



**CONTACT:** Tonya Gustafson  
(206) 631-2280  
tgustafson@marketfitz.com

## **“City Folk” Film Festival from Northwest Folklife Examines Urban Communities’ Response to Change**

**Seattle, March 24, 2008**—*City Folk*, Northwest Folklife’s 2008 film series, will be held at the SIFF Cinema at McCaw Hall from Friday, May 2 through Monday, May 5. Three documentaries and one narrative film delve into how people and their environments shape one another in the modern city and how this process can result in cultural cohesion, social alienation or artistic innovation.

Audience members are invited to engage in post-film conversations with filmmakers and guest speakers. Featured speakers include Rick Lowe, a Houston-based artist who merges art with activism as founder of Project Row Houses (featured in the film *Third Ward TX*) and as arts planner for the central Seattle Public Library. Filmmakers Jesse Weaver Shipley (*Living the Hiplife*) and Tim Jackson (*Radical Jesters*) will join local speakers to reflect on the communities they’ve filmed. A special screening of youth films from the Native Lens program precedes Sundance-favorite fiction film *Four Sheets to the Wind*.

“We’ve found four distinctive films which share the personal stories of communities incorporating art and traditions into new landscapes,” explains Amy Mills, Outreach & Education Coordinator. “These films show how art in public spaces is being used to develop communities and change the world.”

Tickets are \$10 per show, \$36 for the series or \$8.50 for a group of 10 or more. To purchase tickets and for more program developments visit [www.nwfolklife.org](http://www.nwfolklife.org).

The films:

### **Friday, May 2 at 7:30 p.m.**

***Living the Hiplife***, (Director: Jesse Weaver Shipley, 2007, 62 min.)

In 1994, rap musician “Reggie Rockstone” Ossei returned to his native Ghana and sparked a musical revolution. Rockstone left a successful English-language rap career in London to record and perform Akan-language hip hop in the clubs and studios of Accra. What emerged was “hiplife” – a new music combining African American rap and engineered beats mixed with traditional proverbial speech and urban Ghanaian highlife rhythms and vocals. *Living the Hiplife* follows Rockstone and other hiplife stars through the corners of urban living, as they create a new hip hop culture in a postcolonial metropolis.

### **Saturday, May 3 at 7:45 p.m.**

***Four Sheets to the Wind***, (Directors: Sterlin Harjo and Ted Kroeber, 2007, rated R, 91 min.)

When Cufe Smallhill, a registered Seminole who is part Creek, finds his father dead one morning, he disposes of the body in the family pond, according to the old man’s dying wish. Cufe’s cousin loads a donated coffin with watermelons for weight, making Cufe’s mother happy because a closed-casket funeral is possible. Overwhelmed and confused, Cufe sets off to begin a new life in the big city of Tulsa, where his sister Miri is struggling in her own ways. What follows is a sweetly bitter tale about family, forgiveness and something resembling love.

### **Sunday, May 4 at 7:30 p.m.**

***Third Ward TX***, (Director: Andrew Garrison, 2007, 57 min.)

A neighborhood in Houston’s inner-city Third Ward seems doomed to decay until a group of African-American artists starts Project Row Houses. First, they clean up a row of condemned shotgun houses and hold a “drive-by” exhibition of paintings on the fronts of the abandoned homes. Then they do something *really* unusual. They ask the community what it needs—and listen to the answers. In the process, this tidy little row of born-again houses has become cutting-edge public art and a homegrown challenge to traditional notions of community development.

**Monday, May 5 at 7:30 p.m.**

***Radical Jesters***, (Director: Tim Jackson, 2007, 75 min.)

Pranksters, performers and provocateurs take to the streets to engage in social critique through imaginative guerrilla art. Through media hoaxes, billboard alteration and even pants-less subway rides, these radical jesters taunt mainstream media and challenge the increasingly private use of public space. Behind every prank is a purpose – to use humor to make people question a culture where ideas and values are often fashioned by the media and through habits of consumption.

*This program is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Washington, a state-wide non-profit organization supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the state of Washington, and contributions from individuals and foundations.*

**About Northwest Folklife**

Northwest Folklife is a non-profit organization committed to creating opportunities for individuals and communities of the Pacific Northwest to celebrate, share and sustain the vitality of folk, ethnic and traditional arts for present and future generations. Northwest Folklife fulfills its mission in a variety of ways, most notably through the annual production of the free Northwest Folklife Festival. For more information or event details, please visit [www.nwfolklife.org](http://www.nwfolklife.org).

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**Northwest Folklife Festival**

Memorial Day Weekend

May 23-26, 2008

**Play • Sing • Taste • Dance • Learn • Participate**