



Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

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Free Indie Film-Screening at BMAC Visits “A Village Called Versailles,” An Embattled Vietnamese-American Neighborhood in New Orleans

Brattleboro, Vermont—On Thursday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m., the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC), in partnership with Vermont Public Television and Brattleboro Community Television, presents a free screening of the prize-winning film “A Village Called Versailles.” The screening will take place at BMAC and will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Kate Jellema, Huong Nguyen, Chris Lenois, and Samirah Evans.

The film is being shown as part of BMAC’s new *Community Cinema* program, a free monthly advance-screening project featuring documentary films from the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Every month BMAC hosts a free public screening of a cutting-edge documentary film soon to be aired on PBS. Screenings are accompanied by community-based discussions and events, organized by BMAC, that bring together citizens, organizations, and public television stations in dialogue and action around important social issues.

“A Village Called Versailles” tells the story of a New Orleans neighborhood where a tight-knit group of Vietnamese Americans overcame obstacles to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina, only to have their homes threatened by a new government-imposed toxic

landfill. The film is an empowering account of how the Versailles people, who have already suffered so much in their lifetime, have turned a devastating disaster into a catalyst for change and a chance for a better future.

Panelist **Kate Jellema** has an abiding interest in both Vietnam and refugee issues. She conducted two years of ethnographic research in northern Vietnam, resulting in her PhD dissertation, “‘When you drink from the stream, remember the source’: Moral landscapes of memory in a northern Vietnamese village.” She has taught courses on Vietnamese history, culture, and religion at Marlboro College and helped organize trips to Vietnam for Marlboro students and faculty. **Huong Nguyen** worked for the American Red Cross (ARC) in her native Vietnam and then continued this work with ARC when she first arrived in the United States. Having settled in Brattleboro, she is starting up **Linh’s Vietnamese Cuisine**, has a food booth at the local farmers’ market, and is studying at S.I.T. Graduate Institute. **Chris Lenois** lived in New Orleans for seven years, during which time he wrote for the New Orleans Times-Picayune and other publications and hosted a drive-time program on the popular community radio station, WWOZ. **Samirah Evans** lived in New Orleans for nearly 20 years. A jazz vocalist, she was a fixture of the local music scene. She was also an active member of the New Orleans chapter of Soka Gakkai International, a Buddhist association for peace, culture, and education. Six months after Lenois and Evans got married on the shores of Lake Ponchartrain, Hurricane Katrina flooded their home. After evacuating to Florida for two months, they returned to New Orleans for about a year before relocating to Lenois’ hometown of Brattleboro, Vermont.

Major support for the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center’s 2010-11 season is provided by BMAC members and Entergy Vermont Yankee, Foard Panel, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Sam’s Outdoor Outfitters, and Chittenden Bank. The Museum’s exhibits and gift shop are open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Tuesday and Wednesday. Regular admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for students. Members and children 5 and under are admitted free of charge.

Founded in 1972, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center presents art and ideas in ways that inspire, educate, and engage people of all ages. Each season features compelling new exhibits of contemporary artwork by regional and internationally acclaimed artists, complemented by lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and other public programs. Located in historic Union Station in downtown Brattleboro, at the intersection of Main Street (Route 5) and Routes 119 and 142, the Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information call 802-257-0124 or visit www.brattleboromuseum.org.

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