



Press release

Tuesday 26 April 2010

Palmerston North's *Reel Earth* best picks for 2010 announced.

Organisers of the Southern Hemisphere's largest environmental film festival, *Reel Earth*, today announced its pick of nominations for its best of 2010 film awards. The Palmerston North-based annual festival also announced the selected programme of films to screen in the city's Downtown Cinemas, from 23 May to 5 June 2010.

More than 200 film entries from over 40 countries have been rigorously scrutinised by our New Zealand-based jury panels, says festival director Warren Jones. 'Our independent selection panels have chosen 78 films for this year's festival programme. The best 18 have been nominated to *Reel Earth*'s juries for awards to be announced at the festival gala opening evening on 22 May.

Reel Earth's sixth season opens with a 'Green Carpet' gala night at Palmerston North's Regent on Broadway Theatre. The gala programme will have a weekend of 'green activities' free to the public in Civic Square, as well as free workshops for filmmakers and photographers whose focus is the world around us.

Common themes in this year's festival cover the environment, social justice, natural history, biodiversity and sustainability issues. The award nominee classifications are: short films of up to 15 minutes; short films of 15 to 45 minutes; feature-length movies; and New Zealand-made movies, with several craft awards also.

Reel Earth was founded in Palmerston North by a group of like-minded, environmentally-aware film enthusiasts in 2005. 'Our film festival is firmly based here in the Manawatu, with growing interest from all over the region. Today it has expanded to capture the attention of environmentally-focused filmmakers around the world,' says Mr Jones.

The festival programme and ticket information are on *Reel Earth*'s website www.reeearth.org.nz. Tickets for films and sessions can be purchased online from TicketDirect and Downtown Cinemas or at their respective box offices from 17 April.

Reel Earth—where the earth gets seen, gets heard, and gets attention

- ends -

For more information please contact: Warren Jones, *Reel Earth* Festival Director

Mob: +64 27 325 6004 Office +64 6 350 1812 warren@reeearth.org.nz

Feature Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
The Unnatural History of the Kakapo	New Zealand Director: Scott Mouat	<p>Most New Zealanders know at least something of the story of the kakapo's rescue from the brink of extinction. What more can be said that hasn't already been documented; that hasn't already entered the national consciousness? The Unnatural History of the Kakapo uses a strong, well-written storyline, sound information and excellent filming to show the answer is, "Plenty". For the last several decades, the outlook for kakapo was bleak, as if the efforts were only slowing rather than preventing inevitable extinction. But recently-developed scientific techniques showed much of the problem arises from the birds themselves: they're too closely related, leading to infertile eggs and dead embryos. The film shows how the combination of careful thought, good science and a diverse range of skilled and passionate researchers and support staff identified the problem, worked out what to do about it, and put those plans into action. The result was the most successful kakapo breeding season on record.</p> <p>Sometimes funny, sometimes emotionally difficult, but always gripping, Kakapo portrays powerfully the story of one of New Zealand's most internationally famous conservation successes and the people who confronted the apparent inevitability of this wonderful bird's extinction. Now, extinction is optional.</p>

Feature Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
The Legend of Pale Male	Luxembourg Director: Frederick Lillien	<p>When a wild red-tailed hawk, dubbed “Pale Male” because of his colouring, settled in New York’s Central Park in the early 1990s he became a celebrity, attracting attention not just among New Yorkers but internationally. Among those captivated was a young Belgian: a self-proclaimed clueless escapee from a career in law. For the better part of the next two decades, Frederic Lillien documented the story of Pale Male and the effect this wild predator had on the humans who grew to love him. But the rich occupants of the apartment building on which Pale Male and his partner had set up home arranged for their nest to be removed. Outrage followed, and the film shows just how powerful a force humans’ connection for nature can be. Lillien’s genius was in turning the camera on the observers as well as the birds, showing (not telling) us just how much we need wildness and nature: that we need the spirit of the true jungle at least as much as we need the concrete one. A particularly strong storyline combined with humour and skilled film-making make Pale Male emotionally compelling and deliver a beautiful, subtle story about hard-nosed New Yorkers discovering environmental consciousness.</p>

Feature Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
Call of Life	USA Director: Monte Thompson	<p>A Fascinating and informative film Call of Life provides an unusually rigorous, in-depth analysis of The Importance of Biological diversity and the devastating Consequences of the current, out-of-control Extinction rate. Fronted by Some of the best-respected, articulate bridge names in ecology and environmental science (eg Vitoušek, Pimm, Leakey, Ehrlich, Meyers), it should BE required viewing for anyone "and with vested Interest in Maintaining the diversity of life on Earth - That and, as the film explains so convincingly, MEANS ALL of us. Discussions about topics like the psychology of denial Climate Change, the Importance of conserving populations not just species, and how the Historical Changes in the Religious and Spiritual Attitudes Has Influenced Reverence for the environment, are interspersed with powerful, brilliantly Explained examples - the way the blood of lizards on the West Coast of the U.S. protects from Lyme disease Humans with a Particular gem, leading one to wonder What Kinds of protection WE Might Lose Before Even WE know we're benefiting. Serious, Rich and Challenging, Call of Life rises far beyond the superficial environmental jeremiads of many documentaries and explores its subject in commendable depth.</p>
Milking the Rhino	USA Director: David E Simpson	<p>The Maasai of Kenya and the Himba of Namibia are two of Earth's oldest cattle cultures. Conventional African wildlife documentaries often depict both cultures — if at all — as a problem for conservation: in conflict with wildlife, poaching, killing for bushmeat, turning habitat for wildlife into sparse, sere pasture for bony cattle. In contrast, Milking the Rhino gives the Maasai and Himba their own voice in conservation, and offers "...complex, intimate portraits of rural Africans at the forefront of community-based conservation: a revolution that is turning poachers into preservationists and local people into the stewards of their land". Moreover, skilful filming and editing delivers a powerful, moving film that shows us ourselves and our culture through the eyes of those we typically see as "the other". Sometimes this insight is comical; sometimes it's sobering or uncomfortable; always it provokes thought. One of this festival's top films, Rhino busts myths about wildlife conservation in Africa and might permanently change your perspective on indigenous conservation.</p>

The Age OF Stupid	UK Director: Franny Armstrong & Lizzie Gillette	<p><i>"I think everyone in the future will perhaps blame us for not thinking to protect the environment. We knew how to profit but not to protect."</i></p> <p>Almost flawless, cleverly structured, and with an opening worthy of a Spielberg film, The Age of Stupid delivers an extraordinarily thought-provoking take on modern civilisation's oil-fueled drag race against planet Earth. In the devastated world of 2055, the curator of an archive of relics from the last days of human civilisation (Pete Postlethwaite) lives alone among books, documentary footage, pickled animals, skeletons and echoes from the past. "Why," he asks, while looking at footage from our present, "didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?" The film takes risks and makes them pay off, delivering a mainstream message in a novel way and creating a film that's intriguingly complex but not confusingly complicated. Powerful emotive content backed up by sound information and a structure that links disparate threads produces a compelling argument; moreover, it engenders a strong desire to do something to counter the stupidity that's ruining our Earth. Despite its apparent prognosis The Age of Stupid doesn't depress — it galvanises. Essential viewing.</p>
NZ Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
The Unnatural History of the Kakapo	New Zealand Director: Scott Mouat	<i>(Refer Features above)</i>
Carving The Future	New Zealand Director: Guy Ryan and Nick Holmes	<p><i>"You are one person, and you don't stand alone"</i></p> <p>This short film debut by Guy Ryan and Nick Holme stirs hope and challenges the viewer with an inspirational account of how young New Zealanders are leading change for the betterment of our environmental future. Produced while Ryan and Holmes were students at Otago University and crafted for a youth audience, the film shows how one person might change the future. It aims to inspire tomorrow's leaders to act today on the challenges posed by climate change and short sighted management: challenges that are already damaging tomorrow's environment. Grassroots, youth-driven community action inspired the film. Features the music of Raglan band Cornerstone Roots.</p>

Albatrocity	New Zealand Director: Ian Frengley and Edi Saltau	<p>“...they challenge our imagination of what is possible.”</p> <p>New Zealand filmmaker Iain Frengley traces the story of the albatross, immersing the viewer in the beauty, majesty and vulnerability of these birds as viewed through the dramatic prism of Coleridge’s famous poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Using some of the most innovative visual effects in documentary film, the work distils a vast collection of natural history, harsh reality and folklore in a well paced viewing experience. Remarkable oceanic and onshore footage woven in a creative synthesis elevate this film to a class of its own. In tracing poetry we find our relationship with the winged monarch of the sea.</p>
Love In Cold Blood	New Zealand Director: Jane Adcroft	<p>New Zealand film makers Carla Braun-Elwert and Jane Adcroft tell an enchanting love story as they bring to life the slow courtship of Mildred and Henry, two elderly tuatara in Invercargill’s Southland Museum. And when we say slow courtship, we mean it: they’ve finally decided to mate at the ripe young ages of 80 and 111 years. It’s an event forty years in the making, but their partnership means a lot, not just for the passionately dedicated people who care for these rare animals, but for the very survival of this rare, iconic species still sailing aboard ‘Moa’s Ark’.</p>
Vegetables From The Sea	New Zealand Director: Adam Hermans	<p>Our shores offer a great source of food that most of us ignore. You are invited to take a tasty bite and develop an appetite.</p>

Short Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
Varmints	UK Director: Mark Craste	In the face of overwhelming urbanization, indifference and recklessness, a small creature struggles to preserve a remnant of the peace he once knew. His selfless acts of love plant the seeds of change that will ultimately prove the salvation of his world — but at what cost to himself? This elegant and beautifully rendered animation draws inspiration from the best graphics houses and even without dialogue easily creates a strong sense of emotion. Parallels to the Christian concept of rapture and afterlife are evident, but is there another parallel in the real world — will turning away from a soul-destroying existence as urban automatons be a key to freedom and appreciation for the environment?
A Simple Question: The Story of STRAW	USA Director: Kevin White and David Donnenfield	In the face of overwhelming urbanization, indifference and recklessness, a small creature struggles to preserve a remnant of the peace he once knew. His selfless acts of love plant the seeds of change that will ultimately prove the salvation of his world — but at what cost to himself? This elegant and beautifully rendered animation draws inspiration from the best graphics houses and even without dialogue easily creates a strong sense of emotion. Parallels to the Christian concept of rapture and afterlife are evident, but is there another parallel in the real world — will turning away from a soul-destroying existence as urban automatons be a key to freedom and appreciation for the environment?
Carving the Future	New Zealand Director: Guy Ryan and Nick Holmes	<i>(Refer NZ Films above)</i>
Albatrocity	New Zealand Director: Ian Frengley and Edi Saltau	<i>(Refer NZ Films above)</i>

CUD	USA Director: Joe York	<p><i>“My beef is just like industrial commodity beef except it's healthier, safer, better for the environment, and it tastes better. Other than that it's exactly the same.” — Georgia cattleman Will Harris</i></p> <p>Grass-fed beef, the family farm and a dog named Possum: it could be anywhere in New Zealand, but this is the US. With humour and insight, fourth generation cattleman Will Harris provides a timely reminder that, in the grand scheme of things, grass fed beef in an organic context is a surprisingly sustainable land use and wealth generator. The paradox for the New Zealand viewer is to see a farmer being held up by the environmental community as a paragon of agricultural virtue while remaining part of the USA's environmentally disastrous approach to animal production. In New Zealand, that same farmer and his system would be slated by some environmentalists. What a difference a country and a context makes. A film guaranteed to dismay vegetarians and horrify vegans, but offering a different perspective on agriculture. Frank and refreshing.</p>
Lines of Flight	UK Director: Sal Brown	<p><i>“The discovery of a direction they didn't know.”</i></p> <p>Connecting industrial towns and the barren wilderness of the northern English moors and their gritstone outcrops, film makers Sal Brown and Martin Wood portray the adventure and sheer joy of escape through the physically and mentally demanding world of solo rock climbing. Using spectacular ascents of some of the Pennine region's iconic gritstone climbs, the film considers the impact of social and economic transformations on the landscape and on the minds of a few individuals. A magnificent meditation on environment, place and humanity. As for the solo climbing — it's for none but the utterly fearless (or foolish)! A film for any thoughtful person, whether you climb or not.</p>
Love in Cold Blood	New Zealand Director: Jane Adcroft	<i>(Refer NZ Films above)</i>

Ultra Short Films	Country/Director	Synopsis
Vegetables From The Sea	New Zealand Director: Adam Hermans	Our shores offer a great source of food that most of us ignore. You are invited to take a tasty bite and develop an appetite.
Lebensader	Germany Director: Angela Steffen	Lebensader (Vein of Life) is an awesome animation that takes a spiritual look at the interconnectedness of life. Those in the know say it's a must see.
Flood Children of Holdibari	Bangladesh Director: Mary Matheson	Bangladeshi children look at practical measures on their river island to make life easier during the floods that have become more extreme with climate change. Eye-opening maturity in eye-watering circumstances make for compelling watching.
Dark Clouds	UK Director: Peter Szewczyk	Dark Clouds is a beautiful animation of rain that shatters flora and fauna. Prepare for edgy acidity from great heights and be grateful this is not screened in 3D!
Rethink The Shark	South Africa Director: Erica Brumage	Fear of JAWS is omnipresent but is that fear justified? Expect to see more of this little beauty.
The Break Up	New Zealand Director: Charlee Collins	And you thought using your mobile phone was the easy (but cowardly) way of breaking up? Watch this. It's time to end our relationship with global warming!

Media information

16 April 2010

Palmerston North's sixth *Reel Earth* environmental film festival, 22 May-5 June

In just five years Palmerston North's annual home-grown and volunteer-run 'green' film festival has become the largest international, juried environmental film festival in the southern hemisphere, according to *Reel Earth* Director Warren Jones.

Of the 200 films entered from over 40 countries, around 70 films have been selected by a New Zealand-based jury of science and film specialists for the 2010 festival screening from 23 May – 5 June. The festival has four categories—ultra short films of up to 10 minutes; short films of 10 to 45 minutes; feature-length movies; and New Zealand-made films. Category award nominees include recognition for best New Zealand film; cinematography (NZ); emerging filmmaker; feature film; short film; ultra short film; and science communication.

Category award and craft winners will be announced at *Reel Earth's* 'green carpet' gala opening evening at The Regent in Palmerston North on 22 May, with Auckland actress Robyn Malcolm as MC, and Wellington band *The Black Seeds* providing entertainment. Also attending the opening weekend is special international guest speaker, Vincent Laforet, an acclaimed French-American photojournalist, filmmaker, and Canon USA Explorer of Light and Master of Print. His Pulitzer prize-winning work includes both exquisite fine art still photography and HD cinematography made on Canon's remarkable 5D MkII camera technology.

Reel Earth's festival programme is on www.reeearth.org.nz. The environmentally-themed films screen in Palmerston North's downtown cinemas from 23 May-5 June 2010. The festival also features film workshops, seminars and a series of community activities including a civic welcome and a 'green carnival of sustainability' during the opening weekend in Palmerston North's Civic Square. The festival will then tour most New Zealand main centres and nearly 1800 schools.

The combined production budget of more than \$75 million for this year's films demonstrates filmmakers around the world are becoming more and more committed to telling their environmental stories.

***Reel Earth* Fact Sheet**

Reel Earth's line up of activities includes:

Screening for school's programme on 19 May at the Regent Theatre.

Civic welcome to visiting filmmakers and media Civic Chambers Fri 21 May.

Some 45 environmentally-themed exhibitors in Palmerston North's Civic Square on Saturday 22 May for hands-on activities, technologies and games connected with environmental and sustainable living.

Award-winning entries announced at the 'green carpet' gala opening night at the Regent Cinema on Broadway on Saturday 22 May with Robyn Malcolm as MC and Wellington band *The Black Seeds*;

High-visibility and environmentally-themed festival programme over two weeks throughout Palmerston North CBD.

Special international guest speaker, Vincent LaForet, attending opening weekend to hold workshops and a public seminar. LaForet is an acclaimed French-American photojournalist, filmmaker, and master of light. His work includes multiple Pulitzer prize-winning photographs.

Reel Earth is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation founded and based in Palmerston North.

Reel Earth was established by a group of like-minded, passionate Manawatu-based individuals and filmmakers wanting to share environmental stories and concerns through the powerful medium of film.

Reel Earth is run by its founding group of hands-on and dedicated volunteers who are professionals working in science, research, education, photography, and filmmaking.

Festival brings together national and international filmmakers of repute.

Open to all professional and amateur international filmmakers any age.

Encourages films contemporary, challenging, creative, original and resonant.

Festival organisers encourage a strong representation of young filmmakers.

A robust and rigorous jury process of New Zealand-based high-level media professionals, scientists, educators, and filmmakers, select 70 best films.

An adjudicated festival. Judges are a key strength of festival and its Palmerston North profile – eg scientists from Massey apply rigorous science focus to film analysis.

Post festival filmmakers tours to Wellington.

Award winning entries and other selected highlights tour New Zealand following the Palmerston North screenings.

This year, for first time, a 90-minute package of *Reel Earth* highlights will be shown at nearly 2000 New Zealand schools throughout the country.

Empowering current and future NZ environmental filmmakers through international internship programme (current intern in USA in leading pixel animation studio, will attend festival. Two interns invited to States 2011).

Strong, growing support and buy-in from Palmerston North businesses, local authorities and major international agencies on board to support *Reel Earth*.

Reel Earth a powerful driver for Manawatu's vision for an annual event of international significance for the region. Set to grow as a globally significant festival that showcases and enhances Manawatu's goals and stance for sustainability and environmental best practices.

Funding partners, associated supporters, local and international sponsors:

Palmerston North City Council

Massey University

Westpac

Palmerston North City Environmental Trust

Palmerston North City Library

Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North

Spinning Planet

NZ Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre

Interface NZ

Destination Manawatu

Eastern and Central Community Trust

Manawatu Chamber of Commerce

Manawatu District Council

Van Uffelen Gallery

Bruce McKenzie Booksellers

Environmental Choice/Croxley

Canon Australia (*for Vincent Laforet support*)

Apple South East Asia (*for Vincent Laforet support*)

***Reel Earth*—where the earth gets seen, gets heard, and gets attention** Contact:

Warren Jones, Festival Director: 027 325 6004 warren@reeearth.org.nz