



June 20th

As the rain proceeds to engulf the coasts of Miami, the start of the American Black Film Festival's 16th year of celebrating urban cinema is turning the heat up in this tropical city and bringing together a myriad of industry tastemakers to celebrate the importance of diversity in independent film.

Images: Actress Quvenzhane Wallis as 'Hushpuppy' (the girl in both pics), and actor Dwight Henry as 'Wink'

This year's festival sees an amazing lineup of annual mainstays as well as a host of new avenues of exploration that promise to keep attendees entertained and diversify their experience. Some of the scheduled events include: A Conversation with Salim and Mara Brock-Akil, A Celebration of "Think Like a Man," the HBO Short Film Competition, and the premiere of the GMC Network film "Raising Izzie" which is the visual result of last year's American Black Film Festival/GMC Network scriptwriting competition; "Raising Izzie" marks the start of a possible ongoing relationship between the previous year's winning script and one of the current year's "in competition" produced films.

Tonight's opening film, Fox Searchlight's "Beasts of the Southern Wild" is a real treat for festival attendees. The indie feature has breezed its way through both Sundance and Cannes to unanimous praise and awards for its engaging plot and magical sentiment. The film comes to us from first time feature film director Benh Zeitlin and screenwriter Lucy Alibar. It chronicles the life of a young girl growing up in the bayou whose neighborhood is in trouble and whose father is sick and dying. The young girl must rise above these unforeseen circumstances and find a way

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to reunite with her mother and save her home.



The cast and crew are slated to appear this evening to promote their film and chat with press about the success of their very first masterpiece.

The mission of the American Black Film Festival, an event founded by Jeff Friday of Film Life Inc., has always been to demonstrate cultural diversity within the motion picture industry. Friday has been on this mission since he founded the festival in 1997 which is easily the largest and most successful African American film festival in the world. Just last year, Friday added another tier of awareness to his plight when he introduced October as Black Movie Month— a month to celebrate and bring light to the importance of Black film, an entity that appears to be slowly fading out of the mainstream motion picture industries mark of importance.

With so many amazing events and opportunities in store at this years American Black Film Festival, it's sure to be as the festival producer Reggie Scott stated, "We don't want to just be known as one the best Black film festival's in the world, rather we want people to see us as one of the best film festival's in the world."

Stay tuned to Insight News for more information about this year's American Black Film Festival.