

Headline:

UT welcomes the Southern Circuit Tour

By Genoa Gibson

Caption- New connections: UT will be hosting the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers, produced by South Arts. Filmmakers from all over the United States will be able to present their work to the UT student body.

This year UT will be a venue for the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers, a touring circuit produced by South Arts, a nonprofit organization based out of Atlanta, Georgia. Through an extensive screening process, filmmakers submit their documentaries and narrative style films to be shown at selected venues throughout the South. Sara J. Lauro, assistant professor of English, and Aaron Walker, associate professor of film, animation and new media, worked together to get UT chosen as a venue.

What makes this film screening so unique compared to others is that the filmmakers will be present at each screening for a Q&A, according to the South Arts website. Students will have the opportunity to connect with the filmmakers in a very intimate way and be able to fully immerse themselves in an experience that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to receive at the movies or at home. Meeting face-to-face with a director is especially important, not only to anyone who is interested in film, but anyone who has an interest in learning and becoming more aware of the social issues portrayed in the films.

"While engaging with the filmmakers is particularly important for my students in film," Walker said. "These films' approach and their wide span of topics also help the full community at UT and of Tampa to interact and engage with many crucial, urgent, and fun topics."

Lauro and Walker carefully selected the chosen films to provide good programming across UT. They wanted films that would be able to connect with all the departments on campus and would have some type of relevancy to the student body. Several department at UT joined forces to organize the event, such as the College of Arts and Letters, the Film and Media Arts, the Communication department and the Peace Volunteer center.

There will be six films in total shown over the course of the academic year, three in the fall and three in the spring. The first film, *The Unafraid*, will be shown on Sep. 18 at 6 p.m. in Falk Theatre. This film follows the personal lives of three DACA students in Georgia, a state that has banned them from attending their top state universities and disqualifies them from receiving in-state tuition at any other public college. This film is important because it shows the audience what it means to be an undocumented American in the United States, which is a huge pressing issue facing our government. The Florida Dream Defenders will be in attendance for the film screening to show the audience that there are people in the community who are affected.

"I would say that this is a unique opportunity for our students not only to see great documentaries, but to get some contact with directors working in the field," said Lauro. "As

well as, getting the chance to ask them questions about their process and the pressing social issues of the day.”

The second film that will be shown is *¡Las Sandinistas!*. It will be screened in the Black Box in the Cass Communications Building on Oct. 23 at 6 p.m. This film uncovers the untold stories of women who shattered barriers to lead combat and social reform during Nicaragua’s 1979 Sandinista Revolution. It follows these women who continue to lead the struggle for justice today against their current government’s suppression of women’s rights and democracy.

The last film of the semester, *Farmsteaders*, will be shown at Reeves Theater in Vaughn Center on Nov. 13 at 6 p.m. The film is about a man named Nick who abandoned his career as a food processor engineer at General Mills to return home and resurrect his late grandfather’s dairy farm with the help of his wife and their young family. This film offers an unexpected voice from farmers, who people tend to disregard when thinking about where food comes from.

Since the Southern Circuit pays for all the filmmakers’ travels and the rights to show the film, there is a hefty fee to pay to be a participant. Thanks to a generous grant from the Board of Fellows, UT is able to have the opportunity to present the circuit this year.

While the films may sound serious and heavy, they are also filled with fun and delight, touching on many aspects of life. Be prepared to laugh, cry and think about the world in a different light.

For more information about The Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers check out their website at www.southarts.org