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OPENING NIGHT OF 7TH ANNUAL OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL SHOWCASES TWO LOCAL FILMS AT PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

OCEAN CITY, MD — *Feb. 10, 2023* — The Ocean City Film Festival kicks off its 7th season with an opening night of films with local interest on March 2, 7 p.m. at the Ocean City Performing Arts Center.

Hedgehog was filmed locally by Unscene Productions at Mariner's Country Down in Berlin. The 17-minute film tells the story of six-yearold Nina who is sent to her grandmother's remote village in Ukraine when the war starts. In the shack outside, Nina discovers a badly wounded Russian soldier.

The film was directed by D. Mitry, who was born in the former Soviet Union. "*Hedgehog* was made by people of different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities including Egyptians, Romanians, Mexicans, Finish, Spanish, Austrians, and former residents of USSR, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus," he said. "I am incredibly thankful that people of so many nationalities got together to support Ukraine and to tell this beautiful story about the responsibility of being human to each other, especially during tough war time like this."

Ocean City native John Chester takes us back to his sustainable California farm in *The Biggest Little Farm: The Return*. After the success of his feature film that showed to a packed house at the Ocean City Performing Arts Center as part of the Film Festival in 2019, Chester returns with his new 29-minute Disney+ Earth Day special from National Geographic. Based on the 2018 award-winning documentary that introduced the story of John and Molly Chester, who abandoned their urban life in Los Angeles to live on a barren farm and grow delicious food in harmony with nature, the new film updates us on the farm's current sustainability.

Following the films, Seacrets Morley Hall will host an Opening Night After Party where film goers can mingle with the filmmakers and stars. The after party features happy hour prices and discounted light fare. Patrons must be 21 or older to attend.

Admission to the Thursday opening day events is available by purchasing a 1-day pass for Thursday or a complete 4-day pass that allows admission into all of the events of the festival March 2-5, with the exception of the John Waters' performance on Saturday at Ocean Downs Casino. Tickets are available at <u>OCMDFilmFestival.com</u> The festival is offering discount codes for single- and multiple-day passes to essential members of the community including first responders, military members, students, and Art League members. These groups should call the Art League at 410-524-9433 or e-mail <u>katie@artleagueofoceancity.org</u> for their online discount codes.

The 7th year of the festival will showcase more than 70 independent films in multiple genres at iconic Ocean City locations over the four-day festival. Legendary filmmaker John Waters headlines the festival with a special spoken word performance on Saturday night at Ocean Downs Casino.

Complete information about the festival, including a list of films, parties, Q&As, and events is available at <u>OCMdFilmFestival.com</u>. Passes are available for one day of films and parties, four days of films and parties, and individually-sold John Waters tickets. Also listed on the website are special, off-season hotel rates for festival goers.

The Film Festival is an initiative of the nonprofit Art League that produces the festival annually along with broad support from the Town of Ocean City, Ocean Downs Casino, The State of Maryland Film Office, and the Ocean City community.

More information is available at <u>OCMDFilmFestival.com</u>, <u>OCart.org</u>, or by calling 410-524-9433.

The Art League of Ocean City is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the visual arts to the community through education, exhibits, scholarship, programs and community art projects. ###

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