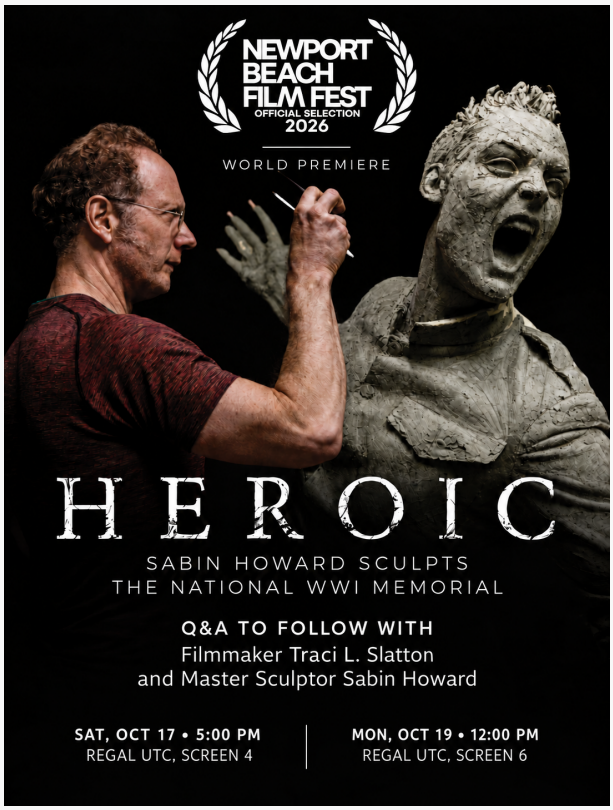
HEROIC Named an Official Selection of the Newport Beach Film Festival; World Premiere October 17

Traci L. Slatton's HEROIC makes its world premiere Oct. 17 at Newport Beach Film Festival, revealing the nine-year creation of America's National WWI Memorial.



Heroic Official Selection Newport Beach Film Festival Poster with Q&A Details

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- HEROIC: Sabin Howard Sculpts the National WWI Memorial, directed and written by Traci L. Slatton, is an Official Selection of the 2026 Newport Beach Film Festival and will make its world premiere on Saturday, October 17. The documentary follows sculptor Sabin Howard's nine-year undertaking to create A Soldier's Journey, the monumental bronze relief at the heart of the National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C.

HEROIC examines what it takes to carry American history forward. Through the creation of a public work of art, the film explores how the experiences of an earlier generation can remain tangible to those who inherit its legacy—and how remembrance depends on people willing to do the work of preserving it.

The film brings viewers into the studio where veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan served as models for figures representing Americans who fought a century earlier. Their participation connects the memorial's subject to the lived experience of a later generation. Howard's 38 figures trace a soldier's departure from his family, the violence and losses of combat, and his return home changed by war.

"The people who served in World War I are beyond our reach, but their experience must remain within our understanding," said Howard. "My responsibility was to give that experience a human form, so that someone standing before the memorial could feel the cost of war and understand why remembrance—and gratitude—still matter."

Slatton documented the project across three continents, drawing on more than 4,000 hours of footage. Her camera follows the work from early development and digital modeling in New Zealand through the New Jersey sculpture studio and bronze production in England. Pandemic disruption, federal design review and the demands of completing a monumental work against a deadline shape the film's account of how artistic ambition becomes a public responsibility.


Headshot of Traci L. Slatton

As both filmmaker and manager of the sculpture project, Slatton had sustained access to the decisions, tensions and relationships behind the finished memorial. Her documentary preserves a history the bronze alone cannot convey: how the work was made, what it demanded of its makers and how veterans helped inform its portrayal of war.

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>
> *Traci L. Slatton, Director/Filmmaker*

"The finished bronze cannot show you everything it took to bring these figures to life," said Slatton. "Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan stood in our studio, bringing their own experience of war to the faces and gestures of soldiers from a century before. That connection made the history immediate. My responsibility as a filmmaker was to preserve it—to bring audiences close enough to feel what war asks of a human being, and what it leaves behind."

The premiere arrives during America's 250th anniversary year and less than a month before Veterans Day, offering a timely opportunity to consider how the nation remembers those who served. Its subject reaches beyond the battlefield to the families awaiting a soldier's return and the wounds that accompany that homecoming. For audiences who have never visited the memorial, HEROIC opens a window onto both the sculpture and the human effort behind it.

A Soldier's Journey was unveiled on September 13, 2024. The 58.5-foot bronze relief stands in Pershing Park near the White House.

Now in its 27th year, the Newport Beach Film Festival presents an internationally curated program of films and conversations with filmmakers and artists. Selection brings HEROIC into that program and gives audiences an opportunity to discuss its exploration of art, military service and national memory directly with its makers. The 2026 festival runs October 15–22.

HEROIC will screen at Regal University Town Center in Irvine on Saturday, October 17, at 5 p.m., and Monday, October 19, at noon. Slatton and Howard will participate in Q&As following both screenings.

Tickets and film information: heroicdocumentary.com

HEROIC is a Superhuman Film Productions documentary directed and written by Traci L. Slatton, produced by Sabin Howard and executive produced by Kathleen Glynn.

Michelle Czernin von Chudenitz
EPEC Media
Michelle@EPECmedia.com
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Join Sabin Howard, the genius behind the sculpture, Traci L. Slatton, Director and Producer of HEROIC, and Charles Mostow, Sculptor and Asisstant Director of a Special Screening & Live Q&A of the film at ARC Conference on Wednesday, June 24 at 6 PM BST



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