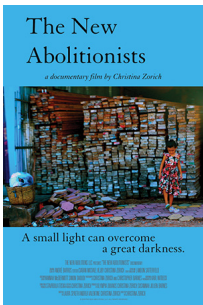
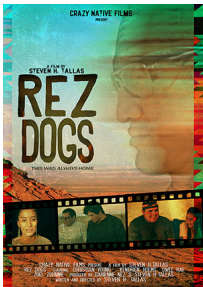


The show must go on

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 25 September 2020 05:07



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Gallup Film Festival goes virtual

Lights! Camera! Action!

While the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the production and screening of major movies throughout the world, it has not stopped filmmakers from presenting their finished works to audiences through online venues.

Gallup Film Festival, one of the signature annual events of downtown Gallup, is following in those steps. Set to unfold Sept. 24-26, the festival will allow viewers to enjoy a selection of films spanning 12 categories from their own homes.

The categories include narrative short, narrative feature, student film, New Mexico film, web series/new media, and documentary feature.

Gallup Film Festival Director Knifewing Segura said the festival almost did not happen this year due to the pandemic and subsequent financial strains on the city.

“But then, some other festivals I worked with out in California convinced me this would be a good way to get back into [showing films],” Segura said Sept. 16. “Even though we decided to do it online and we don’t have some of the resources we had in previous years, we still did get some very interesting films from all over, even abroad.”

GETTING THINGS INTO PLACE

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Despite technical hurdles that come with moving the festival online, Segura called the move a blessing in disguise.

“We have actors who are going to be involved this year. And some of the entertainment is still going to do its thing,” he said.

One entertainment group Segura wanted to highlight was the Nashville comedy duo of Bruce Williams and Terry Ree, also known just as Williams and Ree or The Indian and the White Guy.

“Once they heard the festival was happening, they wanted in on it,” Segura said.

As of Sept. 16, the screening schedule has not been finalized. Segura said it is important to remember the festival was not going to happen at one point.

“The advertisements, everything, it’s all different this year,” he said. “But it’s an interesting, kind of exciting way of life now. I look forward to the engineering [and technology] side of it all.”

Segura said the tech people he is working with from Los Angeles are excited the festival is moving online and are doing everything to make sure the festival goes off well.

SELECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Since the fate of the festival was unknown for some time, Segura said there were not as many entries in 2020 as in previous years.

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“But, there was still a lot of consideration taken this year for film selections,” he said. “The filmmakers have been reaching out to their customers and asking them to go on the festival website and vote for the audience awards.”

The full list of films can be viewed on the film festival website.

Segura wanted to spotlight one of the entries for documentary feature, *The New Abolitionists*, which he said is an eye-opener about sex trafficking in Vietnam.

“That film kept my attention the whole time and I was just shocked to hear about those stories,” he said. “You hear about how girls are sold into Russian mafias as prostitutes. I had never heard of that before.”

The single entry for animation, *Silly Billy Dine*, is also another one people should watch, Segura said.

“After I watched it, I thought these guys have potential, I look forward to them, seeing them work,” he said. “With the festival moving online, they are given that opportunity. This is a new way of [film] distribution.”

In all, there are 24 selections listed on the festival’s website.

A STEPPING STONE

Segura thinks the festival could be the beginning of a bigger opportunity for Native filmmakers as they get to meet the directors of the festival submissions and attend workshops and learn

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from them as well.

Plans for more venues and filmmaking resources in Gallup, including a drive-in movie theater, could hinge on the success of the festival, he added.

“I’m thinking if the plans all pan out, we’re going to have a recording studio and film school in Gallup,” Segura said. “And once we have these new resources, there will be new opportunities for us. One being we could have [part of] a Marvel movie made here.”

In addition, Red Rock State Park has garnered attention for film crews, Segura continued. He also recalled the recent filming of an episode of the TV series *Ghost Adventures* in Gallup.

The continued interest in Gallup as a filming site depends not only on the festival, but perhaps also the city, but Segura said it is important to know these endeavors are a team effort.

“I look forward to all of these challenges. This is just the beginning for us,” he said.

For a full list of film submissions, ticketing information, and to volunteer, visit <https://gallupfilmfestival.com/>

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