

MEDIA RELEASE – FEATURE LENGTH

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New York City’s Immersive Theater Creatives Tony Bordonaro and Ingrid Kapteyn to Produce “CAMPFIRE” As Film on Heels of Live Staging Success

Film festivals targeted for a 25-minute short portraying the last two humans on a post-apocalyptic Planet Earth

Washington, D.C., Sept. 4, 2019: The National Performing Arts Funding Exchange today confirmed that it is supporting the film production of **CAMPFIRE**, an original cinematic portrayal of the last two humans on earth created and produced by immersive dance-theater artists Tony Bordonaro and Ingrid Kapteyn.

Bordonaro and Kapteyn are among New York City’s most gifted creative teams in immersive theater, bringing their powerful imagination not just to the stage but right to and into the audience.

CAMPFIRE is their original theatrical creation. It uses intense physical movement to mine the relationship between two strangers whose paths cross unexpectedly in a dangerous post-apocalyptic city. The refugees’ fight to survive challenges both performer and audience to question how they define humanity.

Bordonaro and Kapteyn’s creative references cross the sensibilities of sci-fi blockbuster *The Hunger Games* with the nuanced dance theater of Germany’s iconoclastic choreographer Pina Bausch. They imagine a dystopia like *Bladerunner* through the lens of an immersive theater production like Punchdrunk’s genre-defining *Sleep No More*.

Kapteyn notes, “I am a shameless sucker for stories like *The Hunger Games* and *The Walking Dead*, where the logistics of normal life disappear, and every day is a matter of surviving until tomorrow. Even in fiction, those high stakes show the guts of what humans care about.”

Bordonaro and Kapteyn were first inspired to make CAMPFIRE by the future-oriented pulse of Shanghai, where they appeared nightly in the original cast of Punchdrunk’s Chinese production of *Sleep No More* in 2017.

They premiered CAMPFIRE in a half-finished downtown office space that was still under construction and filled with debris suggestive of a bombing or an evacuation. Audience members were free to follow the action at their will along an entire empty floor of the building. The duo went on to present sold out performances of CAMPFIRE in The Tank’s intimate and shadowy black box in midtown Manhattan.

Why do Bordonaro and Kapteyn choose to tell the story of CAMPFIRE through physicality so up close and visceral that the audience can feel it in their own bodies? Bordonaro answers, “As dance artists we believe the movement of the body is highly expressive...This project is about empathy and compassion and overall what it means to be human. In CAMPFIRE, this question — although old as time itself — is explored in a new way through physical storytelling and a shared multi-sensory experience.”

Though Bordonaro and Kapteyn occasionally make sounds, not a single audible or intelligible word is spoken for the duration of CAMPFIRE. “The silence of movement, with everything else stripped away,” Kapteyn points out, “can be one of the most simple and articulate ways to tell a story.”

Says NPAFE’s CEO Cliff Brody, “I had heard about CAMPFIRE, got one of the last tickets for the January 2019 performances in the City, and was blown away by what unfolded.” He perceived the actors’ movement of hands, eyes, and body to be spontaneous and learned only after the performance that every last one of the actors’ moves, even the tiniest of gestures, reflected a highly-complex choreography of aggression, rage, self-preservation, and final reconciliation of enemies-turned-friends.

“No matter that there wasn’t any dialogue,” Brody adds. “Everyone in the audience knew exactly what these two were saying in silence about the terror they were facing. This was immersive theater at its best.” That is the reason Brody says NPAFE is committed to supporting the CAMPFIRE film.

Brody’s nonprofit came to that conclusion after a NPAFE team went to New York in February, and again in April and May, to find out from Bordonaro and Kapteyn what was next on their creative agenda. “We knew that Tony, a veteran of the NYC dance company Ten Hairy Legs, was teaching dance and theater at Rutgers and appearing in *The Unbrunch*, and that Ingrid was performing with *Sleep No More* in New York City. But what about CAMPFIRE? Was there more to come?”

With their sold-out New York City shows under their belt, the Bordonaro-Kapteyn Team had decided to turn CAMPFIRE into a 25-minute short to be shot in Brooklyn and then submitted to selected film festivals.

At the intersection of narrative and art film, the CAMPFIRE film will offer the intimacy of the original live performance while engaging wider audiences in its arresting and at times brutal test of the limits of human empathy.

How will they make a 2D film immersive? How will they draw their audiences into the moment? Bordonaro and Kapteyn see film as a way to actually increase the immersive potential of CAMPFIRE - to make the story more accessible to more people.

Explains Bordonaro, "What I love about immersive theatre is its similarities to film. The audience is no longer separated from the characters but up close and involved in the action."

But, throughout their years working in immersive theatre, Bordonaro and Kapteyn have come up repeatedly against the limitations of the form: "I hear similar critiques for every show. 'I couldn't see what happened. I lost them.' 'The audience members are too pushy.' 'I missed something.'"

For Bordonaro and Kapteyn, turning CAMPFIRE into a film means offering every single member of their audience an intimate, personal, and close-up experience of their story. "There will be no sight line issues. No one will be too far away, or stuck behind too many other audience members. Everyone will have equal access to the action and be able to feel equally involved," stresses Kapteyn.

Bordonaro sums it up: "We want to create a film so that all people, regardless of their age or ability, can have access to the story and the intimacy of these characters and this world."

NPAFE believes they will succeed. Bordonaro and Kapteyn have an impressive track record in New York and in China for attracting highly qualified teams of collaborators. The quality of their creative works, whether live or on video, whether self-produced or with production teams, is second to none.

Bordonaro's and Kapteyn's pre-production plan includes a unique live Proof of Concept Showing, in early-Fall 2019, to introduce CAMPFIRE to potential collaborators invited from their film, dance, and funding networks.

The funding round now underway for the film, supplementing some \$40,000+ in funds and in-kind services already committed, will offset pre-production costs, filming, post-production, and early distribution to film festivals.

In addition to producing their film, Bordonaro and Kapteyn are in process to mount further original, live immersive performance events with long-term runs in New York City.

More information, photos, and videos are available at www.campfirethefilm.com.

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Tony Bordonaro and Ingrid Kapteyn are excellent speakers and are available for live or recorded interviews. NPAFE Contact: See www.npafe.org. Reach Cliff Brody at (+1) 202.213.3076 or cbrody@npafe.org to follow up.

About Tony Bordonaro and Ingrid Kapteyn. New York City-based artists Tony Bordonaro and Ingrid Kapteyn are a self-formed team of actor-dancer-choreographers with established international performance careers. They met while performing in *Sleep No More* NYC in 2013 before crossing paths again in the original cast that opened a new version of the show in Shanghai, China in 2016. They each perform, choreograph, and teach around New York City and the world, and they currently appear in the **Unbrunch** (Bordonaro) and **Sleep No More** (Kapteyn).

About NPAFE - The National Performing Arts Funding Exchange. NPAFE is the country's only not-for-profit partnering exclusively with private sector businesses committed to advancing the performing arts, channeling funding to performing artists acclaimed primarily for compelling original work. This financial support comes from corporate sponsors intent on associating their brands with performing artists who are applauded by loyal and discerning audiences. NPAFE provides its promotional services to performing artists at no charge.

CAMPFIRE Media Resources.

- Trailer for live performance of CAMPFIRE in Shanghai: <http://bit.ly/CAMPFIRETHEFILM>
- NPAFE One-Pager with details about CAMPFIRE film project: <https://www.npafe.org/awu-iktb-campfire/>
- Email to Bordonaro-Kapteyn Team: info@campfirethefilm.com