

'I've always known who I was'

FILM continued from front page

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Beginning Thursday, Jan. 23, and running through Sunday, Feb. 2, in Park City, Utah, the Sundance Film Festival attracts filmmakers from all over the world and includes full-length features and short films; series and episodes; and showcases emerging media forms. Since 1978, hundreds of films featured at the festival have gained critical acclaim.

"mañi" is produced by Sky Hopinka, 35, a language teacher and video artist who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia. He collaborated with Mercier, the Tribe's Cultural Resources specialist, for the past three years. Scenes were filmed during Canoe Journey 2018, as well as at different areas in Grand Ronde and the Tribe's ancestral homelands, the Oregon Coast, and on the Washington and Oregon sides of the Columbia River.

"This is an experimental film and there are many aspects I'm hoping the audience will take away," Hopinka says. "I'm hoping they take a different look at Native culture and the relationship of myth and language. It's our way

of opening up the possibilities of what Indigenous art and cinema can look like."

Hopinka, a Ho-Chunk National and descendant of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, is a fluent Chinuk Wawa speaker who helped teach Mercier the language while a student at Portland State University 10 years ago. He grew up in Ferndale, Wash., and spent several years living in the Portland area.

"I've always known who I was," Hopinka said in an interview with *Filmmaker* magazine. "It's always been a part of my life."

Hopinka's early films feature the reawakening of and interest in Indigenous language and filmmaking. He undertook the projects to "feel like we had control over what we were doing and the films we were making."

Hopinka works as an associate professor of film, video and animation at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, and his video work centers around "personal positions of homeland and landscape, designs of language and facets of culture continued within, and the play between the accessibility of the known and unknowable," according to his website.



Sky Hopinka

As a 2018-19 Radcliffe-Harvard Film Study Center Fellow, Hopinka worked on post-production for the film. He has had a number of shorter films featured

at Sundance, ImagineNATIVE Media + Arts Festival, Projections at the New York Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival's Wavelengths and others.

This isn't Hopinka or Mercier's first collaboration. Several years ago, they worked together on a short film called "huyi huyi," which means "trade" in Chinuk Wawa.

"This is a follow-up to that," Mercier says. "I'm really excited about it. This isn't something I ever thought I would be a part of. It's really cool how he is changing the narrative in Native film and telling our story in a different way. He is on the leading edge of Native cinema."

During a screening of the film in Grand Ronde three months ago, Mercier said that even those who

were not well versed in Tribal culture, language and storytelling had positive responses after seeing it.

"People had a lot to say about this," Mercier says. "It gets at the heart of our people's identity by putting it into visual form. It is modern myth telling. If our ancestors had access to this technology, they probably would have used it to tell a story."

Native Americans have a long history of being exploited and stereotyped when it comes to filmmaking, but that is changing.

"This is good exposure for our community," Mercier says. "We're a positive example to many Tribes with our progressiveness, and this is another aspect that fits into that."

Tribal Council member Denise Harvey will attend the Film Festival to represent the Tribe at the screening.

Hopinka isn't sure if the film will be released for distribution, but he plans on holding screenings in Portland and Grand Ronde in the future.

To watch a trailer for the 80-minute documentary or check a calendar of upcoming screenings, visit www.skyhopinka.com. ■

TABLE GAMES DEALER SCHOOL

WHAT:

Learn to deal Blackjack and several other games. A commitment of six weeks* is needed to potentially become a Part-Time Black Jack Dealer. Additional five-week commitment immediately following to learn additional games to maintain employment.

WHO:

Preference will be provided to enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; although all applicants are welcome to apply for consideration.

WHEN:

Deadline to apply is Thursday, Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. Training begins on Monday, Feb. 17, 2020 and ends April 30, 2020. (11 weeks total, 6 weeks Blackjack, 5 weeks additional games) Class Times: Monday - Thursday. Class times will be decided based on availability of the majority of students.

WHERE:

Training is held in the Table Games Training Room at Spirit Mountain Casino

HOW:

On-line Application Instructions:

1. Go to www.spiritmountain.com/careers
2. Select View Current Positions for external applicants (current SMGI employees will log into Ultipro and then select Menu, Myself, My Company, View Opportunities)
3. Select Dealer School Student. Please read information about the school.
4. Select Apply Now at top right hand corner of the screen.
5. Select Sign-in if you already have an account or fill in registration information to create a new account.

All training is unpaid time and should not interfere with your current work schedule.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicant selection will be based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Tribal Member preference will apply

(ONE CLASS OFFERED, MINIMUM OF 12 STUDENTS)

- Seniority with the company and must be in good standing for current employees

- External applicants must demonstrate good work history

- Passing score for basic math entrance exam

- Ability to obtain High Security Class III Gaming License

Upon successful completion of the school, students will be required to pass a dealing audition.

Dealer positions are not guaranteed. Open positions will be posted and filled using the regular employment process as business needs arise.

All students should be prepared to work at part-time status if offered a Dealer position.

*After completion of six weeks of school, students must complete additional Five-week training in Three Card Poker, Let It Ride, Ultimate Texas Hold'em & blackjack variants to maintain employment. Students will not be eligible for full-time positions

without knowledge of these additional games.

Once a student is hired as a Dealer, mandatory classes for Pai Gow Poker and Pitch Blackjack will be required in order to maintain employment.

For more information or assistance, please contact employmentteam@spiritmtn.com,

Brandy Hembree, 503-879-2479, Brandy.Hembree@spiritmtn.com or Jessy Powley, 503-879-2483, Jessy.powley@spiritmtn.com.



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