***Press Release***

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***Contact: Violet Arth Dukes, 704-484-2787***

***Real to Reel Film Festival Announces New Dates & New Virtual Component***

*Documentaries, Feature Films, Animations, and Shorts to be Screened in September*

KINGS MOUNTAIN, N.C. - The Cleveland County Arts Council is excited to begin another decade of offering amazing cinema to film festival goers. Originally slated for the end of July, this year, the 21st annual International Real to Reel Film Fest has been rescheduled for September 9-12 at the Joy Performance Theatre in Kings Mountain, N.C.  Although the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt by filmmakers**,** event planners, and venues around the world, Real to Reel organizers are hoping the delayed dates and a new virtual companion component will expand the outreach and preparation time for this exploration of international film.

“Postponing the festival was not a decision we took lightly but one we felt was best for everyone, and it gave us the opportunity to add a virtual component. We are excited to work with Seed and Spark to bring Real to Reel Film Festival into the virtual festival space via their platform,” commented Festival Director Violet Dukes. More details are forthcoming in regard to this online element of screenings.

The selection committee screened nearly 150 film submissions, from amateur and professional filmmakers, including animated shorts, live-action shorts, documentaries (shorts and feature-length), feature-length narrativefilms, and films made by children ages 14 years and younger. International countries of origin for submissions include India, Japan, Iran, Russia, and Slovakia, among others. The festival will screen approximately 16hours of runtime (30+ films) based on the selections made by the committee, (selections are still being finalized). “This year, I’m particularly energized by the virtual/companion component of the festival. We’ll be able to introduce an entirely new audience (outside of our geographic area) to this long-standing festival,” says Noel Manning, co-founder of Real to Reel and tenured member of the film selection committee. Awards categories will be classified by their student/amateur or professional submission status.

This year especially will bring some unique and exciting virtual components to the Real to Reel Film Festival, notably for online audiences. The virtual aspect will allow audiences to catch films they may be unable to see in person(or that they may want to view again)**.** Tickets will be sold to stream the films online through Seed and Spark. Several filmmaker interviews conducted via Zoom will be available online for general viewing in the weeks leading up to the September festival. Additionally, for the on-site portion of the festival in September, pre-recorded filmmaker Q&A sessions will be made available to audiences. As in years past, audience members can expect live in-person filmmaker Q&A panels as well.

Last year’s Real to Reel Film Festival saw an attendance of approximately 300 people. “While this year’s festival will certainly have a different feel, we’re excited to once again bring diverse, educational and entertaining independent films to our community and beyond,” said Shearra Miller, President of the Cleveland County Arts Council.

For more information about this year’s festival, contact Violet Dukes at the Cleveland County Arts Council by email violet.arth@ccartscouncil.org or phone 704-484-2787. You can also visit the film festival website at <http://www.realtoreelfest.com>

*The mission of the Real to Reel International Film Festival is to offer a forum for independent film, video and multimedia artists from around the world to showcase their talents and expose the works of these artists to our region.*