

NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

For Immediate Release:

WOMEN FILMMAKERS: IMMIGRANT STORIES

Acclaimed New York Women in Film & Television Film Festival Showcases the Unique Vision of Women Filmmakers Documenting the NYC Immigrant Experience with Increased Support from NYC Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley

First Screening of Four Shorts Takes Place February 27 at Maspeth Town Hall

NEW YORK, NY (February 17, 2017) – Women Filmmakers: Immigrant Stories Series, the acclaimed screening series featuring films directed and/or produced by women telling the stories of NYC immigrants. Funded by the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley as part of the Cultural Immigrant Initiative of the New York City Council, this year’s **Immigrant Stories Series** has received extra funding to expand the series to include two screening programs per month through June 2017. Screenings will take place throughout Queens.

Back by popular demand, the compelling and topical series has expanded to include up to ten films, both long and short-form, with NYC screenings to begin February 27 and ending in June. The program was created in 2015 to highlight and promote works by women filmmakers focusing on the immigrant experience in New York City. The first screening on February 27 at Maspeth Town Hall in Maspeth, Queens will focus on the experiences of Immigrant Children and will feature four short films: will be *Niñera* (directed by Diane Weipert), *Poisonberry* (directed by Alice Neff), *Minutes to Say Hi* (directed by Easmanie Michel), and *Las Mananitas* (directed by Gabriella Moses).

NYWIFT announced its call for 2017 submissions earlier this year to begin the selection process for the series. Screenings at community locations in Queens will be followed by Q&As with the filmmakers and special receptions featuring local foods sourced from neighborhood businesses and connected with cultures presented in the films. All screenings are free and open to the public. The program will also include a one-day production workshop on for immigrant and first-generation women taught by professionals from Third World Newsreel on May 20th at Maspeth Town Hall. Applications for this free workshop are available at www.nywift.org.

“NYWIFT is proud to once again provide a platform so that these important immigrant stories told by women filmmakers can reach a wider audience,” said NYWIFT Executive Director Terry Lawler. “We are grateful to Councilwoman Crowley and the City of New York for their continued support and for recognizing that now more than ever these stories need to reach a wide audience.”

“NYWIFT gives immigrant women the unique opportunity of film producing – a lucrative field that is continually growing here in New York City,” said Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley. “This program allows women to be creative and share their stories with their own voice, and I am very proud to have a hand in this initiative.”

NYWIFT will accept film submissions for the program through February 25. To submit, email the link to view your film to events@nywift.org.

In 2015 NYWIFT debuted Immigrant Women: Sharing Our Voices Through Film, as it was then titled, to audience acclaim with highly attended screening events. The series returned in 2016. The non-profit organization, which celebrates and promotes women in film, television and digital media industries, selected approximately 24 films including short docs, fiction shorts, activist films and narratives. A few of those selected films included: *Judith: Portrait of a Street Vendor*, directed by Zahida Pirani; *Claiming Our Voice*, directed by Jennifer Pritheeva Samuel; *Living Quechua*, directed by Christine Mladic Janney; *Entre Nos*, directed by Gloria La Morte and Paola Mendoza; *Don't Tell Anyone/No le Digas a Nadie*, directed by Mikaela Shwer; and *Refugee Kids: One Small School Takes on the World* directed by Renee Silverman and Peter Miller.

Immigrant Stories: Shorts – February 27 Program

***Niñera* (Directed by Diane Wiepert)**

Niñera looks at the bitter ironies many nannies face, raising the children of strangers for a living while their own children are left to virtually raise themselves.

***Poisonberry* (Directed by Alice Neff)**

Poisonberry is a short fiction film about an Asian-American child whose estranged father kidnaps her from her loving, yet reckless young mother. Minnie finds she has to make do on her own as best she can with her complicated love for her mother and her father's ultimate abandonment. *Poisonberry* is about a child who turns a corner after tasting first-hand the plight of struggling adults. The film's title is inspired by a quote from Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*: "...because children are the vessels into which adults pour their poison..."

***Minutes to Say Hi* (Directed by Easmanie Michel)**

Minutes to Say Hi, is a story about a Haitian girl, Maggie, who finds herself transitioning to womanhood shortly after she and her father attempt to establish themselves in the United States while Maggie's mother is left behind in Haiti. In a nonlinear, recollective narrative the story moves fluidly through time revisiting significant moments in Maggie and her Papa's early experience of adjusting to their new life as well as to the glaring absence of Maggie's mother. In a brief series of shots they try to unfold the complexities and challenges of their travels to Ma; of Papa's tribulations in finding in the United States that better life.

***Las Mananitas* (Directed by Gabriella Moses)**

Once upon a time there lived Ana Isabel, a young girl tempted to lose her virginity the night of her Quinceañera, that is, until an unexpected visit from the Virgin Mary in a frying pan gives her some food for thought...

For more information on the event, go to www.nywift.org/ImmigrantFeb27.

About New York Women in Film & Television:

New York Women in Film & Television supports women calling the shots in film, television and digital media. NYWIFT energizes the careers of women in entertainment by illuminating their achievements, providing training and professional development, and advocating for equality.

The preeminent entertainment industry association for women in New York, NYWIFT brings together nearly 2,000 women and men working both above and below the line. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film chapters worldwide, representing more than 10,000 members. NYWIFT produces over 50 innovative programs and special events annually. NYWIFT is a nonprofit, 501c3 public charity, and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

More information can be found online at: www.NYWIFT.org

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