



NEWS RELEASE

ROSE KUO ASSUMES NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR POST AT AFI FEST

LOS ANGELES, July 9, 2007—Veteran film festival programmer, consultant and filmmaker Rose Kuo has been named Artistic Director at AFI FEST presented by Audi. In her new position, Kuo will oversee the programming direction and overall artistic vision of the annual AFI FEST (November 1 – 11, 2007).

“Rose has a gift for spotting emerging talent, as well as a deep knowledge and appreciation of world cinema,” said AFI FEST Director Christian Gaines. “Her leadership, along with the considerable programming talents of Shaz Bennett and Lane Kneedler, has combined to create a formidable programming team.”

Kuo brings to AFI FEST a wealth of experience in film festival programming, as well as film production. A fixture at the Telluride Film Festival for many years, Kuo has also served as a programming consultant specializing in Asian cinema and has worked for the San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Mill Valley Festivals.

Fluent in several languages, Kuo also possesses an extensive background as a filmmaker, working as an assistant to Oscar-winning editor Thelma Schoonmaker and as a camera assistant to famed cinematographer Haskell Wexler. Among a myriad of feature film credits spanning over twenty years, Kuo has also worked with such top directors as Michael Mann, Paul Schrader, Ed Zwick and Martin Scorsese.

Well-versed in both international and American cinema, Rose has worked on several independent films, as post-production supervisor on Maggie Greenwald’s *THE KILL OFF* and as executive producer on Wash Westmoreland’s *THE FLUFFER*. Kuo created the Sundance video blogs for popular website *Movie City News*.

AFI FEST’s programming department is rounded out with new Associate Director of Programming Shaz Bennett who has served as a Senior Programmer with AFI FEST for the past seven years. Prior to AFI FEST, Bennett worked for the Los Angeles Film Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival and spent seven years at the Sundance Institute tracking and developing projects for the summer labs and screening films for the Festival. Bennett is also a writer/filmmaker and performance artist, her latest film *TOP OF THE CIRCLE* is currently screening at the International Women's Museum. Lane Kneedler moves into a senior programmer spot after working in the department on the past two Festivals.

AFI FEST presented by Audi is the longest-running film festival in Los Angeles and one of the most influential film festivals in North America. Each year the Festival presents one of the world's most anticipated showcases of international film, demonstrating AFI's commitment to celebrating the art form.

AFI FEST emerged in 1987 when the American Film Institute adopted the venerated FILMEX: Los Angeles International Film Exposition. Founded in 1971, FILMEX dramatically expanded the audience for alternative film events in Los Angeles, becoming at its peak in the mid-seventies the largest public film event in the world and one of only a handful of film festivals in the United States. FILMEX is still venerated for its range of films and all-encompassing and ambitious aesthetic.

Today, AFI FEST spans 10 days each November, featuring international competitions of new films from emerging filmmakers, as well as global showcases of the latest work from great film masters and nightly red-carpet gala premieres. Kicking off the awards season each year, AFI FEST offers a crucial avenue of exposure to the entertainment community, while providing appreciative audiences with a festive atmosphere and the very best of world film, right in the film capital of the world

The American Film Market (AFM), October 31 – November 7, 2007, is the market partner of AFI FEST. Together, AFI FEST and AFM provide the only concurrent festival/market event in North America. More domestic sales of international titles and international territory sales occurred at AFI FEST 2006 than any other US festival. AFI FEST is the only FIAPF-accredited film festival in the United States. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognizes AFI FEST as a qualifying festival for the Short Films category for the annual Academy Awards.

About the American Film Institute

AFI celebrates its 40th Anniversary in 2007.

AFI is a national institute providing leadership in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media. AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, maintains America's film heritage through the *AFI Catalog of Feature Films* and explores new digital technologies in entertainment and education through the AFI Digital Content Lab and K-12 Screen Education Center. As the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the US, AFI ON SCREEN encompasses the annual AFI FEST presented by Audi: AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival—as well as year-round programming at ArLight Hollywood and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, including SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival. AFI AWARDS, the annual almanac for the 21st century, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year, while **AFI's 100 Years. . .** series has ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. And, during the past 35 years, AFI's Life Achievement Award has become the highest honor for a career in film. Additional information about AFI is available at AFI.com.

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