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ASPEN FILM ANNOUNCES 39TH ASPEN FILMFEST PROGRAM

More than 20 notable films from the international festival circuit to screen from Sept. 25-30, 2018

Aspen Film to welcome 'Beautiful Boy' director Felix Van Groeningen and present the Belgian filmmaker with the reinstated 'Independent by Nature Award'

Aspen, Colo. (August 29, 2018) — Aspen Film announced today its program for the 39th Aspen Filmfest, which runs September 25-30, 2018 at the Wheeler Opera House and Isis Theatre in Aspen and the Crystal Theatre in Carbondale.

Timed to the spectacular fall color in the Rocky Mountains, Aspen Film presents a six-day celebration of independent and crossover cinema for locals and visitors alike to the Roaring Fork Valley's awe-inspiring alpine locale. Showcases of award-winning features and documentaries from around the world along with previews of starry studio releases are punctuated by filmmaker guests, in-depth discussions and education offerings.

"We are fortunate to have had so many phenomenal and accoladed films available to us this year for Filmfest, and we could not be more proud to share these with the Aspen community," says Aspen Film executive director and Aspen Filmfest artistic director Susan Wrubel. "The slate that came together allows stories of amazing people and circumstances to be shared. I am inspired, awed and humbled by our program."

Howard (Stone Circle Pictures) officially launches the festival on Tuesday, September 25 (2:30pm) at the Isis Theatre and will welcome director Don Hahn in-person for a Q&A. The documentary, which shares the untold story of Howard Ashman, the brilliant lyricist behind Disney classics like *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Little Mermaid*, will be followed by the "Behind the Magic with Don Hahn" panel discussion in the Wheeler Opera House Lobby on Wednesday, September 26 (10:30am).

Opening night continues at the Wheeler Opera House (5:30pm) with **Cold War (Amazon Studios)**, a passionate love story of a man and a woman who meet in the ruins of postwar Poland, which earned director Paweł Pawlikowski the Best Director Award at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year.

Widows (Twentieth Century Fox) will anchor festivities as the Opening Night feature presentation (8:15pm) directed by Steve McQueen and starring Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, Cynthia Erivo, Colin Farrell, Robert Duvall and Liam Neeson. The film is preceded by an Opening Night Reception (7:00pm-8:00pm) in the Wheeler Opera House Lobby generously sponsored by *The Aspen Times*.

This year, Aspen Film is proud to reinstate the **Independent by Nature Award**, which celebrates maverick film talent who break the mold within the realm of independent filmmaking. Producer Bob Rafelson was the first recipient of the award in 1999, which ultimately came to honor mid-career achievements, primarily for actors, but also for talent behind the camera. Past notable recipients include Anjelica Huston, Michael Douglas, William H. Macy, Harrison Ford and Stanley Tucci.

“A cornerstone of our mission is to showcase new work from groundbreaking directors as well as highlighting career achievements from seasoned and stalwart filmmakers. This year we have the pleasure and privilege to not only present *Beautiful Boy*, the latest work from Belgian director **Felix Van Groeningen** as our Closing Night presentation, but are also honored to present him with the Aspen Film Independent by Nature Award for his breakthrough achievement in directing,” says Wrubel.

Van Groeningen has directed six feature films since 2004, and *Broken Circle Breakdown* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Oscar in 2014. The culmination of the 39th Aspen Filmfest, ***Beautiful Boy (Amazon Studios)*** screens on Sunday, September 30 (5:00pm) at the Wheeler Opera House with a Q&A and Independent by Nature Award presentation immediately following.

TICKETS:

Tickets will go on sale to the public Wednesday, September 12. Advance tickets are available for purchase for Aspen Film members beginning Friday, September 7. All tickets (\$15 for Aspen Film members, \$20 general admission; \$25 for Aspen Film members, \$30 general admission for Opening and Closing Night features) are available through Aspen Show Tickets at the Wheeler Opera House Box Office (320 E. Hyman Ave., 970-920-5770, aspenshowtix.com). Tickets for Carbondale shows are also available in-person at Bonfire Coffee (433 Main St., 970-510-5327).

New this year, Aspen Film will offer a **Flex Pass** (\$350) valid for 10 ticket vouchers during any one of Aspen Film’s signature film festivals and includes a year-round membership, which offers additional benefits such as advance ticket purchase privileges and special-discounts. **VIP and Priority Pass** options are also now available to new and current members.

A **Super Screener Pass** (\$150) for young professionals (35 & under) is also available, which includes access to all programs, panels and receptions.

For the complete program and to purchase Aspen Filmfest passes or a year-round Aspen Film membership, visit aspenfilm.org.

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39TH ASPEN FILMFEST PROGRAM

FILM PRESENTATIONS:

HOWARD (Directed by Don Hahn, USA, 2018, 93 minutes)

Tuesday, September 25, 2:30pm, Isis Theatre, Q&A to follow

The untold story of Howard Ashman, the brilliant lyricist behind Disney classics like *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid* and creator of musicals including *Little Shop of Horrors*, whose unparalleled career and vibrant life were cut short by the AIDS epidemic at only 39 years old.

COLD WAR (Directed by Pawel Pawlikowski, Poland, 2018, 90 minutes)

Tuesday, September 25, 5:30pm, Wheeler Opera House

Cold War is a passionate love story of a man and a woman who meet in the ruins of postwar Poland. With different backgrounds and temperaments, they are fatally mismatched and yet fatefully condemned to each other. Living during the Cold War in the 1950s in Poland, Berlin, Yugoslavia, and Paris, the couple are separated by politics, character flaws, and unfortunate twists of fate — an impossible love story in impossible times.

WIDOWS (Directed by Steve McQueen, USA, 2018, 128 minutes)

Tuesday, September 25, 8:15pm, Wheeler Opera House

From Academy Award®-winning director Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*) and co-writer and best-selling author Gillian Flynn (*Gone Girl*) comes a blistering, modern-day thriller set against the backdrop of crime, passion and corruption. *Widows* is the story of four women with nothing in common except a debt left behind by their dead husbands’ criminal activities. Set in contemporary Chicago, amid a time of

turmoil, tensions build when Veronica (Oscar® winner Viola Davis), Linda (Michelle Rodriguez), Alice (Elizabeth Debicki) and Belle (Cynthia Erivo) take their fate into their own hands and conspire to forge a future on their own terms.

PICK OF THE LITTER (Directed by Don Hardy Jr., Dana Nachman, USA, 2018, 81 minutes)

Wednesday, September 26, 12:00pm, Isis Theatre

Pick of the Litter follows a litter of puppies from the moment they're born until they begin their quest to become guide dogs for the blind. Cameras follow these pups through an intense two-year odyssey as they train to become dogs whose ultimate responsibility is to protect their blind partners from harm. Along the way, these remarkable animals rely on a community of dedicated individuals who train them to do amazing, life-changing things in the service of their humans. The stakes are high and not every dog can make the cut. Only the best of the best.

EVERYBODY KNOWS (Directed by Asghar Farhadi, France, Spain, Italy 2018, 133 minutes)

Wednesday, September 26, 2:30pm, Isis Theatre

Friday, September 28, 7:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

This film follows Laura (Penélope Cruz) and her two children on their travels from Argentina to her small hometown in Spain for her sister's wedding. Amid the joyful reunion and festivities — including a reconnection with an ex-lover Paco (Javier Bardem) — the eldest daughter is abducted. In the tense days that follow, various family and community tensions surface, and deeply hidden secrets are revealed.

3 DAYS 2 NIGHTS* (Directed by John Breen, USA, 2018, 80 minutes)

Wednesday, September 26, 5:30pm, Wheeler Opera House, Q&A to follow

Saturday, September 29, 5:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

Imagine the defining moment of your life. Then imagine never talking about it with anyone. In 1974, Mark and Andy Godfrey went on a family ski vacation to Aspen, Colo. The plane they were traveling in crashed, taking the lives of their parents, brother and sister. Mark and Andy, who were 11 and 8 years old at the time of the accident, respectively, survived three days and two nights in the frigid mountains. For nearly 40 years they rarely discussed the crash, even between themselves. Finally, the brothers confront and come to grips with the tragic event that changed their lives forever. Their story is one of cathartic discovery in hopes that twin beacons of love can reconcile such a tragedy. **Work in progress*

THE SISTERS BROTHERS (Directed by Jacques Audiard, France, 2017, 121 minutes)

Wednesday, September 26, 8:15pm, Wheeler Opera House

Saturday, September 29, 7:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

Based on Patrick deWitt's acclaimed novel of the same name, this film follows two brothers—Eli (John C. Reilly) and Charlie (Joaquin Phoenix) Sisters—who are hired to kill a prospector who has stolen from their boss while a detective Morris (Jake Gyllenhaal) follows a pursuit of his own. The story, a genre-hybrid with comedic elements, takes place in Oregon in 1851.

THE PRICE OF FREE (Directed by Derek Doneen, USA, 2018, 92 minutes)

Thursday, September 27, 12:00pm, Isis Theatre

Sunday, September 30, 5:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

From producers Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*, *He Named Me Malala*), Sarah Anthony and rising director Derek Doneen comes *The Price of Free*, a suspenseful yet intimate look at one man's groundbreaking crusade to liberate every child possible. Kailash Satyarthi's kinetic journey through secret raids and quests for missing kids shows how refusing to accept an unacceptable status quo can create sweeping change. Gripping as it is, the film is also the story of spirited children who, released from a nightmare, latch onto a second chance for joy with all they've got. It is the kids rescues, who prove the absolute necessity of what Satyarthi does: giving hope to the world one child at a time.

THE INVISIBLES (Directed by Claus Räfle, Germany, 2017, 110 minutes)

Thursday, September 27, 2:00pm, Isis Theatre

Hanni, Cioama, Eugen and Ruth, four ordinary German youths trying to navigate the scarcities and prohibitions of Berlin at the height of World War II, hailed from different social classes and different neighborhoods but shared a single common secret: they were Jews. While Goebbels infamously declared Berlin “free of Jews” in 1943, some 1,700 managed to survive in Nazism’s capital until liberation. Claus Räfle’s gripping docudrama traces the stories of four real-life survivors who learned that sometimes the best place to hide is in plain sight. While moving between cinemas, cafés, and safehouses, they dodged Gestapo and a dense network of spies and informants, knowing that certain death was just one mistake away. Masterfully weaving the different story threads together, *The Invisibles* is a testament to the resourcefulness, willpower, and sheer chance that permit us to survive against incredible odds.

LEAVE NO TRACE (Directed by Debra Granik, USA, 2017, 109 minute)

Thursday, September 27, 5:00pm, Wheeler Opera House, Q&A and panel to follow

After years living in the wildlands near Portland, Will (Ben Foster) and his daughter, Tom (Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie) are suddenly forced back into traditional housing. After trying to adapt to their new surroundings, and clashing with each other as Tom begins to explore her own dreams, they embark on a journey back to the wild.

COLETTE (Directed by Wash Westmoreland, United Kingdom, 2017, 112 minutes)

Thursday, September 27, 8:30pm, Wheeler Opera House

Based on a true story, Colette (Keira Knightley) writes a series of novels that spark a cultural sensation published under her husband’s name. After years of suppression, she fights to challenge gender norms and make her voice known.

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ON HER SHOULDERS (Directed by Alexandria Bombach, USA, 2018, 94 minutes)

Friday, September 28, 12:00pm, Isis Theatre

Twenty-three-year-old Nadia Murad’s life is a dizzying array of exhausting undertakings—from giving testimony before the UN to visiting refugee camps to participating in soul-baring media interviews and one-on-one meetings with top government officials. With deep compassion and a formal precision and elegance that matches Nadia’s calm and steely demeanor, filmmaker Alexandria Bombach follows this strong-willed young woman, who survived the 2014 genocide of the Yazidis in northern Iraq and escaped ISIS to become a relentless beacon of hope for her people, even when at times she longs to lay aside this monumental burden and simply have an ordinary life.

THIS MOUNTAIN LIFE (Directed by Grant Baldwin, Canada, 2018, 77 minutes)

Friday, September 28, 2:30pm, Isis Theatre, Q&A to follow

Friday, September 28, 5:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

The awe that mountainous landscapes evoke is universal, yet few ever venture into true wilderness. Living among us is a special breed of people for whom the draw of the mountains is so strong that their lives must revolve around it. Martina Halik and her 60-year-old mother Tania attempt a bitterly cold 2300-kilometer ski trek from Canada to Alaska through the treacherous Coast Mountains. Woven throughout their adventure are vignettes of others who have chosen this life: a group of nuns inhabiting a mountain retreat to be closer to God, a photographer who is later buried in an avalanche, an impassioned alpinist, a focused snow artist, a couple who have been living off grid in the mountains for nearly 50 years. *This Mountain Life* is a riveting and intimate portrait of human passion set high in the peaks of British Columbia.

WHAT THEY HAD (Directed by Elizabeth Chomko, USA, 2017, 101 minutes)

Friday, September 28, 5:30pm, Wheeler Opera House

At her brother’s (Michael Shannon) urging, Bridget (Hilary Swank) returns home to deal with her ailing mother (Blythe Danner) and her father’s (Robert Forster) reluctance to let go of their life together.

MOMENTUM GENERATION (Directed by Jeff Zimbalist, Michael Zimbalist, USA, 2018, 103 minutes)
Friday, September 28, 8:15pm, Wheeler Opera House, Q&A to follow
Sunday, September 30, 7:30pm, Crystal Theatre in Carbondale

Momentum Generation is a feature-length documentary about the deep friendships that were formed and tested among surfing's most legendary crew, including Kelly Slater, Rob Machado, Shane Dorian, Taylor Knox, Benji Weatherley, Kalani Robb, Ross Williams and Pat O'Connell. After leaving their families in their early teens to live crammed together in a house on the North Shore of Oahu, they courageously followed each other into Mother Nature's most dangerous waves...and when some of them didn't make it back to shore, together they found a way to mourn and adapt. Fueled by camaraderie — but even more by a deep-seated competitiveness — this tight-knit crew became known as the "Momentum Generation" after being featured in Taylor Steele's groundbreaking surf films. They went on to win world titles, break records, and redefine the world's perception of the surfer, of youth culture, and of what it means to be free.

KUSAMA: INFINITY (Directed by Heather Lenz, USA, 2018, 76 minutes)
Saturday, September 29, 2:00pm, Isis Theatre, Q&A to follow

Now the top-selling female artist in the world, Yayoi Kusama overcame impossible odds to bring her radical artistic vision to the world stage. People around the globe are experiencing her installation *In nity Mirrored Rooms* in record numbers. After working as an artist for over six decades, Kusama continues to create new work every day.

SHOPLIFTERS (Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda, Japan, 2018, 121 minutes)
Saturday, September 29, 4:30pm, Wheeler Opera House

After one of their shoplifting sessions, Osamu and his son come across a little girl in the freezing cold. At first reluctant to shelter the girl, Osamu's wife agrees to take care of her after learning of the hardships she faces. Although the family is poor, barely making enough money to survive through petty crime, they seem to live happily together until an unforeseen incident reveals hidden secrets, testing the bonds that unite them.

STUDIO 54 (Directed by Matt Tyrnauer, USA, 2018, 98 minutes)
Saturday, September 29, 7:15pm, Wheeler Opera House, Q&A to follow

For 33 months, from 1977 to 1980, the nightclub Studio 54 was the place to be seen in Manhattan. A haven of hedonism, tolerance, glitz, and glamour, Studio 54 was very hard to gain entrance to and impossible to ignore, with news of who was there filling the gossip columns daily. Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager, two college friends from Brooklyn, succeeded in creating the ultimate escapist fantasy in the heart of the theater district. Studio 54 was an instant success and a cash cow, but the drug-and-sex-fueled dream soon imploded in financial scandal and the club's demise. With unprecedented access to Schrager, who tells the whole unvarnished story for the first time, and a treasure trove of rare footage, director Matt Tyrnauer (*Valentino: The Last Emperor*, *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood*) constructs a vivid, glorious portrait of a disco-era phenomenon, and tells the story of two friends who stuck together through an incredible series of highs and lows.

SPIRITED AWAY (Directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Kirk Wise, Japan, 2001, 125 minutes)
Sunday, September 30, 11:00am, Isis Theatre, Milk & Cookies to follow

Wandering through an abandoned carnival site, ten-year-old Chihiro is separated from her parents and stumbles into a dreamlike spirit world where she is put to work in a bathhouse for the gods, a place where all kinds of nonhuman beings come to refresh, relax, and recharge. Here she encounters a vast menagerie of impossibly inventive characters—shape-shifting phantoms and spirits, some friendly, some less so—and must find the inner strength to outsmart her captors and return to her family. Combining Japanese mythology with *Through the Looking Glass*-type whimsy, *Spirited Away* cemented Miyazaki's reputation as an icon of inspired animation and wondrous, lyrical storytelling.

SECRET SCREENING (AN ASPEN FILMFEST SURPRISE FILM TRADITION)
Sunday, September 30, 2:00pm, Isis Theatre

**BEAUTIFUL BOY (Directed by Felix Van Groeningen, USA, 2018, 110 minutes)
Sunday, September 30, 5:00pm, Wheeler Opera House, Q&A and Independent by Nature Award
presentation to follow**

Based on the bestselling pair of memoirs by father and son David (Steve Carrell) and Nic Sheff (Timothée Chalamet), Felix Van Groeningen's film chronicles the heartbreaking and inspiring experience of survival, relapse, and recovery in a family coping with addiction over many years.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS:

BEHIND THE MAGIC WITH DON HAHN

Wednesday, September 26, 10:30am, Wheeler Opera House Lobby

Don Hahn, the producer of classic Disney films like *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Maleficent*, and more, pulls back the curtain on his work to share the behind-the-scenes stories that make the magic happen. Illustrating his talk with incredible film clips from his projects, Don talks about the creative process and the highs and lows of a life in storytelling. *Tickets: Free for Aspen Film members, \$20 general admission*

FROM BOOK TO BIG SCREEN: LEAVE NO TRACE

Thursday, September 27, 7:00pm, Wheeler Opera House

Sponsored by Aspen Words

What are the artistic challenges and rewards of translating literature into cinema? Following the screening of *Leave No Trace* (5:00pm), Aspen Words executive director **Adrienne Brodeur** will get the inside story from producer **Linda Reisman** and **Peter Rock**, author of *My Abandonment*, the award-winning novel upon which the film is based. First captivated by Rock's novel while working as an editor in New York, Brodeur acquired it for publisher Houghton Mifflin. She later gave the book to Reisman, who knew it had to be made into a film. Hear why this story was so compelling to novelist, editor and filmmaker and go behind the scenes to discover its fascinating journey from book to big screen. *Tickets: \$20 for Aspen Film and Aspen Words members, \$25 general admission (film and panel); \$15 general admission (panel only)*

DOCUMENTARY: TAKING IT TO THE EXTREME

Saturday, September 29, 10:30am, Wheeler Opera House Lobby

There's something about nature and the outdoors that compels people to extremes—to conquer mountains, swim and surf oceans, and cover the vast space around us on foot, on skis, through water, on boards, or by climbing up, over or through. *Momentum Generation* and *This Mountain Life* are unique documentaries that introduce us to groups of wildly determined individuals whose lives have become intertwined with nature—all of the subjects in both films have pushed limits, lived outside the norm, followed their passion and embraced the elements. These are extreme people with extraordinary dedication and motivation. Filmmakers **Jeff and Michael Zimbalist** get into the minds of some of the world's top pro surfers, a group of friends who, as adults, reflect on the complexity of the brotherhood and competition that shaped their shared emotional journey and made them pioneers both heroic and human. **Grant Baldwin** introduces us to climbers who push themselves not only physically but mentally to achieve what is for many unthinkable. For a special breed of people, the draw of the mountains is so strong that their lives must revolve around it. Determination, the will to persevere, trust and friendship are all themes that are explored within this conversation moderated by Aspen Film executive director **Susan Wrubel**. *Tickets: Free for Aspen Film members, \$20 general admission*

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SPONSORS:

The 39th Aspen Filmfest is presented by *The Aspen Times* and sponsored by Alpine Bank, Aspen Club & Spa, Metropolitan Theatres, The Gant, North of Nell, Aspen Public Radio, Aspen Magazine, Aspen 82 and KDNK Community Radio. Aspen Filmfest is also generously supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, AspenOUT, Colorado Creative Industries, Colorado Office of Film, Television & Media, Les Dames d'Aspen, Thrift Shop of Aspen, Town of Carbondale and the Wheeler Opera House (City of Aspen) Arts Grant Program.

ABOUT ASPEN FILM:

Established in 1979, Aspen Film is one of Colorado's most active film arts organizations, presenting dynamic programs and featured guest artists throughout the year. Internationally recognized, Aspen Film organizes a major film event in every season, along with an extensive education program: Aspen Filmfest, Academy Screenings, Aspen Shortsfest and Film Educates. With a mission to enlighten, enrich, educate and entertain through film, Aspen Film stimulates thought, encourages dialogue and broadens understanding of our world and selves through the diverse spectrum of ideas presented by filmmakers worldwide. To learn more, visit aspenfilm.org.

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