



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) Wraps its 25<sup>th</sup> REFLECTIONS Festival ELEVEN DAYS IN-PERSON PRESENTATION OF 60 GROUNDBREAKING DOCUMENTARIES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE**

PALO ALTO, CA – The United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF), wrapped up its very successful in-person annual event, which was held October 20-30, 2022. The 25<sup>th</sup> UNAFF presented 60 documentary films (56% directed/produced by women filmmakers and 60% by filmmakers of color), accompanied by six panel discussions, covering topics such as homelessness and the pandemic, women's reproductive rights, mental health and transformative power of art, the use and abuse of Native American mascots, the LGBTQ community and military policy, the Russia-Ukrainian relations, gun violence and schools, how artificial intelligence increasingly governs our liberties, and the financial impact of environmental solutions.

UNAFF Founder and Executive Director Jasmina Bojic remarked:

*“Long before it became common-place to talk about inclusion, diversity, and equity; long before gender and racial, ethnic or sexual identity became rallying cries; long before inequality of means and of the right to marriage were discussed; long before we even had labels to describe them; UNAFF was providing a forum for airing and examining all these issues under its large umbrella of all-encompassing human rights.*

*Our democracy is under attack, and we believe that the best shield is knowledge. For many, UNAFF is providing a priceless opportunity for just that. It is the perfect antidote for fabricated news, and a community which is educated on UNAFF is inoculated against its allure.*

*This year's theme REFLECTIONS continues UNAFF's enduring devotion to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, emphasizing the 25th Anniversary milestone and creating an opportunity to reflect on the ways UNAFF, our society, and the world have changed over the last quarter century.”*

The 25<sup>th</sup> UNAFF highlights included:

The festival was opened with a welcome by Palo Alto Mayor Patrick Burt who presented UNAFF with the City of Palo Alto Proclamation. Directors/Producers Margie Friedman and Barbara Multer-Wellin were on hand for their inspiring film ORCHESTRATING CHANGE, the story of the Me2/Orchestra changing the

lives of musicians and audiences with mental illness, which prompted a lively Q&A. Many other filmmakers were also present, as well as the 2022 UNAFF Visionary Award honoree: filmmaker and activist Dorothy Fadiman.

The first of six panel discussions dealt with how our society treats children, with filmmakers of *BUTTERFLY, BUTTERFLY* joining Stanford's professor Preeti Panda. Another important panel topic tackled homes and inequality, with Palo Alto Mayor Patrick Burt returning to discuss the issues with filmmakers Sara Terry (*A DECENT HOME*) and Jennifer Huang (*THIS ADVENTURE CALLED CALIFORNIA.*) Participating in the "Justice on Trial" panel were Stanford professor and founder of MLK Jr. Institute, professor Clayborne Carson, and filmmakers Chris Preitauer (*WHEN I GET GROWN – REFLECTIONS OF A FREEDOM RIDER*), and Herb Ferrette (*AMERICAN JUSTICE ON TRIAL*), which was held on United Nations Day, October 24. As our global society navigates a new reality of COVID, a UNAFF panel discussed its past, present, and future, led by Stanford M.D. Victor Carrion at the Stanford Medical School. "Youth Action for Climate Justice" panel had a longtime teacher at the Eastside College Preparatory School, Linda Filo, talking about her personal experience with climate justice during the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. "The Transformational Power of Art in Mental Health" was the final UNAFF panel, held at the Stanford Anderson Collection Museum, with filmmakers and subject from *THE CREATIVE HIGH*, Adriana Marchione, Dianne Griffin, and Jason Bernhardt, as well as *HUMAN KIND* producer Peter Kline and *THE RESTLESS HUNGARIAN* director/producer Tom Weidlinger.

Many other films included filmmaker appearances and Q&As, including *SURVIVING THE SILENCE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF TWO WOMEN IN LOVE WHO HELPED CHANGE MILITARY POLICY*, with filmmakers Cindy L. Abel and Michael Bruno, and subjects Col. Pat Thompson and Barbara Brass; *PASANG: IN THE SHADOW OF EVEREST*, with filmmakers and team members Nancy Svendsen, Sharon Wood, Dorjee Sherpa, Norbu Tenzing, and Andrea Pierpont; *RICOCHET*, with subjects from the film Matt Gonzales and Francisco Ugarte; *SIGN THE SHOW*, with filmmaker Cat Brewer; *ENDURING DEMOCRACY: THE MONTEREY PETITION*, with filmmakers David C. Schendel and Elizabeth Nordt; *BLURRING THE COLOR LINE*, with filmmaker Crystal Kwok.

While the conflict in Ukraine concerns the entire global community, films that enlightened issues in Ukraine were presented. Producer Polina Herman was on hand for *THE PRICE OF CONFLICT*; and director Katya Soldak discussed her film *THE LONG BREAKUP*. Another ongoing international conflict, between North and South Korea, was the subject of *CROSSINGS*, with filmmaker Deann Borshay Liem and activist Christine Ahn on hand for Q&A. Confronting domestic intolerance through *REPAIRING THE WORLD: STORIES FROM THE TREE OF LIFE* by Patrice O'Neill and Charene Zalis was followed by a lively discussion about hate, religion and open dialogue.

UNAFF presented its annual award-winning program for elementary school children *UNAFF & Kids*, which challenges our youngest to expand their awareness of the world around them, offering activities for kids and parents. This free event screened *THE GHOSTS OF THE MOUNTAINS*, *THE 3 CRICKETEERS* and *FOR THE BEES*.

The timely final Closing Night film THE JANES is set in the pre-Roe v. Wade era, and again in 2022, women's reproductive rights are at great risk. The special guest for THE JANES was Dorothy Fadiman, who made an important contribution to the documentary with the donation of her interview footage shot in 1995 with Ruth Sural and Jody Parsons, the Janes founders, who are now deceased.

Dorothy Fadiman also attended the Closing Night to receive the annual UNAFF Visionary Award, in honor for her body of work as a well-known documentary filmmaker and human rights activist. UNAFF has screened several of Dorothy's film, including WHEN ABORTION WAS ILLEGAL: UNTOLD STORIES, shown in 2004. Handing her the award, UNAFF Founder and Executive Director, Jasmina Bojic explained: *"As we mark the 25th UNAFF Anniversary with the theme REFLECTIONS, it is very appropriate to give the UNAFF Visionary Award to a veteran filmmaker and human rights activist, recognizing her life-long unwavering commitment to human rights, creativity, persistence and vision, which inspired several generations to promote gender equality, a culture of peace and a better future for all."*

Other films with special guests attended the Closing Night were FOG: filmmakers Eduardo Dolhun and Gabrielle Mouritzen, and subject Chris Fitzsimmons; and from as far as India, the filmmaker Director Vijayeta Kumar for the US premiere of her short film KICKING BALLS about girl marriages.

The following films receiving this year's UNAFF [juried awards](#) reflect the issues of homelessness, gun violence in schools, girl marriages, blindness and nature, reproductive rights before and after Roe v. Wade.

Best Documentary:

[US KIDS](#)

Best Short Documentary:

[FOG](#)

Best Cinematography:

Komeil Soheil

[COEXIST](#)

Best Editing:

Kristen Huntley

[THE JANES](#)

Youth Vision Award

[KICKING BALLS](#)

For more information: [www.unaff.org](http://www.unaff.org)

Press photos are available at <http://www.unaff.org/2022/press.html>

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## **ABOUT UNAFF**

The award-winning United Nations Association Film Festival has grown to be one of the oldest and most respected documentary film festivals in the United States. UNAFF was originally conceived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was founded by Stanford educator and film critic Jasmina Bojic. In addition to providing early outlets for films, many of which have gone on to win major awards and accolades, UNAFF takes pride in creating a community forum for discovery and dialogue about different cultures, social issues and solutions. Over the years UNAFF has screened some of the most awarded and talked about documentaries in the industry, including eight that went on to win Academy Awards and thirty-four that were nominated. In 2014 the ICFT (International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication of UNESCO) presented the UNESCO Fellini Medal to Jasmina Bojic, Founder and Executive Director of UNAFF, in recognition of her exceptional contribution in promoting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through the art of documentary film.

UNAFF's mission has expanded to broad, year-round programs that augment its reach. In addition to the annual film festival, UNAFF organizes panel discussions, initiates programs that engage children, students, seniors, veterans, hosts a traveling festival which keeps the films alive well beyond their initial festival showings, and opens its doors to documentary film students and researchers.

## **SUPPORT UNAFF**

Donations are essential for us to continue with all these valuable programs for our community.

UNAFF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization, fiscally sponsored by the International Documentary Association (IDA). Contributions in support of UNAFF are payable to IDA, with a memo stating "for UNAFF", and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

By supporting UNAFF, you will have the opportunity to play an active role in upholding human dignity, promoting empathy, and saving the arts. For more details, please visit

<http://www.unaff.org/2022/support.html>