

AFI PROJECT: 20/20

AFI PROJECT: 20/20 is a filmmaker program that is designed to enhance cultural exchange and challenge stereotypes through collaboration among filmmakers from around the world.

In an unprecedented alliance with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, The Department of State, The National Endowment for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi created this program to foster cross-cultural understanding and respect, while nurturing filmmaking excellence—with the goal of developing ways in which these artists and their films can help promote cultural awareness and understanding and challenge stereotypes, while presenting a fresh, clear vision of the common values people share. By sharing their films with audiences here and abroad, AFI PROJECT: 20/20 will encourage understanding and appreciation of values such as freedom of expression, tolerance and rights in intellectual property.

Through workshops, seminars and appearances at film festivals, cultural centers, museums and other community, educational, and cultural venues in the US and abroad, AFI PROJECT: 20/20 filmmakers will promote ways in which film can help develop people's understanding of one another.



AFI PROJECT: 20/20

The 2006 AFI PROJECT: 20/20 Participants are:

Alberto Arvelo (Venezuela) TO PLAY AND TO FIGHT

David Boyle(USA) BIG DREAMS LITTLE TOKYO

Hilary Brougher (USA) STEPHANIE DALEY

Jay Craven(USA) DISAPPEARANCES

Goutam Ghosh(India) JOURNEY

Marwan Hamed (Egypt) THE YACOUBIAN BUILDING

Zhang Jiarui (China) THE ROAD

Danny Lerner (Israel) FROZEN DAYS

Chad Lowe (USA) BEAUTIFUL OHIO

Norman Maake(South Africa) HOMECOMING

Mohammed Naqvi(Pakistan) SHAME

Ngozi Onwurah (UK) SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Jafar Panahi (Iran) OFFSIDE

Jean Bernard Rutagarama (Rwanda) BACK HOME

Julie Stevens (USA) LIFE AFTER TOMORROW

Yukihiko Tsutsumi (Japan) MEMORIES OF TOMORROW

Lucy Walker (USA) BLINDSIGHT

Amie Williams(USA) NO SWEAT

AFI PROJECT 20/20 FILMS & BIOS

BACK HOME

Origin Country: Rwanda, USA

Runtime: 73 MIN

Presentation Format: Digibeta

DIR J.B. Rutagarama PROD Linda Vester DP J.B. Rutagarama,
Daniel Elliott, Noelle Ingabire ED Todd Zelin, Gregory Bertrand
MUS Rod Clemmons



Short Note:

BACK HOME is the first film about the Rwandan genocide made by an actual survivor. The true story of director J.B. Rutagarama, who was adopted by reporters as he fled the killings and given a new life, Rutagarama takes us along as he returns to his homeland to confront what happened there.

Long Note:

Imagine surviving genocide, being rescued, and starting a new life in a new land without knowing what happened to the family you left behind. This is the true inspiring story of J.B. Rutagarama.

Escaping Rwanda alive was a miracle. But after moving to the West, J.B. decides he must journey back to his troubled homeland to search for his lost family. With devastating footage interspersed with his remembrances, we get a uniquely intimate perspective on what became a world tragedy. As J.B. sets foot back in the land of his birth, an unexpected dramatic reunion occurs that will send your emotions soaring.

Shot with an eye for the natural beauty of a cherished homeland, Rutagarama's film is deeply personal -- yet becomes the story of all Rwandans. And in the process it offers a universal lesson in healing, hope, renewal, family, forgiveness -- and finding your own peace.

- Natalie McMenemy

Biography:

It may be a cruel irony that it took a war to introduce J.B. to filmmaking, but now he believes filmmaking is his destiny. As he observed TV news cameras filming the genocide, he discovered the power of the moving image; he saw that it had the ability to touch people in a way nothing else can. From then on, he wanted a profession that gave him the ability to look through the lens of a camera. After J.B. fled Rwanda, the two reporters who adopted him sent him to film school in England, where he graduated with honors. Afterward, he moved to New York City and began working as a studio cameraman at a television network. J.B. is now a Steadicam operator, under the tutelage of two of the top names in the movie business: Cinematographer Bob Richardson (THE AVIATOR, KILL BILL, NATURAL BORN KILLERS, etc.) and Steadicam Operator Larry McConkey (VANILLA SKY, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, THREE KINGS).

BEAUTIFUL OHIO
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 91 MIN
Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Chad Lowe SCR Ethan Canin PROD Hilary Swank, Chad Lowe, Mark Burton DP Stephen Kazmierski ED Amy E Duddleston CAST William Hurt, Rita Wilson, Julianna Margulies, Michelle Trachtenberg, David Call, Brett Davern

Short Note:

Directed by Chad Lowe and starring William Hurt, Rita Wilson and Julianna Margulies, set in the 1970s, a 15-year-old boy lives in the constant shadow of his older brother, a free-spirited and enigmatic mathematics genius. The family's coming of age culminates in an event that will affect both brothers and their family forever.

Long Note:

Chad Lowe makes his impressive directorial debut with BEAUTIFUL OHIO, a solid coming-of-age tale that centers on the complex family dynamics and changing social attitudes of the early seventies.

Simon and Judith Messerman (William Hurt and Rita Wilson) are enlightened, modern parents who have high hopes for their children's futures. Much of their attention is focused on their quirky and gifted son Clive (David Call), whom they expect to win an upcoming mathematics competition. Clive is an uneasy genius who frequently disconnects from the family by slipping into his own unique method of communication. Meanwhile, his teenage brother William (newcomer Brett Davern) struggles to make his own way while living in his older brother's formidable shadow. Adding to the relationship complications is Clive's provocative and free-spirited girlfriend, Sandra (Michelle Trachtenberg), who may be hiding secrets of her own.

The impressive ensemble cast delivers strong, yet subtle performances, while Lowe's mature and even-handed direction infuses the film with authenticity.

- John Bernstein

Biography:

Chad Lowe has resisted becoming a standard issue teen idol, opting for a more unconventional career. In his body of work on stage, screen and TV, the green-blue eyed blond has conveyed an impressive seriousness and gravity that belies his pretty boy looks. As a frustrated 15-year-old, Lowe was encouraged to "pursue acting not only as a profession but as a way of life" by family friend Martin Sheen. He soon acquired an agent and landed his first acting job--a role in the TV-movie docudrama FLIGHT 90: DISASTER ON THE POTOMAC, just before his 16th birthday.

Lowe received his first major showcase as the star of the engaging teen sitcom SPENCER playing an eccentric, discontented and lusty 16-year-old high school student. Lowe subsequently focused on improving his craft with an acting coach and stage work. He returned to TV to play the estranged son of Elizabeth Taylor's emotionally fragile faded actress on the comeback trail in the TV-movie version of THERE MUST BE A PONY. Lowe

later co-starred with Tommy Lee Jones and Robert Urich in APRIL MORNING, a period coming-of-age drama set on the eve of the American Revolution.

Lowe gained a devoted following and considerable acclaim and notoriety as a series regular on the third and fourth seasons of the landmark family drama LIFE GOES ON as Jesse McKenna, the HIV-positive artist boyfriend of Becca. Lowe won a richly deserved 1992/93 Emmy for his portrayal.

Lowe received good notices in films including, APPRENTICE TO MURDER, NOBODY'S PERFECT, HIGHWAY TO HELL and SIRINGO.

BEAUTIFUL OHIO is his directorial debut.

BIG DREAMS LITTLE TOKYO
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 83 MIN
Presentation Format: HD Cam



DIR/SCR David Boyle PROD Duane Andersen, Megan Boyle DP Bill Otto ED Duane Andersen, Scott Hurst MUS Mark Schulz CAST David Boyle, Jayson Watabe, Rachel Morihiko, Drew Knight, Pepe Serna, Michael Yama, James Kyson Lee, Sonny Saito, Bobby Suetsugu, Naohiro Takita, Yuta Kinjo, Kei Miyara, Hiroshi Watanabe, Michael Birkeland, Jonna Tamases

Short Note:

BIG DREAMS LITTLE TOKYO is the story of Boyd, who aspires to succeed in the world of Japanese business, but finds himself mostly on the outside looking in. His roommate Jerome is a Japanese American who has always felt too American to be Japanese, but too Japanese to be American. Together they struggle to find their place in a world where cultural identity is seldom what it seems.

Long Note:

Writer/director David Boyle weaves together short vignettes about a young man living in Little Tokyo to create one of the year's most hilarious and original films.

BIG DREAMS LITTLE TOKYO is the story of Boyd, who aspires to succeed in the world of Japanese business, but finds himself mostly on the outside looking in. Meanwhile, his roommate Jerome is a Japanese-American who has always felt too American to be Japanese, but too Japanese to be American. He aspires to be a sumo wrestler but finds his weight and blood pressure thwarting his dreams. Together they struggle to find their place in a world where cultural identity is seldom what it seems.

This charming and quirky comedy paints vivid characters and conflicts while finding the humor and drama in the disconnects of language and culture in the modern global community.

- Lane Kneeder

Biography:

It's hard to believe that even though Boyle was a student at Brigham Young University for a short time after returning from his Mormon mission, he is virtually untrained in the art of filmmaking. With a background of dabbling in independent endeavors and animation, Boyle's strongest asset in his projects is the ambition and innovation that many other potentially bright stars lack. Working from the time he returned from his mission to write the story, get the financing together, cast, and finally film, the non-stop drive of this young filmmaker is what ultimately helped him to turn into reality what many only dream.

BLINDSIGHT

Origin Country: UK/Tibet

Runtime: 104 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Lucy Walker PROD Sybill Robson Orr EXEC PROD Steven Haft DP Petr Cikhart, Keith Partridge, Michael Brown ED Sebastian Duthy MUS Nitin Sawhney FEATURING Sabriye Tenberken, Erik Weihenmayer

Short Note:

Erik Weihenmayer accomplished the unthinkable when, despite his blindness, he climbed the peak of Mount Everest. His feat impressed Sabriye Tenberken, a blind educator and adventurer who established the first school for the blind in Lhasa. Together they concocted a plan of astonishing courage—or insanity—to lead six blind teenagers on an ascent of the 23,000-foot Lhakpa Ri peak on the north side of Everest, with director Lucy Walker (DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND) along for a harrowing and inspiring journey.

Long Note:

Climbing Mount Everest is a life long goal for many, requiring years of training and preparation. Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind man to conquer Everest, is going to lead six blind Tibetan teenagers with little to no training in pursuit of that same dream.

Directed by Lucy Walker (DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND), BLINDSIGHT introduces us to the students of a unique Tibetan school for blind children. In a region where a staggering one in 70 Tibetans is blind, children are often stigmatized and ostracized for being blind by their own communities. Inspired by Erik's story, their teacher, Sabriye Tenderken, invites Erik to meet her students and help organize an expedition to guide six classmates to the summit of Lhakpa Ri, a peak on the north side of Everest. With Erik's team of guides, the group sets out for an adventure beyond compare.

Interspersed with revealing and heartbreaking portraits of each student, the most awe-inspiring mountains in the world set the stage for this harrowing and charming adventure that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

- Natalie McMenemy

Biography:

Lucy was born in London and graduated with first class honors from New College, Oxford with an MA Oxon in literature, and directed theatre. She won a Fulbright Scholarship to attend the graduate film program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she won a contest to direct a video for Cowboy Junkies, directed three award-winning short films and received an MFA.

Lucy's directing credits include Nickelodeon's Blue's Clues, for which she was twice nominated for Daytime Emmys for Outstanding Directing, and Devil's Playground - Amish Teenagers in the Modern World about the struggles of Amish teenagers during the period of rumspringa. Financed by HBO, Wellspring and Channel 4, Devil's Playground premiered at Sundance Film Festival and went on to many accolades and awards, including winning Sony-AFI digital Best Documentary and overall Best Film, a special jury mention at Karlovy-Vary Film Festival, audience award at Sarasota Film Festival, and

nominations for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary, and for three Emmys (for Best Documentary, Best Directing, and Best Editing).

Director of Amish-run-amok doc "Devil's Playground," Lucy Walker journeys to the Himalayas for this epic portrait of a group of blind Tibetan teenagers who climb a section of Mount Everest, lead by famed blind climber Eric Weihenmayer.

DISAPPEARANCES
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 103 MIN
Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR/SCR Jay Craven PROD Jay Craven, Hathalee Higgs DP Wolfgang Held ED Beatrice Sisul MUS Judy Hyman CAST Kris Kristofferson, Genevieve Bujold, Gary Farmer, William Sanderson, Lothaire Bluteau, Luis Guzman, Charlie McDermott

Short Note:

Set in the Prohibition-era, this whiskey-running adventure based on the award-winning novel by Howard Frank Moshier, takes place along the Vermont-Canadian border. With a unique magical realism style, the film features a standout performance from cinematic legend Kris Kristofferson.

Long Note:

Based on the award-winning novel by Howard Frank Moshier, DISAPPEARANCES is a powerfully mysterious film. The story is set deep in the rural Northeast and features excellent ensemble performances by legendary actor/songwriter Kris Kristofferson, Genevieve Bujold and newcomer Charlie McDermott.

Kristofferson stars as schemer and dreamer Quebec Bill Bonhomme in a spellbinding tale of smuggling, a family's mysterious past, and a young boy's rite of passage. Bill, desperate to raise money to preserve his endangered cattle herd through a long winter, resorts to whiskey smuggling, a traditional family occupation. He takes his son, Wild Bill, on an unforgettable trip that will long remain etched in the viewer's mind.

Palpable, intimate and magical with the vivid textures of rural outback life, Craven's delightfully simple narrative operates on powerful metaphorical levels.

- Shaz Bennett

Biography:

In 1975, Jay Craven founded and directed Catamount Arts in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, which grew into New England's largest independent film and performing arts presenter. In 1991, Craven left Catamount Arts and founded Kingdom County Productions, a nonprofit media arts organization. He is a professor of film studies at Marlboro College, in Marlboro, VT.

FROZEN DAYS / YAMIN KFUIM

Origin Country: Israel

Runtime: 91 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR/SCR Danny Lerner PROD Alan Lerner, Danny Lerner, Assaf Rav EXEC PROD Ehud Bleiberg, Edouard Douek DP Ram Shweky ED Tal Keller MUS Tomer Ran CAST Anat Klausner, Uli Sternberg, Sandra Sade, Pini Tabger, Maor Cohen

Short Note:

Meow is a young woman roaming the streets and nightclubs of Tel Aviv. She lives in empty apartments and surfs Internet chat rooms. When she decides to meet Alex, her chat buddy, a suicide bombing prevents their meeting, putting him in the hospital in a coma and her in his empty apartment. When the other tenants start referring to her as Alex and she assumes his identity, she finds herself sinking into a dangerous deluded reality.

Long Note:

Shot entirely at night on a DV Cam 570, for a budget of \$25,000, FROZEN DAYS is a striking black and white film that is a visually stimulating, and a hauntingly timely film, puncturing the surface of the compelling characters complex lives.

Meow (played by the magnetic newcomer Anat Klausner) is a young woman roaming the streets and nightclubs of Tel Aviv. She lives in empty apartments and surfs Internet chat rooms. When she decides to meet Alex, her email chat buddy, a suicide bombing prevents their meeting, putting him in the hospital in a coma and her in his empty apartment. When the other tenants start referring to her as Alex and she assumes his identity, she finds herself sinking into a dangerous deluded reality.

An incredibly accomplished debut film with polished production values steeped in the gorgeous photography of deep pools of darkness by DP Ram Shweky's carve out a profoundly resonant film that steeped in the miasma of Tel Aviv after dark.

- Shaz Bennett

Biography:

Danny Lerner (director, writer, producer) is a graduate of the Tel Aviv University Film & Television Department. While studying in the university he wrote, directed and produced over 20 short films, among them Bang, Bang, Don't Call Me Galya and Another Day. Frozen Days is his first feature-length film.

HOMECOMING

Origin Country: South Africa

Runtime: 90 MIN

Presentation Format: Beta SP



DIR/SCR Norman Maake PROD Dumisani Dlamini, David Max Brown DP Merlin Van Staden ED Thaven Naidoo, Tongai Ferusa PROD DES Mmamitse Thibedi MUS Benjamin Willem CAST Tony Kgoroge, Siyabonga Twala, Eric Miyeni, Ntathe Moshesh, Bonnie Henna

Short Note:

Charlie comes home to South Africa in 1996, after twenty years in exile. Welcomed back by his family and childhood friends, Peter and Thabo, all seems well until the past starts to catch up with him. While Charlie meets the family of his dead comrade in arms Boetie, and his relationship with Boetie's wife Carol and her child blossoms, Peter's investigations lead him to implicate Charlie in his friend's death.

Long Note:

Based on the successful South African miniseries, HOMECOMING is centered on the lives of three veterans of the armed branch of the African National Congress (ANC).

After years of exile, three friends return home to post-apartheid South Africa and are surprised to discover that "home" is not the same, and integrating back into South African society will not be easy. Determined to reclaim their lives, they pursue individual paths while maintaining their inseparable friendship. As they each make valiant attempts to regain a sense of normalcy, they are confronted with a shocking revelation that challenges the bonds of their relationship.

The story is inspired by the real life experiences of acclaimed filmmaker and writer, Zola Maseko, who also wrote the film's screenplay.

- Sharifa Johka

Biography:

Norman Maake was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1978. He attended AFDA, the African School of Film and Dramatic Arts (now known as The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance). He soon came to understand the power of cinema and its ability to tell deep stories and change people's lives. While in school, he made the short film Home Sweet Home (1999), depicting the corrupted life of South Africa after its liberation, which received critical acclaim and took second place at the 2001 Transparency International Festival. Prior to graduation, Maake directed his first feature film, SOLDIERS OF THE ROCK, which has been screened at many international film festivals and won several awards, including the Mario van Peebles award in 2005. His most recent production is HOMECOMING, depicting the lives of former South African exiles and is loosely based on the real life experiences of the project's writer, Zola Maseko, who is also a noted South African filmmaker.

THE JOURNEY / YATRA
Origin Country: India
Runtime: 120 MIN
Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR/SCR/DP/ED/MUS Goutam Ghosh PROD Vipin Vhora, Agnidev Chatterjee EXEC
PROD Agni Dev Chatterjee CAST Nana Patekar, Rekha Ganeshan, Deepti Naval, Nakul
Vaid

Short Note:

Young aspiring filmmaker Mohan meets renowned novelist Dasrath Joglekar traveling by train to receive a prestigious literary award. They strike up a conversation and before long they are delving into the lives of fictional characters, triggering past memories in Dasrath's real life. This begins a nostalgic journey for Dasrath as he tracks down the friends and people from his past that inspired the characters in his novel—a journey where fact and fiction collide.

Long Note:

On the train to Delhi, renowned novelist Dashrath (Nana Patekar) meets an inquisitive young filmmaker whose probing plunges him back into the world of his latest novel, where truth and fiction are intertwined.

Lajvanti (Rekha), a beautiful courtesan, is the heroine of Dashrath's novel. She captures the heart of Dashrath's hero with her dancing and a voice that beckons him like a siren. However, it soon becomes clear that Dashrath's own soul has been unwound by a mysterious woman in his past. When he disappears from Delhi without a trace, his wife sets out on her own journey into the past to find him.

Goutam Ghose has crafted a beautiful film about a man in search of the one, "...whose soul looks him in the eye." There is life in the eyes of the muse, but to quote Dashrath, "Love creates life... And life is turned ashes in its fire."

- Jacqueline Lyanga

Biography:

One of India's most prominent filmmakers, Goutam Ghose was born in Faridpur, India in 1950, and has directed a wide variety of documentaries, shorts and features, many of which earned national and international awards. His filmography includes: HUNGRY AUTUMN (1974), OUR LAND (1980), THE OCCUPATION (1982), PAAR (1985), LAND OF SAND DUNES (1986), MEETING A MILESTONE (1990), THE YOYAGE BEYOND (1992), BOATMAN OF THE RIVER PADMA (1992), THE KITE (1993), BEYOND THE HIMALAYAS (1996), THE DOLL (1997), DEKHA (2001) and IN THE FOREST... AGAIN (2003), which was in competition at the Montreal World Film Festival.

LIFE AFTER TOMORROW
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 75 MIN
Presentation Format: Beta SP



DIR/PROD Julie Stevens, Gil Cates, Jr. EXEC PROD Motty Reif, Chris Kelly DP Thomas M. Harting ED Steven J. Escobar, Jesco Film Entertainment MUS Megan Cavallari
FEATURING Julie Stevens, Sarah Jessica Parker, Martha Byrne, Allison Smith, Danielle Brisebois.

Short Note:

Reuniting more than 40 former "orphans" and "Annies", this showbiz documentary takes a candid look at the highs and lows of being a child star. With revealing conversations about the impact on their families, friendships and the futures, the former Annie's wax nostalgic about their glory days and life afterwards, including appearances from the creators of the musical, Sarah Jessica Parker and Martha Byrne (AS THE WORLD TURNS), MSNBC anchor Dara Brown and actress Allison Smith.

Long Note:

The title might imply earnest forbearance in a post-nuclear landscape, but instead this insightful, entertaining film offers a glimpse of life behind the curtain - the velvet curtain of Broadway, that is.

The Broadway musical "Annie" was meant to help lift the U.S. out of its mid-1970s doldrums. After a rocky start, the show became a smash hit. Thousands of young girls flocked, not only to see "Annie", but also to audition for parts in it. Dozens of women lucky enough to fill those roles (including Sarah Jessica Parker) reveal the highs and lows of their experiences as child actresses in a cultural phenomenon.

Filmmakers Gil Cates, Jr. and Julie Stevens (a former "Annie" orphan herself) offer a balanced perspective. Some girls used the show as a springboard to greater success; others struggled to accept that their careers peaked at age 10. All of them reveal how "Annie" had a lasting impact on their lives.

- P.E. Thomas

Biography:

Julie Stevens began performing at age nine when she was cast as one of the orphans in the hit Broadway musical, ANNIE. While performing in the show on Broadway, she attended Professional Children's School, with fellow Annie alumni, Sarah Jessica Parker. Julie played Pepper in the final cast when Annie closed on Broadway after 2,377 performances.

Julie went on to earn a BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts but quickly discovered that a degree in Acting did not help pay the rent. She went back to school and received a Masters Degree in Education from Bank Street College. Julie was able to utilize her acting skills and teaching degree as a teaching artist for many well-known theatre companies in New York, including The Roundabout, National Actor's

Theatre and Manhattan Theatre Club. She helped create educational outreach programs, led pre and post-show discussions, and facilitated drama workshops with New York City public school children. Julie also became an on-set Studio Teacher for professional children working in commercials, studio films, and independent films. Her recent credits as a Studio Teacher include THANK YOU FOR SMOKING, (directed by Jason Reitman), FAMILY UNDER SEIGE, INHABITED, and the soap opera THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

In 2000, Julie launched a website, ANNIEORPHANS.COM, hoping to re-connect with her fellow cast members online. The website quickly became the premiere ANNIE site for fans worldwide and has succeeded in creating a "sisterhood" of young women who appeared in the show.

Currently, Julie's singing voice can be heard as Barbie in the animated feature film, THE PRINCESS AND THE PAUPER. Her voice can also be heard in the singing Barbie doll, Erika. Other voiceover characters include My Little Pony and Cheer Bear in CARE BEARS LIVE! Julie is a member of the Director's Guild, Screen Actor's Guild, AFTRA, and Actor's Equity Association. LIFE AFTER TOMORROW marks her directorial debut.

MEMORIES OF TOMORROW / ASHITA NO KIOKU

Origin Country: Japan

Runtime: 122 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Yukihiro Tsutsumi SCR Hakaru Sunamoto EXEC PROD Ken Watanabe CAST Ken Watanabe, Kanako Higuchi, Kenji Sakaguchi, Kazue Fukiishi, Asami Mizukawa, Noritake Kinashi, Mitsuhiro Oikawa, Eriko Watanabe, Teruyuki Kagawa, Hideju Otaki

Short Note:

Experiencing headaches and unable to find the words he is looking for, Saeki (Ken Watanabe) is diagnosed with an early onset of Alzheimer's disease. This emotionally touching story questions what it is to love and share a life with someone who has lost his memory.

Long Note:

Ken Watanabe (THE LAST SAMURAI, MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA) delivers an emotional and heartbreaking performance as Saeki Masayuki, a businessman struck with early Alzheimer's disease in the prime of his life.

Saeki has everything to live for; he is heading the launch of a large ad campaign, his only daughter is months away from marriage and he is about to become a young grandfather. Saeki's drive and personality make him a great executive, but a lousy husband. And yet, it is Saeki's wife, Emiko (Kenji Sakaguchi), who is the most determined to hold on to their life together after his diagnosis.

Yukihiro Tsutsumi's poignant interplay of dream, vision and the surreal deftly reveals the intimate struggle of a man who is losing his ability to distinguish the present from the past, whose only constant is the unconditional love of the family from which he is slowly slipping away.

- Jacqueline Lyanga

Biography:

Born in 1955. Filmmaker, director, visual artist. Starting out in music video clips, has branched out to a wide range of fields including stage and music events (over 20), TV dramas (over 100 episodes), TV commercials (16), and films (9 to date). His film KEIZOKU/EIGA/KEIZOKU: BEAUTIFUL DREAMER recorded a box office hit in Japan.

NO SWEAT
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 54 MIN
Presentation Format: Digibeta



DIR/SCR Amie Williams PROD Amie Williams, Tony Silver DP Amie Williams ED Libby Horne MUS Quetzal Quetzal, Jamie Lawrence

Short Note:

An all-American tale about an all-American garment—the T-shirt—this documentary takes a wild ride into the bowels of the Los Angeles garment industry. Mostly undocumented workers at American Apparel and SweatX are offered better wages, benefits, even a shot at worker-ownership. But what's really behind the label?

Long Note:

Blasting the screen with sure-footed confidence, director Amie Williams has crafted a powerful documentary that shines a light on the popular American Apparel clothing line and the bigger issues that surround the garment industry in America.

An all-American tale about an all-American garment—the T-shirt—this documentary takes a wild ride into the bowels of the Los Angeles garment industry. Mostly undocumented workers at American Apparel and SweatX are offered better wages, benefits, even a shot at worker-ownership. But what's really behind the label?

Amie Williams follows her subjects with a seamless flow of kinetic energy—weaving together day-in-the-life verité footage with interviews, from workers, owners and buyers—creating a vibrant, informative documentary. NO SWEAT is an evocative and riveting mosaic of the big picture that makes up the garment industry.
- Shaz Bennett

Biography

Williams has produced and directed four feature-length documentaries: FALLON, NV: DEADLY OASIS (2003), about a childhood leukemia cluster in a small military town in Nevada; STRIPPED AND TEASED: TALES FROM LAS VEGAS WOMEN (2001); ONE DAY LONGER: THE STORY OF THE FRONTIER STRIKE (2002); and UNCOMMON GROUND: FROM LOS ANGELES TO SOUTH AFRICA (1994). These films have won numerous awards, including the International Documentary Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Media Grant, the SONY/Streisand Award for emerging female filmmakers, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Peace Grant, the A.F.I. Independent Film and Videomakers Award, and a National Arts Council grant to tour Japan and Singapore to show her work. Williams' other work includes numerous public service announcements and political ads. She directed award-winning spots for Cruz Bustamante, the first Latino lieutenant governor of California, and for many candidates running for California state senate and assembly. She graduated from Yale University (B.A., English and Theater, 1985) and UCLA (M.F.A., Film, 1992).

OFFSIDE

Origin Country: Iran

Runtime: 88 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Jafar Panahi SCR Shadmehr Rastin, Jafar Panahi PROD Khiyabaneh Vali Assr., Khiyabane Fereshteh, Khiyabaneh Vali Assr. DP Mahmood Kalari ED Jafar Panahi PROD DES Iraj Raminfar CAST Sima Mobarak Shahi, Safar Samandar, Shayesteh Irani, M. Kheyrabadi, Ida Sadeghi

Short Note:

Six Iranian girls disguise themselves as boys to enter Tehran's Azadi Stadium and watch the 2006 World Cup Asian zone qualifier between Iran and Bahrain. However, their presence is discovered and they are arrested one by one.

Long Note:

Modern life and cultural prohibitions bump up against each other in this gentle comedy. Eschewing any rigid narrative structure, the film is a free-flowing, whimsical look at women (and men) in 21st century Iran.

Iran's World Cup-qualifying soccer match looms as a frantic father searches for his daughter. Although Iranian law declares soccer attendance "male only," he fears she may try to sneak into Tehran stadium. He is right. She, and a half-dozen other young women, disguised as boys in baggy clothes and baseball caps, are caught and held in an enclosed area. As the crowd roars nearby, the young women match wits with their reluctant soldier captors.

Director Jafar Panahi avoids overt political statements, relying simply on characters to explore larger issues. In one supremely ironic moment, a soldier asks the captive women why they are making his life so difficult. This droll sensibility infuses OFFSIDE.

- P.E. Thomas

Biography:

The cinema of Jafar Panahi is often described as Iranian neo-realism. Regardless of how one chooses to categorize his powerful work, the unprecedented humanitarianism of Panahi's films cannot be denied. Panahi's cinema is urban, contemporary and rich with the details of human existence. Panahi's THE CIRCLE won the Golden Lion at the 2000 Venice Film Festival. The unsettling drama about the social dilemma of several modern Iranian women was named FIPRESCI's «Film of the Year» and appeared on Top 10 lists of critics worldwide. Panahi debuted with 1995's THE WHITE BALLOON, Camera d'Or winner at the Cannes Festival. The story of a young girl's adventures as she seeks to buy a lucky goldfish for New Year, THE WHITE BALLOON marked the emergence of a new cinema talent. Panahi's 1997 film, THE MIRROR, received the Locarno Festival's Golden Leopard, and confirmed the young director's promise. CRIMSON GOLD was selected in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2003 where it won the Jury Prize. It went on to win a number of best film awards and opened to excellent critical response.

THE ROAD / FANGXIANG ZHI LU

Origin Country: China

Runtime: 114 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Zhang Jiarui SCR Zhang Jiarui, Yuan Daju PROD Ling Li DP Lin Liangzhong ED Zhou Ying PROD DES Han Chunlin MUS Umabayashi Shigairu CAST Zhang Jingchu, Fan Wei, Nie Yuan

Short Note:

Young mainland actress Zhang Jingchu (PEACOCK, SEVEN SWORDS) looks set to become the next Zhang Ziyi with her amazing performance in THE ROAD, an epic tale of a provincial bus driver and his assistant spread across 40 years of recent Chinese history.

Long Note:

THE ROAD is a sweeping drama that covers five decades in the life of Li Chunfen (Zhang Jingchu), a young ticket girl in rural Communist China, whose destiny turns on the dictates of her government and the route of the Xiangyang bus.

As a young woman, Chunfen is loyal but naïve. She never once doubts that the driver of the bus, her boss, Master Cui (Fan Wei) and the party leadership have her best interests in mind. It is not until she falls deeply in love, that she is exposed to the consequences and sacrifices of life in Communist China. Even then, Chunfen's loyalty to her country is unfaltering.

Zhang Jingchu convincingly handles the transition from naïveté to maturity, delivering a standout portrayal of a woman whose strength of spirit is as unfaltering as her loyalty, and who despite her history, builds a new life for herself in 21st century China.

- Jacqueline Lyanga

Biography:

Zhang Jiarui was born in Chengdu, China in 1958. He has directed three films including HUA YAO XIN NIANG, RUOMA DE SHI GI SUI and he wrote and directed THE ROAD.

SHAME

Origin Country: Pakistan/USA

Runtime: 110 MIN

Presentation Format: Digi Beta



DIR Mohammed Naqvi PROD Mohammed Naqvi, Jill Schneider DP Ahmed Bashir ED Niharika Desai MUS Janek Duszynski FEATURING Mukhtaran Mai

Short Note:

In 2002, following the tribal custom of “honor for honor,” a young woman, Mukhtar Mai, was gang-raped and then publicly paraded for a crime her younger brother committed. Mai set out to seek justice. SHAME is her transformative journey from a simple peasant woman into a world human rights icon—who gave the village that shamed her two schools and a Women's Crisis Center.

Long Note:

Every day, horrific world events evade justice. SHAME is the story of a courageous woman who fought back. During the summer of 2002, in a remote village of Pakistan, 33-year-old Mukhtaran Mai's life changed when the village's tribal council sanctioned a punishment against her for a crime allegedly committed by her younger brother. Following the tribal custom of “honor for honor,” Mai was gang-raped and then publicly paraded around as an example.

Her family cowered in shame. The village shunned her. Normally the only recourse for such a woman would be suicide. Instead, Mai set out to seek justice and shook the very core of Pakistan's decaying judicial system. In her quest, she endured public scrutiny and exposure to the alien world outside her village, losing friends, family and her life, as she knew it.

Throughout this incredible journey, Mai maintains an astonishing resilience and belief in herself. Journalists may visit less frequently, but her work—and the work of women like her – is not yet over. There is still plenty of shame to be faced and conquered.

- Thom Powers

Biography:

Mohammed Naqvi was born in Montreal and grew up in Canada, the United States and Pakistan. His short films include Time (99), Night (99) and Hide (04). He also directed the documentary Terror's Children (03). Shame (06) is his first feature-length documentary.

SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Origin Country: UK

Runtime: 100 MIN

Presentation Format: HD CAM



DIR Ngozi Onwurah SCR Sharon Foster PROD Anne Pivcevic EXEC PROD David Thompson, Hilary Salmon CO PROD Yvonne Isimeme Ibazebo DP David Katznelson ED Liz Webber PROD DES James Merifield MUS Julian Nott CAST David Oyelowo, Charles Mnene, Nikki Amuka-Bird

Short Note:

A highly provocative comedy about a young black man's feelings on what it's like to be a person of color. Shocking, disturbing and funny, this film throws a spotlight on racial attitudes in our world in a way that is anything but politically correct. From award winning young black writer Sharon Foster and Director Ngozi Onwurah, SHOOT THE MESSENGER is a startling and comic look at an extremely controversial subject.

Long Note:

SHOOT THE MESSENGER is a bold, funny, and controversial film directed by the politically explosive Nigerian-Brit filmmaker, Ngozi Onwurah. The film's opening line "...everything bad that has ever happened to me has involved a Black person," rouses and prepares you for a critically insightful and intellectually charged confrontation of ideological and cultural perspectives that is candidly rendered in this remarkably thought-provoking film.

The story chronicles an idealistic Black professional who decides to become a teacher in order to enhance the lives of young Black students. In a twist of irony, the well-intentioned professor finds himself pitted against the students he initially pledged to help and soon becomes a target of the Black community. Feeling betrayed, the young teacher directs his feelings of resentment and rejection against all Black people and adopts the belief that Black people are essentially the root of all evil.

This laugh-out-loud comedy brilliantly satirizes conceptions of racial identity and cultural norms. Cleverly written, with a spectacular performance from the film's leading actor, SHOOT THE MESSENGER is a refreshing contribution to an African film aesthetic that doesn't take itself too seriously.

- Sharifa Johka

Biography

Ngozi moved from Nigeria to Britain with her family at the age of nine after surviving the Nigerian civil war. A passion for cinema led her to St Martins School of Art, where she graduated with a First Class Honors Degree in Fine Arts, Film & Video. Her graduation film COFFEE COLOURED CHILDREN, kick-started her career when it won first prize in the

BBC Showreel competition. She then completed postgraduate studies in Drama Direction at the National film & Television School.

Ngozi has been widely acknowledged as one of the most talented directors in Britain. More success and awards followed with further dramas and documentaries for a number of British and international broadcasters including SOUTH OF THE BORDER, a ground breaking drama series for the BBC. She was awarded the prestigious honor of a special retrospective screenings at the New York Film Festival for her films, THE BODY BEAUTIFUL (Channel 4/BFI), MONDAYS GIRLS (BBC) and AND STILL I RISE (BBC). Her first feature film, WELCOME II THE TERRORDOME, won first prize at the Birmingham International Film Festival & the Cologne Film Festival as well as the audience prize at the Verona Film Festival. Ngozi has directed episodes of HEARTBEAT for Yorkshire Television, the top-rated British drama series with an audience of over 18 million. BEHIND THE MASK (BBC/M-Net, Africa), a drama-documentary made in collaboration with Broker Prize winner Ben Okri has been a great success in international television markets. I BRING YOU FRANKINCENSE (BBC) was premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and received awards at several international film festivals. HANGTIME (M-Net/Wellspring) had a theatrical release in America as part of MAMA AFRICA. SHOOT THE MESSENGER (BBC Films) is her first project following a 4-year 'baby making' break.

STEPHANIE DALEY
Origin Country: USA
Runtime: 92 MIN
Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR/SCR Hilary Brougher PROD Jen Roskind, Samara Koffler, Lynette Howell, Sean Costello EXEC PROD Doug Dey, Tilda Swinton DP David Morrison ED Keith Reamer MUS David Mansfield CAST Tilda Swinton, Amber Tamblyn, Timothy Hutton, Denis O'Hare, Melissa Leo, Jim Gaffigan

Short Note:

When 16-year-old Stephanie Daley (Amber Tamblyn) is accused of murdering her newborn, she claims she never knew she was pregnant and that the child was stillborn. A forensic psychologist, Lydie Crane (Tilda Swinton), is hired to determine the truth behind Stephanie's state of denial.

Long Note:

Pregnant forensic psychologist Lydie Crane (Tilda Swinton) is hired to learn the truth behind the case of 16-year-old Stephanie Daley (Amber Tamblyn), who is accused of concealing her pregnancy and murdering her infant.

An infant is found dead in the trashcan of a Vermont ski lodge. Outside, 16-year-old Stephanie Daley collapses in the snow. When the unassuming teenager is accused of concealing her pregnancy and murdering her newborn, forensic psychologist Lydie Crane conducts a series of interviews to determine the truth behind Stephanie's state of denial.

One of the most unique movie experiences of the year, STEPHANIE DALEY will not soon be forgotten.

- Lane Kneedler

Biography:

Hilary Brougher, who viewed Fellini films and other European films from age four, began shooting her Super-8 movies at age 14. She continued with short films in high school, which brought her a full scholarship to New York City's School of Visual Arts. Her first feature film was THE STICKY FINGERS OF TIME and her second film STEPHANIE DALEY won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting award at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

TO PLAY AND TO FIGHT / TOCAR Y LUCCHAR

Origin Country: Venezuela

Runtime: 70 MIN

Presentation Format: Digibeta



DIR Alberto Arvelo SCR Carlos Díaz, Alberto Arvelo PROD Nestor L. Lopez- Duran, Pedro Mezquita, Gerardo Montilla EXEC PROD Igor lanz DP Cezary Jaworski, John Márquez ED Nascuy Linares, Juan Carlos López-Duran

Short Note:

Once a modest plan to expose rural children to the wonders of music, the Venezuelan Youth Orchestra System has become one of the most remarkable social experiments in Venezuela, linking musicians in many of the country's towns and villages. Among the featured guests are Placido Domingo, Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Eduardo Mata.

Long Note:

TO PLAY AND TO FIGHT is a transcendent journey that showcases the power of music and its ability to promote positive social change. In a place of relative poverty, thousands of children have overcome their hardship through music.

As music programs for youth across the United States are gradually disappearing, quite the opposite is happening in Venezuela. TO PLAY AND TO FIGHT follows the story of the Venezuelan Youth Orchestra System, a once modest program that teaches youths in the towns and villages across Venezuela classical music and how to play in an orchestra. It is a nationwide phenomenon that has changed the fabric of Venezuelan society and has influenced similar programs in other South American countries.

With so many social programs that do little more than offer a handout, the inspiring tale of the Venezuelan Youth Orchestra System offers an alternative vision and in the process creates something truly beautiful.

- Darren Hinton

Biography:

Born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1966, Alberto Arvelo graduated in art history and began his filmmaking career at the age of 17 with an experimental feature, SONG OF THE MOUNTAIN (1983), which he followed two years later with CANDLES IN THE MIST. Others films: ONE LIFE AND TWO TRAILS (1997, presented at the Montreal World Film Festival), LA HOZ Y EL FORASTERO (1998), A HOUSE WITH A VIEW OF THE SEA (2000, also shown at the MWFF), HABANA, HABANA (2004).

The Venezuelan Youth Orchestra System is a network of orchestras linking musicians in many of the country's towns and villages. Once a modest plan to expose rural children to the wonders of music, the program has become one of the most remarkable social experiments in Venezuela. This documentary recounts the inspirational stories of world-class musicians trained by the Venezuelan system, including the Berlin Philharmonic's youngest player Edicson Ruiz and renowned conductor Gustavo Dudamel. Among the interviewees featured in the film are Placido Domingo, Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Eduardo Mata.

THE YACoubIAN BUILDING / OMARET YACoubIAN

Origin Country: Egypt

Runtime: 172 MIN

Presentation Format: 35 MM



DIR Marwan Hamed SCR Waheed Hamed NOVEL Alaa Al Aswani PROD Sameh Gobran, Adel Adib DP Sameh Selim ED Khaled Marei PROD DES Fawzy Awamry CAST Adel Imam, Nour El Sherif, Hend Sabry, Yousra, Isaad Younis, Hind Sabry, Somaya El Khashab, Ahmed Rateb

Short Note:

The famous Yacoubian Building was erected in downtown Cairo in 1934 to house the city's upper crust. In its heyday it housed wealthy pashas, government ministers and foreign diplomats. After the military-backed coup in 1952, rich foreigners fled the country abandoning the once stately building. Today the tenants of its spacious apartments are a bit tattered and its rooftop laundry rooms are converted into homes for the poor.

Long Note:

Based on the Egyptian best-selling novel, THE YACoubIAN BUILDING was adapted to the big screen amidst a whirlwind of controversy due to its depiction of taboo subjects such as corruption, homosexuality, religious hypocrisy and Islamic extremism.

Set in the actual building that exists in Cairo, the residents of this 10-story structure represent the different layers of modern Egyptian society, from the old guard to the new. There is the former aristocrat who longs for the old days, the ambitious businessman who strives to be a politician, the successful magazine editor who is in the proverbial closet, the young student who is lured down a dangerous path, and the young woman who struggles to keep her family above the poverty line, which in Egypt is very low.

First time filmmaker Marwan Hamed remarkably transforms this ambitious dramatic story into a compassionate film that unveils the underbelly of traditional society as it copes with the mire of modernization. Egypt's official Oscar® submission.

- Sharifa Johka

Biography:

Born in 1977, Marwan Hamed graduated from film school in 1999 and apprenticed as assistant director to several veteran Egyptian filmmakers -- Sherif Arafa, Samir Seif, Khairy Beshara, etc. -- before establishing his own reputation directing commercials. In 2001 he directed his first big screen film, a short drama, Lily, which won prizes at Carthage and other festivals. He has also directed two short documentaries as well as several fiction shorts. THE YACoubIAN BUILDING marks his debut in features.