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MASON FILM LAB PRODUCTION ‘JAVA’ MAKES ITS DEBUT AT THE RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The first film from the Mason Film Lab makes its festival debut.

**Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 12 p.m.
Bow Tie Movieland 2**

FAIRFAX, VA – **JAVA**, the first short film produced in the Mason Film Lab, will make its film festival debut in competition at the Richmond International Film Festival on Saturday, **March 4, 2017 12 p.m. at Bow Tie Movieland 2**, headlining the **International Shorts Spotlight 2** program. The Mason Film Lab began in the Spring of 2016 to provide Film and Video Studies (FAVS) students real crew experience and practical skills on large sets similar to what they will experience beyond their college education. Mason Film Lab productions are complete short films intended for international film festival exhibition and give FAVS students experience in working on development, pre-production, and production. Film Lab productions are shot on location with a seasoned director and are produced by Professor Lisa Thrasher, Executive Produced by FAVS Director Giovanna Chesler, and shot by Director of Photography and Professor Hans Charles. For more information on the Mason Film Lab please visit favs.gmu.edu.

JAVA co-stars **Drae Campbell** (“You Move Me”) as Jet, a handsome artist who realizes the dark consequences of her daily routine of obsessively sketching Diana, played by George Mason School of Theater alum **Rebecca Wahls** (“Admins”). **JAVA** was written and directed by Giovanna Chesler and produced and crewed by 60 Film and Video Studies majors.

Film and Video Studies alumni will also be represented at the Richmond International Film Festival on March 2 in the **University Spotlight** program. “**Earley**,” a short documentary about artist Kevin Earley’s struggle with mental illness directed by Alisa Posey, and “**Southern Hustle**,” a dark period fiction directed by Brandon Langford, will screen on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 12:45 p.m. at the Byrd Theatre (2908 W. Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23221).

JAVA Creative Team

DIRECTOR: Writer, Director, Executive Producer, and founder of G6 Pictures, Giovanna Chesler directs films addressing the body, sexuality, and gender. Her fiction shorts “Beauteous” and “Bye Bi Love” have screened at more than 100 juried film festivals in 15 countries and won awards from Chicago International Film Festival and University Film and Video Association. Most recently, Giovanna produced the feature documentary “Out in the Night.” Nationally broadcast on PBS and LOGO, “Out in the Night” earned 15 awards including Best Documentary (Jury and Audience) at Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and Audience Award for Best Documentary at New Orleans International Film Festival. As a documentary director, Giovanna’s feature “Period: The End of Menstruation” (Cinema Guild) facilitated an international discussion on pharmaceuticals when *The New York Times* made “Period” a cover story.

Giovanna is Associate Professor and Director of Film and Video Studies at George Mason University. She teaches transmedia, fiction directing, and holds an M.F.A. in Cinema from San Francisco State University (Most Distinguished Graduate). In 2016, she was named one of the Top 31 Women in Film by Women in Film and Video-DC, and she awarded Most Distinguished Filmmaker by San Diego Women in Film and Video in 2006. Giovanna was selected as a Fast Track Fellow by Film Independent in 2013 with “Out in the Night.”

PRODUCER: Lisa Thrasher, J.D., is an independent film producer, entertainment law specialist, and Film Business Professor at George Mason University. Lisa earned her Juris Doctorate degree from Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles, focusing on Intellectual Property & Entertainment Law and studied at Parsons School of Design and Virginia Commonwealth University, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography & Film.

At Power Up Films, Lisa was President of Film Production & Distribution conducting all Film, TV & PSA development, production and distribution, including: “GIRLTRASH: All Night Long;” “ITTY BITTY TITTY COMMITTEE,” (Berlinale “Teddy Award” Nominee & South by Southwest “Best Narrative Feature Jury Award); “Get to Know Us First” PSA (NBC, ABC, CBS); “Little Black Boot,” (Sundance) “Billy’s Dad is a Fudge-Packer” (Sundance) and “DEBS,” (Sundance, Berlinale); and Stuck (Sundance.)

At 20th Century Fox, Lisa did International Anti-Piracy Litigation & Trademark Prosecution and Anti-Piracy Advocacy seated on the Motion Picture Association's International Anti-Piracy Committee with Sony, Universal, MGM, Disney, Paramount, and Warner Bros.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Hans Charles started studying cinema at the Los Angeles Film Studies Center and worked for Tracey Edmonds (“Soulfood,” “Set it Off”), Bridget Davis (“Sister Act II,” “Hav Plenty”), and Patrick Ian Polk (“Punks,” “Noah’s Ark”) at Edmonds Entertainment. After leaving Los Angeles, Hans pursued his M.F.A. in film at Howard University’s School of Communication. While a graduate student, he produced his first feature “Like Water,” but developed an eye for cinematography. He has shot for a range of directors including Spike Lee, Ava DuVernay (“Venus vs”) and Salim Akil (“Jumping the Broom,” “Sparkle”) and has worked on several films including “Entre Nos,” “Pariah,” “Middle of Nowhere,” and “Mother of George,” which have screened at festivals all over the world. Hans was a former professor of Cinematography at Howard University and his recent projects include working on BET network’s new television series “The Start Up” and as co-Director of Photography on Ava DuVernay’s documentary feature “13TH,” which has been nominated for an Oscar.

Ticket Information

JAVA premieres at the Richmond International Film Festival on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 12 p.m. at Bow Tie Movieland 2 (1331 N. Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23230). For single tickets and information, please visit rvafilmfestival.com.

About Film and Video Studies

George Mason University's program in Film and Video Studies (FAVS) is the first multidisciplinary undergraduate degree in Virginia focusing on production, film theory and history and related media forms, with core courses in ethics, business, writing for the moving image, documentary and web media. The degree is housed in the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) and includes courses taught by faculty and working professionals from disciplines including Theater, Visual Arts, Communication, English, Film and Media Studies, Chinese Studies, History and others. Each concentration includes a capstone experience wherein students are professionalized and mentored by faculty on original projects in their senior year.

Film and Video Studies is driven by an independent film spirit. FAVS works with students who use visual storytelling to increase self-reflexivity and cross-cultural understanding, who are interested in working collaboratively, and who are open to exploring a variety of filmmaking styles and practices historically and internationally. Creative solutions and original thinking are paramount as students practice the craft of film and its related forms (serialized fiction on television and the web, nonfiction / documentary, fiction and experimental cinema).

About the College of Visual and Performing Arts

The College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) provides an academic environment in which the arts are explored as individual disciplines and interdisciplinary forms that strengthen one another. The college prepares students for careers as creators, performers, teachers, scholars, arts leaders, and arts entrepreneurs. Understanding that an education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists, the Center for the Arts, the professional presentation and production arm of the college, welcomes a variety of professional and world-renowned artists, musicians, and actors to its stage. Students have the opportunity to perform, create, and exhibit their work in a wide variety of public venues including a 2,000-seat Concert Hall. CVPA is home to the Schools of Music, Dance, Art, and Theater, as well as the Computer Game Design, Arts Management, and Film and Video Studies programs.

About George Mason University

George Mason University is Virginia's largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls more than 33,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility. Mason is also one of the best values in higher education, producing graduates who lead all Virginia schools with the highest annual salaries.

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