

Strong leadership to drive IFF Panama to success

Panama, February 3, 2012 Over 30 years of combined experience in the areas of creating and organizing film festivals around the world now join the talent of Panamanian and foreign experts who are working to carry out a successful International Film Festival of Panama (IFF Panama). The festival will take place from April 26th. to May 2nd. of this year.

The team of IFF Panama is gaining strength by adding more local and international talent. To start, its director, Henk Van Der Kolk, is a successful movie producer who co-founded the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), the most important event of recent years in the cinematic world. Next, the recognized Panamanian film and documentary director, Pituka Ortega Heilbron, joined the team acting as co-director.

For the artistic direction of IFF Panama, Van Der Kolk and Ortega Heilbron invited Diana Sanchez, a recognized specialist in Ibero-American films, who expressed her pleasure in developing a program which will fulfill all the expectations of those who visit this festival.

Diana Sanchez has been the Ibero-American film programmer in the International Film Festival of Toronto since 2002. Along with selecting the Spanish and Portuguese films for TIFF, Sanchez was also responsible for co-scheduling the program City to City Buenos Aires 2011, and the programmer of Novo Life: The New Brazilian Cinema, National Spotlight of TIFF 2003.

Sanchez is a program consultant in the Rotterdam festival, and the main consultant for the Ibero-American program in the International Film Festival of Miami. She is also in charge of the Calgary Latin Wave programs, a Latin American film series, with the PROA Foundation in Argentina.

Likewise, IFF Panama has the support from Denise Hughes, a professional with connections to international film festivals and who has worked for the International Film Festival of Miami, the International Film Festival of Cartagena, and the New York's Documentary Festival (DOC NY).

Hughes has vast experience organizing, building and putting together film festivals for the Latin American markets.

IFF Panama also has guidance from remarkable Panamanian celebrities of the local cultural scene, such as the director of Chance, Abner Benaim, the President of the Panamanian Association of Film Producers (ASOCINE), Luis Pacheco, the renowned painter Olga Sinclair, and the attorney Yasser Williams Arosemena, who acts as President of the Board of Directors, amongst other celebrities.

About IFF Panama

The International Film Festival of Panama (IFF Panama) is a world-class cultural and cinematic encounter which will take place in Panama City from April 26th. to May 2nd. of 2012. IFF Panama's mission is to build a connecting bridge between its people and the best film proposals of the moment, and it has the support from the National Government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Film Commission, the National Institute of Culture and the Tourism Authority of Panama.

IFF Panama, created by Henk Van Der Kolk and T. Rob Brown, has the objective to broadcast the best of international films in Panama, helping in this way to promote culture in the country, encourage the development of local industry, establish the festival as a tourism destination, and incite film education.