

From Tombs to Triumph: 'Tombstone Pillow' Wins Best of Fest at Girls Inc. Chicago Film Festival

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Tombstone Pillow, a short film

directed by [Daniel Lir and Bayou Bennett](#), has been awarded the Best of the Fest honor at the first-ever Girls Inc. of Chicago ICFilm Festival. The award recognizes the film for its impactful storytelling and thought-provoking narrative, which explores the realities of poverty and the true meaning of wealth.

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The film tells the story of a 9-year-old girl who guides a wealthy widow through a Manila cemetery where thousands of impoverished families live among the tombs. It is a poignant exploration of materialism, generosity, and the resilience of the human spirit. Inspired by a life-changing trip to the Philippines, Lir and Bennett were deeply moved by the living conditions of over 6,000 families who make their homes in the cemetery.

“There are thousands of families living in cemeteries, sleeping on tombs. Human beings deserve better, and film-making is the most powerful voice we know to create change and awareness around these issues,” said Bennett.

Sharry Flaherty of Samera Entertainment, who helped distribute the film, added, "Being born and growing up in the Philippines where my mom is from, I am incredibly excited about 'Tombstone Pillow.' It resonates deeply with me to see stories from my homeland highlighted on such a platform. Congratulations to the dream team for this well-deserved award!"

The film's production posed unique challenges. Despite being unable to travel to the Philippines due to childcare commitments, Bennett remained deeply involved in the film's creation, offering direction remotely through Facebook Live. With technology as her bridge, Bennett worked alongside her co-director, Lir, and an exceptional cast and crew to bring the story to life.

The film's success of 35 awards to date is a reflection of the dedication of its team, and its profound social impact message. At the festival, Tombstone Pillow captivated a youth audience,

many of whom shared their emotional reactions to the story. One young viewer, Maya, remarked, "The movie made me feel like I was there, in that cemetery. I saw that people were kind and generous even though they had so little." Another noted, "I liked the way the girl Maria smiled at the end, like she knew things would be better for everyone."

For Lir and Bennett, the festival provided an opportunity for young women to engage directly with filmmakers and participate in meaningful conversations about social issues. "I think now film-making has an even more important role than ever in uplifting society, and that is what Tombstone Pillow is all about," said Lir.

The Tombstone Pillow team hopes the film can continue to serve as a conversation starter about poverty and inequality, especially for communities who are often unseen. Through the power of cinema, Lir and Bennett aim to shine a light on those who are too often forgotten.

About the Film:

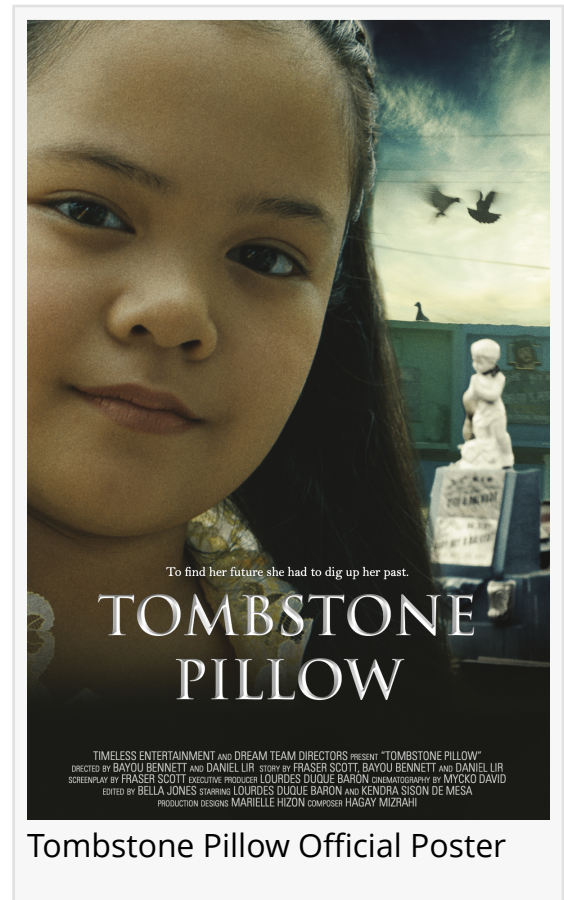
Tombstone Pillow was inspired by a visit to a Manila cemetery, where Bayou and Daniel Lir encountered families living among the tombs of the deceased. The filmmakers, alongside Mumbai-based collaborator Fraser Scott, crafted the story to bring global awareness to the lives of those living in such harsh conditions. It is a film that aims to challenge perceptions of wealth and invite viewers to consider what truly matters in life.

About the Girls Inc. of Chicago ICFilm Festival:

The Girls Inc. of Chicago ICFilm Festival is a platform that empowers young women through film by showcasing global stories, promoting diversity, and fostering meaningful dialogue. The festival aims to engage young audiences in thought-provoking content while providing opportunities to interact with filmmakers and industry professionals.

[Help support by streaming Tombstone Pillow today.](#)

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