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**MORGAN NEVILLE'S "THE COOL SCHOOL,"
TO HAVE ITS BROADCAST PREMIERE ON THE EMMY AWARD-WINNING
PBS SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008**

An Entertaining Look at the Rise of the Postwar L.A. Art Scene

(San Francisco, CA)—How do you build an art scene from scratch? How do you walk the fine line between creativity and commerce in the cutthroat art world? How do you make art matter in a city that has never cared? At the dawn of the 1950s, Los Angeles was a cultural dust bowl, with isolated pockets of bohemians, surfers, beatniks and students interested in making art for art's sake. It took the vision of a med school dropout with a love for Marcel Duchamp to make it coalesce. This was the legendary curator Walter Hopps, who joined with artist Ed Keinholz to open the Ferus Gallery. Morgan Neville's exploration of this vibrant scene, **THE COOL SCHOOL**, narrated by Jeff Bridges, will air nationally on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, on Tuesday, June 10 at 10 PM (check local listings).

Throughout the '50s, the Ferus nurtured L.A.'s first generation of postwar artists. Operating out of a small storefront on La Cienega Boulevard, the gallery hosted debut exhibitions and served as a launching pad for Ed Ruscha, Craig Kauffman, Wallace Berman, Ed Moses, Robert Irwin and many others. By the time it closed in 1966, the gallery had also played a role in solidifying the careers of many of New York's brightest lights: Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Donald Judd, Frank Stella, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. **THE COOL SCHOOL** also features interviews with those inside the scene, such as Dennis Hopper and Frank Gehry, and those on the outside, such as artist John Baldessari.

Under the leadership of genius autodidact Walter Hopps and then the smooth-as-silk Irving Blum, Ferus groomed the art scene in Los Angeles from a loose band of idealistic beatniks into a coterie of competitive, often brilliant artists. What was lost and what was gained is tied up in a complicated web of egos, passions, money, interpersonal relationships and artistic statements.

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To learn more about the film and the issues, visit the companion website for **COOL SCHOOL** at *Independent Lens* online. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmakers, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions. **THE COOL SCHOOL** companion website launches May 13 on pbs.org/independentlens/coolsschool.

About the Filmmakers

Morgan Neville (director, co-writer, co-producer) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who specializes in history and cultural subjects. Through a series of films on important music subjects—including the Brill Building, Sam Phillips and Sun Records; Nat King Cole; Brian Wilson; Leiber and Stoller; The Highwaymen; and Burt Bacharach—Neville has sought to document the stories of songwriters and producers who helped shape 20th-century music. These films include the Grammy-nominated *Muddy Waters Can't Be Satisfied* and the Emmy-winning *Hank Williams: Honky-Tonk Blues*, both of which aired on PBS's *American Masters* as well as on Channel 4/UK and the BBC's *Arena* series, respectively. His first theatrical documentary was the award-winning feature *Shotgun Freeway: Drives Thru Lost L.A.*, an examination of the meaning of history in the City of Angels. His 1998 film about novelist John Steinbeck won critical praise and remains the most comprehensive film on the renowned author. Recently for A&E, Neville has directed specials such as *Honky-Tonk Angels: Women in Country Music* and *Hollywood Home Movies*, a history of the movie business using found footage. He recently directed the multiple award-winning *Shakespeare Was a Big George Jones Fan* about Nashville outlaw Cowboy Jack Clement for PBS as well as *Respect Yourself: The Stax Records Story* for PBS's *Great Performances*. Additionally, Neville has produced various projects for such cultural institutions as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Kristine McKenna (co-producer, co-writer) is a widely published Los Angeles-based writer whose work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *L.A. Weekly* and *Artnews*, among others. She is the recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and in 2005, she organized "Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and His Circle," a historical survey for the Santa Monica Museum of Art and other venues. She co-authored the accompanying catalogue, published by D.A.P. McKenna, who has also published two collections of her interviews with artists, musicians and filmmakers, *Book of Changes* and *Talk to Her*. Her companion book to **THE COOL SCHOOL**, entitled *The Ferus Gallery*, will be published in May 2008.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities and moments in history. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen. Visit pbs.org/independentlens for more information.

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