



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **THE STATE OF THE BLACK MEDIA PANEL DISCUSSION TACKLES HOT TOPICS** **Conversations about black & brown images in film, television, news and social media** **And what does this mean in the age of Black Lives Matter?**

**BOCA RATON, Fla.**—(July 20, 2016)—The **Boca Black Film Festival** kicks off its third year of celebrating film arts & education in South Florida this week, starting on Thursday, July 21 – Friday, July 22, 2016, at the Boca Raton Marriott. With more than one dozen workshop sessions, special screenings and a timely discussion about black media, the 2016 festival promises to be the locals' favorite film festival of summer. That's why, we're bringing back our audience favorite—**The State of the Black Media**, on Friday, July 22, at 6 pm, to talk about this year's biggest topics, ones that we believe are much more than a hashtag— *Black Lives Matter* and *Oscars So White*. These topics only hint at larger issues in film, television and media overall.

The industry needs fair and equal representation of black & brown images in a variety of ranges, in a variety of societal roles and in a variety of depictions as whole human beings with families, work, and communities they love. "We're not saying that the film industry or media needs to color their sensitivities to share only our triumphs," said Lizabeth Martin, festival director. "But, like all of us, we need our images to be balanced with as much of our successes as our failures, our loves and heartaches, and even, our struggles and triumphs too. In our society, these portrayals matter in order to see that black lives are truly American lives."

**The State of the Black Media** panel discussion has normally been a big hit due to the lack of diversity in Hollywood and mainstream media. This year it's even more important since we are living in the new day when the fictional images we see in film & television do have an effect on human lives and dignity on the streets of America. No longer can we keep waiting for this conversation to start, and we can't rely on the Academy to solve everything overnight, even with small diversity gains this year. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences hopes to double the number of diverse members by 2020, and despite two new board directors of color and a record 683 new members invites, as reported by *Variety* magazine—46% being female and 40% people of color—there's still much that we can do individually and collectively. We believe that local communities can start the conversation. More so, we also want to discuss the impact of seeing black death in traditional and social media. And, how will these tragic images affect the next younger generation of young black & brown boys and girls?

Now in our third year, **Boca Black Film** is excited to offer film workshops, conversations on film & media, and special screening opportunities close to home. Our film festival is affordable & our professionals approachable. We have gained the support of local businesses and organizations to help us fulfill our mission for film diversity—to be South Florida's premier festival vehicle for black filmmakers and talent by providing educational enrichment alongside master classes and film screenings. Likewise, we don't just talk the talk, but we also do our fair share to support the Florida film industry and local festivals through membership, education and partnerships. This year's supporting partners include Discover the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach Film & Television Commission, SAG-AFTRA (Miami Local) and Women in Film (Florida chapter), in addition to Pollo Tropical and Videomaker.

Each year, our film festival also highlights the working talents of Florida's best-kept secret—working film professionals of color. The film festival culminates with the Daisy Awards ceremony that honors the achievements of emerging, independent filmmakers while also celebrating one Floridian of color who has worked tirelessly to make an impact in film & television—and remained local. At this year's award program on Friday, July 21, at 7 pm, the Festival is awarding Ms. Ruth Paul, SAG-AFTRA, as the third annual Daisy Award recipient.



**Boca Black Film Festival**

The two-day summer film festival runs from Thursday, July 21 – Friday, July 22, 2016. We promise to educate, support, and nurture independent, emerging filmmakers—from the tri-county area and the state of Florida. Our opening night classic film screening & discussion will be hosted at Palm Beach State College, Boca Raton, and all of our educational programming is being held at the Boca Raton Marriott.

**Boca Black Film Festival** aims to be South Florida's premier festival vehicle for black filmmakers and talent by providing educational enrichment alongside master classes, panel discussion and film screenings by black talent and creative content makers. We strive to accommodate film enthusiasts. And, we always hit the mark with education, information and enrichment that helps novice filmmakers study their craft and move forward to the next competition.

The **Boca Black Film Festival** is open to the public and discounted student rates are available for student ambassadors who sign up for community service hours. The Festival's Friends & Family registration starts at \$100 for two-day pass or \$50 for a student pass. Limited seating so, we ask guests to register in advance. For more information on the Boca Black Film Festival visit [www.BocaBlackFilm.org](http://www.BocaBlackFilm.org). Or at Boca Black Film's EventBrite page. We're social... follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

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The **Boca Black Film Festival** is the premier creative arts and educational film fest that specifically celebrates and champions independent film works created, designed and inspired by persons of black heritage. As one of Florida's and the tri-county area's only film festivals dedicated to the art and craft of filmmaking for black content makers, the **Boca Black Film Festival** organization strives for authenticity and originality in promoting and screening film works. The Festival provides balance in creative arts development, training sessions, networking, mentorship and endeavors that promote well-balanced, diverse images of color in film, television and other media venues. The **Boca Black Film Festival** celebrates the imaginative, organically grown, perspective that is uniquely black American.

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