



For Immediate Release  
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## **FIRST TIME FEST**

**CELEBRATING FIRST-TIME FILMMAKERS  
WITH A GRAND PRIZE OF THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION**

**HOSTED BY THE HISTORIC PLAYERS CLUB**

**12 NEW INTERNATIONAL FILMS IN COMPETITION  
Voted On By Industry Professionals & FTF Audience**

**RETROSPECTIVE PROGRAM 'FIRST EXPOSURE'  
PRESENTS DEBUT FILMS BY NOW PROMINENT DIRECTORS**

**PANELS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

*"How They Did It" &  
"Stand Alone! Conversations with the Outstanding"*

**FIRST JOHN HUSTON PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING  
ACHIEVEMENT IN CINEMA TO **DARREN ARONOFSKY****

**Darren Aronofsky, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christine Vachon,  
Hal Hartley, Peter Saraf, Nancy Savoca, Amy Ryan  
and Many Others Expected to Attend & Participate**

**March 1-4, 2013  
THE PLAYERS & LOEWS VILLAGE VII, NYC**

**First Time Fest** (FTF) – a celebration of first time filmmakers – is a new and unique film festival taking place in New York City from March 1 through 4, 2013. Just as Stanley Kubrick had ***KILLER'S KISS***, Darren Aronofsky ***PI***, and John Huston ***THE MALTESE FALCON*** as their first works (all of which will be screened during the festival), **First Time Fest** is set to discover and present the next generation of great cinema artists. The core of the festival is an exciting lineup of twelve international films – from Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Chile, Israel, Mongolia, and the United States, all debut films by promising and provocative directors.

Representing a hybrid between a traditional film festival and a highly motivated audience participation event, FTF will present a dozen **Competition Films**, which will be judged by a panel of industry luminaries *and* the FTF audience. All competition screenings will be followed “hot-seat” discussions between the jury and filmmakers, and all audience members will vote on the films as well. Together, the jury and audience will ultimately select a Grand Prize winner, who will be offered theatrical distribution for their film and full international sales representation from the renowned American film distributor, **Cinema Libre Studio**. It will truly be a contest of the best emerging filmmakers competing for the Ultimate Audience Award.

**First Time Fest** is a four-day, multi-faceted event hosted in New York City's Gramercy Park by the celebrated Players (16 Gramercy Park South), the club founded by Edwin Booth, Mark Twain and John Singer Sargent, the oldest and most exclusive arts organization of its kind whose membership includes the greatest stars of stage and screen. Each of First Time Fest's twelve finalists will receive high-level industry mentorship and a one-year membership to The Players. The Players will be the location for all FTF panels and events as well as the Filmmaker and VIP Lounge. First Time Fest's screenings will be held at the Loews Village VII on Third Avenue (on 11<sup>th</sup> St. & 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave).

Johanna Bennett (daughter of Tony Bennett) and producer/documentarian Mandy Ward, co-founders of First Time Fest, said, “Along with the Players, we are thrilled to be inaugurating First Time Fest and finding and presenting the most exciting new filmmakers from around the globe. We hope to be seeing much more of their work in the years to come. It is a thrill to be present at the beginning of a career, and we expect to follow and support these filmmakers as they flourish and soar.”

In addition to the Competition Films, **First Time Fest** will present ***First Exposure***, a series of first films from now prominent filmmakers. Included among them are ***PI*** (Darren Aronofsky's [attending] first film), ***THE MALTESE FALCON*** (John Huston's debut), ***POISON*** (Todd Haynes' first film which was

produced by then first-time feature producer Christine Vachon [attending]), **JACK GOES BOATING** (Philip Seymour Hoffman's [attending along with actress Amy Ryan] premier effort), **THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH** (Hal Hartley's [attending] debut), **TRUE LOVE** (Nancy Savoca's [attending] debut) and **KILLER'S KISS** (Stanley Kubrick's first [with star Chris Chase attending]).

**First Exposure** will also include a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tribute to Morris Engel's **THE LITTLE FUGITIVE**, a cinema vérité classic from 1953 that was shot on Coney Island and has inspired countless filmmakers, from Jean-Luc Godard to the Coen brothers. The tribute will be moderated by renowned film historian Foster Hirsch and will include Morris Engel's daughter, Mary Engel (*Ruth Orkin: Frames Of Life*).

**First Time Fest** will also include a series of panels called "**How They Did It**," in which a diverse group of award-winning filmmakers will moderate filmmaking case studies and spotlight some of the most successful and accomplished masters of the industry. Panels will include: **Switch Hitters**: Actors, Producers, Writers & Others Who Direct; **Sell, Baby, Sell**: Marketing Independent Films; **From Rock To Score**: Contemporary Musicians Who Become Film Composers; **Across The Border**: International Filmmakers Come to America; and **A Critical Eye**: Critics and their Role in Discovering New Filmmakers. There will also be several "**Stand Alone!** –Conversations with the Outstanding," one-on-one interviews with notable cinema artists. Participants in these programs will be announced shortly.

**First Time Fest** will present the first **John Huston Award for Achievement in Cinema**. The inaugural Award will be bestowed on an individual who has made a significant contribution to the art of cinema: **Darren Aronofsky**, the Brooklyn-born director of *Black Swan*, *The Wrestler*, *The Fountain*, *Requiem for a Dream*, *Pi*, and the upcoming *Noah*. As a director, writer and producer, Aronofsky embodies the spirit of John Huston – one of America's greatest filmmakers (*THE MALTESE FALCON*, *THE AFRICAN QUEEN*, *TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE*, *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE*, *THE DEAD*) and carries on his legacy. Mr. Huston was an esteemed member of The Players (his membership in the Club was sponsored by his friend and colleague, Humphrey Bogart), and the Award will be presented in The Players ballroom at FTF's Closing Night Awards Gala.

### **First Time Fest - Cinema Libre Grand Prize**

The winning film will be the recipient of a theatrical release by Cinema Libre Studio. Distribution plans would include at least one major city (New York or Los Angeles) with the option for platform expansion as well as DVD, digital release and international sales representation. Cinema Libre Studio is a leader in distributing social-issue documentaries and features by passionate filmmakers. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the Cinema Libre team has released

over one hundred films including the Sundance Audience Award-Winning FUEL, THE END OF POVERTY?, and Oliver Stone's SOUTH OF THE BORDER. The studio is developing John Perkins' best-selling memoirs, CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN, into a major motion picture. For more information and updates, please visit: [www.cinematolibrestudio.com](http://www.cinematolibrestudio.com).

## **COMPETITION FILMS**

**BLUMENTHAL** - *New York Premiere*. USA, 86 minutes. Written and directed by Seth Fisher. With Fisher, Brian Cox, Mark Blum, Laila Robins, Mei Melançon.

Can oversized egos and romance peacefully co-exist in modern-day New York? Manhattan neuroses gets a fresh, bracing new twist in Seth Fisher's delightfully acerbic *Blumenthal*. The death of playwright Harold Blumenthal (Brian Cox) sets in motion a tangled web of family and relationship drama in a polished film distinguished by Zak Mulligan's crystalline cinematography, a strong ensemble cast, and multi-talented Seth Fisher's razor-sharp script.

**HEADFIRST (LA TETE LA PREMIERE)** - *U.S. Premiere*. Belgium/France, 89 minutes. Written and directed by Amélie van Elmbt. With Alice de Lencquesaing, David Murgia, Jacques Doillon.

Two attractive teens meet while hitchhiking across Belgium. Deceptively simple and beautifully made, Amélie van Elmbt's quietly and deeply observed coming-of-age road movie, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, will linger long after it is seen, thanks to its remarkable lead performances. Rising star Alice de Lencquesaing (familiar from films by Olivier Assayas and Mia Hansen-Løve) won Best Actress at Montreal's Festival du Nouveau Cinema for this role, and David Murgia won the Belgian Magritte award for Most Promising Actor.

**HORIZON SKY** - *World Premiere*. Belarus, 133 mins. Written and directed by Dmitry Martin, Andrey Kureychik. With Leonid Pashkovsky, Tatyana Bovkalova, Viktor Rybchinsky, Anna Sirotina.

An exciting discovery from an unlikely corner of the world, *Horizon Sky* is the first independent feature film from Belarus in a decade. Its theme — the generational battle between rebellion and oppression, played out in the arena of sex and rock music — is universal. *Horizon Sky* tells a keenly dramatized story about a young musician stricken with AIDS who battles discrimination and addiction.

**I LOVE YOU ALL (LOS QUIERO A TODOS)** - *U.S. Premiere*. Argentina, 75 mins. Written, directed, and produced by Luciano Quillici. With Ramiro Aguero, Santiago Gobemori, Diego Jalfen, Valeria Louis, Leticia Mazur, Margarita Molfino, Alan Sabbagh.

Imagine some combination of Lawrence Kasdan's *The Big Chill* and François Truffaut's *Day For Night*, and you'll have some idea of the exceptional nature of Luciano Quillici's lyrical and contemplative *I Love You All*. A group of thirty-something friends reunite for a trip to the country where they mull over lost opportunities and their disaffection with the present, in this accomplished film that offers further proof that Argentina is one of the most exciting hotbeds in world cinema today.

**JUNCTION** - USA, 90 mins. Written and directed by Tony Glazer. With Tom Pelphrey, Neal Bledsoe, Harris Doran, Summer Crockett Moore, Anthony Rapp, David Zayas, Michael O'Keefe

A group of junkies get more than they bargained for when they rob the house of a man who turns out to be a pedophile. Gritty urban drama? No... the intense action in Tony Glazer's riveting drama, with a dynamite ensemble cast including *Rent* star Anthony Rapp and *SMASH* actor Neal Bledsoe, takes place in the idyllic upscale neighborhood of Verterra Hill, a community full of manicured lawns and sprawling colonials. Along the way, hard choices must be made, and the only certainty is that all decisions come with a price.

**MONGOLIAN BLING** - *U.S. Premiere*. Australia/Mongolia, 90 mins. Documentary, directed by Benj Binks.

In an ancient country undergoing a 21<sup>st</sup>-century identity crisis, hip-hop music is at the center of a thriving music scene in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Beyond the customary bling of babes, cars, and jewels lie the remnants of a dying culture. Benj Binks' lively documentary looks at the fascinating tension between Mongolia's rich musical history and modern-day beats and rhymes.

**SAL** - *New York Premiere*. Chile/Argentina, 112 mins. Written and directed by Diego Rougier. With Fele Martínez, Patricio Contreras, Sergio Hernández, Javiera Contador.

A Spanish film director obsessed with making a western in Chile travels south to find a story that will salvage his screenplay; a case of mistaken identity makes him a marked man. This gorgeous widescreen film pays loving homage to Sergio Leone while playfully subverting the western genre.

**SUBMERGE** - *World Premiere*. Australia, 90 mins. Directed by Sophie O'Connor. With Lily Hall, Christina Hallett, Kevin Dee, Georgia Bolton.

In Sophie O'Connor's absorbing, sensual drama, an ambitious, beautiful and tightly wound history student – who is also an Olympics-bound swimmer – falls in love with the girlfriend of her thesis advisor. The protagonist is surprisingly drawn into a sexual underworld and is submerged in feelings that she doesn't understand. Lily Hall's performance powerfully captures the transformation in this memorable "Generation Y" love story.

**SUMMERTIME** - *New York Premiere*. USA, 90 mins. Written and directed by Max Weissberg. With Lethia Nall, Eric Garcia, Rob Hollander, H.R. Britton, James Eason, Jenny Grace, Olivia Horton, Michele Cesari.

Two actresses are unknowingly cast in the same role; and that is just the starting point for one of the most enchanting and witty romantic New York roundelays in recent memory. Talented debut writer/director Max Weissberg follows furtive attempts at friendship, love, and sex among eight people including Julia, an actress who lands the role of Anya, daughter of a Russian arms dealer and an unconventional director who thinks she must truly become Anya. This graceful, multilayered film knowingly examines the nature of performance in our “real” lives.

**UPRISING** – USA/Egypt, 85 mins. Documentary directed by Fredrik Stanton.

As timely as today’s headlines, with the added element of historical context and thoughtful analysis, *Uprising* is a vivid and much-needed documentary that captures the drama, chaos, and complexity of a revolution in the making. Produced by an extraordinary Academy Award-winning team including the executive producer of *TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE* and the editor of *INSIDE JOB*, *Uprising* looks at the inside story of the Egyptian revolution from the perspective of its principal leaders and organizers, including four Nobel Peace Prize nominees.

**URBAN TALE** - U.S. Premiere. Israel, 90 mins. Written and directed by Eliav Lilti. With Barak Friedman, Noa Friedman, Esti Yerushalmi, Zohar Shtrauss, Ohad Knoller, Michal Shtamler.

After the death of their mother, an incestuous brother and sister search for their father who abandoned them as infants. Eliav Lilti’s startling, audacious, and surprisingly polished micro-budget feature film could seem unbelievable — if it wasn’t based on a true story. A series of to-the-camera dialogues and explicit sex scenes, with a dry sense of humor and captivating performances, *URBAN TALE* heralds the emergence of an important new director, and perhaps a new direction for Israeli cinema.

**ZIPPER** - USA, 77 mins. Documentary directed by Amy Nicholson.

The eternal showdown between old-fashioned urban tradition and modern commercial development is played out on an unlikely battlefield—the beloved Zipper ride at Coney Island—in Amy Nicholson’s thoroughly entertaining and engaging new documentary. In 2007, a real estate mogul and the Bloomberg administration begin rezoning the amusement park within an inch of its life. Nicholson paints an intriguing portrait of one of New York City’s last cultural enclaves on the cusp of gentrification.

**Tickets & Passes For First Time Fest:**

**Single Ticket Pricing** – Screenings – \$15.00 (Competition & *First Exposure*).

20% discount (\$12.00) for Students and Members of the Museum of the Moving Image, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Film Forum, IFP, the Players, and Motion Picture Industry Unions & Guilds, including SAG, DGA, WGA, ICG, MPEG).

**FTF Presents: Panels & Conversations** – \$12.00 (*How They Did It, Stand Alone!* and 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tribute to ***THE LITTLE FUGITIVE***).

\$10.00 for Students and Members of the Museum of the Moving Image, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Film Forum, IFP, the Players and Motion Picture Industry Unions & Guilds, including SAG, DGA, WGA, ICG, MPEG)

### **Passes**

All-Access Pass – \$500 (Galas, Screenings, *FTF Presents* Panels, Conversations, Tributes), Access to Filmmaker Lounge

25% (\$350) Discount for Students and Members of the Museum of the Moving Image, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Film Forum, IFP, the Players and Motion Picture Industry Unions & Guilds, including SAG, DGA, WGA, ICG, MPEG), GiltGroup, Living Social, Groupon, Theatre Mania, etc.

**Insiders Pass** – \$150 (All Screenings & Panels)

\$100 for Students and Members of the Museum of the Moving Image, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Film Forum, IFP, the Players and Motion Picture Industry Unions & Guilds, including SAG, DGA, WGA, ICG, MPEG)

**Gramercy Pass** (Panels Only) – \$75 (\$50 for discount groups)

**Programmers Pass** (Screenings Only)– \$75 (\$50 for discount groups)

Tickets can be purchased online at: [www.FirstTimeFest.com](http://www.FirstTimeFest.com)

**Also at the Loews Box-Office and The Players headquarters during First Time Fest**

Johanna Bennett and Mandy Ward are the co-founders of **First Time Fest**. As an accomplished philanthropist, actor and social entrepreneur, as well as the daughter of singer Tony Bennett, Johanna Bennett has immersed herself within the entertainment and artistic community her entire life. Mandy Ward has worked in the film industry for the past decade in varied capacities, namely as a film producer of several projects. Mitch Levine, CEO of The Film Festival Group, is producing the festival. Through his company, Mitch offers consulting services and expertise to film festivals, film commissions, distribution companies and filmmakers around the world, and was formerly the CEO and Executive Director

of the renowned Palm Springs International Film Festival. The Festival's Director of Programming is David Schwartz, the Chief Curator of Museum of the Moving Image.

For Additional Information, Press Accreditation, Feature/Review/Interview Consideration, Art, etc., for First Time Fest: Please Contact:  
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