

MV 20-21 Film Festival

Decision Requests from PAC

1. What categories should be included for submissions and division awards?
2. Approval of proposed timeline.
3. Approval of proposed submission fee schedule.
4. Approval of proposed ticketing fee schedule.
5. Consideration of awards structure (willingness to find sponsors).

Introduction

The Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (MVCPA) has had film festivals at the Center in the past; however, we have not hosted one, ourselves. It is also of note that due to COVID-19 emergency declarations, the Center was not able to complete their 2019-2020 season, had to refund clients and ticket sales, and have had limited capacity to host live performances and are not permitted to have live audiences. During the September 2020 Performing Arts Committee (PAC) Meeting, staff proposed that MVCPA host a virtual film festival as a potential revenue stream and as a demonstration of the Center's ability to host virtual performances.

Brief Background

With the COVID-19 shutdowns, MVCPA's Home Companies and some of the clients were able to pivot to virtual performances on their own, removing the Center from the process. While we have continued to support them through marketing efforts, it is also a significant revenue loss for the Center. Additionally, other clients have asked if we are set up to do virtual performance ticketing so that they can continue to use the Center's services while holding performances in a safe space and providing a revenue stream to the performance groups without the need for them to set up their own systems.

Currently, ticketing staff is connected with our ticketing software vendor, ShoWare, to determine if they can provide online event ticketing to the Center, allowing the Center to provide the service to clients who do not have the staff, expertise, or investments to set up their own online performance revenue streams or the ability to host the events.

Purpose and Benefits

The **primary purpose** of hosting a 20-21 Film Festival is to create a revenue stream for the Center. However, there are **additional benefits**, including: setting a timeline and goals for MVCPA staff to set up a virtual performance ticketing system for future performances; proof-of-concept to market the use of online performance ticketing; expansion of client, patron and volunteer services (as ambassadors of the film festival to help get the word out); and general marketing awareness around MVCPA still in operation in some capacity during an emergency declaration.

Finally, during the September 2020 PAC meeting, staff proposed that the theme of the Film Festival was around Race, Equality, Justice and Inclusion to meet with the goals of the City of Mountain View in creating events that highlight recent anthropological challenges in the spotlight in the United States. This festival would not only meet that goal, but give a voice to those who may feel more comfortable expressing themselves through art.

Proposed Timeline

While a more detailed task list will be presented later (with some flexibility where items might come up), below is the proposed timeline for the festival.

Main Deliverable(s)	Proposed Deadline
Film Festival plan submitted to PAC	Oct. 15, 2020
PAC review and approval of plan	Oct. 21, 2020
Creation of submission guidelines (including categories)	Week of Oct. 25, 2020
Decision about online submission portal and process	Week of Oct. 25, 2020
Proposed judges for festival (would like to see if we have contacts in the film industry for this one) and outreach to them	Week of Nov. 1, 2020
Market request for film submission and deadline to submit (proposing December 31)	Starting week of Nov. 1, 2020
Secure ticketing platform	Week of Nov. 15, 2020
Reach out to panelists for participation in after discussions	Weeks of Nov. 15 through Nov. 29, 2020
Run tests on system like switching between film submission and Zoom panel discussion	Week of Nov. 29, 2020
Finalize ticketing system	Week of Nov. 29, 2020
Start Film Festival promotion/Ticket Sales	Week of Dec. 6, 2020
Deadline for submissions	Dec. 31, 2020
Second test on "broadcast" of event	Week of Jan. 3, 2021
Judging submissions	Jan. 3 - Jan. 16, 2021
Notification to winners	Week of Jan. 17, 2021
Viewing schedule set and promoted	Week of Jan. 17, 2021
Panelist schedule set and promoted	Week of Jan. 24, 2021

Last push to buy tickets	Jan. 31 - Feb. 6, 2021
Festival week	Feb. 7 - 12, 2021
Debrief on what we could do better next time	Week of Feb. 14, 2021

Proposed Theme

Films should be submitted that highlight any or all of the following: **Race equity, justice, equality and inclusion.**

Proposed Film Submission Categories and Fees

These proposed fees are based on review of area film festivals with consideration that we will also be starting a new event and may need to build up interest.

Proposed Submission Category	Proposed Fee for Submission
Festival pass (all films)	\$40
Individual feature-length movies and documentaries	\$8
Individual film-shorts	\$5
Special Events	\$10

Proposed Rules and Regulations

Submission rules and guidelines are based on best practices from other festivals in cities of comparable size to Mountain View.

Secure Online Screeners (Vimeo or YouTube links) are the preferred submission method. If using a Vimeo or YouTube link, please include your link at the top of the cover letter section of your submission.

- If accepted, filmmakers will need to provide the following:
 - a digital copy of their completed film
 - name of film
 - director's name
 - run time
 - synopsis
 - 2-3 high-res images from the film (not posters)
 - photo credit information (who you would like those photos to be credited to)
 - film or director's Twitter handle (optional)
 - film website (optional)

- Entry title, name of entrant, and assigned tracking number must be on all materials and containers.
- Separate applications are required for each film — even if one entity is submitting more than one film.
- Please let us know if your email address changes between the time of receipt of entry and notification of results. Otherwise, you will not be advised of or receive any award you may have won.
- All winners will receive customized laurels suitable for print and/or web usage.
- Entries into the Youth Section of the festival must provide proof of eligibility (student ID) upon request.
- English Language: All entries must have audio essential to the message on an English language soundtrack or English subtitles for American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. An English translation script is not an acceptable substitute with the exception of foreign entries.

Judging Criteria

- The Best of Division winners will be considered for the Best of Festival Award. A special panel will determine this special award.

The following criteria are applied during the judging process:

- Target audience
- Credibility
- Purpose
- Organization and development
- Concept and creativity
- Technical proficiency
- Use of theme

Terms and Conditions

The entrant has full rights to submit the entry and authorize its use.

Promotion Rights: Producers or distributors who enter the festival grant permission for their entries to be presented at any festival screening or event unless we are otherwise notified at the time of entry.

Publicity: Images, trailers and reproducible still images may be used in festival programs and publicity materials, including for use by media.

Archives: We keep the winning entries for the festival's archives and future festival promotions

Entrant has read and agrees to abide by all festival rules.

Proposed Awards

While there are no sponsors lined up, we could also award cash or in lieu prizes for category winners.

EXAMPLE ONLY: Ann Arbor Uses the following:

Ken Burns Award for Best of the Festival

\$3,000

Presented to the film of any genre or length that best represents the artistic standards of excellence for the festival, this award is generously provided by influential documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, a graduate of Ann Arbor Pioneer High School.

Tom Berman Award for Most Promising Filmmaker

\$2,000

Tom Berman was a student of AAFF founder George Manupelli at the University of Michigan, as well as an early festival supporter and close friend to many in the festival community. To honor his memory, this award – contributed by the Berman family – supports an emerging filmmaker who the jury believes will make a significant contribution to the art of film.

Kodak Cinematic Vision Award

\$2,000 in film stock

This award goes to the film that demonstrates the highest excellence and creativity in cinematography. The recipient will receive \$2,000 in film stock from Kodak. (This includes complimentary processing should the recipient select s16 or 35mm color negative film stock).

Best Experimental Film

\$1,500

Supported by Ann Arbor residents Ron and Robin Sober, this award celebrates the film that most successfully showcases the use of experimental processes, forms, and topics.

Best Documentary Film

\$1,000

Supported by Ann Arbor residents Jonathan Tyman and Deborah Bayer, this award recognizes the best nonfiction film in the festival program.

Lawrence Kasdan Award for Best Narrative Film

\$1,000

Hollywood film producer and writer Lawrence Kasdan came to know Ann Arbor well during his years as a student at the University of Michigan. He keeps his connection to the town's film culture alive in part through his support of this festival award. The distinction goes to the narrative film that makes the best use of the film's unique ability to convey striking and original stories.

Chris Frayne Award for Best Animated Film

\$1,000

Chris Frayne was a key participant in the festival's early years whose approach to life called to mind his colorful cartoon characters. This award honors the spirit of Chris by recognizing the animated film that delivers the best style, creativity, and content. Support for the award comes from several dedicated AAFF enthusiasts.

Cutters Studios Archival Film Award

\$1,000 in film scanning services

For the best film of the festival using a significant amount of archival film footage – including home movies and found footage – this award bestows on the recipient \$1,000 in 16mm and 35mm film scanning services from Cutters Studios, an integrated media studio.

Gil Omenn Art & Science Award

\$1,000

Provided by Gil Omenn, who seeks to encourage a positive exchange between the arts and sciences, this award honors the filmmaker whose work best uses the art of film and video to explore scientific concepts, research natural phenomena, or embrace real-world experimentation.

Prix DeVarti for Funniest Film

\$1,000

Supported by an endowment fund established by the DeVarti Family, this award goes to the film likely to create the most laughs in the festival. The prize recognizes the 57-year friendship between Dominick's pub and the AAFF and honors the memory of Dominick and Alice DeVarti.

The Barbara Aronofsky Latham Award for an Emerging Experimental Video Artist

\$1,000

This award provides support to the year's most promising early-career video artist. The award was conceived by the Aronofsky family to honor the late Barbara Aronofsky Latham, a Chicago-based experimental video artist who passed away in 1984 whose work is distributed by the Video Data Bank.

The Eileen Maitland Award

\$750

Supported by several local AAFF fans, this award is given to the film that best addresses women's issues and elevates female voices. It was created to honor the spirit and memory of Eileen Maitland, who was a dear friend and longtime supporter of the festival, as well as a patron and practitioner of the arts.

The No Violence Award

\$512

In a culture that relies on images of violence to entertain, this prize is awarded to the film that best engages or informs audiences and explores or celebrates life while also rising to the narrative challenge of "No Violence Depicted." The award is provided by Ann Arbor residents Matthew Graff and Leslie Lawther.

UMCU Audience Award

\$500

Sponsored by the University of Michigan Credit Union, with additional longtime support from an anonymous friend of the festival, this award – affectionately dubbed the Vox Populi Award – goes to the year’s most highly rated audience-selected film in competition.

George Manupelli Founder’s Spirit Award

\$500

With lead support from brothers Dave and Rich DeVarti, this award recognizes the filmmaker who best captures the bold and iconoclastic spirit of the Ann Arbor Film Festival founder, the late George Manupelli, whose vision for the festival continues to this day.

Leon Speakers Award for Best Sound Design

\$500

This award for excellence and originality in sound design is provided by Leon Speakers, which has been installing custom-built high-fidelity speakers in home theaters throughout Ann Arbor since 1995.

Peter Wilde Award for Most Technically Innovative Film

\$500

Peter Wilde was a long-time projectionist for the festival and a master of special effects. This award honors his creativity and pursuit of new techniques by recognizing the film that displays the most pioneering technical innovations. Generous donors to the Peter Wilde Award Endowment Fund include Bernard Coakley, Constance Crump and Jay Simrod, Bill Davis, IATSE Local 395, the LaBour Foundation for Non-Institutional Living, John Nelson and Deb Gaydos, Glenda Pittman, Woody Sempliner, Kevin Smith, and Robert Ziebell and Elizabeth Ward. Additional support was provided by Peter Wilde’s sister and brother-in-law, Susan and Jim Warner, in loving memory of Peter and Susan’s brother, the late Alan C. Wilde.

Tíos Award for Best International Film

\$500

Granted to the film produced outside of the United States that most strongly wins over the jury, this award is provided by Tíos Mexican Café, serving Ann Arbor since 1986.

\\aut\\ FILM Award for Best LGBTQ Film

\$300

This award honors the film that best addresses and gives voice to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer issues. Longtime festival supporters Martin Contreras and Keith Orr, owners of the locally known and loved \\aut\\ BAR, contribute this award to highlight the diversity of voices that achieve excellence in filmmaking.

Overture/Wazoo Award for Best Music Video

\$300

Designed to recognize excellence in the art of music video – which stems from the special collaborative relationship between a musician and a film or video maker – this award is supported by Ann Arbor’s beloved and independently owned Wazoo Records and Overture Audio.

Jury Awards

\$1,888

Provided by friends of the festival and distributed at the discretion of the jurors, the remaining prize monies confer special recognition for films of distinction and artistic accomplishment.

Proposed Ticketing Fees

Ticket pricing is based on review of film festival pricing based on virtual film festival pricing

MovieGoer Pass - Access to 1/3 of all movies or 10 movies	\$50
Passport Pass - Access to 2/3 of all movies or 20 movies	\$90
Short-Films Only Pass - Access to all short films	\$40
Single Ticket Prices (regular screenings)	\$10 per movie
Special presentations	\$15 per movie
Opening Night (?)/Ceremony?	\$18
Closing Night/Awards Ceremony?	\$18

Additional Resources

In doing research for this project, I found a great FAQ page that we may want to incorporate into the online event: https://www.woodsholefilmfestival.org/whff_virtual/virtual-how-to-faq/

Summary

By launching Mountain View’s first virtual film festival, we hope to create new revenue streams that will further our mission to support and promote performing arts. In addition, we will be supporting the City’s goal of hosting more Race Equity, Justice and Inclusion events while also demonstrating a future platform to serve more performing arts clients.