
ABOUT US

"They do everything right."

--Roger Ebert speaking about the USAFF

"Whenever the USA Film Festival calls, I try to answer because it means so much to me personally."

--Stephen Tobolowsky, USAFF National Advisory Committee Member, quoted in Advocate magazine

MISSION STATEMENT

The USA Film Festival is a Dallas-based, 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to the recognition and encouragement of excellence in the film and video arts.

YEAR-ROUND programs and events include an annual spring film festival, now in its 45th year; the annual KidFilm® festival, now in its 31st year, the oldest and largest-attended international children's film festival in the United States; the Annual Oscar® viewing event (Dallas' only official Oscar event for 15 years); special premieres; a 37-year-old National Short Film Competition; year-round "Meet the Filmmakers" screenings; film series and retrospectives organized around important themes and filmmakers; presentations of restored prints on the big screen, and educational activities including filmmaker discussions and extensive community outreach activities.

LIVE CINEMA -- Through its year-round multicultural programs and special events, the USA Film Festival provides an opportunity for the public to discover films not scheduled for commercial distribution and sheds new light on familiar films by facilitating discussion and encounters with filmmakers and lecturers.

With the exception of special member screenings, all events are open to the public.

MOVIES ON THE BIG SCREEN THE WAY THEY WERE MEANT TO BE SEEN -- Programs take place at proper theater settings throughout the Dallas area, in fully accessible facilities, to ensure maximum accessibility for all publics.

A YEAR-ROUND EVENT -- The Festival presents programs every month -- We're a 50-Day Festival!

Annual attendance = 30,000+

SHORT HISTORY

Following its original incarnation in 1970 as the "Screen Generation Film Festival," and a (pre-Cannes) visit from filmmaker Robert Altman with an early cut of MASH and pre-release screening of The Sterile Cuckoo with Alan Pakula (complete with coast-to-coast hook-up so that students in San Francisco and Manhattan could participate in the post-screening discussion), the USA Film Festival was officially created in 1971. Both directors, having provided the inspiration for the creation of the Festival, became our life-long friends, visiting the Festival and Dallas with their films

many times throughout their prestigious careers.

In the early 1970s, the Festival concentrated solely on the then largely uncelebrated films made in the United States. Both amateur and professional filmmakers were invited to submit works to a panel of nationally-renowned critics who selected the best films for competition in the annual festival. Director George Stevens was recognized with the Festival's first Great Director Tribute which took place at the Festival's first home on Southern Methodist University's campus. (Proceeds from that first festival were used to establish the SMU Film Archives.)

In 1973, the focus shifted. Rather than a competition, the annual festival became a showcase for American films. The critics, acting as scouts instead of judges, offered films they deemed worthy of recognition and invited filmmakers and creators for on-stage discussion with the audience. Early critics and jurors included Hollis Alpert, Charles Champlin, Roger Ebert, Paul Schrader, Judith Crist, Barbara Bryant, Manny Farber, Andrew Sarris, Dwight MacDonald and others.

The following year, the Festival expanded its activities, honoring Gregory Peck at the first Great Screen Actor Retrospective. Peck was present for the three-day event and appeared on stage each evening for discussion with the audience. Today the program exists as the Master Screen Artist Tribute.

In 1979, with the first National Short Film Competition, the Festival recognized excellence in this important cinematic form. Since then, the National Short Film & Video Competition has been broadened to include video arts and has screened thousands of films and videos, awarding over \$350,000 in cash prizes, and presenting the top entries each year at a special ceremony on Closing Night of the spring festival. The USAFF Competition is Academy-qualified and numerous winners and finalists have gone on to receive Academy recognition.

In 1981, recognizing the need for informational programs and resources among the rapidly growing metroplex film community, the Festival dramatically increased its scope by offering a slate of activities throughout the year with a special emphasis on educational programs. In addition, the Festival established on-going partnerships with over 200 local arts, cultural and social service organizations to present unique programs spotlighting the wide variety of experiences recorded on film.

In 1983, responding to the void of high quality children's film programming in the commercial market, the Festival presented the first annual KidFilm festival, celebrating excellence in children's media arts. As the first festival of its kind in this country, KidFilm brought national recognition to Dallas and has become the inspiration for similar programs nationwide. Today, KidFilm is the largest-attended children's media festival in the United States bringing 10,000 children, educators and adults to this popular arts-in-education program every year. Since its inception, KidFilm arts-in-education programs have served over 150,000 DISD students and educators.

In 2015, the festival will present the 31st annual KidFilm festival; the 45th annual spring festival, the 37th annual National Short Film and Video Competition and the best new American and foreign works; TexFest, along with numerous on-going series and other year-round programs, retrospectives, tributes, premieres and events.

Since its existence, the USA Film Festival has presented the world, national or regional premieres of thousands of studio and independent feature films as well as short experimental, animated, documentary and dramatic films. Throughout the years, the Festival has brought to its audiences thousands of leading directors, producers, actors, screenwriters, editors, composers, production designers, cinematographers, historians and other experts, fulfilling its mission of creating a "LIVE CINEMA" experience, whereby filmmakers present their films in person and discuss their works with the audience.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Current Members, Former Members & KidFilm Advisory, Founders

Peter Bogdanovich

Charles Burnett

Bill Butler

Charles Champlin

Julie Corman

Grover Crisp

Kirk Douglas

Shelley Duvall

Harrison Engle

Milos Forman

Jeffrey Godsick

Elliott Gould

Dick Guttman

Douglas Hall

Joan Hyler

Ron Judkins

Christine LaMonte

Margaret Loesch

Daphne Maxwell Reid

Leonard Maltin

Arthur Novell

Victor Nuñez

Catherine Olim

Alan Rudolph

Paul Schrader

David Shepard

Stephen Tobolowsky

Douglas Urbanski

John Waters

Frederick Wiseman

Victoria Wozniak

Bud Yorkin

Robert Altman

Hollis Alpert

Paul Bartel

Elmer Bernstein

Bernie Brillstein

Barbara Bryant

Arthur Canton

Ronni Chasen

Judith Crist

George Cukor

Hillard Elkins

Bill Feeder

Horton Foote

Sidney Ganis

Ernie Grossman

Ollie Johnston

Martin Jurow

Mervyn Leroy

Barry Lorrie

Joseph L. Mankiewicz

Stan Margulies

Milt Moritz

Dale C. Olson

Alan J. Pakula

Gregory Peck

Arthur Penn

Polly Platt

Walter Seltzer

Frank Thomas

King Vidor

Raoul Walsh

William Wyler

Max Youngstein

June Foray

Deborah Forte

Paul Gagne

Sid Krofft

Marty Krofft

Ferne Margulies

Carol Mechanic

Hayley Mills

Morton Schindel

Dr. G. William Jones

L.M. Kit Carson

Don Safran

Bob Porter