

Carmel Art and Film Festival Announces Melonie Diaz as Breakout Actress of 2013

Award Presented by Jennifer Howell at Annual Women in Film Luncheon

Carmel, Calif – The Carmel Art and Film Festival will honor Melonie Diaz with the “Breakout Actress of 2013” Award at their annual Women in Film luncheon and fundraiser, which will take place at the Sunset Cultural Arts Center on Saturday, October 12, 2013. The award will be presented by Jennifer Howell, founder of The Art of Elysium, a nonprofit organization that brings art into the lives of children suffering from critical medical conditions.

Diaz, a 29-year-old actress from lower east side Manhattan, is being honored for her role in *Fruitvale Station*, a film that exploded onto the festival circuit this year, winning the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award for U.S. Dramatic Film at the Sundance Film Festival, as well as the Prize of the Future Award at the Cannes Film Festival.

Howell, who was recently named one of Los Angeles’ “Ten Most Inspiring Women,” has built an army of artists who donate their time and talent to annual workshops in children’s hospitals in New York and Los Angeles, and more recently, to independent film projects that will continue to provide financial support for the organization and its ongoing mission.

“These two women are rock stars,” said festival director Tom Burns. “Melonie is on her way to becoming a major star launched out of the world of indie films, and Jennifer is the power broker who uses star power and art to bring comfort to sick children.”

The two will meet on stage in front of an audience of female filmmakers to celebrate the CAFF Women in Film Program, which recognizes and encourages women working in the creative arts, and raises money for scholarships and grants awarded to young film and art students every year. “Our Women in Film program has always been designed to, not only honor women of distinction in the entertainment business, but to also encourage, support and inspire the creative spirit in young people,” continued Burns. “I can’t think of two people who do that better than Melonie and Jennifer.”

The program this year will be followed by a screening of CAFF “best of “ shorts, all directed by women. There are a limited number of tickets still available. For more information, please call 831-625-3700.

ABOUT CAFF

The Carmel Art and Film Festival is committed to filmmakers. In addition to screening close to 100 independent films over a five-day period, the Carmel Art and Film Festival also offers panel

discussions, one-on-one interviews, art exhibitions, concerts, and lectures with industry experts – and filmmakers get a VIP all-access pass to all of it. Our signature artist this year is George Rodrigue, best known for his iconic Blue Dog. Whether a filmmaker or a film lover, we offer a five-day escape – total immersion into film, art, music and parties – but leave the tux at home as we are casual and cool. We even do an over-the-top beach bash and film on the beach that takes advantage of the beautiful white sands of Carmel Beach.

Founded in 2008, the Carmel Art and Film Festival is a 501(c)3 nonprofit committed to supporting the arts in all its forms with a special emphasis on nurturing the creative spirit in young people. Through year round community outreach, scholarships and grants, special festival programs, and the festival itself, Carmel Art and Film gives artists a platform and a voice to pursue their creative visions and share them with the world.

ABOUT FRUITVALE STATION

Fruitvale Station is an independent film based on the 2009 shooting of 22-year-old Oscar Grant (played by Michael B. Jordan), an African American who was killed by a BART transit police officer in Oakland. The film was written and directed by Ryan Coogler and produced by Forest Whitaker.

ABOUT THE ART OF ELYSIUM

The Art of Elysium is a Los Angeles based non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, founded in 1997, that encourages artists to dedicate their time and talent to under-served, at risk, and hospitalized children whose lives are constantly disrupted by hardship or chronic and often terminal illness. Every week we bring hands on workshops, led by local artists, free of charge to these children.

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