

Upcoming 2014 San Diego Film Festival to feature a variety of screenings, events

BY JEANNE FERRIS

The San Diego Film Festival is gearing up for five days of exciting U.S. premieres — and some are world premieres of groundbreaking independent films by emerging filmmakers, local and international.

More than 1,500 films were submitted and only 100 titles were selected to screen Sept. 24-28 at Gaslamp's Reading Theater and La Jolla's Arclight Cinemas. Q&A panels will follow the films, which can include actors, directors, writers and producers. This interactive experience is what makes the festival special for film lovers.

"San Diego Film Foundation (host of the festival) is an educational and nonprofit which was created with a purpose and a passion. Our purpose is to put San Diego on the motion picture industry map. And our passion is independent film," said Dale Strack, chairman and CEO.

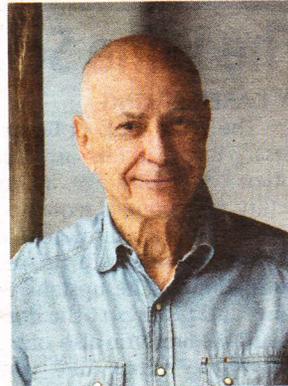
Three-time Oscar winner "12 Years A Slave" opened the festival last year. This year, "Wild" starring Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern will open the festival and "You're Not You" starring Hilary Swank, Emmy Rossum and Josh Duhamel will close the festival. Duhamel will be in attendance for the screening and Q&A panel.

Leading the program are gala presentation screenings, which include Lynn Shelton's "Laggies" starring Chloë Grace Moretz, Keira Knightley and Sam Rockwell, Philippe Falardeau's "The Good Lie" starring Reese Witherspoon, Morten Tyldum's "The Imitation Game" starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley, and Antoine Fuqua's "The Equalizer" starring Denzel Washington, Michael Csokas and Chloë Grace Moretz.

"This year, we have implemented a state-of-the-art ticketing system that offers VIP passholders, first priority selection before the general public — to pre-select films, panels or parties," said Stephanie Inesco, SDFE producer.

VIP passholders also have the opportunity to mingle with filmmakers and celebrities on the red carpet and at private parties such as the Opening Night party, Almost Famous party and the Filmmaker Awards party.

"One of our signature events is Variety's Night of the Stars: A Tribute at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Arts," said Tonya Mantooth, Emmy-award winning producer, and vice president and director of programming at SDFE. "This year we are honoring Alan Arkin, a 45-year veteran of screen and stage with the inaugural Gregory Peck award cre-



Honoree Alan Arkin

ated by his daughter, Cecilia Peck, for an individual who has made a significant contribution to the world of filmmaking. This show will also be moderated by renowned movie critic Jeffrey Lyons."

The festival offers features in all genres, documentaries and shorts, which are short stories and shorter than feature films. These are usually funded by film grants, nonprofit organizations or out-of-pocket funds. They may also qualify for the Oscars, which are bestowed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

For a complete list of scheduled screenings and passholder opportunities, visit www.sdfilmfest.com.