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LOCAL ACTION

Films move to the fore on First Night

The Boston Globe

By Leslie Brokaw By Leslie Brokaw, Globe Correspondent | December 24, 2006

Organizers of next weekend's First Night celebration have gone all out with film programming this year, scheduling more than 50 short- and feature-length films for the city-wide party next Sunday. Even if you've got other plans for the evening, the programs start at 1 p.m. and present a wonderful selection of the year's local and international highlights.

Teen filmmakers from Raw Art Works, an arts organization in downtown Lynn (its entry space features a sign that says "No mistakes -- just art") help get the day started. Their films will play from 2 to 6 p.m. at Cloud Place, 647 Boylston St. They'll also be inviting visitors to participate in the creation of a "public poem."

Down the block at the Hynes Convention Center, the Massachusetts College of Art will present a 28-minute loop of shorts from 1 to 6 p.m. Works are by students from MassArt's animation film program, including **Rosangel Gavidia, Jesse Aronson, Lindsay Small, Lee Luker, Tom Chorlton, Sean Carroll, Beth Murphy, Sarah Gay, Jolie Ruelle, Katherine Waddell, and Dante Finn.**

At the Boston Public Library's Rabb Hall (also on Boylston Street), the band Cul de Sac will provide live accompaniment to two classic short films: **Raymond Briggs's** story "The Snowman," animated by Dianne Jackson, and "The Mascot," by Ladislav Starewicz. Screenings begin at 7:30 and again at 8:45 p.m.

Three programs of short films will play throughout the day and into the evening: a selection of classic and new Japanese anime (Hynes Convention Center, on and off between 1 p.m. and 10:45 p.m.); new international short films selected by Museum of Fine Arts film curator **Bo Smith** (the MFA, on and off between noon and 4:30 p.m.); and "Top of the Rox," highlights from this year's Roxbury Film Festival, including **Byron Hurt's** "Beyond Beats and Rhymes" on "manhood and hip-hop culture" (7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Hynes).

The day's centerpiece selection of feature films, called the First Night Film Festival, runs from 1 until 11 p.m. Curated by **Connie White** of Balcony Booking, the program starts with a Boston-centric film -- **Rebecca Dreyfus's** "Stolen," about the 1990 heist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum -- and then is devoted to Boston-area premieres: a documentary about **Ralph Nader** called "An Unreasonable Man"; a new Australian tribal film "Ten Canoes"; "Air Guitar Nation," which was the Audience Award Winner at the 2006 South by Southwest Film Festival; "Venus," starring **Peter O'Toole** and written by **Hanif Kureishi**; and "The Curse of the Golden Flower," by director **Zhang Yimou** and starring **Chow Yun-Fat**. All films play at the Hynes.

A \$15 First Night button buys entry to the entire day of programs at all venues. Festival organizers note that "daytime screenings are generally kid-appropriate, while evening screenings may not be." The 30-page program is available online as a pdf at firstnight.org.

MORE AWARDS FOR "FOUR EYED MONSTERS" AND "HALF NELSON": A few weeks ago, we reported here that two films by Boston-area natives had picked up nominations from the Spirit Awards program. Since then, the Boston Society of Film Critics has honored "Half Nelson": director **Ryan Fleck** won the new filmmaker award, **Shareeka Epps** was named best supporting actress, and **Ryan Gosling** was runner-up in the best actor category.

In addition, "Four Eyed Monsters" co-director and performer **Arin Crumley** reports that he and partner **Susan Buice** have won the indieWIRE Undiscovered Gems Audience Award, which has a \$100,000 prize. The film was in competition against seven other features, including **Andrew Bujalski's** "Mutual Appreciation," the **Duplass Brothers' "The Puffy Chair,"** and **Jem Cohen's "Chain."**

Crumley says he and Buice will put half the money toward their credit-card debt and half to a multicity theatrical release, with Boston on their hit list after New York. (Crumley also notes that although we said two

weeks ago that both he and Buice are University of Massachusetts grads, only Susan went to school there. "I actually didn't go to college at all," he says by e-mail.)

2007 SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: Close out this year by figuring out the best way to make a splash next year: The fifth annual Women in Film and Video / New England screenwriting competition is now seeking entries. Scripts will be judged by **Kate Boutilier**, who wrote the Rugrats movies and "The Wild Thornberries," and the grand-prize winner will have his or her work reviewed by a literary agent and receive Final Draft software and a six-month online script placement at lnktip.com. Men and women are invited to submit ; regular deadline is Jan. 15, final deadline is Feb. 1. **Jami Brandli**, literary manager for the local Alarm Clock Theatre and a screenwriting teacher at Northeastern University, Grub Street, Emmanuel College, and Emerson College, is chair of the competition. Full details are online at wifvne.org, or call 781-788-6607.

SCREENING OF NOTE: The Brattle Theatre has extended its run of David Lynch's "Inland Empire" through next Sunday (617-876-6837 and brattlefilm.org). . . .New York's Metropolitan Opera is bringing its first-ever live event to movie theaters in high-definition. Mozart's "The Magic Flute" is the first in a series of six performances to be broadcast in theaters. It takes place Saturday at 1:30 p.m. In the Boston area, the show at the AMC Framingham 16 is sold out, but check the Swansea Stadium 12 and Marlborough's Solomon Pond Mall 15 cinemas for availability. The next event is Jan. 6, with Bellini's "I Puritani." Location information, listings of future shows, and trailers are all online at metoperafamily.org/hdlive.

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