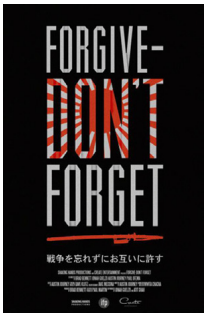
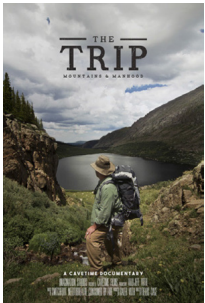


Gallup Film Festival diverse film lineup

Written by Staff Reports
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There's something for everyone

Whether you prefer features, documentaries, shorts, or foreign made films, there's something for everyone to enjoy at the Gallup Film Festival Sept. 14 -16.

It's a lineup that showcases some of the best and brightest talent in the independent filmmaking industry.

Thursday evening debuts with the long-anticipated film the "Watchman's Canoe." Filmmaker Berri Chase teased festival-goers with a sampling of the film she was currently shooting at the time of last year's festival. And she's back, post-production, with her star lineup in tow.

Starring Adam Beach and Roger Willie, along with a ray of sunshine lead Kiri Goodson, it's 1969, and the film's protagonist Jett is a fair skinned Native American girl struggling to fit in with her peers on the reservation.

After summoning the trees to shield her from her bullies, she realizes her special connection with the surrounding nature. With the help of a tribal Watchman (Roger Willie), she embarks on a spiritual journey to discover her destiny.

And there's some more Native American flair at the festival, featuring the film "Dig It If You Can," a short documentary by Kyle Bell, which explores the mind and art of Native American renaissance man, Steven Paul Judd (Choctaw/Kiowa).

In keeping in step with the indigenous theme, “Inside the Labyrinth” takes movie-goers on a journey into the lands of the Tohono O’odham indigenous people, located at the border between the American State of Arizona and the Mexican State of Sonora.

The film follows individuals from this community, who contemplate the meaning of identity, indigenous sovereignty, immigration, borders and fear. Directed by Caroline D’hondt, the film takes viewers to the heart of a migration zone, where military presence is increasing and where walls are being erected.

As the film transports viewers, it tells a story that echoes throughout the world, as states pursue policies of isolation and militarization to ensure their security. It is a journey to the center of the labyrinth.

Shifting gears, for the outdoorsy types, the documentary directed by Fields Cage, “The Trip: Mountains & Manhood,” tells the story of Jeff Voth, who for the past 35 years has led his sons and other groups of men on an annual backpacking trip into the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

“The Trip” has become a legendary, masculine benchmark. Learning life-skills, trout fishing, extreme physical fatigue and the sharing of deep heart-felt secrets in a sometimes beautiful, sometimes terrifying alpine backdrop has etched this event indelibly into these men’s lives. They would each tell you that they have been forever changed – that they have been forged into a deeper and healthier masculine place – that they have become better men because of The Trip.

On the darker side of global history, the film “Forgive-Don’t Forget” explores Japan’s surrender at the end of World War II, and the numerous swords confiscated by American officers. In order to better understand the past and build a bridge between cultures in the present, a filmmaker attempts to return one of these surrendered swords to its original owner

And on the lighter, sentimental side, in the “Road Less Traveled,” Charlotte (Lauren Alaina) is struggling to balance her songwriting career and planning her upcoming wedding. After trying on countless wedding dresses, she knows the only one that’s right for her is her mother’s dress,

which is at her grandmother's house in Harmony, Tennessee.

With her two best friends in tow, Charlotte journeys from Los Angeles back to her hometown to ask her grandmother for the dress. But once there, she runs into her ex-boyfriend and starts to wonder what life would have been like if she had never left Harmony. At this fork in the road, Charlotte will have to choose which path is right for her in "Road Less Traveled."

These are just a few of the random snapshots of off the grid, fabulous films that made this year's cut. Check out the schedule and pick *your* "block" of favorite films to watch at the El Morro Theatre and Events Center this Friday and Saturday.