



### Contact

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## **VENICE ARTS GALLERY PRESENTS AN ON-THE-GROUND VIEW OF THE LIBYAN UPRISING WITH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER MATTHEW MILLAN**

Los Angeles, CA – (July 27, 2011) – On **Wednesday, August 10, 2011, 7:30–9:30pm** Venice Arts Gallery will host a Free Film Premiere and Discussion with filmmaker Matthew Millan. Mr. Millan will give a talk about his travels through war-torn Libya, and the extraordinary events that he witnessed while there. He will first walk the audience through the emerging nation in the midst the war, and the devastation of the Libyan infrastructure before showing the premiere of “We Win or We Die,” a 30-minute Documentary on the first four days of the uprising. He will also show teasers to his upcoming feature length film, entitled “West of Tobruk,” due out in 2012. Join Mr. Millan on August 10<sup>th</sup>, and see the true Libya.

In April and May of 2011, Millan traveled to eastern Libya to document the violent uprising that erupted in February of this year. And what he discovered was staggering. From the eastern city of Tobruk to the rebel stronghold of Benghazi, he witnessed a nebula coalescing from the dust of war, to form a nation reborn. Amidst the brutality and devastation wrought under 42 years of Gaddafi's rule, a civil society par excellence is emerging from the ashes. And for the first time in their lives, the eastern Libyans feel a strong sense of citizenship, finding themselves gravitating toward certain roles, roles they would never consider five months before. Medical students turned news anchors. Civil engineers turned newspaper editors. And taxi drivers turned soldiers. Neighborhoods have banded together to pick up the pieces of a shattered infrastructure. Children sweep the streets after the witching hour, alongside men who paint the roadside curbs. Looting is non-existent, and the crime rate has dropped by a factor of 20—all in the absence of strong government. Mr. Millan's film screening and discussion will offer a window into the current state of Libya beyond what is being presented in the news media.

**The Venice Arts Gallery is located at 1702 Lincoln Blvd.** in Venice, CA; 310-392-0846. This program takes place in conjunction with the exhibition **Shipping & Receiving: Photographs and Letters between Venice, CA and Dupree, SD**, which opens on Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup> with a reception from 5:00–8:00pm. The exhibition highlights a photographic and personal storytelling exchange between youth in Venice and youth on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota and will feature texts and panoramic, collaborative double-exposure photographs, paired with over thirty black-and-white and color photographs taken by youth who have participated in the My Viewpoint Photography Program since its inception in 2005. This is the first public exhibition of their work. The exhibition continues through September 30th.

Page 2

### **Brief Bio of the Filmmaker and Producer**

With over nine years of experience, Documentarian Matthew Millan has shot films all over the world, from the frozen heights of Northern India to the imperial majesty of China. Yet he started out on an entirely different path, earning a Bachelor of Science in Physics before moving on to engineering, and later teaching. However, only in filmmaking did he find that he could unify his talents in the arts and in the sciences, and fulfill his need to share knowledge with a wide audience. His latest featured-length Documentary Film, "West of Tobruk," which is currently in production, explores the burgeoning nation that is emerging out of the ashes of war-torn Libya.

Film Producer Erik Niel founded 180 Films in 2001 with partner Matt Millan. Over the past 10 years, 180 Films has produced a wide spectrum of content stemming from its mission statement: Illuminating Shifts in Perspective. Mr. Niel comes from a scientific background with a B.S. in physics from U.C.S.C., but his heart was always in music and storytelling. Current projects include a recently completed album for the Topanga band Dinosaur Horses and the Documentary "West of Tobruk," with partner Matt Millan (in production).

### **About Venice Arts' Gallery and Public Programs**

The **Venice Arts Gallery** primarily features the work of Documentary Photographers and high-caliber Participant-Produced Photography. Public Programs include workshops for adults and free lectures, conversations, and film screenings. The Venice Arts Gallery is a program of the non-profit **Venice Arts** that, since 1993, has received critical acclaim around the world for its innovative mentoring and educational programs for Los Angeles-area youth in Photography, Filmmaking, and Multimedia. Venice Arts also conducts Documentary Programs locally and internationally with adults and children; runs the Institute for Photographic Empowerment with USC; and consults with other organizations, foundations, and individuals on the development of similar programs. Venice Arts' newest partnership is a consulting contract in Hong Kong for the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation, for whom Venice Arts has developed a photography curriculum, is training their Teaching Artists, and recently curated an exhibition of work by Hong Kong youth, which opened in June at the Hong Kong Cultural Art Centre.

**Hi-Res images and video available upon request.**

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