



Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Festival Back for Eighth Year

December 2, 2015

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Now in its eighth year, the “all docs all day” [Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival](#) returns to Bay Street Theater and Arts Center in Sag Harbor this week, offering screenings of close to 30 films followed by Q&As with filmmakers and their subjects from Thursday, December 3, to Sunday, December 6, 2015.

Highlights of this year’s festival include: the Opening Night film on Thursday, “A Ballerina’s Tale,” directed by Nelson George; Friday night’s Spotlight Film and Filmmakers’ Choice Award, which goes this year to director Liz Garbus for her documentary “What Happened, Miss Simone?”; the Saturday evening Festival Gala and Career Achievement Award honoring director Stanley Nelson; and the Closing Night film on Sunday, “Since: The Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103” by director Phil Furey.



Still from “A Ballerina’s Tale” on Misty Copeland. Photo by Oskar Landi.

The visual arts are directly referenced during the festival in three films: director Leah Wolchok’s “Very Semi-Serious,” about cartooning at The New Yorker, on Friday; “Nefertiti’s Daughters” by director Sharon Liese, about the impact of street art on the Egyptian uprisings, screening on Saturday as part of a shorts program; and “Monk with a Camera,” about the photographer turned Buddhist monk Nicholas Vreeland, on Sunday.

Focusing on the related fields of architecture and design, as well as history, is another film, “Modern Tide: Midcentury Architecture on Long Island” by director Jake Gorst, screening on Saturday.

Augmented by seasonal screenings throughout the year, the four-day festival was founded and continues to be organized by documentary filmmaker and festival Executive Director Jacqui Lofaro. Serving as creative director is Karen Arikian, formerly the executive director of the Hamptons International Film Festival.

Serving as co-hosts and emceeing the bulk of the Q&As are WPPB broadcast personality and drama director Bonnie Grice and Hamptons Art Hub editor-at-large and writer/actor/director Andrew Botsford.

The presenting sponsor for the Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival is Bridgehampton National Bank. The Audience Award sponsor is Brown Harris Stevens.

Screening on Friday, December 4, at 6:15 p.m. “Very Semi-Serious” (83 minutes) has been described as “an offbeat meditation on humor, art and the genius of the single panel.” The film goes behind the scenes at The New Yorker magazine and introduces cartooning legends like Roz Chast and Mort Gerberg submitting their work alongside hopefuls like graphic novelist Liana Finck.



Still from “Very Semi-Serious” on New Yorker Magazine cartooning hopefuls.

The camera also focuses on the other side of the desk, where Cartoon Editor Bob Mankoff sifts through hundreds of submissions every week to bring readers a carefully curated selection of cartoons that blend keen insights with typically wry humor.

“Very Semi-Serious” director Leah Wolchok recently completed the IFP Documentary Lab, San Francisco Film Society Film House Residency and BAVC MediaMaker Fellowship. She co-produced the Independent Lens documentary “Ask Not” and has directed four award-winning short films.

“Nefertiti’s Daughters” (39 minutes) by directors Mark Nickolas and Racha Najdi is the fourth of four short films that will begin screening at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 5.



Still from “Nefertiti’s Daughters” on revolutionary street art during Egyptian uprisings.

Shot by cinematographer Oscar Frasser, the film focuses on the role of women artists in the struggle for social and political change and reveals the critical part that revolutionary street art played during the Egyptian uprisings. The documentary also shows how the iconic graffiti of a woman using the tag Queen Nefertiti placed her on the front lines in the ongoing fight for women’s rights and freedoms in Egypt.

Mark Nickolas is a longtime veteran of U.S. Democratic politics, most notably as an aide to then Vice President Al Gore. His first film, “My Life in the Canyon of Heroes,” was screened at the 2013 HT2FF. Currently in post-production on a third short documentary, he is also in pre-production on his first feature length documentary.

Co-director Racha Najdi has producer or associate producer credits on three other films: “Chaos, Disorder,” “Love, Older ... Jack & Martha” and “Bahiya & Mahmoud.”

The short films screening prior to “Nefertiti’s Daughters” are: “The Gnomist” (12 minutes); “Every Day” (12 minutes); and “The House Is Innocent” (12 minutes).

Directed by Tina Mascara and Guido Santi, “Monk with a Camera” (90 minutes) will be screened on Sunday, December 6, at 5:15 p.m. The film chronicles the life and spiritual quest of Nicholas (Nicky) Vreeland, who for the past 28 years has been a Tibetan Buddhist monk.



Still from “Monk With a Camera.”

The son of a U.S. Ambassador and grandson of legendary Vogue editor Diana Vreeland, Nicky Vreeland was a photographer by trade who left his privileged life behind to follow his true calling. He spent 14 years in India in a monastery with no running water or electricity studying to become a monk.

Many years later, Vreeland went back to the worldly pursuit of photography in order to help his fellow monks rebuild their monastery. The documentary follows his path as he transitions from photographer to monk and, most recently, to being appointed as the abbot of the monastery he helped to rebuild.

Directors Tina Mascara and Guido Santi previously made “Chris and Don: A Love Story,” a moving account of the long-term romantic relationship between author Christopher Isherwood and artist Don Bachardy.

Director Jake Gorst’s “Modern Tide: Midcentury Architecture on Long Island” (86 minutes) will be screened on Sunday, December 6, at 12:15 p.m. The film takes as its focus Long Island’s rich heritage of midcentury modern architecture, much of which has disappeared due to redevelopment and natural disaster.



Still from “Modern Tide: Midcentury Architecture on Long Island.”

Gorst attempts to highlight in the documentary some of the region’s best design work as a way to “bring awareness and appreciation” for such architectural achievements, according to the festival release. The director considers in the film the work of some of the region’s best postwar architects

and designers, including Albert Fey, Frank Lloyd Wright, Marcel Breuer, Andrew Geller, Philip Johnson, Charles Gwathmey and others.

For the past two decades, Gorst has been researching and documenting midcentury modern architecture in print and film, including the work of his grandfather, architectural designer Andrew Geller. An Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker, Gorst is the director of Mainspring Pictures Ltd.

A producing partner on the film was [Design Onscreen](#)—The Initiative for Architecture and Design on Film, a non-profit foundation dedicated to producing, promoting and preserving high-quality films on architecture and design.

BASIC FACTS: Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival, December 3 through December 6, 2015 at Bay Street Theater and Arts Center, 1 Bay Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. www.ht2ff.com.

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