



Monday 2 October 2017

**#CINEMAFORTHESENSES
BYRON BAY FILM FESTIVAL 6 – 15 OCTOBER 2017**

**Film feature: *Journey to Adaka*
First Nations find their pride**

By Jenny Bird

The opening line in *Journeys to Adaka* is “People are beginning to discover themselves again” – is spoken by a First Nations woman from the Yukon, and is a statement of the film’s primary theme.

Yukon, abutting the border of Alaska, is a Canadian subarctic wilderness territory of lakes, tundra and snowy mountains, traversed by the mighty Yukon River. There live indigenous first nations tribes who gather every year for the **Adaka Cultural Festival** in Whitehorse, the capital.

Journeys to Adaka introduces us to seven indigenous artists as they prepare for the festival. A fashion curator, a traditional ravens tail weaver, a canoe maker, a sculptor, a singer/songwriter and two teachers of language, dance, singing, drumming and performance. We meet them in their homes, at rehearsal, engaged in their creative practice, and completing the work that will travel to Whitehorse for the festival.

The film, says producer **Teresa Earle**, “is not just about the literal journey to the Festival, but about the personal journeys of the artists”.

The older artists speak of the severance from their culture, language and identity by the residential school program. Akin to Australia’s policy of removing Aboriginal children and placing them in homes, the Canadian Government removed indigenous children as young as five and placed them in residential schools away from their homes and families. One older artist speaks of his art practice as ‘cultural connection to our history that’s almost genetic’.

The younger, more urbanised artists speak of their shame and the rejection of their indigenous identity as young people, until a moment, a drumming moment, or a vision, when an awakening occurred, described as a 'blood memory' by one artist.

'Adaka' means 'coming into the light' in the Southern Tutchone language of the Yukon.

Low budget, filmed in collaboration with the **Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association**, directed and produced by **Fritz Mueller** and Teresa Earle, this 57 minute documentary shines its own beam of light on first nations peoples pushing back against colonialism.

Journeys to Adaka screens at the Byron Bay Film Festival Saturday 7 October at 1pm at the Byron Community Theatre.

Teresa Earle will be in attendance for her film, and will be speaking to ABC Breakfast presenter Joanne Shoebridge on October 9.

THE FESTIVAL

The Byron Bay Film Festival is illuminated with two dazzling red carpet gala events in the heart of town. Opening Night offers a chance for industry networking and a taste of the flavour of the festival to come, and features a highlight film screening. The culminating celebration event is an exciting night of recognition for filmmakers, the festival, Byron Bay, and the international film industry, and not to be missed. Early ticket purchases are recommended to avoid disappointment to these two popular events.

The 11th Annual Byron Bay Film Festival is held on Friday 6 – Sunday 15 October 2017 in multiple venues throughout Byron Bay and surrounding suburbs.

Program OUT NOW.

Tickets are on sale now via www.bbff.com.au

End.

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