

Global Film Initiative to Distribute Global Lens DVDs

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The Global Film Initiative will now distribute DVDs from the Global Lens Collection, which formerly was distributed by First Run Features.

The first two titles in the series released by Global Film Initiative on DVD will be *Getting Home*, by Chinese director Zhang Yang, and *Song From the Southern Seas*, by Kazakh director Marat Sarulu, both streeting July 27 at \$24.95.

Global Lens is a traveling series of films that has opened at MoMA in New York every year since 2003 and screens at other museums, cultural centers, universities and film festivals, before being released on DVD. More than 30 nations participate in the series, including countries of Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, and some are produced with financial support from the Global Film Initiative.

Now, not only will Global Film Initiative self-distribute the DVDs and handle all markets, including VOD licensing, educational sales, and theatrical and nontheatrical sales, it also has signed an exclusive pay-per-view release deal with Virgin America airlines as well as a multifilm television deal with Latin American channel Venevision.

"Global Lens is the only film series of its kind, and its popularity has increased exponentially in the last few years," said Santhosh Daniel, director of programs for the Global Film Initiative, in a statement. "So naturally it makes sense to pull distribution in-house instead of using a third-party, to expand release channels and provide direct and more personalized service to our audience — the series is known from Alaska to Austin to New York and we're responding to that awareness and demand."

The Global Film Initiative also has announced its Educational Affiliates program to provide public and private libraries a 33% discount off of traditional educational pricing, in addition to access to new titles from the series before their commercial release. The effort extends to high school, college and university libraries as well. Additionally a complementary Cinema in the Schools initiative will help provide the films at a low cost to high schools.

The titles also will be available for rental through Netflix. No Blu-ray Disc or digital-download plans have been announced yet for the series.

"I think our upcoming DVD releases will surprise a lot people — both in and outside the industry," Daniel said. "From a consumer standpoint, the encodes and menus are very visually appealing and really reflect the cinematic quality of each film. In terms of the industry, like everyone else, we're looking at digital and other new ways to support a lucrative distribution model. But at the same time, we also know the market we've created for Global Lens and expect a 150% increase in home video revenue this next year."

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