

“Milking the Rhino”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Milking the Rhino,” David E Simpson, Producer/Director

Stuart, Florida – The Arts Council and the Friends of the Blake Library present “Milking the Rhino” with Producer/Director David E. Simpson as part of the Southern Arts Federation’s Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers at The Blake Library, John F. Armstrong Wing, 2351 SE Monterey Road, Stuart on November 15, 2009. Following a screening of his feature film “Milking the Rhino,” David Simpson will engage the audience in a discussion about the film and his work as a filmmaker.

Milking the Rhino tells a nuanced tale of human-wildlife coexistence in post-colonial Africa. The Maasai tribe of Kenya and Namibia's Himba - two of Earth's oldest cattle cultures - are in the midst of upheaval. Emerging from a century of "white man conservation," which turned their lands into game reserves and fueled resentment towards wildlife, Himba and Maasai communities are now vying for a piece of the wildlife-tourism pie. Community-based conservation, which tries to balance the needs of wildlife and people, has been touted by environmentalists as "win-win." The reality, however, is more complex. "We never used to benefit from these animals," a Maasai host of a community eco-lodge explains. "Now we milk them like cattle!" His neighbor disagrees: "A rhino means nothing to me! I can't kill it for meat like a cow." And when drought decimates the grass shared by livestock and wildlife, the community's commitment to conservation is sorely tested.

David E. Simpson has crafted award-winning films for 25 years. As a producer, director and editor he plies his trade in the belief that a well-told story can move viewers' hearts and minds regarding crucial, human issues. David co-produced and directed *When Billy Broke His Head*, a documentary about disability culture that won the Sundance Film Festival's Freedom of Expression Award, along with major prizes at dozens of other festivals. He recently co-produced and edited *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*, about an Auschwitz survivor's controversial campaign of forgiveness, which won the 2006 Slamdance Grand Jury Prize for documentaries. David directed *Refrigerator Mothers*, about a generation of mothers who raised autistic children under the shadow of professionally-promoted mother-blame. The film won top honors at the Florida, Indiana, and Sedona film festivals and aired on the PBS series *P.O.V.* David also produced and directed *Halsted Street, USA*, a multi-award-winning snapshot of America through the prism of one multicultural street. His experimental narrative, *Dante's Dream*, a re-working of Dante's cosmology, earned five 1st place festival awards.

The Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers is a program of the Southern Arts Federation, a not-for-profit regional arts organization making a positive difference in the arts throughout the South since 1975. Southern Arts Federation is supported by funding and programming partnerships with the National Endowment for the Arts and the state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Special support for Southern Circuit is provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For more information on the Southern Arts Federation and its programs visit www.southarts.org.

The Arts Council Inc serving Stuart and Martin County is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that supports the arts and artists in our community. The Arts Council and the Court House Cultural Center Gallery are located at 80 E Ocean Boulevard, Stuart Florida. For information visit the Arts Council website at www.martinarts.org or call 772-287-6676. The Arts Council is sponsored in part by the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, City of Stuart, Martin County Board of County Commissioners, and private contributions. The Martin County Tourist Development Council is a funding partner for this program.

The Martin County Library System is dedicated to meeting the educational, recreational, cultural and intellectual needs of its diverse communities. In fulfilling this mission MCLS continues to provide free and equal access to information, lifelong learning resources and services to people of all ages and abilities. For more information visit www.library.martin.fl.us or call 772-221-1403.

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Images and film trailers available on request.