shooting the early Brad Pitt vehicle *Johnny Suede* into a screenplay that ambiguously mixes dream sequences and reality and blurs the line between cinematic artifice and real life. Also featuring Dermot Mulroney and Catherine Keener (in one of her earliest roles), *Living in Oblivion* is a true cult classic and an enduring tribute to the determination of cash-strapped independent filmmakers everywhere.

About Tom DiCillo:

DiCillo is a filmmaker, cinematographer and actor. In 1987 he shot (and acted in) *Stranger Than Paradise* for friend and film school classmate Jim Jarmusch. He directed his first feature *Johnny Suede* in 1990 which won one Best Picture at the Locarno Film Festival. In 1995 he made the multi-award winning film *Living in Oblivion* starring Steve Buscemi. Other films include *Box of Moonlight*, *The Real Blonde*, *Double Whammy*, *Delirious*, and *When You're Strange*, a documentary film on the *The Doors*. DiCillo has also written books and worked for television.

**Opening Night Film Announced**

We are happy to announce the 2015 opening night film, acclaimed Iranian director Jafar Panahi's, *Taxi*. The opening night premiere takes place Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm at The Main Street Landing Film

House. The premiere will be followed by an opening night party in the Film House Lobby with food and bar provided by Skinny Pancake. Awards for the Vermont Filmmakers Showcase will also be presented at the opening night party.

About the film:

Call it guerilla cinema, Iranian neorealism or an act of political dissent. But whatever the label, Jafar Panahi's *Taxi* is simply great filmmaking in the face of considerable adversity. Since 2010, Panahi has been banned by the Iranian government from making movies. But that hasn't stopped him from surreptitiously turning out the autobiographical *This Is Not a Film* (which was smuggled from Iran to the 2011 Cannes Film Festival in a flash drive hidden in a birthday cake and was also screened at VTIFF 2013) and the similarly self-reflexive *Closed Curtain*. Like fellow Iranian Abbas Kiarostami's 2002 film *Ten*, *Taxi* is set entirely within the confines of an automobile. Panahi himself is at the wheel, with a dashboard camera capturing his interactions with a variety of passengers – including a bootlegger of American videos and Panahi's precocious niece, who longs to make a "distributable" film. Like the earlier Kiarostami film, Panahi's movie deals with the subjugation of women in Iranian society, but it also overtly addresses issues of state censorship and Iran's disturbing propensity for meting out capital punishment for minor offenses. *Taxi* is bold, uncompromising cinema, which should on no account be missed.

### **Festival Premiere of Joshua Oppenheimer's Latest Documentary Announced**

VTIFF is please to premiere the latest film from award winning documentary film director Joshua Oppenheimer, *The Look of Silence*. Oppenheimer's film continues to explore the themes from 2012's Oscar-nominated *Act of Killing*, which VTIFF premiered in the 2013 Film Festival. Saturday, Oct 31<sup>st</sup> at 1pm. Oppenheimer will host a Q&A following the screening via Skype.

About the film:

In his previous film, *The Act of Killing* (shown at VTIFF 2013), Oppenheimer focused on the perpetrators of the 1965 Indonesian genocide. His follow-up, *The Look of Silence*, focuses on a family of survivors who discover how their son was murdered, as well as the identities of the killers. The film avoids the usual clichés of presenting survivors as saintly victims; rather, it explores the meaning of silence borne of terror and, in Oppenheimer's own words, "it is a poem about the necessity of breaking that silence, but also about the trauma that comes when silence is broken." This riveting, disturbing and eye-opening film will stay with you long after you've left the theater.

About Joshua Oppenheimer:

Oppenheimer was born in Austin, TX and grew up in and around Washington DC and Austin TX. His first film, *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (1997) won a Gold Hugo at the Chicago

International Film Festival (1988). From 2004 to 2012, he produced a series of films in Indonesia. His debut feature, *The Act of Killing* (shown at VTIFF 2013) went on to win many prizes world-wide. Joshua currently lives in Denmark. He is the recipient of the MacArthur Genius Award.

VTIFF 2015 is sponsored by Green Valley Media, Vermont Arts Council, Vermont Community Fund, Grace Jones Richardson Trust, City of Burlington, John M Bissell Foundation, Champlain College, UVM, Northfield Savings Bank, Urban Rhino Visual, Arts Riot, Burlington City Arts, Ben & Jerry's.

**The Vermont International Film Foundation (VTIFF)** is a cultural non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the community through film. VTIFF operates year-round and showcases community film screenings, supports programming like the Global Roots Series, the Burlington Film Society and VTIFF For Schools, as well as supporting Vermont filmmakers. VTIFF celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. The largest program of the Foundation is the annual Vermont International Film Festival, best known for featuring groundbreaking and independent films from around the world and Vermont. The festival also includes the Vermont Filmmakers' Showcase™, the largest juried selection of Vermont-made films. The 2015 festival runs October 23<sup>rd</sup> -November 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, at Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center, and The BCA Center. More information at [www.vtiff.org](http://www.vtiff.org).

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