

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Extraordinary Music Video Has Back Story to Match

“The Dive,” a visually stunning music video playing at [\[insert name of festival here\]](#), has quite an unusual back story.

Director Kia Simon’s stepfather, Dan Skarry, was an avid skydiver who went up several times a week, often diving with large groups in formation. On May 26, 2001 in Lodi, California he joined twenty-two other skydivers for such a dive. The divers leapt from the plane in a circular formation, grasping each other’s hands and feet. As the final diver grabbed hold of his neighbors to complete the formation, Skarry convulsed and began to plummet through the sky. Several of his fellow divers immediately dropped out of formation to follow him down. His backup chute automatically engaged at 1000 feet, landing him in a grassy yard. The yard belonged to an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) who was out doing yard work. The EMT went to work on Skarry as his friends called 911. Minutes later, a helicopter transported Skarry to the nearest hospital. He was dead on arrival.

Skarry’s story inspired San Francisco electronic music duo Momu to write "The Dive" about his final jump. Simon then created the video with the goal of evoking the sensation of flying, transcendence to another plane, the mixed pain and joy of leaving, and the sadness of being the one left behind.

As Simon said, "I don't know if we are given any choices in the moment of death. But it seemed as if Dan was given a pretty good chance to stay alive. I think maybe he decided that flying was the way to go. He went up and really never came down."

“The Dive” was shot entirely underwater. Lacking the budget to afford a tank specifically designed for underwater film shoots, Simon rented waterproof camera housings for her MiniDV and still cameras, and she and a second photographer donned wetsuits to shoot from the shallow end of a friend’s backyard pool while the band and dancers performed in the deep. The video’s impressionistic visual quality was achieved by hand painting every frame of the video and each still shot—a process that took a team of artists more than six months to complete.

“When people see the film, they often ask if we jumped out of a plane and filmed it on the way down. It just doesn’t look like it was shot underwater,” says Simon.

“The Dive” is part of the [\[insert name of festival here\]](#) and screens at [\[insert date, time and place of screening\]](#).

About the artists

Kia Simon’s award-winning video for Jondi & Spesh’s “The Sway” spent over a year in heavy rotation on MTV and MTV2. Born and raised in Berkeley, California by radical poets, Simon learned to write poetry before she learned to write. Her ability to see poems in everyday life translates to her behind-the-camera vision. “Looking for Sly,” her documentary about an Armenian Sylvester Stallone impersonator, won top awards at SXSW, LA International Short, and other festivals. In 1998, the Pacific Pioneer Fund awarded her an Emerging Filmmaker Grant. In 1999, she was chosen to participate in AFI’s Women

Director's Workshop, a highly-selective program accepting only eight participants per year. Simon recently co-founded Sneaky Little Sister Films, a San Francisco-based, smart-ass film company.

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Momu is a power tag-team vigilante duo made up of Jondi (of internationally renowned production team Jondi & Spesh) and Mark Musselman, one of San Francisco's most acclaimed breaks DJs. Momu's sound to date: wicked breaks, future tech sounds, breathtaking melodies, sinister FX, and devastating arrangements that wreak havoc on the dance floor.

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Choreographer **Chris Black** co-founded POTRZEBIE Dance Project in 1993. She collaborated with Simon on a previous film, "In Public Space," which won the By Women Prize at Luna Fest and Best Art Film at Berkeley Video and Film Festival. The San Francisco Bay Guardian described her work as "luxuriously spilling bodies all over the stage." POTRZEBIE has been named a "Critic's Choice" and "Stage Pick" by the SF Bay Guardian and a "Best Bet" by the Chicago Tribune.

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