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Ag & Art Film Festival kicks off Wednesday

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VACAVILLE — Journey Downtown, 308 Main St., is the host venue for the fifth annual Ag & Art Film Festival.

The festival has partnered with four community organizations for this year's festival and is hosting three panels, three live musical performances, two wine mixers and a farm-to-table dinner.

"I wanted to team up with local organizations, artists and farmers to make the screenings more of a 3-D experience for attendees. Now they can watch films about farming/farmers or art/artists and then meet local farmers and artists to explore and support," festival director Lisa Murray said, in a press release.

On Stage Vacaville is presenting a special screening of the artist documentary produced by Murray, "Soul Providers," along with the panel, "The Importance of Art," at 6 p.m. Thursday.

"Soul Providers" examines the thoughts, inspiration and creative processes of five working artists in Los Angeles.

The panel features one of the film's subjects, Dapo Torimiro, a Nigerian American multi-platinum, Grammy-nominated music producer who was John Legend's personal musical consultant on the film "La La Land."

The two other panelists are Vacaville-based artists, Angela Arteritano, a Venezuelan American multi-disciplinarian, artist and choreographer who works with On Stage Vacaville. She has a short film in this year's festival, "Retratos Migrante," screening in the 10 a.m. movie block on the same day.

The third panelist is Renee Converse, a visual artist and local art teacher.

The Solano County Farm Bureau presents the "Farm Shorts & Farm Panel" at 10 a.m. Friday. The panelists are Justina Salina, owner/farmer of Araceli Farms (Dixon), Ben Lyons, owner/farmer of Lockwood Acres (Vacaville), and Rafael Galiano, owner/farmer Park Winters Flower Farm (Winters.)

Sustainable Solano will be presenters of the 2 p.m. block on Friday.

Preceding the screening, local artist Alana Miller will perform "This Wonderful World", a multi-media musical performance honoring Sustainable Solano's work through song, storytelling and video.

After the performance, the multiple award-winning South African film, "The Last Seed," directed by first-time director Andrea Gema from Cape Town, South Africa, will screen.

The film is a must-see, Murray said. "The information about the perilous state of our food systems and the urgent need for change is vital to every living being on this planet," she wrote in press materials.

The Vacaville Museum, 213 Buck Ave., is presenting the 10 a.m. Saturday movie block and panel. "The Amphora Project" is a documentary about ancient winemaking vessels that are being explored by winemakers in San Luis Obispo County.

Following the screening, a panel of Solano County winemakers consisting of Lisa Howard, owner/winemaker of Tolenas Winery, Ron Lanza, owner/winemaker of Wooden Valley Winery, and Candace and Bob Balestra, owners/winemakers of Balestra Family Wine, will speak about their wineries located in Suisun Valley/Solano County.

The panel is being moderated by Sarah Olsen, director of the Vacaville Museum.

The Vacaville Museum kicks off its "Fruit of the Vine: A Grape Story" exhibit on the same day.

Following the screening and panel, VIP festival passholders are invited to a "winemaker reception" at the museum. A light offering of Italian meatballs, a charcuterie board and cannolis will be provided by La Borgata Italian Deli.

The Red Carpet Kick Off Party begins at 6 p.m. Wednesday at The Library, 300 Main St.

It's open to all. Festival organizers are asking those interested to RSVP on the festival's website.

Tickets and festival passes are also available on the festival website at <http://agandartfilmfestival.com>.