

WATCH OUT: VOODOO IS OFFICIALLY TAKING OVER MONTREAL THE MIHFF LAUNCHES ITS 2008 PROGRAM

Montreal, Wednesday, September 3, 2008 – The Montreal International Haitian Film Festival (MIHFF) is pleased to be launching its 2008 program today—and what a bold program it is! For this 4th edition of the Festival, the MIHFF would like to open a window onto the world of voodoo, this elusive, taboo and sometimes controversial subject even within Haitian communities themselves. From September 17 to 21, 2008, Montreal movie buffs will have the opportunity to appreciate Haitian cinema while discovering and exploring the realities, rituals and taboos connected with voodoo culture.

The Fabienne Colas Foundation and *Les Cinémas Guzzo* are, therefore, pleased to present the Montreal International Haitian Film Festival (MIHFF) from September 17 to 21, 2008. As the largest festival in the world dedicated entirely to Haitian cinema, the MIHFF—only in its fourth year—has gained prestige amongst professionals working in the independent author's film industry and is developing quite a following both here and abroad. The MIHFF wants to promote quality independent cinema as well as films from Haiti, while encouraging cultural diversity within Quebec. This year, the Festival will present a record selection of **53** fiction and documentary, short and feature-length films, **25** of which are about voodoo, from many countries, including Haiti, Canada (Quebec), the United States, France, Brazil, England, Italy, the Dominican Republic and Switzerland. This is the first retrospective of this calibre on voodoo in North America!

SPOKESPERSON

When the MIHFF chose voodoo as the central theme for this year's Festival, the choice of spokesperson become obvious: Francine Grimaldi. And so, Francine is happy to be supporting the Festival for the second year in a row: "I discovered voodoo culture and ceremonies in Haiti in the 1960s and I've been a godmother in a voodoo ceremony. We shouldn't be afraid of voodoo. It's not black magic or witchcraft... Rather, it's an outlet, a way of life, and a crutch like all other religions. It's a way to release the bad stuff inside, a way to let off steam! And so, once again, I am pleased to be representing the Festival, and I would like to invite all Quebeckers and in particular anyone who has preconceived notions about voodoo to come out to the Festival from September 17 to 21 and take full advantage of the films, exhibition and conference."

OPENING AND CLOSING FILMS

To the great pleasure of all, the world premiere of "**Minuit**," directed by actress Fabienne Colas, will officially open the Festival on September 17, at 7 p.m., in the Mirella and Lino Saputo Theatre at the Leonardo da Vinci Centre (8350 Lacordaire). This is Ms. Colas' first film. It's a story about voodoo right in the heart of Montreal. A race against time and the forces of evil!

"**Ghosts of Cité Soleil**" by director Asger Leth (selected at the Toronto Film Festival) will close the MIHFF on September 21 at 8 p.m., again, in the Mirella and Lino Saputo Theatre at the Leonardo da Vinci Centre. This breathtaking documentary plunges us into a slum in the capital of Port-au-Prince, Haiti called Cité Soleil, a shantytown that the film describes as being the most dangerous place on Earth...

VOODOO EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

Once again this year, the MIHFF is synonymous with more than just cinema. The Festival continues to take up challenges and to deal with themes that are crucial to Haitian society and to developing countries, in general. From September 17 to October 11, 2008, the MIHFF will proudly present a three-part exhibition called "**Voodoo: Art, Mystery and Religion**" at Galerie Mosaikart (4897 St-Laurent). Through this exhibition, which combines photographs, paintings and voodoo objects, the public will have the opportunity to learn about the origins of voodoo and what it's all about.

The MIHFF will also host a debate conference called "**Voodoo: from Haiti to Montreal**" on September 20, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This conference will bring together a panel of experts from Haiti and Quebec to discuss various aspects of voodoo. Panelists include Michel Soukar, Jean Fils-Aimé, Daniel Supplice, Monique Dauphin, Arnold Antonin, Sara Rénélik, Myrtille Chéry and several others... The conference will take place in the Fernand Daoust Room (1205) at Centre St-Pierre, 1212 Panet, in Montreal.

TRIBUTE TO TOTO BISSAINTHE

The 4th edition of the MIHFF is entirely dedicated to the memory of actress and singer, Toto Bissainthe (1934-1994). The spirit of this great woman, this legend of song, of the stage and of the screen, guided us as we programmed this latest edition of the Festival. We bow down in tribute to her work and thank her for everything she has contributed to Haiti's cultural heritage.

MIHFF AWARDS

This year, we will be presenting four awards at the closing ceremony: the Best Feature Fiction Film Award (digital), the Best Feature Documentary Film Award, the Best Short Film Award and the From Another Perspective Award (35 mm feature film). For the third year running, Radio-Canada will be awarding the Best Feature Fiction Film (digital) prize in collaboration with INIS. The Jury consists of Daniel Morin - Producer (Jury President), Fayolle Jean - Actor and Director, and Danielle Champoux - Producer.

PASSPORT CARD AND THEATRE LOCATIONS

In celebration of its fourth anniversary, the MIHFF is very pleased to offer its ardent fans a passport package that provides access to all 53 films in the program (except for the opening and closing night films) for a mere \$45. **This is unprecedented!** It's a way for us to thank all those movie-goers who supported us in the past and helped us grow. The films will be screened at NFB Cinema (1564 St-Denis), Cinéma du Parc (3575 du Parc) and Cinéma Guzzo Lacordaire (5940 des Grandes Prairies).

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