

Lexus and The Weinstein Company Re-team to Produce The Second Lexus Short Film Series with World Premieres in Los Angeles and New York

July 28, 2014

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Lexus and The Weinstein Company have once again come together in the spirit of innovation to produce two new short films for their second annual “Life is Amazing” Lexus Short Films series. Two rising filmmakers (Jon Goldman, Satsuki Okawa with script writer Ken Ochiai) are being mentored by acclaimed members of the film community including actress Katie Holmes (*The Giver*, *Wonder Boys*) and directors Justin Chadwick (*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, upcoming *Tulip Fever*), Simon Curtis (*My Week With Marilyn*, upcoming *Woman in Gold*), Antoine Fuqua (*Brooklyn’s Finest*, *Training Day*, upcoming *Southpaw*), and Phillip Noyce (*The Giver*, *The Quiet American*).

The group will also film featurettes that highlight the mentoring process as each talent meets with the up-and-coming directors and offers guidance and support. The pieces will also focus on the art of the short film, the evolution of the medium and its importance, and the growing global appetite for the format. The featurettes will be released leading up to the films' theatrical run in Los Angeles and the worldwide release in October.

Said Noyce, “It’s an honor to have been approached by The Weinstein Company and Lexus International to participate in such an innovative and important program. What they are doing with the next generation of filmmakers will have a significant impact in the world of cinema. I’m truly excited for audiences to see what these talented, young directors are creating.”

The first presentation of the shorts, *Market Hours* and *Operation Barn Owl*, took place at the Short Shorts Film Festival in Tokyo on May 29th. As part of the marketing campaign, both films will play at numerous festivals around the world including the Los Angeles Shorts Festival, The Rhode Island Film Festival, and The Portland Film Festival. They will also be attached to major Weinstein Company releases such as *The Giver*.

World premieres will take place July 30th in Los Angeles and August 6th in New York. Noyce will show footage from his new upcoming Weinstein Company film *The Giver*, starring Brenton Thwaites, Odeya Rush, Jeff Bridges, Meryl Streep, Alexander Skarsgard, Katie Holmes, and Taylor Swift at the New York event.

TWC co-chairman Harvey Weinstein about the partnership, “We launched the Lexus Short Films Series in 2013 with incredible, young filmmakers watching them develop their stories, skill and talent culminating into a special screening during the Cannes Film Festival. We’re honored to be working with Lexus again for a second year to find the next great, innovative storytellers to bring their own fresh take to the short film format.”

Mark Templin (Executive Vice President of Lexus International) added, “It’s an honor to continue our shared inspiration to make an impact on the craftsmanship of filmmaking with The Weinstein Company. We’re proud to shine a light on the passion, innovation and artistry that guides this year’s rising filmmakers as they open our eyes to their interpretation of ‘Life is Amazing’.”

The Lexus Short Films series will premiere online in October this year. In the meantime, the films’ progress and film festival schedule can be followed at www.lexusshortfilms.com.

Why Lexus Chose to Do Lexus Short Films

In conjunction with product innovations, Lexus aims to elevate artistry and bring fundamental enjoyment through the creation of luxurious spaces, moments and feelings. One such step is supporting young creators with fresh ideas through the “Life is Amazing” Lexus Short Film Series with The Weinstein Company.

Lexus Short Films 2014

1. Market Hours

Randall spends his days imagining the vibrant inner lives of various vendors at the multicultural urban market where he works; none more so than Angela, an angel with her own pastry shop. But Randall's inattention to his work has led to a string of thefts and soon threatens to cost him his job. A chance encounter with a beautiful starlet and her lapdog provides Randall not only an opportunity to break the ice with Angela, but a chance to prove his worth to everyone at the market – including himself.

Writer/Director

Jon Goldman

Jon is a graduate of Stanford University with a B.A. in English Literature and Creative Writing.

His short film "Diplomacy," a wry take on the power of interpreters in top-level negotiations between the United States and Iran, played over two dozen film festivals worldwide including Abu Dhabi, South by Southwest and Tokyo Short Shorts, winning jury and audience awards in Paris, Aspen, New York, Switzerland and Mexico. He acts not only as director but also as script writer in Europe and America.

2. Operation Barn Owl

Ellen and her group of friends band together to help her best friend Jonah create a picturesque proposal for his girlfriend. Ellen, however, must overcome her feelings for Jonah and any past promises they made to each other for the proposal to go as planned

Director

Satsuki Okawa

Born in Tokyo, Satsuki earned her BA from Nihon University College of Arts and went on to graduate with an MFA from Columbia University in New York. Upon her graduation from Columbia, she directed several short films including "Koyuki's Wandering Football", which was commissioned for the Japanese Professional Football League as the J-league's 20 year anniversary project. Last year's Yubari favorite "Little Kyota Neon Hood" went on to gain acclaim on the international film festival circuit. The film not only won numerous awards domestically, but internationally.

Co-writer

Ken Ochiai

Ken he left his hometown of Tokyo after graduating from senior high school and went to USA. Ochiai graduated from the USC School of Cinematic Arts in 2006 with a BA in production. In 2008, he received his MFA from the American Film Institute Conservatory in directing. To date, Ochiai has made more than 30 short films, commercials, and music videos including "Half Kenneth" which won the Jury Prize from the Directors Guild of America; "Frog In The Well" which won the Crystal Award at the Heartland Film Festival. He received the Young Alumni Award from the USC in recognition of his achievements in filmmaking. Ochiai has directed three feature films, including "Tiger Mask" will be released in the fall 2013 in several Asian countries. The film is based on a Japanese legendary comic book series and produced by Toshiaki Nakazawa, producer from an Oscar-winning film "Departures."

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