



2018 AIFVF Opens with World Premier of Local Documentary, “Farmsteaders”

ATHENS, OH (March 19, 2018)—The Athens International Film + Video Festival (AIFVF) is excited to announce its opening night program, featuring the world premiere of “Farmsteaders,” a local documentary by director Shaena Mallett, 7 p.m., Monday April 9 at the Athena Cinema.

“Farmsteaders” is a love story, a farm story, and a story of contemporary rural America. Nick Nolan, his wife Celeste, and their young family are on a journey to resurrect his grandfather’s dairy farm—fighting to keep this homeland from “drying up and blowing away,” something that has happened to about 4.7 million farms in the U.S. as the pressures of corporate-driven food have left deep scars in the region.

Director Shaena Mallett points an honest and tender lens at the beauty and hardship of everyday life, in “Farmsteaders,” as the Nolans work to balance their fears and hopes with so much at stake. For the Nolans only three things remain certain: family is everything, nothing ever stays the same, and the land holds it all together.

“People don’t really understand the beauty of life if they don’t understand the tragic side of it,” Nick says. “Everything beautiful is created out of pain.” Nick and Celeste’s meditations on life, legacy, and resistance offer an unexpected voice at a time when the country is so deeply divided. With much of the current rift falling along demographic lines, there is a deepening discussion about the rural white American. And yet here they stand in contrast to all of our expectations—heroic, benign, accessible.

A documentary filmmaker, editor, award-winning photographer, and teacher, Mallett grew up on a family homestead and to this day prefers to be outside. She graduated from Ohio University where she produced a participatory story project focused on several women and their relationships to land. She worked as an assistant editor on three short documentary films produced by the Maine Farmland Trust and Seedlight Pictures that explore the growing pains of the local food movement. Her stories are often found on backroads, entangled in roots, relationships with land, and what it means to be home. “Farmsteaders” is her first full-length film, the culmination of over five years of work.

Also in this program is the short documentary “The Last Honey Hunter,” directed by Ben Knight. The story of the last man in the remote Nepal village of Saadi to be visited in a dream by a wrathful forest spirit called Rongkemi. If no one else in the village has the dream, a generations-old tradition may die.

Founded in 1974, the Athens International Film + Video Festival has been presenting the best in international film for 45 years. Known globally as a festival that supports cinema from independent, underground and marginalized populations, the AIFVF represents the values that we share as a community. It is a champion of justice and provides a voice for underrepresented artists and

viewpoints on a global level. For over four decades, the AIFVF has embraced experimental, narrative, short-form, feature length and documentary films from every corner of the globe.

The Athens International Film + Video Festival is administered by The Athens Center for Film and Video, a project of the College of Fine Arts at Ohio University.

This year's festival takes place April 9–15, 2018, at the historic Athena Cinema and other locations in and around downtown Athens. The full 2018 schedule is available now at the Festival's website: <http://athensfilmfest.org/2018-schedule/> and printed programs will be available soon.

CORRESPONDING PHOTO; Farmsteaders_Film_Still.jpg [Farmsteaders, Nolans Family: 2017; Photo Credit: Shaena Mallett.]

LINK TO PRINT QUALITY IMAGE: <http://athensfilmfest.org/Farmsteaders.zip>

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