

2008 AFI FILM FESTIVAL BREAKDOWN PART 2

These are the films that I would recommend seeing at the 2008 AFI Fest. So if you cannot see them at the fest be on the look out for them. Or just Google the film's title with DVD or theater release and it should come up whether it is out or not. Some films no matter how great they are do not always get a distribution deal. I could go back to the 2007 AFI Fest and easily pick out 20 or more awesome films that you cannot watch at all. But what has happened is that the film festival circuit is really now about you can see at a festival as opposed to seeing a gem of an indie or foreign film before it becomes a nationwide or global hit. There is an immense amount of competition among all the top festivals to secure that blockbuster opening gala premiere and closing night gala premiere film. Even this year the AFI Fest originally announced that their opening film would be Jaime Foxx's and Robert Downing Jr.'s *The Soloist* which would have been great for AFI. But Paramount Pictures and Dreamworks suddenly yanked the release date from late November to April 2009.

Now my first question is why would a studio yank a film that possibly could have gotten Jaime and Robert Oscar nominations. I saw the trailer for *The Soloist* and it looked like one of those complicated personal drama about a white man helping broke mentally deficient black man become a success. Hollywood liberals love this type of flick and it totally escapes me why they moved the date of the film to the Spring 2009 when it will be buried and long forgotten by the time the 2009 Oscar Nominations are announced. But anyway *The Soloist* being pushed back meant that the AFI Fest used their back up selection for *Doubt* to open the festival. Which is will no doubt, no pun intended, help *Doubt* possibly get Oscar nominations. Because the spotlight would have went to *The Soloist* and forced a lot of Academy voters to consider it for Best Picture and lead acting nominations for Jaime and Robert. So I have to conclude that ditching the prestige and tons of free publicity of being the 2008 AFI Fest's Opening Night film had more to do with not really wanting to get slammed by AFI Fest critics or a lukewarm reaction by Academy that generates no Oscar nods at all. And even worse a low box office from bad reviews which means a double loser for Paramount.





But overall I am again excited about the AFI Festival 2008. You can see all the films in Part 2, *Of All Things to Yellow Submarine* as well as some highly entertaining AFI Fest *Shorts*, I have selected as must see whether at the AFI Fest this year or later on when they are released in theaters, DVD or on cable. It is getting harder and harder in the U.S. to consistently see high quality indie films and foreign films other than between October and February. And you can forget it during summer. But that's why there are great film festivals like AFI Fest that can let one see a lot of great cinema and outstanding international and upcoming new actors and actresses.



OF ALL THE THINGS

Documentary Competition

(USA, 2008, 83 mins)

HDCAM

Directed By: Jody Lambert

Featuring: Dennis Lambert

Producer: Taylor Williams

Executive Producers: Joel Wilson, Suzi Wilson

Director of Photography: P.H. O'Brien

Editor: Haines Hall

Co Producer: Heather Greene , Jody Lambert

Additional Photography: Jeremiah Clancy

Assistant Editor: Austin Meredith

Titles and Graphics: Brian Oakes

Dennis Lambert, a 60-year-old family man selling real estate in Florida, is about to embark on a whirlwind concert tour to the Philippines. Among those watching will be thousands of fans he never knew he had ... and his son Jody, who is taking a camera to document this historic moment in his father's life. One of the most successful and diverse songwriter-producers of the '70s and '80s, Lambert's hits include "Ain't No Woman Like the One I've Got," "Rhinestone Cowboy," "Don't Pull Your Love" and "Baby Come Back." He had chart toppers in almost every genre of music, and at one point four of his songs were simultaneously on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, a feat previously accomplished only by the Beatles. Though Lambert had written songs for amazing artists, he recorded only a few of his own songs himself. As it turns out, his obscure 1972 solo album is huge ... in the Philippines. After years of requests from a Filipino concert promoter, Lambert agrees to tour, in celebration of the 35th anniversary of the album. Can this real estate agent pull off his first performance in 30 years? **OF ALL THE THINGS** offers an entertaining, exhilarating, warmly human and inspiring tale of the enduring power of the creative spirit.

Winner of the AUDIENCE AWARD at the Sarasota, Nantucket and Palm Beach film festivals.

-- Shaz Bennett

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O'HORTEN

World Cinema

(France , Germany , Norway, 2008, 90 mins)

In Norwegian with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Bent Hamer

Directed By: Bent Hamer

Cast: Espen Skjønberg, Bard Ove, Ghita Norby, Bjørn Floberg

Producer: Bent Hamer

Director of Photography: John Christian Rosenlund

Editors: Pal Gengenbach, Silje Nortseth

Music: John Erik Kaada

Co Producer: James Frazee, Mads Peter Ole Olsen, Christoph Friedel, Karl Baumgartner, Alexandre Mallet-Guy

Sound Design: Morten Solum

Production Design: Kalli Juliusson

“It seems most everything comes too late ... so nothing comes too late,” someone tells Odd Horten, a shy, willfully isolated man whose life has been organized around the rigid rituals associated with his career as a train engineer. Now at mandatory retirement age and robbed of his familiar, by-the-clock patterns, Horten finds chaos and portents of death, in forms alternately poignant and deliciously humorous, around every corner. Norwegian writer-director Bent Hamer (the Oscar-shortlisted *KITCHEN STORIES*, the Bukowski adaptation *FACTOTUM*) is quickly building a career as a master of droll, poignant cinematic humor, following promisingly in the substantial footsteps of practitioners including Jacques Tati and Aki Kaurismäki. In this, his most mature, sophisticated and emotionally resonant film yet, Hamer dramatizes his hero's perplexity with a cool, elegant precision. Assisting Hamer enormously is actor Bard Ove, who gives O' Horten his charmingly underplayed dignity. As the film progresses, we see Horten making small changes—tiny affirmations that offer a deeply moving sense of the resilience and flexibility demonstrated by humans in transition.

—Larry Gross, Telluride Film Festival



PARADISE

ALT_Cinema

(USA, 2008, 75 mins)

BetacamSP

World Premiere

Directed By: Michael Almereyda

Producer: Michael Almereyda

Director of Photography: Michael Almereyda

Editor: Laurie Butler, Bara Kirkpatrick, Rachel Websterq

Michael Almereyda is best known for his hip, update of HAMLET, with Ethan Hawke, and his black-and-white vampire film NADJA. PARADISE continues his recent foray into documentary that began with WILLIAM EGGLESTON IN THE REAL WORLD. Like all of Almereyda's films, PARADISE is a lyrical, melancholy journey that reflects on the nature of creativity, and on what it means to be beautiful or exceptional in the world. It is an intricately arranged journal of Almereyda's own travels. Each section of the film (none longer than a few minutes) is introduced by the name of the city where the action takes place. In long uninterrupted takes, Almereyda introduces us to acquaintances, friends, children of friends and total strangers as they do everyday tasks: flying planes, watching birds, performing music, conducting funeral services. Some of these people are marginal and eccentric. Some, like Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth and Elina Löwensohn, are performers associated with Almereyda's previous work. Towards the end, we see one of the most admired and reclusive directors in the world at his everyday job of making films. Working in the diary tradition associated with Chris Marker and Jonas Mekas, Almereyda has constructed a synthesis of documentary reality and poetic atmosphere.

–Rose Kuo



PATRIK, AGE 1.5

Added Screenings

(2008, 100 mins)

Directed By: Ella Lemhage

Cast: Gustaf Skarsgård, Torkel Petersson, Tom Ljungman

Producers: Toma Michaelsson, Lars Blomgren

Producer: Marek Wieser

Editor: Thomas Lagerman

Music: Fredrik Emilsson

A married gay couple relocates to a village to realize their dream of adopting a child. This smart, sensitive, textured and amusing exploration of the rifts in contemporary gay life also explores how our expectations imprison us and separate us from one another.

–Steve Gravestock, Toronto International Film Festival



PERFECT LIFE (plays with CRY ME A RIVER)

WAMMEI SHENHUO

Homage to Xstream

(China , Hong Kong, 2008, 97 mins)

HDCAM

North American Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Emily Tang

Directed By: Emily Tang

Cast: Yao Qianyu, Cheng Taisheng, Jenny Tse

Producers: Chow Keung, Jia Zhang-ke, Li Xiudong

Director of Photography: Lai Yiu-Fai

Editor: Chow Keung

Production Design: Lam Ching

Emily Tang's second film confirms what was already striking in her debut, *CONJUGATION* (2001): a gift for combining minute, mundane details to suggest a larger story (in this case, a tale of globalization, internal exile and loss). She interweaves the fates of two young women who never meet, except briefly in a street market in the New Economic Zone of Shenzhen. Born in the dreary northeastern town of Fushun, Li Yueying is one of these 600 million Chinese women whose lives apparently do not matter. She's uneducated, unskilled and repressed—but, in her burning desire for change, hops on trains, switches jobs and tempts fate. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, Jenny experiences the collapse of her dreams, as her marriage to a local man is ending in divorce and financial hardship. One woman will move south, the other north. Is Shenzhen the city of broken dreams or mysterious survival? Switching to documentary mode, Tang shoots assembly lines of young female workers in toy factories, sometimes capturing a defiant smile amidst the boredom and fatigue. Composing, through light, impressionist touches, an intimate and complex picture of the female condition in China, *PERFECT LIFE* reasserts Tang as an original, insightful and highly talented director.

—B er enice Reynaud



PINDORAMA - THE TRUE STORY OF THE SEVEN DWARVES
PINDORAMA - A VERDADEIRA HISTÓRIA DOS SETE ANÕES

Documentary Competition

(Brazil, 2008, 84 mins)

In Portuguese with English subtitles

HDCAM

Directed By: Roberto Berliner,

Lula Queiroga,

Leo Crivellare

Executive Producers: Rodrigo Letier, Danielle Hoover

Director of Photography: Jacques Cheuiche, Beto Martins, Ricardo Castro Lima

Editors: Leonardo Domingues, Daniela Ramalho

Music: Lula Queiroga

Coordinating Producer: Lorena Bondarovsky

Assistant Director: Chris Alcazar

Sound: Nicolas Hallet and Simone Dourado Barbosa

Charles, Claudio, Cleidy, Cleidiomar, Zuleide, Gilberto and Rogerio Gomes de Oliveira are siblings, colleagues, friends, competitors and entertainers. Together these seven remarkable people, with their respective families, make up the Pindorama Circus. A full-fledged, old-school circus that tours northern Brazil, the Pindorama's greatest claim to fame is that its owners and core performers, the seven siblings, are dwarves, the progeny of Pindoba, one of the most famous and beloved clowns in Brazilian history. These true "Seven Dwarves" carry on their family tradition, now spanning three generations, with humor, razor-sharp business savvy and humanity despite the rivalries and general frustrations that go hand in hand with living and working 24-hour days with family. Filmmakers Roberto Berliner, Lula Queiroga and Leo Crivellare expertly weave together deeply insightful, candid interviews with the family, footage of the Pindorama's everyday life and hilarious, color-soaked, inside-the-tent action, assembling the film with outstanding attention to detail and drawing out unexpected beauty in every shot. Just as the Pindorama fills its audiences with wonder, excitement, merriment and joy, so too does this charming and spirited documentary. If you've ever had even an ounce of desire to run away with the circus, you may just find yourself in Pindorama heaven.

—Maggie Mackay



**PLASTIC CITY
DANGKOU**

Homage to Xstream

(Brazil , China, 2008, 118 mins)

In Portuguese, Mandarin with English subtitles

HDCAM

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Yu wai, Fernando Bonassi, Liu Fendou

Directed By: Yu Lik-wai

Cast: Joe Odagiri, Anthony Wong, Huang Yi, Tainá Müller, Jeff Chen

Producers: Fabiano Gullane, Caio Gullane, Chow Keung, Jia Zhang-ke, Yuji Sadai, Tsui Siu Ming

Executive Producers: Caio Gullane, Rui Pires, André Montenegro, Tom Cheung

Director of Photography: Lai Yiu Fai

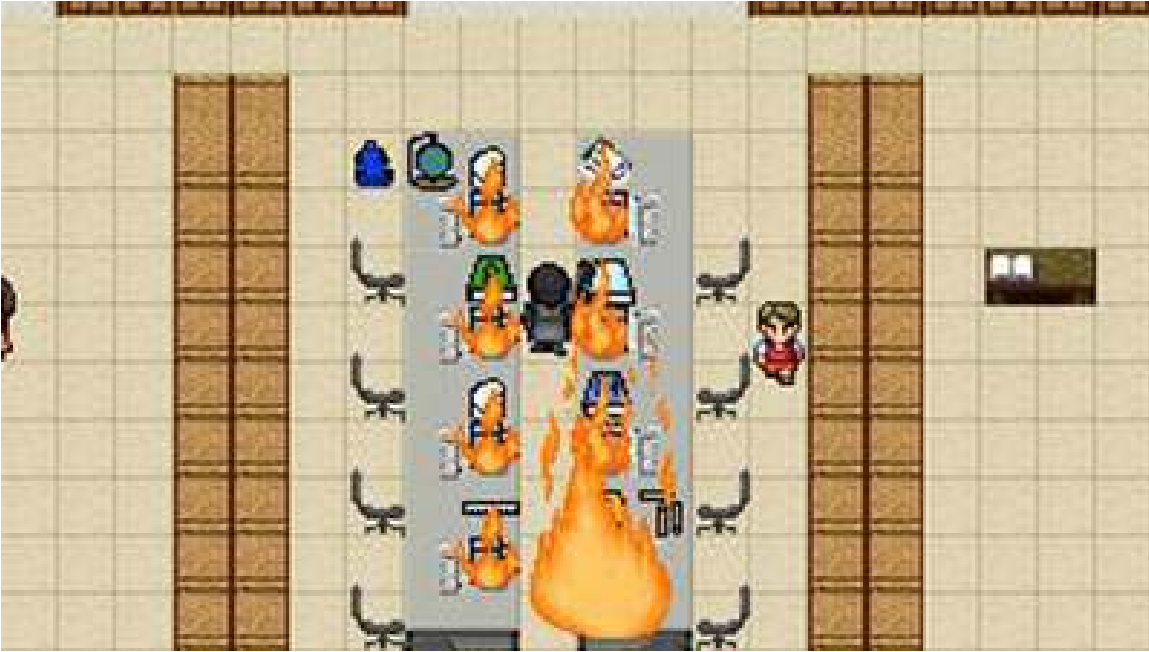
Editor: Wenders Li

Music: Yoshihiro Hanno

Production Design: Cássio Amarante

Yu Lik-wai, the cinematographer-poet of postindustrial spaces (LOVE WILL TEAR US APART, ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES) turns his unbridled visual imagination toward Brazil's thick jungles and multicultural metropolises through the complex father-son relationship of aging Chinese gangster Yuda (the great Hong Kong actor Anthony Wong, recently seen in Johnny To's THE EXILES) and Kirin, the young Japanese man he raised (Japanese heartthrob Joe Odagiri). Unfolding the many layers (and many languages) of its narrative at an alluring rhythm, PLASTIC CITY takes the viewer on a roller coaster journey of striking visual images (one idea per shot), including a bloody swordfight and massacre above São Paulo's spectacular skyline. Territorial feuds and racial rivalries (between Chinese, Japanese and Brazilians from every fraction of the ethnic rainbow) are enacted in impoverished slums, mean streets, industrial waterfronts, dark nightclubs and postmodern shopping malls against a colorful background of unemployed thugs, crafty gangsters turned businessmen, wise-cracking street kids, cynical longshoremen, corrupt politicians and sexy bar girls with feelings. The hearts of men are no less treacherous than the architectural maze of the city, the intoxicating heat of the jungle or the mesmerizing eyes of a white tiger that, as Indians say, will bring you death if gazed at for too long ...

—Bérénice Reynaud



PLAYING COLUMBINE

Documentary Competition

(USA, 2008, 94 mins)

HDCAM

World Premiere

Directed By: Danny Ledonne

Featuring: Jack Thompson, Tracy Fullerton, Danny Ledonne, Ian Bogost, Joel Kornek, Melissa Fuller, David Kociemba, Aaron Ruby, Tim Winter, Peter Baxter, Brian Flemming, Sam Roberts

Producer: Danny Ledonne

Editor: Danny Ledonne

Music: Cory Antiel, Josh McKnight

By reenacting one of the nation's most infamous school shootings, the video game Super Columbine Massacre RPG! (the initials standing for "role-playing game") instantly provoked more debate and discussion than any game in recent years. Media pundits pointed to it countless times as an example of a society gone off the rails. However, many failed to recognize that Super Columbine is more than a violent impulse fantasy. In fact, some who have taken the time to play it have found Super Columbine to be therapeutic and even life changing. Danny Ledonne's film serves as an introduction to the controversial game, exploring its coverage in the press, the phenomenon of school violence and the evolution of video games as an expressive medium. It asks us to reconsider games as more than just play and asks us which subjects are fit to become interactive experiences. It introduces us to artists who are using the emergent form to explore larger societal issues. And it reexamines the film's most controversial moment, when, after being selected as part of Slamdance's Guerilla Gamemaker Competition, it was unceremoniously dumped by the festival director. Most of the other competitors pulled their projects in response, a clear signal of how button-pushing and polarizing this one game would become.

-- Lane Kneedler



POUNDCAKE

Narrative Competition
(USA, 2008, 101 mins)

HDCAM

World Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Troy Hall, Kevin Logie

Directed By: Rafael Monserrate

Cast: Jay O. Sanders, Kathleen Quinlan, Troy D. Hall, Deshja Driggs-Hall, Kevin Logie, Rob Bogue, Marisa Coughlan

Producers: Troy Hall, Kevin Logie, Mridu Chandra

Executive Producer: Paul Kelly

Director of Photography: Josh Silfen

Editor: Anthony Ripoli

Music: Adam Schoenberg

Co Producer: Ryan Seger

This dysfunctional family comedy with heart stars Academy Award nominee Kathleen Quinlan and Jay O. Sanders and takes place in Buffalo, N.Y., in the late '80s. On the night before Thanksgiving, Cliff and Carol Morgan gather their three grown children—Robby, a late-night radio DJ, his hypochondriac younger brother Charlie and their adopted sister Brooke—at their favorite Chinese restaurant, the Golden Buddha, to announce that, after 30 years, they'll be getting a divorce. Can they spend their last Thanksgiving together in a civilized manner? A fiercely original script, written by actors Troy Hall and Kevin Logie (who portray the adult brothers), is the root of this dark, outrageous, hilarious exploration how one impending divorce can affect every element of family life. POUNDCAKE pushes the family reunion film into a hysterical, emotional free-fall. Director Rafael Monserrate lets the action play out like the finale of an insane symphony, controlling the underlying fever pitch with just the right amount of restraint. The performances of the ensemble cast help make this a mesmerizing, at times disturbing comedy.

—Shaz Bennett



PROPER EYES

POR SUS PROPIOS OJOS

Narrative Competition

(Argentina, 2008, 80 mins)

In Spanish with English subtitles

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Liliana Paolinelli

Directed By: Liliana Paolinelli

Cast: Ana Carabajal, Luisa Nunez, Maximiliano Gallo, Mara Santucho

Producer: Paula Grandio

Executive Producers: Paula Grandio, Cristina Fasulino, Sol Martorell

Director of Photography: Martin Mohadeb

Editor: Lorena Moriconi

Music: Vincent Artaud

Co Producer: Juan Solanas

Art Director: Mauro Guevara

Sound Director: Leandro de Loredo

This film—which won best actress awards for Ana Carabajal and Luisa Núñez at the Biarritz and the Mannheim-Heidelberg film fests—balances social criticism, fear, fantasy and reality in the lives of the women with family in prison. For her college thesis, film student Alicia (Carabajal) is making a documentary about the women whose sons and husbands are inmates at a local jail. The only problem: No one is willing to be interviewed on camera, except the desperate Elsa (Núñez), whose son Luis has recently been arrested for a petty crime. Elsa will grant Alicia an interview only if she agrees to visit Luis in jail. Alicia reluctantly agrees to Elsa's proposition, but that visit sends Alicia's world spiraling. Blurring documentary and fiction (the film was shot in gritty, operating penitentiaries in Argentina), **PROPER EYES** takes the audience on a suspenseful ride. First-time director Liliana Paolinelli employs unconventional storytelling, asking the audience to actively work to uncover the story behind two fascinating women and eliciting nuanced and insightful performances from her leads. **PROPER EYES** reveals her as a passionate and inventive filmmaker.

—Shaz Bennett



A QUIET LITTLE MARRIAGE

World Cinema

(USA, 2008, 83 mins)

HDCAM

Screenwriter(s) : Mo Perkins, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Cy Carter

Directed By: Mo Perkins

Cast: Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Cy Carter, Jimmi Simpson, Charlie Day, Melanie Lynskey, Michael O'Neill, Lucy Devito, Rita Taggart

Producers: Tamara May Maloney, Angela Sostre

Executive Producer: Hal Haberman

Director of Photography: Eric S. Zimmerman

Editors: Julia Gandelsonas, Mo Perkins

Music: Jeff Martin, Dave Lux

Production Design: Travis Page

Things begin to fall apart for Dax and Olive, a loving young couple who gradually realize they have different thoughts about the fundamental nature of their relationship. This conflict begets a series of secrets and lies, which slowly begin to unravel the world around them. Very few films come with such emotional honesty as this portrait of a marriage, whose title speaks volumes about its central themes. First-time director Mo Perkins tells a story about the spiraling disasters that can happen to relationships that lack adequate communication, describing, in vivid, poignant detail, the pain that can be birthed across the chasm of silence. The silences in this film speak volumes about what is breaking this young couple apart and why they are facing such a crisis. A small story with big performances from Cy Carter, as Dax, and Mary Elizabeth Ellis, as Olive, and a gifted supporting cast, this film announces the arrival of several new young talents on the independent film scene.

–Lane Kneedler



LA RABIA

Showcase on Argentina

(Argentina, 2008, 83 mins)

In Spanish with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Albertina Carri

Directed By: Albertina Carri

Cast: Analia Couceyro, Javier Lorenzo, Victor Hugo Carrizo, Nazarena Duarte, Gonzalo Perez

Producer: Pablo Trapero

Executive Producer: Martina Gusman

Director of Photography: Sol Lopatin

Editor: Alejo Moguillansky

www.bavaria-film-international.de/htmls/bfi/index.php

The farmers of Argentina's endless pampas are as rough and bristly as the arid landscape that is their home. Circumstances force them to share and help one another. But sometimes emotions can erupt like a summer storm. When strong, silent Poldo feels that his more exuberant fellow farmer Pichón has insulted little Nati, his mute daughter, Poldo breaks off all contact with him. Poldo also forbids his wife to see Pichón, not suspecting that they are carrying on a passionate relationship behind his back. Nati knows what is going on, and so does Pichón's son, Nati's only friend. Things come to a head when Poldo finds drawings made by his daughter that depict what she has seen, but which he misunderstands for something much worse. Albertina Carri, one of the leading lights of Argentina's remarkable cinematic renaissance, returns with this stark, evocative and potent tragedy, a nearly wordless passion play that employs gorgeously dark cinematography and inventive animation. Told through the perspectives of the children, it takes on a harrowing aspect. Vivid, unforgettable and masterfully constructed, LA RABIA provides more evidence that the miraculous Argentine film scene is continuing to grow and thrive.

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THE REST OF THE NIGHT

Narrative Competition

(Italy, 2008, 101 mins)

In Italian, Rumanien with English subtitles

35mm

North American Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Francesco Munzi

Directed By: Francesco Munzi

Cast: Sandra Ceccarelli, Aurelien Recoing, Stefano Cessetti, Laura Vasiliu

Producer: Donatella Botti

Director of Photography: Vladen Radovic

Editor: Massimo Fiocchi

Music: Guiliano Taviani

Sound Design: Stefano Campus

Production Design: Luca Servino

Francesco Munzi's sophomore film, after his acclaimed SAIMIR, shines a light on a Europe in xenophobic flux. Silvana, the wife of a provincial industrialist, grows convinced that Maria, their young Romanian maid, is responsible for the disappearance of precious objects from their home. Despite the lack of proof and against her husband's wishes, Silvana fires Marja. Out of money and choices, Marja returns to her ex-boyfriend Jonus. Recently released from jail, he's living with his younger brother in a squalid suburban slum and hanging out with Marco, a young cocaine addict. Marco has his own domestic problems: he is not allowed to spend time with his eight year-old son. Together, this gang of desperate have-nots set their sights on Silvana and her villa. At once a gripping drama and a cerebral contemplation of ethnic and class divides, THE REST OF THE NIGHT is a rich, resonant work featuring distinctive, fully fleshed-out characters and delicately entwined stories. Munzi never shies away from controversy embedded in the material, continually refocusing and redirecting our attention on the power dynamics. The film's impact builds gradually, leaving a provocative story sure to haunt you for a long time.

–Shaz Bennett



REVANCHE

World Cinema

(Austria , Gemany, 2008, 121 mins)

In German with English subtitles

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Gotz Spielmann

Directed By: Götz Spielmann

Cast: Johannes Krisch, Ursula Strauss, Irina Potapenko, Andreas Lust

Producers: Mathias Forberg, Heinz Stussak, Sandra Bohle, Gotz Spielmann

Director of Photography: Martin Gschlacht

Editor: Karina Ressler

Production Design: Maria Gruber

Sound Design: Heinz Ebner

www.revanche.at

The ex-con Alex (Johannes Krisch) and his immigrant prostitute girlfriend Tamara (Irina Potapenko) are desperate to escape the dangerous brothel where they work. Robert (Andreas Lust) is a police officer happily married to Ursula (Ursula Strauss), the two enjoying the serene splendor of a farmhouse they've designed and built themselves. A botched robbery and bullet fired astray set these characters on a collision course. What begins as a grim, melodramatic thriller in the finest tradition of Simenon and Highsmith soon spins into completely unexpected emotional territory as writer-director Götz Spielmann reveals the characters' wounded psyches and traces their uneven arcs of redemption. With its long, carefully composed medium shots, the film ventures into rich, temporal territory, exploring real matters of life and death. Is this the first Buddhist thriller? But not for a minute does REVANCHE feels like an experiment, never losing its pure, soulful force, thanks to its rich detail, methodical pacing, the absence of a musical score and a superb ensemble cast led by Krisch, whose career in Europe is in rapid ascension thanks to this stunning debut. –Larry Gross, Telluride Film Festival



SKIN

World Cinema

(South Africa, 2008, 107 mins)

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Helen Crawley, Helena Kriel, Jessie Keyt

Directed By: Anthony Fabian

Cast: Sophie Okonedo, Sam Neill, Alice Krige

Producers: Margaret Matheson, Genevieve Hofmeyr, Anthony Fabian

Executive Producers: Simon Fawcett, Robbie Little, Laurence Paltiel, Alasdair MacCuish, Moses Silinda, Hellen Kalenga

Director of Photography: Dewald Aukema sasc & Jonathan Partridge

Editor: St. John O'Rorke

Music: Helene Muddiman

Sound Design: Paul Cotterell

Production Design: Billy Keam

Spanning 30 years in the history of South Africa, this story follows the life of Sandra Laing (Sophie Okenodo), a young woman who, despite being born to a white Afrikaner parents, has light brown skin and curly hair. From a white African family but possessing of black African physical features, Sandra defies the classifications that served as the foundation of South Africa's systemic racism. Sandra grows up in a sheltered environment on a rural farm, loved and nurtured by her father (Sam Neill) and mother (Alice Krige). It is not until she is thrown out of the same all-white boarding school that her brother attends that reality sets in: Sandra will not have the same opportunities as everyone else in her family. Sandra's parents immediately set out to have her legally classified as "white" in 1960s apartheid-era South Africa, setting in motion a legal battle that marks Sandra with the strength and self-awareness that ultimately enables her to embrace her identity and cultural legacy as an African woman. It is impossible to watch this film, which is based on a true story, without being swept up by the undercurrent of sadness. These strong emotions penetrate the wrenching performances from Okenodo, Neill and Krige, members of a family torn asunder.

-- Jacqueline Lyanga



SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

Tribute

(2008, 116 mins)

HDCAM

Directed By: Danny Boyle

Cast: Dev Patel, Freida Pinto, Madhur Mittal, Anil Kapoor, Irrfan Khan

Producer: Christian Colson

Executive Producers: Paul Smith, Tessa Ross

Co-Director (India): Loveleen Tandan

Director of Photography: Anthony Dod Mantle

Editor: Chris Dickens

Music: A.R. Rahman

Production Design: Mark Digby

Today is the biggest day in Jamal Malik's life. A penniless, 18-year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai, he's one question away from winning a staggering 20 million rupees on India's WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? But when the show breaks for the night, he is suddenly arrested on suspicion of cheating. After all, how could an uneducated street kid possibly know so much? Determined to get to the bottom of Jamal's story, the jaded Police Inspector spends the night probing Jamal's incredible past, from his riveting tales of the slums where he and his brother Salim survived by their wits to his hair-raising encounters with local gangs to his heartbreak over Latika, the unforgettable girl he loved and lost. Each chapter of Jamal's increasingly layered story reveals where he learned the answers to the show's seemingly impossible quizzes. But one question remains a mystery: What is this young man with no apparent desire for riches really doing on the game show? When the new day dawns and Jamal returns to answer the final question, the Inspector and 60 million viewers are about to find out .



DANNY BOYLE TRIBUTE

Tribute
(45 mins)

Danny Boyle's career has been marked by the remarkable variety of themes, locations and genres he has tackled and his extraordinary eye for discovering talent. After several provocative made-for-BBC films, his first theatrical feature, the riveting dark-comedy thriller *SHALLOW GRAVE*, introduced Ewan McGregor and won the BAFTA award for best British film. *TRAINSPOTTING*, an inventive adaptation of Irvine Welsh's gritty, scabrous novel about heroin addicts on the street of Glasgow, established Boyle as a major talent worldwide. In addition to making McGregor a movie star, the film introduced audiences to future stars Jonny Lee Miller, Ewen Bremner and Kelly McDonald. Boyle's low-budget zombie update *28 DAYS LATER* featured two extraordinary actors, Cillian Murphy and Naomi Harris, and some of most innovative use of digital video yet. His space opera *SUNSHINE*, island thriller *THE BEACH* and offbeat family film *MILLIONS* further demonstrated his range. Boyle latest, *SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE*, is his most ravishing film to date, an astonishingly vivid comic-drama about the rags-to-riches story, set mainly in the slums of Mumbai, of a boy who conquers India's biggest game show. Told with sensual speed and grace, it leaves audiences in a state of bliss.

In collaboration with the American Cinematheque and the Egyptian Theater, AFI FEST added screenings:

Thursday, November 6 - 7:30 PM

Danny Boyle In-Person to introduce a Double Feature of his films.

SHALLOW GRAVE

1995 UK 91 MIN 35mm

TRAINSPOTTING

1996 UK 94 MIN 35mm



STILL ORANGUTANS

AINDA ORANGOTANGOS

ALT_Cinema

(Brazil, 2008, 81 mins)

In Portuguese with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Gibran Dipp, Gustavo Spolidero, Paulo Scott

Directed By: Gustavo Spolidoro

Cast: Karina Kazue, Lindon Shimizu, Kayode Da Silva, Janaina Kremer, Renata De Lelis

Producers: Cristiane Oliviera, Fabiano De Souza, Gilson Vargas, Milton Do Prado, Gustavo Spolidero

Director of Photography: Juliano Lopes Fortes

Hyperkinetic and brash, co-writer and director Gustavo Spolidoro's adventurous film is not so much a traditional piece of cinema as it is an incitement to riot. Veering from sublime to ridiculous, mashing up sacred and profane, biting funny and piercingly sad, this film's contempt for propriety is only exceeded by its utter loathing of convention. The place is Porto Alegre, Brazil, where we experience one day in the interrelated lives of a group that stretches the definition of "eclectic" to heretofore unimaginable dimensions. Be aware: People will die, bizarre theories regarding the Great Apes will be expounded upon and Santa will get much drunker. As the stellar cast leads us through the Möbius strip plot, it can be difficult to remember that this film was shot in one complete take, a remarkable technical achievement that has never seemed so necessary. A roaring, new incarnation of punk rock filmmaking, **STILL ORANGUTANS** is overwhelming in the best possible way. So do not blink, do not budge and, please, no matter how lovely the bottles might be, do not drink the perfume.

-- Jon Korn



SUGAR

Special Screenings

(USA, 2008, 118 mins)

In English, Spanish with English subtitles

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck

Directed By: Anna Boden,

Ryan Fleck

Cast: Algenis Perez Soto, Rayniel Rufino, Andre Holland, Michael Gaston, Jaime Tirelli, Jose Rijo, Ann Whitney, Richard Bull, Ellary Porterfield, Alina Vargas, Kelvin Leonardo Garcia, Joendy Pena Brown

Producers: Paul Mezey, Jamie Patricof, Jeremy Kepp Walker

Executive Producer: Anna Boden

Director of Photography: Andrij Parekh

Editor: Anna Boden

Music: Michael Brook

For many Dominicans, baseball represents the pathway from poverty to wealth and glory. And so when Sugar, a gifted 19-year-old pitcher, gets called up to the American minor leagues, it seems a dream fulfilled for him, his family and his community. But life on the road and under the glare of the lights carries more challenges than the young man imagined. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's follow-up to their Oscar-nominated HALF NELSON is a miracle of cinema, a restrained, moving and wholly realized human story. SUGAR seems to evolve organically—at times feeling almost improvised—and is filled with the gentle twists and surprises of a real life being lived. Yet, as it progresses, one recognizes its thoughtful construction; it is carefully paced and breathtakingly composed (by HALF NELSON cinematographer Andrij Parekh). The sports footage is convincing without being showy, and the struggles of Sugar and the other newcomers to the US are drawn with deep empathy, instead of relying on contrived, episodic moments. As Sugar, newcomer Algenis Pérez is a thrill to watch: a smart, curious and everyday-brave young man whose wide-eyed naivety is soon transformed into wisdom. As Sugar makes his way, the film grows, too, from a familiar boy-trying-to-make-it-big tale into a grander yet quieter story, that of a newcomer seeking a place in America, still the container for the world's hopes and aspirations.



SUMMER HOURS

World Cinema

(France, 2008, 102 mins)

In French with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Olivier Assayas

Directed By: Olivier Assayas

Cast: Juliette Binoche, Charles Berling, Jeremie Renier, Edith Scob

Producers: Charles Gilibert, Marin Karmitz, Nathanaël Karmitz

Executive Producer: Claire Dornoy

Director of Photography: Eric Gautier

Editor: Luc Barnier

Sound Design: Nicolas Cantin, Olivier Goinard

Hélène (Edith Scob) gathers her children and grandchildren at her French country estate to celebrate her 75th birthday. Their gift of a tricky-to-use mobile phone, however, seems to symbolize the 21st-century pressures that are closing in on her precious way of life. The growing sense the exquisite Hélène—the niece of a famous artist—has of her own mortality leads her to bequeath her most valuable artwork and furniture to her closest family: her eldest son Frédéric (Charles Berling), daughter Adrienne (Juliette Binoche) and brother Jérémie (Jérémie Renier). Director Olivier Assayas's gently beautiful meditation on connection and loss traces the journey of one family's treasures from their home to their final resting place in glass cases, where they receive only the passing consideration of museumgoers (like Hou Hsiao-hsien's FLIGHT OF THE RED BALLOON [AFI FEST '07], SUMMER HOURS was commissioned by the Musée d'Orsay to celebrate its 20th anniversary). As he did in his LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER, Assayas uses elliptical jumps in time and unexpected shifts in perspective to tell an ensemble story in oblique, multilayered fashion. Gradually, carefully, Assayas shows how family ties, even in decent and affectionate families, inevitably erode over time. The haunting late-afternoon melancholy is well served by Eric Gautier's fluid camera and, combined with Assayas's confident, inventive storytelling, makes SUMMER HOURS a bittersweet elegy about love and memory and the ways in which we hold them.



THREE BLIND MICE

World Cinema

(Australia, 2008, 94 mins)

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Matthew Newton

Directed By: Matthew Newton

Cast: Ewan Leslie, Toby Schmitz, Matthew Newton, Tina Bursill, Brendan Cowell, Alex Dimitriadis, Bob Franklin, Marcus Graham, Charles 'Bud' Tingwell, Jacki Weaver

Producer: Ben Davis

Executive Producers: Michael Favelle, Ben Ferris

Director of Photography: Hugh Miller

Editor: Gracie Otto

Music: John Foreman

Sound Design: Tony Vaccher

This taut psychological drama follows one night in the lives of three young Australian naval officers. On shore leave on the eve of being shipped out to fight in Iraq, they hit the streets of Sydney. The three lose each other but find themselves, along with courage, friendship and redemption. Sam (Ewen Leslie) has been mistreated at sea and is going AWOL; Dean (Toby Schmitz) is anxious to reconnect with his girlfriend and her parents, and has secrets to share; Harry (Matthew Newton) is out to play cards and indulge in a night of excess. Newton wrote, directed and stars in his debut feature, which received a special commendation at the 2008 Sydney International Film Festival. With support from his wonderful cast, featuring some of Australia's brightest young talent, Newton displays a precocious cinematic dexterity in crafting a beautifully rendered examination of these young men on leave. *THREE BLIND MICE* is a fascinating film, the succinct story unfolds perfectly, revealing the hidden levels of the human condition as the night goes on. It provides an illuminating, deeply satisfying and psychologically astute examination of life in the military.

-- Shaz Bennett



TIME CRIMES

LOS CRONOCRIMENES

ALT_Cinema

(Spain, 2007, 108 mins)

In Spanish with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Nacho Vigalondo

Directed By: Nacho Vigalondo

Cast: Nacho Vigalondo, Barbara Goenaga, Karra Elejalde

Producers: Eduardo Carneros, Esteban Ibarretxe, Javier Ibarretxe, Santi Camunas, Jorge Gomez, Jordi Rediuc, Norbert Llaras

Director of Photography: Flavio M. Labiano

Editor: Jose Luis Romeu

Music: Chucky Namanera

This debut feature from acclaimed short-film maker Nacho Vigalondo is a diabolically intricate little machine. Free of the flashy digital effects that can overwhelm modern science fiction, it feels instead like a taut short story from a previous age. Once set in motion, this film spins off in all manner of odd directions; a charged particle that flouts expectation with palpable glee. Hector (Karra Elejalde) is a fleshy Everyman whose lazy afternoon is complicated when he sees something odd through his binoculars. Starting from this utterly mundane setting, Vigalondo proceeds to pull the rug out from underneath his protagonist, his audience and then the space-time continuum itself. A bewildered Alice sucked down a wormhole, Hector's focus swings from iced tea and chaise lounges to slightly bigger things, such as ensuring his entire existence doesn't get erased. The exquisite tension of the plot is sustained by sharp editing and a lush orchestral score that proudly declares its debts to Bernard Herrmann's work for Hitchcock. A thrilling feat of cinematic prestidigitation, TIMECRIMES reminds us just how short the distance is between regular life and utter weirdness. (Unless you're a veteran time traveler, in which case it reminds you to get a dependable lock for your lab door.)

—Jon Korn



TOKYO!

Special Screenings

(France , Japan , Germany , South Korea, 2008, 112 mins)

In Japanese, French with English subtitles

Screenwriter(s) : Gabrielle Bell, Michel Gondry, Leos Carax, Bong Ho

Directed By: Michel Gondry,

Leos Carax,

Bong Ho

Cast: Ayako Fujitani, Ryo Kase, Ayumi Ito, Denis Lavant, Jean-Francois Balmer, Renji Ishibashi, Teruyuki Kagawa, Yu Aoi, Naoto Takenaka

Producer: Kenzo Horikoshi

Executive Producers: Yuji Sadai, Hiroyuki Negishi

Director of Photography: Masami Inomoto, Caroline Champetier DeRibes, Jum Fukumoto

Editors: Jeff D Buchanan, Nelly Quettier

Music: Etienne Cherry, Lee Byeong-woo

This triptych of shorts hover in a state of surrealism that might feel natural only in Tokyo, as auteurs Michel Gondry, Leos Carax and Bong Joon-ho transform elements of the mundane to tantalizing visual aphorisms. Gondry's INTERIOR DESIGN begins when a young man and woman move to Tokyo to pursue (his) dreams of filmmaking. Soon, they are lost in endless grids of towed cars and buildings that “refuse all contact with each other.” Feeling smothered by her boyfriend’s self-proclaimed genius, the heroine’s anxiety escalates until she undergoes an uncanny metamorphosis. In Carax’s MERDE, the delicately woven surface of consumer utopia is ruptured abruptly with the appearance of an otherworldly being from the sewers. His name is Merde. He does not speak our language. The jostling crowds and pervasive media are frenzied as the enfant terrible assaults everything in his path: eating cigarettes, flowers, tipping baby strollers and licking schoolgirls. His acts invoke furor, repulsion and hilarious religious ardor in the masses. Finally, he is incarcerated, but is this the end, or just the beginning? Bong Joon-ho's SHAKING TOKYO treats us to a look into the nest of a hokikomori- a man socially crippled by a spatial ailment that keeps him from leaving the stale security of his home. Then, when an earthquake strikes, Bong asks sadistically, what might happen if a hokikomori fell in love? These stories of individuals whose isolation is exacerbated by their fantastic debilitating urban spaces offer hallucinatory portraits of a city that are fleeting, terrifying and sublime.

-- Aliza Ma



TOKYO SONATA

Added Screenings

(2008, 117 mins)

Directed By: Kiyoshi Kurosawa

Cast: Haruka Igawa, Kai Inowaki, Teruyuki Kagawa, Kyoko Koizumi

Producers: Yukie Kito, Wouter Barendrecht

Executive Producers: Yasushi Kotani, Michael J. Werner

Director of photography: Akiko Ashizawa

Editor: Koichi Takahashi

Music: Kazumasa Hashimoto

Sound Design: Masayuki Iwakura

A father loses his job, his sons spin into alienation and his wife tries to hold it all together. Kurosawa, the master of Japanese genre turns his sights on a mundane, yet (in his hands) thrilling, disturbing subject: the secret lives of an ordinary Japanese family.



TRUTH IN 24

Special Presentation

(USA , Germany, 2008, 100 mins)

HDCAM

Directed By: Keith Cossrow,
Bennett Viseltear

Producers: Charles Besser, Chuck Johnsen, Matthew Goldfine, Alan Brown, Jared Hilbert

Director of Photography: Hank McElwee

Editors: Charlie Askew, Keith Cossrow, Dave Neupauer, Steve Lucatuorto, Leo McCafferty,
Bennett Viseltear

For the past decade, Audi has upheld its historically formidable presence in the international car-racing arena. Yet in very recent years a tense and emotionally charged rivalry with European car company Peugeot has plagued the Audi team. TRUTH IN 24 follows the men behind the iconic four interlocking rings—the racers, the mechanics, the coaches—and captures with heart-pounding excitement and visceral intensity the Audi team’s race for gold at the prestigious European track Le Mans. As is revealed in the documentary, Le Mans is not only a race where technical skill and quality engineering are put to the test. Endurance proves to be one of the most critical factors for the competing cars in the daylong event. After 24 hours, will it be Audi or Peugeot who have succumbed to the complexities of the track? Which team will have emerged victorious? In TRUTH IN 24, the hopes, disappointments, and joys of the Audi team are made very real, as is the constant, undeniable threat of injury or even death that goes hand-in-hand with a sport as volatile as car-racing. TRUTH IN 24 is certain to delight car enthusiasts, and will grab the attention of anyone with a hankering to watch a whirlwind, edge-of-your-seat competition unfold.

–Beth Hanna



TULPAN

Showcase on Kazakhstan

(Kazakhstan, 2008, 100 mins)

In Kazakh, Russian with English subtitles

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Sergei Dvortsevov, Gennady Ostrovskiy

Directed By: Sergey Dvortsevov

Cast: Askhat Kuchinchirekov, Samal Yeslyamova, Ondasyn Besikbasov, Tulepbergen Baisakalov, Bereke Turganbayev

Producer: Karl Baumgartner

Director of Photography: Jola Dylewska

Editors: Isabel Meier, Petar Markovic

Production Design: Roger Martin

One of the most delightful works to come out of the Cannes and Toronto film festivals this year, Sergey Dvortsevov's tale centers on Asa, a Kazakh sailor who returns home and dreams of life as a shepherd on the windswept and remote plains of the Kazakh steppe. Complications ensue when Asa's stoic brother-in-law holds back on giving him his own flock until Asa finds a wife. However, there is only one girl of marrying age in the village, and she rejects him. The elusive Tulpan, Asa's titular beloved, will not be swayed, either by his boastful tales of battling octopi, nor by gentle persuasion. Like many rural Kazakhs, the girl has dreams of the big city. TULPAN is filled with breathtaking scenes—the birth of a lamb, a mother camel tormenting a veterinarian—all captured beautifully by the mostly hand-held camera. The film also features many memorable characters, including Asa's best friend, a truck driver with a penchant for pornography and Russian pop, and Asa's devoted sister and her precocious children (all remarkable performances by mostly nonprofessional actors). For his first narrative feature, Dvortsevov, known for his award-winning documentaries, has crafted an exceptionally charming, funny and thoroughly engaging portrait of life in rural Kazakhstan.

—Mimi Brody



TWO - LEGGED HORSE

ASBE DU-PA

World Cinema

(Iran, 2008, 101 mins)

35mm

US Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Mohsen Makhmalbaf

Directed By: Samira Makhmalbaf

Cast: Ziya Mirza Mohamad, Haron Ahad, Gol Gotai Karimi, Khojeh Nader

Producer: Mehrdad Zonnour

Director of Photography: Farzad Jodat

Editor: Mohsen Makhmalbaf

Music: Tolibkhon Shahidi

Sound Design: Hossein Mahdavi

Acclaimed director Samira Makhmalbaf (*5 IN THE AFTERNOON*, *THE BLACKBOARD*) returns to AFI FEST with *TWO-LEGGED HORSE*, an exploration of how two people can test the very limits of a human relationship. Set in Afghanistan, the film introduces us to a subculture of impoverished children who find shelter in a maze of abandoned sewer pipes. A father sets out to hire someone to attend to his severely disabled son, a young boy who is unable to walk. Mirvais, one of the inhabitants of the sewers, successfully competes for the job, which includes carrying the boy around on his back. It is not long, however, before Mirvais's simple duties are extended by his new young master, in ways that border on the sadomasochistic. The script was written by one of the world's greatest filmmakers, Makhmalbaf's father, Mohsen. Samira, initially shocked by the desperateness of the story, asked her father why he wrote it. "What else do you expect me to write when I'm living in such difficult political-social conditions in Iran?" he answered. "How can I describe people's hidden relationships in a seemingly modern but indeed primitive society?" *TWO-LEGGED HORSE* is a haunting film that feels as intense as that reality, showcasing the filmmaker's delicate eye for detail. Urgent, emotive and evocative filmmaking at its finest, the film's scenario is so infused with dramatic potential that it all but bursts from the screen.

—Shaz Bennett



TWO LOVERS

Special Screenings

(USA, 2008, 108 mins)

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : James Gray, Ric Menello

Directed By: James Gray

Cast: Gwyneth Paltrow, Isabella Rossellini, Joaquin Phoenix, Elias Koteas

Producers: Donna Gigliotti, Anthony Katagas, James Gray

Executive Producers: Todd Wagner, Mark Cuban, Marc Butan, Agnes Mentre

Director of Photography: Joaquin Baca-Asay

Editor: John Axelrad

Co Producers: Mike Upton, Couper Samuelson

Acclaimed director James Gray (LITTLE ODESSA, WE OWN THE NIGHT) presents a taut, emotionally charged psychological love story. Inspired in part by Dostoevsky's story "White Nights," and adapted by Gray and co-scripter Richard Menello, TWO LOVERS is a modern-day romantic drama set in New York. After a devastating breakup, Leonard, a depressed young man (Joaquin Phoenix), moves back in with his parents (Isabella Rossellini and Moni Monoshev), who try to set him up with Sandra (Vinessa Shaw), the sweet and caring daughter of a close family friend. Late one night, Leonard looks out his bedroom window and notices the ravishing young Michelle (Gwyneth Paltrow), who recently moved into an apartment in his family's building. Instantly attracted to Michelle, Leonard develops an attraction that quickly becomes obsession, pursuing her arduously. As Michelle begins to fall for Leonard and Leonard discovers hidden depths in Sandra, the troubled young man is forced to make an impossible decision. The superbly crafted TWO LOVERS weaves story and style with finely honed acting to explosive effect. The deeply moving TWO LOVERS is a work by a mature, talented director whose clear, resonant, original voice is growing stronger over time.

—Shaz Bennett



UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

Documentary Competition
(United States, 2008, 93 mins)

HDCAM

World Premiere

Directed By: Aaron Aites,
Audrey Ewell

Producers: Audrey Ewell, Aaron Aites

Executive Producer: Gill Holland

Director of Photography: Audrey Ewell, Odd Reinhardt Nicolaysen

Editor: Andrew Ford

Music: Darkthrone, Mayhem, Burzum, Ulver, Thorns, Gorgoroth, Enslaved, Boards of Canada, Black Dice, Sunn 0))), Múm, J Lesser

Co-Editors: Audrey Ewell, Aaron Aites, Micheal Dimmitt, and Ulysses Guidotti

Assistant Editor: Jim Lopezzo

Additional Camera: Ellen Lande, John Harlow, and Aaron Aites

- www.myspace.com/blackmetalmovie

In 1991, Norwegian churches started to burn, just after an underground scene of anticonsumerist metal musicians had begun to gel. While reporters and police scrambled for answers, more and more churches went up in flames. They had no leads until Varg Vikernes, one of the architects of an underground music-art-political scene known as "black metal" took credit. He was held for questioning long enough for the media to run with a largely fabricated story of satanic rituals, abductions and sacrifices. Soon, other young men took those media cues, creating an escalating cycle of fiction-fueled reality. This feature documentary unearths the real story of black metal, a movement and music genre led by metal musicians, murderers, church burners and suicide victims. The film examines the birth and explosive arc of black metal from the perspective of the musicians, young men who tried to change the world using music and symbolic acts of violence. Part modern-art splinter group, part terrorist movement and part rock scene, this underground assemblage has become increasingly commercially successful and infamous, its music available in record stores, profiled in Spin and Rolling Stone and even serving as the inspiration for popular animated shows in the US.



VISIONEERS

World Cinema

(USA, 2007, 94 mins)

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Jared Drake, Brandon Drake

Directed By: Jared Drake

Cast: Zach Galifianakis, Judy Greer, Mia Maestro, James LeGros, Missi Pyle, Fay Masterson, Matthew Glave, Chris Coppola, Aubrey Morris, John Paulsen, John Keister, Pat Cashman

Producers: Jory Weitz, James Henney, Henry Capanna

Executive Producers: Kurt Dalton, Henry Lowenfels

Director of Photography: Dino Parks

Editor: Justine Halliday

Music: Tim DeLaughter

www.visioneersthemovie.com/

George Washington Winsterhammerman lives an ordinary life. He has a wife, a kid, a house and a boat. Every day George gets in his minivan and goes to work as a Level Three Tunt at the Jeffers Corporation, the largest and most profitable corporation in the history of humankind. Though he lives an utterly comfortable life, George is growing nervous. People around him have begun exploding—literally. Fearing he might be next, George visits his doctor and learns that his recurring dreams are a symptom of impending explosion. Unfortunately, George can't stop dreaming, and as the explosion epidemic worsens, he is forced to question the life he's been living. This quirky and distinctive story, utterly original in every way, features inspired casting, particularly with acclaimed actor and comedian Zach Galifianakis as George. He is joined by the delightful Judy Greer and terrific indie mainstay James LeGros. VISIONEERS, the debut film from the sibling filmmaking team of Brandon and Jared Drake, offers a darkly comic view of a world so skewed it can't help but remind us of our own.

—Lane Kneedler



WAITING FOR SANCHO

World Cinema

(Canada , Spain, 2008, 105 mins)

In Catalan, English, Spanish, Hebrew with English subtitles

HDCAM

US Premiere

Directed By: Mark Peranson

Featuring: Albert Serra Juanola, Montse Triola Teixidor, Lluís Carbo, Lluís Serrat Masanellas, Lluís Serrat Batlle, Victoria Aragonés

Producer: Mark Peranson

Director of Photography: Mark Peranson

Editor: Mark Peranson

How can filmmaking be filmed? The question would seem to have been answered already, given the teeming amount of “making of” featurette extras that cling to DVD packages. But the dirty little secret of “making of” films is that none of them show filmmaking as it is, in the moment of creation. Which is why Mark Peranson refers to his first film, about the filming of Albert Serra’s extraordinary BIRDSONG (also playing at this year’s AFI FEST) as “a kind of making of.” A fan of Serra’s epochal HONOR DE CAVALLERIA, Peranson loved the Catalan director’s work but never imagined that he would be called out of the blue to play Joseph, father of Jesus, in Serra’s new film about the three kings’ journey to Bethlehem. Armed with only a little HDV camera and a built-in mic, Peranson arrived at the production site on the breathtaking, volcanic Canary Islands and shot what he saw during the days he wasn’t acting. When Serra is filming, he’s discovering the film he has minimally sketched out on paper (which we also see); Peranson discovers Serra discovering, his camera more or less invisible, allowing the viewer to sense exactly what it looks, sounds and feels like to be in the midst of a film set run by a serious and generous artist who is reinventing cinema as we know it.

-- --Robert Koehler



WALTZ WITH BASHIR

World Cinema

(France , Germany , Israel, 2008, 87 mins)

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Ari Folman

Directed By: Ari Folman

Cast: Ari Folman, Ori Sivan, Roni Dayg, Shmuel Frenkel

Producers: Yael Nahlieli, Serge Lalou, Gerhard Meixner, Roman Paul

Editor: Nilli Feller

Music: Max Richter

Art Director: David Polonskey

Director of Animation: Yoni Goodman

Sound Designer: Aviv Aldema

Beginning with unnerving images of a pack of dogs racing through the streets of Tel Aviv—an emblem of tormented conscience—writer-director and former Israeli soldier Ari Folman offers the most powerful statement yet about the agony of years of Middle East violence. Using at times otherworldly, atmospheric animation, Folman reconstructs a notorious atrocity that occurred in Palestinian refugee camps during the 1984 invasion of Lebanon, one that he witnessed but, for reasons he can't understand, cannot remember. Folman proves adept both as an investigative journalist and as a visual poet, delivering his story through the expressive, painterly animated frames. Dreams and black comedy gracefully enrich the facts he rigorously gathers, including eyewitness testimony from both his friends and comrades in arms and from military and political leaders. This documentary-style narration serves as a powerful counterpoint to the surreal, magical, insistently subjective drawn images: a man floating through the ocean nestled between the breasts of a naked woman, soldiers playing heavy-metal air guitar with their weapons as bullets fly past. *WALTZ WITH BASHIR*'s hybrid form becomes more than a skilled reconstruction of a tragedy. It is, like the masterpieces of Alan Resnais and Chris Marker, a universal meditation on the interaction of historical and personal memory.

—Larry Gross, Telluride Film Festival



WELLNESS

World Cinema

(USA, 2008, 90 mins)

HDCAM

Screenwriter(s) : Jake Mahaffy

Directed By: Jake Mahaffy

Cast: Paul Mahaffy, Jeff Clark

Producers: Jake Mahaffy, Jeff Clark

Director of Photography: Jake Mahaffy

Editor: Jake Mahaffy

www.handcrankedfilm.com/

Film and literature are filled with charming charlatans—suave frauds who take our money, yes, but also steal our hearts. This oxymoronic breed is nowhere to be found in writer-director Jake Mahaffy's devastating drama WELLNESS, which instead presents a starkly prosaic take on the modern confidence man. In the story of the erstwhile salesman Thomas (Jeff Clark), a middle-aged mark whose earnestness betrays his desperation, this film reminds us that victims of crime are never happy with their fates. Out on the road in gloomy upstate New York, Thomas tries and fails to interest anyone in the titular product, a panacea that is definitely miraculous and probably fictitious. He gets no help from his "sales rep," Paul, a bullet-headed shark of a man portrayed with all the appropriate piss and vinegar by Paul Mahaffy, the filmmaker's father. As the complications pile up, Thomas digs deeper into fantasy and writes more checks rather than ever admit defeat to himself or, more importantly, his wife. Grim and beautiful, WELLNESS will have even the most entrenched cynic hoping against all logic for a happy ending. Which, of course, is how these guys get you.

WELLNESS was the Grand Jury Prize winner a this year's South by Southwest Film Festival.

-- Jon Korn



WITCH HUNT

Documentary Competition

(USA, 2008, 91 mins)

HDCAM

Screenwriter(s) : Dana Nachman

Directed By: Don Hardy,

Dana Nachman

Featuring: John Stoll, Jeff Modahl, Marcella and Rick Pitts, Brenda and Scott Kniffen

Producers: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy

Executive Producer: Sean Penn

Director of Photography: Don Hardy, Brad Williams, Dan Gillett, Alex Bozovic, Josh Keppel, Paul Fifield, Monique Hurley

Editor: Don Hardy

Music: Joe Rosato Jr.

Narrator: Sean Penn

www.ktffilms.com/

Dana Nachman and Don Hardy's documentary film, narrated and executive produced by Sean Penn and featuring music from Pearl Jam, chronicles the unraveling of a small town's justice system. The subjects, working-class moms and dads, all were wrongly convicted of child molestation in the early 1980s in Bakersfield, Calif., where the Kern County District Attorney—who remains in office today—recklessly pursued charges. A true crime drama, but with the authorities perpetrating the crimes, this is a heart-wrenching story of wrongful prosecution, an unbalanced justice system, coercion and, at the same time, perseverance and hope for an end to this type of injustice. The film uncovers the story of nine citizens, all of whom served unwarranted prison time (between six and 20 years) in some of California's roughest prisons, leaving severe emotional and psychological scars. Miraculously, after lengthy court battles and the uncovering of evidence withheld from the initial trials, each person was finally exonerated. However, they have yet to receive what they also deserve: an apology from those who wrongfully convicted them.

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THE WORLD WE WANT

Free Screenings

(USA, 2008, 100 mins)

World Premiere

Directed By: Patrick Davidson

Producer: Patrick Davidson

Director of Photography: Curt Miles, Brian Pratt

Editors: Joanne Nucho, Bill Macomber

Music: Paul Hollman

Co Producer: Roberta Davidson

theworldwewantmovie.com/

Patrick Davidson's empowering documentary follows a group of self-motivated teenagers, from a broad spectrum of countries, who come together to strive for societal betterment. In the film, the final eight teams compete in Project Citizen, an international program in which groups of teens present game plans for community improvement in their home cities. An array of countries are represented—Jordan, Senegal, Columbia, India and beyond—with an even more diverse group of active and intelligent young people each given his or her moment to defend a worthy cause. Perhaps what is most moving about **THE WORLD WE WANT** is how it captures the non-destructive side of teen spirit. The young men and women are at once normal and exemplary, channeling their rebellious teenage drive into positive action, with hopes of creating a more positive future. Meanwhile, Davidson provides sobering reminders that the world we currently occupy is far from ideal. The team from Jordan investigates into the relentless presence of beatings-as-punishment in primary schools, while the Senegalese team takes a stand against the unsanitary drinking water in the city of Ross Bethio. The members of Project Citizen have seen violence, poverty, and corruption, experienced illness, and even lost loved ones: harsh realities that set them into motion. In a culture that glorifies selfish, privileged and irresponsible teenagers, the youth of **THE WORLD WE WANT** deserve at least equal time.

-- Beth Hanna



**WORLDS APART
TO VERDENER**

World Cinema

(Denmark, 2008, 108 mins)

In Danish with English subtitles

35mm

North American Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Niels Oplev, Steen Bille

Directed By: Niels Arden Oplev

Cast: Rosalinde Mynster, Pilou Asbaek, Jens Jorn Spottag, Sarah Boberg

Producer: Thomas Heinesen

Executive Producer: Kim Magnusson

Director of Photography: Lars Vestergaard

Editor: Anne Osterud

www.toverdener.dk/

The Danish contender for the best foreign-language film Oscar, *WORLDS APART* is director Niels Arden Oplev's follow-up film to the acclaimed *WE SHALL OVERCOME*. Based on a newspaper story Oplev read about a girl expelled from the Jehovah's Witnesses, the film tells the story of Sara, a pretty, sheltered 17-year-old girl who, with her community members, goes from door to door to preach about Judgment Day and eternal salvation. But when Sara meets the worldly Teis, she is confronted with her most difficult choice in life. Teis is not a Jehovah's Witness, yet their love grows through stolen, secret meetings. Sara is torn between her conscience, faith and passion, forced to make a choice between her own desires and that of her family. "Do you love God more than you love me?" Sara asks her father, sharply phrasing the central drama. *WORLDS APART* takes up those issues thoughtfully, inspiring deep debate and never judging any of its characters. As Sara, Rosalinde Mynster gives a magical, sensitive portrayal of a quiet girl who, traveling the path to self-awareness, makes a subtle metamorphosis.

-- Shaz Bennett



THE WRESTLER

Galas

(USA, 2008, 105 mins)

35mm

Screenwriter(s) : Robert Siegel

Directed By: Darren Aronofsky

Cast: Mickey Rourke, Marisa Tomei, Evan Rachel Wood

Producers: Darren Aronofsky, Scott Franklin

Executive Producers: Vincent Maraval, Agnes Mentre, Jennifer Roth

Director of Photography: Maryse Alberti

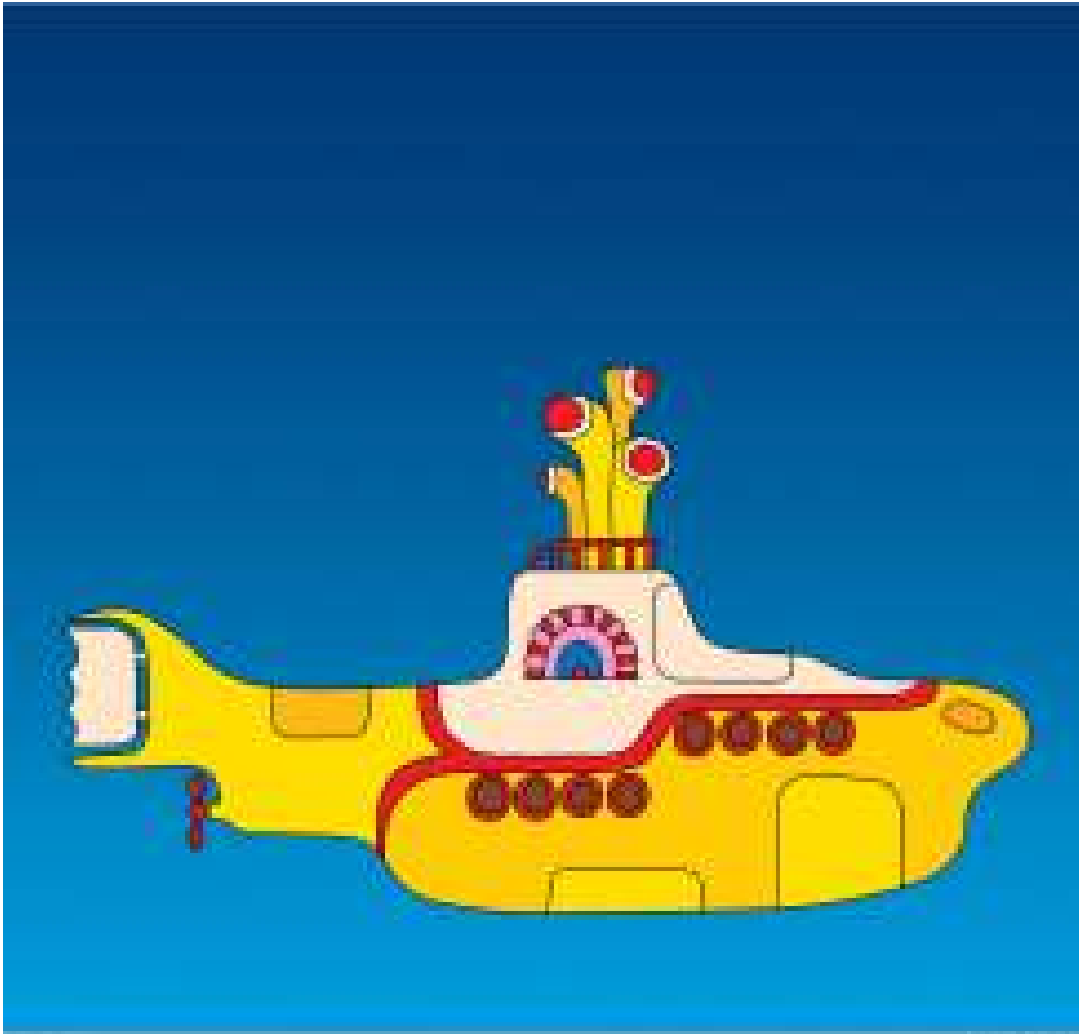
Editor: Andrew Weisblum

Music: Clint Mansell

Sound Design: Jacob Ribicoff

Production Design: Timothy Grimes

Back in the late '80s, Randy "The Ram" Robinson (Mickey Rourke) was a headlining professional wrestler. Now, 20 years later, he ekes out a living performing for handfuls of diehard wrestling fans in high school gyms and community centers around New Jersey. Estranged from his daughter (Evan Rachel Wood) and unable to sustain any real relationships, Randy lives for the thrill of the show and the adoration of his fans. However, a heart attack forces him into retirement. As his sense of identity starts to slip away, he begins to evaluate the state of his life—trying to reconnect with his daughter and striking up a blossoming romance with an exotic dancer (Marisa Tomei) who is ready to start a new life. Yet all this cannot compare to the allure of the ring and passion for his art, which threatens to pull Randy "The Ram" back into his world of wrestling. Director Darren Aronofsky presents a powerful portrait of a battered dreamer, who despite himself and the odds stacked against him, lives to be a hero once again in the only place he considers home—inside the ring.



YELLOW SUBMARINE

Added Screenings

(1968, 85 mins)

Directed By: George Dunning

Cast: John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Paul Angelis, John Clive, Dick Emery, Geoffrey Hughes, Lance Percival

Producer: Al Brodax

Executive Producer: Alan Kozlowski (1999 renovation)

Editor: Brian J. Bishop

Music: George Martin (musical director)

A hit in its psychedelic heyday, George Dunning and the Beatles' colorful adventure still holds up. AFI FEST celebrates the film's 40th anniversary with a special screening in the ArcLight Hollywood Cinerama Dome. Older Beatles fans will still "get" the references to hippydom and Fab Four culture, while kids will go nuts for the vivid animation and general silliness. And, of course, there are the songs—When I'm Sixty-Four, Nowhere Man, Lucy In the Sky with Diamonds—that'll have the whole family singing along.



Samsung Mobile Fresh Films Youth Fest

Panels

(2008, 240 mins)

World Premiere

SAMSUNG MOBILE FRESH FILMS YOUTH FEST

Samsung Mobile Fresh Films, the nation's leading teen filmmaking program, is proud to present this four-hour event, jam-packed with demonstrations and panels to celebrate and inspire the filmmakers of tomorrow. Hosted by Film Threat's **Chris Gore**, the event features a screenwriting panel led by Emmy-award winning writer **Rick Cleveland** (*Six Feet Under*, *The West Wing*) and an interactive comedy session with **Paul Scheer** (*Human Giant*, *30 Rock*) and **John Gries** (*Napoleon Dynamite's Uncle Rico!*). **Clare Kilner** (*How to Deal*) and **Joe Nussbaum** (*Sydney White*) share tips on breaking into directing. And strap on your safety goggles for Jeff Marsh's pyrotechnic special effects workshop. We'll give away great prizes and screen the best teen-produced 2008 Samsung Mobile Fresh Films .

All are invited to attend this amazing event.

Visit www.fresh-films.com/premiere.htm for updated schedule information. Panelists are subject to change.

9am-1:00pm, ArcLight Theatre 9, Hollywood

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SHORTS:

ALEX AND HER ARSE TRUCK

plays in **Shorts 4 -- Amuse bouche**

Shorts Competition

(United Kingdom, 2008, 16 mins)

Directed By: Sean Conway

Alex and her Arse Truck is a story about a scooter riding zelophile called Baby Shoes, his dogfart nymphomaniac girlfriend Alex, her black lover Nylon, a mentalist called Poubelles and a pair of drug dealing lesbians called Manina and Javotte.



BUCKETS

plays in **Shorts 5 -- Worldviews**

Shorts Competition

(USA, 2008, 15 mins)

World Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Todd Serlin

Directed By: Nick Simon

Cast: Bruce Lamont Cherry, Jhing, Andreas Cardini, Leon Carswell

Producer: Todd Serlin

Director of Photography: Patrick Russo

Editor: Michael Griffin

A moving musical portrait of the people living on the skids in Los Angeles and the unexpected beauty that comes out of this.



BUSCO PERSONAS: THE FACES OF COLOMBIA'S WAR

plays in **Shorts 3 -- Documentary**

Shorts Competition

(Colombia, 2008, 21 mins)

World Premiere

Directed By: Lagan Sebert,
Sandra Sampayo

Producer: Lagan Sebert and Sandra Sampayo

Editor: Lagan Sebert

Music: Juanes, ChocQuibTown, Aterciopelados

BUSCO PERSONAS takes a look at the forgotten faces of Colombia's 40-year-war. What started as a political conflict is now little more than a fight for drug money and territory, and it is innocent Colombians who are paying the price. The film is set to the soundtrack of vibrant Colombian music from Grammy winning artists Juanes and Aterciopelados as well as newcomers ChocQuibTown. BUSCO PERSONAS goes from the shanty towns of southern Bogota to the edge of the conflict in rural Colombia—letting some of the four million internally displaced people tell their story while examining one of the most ignored humanitarian crises in the world.



CAREFUL WITH THAT AXE

plays in **Shorts 4 -- Amuse bouche**

Shorts Competition

(New Zealand, 2008, 2 mins)

35mm

North American Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Jason Stutter

Directed By: Jason Stutter

Cast: Cameron Stevens

Producer: Jason Stutter

Editor: Jason Stutter

Sound Design: Matt Stutter

A young boy tries his hand at chopping firewood with his father's razor sharp axe. He finds that the axe is incredibly heavy, so heavy that he balances himself by resting one bare foot on the chopping block... uh oh.



THE DRIFT

plays in **Shorts 4 -- Amuse bouche**

Shorts Competition

(USA, 2008, 9 mins)

Screenwriter(s) : Kelly Sears

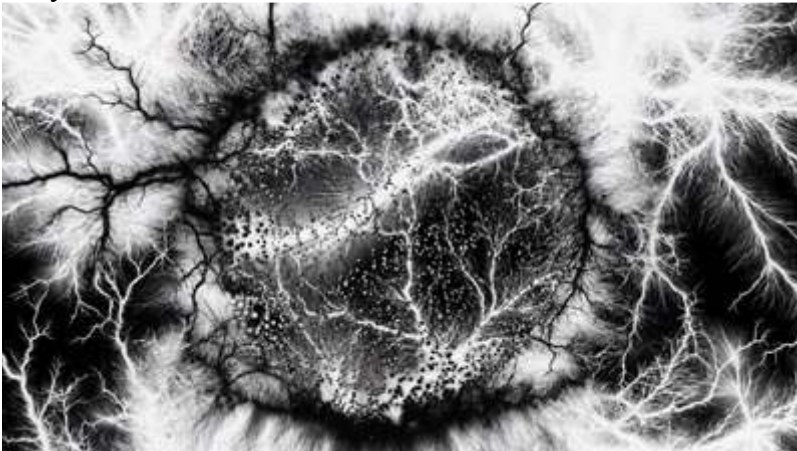
Directed By: Kelly Sears

Narrator: Anthony McCann

Sound Design: Adam Wade

Animation: Kelly Sears

A mysterious disappearance on a 1960s space journey launches the counter-culture revolution, the government blocks contraband radio broadcasts, and American fervor for conquering space results in tragic ends. Psychedelic Rock, wayward space transmission, happenings, scientific research, the space race, high hopes, failed dreams, and bodily levitation all come together in the story of The Drift .



ENERGY!

plays in **Shorts 1 -- ALT Shorts**

Shorts Competition

(Germany, 2007, 5 mins)

Directed By: Thorsten Fleisch

Music: Jens Thiele

From a mere technical point of view the TV/video screen comes alive by a controlled beam of electrons in the cathode ray tube. For ENERGY an uncontrolled high voltage discharge of 30.000 volts exposes multiple sheets of photographic paper which are then arranged in time to create new visual systems of electron organization. Even though the result is abstract it tells a universal story older than the world itself.



EVERYDAY PEOPLE

plays in **Shorts 3 -- Documentary**

Shorts Competition

(United Kingdom, 2008, 5 mins)

Digital Betacam

World Premiere

Directed By: Enda Hughes

Cast: Julia Roberts, Will Smith, Michael Douglas, Emma Thompson, Tom Jones, Naomi Campbell, Phil Collins, Muhammad Ali, George Lucas, Gordon Ramsay

Producer: Peter Hale

Editor: Jake Martin

Associate Producer: Cleone Clarke

Designer: Ross Goulden

Ever wondered what it's really like to be Julia Roberts, Will Smith or Michael Douglas



EX-BULLY

plays in **Shorts 4 -- Amuse bouche**

Shorts Competition

(USA, 2008, 4 mins)

World Premiere

Screenwriter(s) : Joey Garfield

Directed By: Joey Garfield

Cast: Paul Grondy, Luke Singer, Paul G. Curtin, Matt O'Neill, Sam Lewis, Paul Kim, Ben Lindau, Logan Sutherland

Producer: Jonathan Singer

Director of Photography: Darryl Miller

Editor: Brian Gannon

Music: Cody Chestnutt

Graphic Designer: David Ludwig

A knock at the door...



FLOK

plays in **Shorts 1 -- ALT Shorts**

Shorts Competition

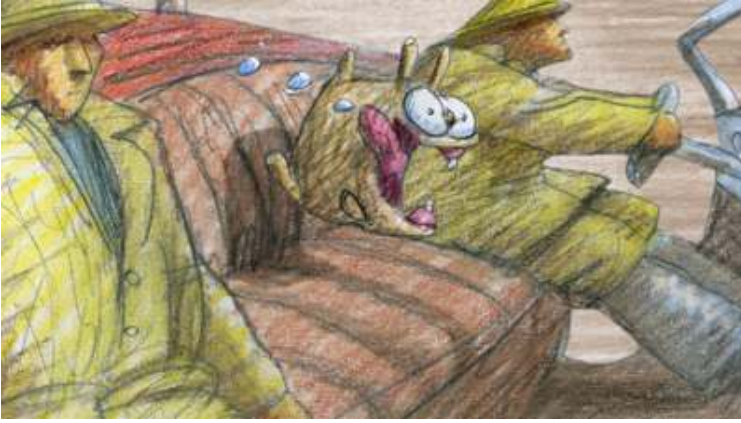
(USA, 2008, 10 mins)

Directed By: Andrew Mausert-Mooney

Producer: Nicholas Bacon and Christopher Mausert-Mooney

Director of Photography: Nicholas Bacon and Konstantin Brazhnik

Twin brothers travel around their town in search of dead birds. Using science, art, and faith, they attempt resurrection.



HOT DOG

precedes **IDIOTS AND ANGELS**

Special Screenings
(USA, 2008, 6 mins)
35mm

Directed By: Bill Plympton

Producer: Biljana Labovic

Editor: Biljana Labovic

Music: Corey Jackson

Animation: Bill Plympton

Sound Design: Greg Sextro

Digital Compositing: Kerri Allegretta

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