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NZIFF Announces Short Film Competition with Cash Prizes

The New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) today introduced its first ever competitive strand with three cash prizes for New Zealand short films.

The competition will be open to short films having their NZ premiere screenings at the Festival in 2012, and will include both narrative and documentary, animated and experimental films of 20 minutes duration or less running time. The New Zealand nationality of the filmmakers will also be a key factor for qualification.

NZIFF programmers will short list 12 films from over 100 NZ shorts submitted to the Festival. A guest assessor will be invited to make the cut to five finalists. The favoured five will be presented as the head-lining *New Zealand's Best* short film programme at the Festival, screening simultaneously in Auckland and Wellington and touring subsequently.

The Cash Prizes

The Madman Entertainment Jury Award for Best New Zealand Short Film at NZIFF will be a cash prize of \$5000 donated by the Australasian distribution company. Madman will also appoint one of the three jurors who will attend the Festival screenings.

Festival-goers will be invited to rate the five finalists to determine the **Audience Choice Award**. The prize will be funded by box office attendance at the screenings: a 25% share of the box office takings from the *New Zealand's Best* screenings in the four main centres. (25% is the share of box office regularly paid to film suppliers.)

Since 2005 **The Friends of the Civic Prize** has been presented to an emerging filmmaker with a short film in the Auckland leg of the Festival. The winner of this \$3000 annual cash prize will now be determined by the short film jury. The Friends of the Civic is the Charitable Trust whose campaign helped ensure the preservation of film projection facilities at the refurbished Civic.

All three prize-winners will be announced on the Closing Night of the Festival in Auckland. The *New Zealand's Best* short film programme will then screen in a further 11 towns and cities around NZ with the Festival.

"NZIFF has a long commitment to the presentation of short films by New Zealand filmmakers, but we are well aware that short film programmes are competing with a vast array of other Festival films for audience attention. The success of the 48 Hour and Show Me Shorts Festivals has changed the terrain considerably since we introduced the *Homegrown* programmes of short films 15 years ago. A more gladiatorial event with a recognisable curatorial hand involved appealed to us as a means of highlighting and rewarding the achievements of emerging filmmakers." says NZIFF director Bill Gosden.

"Madman Entertainment is proud to be presenting the Jury Award for Best Short Film at the New Zealand International Film Festival. We take an active interest in the local film development and are thrilled to have an opportunity to provide direct support to filmmakers. Currently Madman is involved in the New Zealand feature film *Shopping*, which is about to go into production. We look

forward to working with more local filmmakers on other exciting projects in the years to come.” says Paul Wiegard, Managing Director, Madman Entertainment.

NZIFF programmers will continue to schedule short films by local filmmakers with features at the Festival and to present occasional programmes of short films. The Wairoa Maori Film Festival Te Taurima Whakataa Maori Te Wairoa will also curate a programme of recent Maori and Pasifika Short Films for presentation at NZIFF.

Submitting a Short Film for the Competition

Filmmakers intending on submitting work for consideration in the NZIFF 2012 are encouraged to contact Michael McDonnell, Festival Assistant Programmer (Michael@nzff.co.nz). All film submissions are due by 20 April (see <http://www.nzff.co.nz/submit-a-film> for details).

The NZIFF will screen in Auckland from 19 July, Wellington from 27 July, Dunedin 27 July and Christchurch from 9 August. The programme will be released in mid-June. Further regional information is available at www.nzff.co.nz

www.nzff.co.nz

www.twitter.com/nzff

www.facebook.com/nzfilmfestival

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

NZIFF, Rebecca McMillan 0274 555 061 rebecca@nzff.co.nz

Madman NZ, Laura Barton 021 854 645 laura@madman.co.nz

The Friends of the Civic, Eric Kearney 09-426-9983 civictheatre@xtra.co.nz