

# LA FiLM FESTiVAL

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## **RICARDO DE MONTREUIL'S *LOWRIDERS* TO OPEN 2016 LA FILM FESTIVAL**

## **RYAN COOGLER ANNOUNCED AS GUEST DIRECTOR**

## **AVA DUVERNAY AND ARRAY RELEASING WILL RECEIVE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE AWARD**

## **2016 POSTER ART BY CAROLYN CASTAÑO UNVEILED**

LOS ANGELES (April 5, 2016)— The LA Film Festival, produced by Film Independent, the non-profit arts organization that also produces the Film Independent Spirit Awards, announced today that Ricardo de Montreuil's *Lowriders* will open this year's Festival. The film, produced by Academy Award® winner Brian Grazer (*A Beautiful Mind*, *8 Mile*, *American Gangster*) and Oscar® nominee® and Emmy Award winner Jason Blum (*Whiplash*, *The Gift*, HBO's *The Normal Heart*), stars Eva Longoria, Demián Bichir, Melissa Benoist, Theo Rossi, Tony Revolori and Gabriel Chavarria. It was also announced today that Ryan Coogler (*Fruitvale Station*, *Creed*) is named the 2016 Guest Director. The 2016 Festival poster artwork by Carolyn Castaño has also been unveiled.

Additionally, it was announced that Ava DuVernay (*Middle of Nowhere*, *Selma*) and Array Releasing will receive the Festival's annual Spirit of Independence Award. This award, which honors those who advance the cause of independent film and champion creative freedom, has previously been given to Don Cheadle, George Clooney, David O. Russell, Tom Bernard and Michael Barker, and Charlize Theron, among others.

The 22nd edition of the LA Film Festival will take place June 1 – June 9, 2016 at ArcLight Cinemas. The LA Film Festival's mission is to showcase diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision in independent American and international cinema.

"We are thrilled to open with *Lowriders*, a culturally vibrant film that explores familial relationships within a second-generation Mexican family in East LA. Made by filmmakers of color, *Lowriders* embodies our mission of shining the light on unique voices," said Festival Director Stephanie Allain. "Spirit Award winner Ryan Coogler honors us as Guest Director – we had *Fruitvale Station* at the Festival in 2013 and are so happy to have him back this year as our Guest Director."

"We can't imagine a more fitting recipient of the Spirit of Independence Award than Ava DuVernay and her distribution company Array Releasing," said Film Independent President Josh Welsh. "In addition to being a brilliant filmmaker, Ava is a passionate, forward-thinking distributor, helping unique and diverse voices find their audiences. Array bought Takeshi Fukunaga's *Out of My Hand* at last year's Festival, a film that we celebrated at this year's Film Independent Spirit Awards."

Set against the vibrant backdrop of East LA's near-spiritual car culture, *Lowriders* follows the story of Danny, a talented young street artist caught between the lowrider world inhabited by his old-school father and ex-con brother, and the adrenaline-fueled outlet that defines his self-expression.

"It is such an honor that the LA Film Festival has chosen *Lowriders* to open this year's Festival," said producer Brian Grazer. "From their humble beginnings to their modern-day status as works of extraordinary art, these aren't simply cars...they hold the imagination of the people and culture that create them. Danny's coming-of-age story is one of a son, a brother and a visionary, and we cannot wait to share Ricardo's film with the world."

"We are always looking to partner with filmmakers who are incredibly passionate about their projects," said producer Jason Blum. "When Brian brought the idea for *Lowriders* to Blumhouse, we got excited by the opportunity to work with Imagine and Ricardo on this powerful story, which is a unique look at two generations at a crossroads. The LA Film Festival is a wonderful event, and we look forward to being a part of this year's unique lineup."

Guest Director Ryan Coogler (*Fruitvale Station*, *Creed*) will attend the 15th annual Filmmaker Retreat. A signature program of the Festival, the Filmmaker Retreat brings together all the feature directors in this year's Festival along with seasoned filmmakers and Film Independent Board Members who attend as

honored artists. The Filmmaker Retreat is an opportunity to build community among the Festival's filmmakers before the Festival kicks off on June 1. Past Guest Directors of the Festival include Rodrigo García, Lisa Cholodenko, David O. Russell, Mira Nair, Kathryn Bigelow, George Lucas, William Friedkin, Sydney Pollack, Guillermo Del Toro and Alfonso Cuarón.

Writer/director/producer/distributor Ava DuVernay (*Middle of Nowhere*, *Selma*) and her colleagues at Array Releasing will be awarded the Spirit of Independence Award. The Spirit of Independence Award is given to individuals who advance the cause of independent film, champion creative freedom or make a significant contribution to the preservation and proliferation of independent voices. Array Releasing is an LA-based film collective dedicated to the amplification of images by people of color and women. The collective's film releases to date include: 2015 LA Film Festival winners *Out of my Hand* and *Ayanda*, *Ashes and Embers*, *Mississippi Damned*, *Middle of Nowhere*, *Kinyarwanda*, *Restless City*, *Vanishing Pearls*, *Big Words*, *Better Mus' Come* and *I Will Follow*.

"In 2013 we launched a series of LA Film Festival posters designed to celebrate LA artists. Native Angelena Carolyn Castaño joins the ranks of acclaimed artists Ed Ruscha and the late Noah Davis as the 2016 poster artist," said Mary Sweeney, Film Independent Board Chair. "Castaño's work reflects and celebrates her deep roots and experiences in the powerful Latina culture of Los Angeles. Film Independent and the LA Film Festival support and celebrate the diversity of unique artistic voices."

Carolyn Castaño's work in painting, drawing, video and mixed-media installations has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, most recently at the 56th International La Biennale di Venezia, LACMA's Fútbol: The Beautiful Game, the Pasadena Museum of California Art and at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City. Her site-specific installation at the Los Angeles International Airport will be unveiled in June 2016. Castano earned a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and her MFA from UCLA.

Festival passes are on sale to Film Independent Members starting today, April 5. Passes go on sale to the general public on Tuesday, April 12. The full line-up will be announced on Tuesday, April 26. Individual tickets go on sale to Members on Tuesday, May 5 and to the general public on Tuesday, May 10. Please visit [lafilmfestival.com](http://lafilmfestival.com) for more information.

Press materials can be found at [filmIndependent.org/press](http://filmIndependent.org/press). The deadline for press to submit applications for credentials is May 5.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Albina Oks, Director of Sponsorship at Film Independent, [aoks@filmIndependent.org](mailto:aoks@filmIndependent.org).

## **ABOUT THE LA FILM FESTIVAL**

The LA Film Festival is a key part of the exhibition arm of Film Independent, showcasing new American and international cinema that embraces diversity, innovation and unique perspectives. The Festival produces one-of-a-kind events featuring critically acclaimed filmmakers, industry professionals and award-winning talent from Los Angeles and around the world. The Festival's signature programs include the Filmmaker Retreat, Celebrating Women Filmmakers, Master Classes, Spirit of Independence Award, Coffee Talks, LA Muse and more. The Festival also screens short films created by high school students. Presenting Media Sponsor is the Los Angeles Times. Premier Sponsor is Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Principal Sponsor is Jaeger-LeCoultre. Platinum Sponsors are American Airlines, Dolby Laboratories, Inc., EFILM I Company 3 and HBO. The University Sponsor is Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television. WireImage is the Official Photography Agency. More information can be found at [lafilmfestival.com](http://lafilmfestival.com).

## **ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT**

Film Independent is the non-profit arts organization that champions independent film and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision. Film Independent helps filmmakers make their movies, builds an audience for their projects and works to diversify the film industry. Film Independent's Board of Directors, filmmakers, staff and constituents, is comprised of an inclusive community of individuals across ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation. Anyone passionate about film can become a member, whether you are a filmmaker, industry professional or a film lover.

Film Independent produces the Spirit Awards, the annual celebration honoring artist-driven films and recognizing the finest achievements of American independent filmmakers. Film Independent also produces the LA Film Festival, showcasing the best of American and international cinema and the Film Independent at LACMA Film Series, a year-round, weekly program that offers unique cinematic experiences for the Los Angeles creative community and the general public.

With over 250 annual screenings and events, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists who are driving creativity in the film industry. Film Independent's Artist Development program offers free Labs for selected writers, directors, producers and documentary filmmakers and presents year-round networking opportunities. Project Involve is Film Independent's signature program dedicated to fostering the careers of talented filmmakers from communities traditionally underrepresented in the film industry. For more information or to become a member, visit [filmindependent.org](http://filmindependent.org).

**ABOUT ARCLIGHT CINEMAS**

ArcLight Cinemas, created by Pacific Theatres, a privately owned, Los Angeles based company with 60 years of theatrical exhibition history throughout California, Hawaii and Washington is a premiere moviegoing experience with an unparalleled commitment to bringing a variety of rich cinematic content to moviegoers in all markets. ArcLight Cinemas operates nine theaters in California including Hollywood, Pasadena, Sherman Oaks, El Segundo, Culver City and La Jolla, as well as one theater in Bethesda, Md, Glenview, Ill, and Chicago, Ill. Additional theaters opening this year include Santa Monica, CA. ArcLight also owns and operates the historic Cinerama Dome and programs the TCL Chinese Theatre and IMAX in Hollywood. Pacific Theatres currently operates theaters in Los Angeles that include The Grove and The Americana at Brand in Glendale, Calif. Additional information about ArcLight Cinemas is available at [www.arclightcinemas.com/](http://www.arclightcinemas.com/)

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