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Illinois Film Office Announces Winner of *Shortcuts* Competition

“Arithmetic Lesson” premieres at the 2010 Chicago International Film Festival

CHICAGO – The Illinois Film Office (IFO) today announced the winner of *Shortcuts*, Illinois’ short film contest. The winning film, *Arithmetic Lesson*, was produced by Chicago-resident Wenhwa Ts’ao. The film screened as part of the Chicago International Film Festival short films program on Monday at AMC River East 21, 322 E Illinois, Chicago.

“*Shortcuts* is another avenue for Illinois filmmakers to showcase their talent and gain greater exposure for their work,” said IFO Managing Director Betsy Steinberg. “This competition is a great example of how Illinois is helping nurture talented, skilled filmmakers and bringing quality productions to the world stage.”

Arithmetic Lesson is a 15-minute dramatic film that depicts the story of Gracie, a seven-year-old Chinese American girl, who finds the courage to defy and survive the traumatic abuse of her caretaker.

Born and raised in Taiwan, Wenhwa Ts’ao is an award-winning filmmaker whose work has received numerous grants and scholarships such as the Illinois Arts Council Fellowship, the Kodak Faculty Award and Chicago Community Arts Assistance Program. Her short films have been showcased in the US, France, China, Romania, Mexico, Ecuador, Africa, Korea and the Netherlands in international film festivals.

In addition to her work as an independent filmmaker, Wenhwa is a teacher and Graduate Program Director in the Film & Video Department at Columbia College Chicago. Currently, Wenhwa is in pre-production on a dramatic feature about human trafficking titled *Snakehead*. Wenhwa is also in development of a feature script inspired by the historical looting of the Silk Road Buddhist Treasure from 1885 to 1925, and a sci-fi film about a coming-of-age thirteen-year-old cyborg girl.

Shortcuts was designed to encourage filmmakers across the state to explore their creativity and showcase their skills. All Illinois residents 18 and over were invited to enter the competition.

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More information on the *Shortcuts* contest and the Illinois Film Office can be found at www.illinoisfilm.biz.

“The *Shortcuts* competition is a great way to recognize the diversity of the Illinois film industry by showcasing other forms of film besides the blockbuster productions that Illinois is best known for,” said Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Warren Ribley. “By supporting this type of creativity, we are building a more attractive industry in Illinois and supporting emerging filmmakers.”

DCEO is dedicated to advancing Illinois’ reputation as a world-class film destination. The Illinois Film Office, a division of DCEO, promotes and markets the state as an ideal shooting location for films, television shows and commercials. The IFO also promotes and encourages the training and hiring of Illinois residents who represent the diversity of the state’s population.

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