

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

UFOs of Cinema Courtesy of the 57th San Francisco International Film Festival

Sophia Stein · Wednesday, April 23rd, 2014

The San Francisco International Film Festival makes room for “unidentified flying objects of cinema,” boasts gifted Director of Programming, **Rachel Rosen**. Selections are determined independent of any prescriptive quotas. Her seasoned staff of professional curators aim to be “as inclusive as possible” in culling cinematic treasures from the more than 4,000 submissions they receive from around the world.

Over the next 15 days, the **57th San Francisco International Film Festival**, which opens this evening, will screen 74 narrative features, 29 documentary features, in 40 languages from 56 countries — including *All About the Feathers* from Costa Rica (a festival first from that country!) and *Of Horses and Men*, a unique and striking cinematic experience from Iceland.



“The Two Faces of January,” the directorial debut by noted screenwriter Hossein Amini (The Wings of the Dove, Drive) opens the 57th San Francisco International Film Festival this evening, April 24, at 7:00 p.m. at the Castro Theatre. The screening will be followed by a kick-off party with live entertainment, dancing and drinks at ‘Public Works’ in the Mission district.

Over the past several years, the **San Francisco Film Society** which hosts the Festival, has earned a reputation for funding the development of innovative, award-winning independent feature films. (*Fruitvale Station*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, and *Cutie and the Boxer* are just a few of their celebrated beneficiaries.) Seven films that were supported with **Filmmaker360** grants and services are slated to screen during SFIFF-57. These include: *Hellion*, *The Last Season*, *Little Accidents*, *Manos Sucias*, *Obvious Child*, *The Overnighters*, and *Ping Pong Summer*. On Wednesday, May 7, an additional \$35,000 in prize money will be bestowed to filmmakers during the Golden Gate Awards Ceremony.

For those who lament having missed out on Sundance Film Festival 2014, the San Francisco International Film Festival is bringing no less than 25 of Sundance’s most recent greatest hits to the City by the Bay, including two personal favorites: Richard Linklater’s seamless and masterful *Boyhood* and the painfully funny *Skeleton Twins*, featuring Kristin Wiig and Bill Hader. Among the Sundance Award-winning narrative features included in the SFIFF-57 line-

up: *Difret*, *Kumiko – the Treasure Hunter*, *I Origins*, and *Dear White People*. Sundance Award-winning documentaries that will screen during the festival include *Return to Homs*, *The Overnighters*, *20,000 Days on Earth*, and *We Come as Friends*. I am particularly looking forward to seeing three films that received great word of mouth in Park City that I regret having missed during my sojourn in the high-desert mountain town — *Calvary*, *Happiness*, and *Frank*.



“Palo Alto,” the impressive directorial debut from Gia Coppola (grand-daughter to Francis Ford Coppola), will premiere as the Centerpiece Film on Saturday, May 3 at 7:30 pm at Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, followed by a party at Roe.



“Palo Alto” features a break-out performance from Jack Kilmer, son of Val Kilmer. The teen-drama is adapted from James Franco’s book of short stories.

Film aficionados and students of cinema alike will appreciate the “conversation” events consisting of in-depth, moderated discussions with honorees of the 57th San Francisco International Film Festival including **Richard Linklater** (Founder’s Directing Award), **Stephen Gaghan** (Kanbar Screenwriting Award), **Jeremy Irons** (Peter J. Owens Award for Acting), **John Lasseter** of Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios (George Gund III Craft of Cinema Award), film historian **David Thomson** (Mel Novikoff Award), and pioneering filmmaker and installation artist **Isaac Julien** (Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award). Younger students, kids ages 10-16, can acquire hands-on filmmaking experience, registering to participate in “Painting with Pixar: A Workshop for Kids,” to take place on Sunday, May 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the Walt Disney Family Museum.

“An extraordinary showcase of cinematic discovery and innovation in one of the country’s most beautiful cities” — this is how the San Francisco International Film Festival bills itself. It is well-deserved description for the nation’s oldest continually operating festival of its kind. The San Francisco International Film Festival is so accessible, welcoming, and inspiring. It is in many ways unparalleled throughout the world. 2014 is going to be a great year — with Executive Director **Noah Cowan** fresh from TIFF and newly installed at the SFIFF helm. You will not want to miss it!



“Supermensch: The Legend of Shep Gordon,” the outrageous and amusing documentary so lovingly directed by Mike Myers in tribute to his manager. Photo courtesy of San Francisco Film Society.

Some useful links for the 57th San Francisco International Film Festival which will run from April 24 – May 8, 2014:

[Ticket Information](#)

[Film Guide](#)

[Travel & Dining](#)

[SFFS-Supported Films at SFIFF57](#)

[Filmmaker 360 – Deadlines at a Glance](#)

Top Image: Viggo Mortensen, Oscar Isaac, and Kirsten Dunst star in Hossein Amini's thriller, "The Two Faces of January," playing at the 57th San Francisco International Film Festival.

All photos courtesy of the San Francisco Film Society.

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