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Cinequest Film & VR Festival Celebrates the Work of Global Film Artists, Technologists and Futurists in 28th Season

105,000+ Festival Participants to Connect in the Silicon Valley from February 27th - March 11th

Cinequest, a vanguard organization that fuses creativity with technological innovation to empower, improve, and transform the lives of people and communities, today revealed the full program for its international celebration of the filmed arts and technologies, the [Cinequest Film & VR Festival](#). From February 27th through March 11th 2018, the festival's 28th season has programmed a dynamic 13 days of screenings and premieres, inspiring experiences with trailblazers in film and virtual reality, and intimate awards presentations with icons in entertainment. The full festival lineup can be found at www.cinequest.org.

"We've seen the power of film to not only delight and entertain, but spark awareness, create connections and galvanize communities," said Halfdan Hussey, co-founder of Cinequest. "Our theme for this year's festival is 'Impact', reflected by the exceptional films, VR, and interactions with the torchbearers in entertainment and technology--programmed to give our audience a venue for engagement and empowerment. We're proud to spotlight the work of internationally celebrated and emerging artists, representing a spectrum of genres, genders, ethnicities, orientations, ages and perspectives, and to enable these creators to connect with audiences in the vibrant and cosmopolitan Silicon Valley – the world's leader in innovation."

THE NUMBERS: CINEQUEST AT 28

Over the 13-day festival, 229 feature and short films and 29 virtual reality experiences will be shown across downtown San Jose theatres and venues, and a satellite cinema in Redwood City for an audience of more than 105,000 attendees. Representing works from 45 countries, including China, India, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Iran and South Korea, Cinequest will be the venue for 74 World and 55 U.S. film and VR premieres. These global selections also commend the art of women behind the camera, with 99 works at Cinequest directed by women. 52 celebrations and special events round out the offerings amounting to 510 screenings, events, parties and experiences.

Complementing the feature and short film screenings, Cinequest has scheduled a packed calendar of special engagements that offer audiences a glimpse at the past, present and future of cinema, and an opportunity to connect with prominent figures in film and virtual reality.

Highlights for the Cinequest Film & VR Festival 2018 include:

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Opening Night: William H. Macy Returns To Cinequest with *Krystal* | February 27 at 7:15PM

Opening the festival, *Krystal* will screen at the illustrious California Theatre, followed by a fireside chat with the film's director, and past recipient of Cinequest's prestigious Maverick Spirit Award, actor, director William H. Macy (*Fargo*, *Shameless*). Starring Cinequest alum Rosario Dawson in the titular role, up-and-comer Nick Robinson (*Jurassic World*, *The Kings of Summer*) takes lead in this unconventional comedy. Macy as well as select cast and crew joins Cinequest for a conversation following the screening.

Maverick Spirit Awards | Icons, Legends & Risk Takers in Entertainment

Joining past honorees including Harrison Ford, Rosario Dawson, JJ Abrams, Sir Ian McKellen and Jennifer Jason Leigh, Cinequest is bestowing its most prestigious award to four powerhouses that have had immeasurable impact on the industry:

Nicolas Cage | February 28 at 7:30PM, California Theatre

Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and Academy Award winning star of more than 80 motion pictures – Nicolas Cage's stunning achievements show no signs of slowing down. In unforgettable roles spanning the early 80's to today, ranging from drama to rom-com, action thrillers to independent triumphs, Cage has won critical esteem in films including *Moonstruck*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, *Raising Arizona* and *Adaptation*, coupled with box office success in action in films like *National Treasure*, *The Rock* and *Face/Off*. Cage's first virtual reality role in *The Humanity Bureau VRvolution*, will be featured at Cinequest's VR Cinema, from March 1 – 4th.

Tatiana Maslany | March 8 at 7:30PM, California Theatre

Tatiana Maslany has earned legions of fans – and an Emmy – in the titular role in the sci-fi thriller series, *Orphan Black*, and stunning critical acclaim in the emotional film, *Stronger*. With a festival career that includes receiving the Jury Breakout Role Award at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival, Maslany is charting a trajectory for brilliant career on screens big and small. At Cinequest, Maslany joins co-star Tom Cullen for the world premiere her short film, *Souls of Totality*.

Tom Cullen | March 8 at 7:30PM, California Theatre

Appearing in the most talked about television of the last decade, award-winning actor Tom Cullen (*Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones*, *Black Mirror*) exemplifies the quality and societal impact of this latest 'golden age of television', made possible by tech giants like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon. Cullen is also featured in the short film *Souls of Totality*, and joins co-star Maslany in a discussion about the film.

Andie MacDowell | March 10 at 7:00PM, California Theatre

Andie MacDowell's enduring grace, beauty and talent has been witnessed in classic comedies like *Groundhogs Day* and *Four Weddings and Funeral* and provocative indie films like *Sex, Lies &*

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Videotape and *Short Cuts*. MacDowell will present her latest triumph *Love After Love*, followed by a discussion of the film and her illustrious career.

Media Legacy Award Event with Ben Mankiewicz | March 11 at 1:30PM, California Theatre

Celebrating the impact of media on discovering new talent, voices and perspectives in film, Primetime Host Turner Classic Movies (TCM) writer, journalist, and co-founder of *The Young Turks* Ben Mankiewicz will be honored with Cinequest's Media Legacy Award. Mankiewicz joins Cinequest audiences with a screening of a personal film selection, the 1951 classic *People Will Talk* (Directed by Joseph Mankiewicz), followed by a discussion of his choice.

Virtual Reality Returns in 2018 | March 1 – 4th, 11AM – 7PM

Continuing Cinequest's tradition of featuring technology that is poised to disrupt and improve media and entertainment, from March 1 – 4th, the Cinequest VR Program will feature 29 astounding VR and AR films, experiences and games. In the Cinequest VR Experience Lounge, experts and visionaries in the field will lead interactive workshops. In recognition of his work pushing the boundaries of VR in entertainment and as a connector and conduit between the fields of film and tech, Travis Cloyd will be honored with this year's VR Visionary Award. In addition to accepting this year's highest VR honor, Cloyd will present three VR experiences at the festival: the world premiere of *The Humanity Bureau VRevolution*, starring Maverick Spirit Award honoree, Nicolas Cage; *Speed Kills VR Experience* starring John Travolta; and *The Recall VR*, starring Wesley Snipes.

Closing Night Film: *Brothers in Arms* | March 11 at 6:30PM, California Theatre

The festival closes with the world premiere of the scintillating documentary, *Brothers in Arms*. A 'from-the-trenches' look at making of the 1986 Best Picture Academy Award winning film, *Platoon*, the film is directed by *Platoon* cast member, Paul Sanchez and narrated by Charlie Sheen, with commentary from the stars that this legendary masterwork created, Willem Dafoe and Jonny Depp.

Award Winning Cinequest Alumni Return in 2018

In addition to William H. Macy's return, other Cinequest alumni have featured work in the 2018 festival, including:

- Brad Anderson, Award-winning director (*Beirut*)
- Marion Cotillard, Oscar-winning actor (*Ishmael's Ghost*)
- Rosario Dawson, former Maverick Spirit Award honoree (*Krystal*)
- Peter Fonda, former Maverick Spirit Award Honoree (*You Can't Say No*)
- Piper Laurie, Oscar-nominated actress (*Snapshots*)
- Dan Mirvish, Award-winning director (*Bernard and Huey*)
- Dean Norris, Award-winning actor (*Beirut*)
- Dana Nachman and Don Hardy, Award-winning documentarians (*Pick of the Litter*)

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- Jan Svěrák, Oscar-winning director (*Barefoot*)
- Hilary Swank, Oscar-winning actor (*What They Had*)
- Stanley Tucci, Oscar-nominated actor (*Submission*)

‘Only at Cinequest’ Events, Screenings & Celebrations

Complementing the feature and short film program, Cinequest features a selection of extraordinary events that offer audiences a glimpse at the past, present and future of cinema, and the artists:

Silent Cinema – *The Wind* | March 9th at 7PM, California Theatre

Curated by the Packard Foundation, the silent film era is reborn with a special screening of the classic film, *The Wind*, starring Lillian Gish. Taking place at the 1920’s-era jewel, The California Theatre and accompanied by organist Dennis James on the mighty Wurlitzer, festival go-ers will experience this masterpiece of American silent cinema as cinema patrons from the past did, when it premiered in 1928.

Screenings and Soirees with A-List Talent | Daily

More than 800 artists, actors, filmmakers and technologists are attending Cinequest to showcase their latest works and meet and mingle with audiences. Noteworthy examples include the world premiere of *You Can’t Say No* (March 3rd, 7PM), with past Maverick Spirit Award recipient and Academy Award winner Peter Fonda (*Easy Rider*), Marguerite Moreau (*Wet Hot American Summer*) and Hamish Linklater (*Fargo*) in attendance, and the world premiere of *Snapshots* (March 3rd, 4:15PM) with cast members including Academy Award winner Piper Laurie (*Carrie*), Brooke Adams (*Gas Food Lodging*) and Emily Goss (*Castle*) joining the festivities.

Poets N Film | March 8th at 7PM, 3Below Theater

San Jose State’s *Reed Magazine* and Cinequest are excited to present the 2nd Edition of this mesmerizing melding of poetry and films. Poet performers ASHA, Bill Cozzini, Roberto Duran, Eli Hansen, Lita Kurth, Mighty Mike McGee, Joe Miller, and Kimy Martinez perform, alongside satirical dance, sound experiments, visual projections and live music. The film *Unspoken*, about the spoken word poet Farah Chamma, precedes the screening of *I Remember: A Film About Joe Brainard*, by Matt Wolf.

Courageous Conversation presented by Bank of America | March 1st at 7:15PM, Hammer Theatre

Bay area filmmaker Laurie Coyle’s documentary, *Adios Amor: The Search for Maria Moreno*, will be featured in a special screening event presented by Bank of America titled, **Courageous Conversation**. Followed by a discussion with the filmmaker and voices in community, *Adios Amor* tells the story of a Maria Moreno migrant worker and mother of 12, who became the spokesperson for a multi-ethnic farm labor movement.

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Kaiser Thrive presents *Pick of the Litter* | March 3rd at 4:30PM, California Theatre

Bay Area documentarian Dana Nachman, returns to Cinequest for her third time, following her previous films *Witch Hunt* (narrated by Sean Penn) and the inspirational *Batkid Begins* with her latest work, *Pick of the Litter*. Following a litter of puppies from in utero until if and when they become Guide Dogs for the Blind, cameras follow these pups through a two-year odyssey as they train to become the chosen few canines, whose ultimate responsibility is to protect their blind partners from harm.

The Cinequest Film & VR Festival is a part of Cinequest, an organization dedicated to empowering, improving and transforming the lives of people and communities. In addition to its annual film festival, Cinequest operates the transformative leadership movement, Picture the Possibilities (PTP) that empowers global youth with the tools, confidence and inspiration to form and create their dreams from art to science--driving an optimal future for all of us.

Passes and individual tickets for the Cinequest Film & VR Festival events and screenings are on sale now, and can be purchased at www.cinequest.org. For the latest news and updates, follow @Cinequest on Twitter, and facebook.com/cinequest on Facebook.

About Cinequest

A vanguard organization set in the Silicon Valley, Cinequest's uniqueness and impact result from being ahead of the curve in the powerful integration of creativity and technology. Cinequest fuses the world of the filmed arts with that of Silicon Valley's innovation to empower youth, artists, and innovators to create and connect – driving transformations and a better tomorrow. Cinequest does this through Cinequest Film & VR Festival, Picture The Possibilities (PTP), and its sister company Cinequest Mavericks Studio. (Voted **Best Film Festival** by *USA Today* Readers.)

About Cinequest Picture the Possibilities

Picture The Possibilities (PTP) empowers youth with the tools, confidence and inspiration to form and create their dreams, no matter what the discipline, driving an optimal future for all of us. Through PTP's free, online platform, the 7 Powers of Creating Workshop, as well as global live event initiatives, PTP Summits and PTP City Sessions, youth are empowered to voice their reality, picture a desired future or dream, and access their capacity to make that dream real.

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