

PICTURE TALK

SAN FRANCISCO FILM SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2007 V17 N6

SF INTL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

NEW ITALIAN CINEMA

PARANOID PARK

ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN



Komaneko: The Curious Cat

Membership Program Sponsor

WELLS
FARGO

With the holiday season just around the bend (we can't believe it either), won't you consider giving the gift of a Film Society membership? After all, for just \$60, you can give someone access to the best films the Bay Area has to offer. Year-round Film Society members get discounts and advance ticket sales to next spring's 51st SF International Film Festival, as well as to next year's SF International Animation Festival, New Italian Cinema and select Film Society events throughout the year, like the very special screening of Gus Van Sant's **Paranoid Park** December 8. Year-round members also receive discounts to local theaters, discounts to DVD clubs, passes to video stores and invitations to free screenings. To renew your membership or to give the gift of membership, visit www.sffs.org or call 415-561-5020. Email members@sffs.org with any questions.

Join us now

For information visit www.sffs.org

December 8 Film Society Benefit Screening

November 11-18 New Italian Cinema

November 8-11 Second San Francisco International Animation Festival

Upcoming Events

SAN FRANCISCO FILM SOCIETY™

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THE PRESIDIO
SAN FRANCISCO CA
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At the October 1 kickoff reception for the Annual Fund Campaign: **1)** SFFS Executive Director Graham Leggat **2)** SFMOMA Curator of Education and Public Programs Dominic Wilsdon, Consul Nadia Scipio del Campo and Senior Public Affairs Officer Andrew Thompson of the Canadian Consulate, SFFS Director of Programming Linda Blackaby **3)** Sundance Cinemas Vice President of Marketing Nancy Gribler; SFFS Director, Corporate Sponsorship Suzanne McCloskey **4)** Karen Diefenbach, SFFS Board Chair George Gund III **5)** Luminary member Steve Warren, SFFS Board President Melanie Blum **6)** SFFS board members Pat McBaine and Celeste Meier; Susie McBaine. Photos by Tommy Lau.

Annual Fund Campaign 2007-08 Kicks Off

By Kim Bender

The Film Society kicked off its 2007-08 Annual Fund Campaign October 1, and this year we hope to raise more money than in any year in the past. The reason? We are doing more this year than in any year in the past. Between the SF International Film Festival, the SF International Animation Festival, New Italian Cinema, our expanding Education Program for middle and high school students, the increasingly popular SF360 Film+Club and more, we are very busy working to provide the highest quality film programming to our vast and diverse audiences—over 100 days of programs beyond the SF International Film Festival and even more to come in 2008.

As we mentioned in the Annual Fund Campaign mailing sent to all members of the SFFS community, we rely upon gifts from individuals such as the readers of **Picture Talk** to meet our annual budget. Memberships, tickets, sponsorships and grant revenues cover only a portion of the cost of presenting our year-round programming. The Annual Fund ensures that SFFS continues to be known for top-notch films and guest filmmakers from around the world, our wonderful education programs, our strong support for the Bay Area film and media community and our exploration of new digital technologies.

Join us today by sending in

a gift of \$100 or more to help us continue to grow and innovate. If you are reading **Picture Talk**, you are passionate about cinema and understand the power of the moving image to change hearts and minds.

Make SFFS one of your top giving priorities this year, and be part of San Francisco's compassionate, open-minded, inventive film culture.

Donate online now at www.sffs.org.

For further information, contact:

Kim Bender
Director, Foundations & Major Gifts
kbender@sffs.org
415-561-5049

SF360

New Experiences from America's Film and Media Frontier

SF360 Film+Club: Bringing movies out of the theater and into the club

SF360 Live: Provocative discussions about experiences surrounding filmmaking

SF360 Movie Night: One City, One Night, One Film

SF360.org: Read about the Bay Area film and media scene

SF360 Movie Scene: Monthly on Comcast 11

For more information visit SF360.org or email info@sf360.org

SFFS Benefit Screening of Van Sant Film

On December 8 join us for a benefit screening of Gus Van Sant's new film, **Paranoid Park**, an understated study of the inner lives of youth in the modern world, which won the 60th Anniversary Award at the Cannes Film Festival this year. The screening will be complemented by a personal appearance by author Andrew Bailey signing copies of his new book, **Cinema Now**, a Taschen release that examines the work and key themes of 60 filmmakers working around the world today, from the cream of the crop of young Hollywood to the new wave of Asian mavericks to burgeoning auteurs from Europe and Latin America. Books will be available for sale and signing both prior to and following the screening. Full details will be available November 1 at www.sffs.org. Special thanks to IFC Films.

Screening

7:00 pm Paranoid Park (90min)

Premier Theater
Letterman Digital Arts Center
The Presidio

Tickets

November 1–5: SFFS year-round members only

November 6–December 7: General public

Online www.sffs.org

Phone 925-866-9559, Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–4:00 pm

Fax 925-866-9597, Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–4:00 pm

SF360 Upcoming Activities

by Ben Friedland

SF360 Film+Club

Have you been to a Film+Club yet? Each month the Film Society takes movies out of the theater and puts them in a club, in this case, Mezzanine. Last month, we showed a double feature of skateboarding documentaries. What's next? Well, we can't tell you just yet, but can tell you when, so save the dates:

November 28

December 19

January 25

SF360.org/SF360 Movie Scene

Are you getting the latest Bay Area independent film and film festival news? If not, check SF360.org each day for an in-depth feature or examination of local film news, film people, film companies, film everything. Or you can tune in to Comcast-SF Channel 11 for SF360 Movie Scene, the only show devoted entirely to the Bay Area's film scene. New episodes air the first Monday of each month. Check your local listings for showtimes.

SFIFF51 Final Entry Deadline November 30

There is still time to enter your documentary, short, animation experimental, youth-produced or TV work or narrative feature in the 51st San Francisco International Film Festival. See www.sffs.org for details and to enter online.



Animation Festival Presents a Wide Array of Forms and Styles

By Sean Uyehara

When SFFS presented the inaugural Animation Festival last year, the foremost desire was to present animation as a multifaceted artistic practice. In thinking about animation and its wide-ranging forms—from the latest Pixar blockbuster and TV's **The Family Guy** to motion graphics in commercials and blinking banner ads—we noticed that in a way we are immersed in animation. That Festival presented a chance for us not only to celebrate the kinds of work that inspire and entertain us, but also to take a step back and reinvest animated work with a renewed sense of wonder and engagement.

After opening last year with **The Host**, a hybrid live-action and visual effects film, and seeing the overwhelmingly positive response to this not-strictly-animated film, we could see that we were on the right track. So, this year we again attempt to present animation in an array of forms and styles. We have doubled the number of programs and have branched out to include new kinds of work.

We open SFI AF with **The Pixar Story**, a live-action documentary about the synergy behind the meteoric rise of the Emeryville-based company.

However, one of the themes that has cropped up in this year's program is the use of animation in

nonfiction. Sprinkled into the shorts programs, we present a series of different animated approaches to nonfiction. In the shorts program **Top Drawers** Signe Baumann relates her howlingly funny reminiscences of sexual anxiety in **Teat Beat of Sex**, and Song E. Kim muses loosely on mealtime conversation in **Dinner Table**. In these films, animation provides an intensely powerful, sometimes exceedingly beautiful, medium for describing a subjective experience of reality.

In the same program, Josh Raskin uses audio from a 14-year-old Beatles fan whose recorded interview with John Lennon serves as the soundtrack for morphing pen sketches and digital animations in **I Met the Walrus**, recalling the exuberance of youth in a way that no live-action documentary could ever capture.

And stretching the idea even further, **Magnetic Movie** visualizes concepts elaborated by NASA scientists at UC Berkeley as they speak about magnetic forces.

Another area explored in much greater detail this year is the overlap between animation and graphic design. The compilation of music videos in **Play It by Eye** comprises a cross section of the best graphic, commercial work out there today. Seeing these videos play out on the big screen will be a

truly extraordinary experience.

Our free panel at the Apple Store, **Animating the Internet**, will feature panelists from Goodby, Silverstein & Associates, Postfuturism, the Webby Awards and WILDBRAIN. All of these companies are leaders in pointing the way to the best current and future methods for using animation in all of its incarnations.

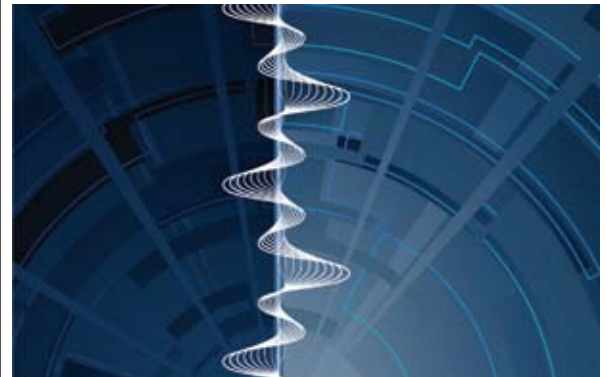
Still, the bulk of the program is made up of what you would hope to encounter at an animation festival: the best international works that we could find. We present a wonderfully endearing, child-friendly feature in **Komaneko: The Curious Cat**, an adults-only feature in **Film Noir** and the best fiction and nonfiction short work of the past year.

And, as audiences have come to expect from Film Society programs, we will have filmmakers and discussions at many of the programs. Among guests who have confirmed their attendance at the Festival are Leslie Iwerks (**The Pixar Story**); Serge Penezic, aka D. Jud Jones (**Film Noir**); Claude Cloutier (**Sleeping Betty**); Chris Lavis and Maciek Szczerbowski (**Madame Tutli-Putli**); Kelly Sears (**The Drift**); Song E. Kim (**Dinner Table**); and Betsy de Fries and Jerry van de Beek (**Today**).

Sean Uyehara is a Film Society Programming Associate. You may reach him at suyehara@sffs.org.

UPPER LEFT This year's program ranges from the adults-only **Film Noir** to the children's feature, **Komaneko: The Curious Cat** (cover panel).

ABOVE Among filmmakers who have confirmed their attendance at the Festival are (clockwise, from top left) Chris Lavis and Maciek Szczerbowski (**Madame Tutli-Putli**); Kelly Sears (**The Drift**); Song E. Kim (**Dinner Table**); Jerry van de Beek and Betsy de Fries (**Today**).



SF INTL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

From Thursday, November 8 to Sunday, November, 11, the SF International Animation Festival hits Landmark's Embarcadero Center Cinemas. View the full program and schedule at www.sffs.org.

Tickets

Online www.sffs.org

Phone 925-866-9559, Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–4:00 pm

Fax 925-866-9597, Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–4:00 pm

Presenting Sponsor





Francesca Comencini



Francesca Archibugi

New Italian Cinema Series Reflects Italy Today

By Rod Armstrong

An invigorating crop of new work will be on view when the San Francisco Film Society presents the 11th annual New Italian Cinema series, November 11–18 at the Embarcadero Center Cinemas. This year's lineup is bookended by two diverse films from female directors.

On Opening Night, Francesca Comencini will present her vision of Milan as the capital of a morally bankrupt nation in **Our Country**, starring Valeria Golino. It doesn't get more contemporary Italian than this film, which, despite a favorable critical reception, caused audible resentment among some at its world premiere at the Rome Film Festival a year ago. The discomfort was prompted, suggested Paolo Mereghetti, the film critic for the Milan daily **Corriere della Sera**, by "the perplexity of seeing a film that's out of place in the Italian panorama, far from the facile, flowery and allegorical folklore that seems to be the only language accepted in the cinema and in television, where everything is excessively spelled out, excessively shown off, excessively forced."

"After a diet of lighthearted comedies poking fun at the national character," wrote Elisabetta Povoledo in the **New York Times**, "Italians are not used to having their dark side laid bare."

This new film is only the latest

effort keeping the director in the headlines. Comencini comes from a prominent show business family which includes her father Luigi, a veteran director who passed away earlier this year, and sister Cristina, who directed the powerful **Don't Tell**, a 2005 nominee for the Best Foreign Film Oscar.

Comencini burst on the scene in the early 1980s. Barely into her 20s, Comencini quit school, moved to France, got married (to producer/actor Daniel Toscani de Plantier) and directed her first feature, **Pianoforte**, a story of drug addiction, which won the coveted De Sica prize at the Venice Film Festival.

Two decades and ten films later, **Our Country** presents a variety of interconnecting stories involving financial shenanigans, illegal adoptions and wrongheaded choices made for material gains. Though money—the lack of it, the need for more—is central, the theme of childlessness also plays a major part. It's a bold and complex film which powerfully sets the stage for our presentation of two prior films from the same director.

From 2004, **I Like to Work (Mobbing)** offers an equally dire but more intimate look at Italian society in crisis. It tells the story of a woman with a difficult home life whose job becomes increasingly

difficult when her coworkers gang up on her. Presenting a form of office harassment all too common in Italy, Comencini offers a vital social document told in powerful narrative form.

Her 2002 film **My Father's Words** focuses more on interpersonal relationships than societal ills in its story of a spoiled young man torn between two sisters. Using Italo Svevo's popular novel **Zeno's Conscience** as a starting point, Comencini makes indelible points about romantic attachments and family ties.

After this mini-retrospective, New Italian Cinema presents seven features and shorts by emerging directors who are all working confidently in a variety of genres to tell their stories. **Any Reason Not to Marry** delightfully employs the tropes of romantic comedies to satirize politics, religion and marriage. **The Ball** works within a coming-of-age framework to tell the story of a single parent balancing career and motherhood. With **Italian Dream**, director Sandro Baldoni manages a nifty balance of mystery and suspense. Even more suspenseful is **Me, the Other** a shipboard-set drama about suspicion between friends in a post-9/11 world.

One Out of Two marks director Eugenio Cappuccio's return to

the festival. His 2005 film **I Truly Respect You** was a clever tale of workplace downsizing; his latest is about a cocky lawyer whose life is transformed after being hospitalized for a potentially fatal illness. **Salt Air** is an assured first feature involving a complex father-son relationship. And **Shelter** is a powerful story of two women whose relationship is put to the test when they take a Tunisian boy into their home.

New Italian Cinema closes with Francesca Archibugi's moving and multilayered **Flying Lessons**. Two teenagers from Rome decide to travel to India in the hopes of finding some direction for their lives. After some serious culture shock, including illness and robbery, they meet up with an Italian aid worker

and work with her in a remote village. Without resorting to cliché or easy resolutions, Archibugi offers a finely tuned tale of late adolescence and newly acquired wisdom.

Regular New Italian Cinema attendees will remember the tribute to Archibugi from 2003 which included **The Tree of Pears**, a sensitive story of children dealing with a drug-addicted mother, and **Tomorrow**, an ensemble drama about relationships formed among survivors of the 1997 Umbria earthquake.

Rod Armstrong is a Film Society Programming Associate. He may be reached at ramstrong@sffs.org.



The Film Society, New Italian Cinema Events and the Italian Cultural Institute present New Italian Cinema, at Landmark's Embarcadero Center Cinema, November 11–18. View the full program and schedule at www.sffs.org.

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