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Cucalorus Announces 2015 Fest and Conference Lineup Celebrating Female Directors, Entrepreneurs, Virtual Reality and More...

Cucalorus Film Festival and Connect Conference runs November 11 – 15.

WILMINGTON, N.C. – The [Cucalorus Film Festival](#) unleashed the official line-up of indie and international films for its 21st annual showcase, scheduled for November 11-15, 2015 in downtown Wilmington, North Carolina. The five-day event, named “one of the coolest film festivals in the world” by [MovieMaker Magazine](#), is diving into the world of venture capital and business with the launch of the [Cucalorus Connect Conference](#), to celebrate innovation and entrepreneurship across many industries from tech to textiles and brewing. Cucalorus takes over historic downtown with a full schedule of more than 160 events from films to panels with morning keynotes and endless parties. Full event details at cucalorus.org. Cucalorus passes and tickets may be purchased online.

Cucalorus 21 includes an expansive collection of more than 260 films selected from more than 1700 entries. A hefty list of premieres complements a curated selection of festival favorites, showcasing both well-known and up-and-coming filmmakers with programmatic focuses on female directors, social justice, dance and more. The festival's signature multi-media programs include the *Works-in-Progress* Lab, Dance-a-lorus, Visual/Sound/Walls, and the David Lynch inspired interactive installation *The Bus to Lumberton*.

Connect Conference Highlights:

Cucalorus Connect will host more than 50 events ranging from keynotes with national followings to panels that explore evolving technologies and economic trends. Key conference presenters include Galen Buckwalter, the founding chief science officer at eHarmony and creator of the technology behind ostensibly the world's most innovative relationship software company; Chris Heivly, a founder of MapQuest and now a managing director of The Startup Factory in Durham, Tim Mather and Greg Avola, co-founders of Untappd, the hottest social media platform for craft beer junkies; Dan Tynan, editor in chief for Yahoo Tech; Joan Siefert Rose, president of the Council for Entrepreneurial Development; and lead principals from the crowdfunding sites Kickstarter and Seed&Spark. Cucalorus steps deep into the future of entertainment with its first-ever Virtual Reality Lounge to share the most mind-bending new works in a rapidly growing and emerging field.

Cucalorus Connect Conference Schedule

On Wednesday through Friday, November 11-13, Connect will begin at Thalian Hall's ballroom with a Connect Coffee Hour, followed by keynotes and panel discussions on Thalian's Main Stage. Each morning's session will also feature several rocket pitches, called the Port City Pitch, providing new companies a stage to present their ideas and start-up aspirations. Following a lunch break, Connect events resume with panels and workshops at Ironclad Brewery on North Second St, and Bourgie Nights on Princess St. Daily schedules end with social events, cocktail gatherings and workshops, and the virtual reality lounge. Panel programs continue through the weekend at both Ironclad and Bourgie Nights.

Cucalorus partnered with the University of North Carolina Wilmington Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), tekMountain and the City of Wilmington for the Cucalorus Connect conference, aiming to attract local and national entrepreneurs to the Port City.

Cucalorus Special Events

On Saturday, November 14, Princess Street will be closed between Front and Second Streets for a PlaceMakers Fair, showcasing regional makers and their inventions with exhibits, demonstrations, entertainment, food and a tall bike jousting showdown. A design charrette for downtown placemaking is also in the works. Events are family friendly and follows the Saturday morning Kidsalorus screening of the heralded animated film "Khalil Gibran's The Prophet" an official selection at Cannes, produced by and starring the voice work of Salma Hayek, along with Liam Neeson.

Other special events include "Visual/Sound/Walls," a multi-sensory exhibition of 37 music videos; "Bus to Lumberton," an interactive production curated by Michael Arcos, and inspired by David Lynch's landmark film Blue Velvet; and the Emcee Showcase, presenting the talent that has long distinguished Cucalorus from other film festivals with its introduction of film screenings by performance artists including vocalists, dancers, spoken word performers, and comedians.

A reprise of the Festival's 10x10 Filmmaker Challenge is also planned. Ten entrepreneurs and ten filmmakers will be introduced and paired on Tuesday, November 10. Throughout the festival, they'll collaborate and produce a short film, screening the results at the Connect Closing Party on Sunday afternoon.

Key Film Screenings in Cucalorus 21

Fueled by the curatorial gusto of critic and filmmaker Aaron Hills, Cucalorus' "Convulsions" program is emerging as a launching pad for genre busters like Blue Ruin (Cuc '19) and It Follows (Cuc '14). This year's line-up includes The Devil's Candy (Sean Byrne) and the US premiere of Tag (Sion Sono).

Cucalorus will host the US premieres of *Lace Crater* (Harrison Atkins), and *He Hated Pigeons* (Ingrid Veninger), which will screen with a live musical score by Canadian Flutist Roz McPhail. Veninger is a festival alumni and ambassador. Her film *The Animal Project* had its US Premier at Cucalorus in 2013.

Notable narrative features include the outrageously bizarre *Men & Chicken* (Anders Thomas Jensen), *A Light Beneath Their Feet* (Valerie Weiss), *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party* (Stephen Cone), and *the Missing Girl* (A.D.Calvo).

Cucalorus will host the Southeast US Premiere of *Booger Red* (Berndt Mader) featuring an engaging performance by former Wilmingtonian Onur Tukel, whose feature *Applesauce* also screens at the festival. Among the North Carolina features are *In the Treetops* (Matthew Brown) and *Lost Colony* (Christopher Holmes).

Key documentaries to be screened include *Welcome to Leith* (Michael Beach Nichols and Christopher K. Walker) and *Censored Voices*, both official selections at Sundance; *The Anthropologist* (Daniel A. Miller) and the heartwarming and hilarious film *Mom and Me* (Ken Wardrop).

On Saturday afternoon on the Main Stage at Thalian Hall, Cucalorus will host the world premier of Christopher Everett's *Wilmington on Fire*, the most comprehensive documentary about the 1898 Wilmington riots.

And, true to its past, Cucalorus will screen an abundance of short films, 170 in all, in shorts blocks and preceding every narrative and documentary screening.

Screening venues for Cucalorus 21 include Thalian Hall's Main Stage and Thalian Black, Union Station, Jengos Playhouse and City Stage.

Cucalorus Providing a Voice for Women Filmmakers

Cucalorus 21 will also feature a strong slate of female filmmakers, part of an ongoing effort to nurture new talent through the Vanguard and Works-in-Progress programs. Female directors hitting the screen at Cucalorus include: Ingrid Veninger (*He Hated Pigeons*), Valerie Weiss (*A Light Beneath Their Feet*), Britni West (*Tired Moonlight*), Jiyoung Lee (*Female Pervert*), Brigitta Wagner (*Rosehill*), Karyn Kusama (*The Invitation*), Adrienne Subia (*June, Adrift*), Alison Bagnall (*Funny Bunny*), Olympia Stone (*Curious Worlds: The Art & Imagination of David Beck*), Olivia Wyatt (*Sailing a Sinking Sea*) and Jillian Corsie (*Trichster*).

The complete schedule of 260+ films, Connect Conference events and special programs at the 2015 Cucalorus Film Festival and Connect Conference can be found at www.cucalorus.org. Passes are now on sale on the website.