



Klaus at Gunpoint 11

# Editorial by Chris Garcia

Cinequest is over and it was amazing. The Shorts program was great, and the various programs sold out a bunch of times. It was a huge success, and the Shifted Realities program that I put together was Hugely successful! Harry Knowles of Ain't It Cool News even attended the first screening and had a good time! I loved it, and the rest of the program was equally as well-received!

The Feature Films were great. The ones I'd seen screeners ahead of the fest were re-watched on the big screen, which helped in all but one case. I saw about a dozen other films, which were almost all excellent films. The Maverick Spirit event with Neil Gaiman, the only one I saw, was really fantastic, and the parties were great, as was the VIP Lounge, which is where I spent a lot of time. Being Staff for CQ has its benefits...

This issue is looking at the Festival from several points of view, including my own. Jason Wiener, Susannah Greenwood. You can hear some of the interviews Vanessa Applegate and myself did with various Cinequest filmmakers are up at <http://www.podcastgarden.com/podcast/journeyplanet>

So, I hope you enjoy this issue, and I'm really excited that Cinequest went so very well and that we're looking at a Full Extra Day for Cinequest next years - February 23rd through March 8th!

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# Opening Night by Jason Wiener

## **Jason goes to Cinequest--Opening Night**

My favorite two-week drinking festival (with movies) started last night. And I was there about 3 hours early to check in to the VIP lounge, have some Tito's, have some Stella Artois, have some Cuarenta y Tres.... And of course hug all my friends in there. Then we headed over to Cafe Stritch where I had an extra Arrogant Bastard Ale (not a sponsor, so no link for them, but I do love it!) and finally headed across the street to the California Theatre for the opening night program.

After the Cinequest trailer, the programmed actually began with RPG OKC, which I had already seen at Indiefest and it looked so much better on the giant screen at the California. That was the lead in to Cinequest's first ever Media Legacy Award, given to Indiewire's Senior Editor and Chief Film Critic Eric Kohn. Then we had a brief conversation with him about championing great underseen films (where he called out me and my friend Phil in the first row for knowing and cheering all the films he mentioned.)

And then Martin Cooper, the inventor of the cell phone, received the Maverick Innovator Award. He had been at Cinequest before, so I actually knew some of the jokes he told (like how the first cell phone only had 20 minutes of battery life, but that was okay because it was so heavy you couldn't hold it up to your ear for 20 minutes.) He also opined on the future promises of technology, especially in health care and lifting people out of poverty. But my favorite part was when he asked if anyone didn't have a cell phone and the only one in the whole theater was my friend Roy.Awesome.

And then finally, we settled in for the opening night film, THE GRAND SEDUCTION, an English language remake of Jean-Francois Pouliot's LA GRANDE SÉDUC

TION (note: I've never actually seen the original.) It's set in a small Newfoundland fishing community--or at least what used to be a small fishing community. Now it's a community of people who collect welfare checks. Some even collect two welfare checks, one for them and one for their friend who signed over power of attorney to him (um...before he died.) That scoundrel would be Murray (Brendan Gleeson) but there's never really an attitude that he's a bad guy for doing this. He's just surviving, like everyone on the island. And if he has to lie a little bit to survive, so be it. What the harbor (don't call it a village) is really hoping for is to get the new petrochemical processing plant built there. Yeah, that doesn't sound like pretty work, certainly not as fun as fishing. But they need jobs. But in order to get the plant they need a doctor living there. Anyway, when the ex-mayor finds a doctor (with a bit of a cocaine problem) they might have a solution. Dr. Lewis (Taylor Kitsch) agrees to a one month trial, and all they have to do is convince him this is a place he wants to live. So out goes hockey, in comes cricket (the reveal of the cricket pitch from the boat is one of my new favoritest scenes ever!) And let him know that they're just fine with him using a little cocaine now and again (although it never really comes up again.) And commence with the spying and trickery to find out everything you can about him and use it to your advantage. And the thing is, it works. He falls in love with the harbor--or at least what the harbor is pretending to be. Oh, and did I mention it's hilarious? Especially when the petrochemical folks come to town to assess whether there are enough able-bodied workers for their plant. Or when they have to scrape together some bribe money for them. All in all it's a charming comedy about the importance of work for dignity, and how far you will bend the rules for that grasp at a dignified, honest living. Plus, [minor spoiler alert] it might be the first movie I've ever seen that ends with a harbor-wide simultaneous orgasm. So it's got that going for it, which is nice.

Then over to South First Billiards for some snacks, a lot more drinking, and a lot more hugging of Cinequest friends. And Cinequest 2014 is officially begun!

# Mini-Reviews - Round 1

## by Susannah Greenwood

When did I have time in the last 3 weeks to watch 6 films? Please, what else do you do when you have the flu or between the hours of midnight and 2am. If you think fitting 6 movies in three weeks on top of a heavy schedule is something, hold on to your hats. The Cinequest Film Festival runs at various venues in San Jose March 4th-16th, 2014 and we are talking 200 films people. The line up (yet again) feels like choosing a favorite vital organ. So many films so little time and so much variety and diversity. Get a pass, take two weeks off and see them all and don't forget to schedule in time to TALK about what you see. I've had a sneak peek and below are some uber miniature snapshot reviews to help you choose based on your own preferences and to start you scheduling in your own March Madness!

**Cheatin'** - My favorite of the lot so far, I'm amazed that hand drawn, raw and rustic cartoons can tell such a bizarre and simultaneously universal story with no dialogue. For 90 minutes you are taken on a journey, a sweet and a bit twisted love story, with only music, images and the occasional sound effect or gibberish to communicate an array of emotions. I was impressed with the effectiveness of the format for sure and was even a bit touched by the story. 4 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara.

**My Prairie Home** - Once you get used to the style of this film and settle into the groove, it's a really enjoyable and certainly unique piece. Though it took me a good 20 minutes to "figure it out" and embrace it's quirky, docu-music video, Canadian emo-folksy goodness, ultimately I liked it. The visuals have humor and poignancy, as do the story and the soundtrack. With the subject matter it could almost be too angsty, but the film makers and the film's focal point, do a good job of keeping it positive and not too self deprecating. 4 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara.

**Life is Love** - A touching film, colorfully shot. Above all else I think this is a very IMPORTANT film to make and see. While the unfortunate young female victims of the Cambodian Sex Trade make for a devastating topic, the film, which consists of 90% interviews from all sides of the issue, illuminates a painful present, but shines the light on the good that is being done to change the future for the brighter. In my DVD version, there were no subtitles and I'd say at least 50% of the English being spoken could not be understood clearly. The loss in what was being said made it feel a bit long in places, but if I had some assistance with the language (which may in fact be available at the general screening) I wager it wouldn't have dragged or felt repetitious at all. 3 1/2 jewels out of 5 in the review tiara.

**Funny Money** - A blockbuster comedy type plot with slapstick, over the top performances I found to be cheesy, but mildly entertaining. It was a bit uneven, playing over acting one minute and then some cute tender scenes the next. Cute plot, but the subtitles were a bit cumbersome for me as they (and the accompanying action) moved fast. Meh, 3 jewels out of 5 in the review tiara.

**The Rugby Player** – A story is told in this film and it happens to be true. The honesty of this film is appreciated. The main character is shown in some really less than complimentary lights, but in a way...that just makes the end that much more rewarding. A rebellious and intelligent and artistic spirit goes from altercations and minor run ins with the law to a very different space and destiny. It's not until the end really that I think I understood why this story was being told and could "agree" with the approach it took to storytelling. Certainly a film that gives us insight into a human that very well may have died a real hero. 3 jewels out of 5 in the review tiara.

**Acting Like Adults** – There is no denying that this film is well made. It's certainly a love letter to Los Angeles, and we all know LA needs someone on its side. Some people like watching extremely dysfunctional conflict. I am not one of those people. The acting must have been good, because I kind of wanted to punch the daylight out of at least 1 of the characters. Repeatedly. There were funny moments, but in general this comedy is so dark it felt like I had died. Many people will likely enjoy this film more than I did, and they can give it as many stars or thumbs or lattes as they like, I however will only give it 2 1/2 jewels out of 5, because it made me angry, and irritated, annoyed and want to do violence on damaged, shallow, mean people. Maybe that was the point. Still. Suck it this film. Grow up.

# Love in the Time of Monsters

## Review by Chris Garcia

Rangoon Video. It's one of the few video stores still alive in Santa Clara, California. Back in the 1980s and early 90s, it's where I rented from, largely because they were the only place in town where I could get my non-WWF wrestling videos. There was a section of the store, back in those heady VHS days, where one could rent the most low-budget of straight-to-VHS horror. My Dad had introduced me to horror films when I was pretty young, starting with the Universal classics. It might be *Frankenstein* or *Freaks*, or if I was really good, an *El Santo* movie. At Rangoon Video, the tapes on those shelves, they were not those horror films.

These were gritty, splatterfests. They had titles like *Splatter Farm*, *Aligator*, and *Uncle Sam*. They were often poorly produced, sometimes completely non-sensical, and often awfully gory. I've never been one for gore. It bothers me, even today, but I loved these films. I rented them all the time, usually two at a time, and I loved them in a way that I loved no other film. When I got older, turned away from Corman and Kaufman and towards Welles and von Trier, I still found moments to enjoy the horror of the lower-end of the filmic universe. Once in a while, I still go at them, and when I managed to see *Love in the Time of Monsters* at Cinequest, I rediscovered that love in its full glory.

The story of *Love in the Time of Monsters* is deceptively simple – A pair of sisters (one a pretty blonde, the other a smoldering brunette) go to Uncle Slavko's resort, where some questionable stuff happens. Basically, there's been some toxic dumpage goin' on. Now, the resort is settled in a world of Mysterious Trees, and while there is no Bigfoot, Slavko's come up with a team of suited men made up as Sasquatch to interact with the tourist as they are guided about. These Bigfoot suitors end up falling in the toxic water, setting off a series of biological changes that turn them into something like zombies.

And they're after human flesh.

Now, this is where I get a big squeemish. There's a fair



bit of gore, not just blood, but gore, and that's my weakness, of course. When I watched it at home, my laptop perched atop my belly, I could busy myself with an eMail anytime viscera appeared on the screen. In the theatre, I had to have a friend block the view for me when it popped up. The thing that's awesome is that it's not over-powering. There's just enough to give a hint of the extreme, but at the same time, it's not the only thing that's memorable about the film. There's a cast that is absolutely perfect for the film. The sisters, Carla (Marissa Skell) and Marla (Gena Shaw), are the type that don't quite fit in with each other. Marla's the Smart Ass, and Carla's the good girl... sorta. They've got a friend who works at the resort, played by Paula Rhodes (who was in Kurt Kuenne's Shuffle), who was their sorority sister and who also happens to be the single most attractive human form ever put onto film. She plays the character with almost over-the-top cheerful dominance. The lovely trio is the mover of the film, but the heart of the film is actually a subplot. Love in the Time of Monsters wouldn't be nearly as humane if not for the wonderful love story between a lonely mountain man, Chester (played by Hugo Armstrong) and Uncle Slavko's wife. It's a sweet relationship, which bothers Uncle Slavko, but the brief moments that we see them together are lovely. Armstrong, in particular, as the hunter who lives alone in the woods, gives a strong performance that bumps things up an emotional quantum.

## **Luke Beavers @ARealDandy Mar 16 @UncleSlavko Damn. Good. Movie. So glad I got to see "Love In The Time Of Monsters."**

Oh yeah, there are also zombie forest creatures. We get a zombie moose, zombie squirrels, and the prix-de-resistance... zombie trout. The way they are presented completely reminded me of those VHS tapes I'd rent from Rangoon. There's even a single moment of big breasted nudity, mingled with cavorting zombie forest animals, which would seem so in-line with those crazy gore-and-more films of the 1980s and 90s! Yeah, it was a bit gory, which meant there was some eye-closage, but that was part of the fun.

Director Matt Jackson and his team have managed to make Love in the Time of Monsters more than just a throwback. It's a film that is so much fun in and of itself that even if you're not familiar with those videos, you'll find a lot to love. Even if you're a bit turned off by gore, you can make it through this one with wisely placed palms over eyeballs for a few seconds every ten minutes or so. If you're a gorehound, well, enjoy!

# Cinequest Day 10 by Jason Wiener

## Jason goes to Cinequest--Day 10

Up early, at the lounge by 10 am, and drink, drink drink. Then time for some movies.

First up was the Norwegian thriller/drama IT'S ONLY MAKE BELIEVE. Jenny has a bit of a criminal past. Like, 'she's spent 10 years in prison for shooting a man' type of criminal past. But now she's out, looking for a fresh start with her young daughter. But when the bank won't give her a loan to fix up her shithole of a home (you know, to make it livable for her daughter) she turns back to her drug-dealing past. And that just puts her deeper in debt, not just monetary debts but favor debts. And they threaten her daughter, too, which is just going too far. Lead actress Silje Salomonsen does a fantastic job, and her innocent-looking beautiful face (especially when she's with her daughter) creates a stark contrast to the dangerous crime-world she's trapped in.

Then back to the lounge for another drink, and then the Vietnamese comedy FUNNY MONEY. A comedy about bad luck and unintentional counterfeiting, our hero is the ironically named Lucky Loc. He runs a company making fake paper money and luxury goods to burn as an offering to your ancestors (it's an Asian thing, you burn paper of a nice fancy suit to your grandfather, he is nicely dressed in heaven, etc. I happened to know that from my Asian friends, and perhaps if you didn't know it would be a little confusing.) He specializes in making the most realistic paper products possible, even texturing the paper and adding leather scents to his paper Luis Vuitton handbags. Of course, having fake money that's overly authentic can be a problem, and he accidentally pays a salesgirl with one of his "funny money" bills. And that causes his luck to just... suck. And, weirdly, it causes her luck to be awful, too.

Meanwhile, his skills at authenticity attracts a gang of Chinese criminals who sucker him into making counterfeit \$100 bills for them. And wacky, wacky hijinx ensue. That was a lot of fun.

And then I ran to the nearby screen for the comedy NOTHING IN LOS ANGELES. Writer/Director Alexander Tovar stars as Quinn, a sort of chubby Woody Allen of Los Angeles, attempting to write an artsy screenplay about a screenwriter named Alexander who is trying to write a screenplay. Meanwhile he is distracted by the vapidness of the industry. His best friend is cheating on his wife--with a man. He is falling for his best friend's wife even though he's in a committed relationship. That relationship is with a woman twice his age though (50 to his 25) and there's even explicit speculation that he's only in the relationship to get an experience to write about in his screenplay. Meanwhile his friend is actually making a movie--a feature based on a short about a filmmaker trying to make a feature out of a short about a retarded kid in a wheelchair who wants to be a boxer (the kid, not the wheelchair. That's just stupid, why would a wheelchair want to be a boxer?) And it's chock full of iconic L.A. landmarks, my favorite being the Original Pantry, although they chose instead to focus the action in the HMS Bounty. It's a pretty funny movie, even if it doesn't exactly amount to much, but as a former L.A.-lien (my preferred term,) I like seeing it get sent up like that.

## **Up early, at the lounge by 10 am, and drink, drink drink. Then time for some movies.**

Then I ambled over to the Soiree at Britannia Arms, finally got my phone working at the Verizon store along the way. And while I was there, I met the filmmakers of AS IT IS IN HEAVEN, had a drink with them, and then according to my rules I had to see their movie. Previously I was planning to see MYSTERY ROAD, but if Hugo Weaving is too important to have a drink with me, screw him. Anyway, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN is a wonderfully made cult movie. That is, it's a movie about a cult, not what is typically meant by a "cult movie." In the opening scenes, David is baptized and joins a small religious community. One year later he's a leader in that community, as they welcome a new member, a young Asian woman. Their prophesied judgement day is just a month away, when their prophet Edward passes away after a fall. His last words are to David, expressing sorrow at his failure to lead them into sufficient purity, and asking David to lead them for the final month. And David takes it up

whole-heartedly, instituting a fast until their final day. This does not sit well with Eamon, Edward's son who knows that Edward never would have done something so dangerous. While David could have easily come off as something of a psychotic asshole, he doesn't. It's very, very important to see that David is genuinely doing what he thinks is right to prepare his flock for salvation--even if it means starving an infant because no one is exempt from the fast. Similarly, in defying him Eamon is not looking for a power struggle, he's genuinely doing what he thinks is right, believing that David is a false or mistaken prophet. The story and performances are rich, textured, and nuanced. And the ending, which I won't spoil, is handled with subtlety, style, and grace. I am pretty open about not being a believer, but I like the way this story was presented much more than if I had seen something that was mocking religion or showing how stupid and foolish cult members are. These cult members aren't stupid, they have something they believe in deeply and are crushed if it isn't true--and that phenomenon is true of anyone who believes anything deeply.

And finally the last show started with the PTP short CHECKMATE. A blind teenage chess master challenges a wealthy landlord to a game of chess to get his father's farm back. A cool, stylish story of revenge, justice, and honor.

And then...HAPPENINGS OF THE EIGHTH DAY...happened (oddly, on the 10th day of Cinequest.) This movie is...just weird. On the one hand, it's a long meta-joke about making the movie. On the other, it's...well, maybe it's just evil. I'll get back to that. It opens with shots of silent films, so that had me inte



# Cinequest Feature Films Reviewed As Comments I Made to Vanessa By Chris Garcia

**Acting Like Adults:** “At a restaurant, have you ever watched a couple try to fight subtly at the next table? Do that instead of watching it.”

**Victoriana:** “It’s every sort of thing wrong with the world put into pictures. It’s beautiful.”

**Blood Punch:** “It’s like watching someone get kicked in the crotch over and over, and that’s the beautiful part of it!”

**Happenings on the Eighth Day:** “I’m so sorry. Remember me as the one who showed you Victoriana.”

**Friended to Death:** “As is probably obvious, I am terrified that I am actually that guy IRL.”

**Loaded:** “It’s like watching ten years of my life, only on an over-night road trip and split into three different characters.”

**A is for Alex:** “In the end, it’s about family and the dangers of putting not reviewing content you post to YouTube.”

**Confessions of a Womanizer:** “I am fairly certain this would be considered crass in many communities.”

**Deep City:** “If it weren’t for all the jai alai, cubans, mosquitos, humidity, and human sorrow, this movie’d almost make me want to move to Miami.”

**Love in the Time of Monsters:** “Sorry if I squirmed a bit too much.”

**Sex(ed):** “It really didn’t say much about the hard fucking...”

# Me + Her Reviewed by Chris Garcia

It's hard to describe why a short film like *Me + Her* is so amazing to an audience who has only seen it once. Yes, on a single viewing it is a marvelous film of loss, re-birth, dedication, and love, but on the 15th viewing, things change and the story goes out the window with an amazing feeling that follows.

This is gonna get kinda Big Idea-like.

The story - a man's companion dies, wasting away in a hospital. He then goes and deals with his grief by taking the grandest possible adventure.

Oh yeah, and the world and all those in it are made of cardboard. It's an amazing world, so detailed and corrugated, painted, and I believe that there is a small amount of animation. Instantly, my favorite short of last year, *Lullaby for Lucius and Sumat* sprang to mind as far as style. There was puppetry, beautiful puppetry, and they don't seem to hide the rods controlling arms and feet, which takes you to a place of magic. It is a world of cardboard, and a world of puppets, and you are never losing sight of that.

But the emotional draw is incredible.

The story, love and loss, is simple and beautiful. The amount of emotional impact they get out of even a simple subtle motion of a hand on a rod. can break a heart.

And we're in their world, which we know we are not a part of, and that makes it so effective. So thoroughly has the team created this cardboard universe that we know we're not a part of, that we can not question our place in it because emotionally, we're there. Loss is universal; death is universal. We completely buy into this meticulously-reated world because in it, our hearts live as well. There is nothign foreign here - only differently presented.

I consider this to be one of the finest examples of short filmmaking of the last decade, and one worthy of searching out.

# More Mini-Reviews by Susannah Greenwood

I'm 8 days into Cinequest and the energy in downtown San Jose is electric! At all hours people can be seen on the streets talking film. They are meeting up early, staying up late, and literally closing down restaurants and bars with conversation. It's absolutely lovely to see passionate people from all over the world downtown. It really is so much more than films. The screenings are just as entertaining and diverse as the friendly, fun, intelligent crowds and what an incredibly priceless opportunity to be able to access filmmakers (new and experienced) so effortlessly and shower them with questions! Once I come out on the other end of it, I'll likely put down some more thoughts on the festival (which is celebrating its 24th year this year) overall. In the meantime I encourage you to pick at least one film from the remaining screenings and experience the magic. Parking is validated (EASY!) and plentiful. Shy? No problem, come find me tomorrow (Wednesday, March 12th) where I'll be celebrating my 39th birthday (I'll be the Redhead in a crown) at **Kiss Me You Fucking Moron** and then **The Illiterate** both playing at the Camera 12. I'll be happy to save you a seat and introduce you to some Cinequestors. Consider me your Festival Ambassador, here to jump-start your Cinequest 2014 experience. Encore day March 16th will show a number of films that were popular again (to be announced in the next few days) so be sure to check back on the Cinequest site for updates. Below find quick thoughts on some films I've seen in the last few days.

I always try to catch at least a couple of the Shorts program. There is a little something for everyone with shorts and they're themed so you have a better chance of liking more of them. The comic shorts, **Shorts Program 3: Humor Me** was fantastic this year with 4 of them being outstanding, 3 of them solid and only 2 of them

leaving me with a question mark. **The Ghost Pepper Eating Contest of Jefferson County** had me in stitches, by far my favorite (SO BRILLIANT) and **#twitterkills, Thank You, Cabbage,** and **Reel Life** were all very well done too with a lot of therapeutic laughter as a result. The thing about the shorts are, unlike a really great full length feature, you don't have as many opportunities to see many of them outside a festival circuit. A lot of great filmmakers got their start in shorts as part of a school project and so it really is an honor and a joy to discover the next big thing and enjoy the plenty of great films that WON'T likely launch a career either. 4 1/2 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara for a well curated, diverse program of chuckles, chortles and snorts.

**Friended to Death** is a fabulously ridiculous and uber satirical look at social media so very thinly veiled as a BRO movie. Think **Swingers, The Hangover, Dumb and Dumber,** and **Ace Ventura Pet Detective,** but with so much fantastically funny and TRUE #SocialCommentary on our #SocialMediaCrazy society (for better and for worse) that it ups the IQ of the film and broadens the impact 10 fold. While some of the social media laughs are a bit close to home for me personally and the comedy is dark, I found I really enjoyed this film. I'm NOT a fan of the crude "bro" genre at all, but I have to say I was taken in by its sincerity and wit. There's a heart to the story despite it's crassness that makes it feel less superficial and cheap than some of the comparable comedies I've seen lately. There's also a great soundtrack, some really hilarious acting (expect to see all of these actors in the future) and the overall production value is totally ready for prime time. 4 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara for a #clever, #self-deprecating look at social media.

**Eternity: The Movie** in its basest form, chronicles a couple of guys in the 80's who form a band...called, you guessed it, Eternity. Oh this film is so silly. As a huge Erasure, Boy George, Wham and Thompson Twins fan (just to name a few), I appreciated the details of this film immensely. The fashion, my god the hair, the interior design and yet the music are all hilariously and embarrassingly realistic. There is a huge "are they or aren't they gay" thread throughout and while very funny in places, I personally found that to be repetitive after the first hour. There is a HUGE audience for this film...I think I'm just sitting in the back row of it. Enjoyable, light, funny, absolutely. Nostalgic, yeah a little. Well produced, yes. If you are in a good mood and looking for something just super fun (and with a beat you can dance to) I think you will find this film to be just what you need. 3 1/2 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara.

Horror is probably tied with Science Fiction as my favorite genre. Since I was about 11 I think I have sought out and mostly enjoyed the whole spectrum from seriously pee your pants scary all the way to campy, wink wink,



nudge nudge. **Love in the Time of Monsters** falls more in the camp end of the two extremes, but has several moments of sisterly bonding and serious dialogue in it too. While I could have done without the serious bits for the most part, what's really important about this movie is that they went through 55 gallons of fake blood while filming this epic tale of big foot impersonators at a family tourist camp who accidentally go mental when they are exposed to toxic waste. It's kind of the best plot ever with some fun effects and surprises as well as some NOT surprises. It's quirky and bizarre, but a good effort. 3 1/2 out of 5 jewels in the review tiara for a classic camp cult in the making.



# The Brunchers

## Review by Chris Garcia

When does a film cross that line into that space occupied on top of your shoulders? I was sorely tempted to sue the team that produced *The Brunchers* for stealing what happens to me all the time! It's a hilarious film, darkly comedic, but it's also a film that says a lot about the world we live in when we get to *A Certain Age*.

I'm pretty sure that age for me was 36.

You see, in *The Brunchers*, a couple, almost certainly in their 30s, are in need of breakfast. The woman desires brunch at a trendy restaurant where the young and hip dine. She wants to go to *NEW Toast*, not the old *Toast*, which is so over.

Thus begins the quest for a hip brunch.

The thing is, it's not a laugh-a-second short, at about 30 minutes, it takes its time and makes the most out of the world it lives in. There are so many laughs in it that you forget how long it is. While it never goes over-the-top, it never stops entertaining and that's the key.

An appearance by Rufus Sewell doesn't hurt either.

The thing is, this is a story about a couple who has entered that stage where they are well-defined. He is comfortable, he knows *ABOUT* the hip, about the other side that still frequents places like *NEW Toast*, but he doesn't feel the need to go there. On the other hand, she desires that taste of the trendy, the hip. She's not chaffing against the restraints of her relationship; she's straining against her own passing of time. She used to be hip, she used to do things at the places where the people who do things did things, and now, she's not sure what she is.

And let's face it: a lot of us are there.

I know I am. This film could have been me and my girlfriend at various points in my life. It could easily have been me trying to get a table at a restaurant that's not really for me and then trying and trying to capture that former hipster glory.

And, of course, I never managed.



# Cinequest - Closing Night by Jason Wiener

Breakfast was at 9:00 am. And I had a beer (or several) with that breakfast. Then I left to my room to actually do a little bit of my day job before I had to check out. As a result, I missed hanging out more with Matthew Modine, who showed up just as I was leaving. Oh, well.

Anyway, I was back to the lounge soon enough for a little bit of a rest more drinking as I skipped the first showings of Encore Day (the one film I had not seen in the first time slot was EAST SIDE SUSHI, which I heard great things about but I'm already planning to see at CAAMFest)

And I had a drink with my final filmmaker of Cinequest. That is, the final time I applied my "drink with me and I will see your movie" (and the third time this rule forced me to miss out on the Patrick Stewart starring HUNTING ELEPHANTS) The winning filmmaker was a producer of SLINGSHOT, so I saw this excellent documentary on the life and work (mostly the work) of Dean Kamen. If that name is familiar at all, you likely recognize him as the inventor of the Segway. But he's been an inventor for a long time, with big, big ideas. While the Segway became the butt of several jokes, he's actually still pretty proud of it (I've never actually ridden one, so maybe it is actually really cool.) He also invented the iBOT mobility wheelchair. And he founded FIRST--For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology--to get kids interested in science. And his most important project right now--and the title of the movie--is the Slingshot, a water purification device based on vapor compression distillation (i.e., evaporate water and make it rain in a tank.) The name comes from the story of David and Goliath, with the Slingshot delivering the blow that takes down either the Goliath of large government/corporate control of potable water or the Goliath of water-borne pathogens being responsible for half the illnesses in the world. Bill Clinton, incidentally, seems pretty fond of telling the story of how Dean filtered the dirtiest water he had ever seen through the Slingshot, and he enjoyed the

pure, delicious water out the other end. It's a really cool story of an inspiring guy and the persistence of fighting for his invention for 15 years (and counting.) It's also a story of how corporate partnership (in this case, Coca-Cola) can sometimes work well to get things done. Now I know that Coca-Cola has not had a great record in the past with managing water resourced, particularly in their third world bottling plants. But if it comes down to a choice between partnering with an 'Evil Corporation(tm)' or not distributing your life-saving devices, I'm on Dean Kamen's side. Partner with whoever can get the job done.

Anyway, then it was time for more drinking. So I went back to the lounge and discovered that the VIP Soiree at Gordon Biersch was moved up to 4:00 (normally they start at 5:00.) So...it was more drinking their beers instead of Stella Artois (and actually, drinking margaritas was more the order of the day.)

Then finally the closing night event. I have to say, I kind of miss something they did in past years, which was to bring all of the filmmakers who were still in attendance up on stage for a standing ovation. That was back when they announced the award winners there, but this year they did that the previous evening. I can dig wanting to get to the film as quickly as possible, but this was something I always looked forward to. Anyway, I did get called out by board member Carlso Montalvo, so that was pretty awesome!

And then the movie, SMALL TIME. Al Klein (Christopher Meloni) owns a used car lot with his friend Ash Martini (Dean Norris.) He is also the proud father of a recent college graduate, Freddy (Devon Bostick.) Freddy lives with his mother (Bridget Moynahan) who is divorced from Al. And rather than go to college, Freddy wants to come work for Al at the car lot. Which for a guy who constantly feels inferior to his kid's stepfather (Xander Berkeley) that's pretty cool. And Freddy is actually pretty good at selling cars. In fact...too good. He kind of reminds the audience (and Al) of all the bad stereotypes of used car salesmen. And looking in the mirror like that, seeing your son becoming you, seeing a side of yourself you have kind of buried...that forces Al to take a tough look at himself and make some tough decisions. More importantly, this is a comedy. It's funny, especially the scenes where Al and Ash are bullshitting with their friends (where Kevin Nealon has a small role) or the tricks they use to lure in a buyer. But beyond the comedy is a pretty serious and poignant story.

And then more drink. The closing party was simultaneously at neighboring bars The Farmer's Union and La Pinata. Drink drink drink, hug so many filmmakers, staff, friends. And that was finally that. I'll just end on these final words:

**BEST CINEQUEST EVER!!!!**

(until next year, when I'll find a way to make Cinequest 25 top it!)



Jason Wiener's fantastic reviews of films, festivals, and more can be found at <http://jasonwatchesmovies.blogspot.com/> It's well-worth reading because that man sees a LOT of movies, has wise thoughts about all of them, and is generally entertaining.

Susannah Greenwood is... well, let me put it in to her own words from her excellent site, <https://artsalot.wordpress.com/>

“Once upon a time...

There lived a Princess whose principal passion and duty it was to enjoy the local land's rich artistic pleasures. This was quite the honor and the perk for the Princess for the arts were plentiful in the valley of silicon. So abundant were these creative expressions that the kingdom was clandestinely referred to as Artopia, Artsville, Artstown, Artsopolis, and her personal favorite, Artsalot.

As time passed, the Princess decided she simply must find a way to share all her experiences with the other members of the kingdom. She must build an arts castle of sorts for each of her thoughts, or as she likes to call them her ARTERior missives!

And so, here you are! You have found the home of her art-related musings, thoughts, previews, reviews and recommendations of the Princess.

For information on what to expect from her reviews (which are not and are not intended to be what you find in newspapers or other media please) see this post - <https://artsalot.wordpress.com/2012/05/29/why-write-an-arts-review-one-princess-unofficialofficial-response-to-that-very-question/>”

Chris Garcia edits this thing. Yeah, really!

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FILM FESTIVAL 2014

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