

Klaus at Gunpoint



Welcome to **Klaus at Gunpoint**. This first issue has been created specifically to get out into the world for Cinequest, which means it's only two years late.

That's right, **TWO YEARS!**

You see, I tried to do a Kickstarter to get it running in 2010, and it failed. Almost spectacularly, so I set the idea aside and did other things, like winning a Hugo Award for one of the other zines I work on, and deciding which tattoos to chicken out of just before I got them. Those are both hard things. I turned my attention back to the zine after I got several requests for copies from an old post I made and started to get interest from filmmakers in having us review their films. And then we started asking folks for screeners, and they kindly sent them, and then we were OFF!

And everyone wants to know about the name. Well, it started on Twitter. Marya Murphy, a good friend of ours, and I were having one of our conversations, I think in 2009, where the phrase, "I feel like Kinsky trying to please Herzog at the end of his pistol." We all had a good snicker and then I said "Klaus at Gunpoint is the title of my next zine"

And while I've started another one since then, it's the title of THIS zine.

Or journal. Journal's more respectable, Zine's more honest to what we're doing.

This issue looks at the world of film a couple of different ways. We're glad to have looks at a ton of genre short films, some science fiction, some fantasy, comedy, horror, musical, science fiction comedy, horror musical, and on and on! There's also a look at the mainstream from a couple of different points of view, and an essay about Wes Anderson.

And thus, we are live!

Christopher J Garcia

Editor-in-Chief

Contact - journeyplanet@gmail.com

Les Misérables - Reviewed by Miss Banshee

OKAY HI! I'm Miss B, and I have a LOT to say about *Les Misérables*. Full disclosure: I saw *Les Mis* for the first time in 1989 on Broadway, and somewhere along the way I lost track of my repeat viewings. I was a theatre kid, I even have a completely useless BFA in it. I sang "On My Own" into my hairbrush. I am, to put it lightly, a fan. So when the first trailer came out for the movie (OMG, Wolverine! OMG, Anne Hathaway weighs nine pounds! OMG, Cosette is still a useless bint!) I was a tiny bit excited. And on Christmas Eve, a friend of mine insisted we would go to the movie. I took time out of my very busy schedule of watching the trailers and sobbing to go to the movies, and here's what I thought.

I loved it. LOVED IT. But I have many notes, and here they are.

Hugh Jackman. You will not find a bigger fan of Wolvie than I am. And I thought he ripped his heart out for the role of Jean Valjean. It was amazing. But. Perhaps it was his mannerisms, but I felt he was really struggling with the vocals. He was fantastic and no doubt completely dedicated, and "Bring Him Home" had me in tears, but there was something...off. Was it the now-infamous countless takes of live singing? I'd like to think so. That role is hard eight times a week. I can't imagine what it would be like eight times a DAY.

Anne Hathaway. Well. Girlfriend BROUGHT IT. I was always an Eponine girl, and thought Fantine was kind of a one-dimensional angelic figure, but Anne BROUGHT THE GOODS. She made Fantine complex and heart-rendering. And as someone who has shaved her head in the past, I salute Anne for her dedication to the role. Keep the hair, Anne! It's growing out to be crazy cute! I had forgotten that in the book Fantine not only sold her locket and hair, but her TEETH, and holy crap, that was harrowing. If it wasn't for the douchebag next to us playing

Mind The Mainstream

on his phone, I would have shouted “She’s DYING don’t you SEE THAT? Cut a sister some SLACK!!!!” As I said, I’ve seen the play countless times, and I have never been moved by Fantine like I was with Hathaway. Engrave her name in the Oscar now. Just do it. DO IT NOW.

Cosette. Oh lordo, what to say about my least-favorite character. Okay, I hate Cosette. Not YOUNG Cosette, I thought the little girl who played her was really great. But grown-up Cosette? Just...no. She’s simpering. She’s plastic. She’s a whiny little twat. I’ve always hated Cosette. But that’s not Amanda Siefried’s fault. Her voice is fine. It’s thin and warbly, but that’s Cosette. I wish she had a little more breath control, but she’s not a Broadway star, she’s a film actress. Which brings us to...

Eponine. Oh, Eponine. I wanted to BE YOU when I was in high school. Only you understood me! And Samantha Barks is fantastic. It’s CLEARLY obvious that she’s the theatre kid. Her voice (and Enjolras’s) are really the only two that belt out for life, and I really have to give her credit, I’ve seen the Les Mis 25th anniversary concert countless times, and she’s amazing in it, but she toned down the Broadway Belt for the movie. Restraint. Very professional. And don’t get me started on the horrible editing that follows her (SPOILER) death. Marius is supposed to be devastated. Shattered. And they cut the film wrong there. I’m still seething.

So let’s talk about Marius. Marius can be played two ways. One is a stupid, boring, one-dimensional brat (see: 25th anniversary concert, Jonas Brother Edition) and the other is the classic Michael Ball tormented, confused kid wanting revolution and then falling entirely in young, hopeless love. I think Eddie Redmayne is the Michael Ball Marius. He brings layers to his character that others haven’t - there’s a moment in “Do You Hear The People Sing” where he grabs a red flag and there is a determination in his face that’s really classic - so good job, Eddie. You could have coasted this and you didn’t.

And I guess it’s time to talk about Russell Crowe. SPOILER! Crowe isn’t as bad as you’ve heard. He just isn’t. Sure, his voice is affected in the way that only a rock singer can be

(he's in a rock band, right?) and that doesn't fit the show at all, but people are howling that he ruins the movie, and that simply isn't true. He's perfectly stoic (as Javert should be) and when he is vulnerable and confused, he plays it well. Sure, he'll never get a Broadway role. But physically? Emotionally? He's right for the role. And he's not bad. Not good, but not bad.

And now a few closing notes (hahahhaa, I'm clever.) A few notes! Gavroche. Guys, you have no idea. After the horror in Connecticut, a child dying from a bullet is shattering, but Gavroche's death is so. Freaking. Painful. Be prepared.

Enjolras's last stand. Bring another box of tissues.

Colm Wilkenson's cameo. For those who aren't COMPLETE UTTER NERDS, Colm was the original Valjean. You'll swoon when you first see him. You'll sob when you see him next.

If you're a Les Mis nerd like me, you'll notice the weird changes in the wording of some songs. Sure it's only one or two words at a time, but it will GET TO YOU. It's okay. I'm here for you.

Have I said enough? Are you going to see it again? Cause I really need a movie date.

OMG I HAVE MORE TO SAY I NEED AN EDITOR OR MAYBE A SEDATIVE. The Thenardiers. I was very wary of the obvious stunt casting of Sacsha Baron Cohen and Helena Bonham Carter. This is not a Tim Burton film, people. I was grumpy. But you know what? It worked. It worked REALLY WELL. Cohen gives us a much (desperately) needed giggle with his ongoing joke of not knowing Cosette's name (DARLING COLETTE.... COSETTE) and in the (extremely disgusting) sewer scene, he sadly doesn't get his song, but it's still effective. And I cannot even begin to deal with how gross that scene is. CANNOT BEGIN TO DEAL.

Did Samantha Barks (Eponine) get ribs removed? Because girl's waist is RIDICULOUS.

John Robey @the_gneech

Bilbo wakes up suddenly to DON'T STOP BELIEVING. ...It was an unexpected Journey.
[#TerribleJoke](#) [#NotMinelStoleIt](#) [#TheHobbit](#)

sasha roiz @sasharoiz

Watched [#TheHobbit](#) while in New Zealand.
Much more Tolkienny.

Missinfo @Missinfo

(No wait...it's like the longest Travelocity commercial ever. [#thehobbit](#))

[Jos](#) @ginger_siren

Well that was some amazing Orc killing awesomeness!! Very good adaptation
[#thehobbit](#)

Beth irving @bettyhashtag

I WANT TO RIDE A MOOSE INTO THE SUNSET [#thehobbit](#)

[Andrew David Barker](#) @ADBarker

& the one thing I do know, Gandalf the Grey is far more rock n roll than that boring old Gandalf the White [#TheHobbit](#)

Creak @GrimCreak

I think [#PeterJackson](#) knew [#LOTR](#) would change our lives and we may end up away from home, so today, [#TheHobbit](#) is more relevant than ever.

Brian Lynch @BrianLynch

One N-Word DJANGO UNCHAINED definitely didn't use enough was "nice" which everyone in that movie could have been a little more of.

Baron Vaughn @barvonblaq

People are more pissed off about Django Unchained than actual slavery.

molly @Molly_Kats

I made an emergency appointment with my therapist because I have no desire to see 'Django Unchained.'

[Johnny Depth](#) @painted_eel

Taking my parrot with to see Django Unchained was a bad decision.

[Zerlina Maxwell](#) @ZerlinaMaxwell

Still zero articles talking about Django Unchained and Blazing Saddles being the same movie. Guess I have to write it.

todd levin @toddlewin

The outrage over racial slurs in Django Unchained has sadly overshadowed Tarantino's grotesque use of "Aussie Face."

[scharpling](#) @scharpling

Even if you didn't like DJANGO UNCHAINED, you should be glad that something that insane and singular exists.

Maggie @maggie_mae20

I'm gonna find a man that won't judge me for eating m&ms before bed. #TheGuiltTrip

[Imakinesthtic](#) @AndrewFaas

@Sethrogen your role and work put into that movie was awesome man. You spoke my story and defended my perceptions. #theguilttrip

SDW @TRHoftheIE

Love/hate #theguilttrip. Movie was great. Barb/Seth phenom. I hate that spouses pine for the what-if. It's what my "spouse" does. Hurtful

William Bailey @jeeter_skool

I'm not fan of Barbra Streisand as a singer, but she makes a great smothering mother in #TheGuiltTrip ;)
#film

[Mitchell Waxman](#) @MitchWaxman

My grandmother reviews #theguilttrip: why'd they cast Barbara Streisand? She didn't even sing!

Linda Robinson @silkwind

@Abramz @Fandango Critics don't like anything that isn't violent, foul language or sex! #TheGuiltTrip is funny & charming!

J.R. @IBBFTW

I'm amazed that #ThisIs40 didn't get 86'd. "You want to spin off the old PPL from Knocked Up? Check please.

[Sarah Backe](#) @zombieprncess13

@JuddApatow best part of #thisis40 was seeing Mr.Apatow's daughter wearing a WEEN TSHIRT!!
#ween

[Joshua](#) @Iamjustjoshua

Wow this so called "comedy" took an hour and 40mins before I laughed once. #thisis40 #thisisshit

Ryan Unicomb @Ryan_M_Unicomb

Saw #ThisIs40 tonight. Thought it was bloody fantastic! Took a while to get used to @maudeapatow dropping F-bombs throughout! 9/10
#MORE

Ashley Rose @ashleyrose_xox

#ThisIs40 was not very good ... there were a couple funny parts but the whole movie was long and stupid #WhatABummer

[Keith Sauve](#) @Poker_Keith

Saw #ThisIs40 last night. Great movie. Funny with a ton of moments that I can directly relate to. Not sure what the negative reviewers saw.

Mind The Mainstream

Twitter Speaks - #thisis40

[T.S.Suresh](#) @editorsuresh

#JackReacher - Slow paced narration with a standout presentation! Kudos to editor #KevinStitt! Must watch for budding editors! Don't miss it

iFuj @iFeelYouJohanna

That was like the napoleon dynamite of action movies #jackreacher

[Fez Spencer](#) @fez_spencer

So,if there's a thing called subliminal advertising #JackReacher must be using the most liminal advertising ever. #adsevery12seconds

C Fitzpatrick @RiverCate

#jackreacher Too bad short man Tom Cruise was cast as 6'6" 250 lb Tom Reacher.TC can squeeze a man to death? I don't think so. Infuriating.

Don McNevin @DonMcNevin

Tom Cruise as Jack Reacher is like Richard Simmons playing Thor. Just saying. #JackReacher

[johnnyeponymous](#) @johnnyeponymous

I would want to watch Jack Reacher more if Werner Herzog played Jack Reacher.

Wes Anderson's Homes for the Wayward Soul

There is a theory that I like. The theory is that all genre works are about people fleeing from problems and running a twisted path towards solutions. The nature of that problem defines the genre of the work. If it's a murder, then it's a Mystery. If it's a gunfighter, then it's a Western. If it's an infestation of zombies/robots/dragons, then it's Horror/Science Fiction/Fantasy. That's as good a definition as I can think of, because though I can come up with a ton of counter-examples, it makes more sense than any other literary theory I've heard. It's a beautifully simple theory, and I was thinking about it when I was sitting waiting for Wes Anderson's newest film, *Moonrise Kingdom*. I thought about it and as the film unfolded, I realised that Wes Anderson's films were about two things: running away from problems, and towards 'homes' that were not really homes.

Let me start by saying that I'll be getting into four Anderson films: *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *Darjeeling Limited*, and *Moonrise Kingdom*. While there is a lot of this theme in Anderson's lesser films (OK, some consider *Bottle Rocket*, *Rushmore*, or *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* to be his best, something I REFUSE to accept), these are the four where it is not only most evident, but forms the basis for the entire film. It's so clear in those four films, I could not overlook it if I wanted to.

I'll start with *The Royal Tenenbaums*. It's a film which is difficult for many because it's not a story with any sort of sensible character. Well, there's one, played brilliantly by Danny Glover, but mostly it's a gathering of extremely damaged characters almost entirely ruined by their own success. Margot, played by Gwyneth Paltrow, was a child genius playwright who was never accepted fully by her adoptive family, save for the brother Richie, who she finds herself falling in love with. They run off together in much the same way Sam and Suzy will in *Moonrise Kingdom*. She finds herself in many situations, none of which make her any

Mind The Mainstream

happier, but when she finds herself in a uni-directionally loving marriage to a researcher played by Bill Murray, she is ultimately lost and retreats into her bathroom, and into an affair with Eli, her adoptive brother's best friend. She runs back to the house on Archer Avenue, but it is not a home either. She is as alone there as she is at the home she shared with Raleigh St. Claire. The home she finds is a tent in her bedroom where she shares the most private moments with Richie.

Richie is running from his past as a championship-level tennis player, which haunts him as he can not deal with Margot's marrying Raleigh, and he goes off on a ship, only to return home when he hears that his father, Royal is ill. Royal, long-estranged from his wife, Etheline, is running away from several things, most significantly his apartment in a hotel that he can no longer afford. He wants to be a part of the family again, so he runs to a Home that is Not A Home, or more accurately in his case, a home that was once his Home. By claiming that he is dying, he is able to run back to the House on Archer Avenue.

The third Tenenbaum kid, Chas, played by Ben Stiller, is the only one who managed to make his way to some sort of stability after a childhood of financial success that was ruined by his father's stealing his earnings. Chas married, had two kids (Ari and Uzi) and got way into running, the perfect metaphor for a Wes Anderson film. He returns home after losing his wife and having a nervous breakdown leading to his obsession with exercise and fire drills. He has a Home, a home which was shared by the Kids, Chas and his wife at one time, and now, it's no longer a place that can feel like home, so he returns to the House on Archer Avenue. The House on Archer Avenue is his home, feels like his home, but he has dragged his children with him and the House on Archer Avenue is NOT their home any longer, and thus Chas and his family have discovered another Home that is Not a Home.

The cinematography of Robert Yeoman is the key to all of Wes Anderson's film, especially in the way that he frames every scene. While as a whole, cinematography in the last twenty years has gone to the idea of the camera as observer, as an extension

of the audience, as a set of eyes. Handheld and Steadicam, ever-increasing amounts of effects that allow a camera to appear to occupy no space whatsoever are now the standard. The Yeoman style is not to make the camera a viewer, but to make the frame into a painting, a postcard, a stage. We are watching a scene that is planar. We are not being inserted in the film, we are watching it at a distance. It's lo-fi, no question, in stark contrast to those films that are so concerned with the mobility of image. Many shots are simply tableaux, camera unmoving, long takes of nearly motionless action.

In *The Royal Tenenbaums*, Yeoman gives the postcard treatment to both the House on Archer Avenue and the Ship which Richie sails on after his tennis match meltdown. We see static shots of the rooms of the Tenenbaum kids; Richie's paintings, Chas' Apple][computer and desk, Margot's dollhouse. We see the ship, an eMail message sent via a TRS-80 computer, in the same format. It's a wonderful visual sense, and it really establishes the mode that Yeoman and Anderson work in for the rest of their films.

At one point, we flash back to Richie and Margot running away to the Natural History Museum. This scene, of Margot and Richie hiding under a bench with the African dioramas filling 90% of the shot. This image is so very Yeoman. This is two characters again running away to a Home that is Not a Home, though the two of them seem to want it to be a home, and that is the key to it all. They do not feel at home in their home, so they leave to make their own. When they return, they erect a tent, and the way that tent is shot is very much in the vein of the way tents are later shot. The interesting thing here is that everyone must make their own Home within their Home that is Not a Home. Margot and Richie aren't at Home because they can't be in their love, Royal is not at Home because even though he's 'dying', the others do not really want him there, and Ari and Uzi are not at Home because their Home is the one that they shared with their late mother. They all have to create a Home, like they did when Richie and Margot went to the Natural History Museum.

The follow-up to *Tenenbaums*, the exceptionally odd

Mind The Mainstream

The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou, is another excellent example of running away into A Home That is Not a Home. The HTINAH is the Belafonte, Steve Zissou's research vessel. This is a gathering place for a variety of character, ranging from a Sikh born on the banks of the Ganges to a David Bowie-singing Brazilian. It's a great science fiction film with a touch of fantasy when it comes to the creatures of the sea. These sailors, along with a crew of interns from the University of Northern Alaska, make a home on the ship, but it really can't be a home. Why not? It has all the trapping of a home: bunks, cooking quarters, a viewing port area (inspired by a dream that Steve Zissou had) and all the necessary audio-video areas. The reason it can't be a home is that it's a debased location. It's the kind of place that places demands on those that live there. It's a place of pill-popping, of long hours of work. It is almost as bad as a pre-Soviet Russian farm, with the interns as the serfs and Zissou himself as the Lord of the manor. For Zissou, it can not be a home either. It's got too many tie-ups to his friend Estaban, who was eaten by the Jaguar Shark. It has become a place of discomfort for Steve, and it shows in his interaction with the journalist played by the brilliant Cate Blanchet. She is asking all the questions that a journalist in her position should be asking. Zissou responds by pulling a gun on her. It is not that he is wanting to scare her, it's that he is so uncomfortable in his own location that it's the only thing he can think of that will deflect the conversation. It's a great scene, if only for the mugging Orca in the background.

Where *The Life Aquatic* excels is showing the effect of a home that is lost. The home of Steve's ex-wife, played by Anjelica Huston, on an island which we are supposed to believe is where Zissou would like to be the mot, but it's where he is most uncomfortable. He makes what we can only assume is a rookie mistake in misidentifying a wash of Vietcong Man-o-Wars as Electric Jellyfish. Steve has lost his connection with the land, but he has also lost his connection with the ship. He is now only tied to revenge against the Jaguar Shark. It's a great part.

The cinematography is the basis for the rest of Yeoman's work on Anderson films. The cut-away side of the Belafonte

provides an early look at how *The Darjeeling Limited*, and especially the Harris house in *Moonrise Kingdom*, are treated. It shows a series of compartments that represent the entirety of the living quarters on the ship, but it also shows the Hibatrail form of the ship and the low-level of true livability of the ship.

Perhaps the least successful as far as theme goes is *The Darjeeling Limited*. It's the story of three brothers who go to India as a way of running away from all the pains of the past. One is running from his pregnant wife, another a broken heart, and the final a vehicular suicide attempt. They are going for a Home that is Not A Home in the convent where their mother has taken refuge from her life as a mother. It's the most obvious of the Homes that is Not A Home because it is their mother, who we see treating them like she would if they were young children, who abandons them there. They came to reconnect, to get the answers that they hope will settle the lives that they have grown tired of, and she leaves them with only a note of explanation.

In the pre-film short, *Hotel Chevalier*, Jason Schwartzman's character is confronted by his ex, played by Natalie Portman in the hotel room he has moved into in Paris. He has tried to create a new home, one that is specifically away from her, and she has invaded it, making it unsuitable as a home. He then goes to India with his brothers and writes the story of the encounter. It is an impressive short film that I really consider to be a part of the film because it tells the story of the film in one 13 minute chunk. It is about creating or discovering a new home and then having it pulled out from under you. This would later be another theme for Anderson.

The cinematography here is far more picture postcard than any other Anderson film, perhaps because of the fact that it is the first real road movie that Anderson has done. The cinematography is still very much composed in the concept of framing situations, but it is also wider, broader, less constrained. The shooting of the train is very much like the shooting of *The House on Archer Avenue*, *Rushmore Academy*, and perhaps most significantly, *the Belafonte*. The picture postcard shooting is beautiful, but at the same time it makes the film feel less

Mind The Mainstream

intimate, which is usually a trademark of the Anderson oeuvre. Perhaps that is the reason for the failure of *The Darjeeling Limited* to connect as strongly as the other Anderson films.

Moonrise Kingdom is a film where every character is, emotionally, a single adjective. Sam Shakushy (Jared Gilman) is *displaced*. Suzy Bishop (Kara Hayward) is *angry*. Scout Master Randy Ward (Edward Norton) is *ordered*. Social Services (Tilda Swinton) is *legalistic*. Walt Bishop (Bill Murray) is *numb*, though there may be more to it than I'm letting on. Frances McDormand's Laura Bishop is *unaffected*, while Captain Sharp (Bruce Willis) is simply *dull*. To me, this makes the fact that characters who are so entrenched in a single emotion can come across for each other, and even fall deeply in love, so fulfilling.

There are two locations which could be considered the Home That Is Not Home. There's the Bishop house, which is lovingly shot as the HTINH, though there's also the island. Suzy and Sam run away from their respective homes that are not at all Homes. Suzy is angry, hates living in her house, and while the film opens with a lovely dolly shot of the house, gliding from room to room along hallways that give off the feeling of 1965 greater than any of the costumes or even the Narrator telling us the date of the scene. It's obvious that this house has been made to feel homey, though it is also apparent that is not a home to Suzy, who spends her time looking through binoculars at the outside world, completely turning her back on the home that is supposed to be the Home for her. She is staring out at the island, and that's where she's hoping to run off to with Sam, in a relationship that's cemented via mail in a series of letters that expose the feelings and troubles of the pair of 'em. The home is not her Home, though she's been born into it. She may as well be living in the suitcase that she carries as she and Sam run off into the wilds of the island.

The island is exactly the kind of Home that is Not a Home that Anderson has specialized in displaying. The island is full of coves, niches, forest knots and hills, the kind of locations where a young pair could get lost and then come to find the love they have half-expressed in writing. They go camping, with

Sam using the Khaki Scout skills he unwittingly acquired after being dismissed by his foster family. The locations they find can not be the home that Suzy and Sam are looking for because they're being hunted by Suzy's parents, the Khaki Scouts and Captain Sharp. They manage some intimate moments in beautifully-constructed camps, but they can never be at home, despite the obvious comfort and security they feel being in the company of each other on the island that Suzy has spent her years surveilling. Perhaps the best example of how the camp can not be a true home is when Suzy and Sam are discovered by Mr. Bishop in the tent. Sam zips shut the tent, but Mr. Bishop simply lifts the tent up and lays it to the side. This is a Home that is completely without security.

What is interesting is the visual presentation of the island compared to that of the Bishop House. The Bishop house is lovingly shot, each frame showing a carefully constructed tableau, while the island is shot in far less a gentle manner, allowed to maintain some of the wildness and is the only portion of the film where there is significant amounts of handheld shooting. It is the campsites that get the Home Not Home treatment. They are framed as lovely postcard images, the kind the pair might have sent to the friends that Sam and Suzy did not have. The shots of the camps are gorgeous, and exactly the kind of photography that we've come to expect from Yeoman.

The films of Wes Anderson have been criticized for being detached and deadpan, neither of which are ill-placed nor are they intrinsically bad concepts. The films of Wes Anderson go to a part of the modern consciousness that does not as readily respond to action but instead find an ennui in the comings and goings of life and success. Doing such heavy ideas in such a light-hearted way requires visuals that are neither flashy nor understated, which is what Yeoman provides in spades.

**2012—*In Defense of Black and White Film,
With Help From Cinequest***

A few years ago a friend of mine wanted to know what the ‘young people’ know (and, presumably, wanted to chat with the cute, young receptionist at work) so he asked her, “Do you know who Humphrey Bogart is?” She said, “No.” He was surprised, and pressed her on this--”Really, you don’t know who Humphrey Bogart is?” And then she gave in and admitted, “I haven’t learned everyone’s name here yet!”

In a similar story, another friend was telling me about her (young) dentist. His office walls are covered with old classic film posters, and since she is a film fan like me she was excited about this. But when she talked to him about it he admitted that they were simply there when he took over the office and he hasn’t bothered to redecorate. He hadn’t seen any of the old movies depicted on his walls, and in fact he has never even seen a black and white film.

Now I understand not everyone is as big of a film buff as I am. And even people who like movies don’t necessarily watch a lot of the old stuff. I understand, I really do. But never having seen any black and white film? Not even knowing who Humphrey Bogart is (even if you’ve never seen one of his films?) That honestly boggles my mind. It’s a clear decline in the cultural and artistic literacy of Americans.

But here’s the thing. Humphrey Bogart died over 17 years before I was born. Why should I assume people who were born a decade or two later should still find him relevant? Why, for that matter, should I find him relevant. And it’s not like anyone was making black and white movies while I was growing up (if you’ve looked up the year of Bogart’s death and done some simple math, you’ll know I was born in 1974.) Off the top of my head I can’t name a single popular, important black and white film from the ‘70s or ‘80s. I’m sure someone can point out a good example, but the fact that I can’t think of one tells me that black and white film wasn’t an important part of my experience during my formative years. [Note: Okay, I thought

The Festival Frame

by Jason Wiener

of one—1980's THE ELEPHANT MAN. But producer Mel Brooks (who kept his name off the film so people wouldn't mistake it for a comedy) had to fight for the right to make it in black and white. And while we were on David Lynch, how about ERASERHEAD? In fact, I distinctly remember in 1993 when SCHINDLER'S LIST came out people were talking about whether audiences would actually come out to see a black and white film. Perhaps this was the turning point—both for me and for the film-watching community at large—for embracing black and white film.

But the point remains, in 1993 I turned 19. Not exactly an old dog, but no longer a puppy. So where does my love of black and white film come from? Not just love, but shock at the idea of having never seen one? Is this some hipster affectation? A presumed cultural elitism built upon a nostalgia for a time and place I never lived in? Why should I look down on people who don't know who Humphrey Bogart is or who've never seen a black and white film if by all rights I had to seek out such experiences—they are not naturally part of the culture from when and where I was born.

I'm lucky to live in the San Francisco Bay Area, where there are many great chances to watch old, classic (or forgotten) black and white film. Not only the regular festivals that show nearly all black and white such as [Noir City](#) or [The San Francisco Silent Film Festival](#), but the big general festivals such as [Cinequest](#) or the [San Francisco International](#) always feature a healthy dose of black and white (including silent programs.) There are also plenty of art-house and repertory screens that regularly play black and white. Two of my favorites are the [Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum](#) (where I volunteer as a docent/gift-shop clerk most weekends) and the [Stanford Theatre](#). So if I am just playing at being a sophisticated fan of good-ol' black and white film, at least I live in a great playground.

But if in 1993 it was a somewhat radical act to release a new film in black and white, by 2012 black and white has firmly taken hold as a viable artistic—and commercial choice. In fact, I'd hazard to guess that a filmmaker who wants to make a major studio project

The Festival Frame

in black and white has less of a fight than if he wants to make a film in 2D only with no 3D option (think of Tim Burton's FRANKENWEENIE. I can see studio heads putting up more of a fight insisting on 3D than vetoing black and white.) And not only did a black and white film—THE ARTIST—win the Oscar for Best Picture, it was the first silent film to do so since WINGS in the very first Academy Awards in 1929 (and if you want to get technical, that award was called “Most Outstanding Production,” not “Best Picture,” but it's always assumed the two are the same.) Now THE ARTIST wasn't quite your stereotypical runaway blockbuster hit (it never actually cracked the top 10 any given week) but given its \$15M budget, it's \$44M North American box office and about twice that overseas (see, silent films travel well without that pesky language barrier!) it would certainly be counted as a commercial success. If black and white film wasn't a feature of my childhood, it's certainly a feature of my here-and-now.

And the time in 2012 when I really noticed the greatness of black and white film was during Cinequest. About half way through the festival I was chatting with friends about our favorite films in this year's festival and I suddenly realized that I kept naming black and white films. So allow me to conclude with a short rundown on the awesomeness of black and white film at Cinequest 2012. And please note, with all but one exception, these are new black and white films. So this isn't a backwards looking nostalgia trip, but a look at the present state of black and white film (and hopefully a preview of the future.)

FAUST (1926): Of course, this is the one old film in the list. Cinequest always has a spotlight on Silent Cinema. And for at least as long as I can remember they've always brought the magnificent Dennis James in to rock the Mighty Wurlitzer organ. And “rock” was the right word for this experience. James (accompanied by Mark Goldstein on the Buchla Lightning Wands) opened by saying that San Jose's California Theater has the most powerful Wurlitzer organ in the country, and he'd be playing it at full blast

that night. And it was freaking amazing! The greatest silent film experience I had ever had up to that point (until a few weeks later when I saw **NAPOLEON** with a full orchestra at the Paramount, but that's another story.)

BATTLE OF THE QUEENS: Now here's a movie that is carried almost entirely by its (black and white) cinematography. In concept a simple documentary about an odd cow-fighting festival in Switzerland. Weird guys who breed and raise fighting cows, nearly as odd spectators. But what really sticks in my mind is the glorious widescreen slow-motion black and white shots of the fighting cows, with a whole hillside of spectators in the background. That and super slow-motion shots of the flies buzzing by the cows or snot flying from the cows' snouts. And if that sounds disgusting, well in black and white it's sublime.

HOW I WAS STOLEN BY THE GERMANS: This is actually an interesting case, as the film is mostly in color. But the use of black and white surprised and impressed me. The story is told in flashbacks, as the hero tells his life story to a little girl (possibly his daughter) during a long car trip. The flashbacks are actually in color, while present day is in black and white. It's a reflection of the greyness of his current life, and how his childhood (for all the bad things that happened) had more life in it than his present day.

KILL ME PLEASE: Black humor, in black and white. It's a comedy about an assisted-suicide clinic off in a remote forest location. Or rather, it's a drama about an assisted-suicide clinic for the first half, and a slapstick comedy for the second half, after a drastic tonal shift. And in either half, black and white is the perfect choice for the tone and the subject matter. I simply couldn't imagine this in color. It's like it takes place in a black and white world. [Which reminds me of [this](#) Calvin and Hobbes comic]

THE GHASTLY LOVE OF JOHNNY X: This was actually shot on the last of the discontinued EASTMAN PLUS-X Negative Film 5231, a fine grain black and white film stock. But even if you're

not a film geek and don't care about this odd piece of film history trivia (it's also the final film appearance of Kevin McCarthy), it's also a thoroughly enjoyable bit of sci-fi/50's teenage delinquents/horror/musical. More than any other film I've listed, this really does feel like it exists in a bizarre black and white world and wasn't just shot in black and white.

SHUFFLE: And finally, this amazing story of a man who lives his life out of order was perhaps the most interesting example of black and white at Cinequest (and, in full disclosure, my personal favorite.) In the Q&A, director Kurt Kuenne revealed that he had actually shot it in color (in fact, intending it to be in very bright colors) but in putting it together and testing screening it with friends, he thought it just wasn't working right. Finally someone pointed out that he had lit it very similarly to his [earlier black and white shorts](#). So he tried SHUFFLE in black and white, and sure enough it worked. However, the DVD distributor insisted

on a color version, so if you [buy the DVD](#), you can see both for yourself and see how they compare. For my money, the story is just as powerful in color, but it only looks 'right' in black and white. Maybe that's because I had seen it twice in black and white before, but really I think it's because (and this is the closest you'll get to a spoiler from me) it's just so darn Capra-esque



Genre Short Films

There may be more short films produced and seen today than at any point in the history of film. YouTube, Vimeo, MUBI, all of them have really taken hold and given new methods for distributing shorts. Even in the era when there would be a short, and sometimes 2, shown in theatres. What was once only seen at the various film festivals around the world can now be seen on computers around the world.

And there's still those festivals.

The short films featured here are only a sampling, and there are so many more out there that you might wanna check out. The best short films still often play at festivals, some of which are what's known as Academy Eligible, where if you win that festival, you are in the running for the Best Short Film Oscar. That's still a big deal.

If you're interested in finding out about more genre films, there are a number of sites around the internet where you can find not only films, but also reviews of short films.

Short of Week (<http://www.shortoftheweek.com/>) is one of the best sites on the net for film fans. They break out the shorts they look at into categories, including SciFi, Romance, etc, etc. It's a great site and if you love short films, it's the place to go!

FILMSshort (<http://www.filmsshort.com/>) is a location for the enjoyment of short films. You can find so many excellent short films there from the last few decades, That's a really awesome thing.

Short Film Central (<http://www.shortfilmcentral.com/>) is a very good location for finding films and where they will be showing at festivals. and with a ton of information on various films and festivals.

There's an awesome journal called The Journal of Short Film (<http://www.thejsf.org/>) which covers short film. It's fairly academic, but it's one of the best venues for covering shorts.

There are also many short film festivals out there. The San Francisco Festival of Short Films (<http://www.sfshorts.org/>) is one, happening in October 2013. There's the San Jose International Short Film Festival. Manhattan Short Film Festival (<http://www.msfilmfest.com/>) , LA Shorts Fest (<http://lashortsfest.com/>), Miami Short Film Festival (<http://www.miamishortfilmfestival.com/>), all some of the most respected US short film festivals.

Lullaby for Lucious and Sumat* by Alvin Campaña** ***Reviewed by Chris Garcia

Love stories, even Surrealist ones, are a hard sell to me. They tend to be difficult to cut through. When I first got a hold of *Lullaby for Lucious and Sumat*, I realised that this was not a typical love story, but a thoroughly reinvented kind of story, the sort that small-time home filmmakers of the silent era were specializing in. It was easy then, the language of film was still being invented, but to do so today, with a hundred-plus years of cinematic grammar built up, it is much harder to make such a break-through.

Amazingly, *Lullaby for Lucious and Sumat* does just that. It creates a vocabulary, and then populates it with a grammar, both visual and auditory, that forces the viewer to re-investigate their perceptions of what has come before. And, utterly contradictory as it may seem, it does it by forcing the viewer to consider, accept and reject, that century of film history and visual expression. Thoroughly post-modernist, but also steeped in a tradition that is older than any any named artistic movement, *Lullaby for Lucious & Sumat* is an absolute achievement in the history of short film.

Let us start with what is easily taken in: the story to be told. The Moon is tired in his role looking over the world, and he sees the woman with the harp and telescope and they fall in love. Without the Moon, the order of things is lost, werewolves aren't able to werewolf, lovers are no longer able to lover, astronauts are left to consult maps. It's a smart movie, and it's so very, thoroughly surrealist in every aspect that it makes love to all the senses. The story, told completely without dialogue, is beautiful and while I felt it was maybe a touch longer than the story demanded, the production was so amazing that I did not notice on my first viewing.

My first of many.

Watching it, I could see a certain combination of the works by Melies (whenever you show a moon with a human face, whether you mean to or not, you're referencing Melies!), of the German Expressionists (with an obvious nod towards *Nosferatu* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*), of the Trick Films of the 1910s, of the artier Disney animations of the 40s, and shorts like *The Life and Death of*

9413: *a Hollywood Extra*. At times, I felt as if I was watching an Eastern European animation of the Soviet era like *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*. It's an absolute visual feast, and what shocked me was the fact that so much of the imagery came from films of the science fiction type. Shots of the cavorting moon, coupled with the images of astronauts, lost in space, all give a taste of science fiction running from Melies to Kubrick. But this is a fantasy film, no mere science fiction bauble! The colors and many of the visuals seem to recall works from as far afield as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pushing Daisies*. At many points, the sense of a digital Guy Maddin begins to leap off the screen. Hell, there's even some Fellini mixed in there. This is a short that acknowledges every other film ever made. It is a multi-media phoenix rising from the ashes of a century of film.

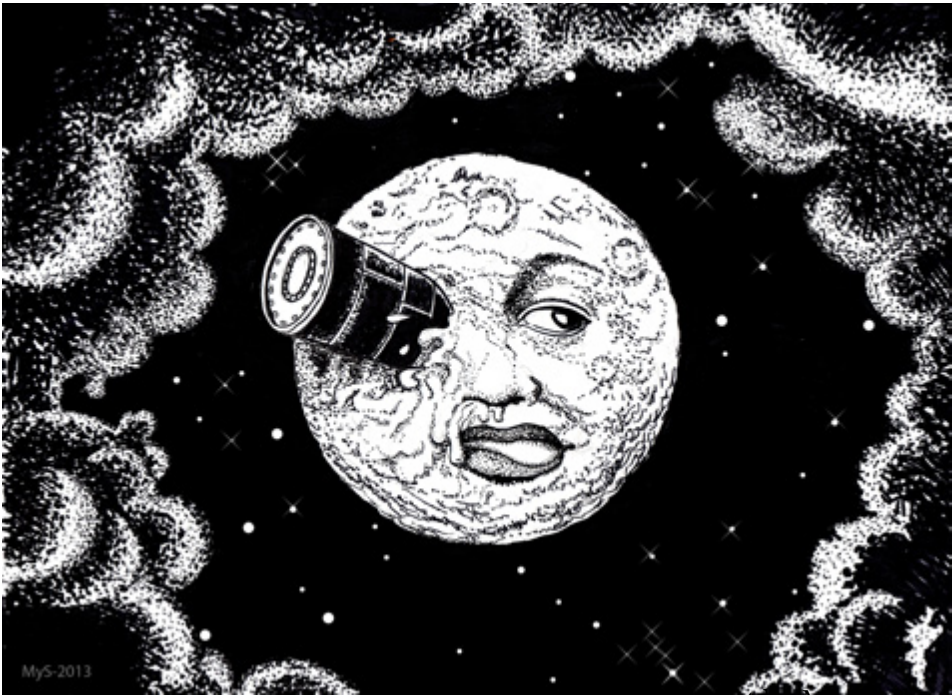
Perhaps it is the texture of this film that is most engaging. The corrugated suit, visible painter's tape as costuming, over-saturated colors, woodgrain, felt, printed paper, and foliage, the sense of a cut-paper collage, at times literally, brings the viewer in deep. The animation is not built to seamlessly blend in with the film, it is meant to give that feeling of assemblage that artists from Louise Nevelson and Joseph Cornell to Jeff Wassmann and Greg Colson have productively mined. There's more than a touch of May Ray and Dali in there, and a timelessness that only makes the appearance of the astronauts that much more humorous and intellectually jarring. There is a dream-like quality to the presentation, which makes the fact that the audience can enter into a dream-state with the characters in what already seems to be a dream-state is a testament to the superiority of the filmmaking. There are Moonbabies, crying and tiny, who are controlled by puppetmasters who are visible in their black body-stockings, but the faces are obviously computer-generated. It's touches like that, the acknowledgement of the traditions of puppetry while still working in the film world of today, that gives so much more to this short.

But this short, so powerfully visual, is significantly more about the music than it is about the images.

Maylee Todd's song *Lullaby For My Fictitious Children Lucious and Sumat* was the basis for the short, which she co-wrote with director Alvin Campaña. Maylee appears in the short as the woman

of the world and sings the song towards the end of the film. It is amazingly beautiful, what else should we expect from such a stunning voice, but her performance as the woman who the the Moon falls in love with is equally beautiful. The music for the entire film is remarkable, tying together a film that is a simple story.

The direction was spectacular, along with the cinematography and the music. Art Direction in a film like this makes the movie, but all together, this film is an absolute feast. Lullaby for Lucious & Sumat is possibly the most gorgeous short film out there right now. It's a production that I pray makes a wide trip around the festival circuit.



Art by Mo Starkey

LIFELESS: #beingkindadeadsortasucks by VP Boyle Reviewed by Chris Garcia

Musicals are a crazy, crazy thing right now. We've had a bunch of musicals cross our desk, and some of them are hilariously awesome. Others, not so much. *LIFELESS: #beingkindadeadsortasucks* is one of the better ones.

The music of *LIFELESS* feels much closer to the traditional musical than to the current crop of 'em which tends to stay closer to either modern pop music (ie. *Glee*) and not so much in the mode of traditional musicals. This opening song gathers all the characters of the film at the party and shows how they all got themselves kinda dead. The music is smart, and EXACTLY sets up the brand of musical comedy that we're about to undertake. I thought it was one of the smartest ways to set the film up. We're introduced to a cast of characters that could easily have come out of any of the high school party films of the 1990s. A punk chick, the incredibly hot nerd, goody-goody, the Wicca chick, the hot foreign chick, the gay best friend, so many of the typical characters you'd expect to see. It half-reminded me of *Not Another Teen Movie*, as it so perfectly pinpoints each character type. That sets things up.

The group at the party ends up as a bunch of the undead due to a combination of drugs, magic herbs and Liquid Plumber. The film then becomes the story of the kids dealing with having to be only sorta dead. There's a good deal of the typical horror effect over-use, but it's all very tame compared to some. The songs that inhabit the space are wonderful, infectious even. The best of them, *Out of Our Life*, is so very strong. It's one of those movie musical segments like *Roxie* or the *Cell Block Tango* from *Chicago* where they leave the world of film and give you a scene that plays like it's theatrical, on a distant stage. The song itself is a wonderful showcase for the women of the cast and they take full advantage of the opportunity. It's lovely, and it's also followed by a direct reference to the show *Glee*, which is both funny and amps up the Auto-tune to make a point.

This is somewhat of a tent-pole film. It has high highs, but there is a bit of slack between them. One song, performed by the

Gay Best Friend, seems shoe-horned in, though it is a nice showcase for the singer. The search for the cure was also a bit of the slack, but really, you forget all about those moments once you get to the meat of the picture, those marvelous songs.

The direction is precise. That's the key to the film. A good director can elevate a film, and here, all the elements slide together with nary a seam, and while the script isn't perfect, the pacing is right and the movement is fluid.

So, *LIFELESS* is well worth watching, and it's a lot of fun. You'll find yourself humming the marvelous songs long after the last credits roll by, but you might find it a moment or two too long.



The Charon Incident

Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia

London is a city I know a good bit. It's a place that I would be in a heartbeat. There's something about even seeing images of it that moves me, and when it is put in peril, I am especially taken. That is what drew me into *The Charon Incident* at first, but it was some exceptional filmmaking that held on to me.

The film starts with a dark and strident soundtrack, which might be a bit heavy on the artificial claps, and shots of London that form a heavy introduction to the concept, and the use of the music throughout the film gives a sense of foreboding. Even in the sections which are heavy on the dialogue, we're hit with tone and music that imbues the scene with tension. The Charon Virus is a biological agent that is going to be unleashed. We're taken into the world of brokers and extra-governmental agents that deal in mayhem and death. The agent is an American in England who is on his last mission. It's the 'One Day Away From Retirement' story, only on the other side. I guess that makes it a 'One Last Big Score' movie. The way it's made is far smarter than I'd have expected from what is essentially the story of a terrorist and his motivations. There's a little of the feeling that this is a moral matter. This is a film about expectations. We're expecting that the agent is delivering a terrible weapon, but what we don't expect are the outcomes: both large and small.

The sound design, the use of locations and especially the cinematography is fairly spectacular. There are shots that made me dizzy, one of a spiral staircase that spoke of a century of thrillers and made me a bit dizzy. The entire mis-en-scene plays the tension and the disquiet up, while at the same time minimizing the feeling of the length. That's a key consideration in a short of twenty minutes. If it feels long, if there's a moment of pause in the action and the story, it's almost certainly lost, and while there does seem to be a bit of extra baggage in this script, it plays smart with what it's got. There's never a moment when I started to wander away from the story.

Two things drew me away from the story, slightly. The first was the fact that one of the characters was named 'Dr. Drew', which

made me giggle. One should check character names against figures in the popular culture because I couldn't see beyond the image of Dr. Drew Pinsky doing a *Loveline* episode about the Charon virus. It's a shame because the actor plays the role so well, like a concerned scientist with a mission, but I couldn't get around the name, which I guess is my bad. The other problem is almost exactly the opposite. Dr. Smith, who didn't make me think about the character from *Lost in Space*, is a performance that is somewhat stilted and stiff. Her delivery pulls down the scene where we're given the scientific content and the explanation of the virus.

So, this is a film that may not be perfect, but what film is? It makes its marks hard and fast with impressive production values and hyper-intelligent reasoning. When I look at a genre short, the first thing I try to grok is whether or not the filmmakers had an internal logic, and I never doubted that for a second watching *The Charon Incident*. The ending is powerful, smart, and most importantly, real in its paranoia.

Isolates ***reviewed by James Bacon***

I really enjoyed this fifteen minute short film.

Perhaps it was the really slick production quality, the hospital set was really smart, while the effects during the action sequence were just right, but the question of a weaponised human, perhaps augmented, born this way, a super soldier perhaps, isolated from the real world, her only point of contact, being truly human, asks more questions than it answers, but questions for the viewer, about what it is to be human, and what it is to relate to other people, and the power of perhaps love or just friendship. Real friendship, not a click on a screen.

I obviously enjoyed this film, and the two main actors are the film, one a doctor, there to help, but obviously in a system, the other a cage being, with true humainty. It is during the time when the super soldier has escaped, and the doctor, who has insisted on helping to recapture her, that one sees the power of the super

soldier, and the interaction between the two characters is just stunning.

To say much more, is to spoil what is a terrific little movie, suffice to say, many basic questions are asked of the viewer, and at no stage, once the weaponry is clear, does one wonder what is occurring, it is an easy film to watch but heart breaking to think about, with perhaps a quation at the end, as to what next.

PLURALITY

Reviewed by James Bacon

The Bentham Grid is so believable, electronically linking peoples DNA to a grid, that knows you by touch, everything from locks to sales points to bannisters just needing a touch to identify and of course pin point you. With law enforcement getting legal access to grid data, fugitives have been captured in record numbers, the crime rate is justification for the loss of privacy

Now, to say much more is to ruin this film. It is really very enjoyable.

The graphics connected to the grid, the nice slightly noir voice over explaining the grid, the ISIU - Dept of Immigration Special Investigations Unit, all working so well, making the setting so tangible, and of course the concept, its a brilliant idea, but this is a story, that goes beyond the idea.

I have to say, it is to the quality of current TV shows, I was wondering if it was more of a pilot that a short film, and felt of that quality. Jacob Foucault is a superb lead character acted brilliantly by Jeff Nissani who in a sense made half the show, while Samantha Strelitz was a perfect choice to play against him, which she did stunningly well.

Direction is by Dennis Liu who makes this story by Ryan Condal really work. I just hope that there is more to this, than a one off short.

2076

Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia

Post-Apocalyptic science fiction is one of those sub-genres that one must buy into heavily to be of any use. The idea that the world as we know it can melt away, sending us into a time where a few survive among a few scattered remains of what was once a viable human landscape can be difficult to buy. It's usually best when we're thrown into the situation and we don't have to consider how this strange remnant world came to be. That's what *2076* does, it simply throws us into the deep end, what once was a city is now sanddunes and scree. We find ourselves viewing the work of two men, covered from head to toe, breathing with gasmasks, as if the air will scour their lungs. They work searching for water, it seems, and eventually one comes across another person.

That's pretty much it.

The thing about this one is that it's very well shot, the music is excellent, and while the acting is muted due to the masks, and the computer-generated images of an interface is well-done and doesn't feel out of place. The problem is that while there is obviously a story here, there is little to hook onto. There is no dialogue, and the story is short, and ends almost exactly as you figure it will. It's gorgeously shot, the landscape lends itself to beautiful visuals, and the music is moody, lends an air of disquiet, if not mystery, but other than production values, there's little here that gripped me. It's not a wasted 8 minutes, but in the end, it felt forgettable.

Retrocognition

Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia

There are times, it seems, when a film has to go further than an audience will allow. This is probably a bad way to start a look at a short I greatly admire, but it's true. At 18 minutes, *Retrocognition* is a film that wears out its welcome, that runs further away from an audience than I'd have hoped, but it is also a film which runs through its material so thoroughly, with such depth, that it goes long.

But it rewards the strong.

Eric Patrick is a fine filmmaker. I was fortunate enough to see his film *Ablution* at Cinequest one of my first years on the programming team. His film *Startle Pattern* from 2006 is one of the better films I saw during the period when I was watching upwards of 1000 shorts a year. Here, he has turned to photo manipulation animation with a distinctive style that makes every image seem as if its been folded in on itself leaving creases. The images move with fluidity, but at the same time there is a motion-type that gives you the feeling that these are wind-up robots tottering across the scene. The dialogue is made-up of sound-bytes from various television programs of the 1950s. The theme song from snippets of television theme songs. The look is certainly a bit of *Leave It To Beaver* and *My Three Sons*, while the story is much darker.

The problem is once the over-whelming sensation of the visual import wears off, you are left with a fine story told in such a way as to propel the viewer, but it's also a long-trip. A LONG trip. The visuals do over-power a bit, and that's part of the strength of the film. The message, that we are surrounded with messages, some of them completely divorced from our time and place, is strong, but it takes digging to get there.

Retrocognition is a wonderful piece of animation. It's fascinating, but it's tiring, exhausting. If you take it in, give yourself over fully, you'll be rewarded.

Other O.S.

Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia

When I think of the ills of society, almost always my first thoughts are of how technology is perverted by those who think that they're doing right. There's a thread of this apparent in all science fiction, that technology has an evil side just waiting to be exploited. This is never more apparent than when machines are given the ability to think, as in *Other O.S.* starring Tim Daly of *Private Practice*!

This could have come out of an issue of *Analog* from the late 1980s. A neuroscientist has become a recluse in pursuit of the secrets of the human mind because his sister has been in a comatose state since they were kids. He lives surrounded by technology. He's brilliant, but trapped in the world that is his home/lab/sister's care facility. He put out a code contest that a brilliant student wins. Eight million lines of code are what it takes the human mind to process the phrase "I think, therefore I am."

That's a really cool concept!

The kid basically muscles his way into the house, which is wired like Bill Gates' place. The kid developed an interface which figured out the eight million lines of code, and that led to him uploading the OS into the house's control program. At that point, I started feeling the sensations that I had picked up when I watched *Demon Seed*! Since the house is connected to his sister's life support, she begins to control the house, and she is very demanding. She is still a child in her mind, and she demands that her brother plays her games and keep her company, but at the same time she tries to control her brother. This leads to questions of what makes a person a person, what is AI, and how can we defend ourselves from our own desires for connection.

The program, of course, becomes sentient, as always happens in this kind of film. The story is pretty tense, though at times it falls into the trap of being over-wrought. Tim Daly as the neuroscientist is pretty damn good, and the script, while not exceptional, makes good use of his talent. The pacing is good, and at 22 minutes that's something that is a major positive. I was a bit disappointed in the music. It didn't add anything to the film, really. It obviously wanted to be an emotional definer, but it really just ended up being there, holding off the silence. I thought that the shooting was pretty positive. The production design, and especially the set, was strong,

giving a feeling of both the Now and the Not-So-Distant Future!

Overall, *Other O.S.* is a strong short, and while it does beat you a little over the head with its message, at least it does so in a way that is cinematically entertaining!

Office Hours ***Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia***

Sometimes, it's the simplest concepts that draw me in the furthest. It's rare to find a short that's both conceptually funny and executed well-enough to make me want to watch it again and again.

Office Hours is one such comedy.

The shot is fixed: a desk with someone sitting in a chair on the other side. The person keeps changing, sometimes after only a few moments, others linger a bit longer and return. Apparently, we're in the eyes of a professor whose students are all trying to get away with not having turned in a paper, or having turned one in that isn't their own. They've got every excuse you've ever thought of, and a few new ones that were endlessly amusing. What makes it work as a shot of a full 8 minutes is that there's no trickery, none at all. Exactly what you expect is exactly what you get. There's one shot, unexcitingly framed, and it works as a way to get us to focus on the ballsiness/foolheartiness of the students lying their asses off! It's a fun short, and one without a wasted moment.

A Conversation About Cheating with My Time Traveling Future Self ***Reviewed by Christopher J Garcia***

There are things that titles tell you. A title like "A Conversation with My Time Traveling Future Self" says "Expect science fiction comedy played against a hilarious relationship situation." That's what I had in my mind, and in the opening moments of this slickly-made eight minute shorts, it seems that's the direction we're being taken.

And then it's not that kind of film. It's something else entirely.

The story is a complex one, well simple for a time travel film, perhaps. A gentleman called Stan has developed a way to travel through time for limited periods, and the version from the future arrives just as he's about to give up on cheating on his love. That's the simple part. What follows is a conversation not only about what they're doing in the moment, but on what's going to happen, and the inevitability of it all. There's a lot here about memory, about the way we carry around a version of the world that others might not. Each traveler carries a story, a story that they alone own and must reconcile with the reality of the world they wake up in.

Nothing changes, both Stans say, only the details.

One of the Stans knows the path of the relationship with his girlfriend, and why it means he has to keep going back into his lifestream. He's trying to make his future self do things that he might not want to do, even though he knows it's futile to try and change the future. The older traveler is trying to capture something, the ultimate intangible gift from the past.

Yeah, it's that kind of film.

It takes a dramatic turn at the end, particularly in the way the two Stans interact with one another. One is injured, the other is clueless, and at first so is the audience. When it turns and everyone is enlightened, it becomes heartbreakingly good. The acting is pitch perfect, Bobby Campo does an excellent job playing both sides of the same coin in the pair of Stans. It's a lot harder to play the same character who has two different sets of memories than you think. Campos had to come up not only with two different sets of emotional responses to the stimulus of the story, but had to come up with what DIDN'T change because of the situations.

The way it's shot, with little in the way of loving close-ups and not nearly too many obvious splitscreens to play up the two of the same guy at once thing, is gorgeous. Not overly-slick, though the opening shots might give you the impression that you're about to see something that's made with loving camera-glide. With the brief tinge of voice-over and the camerawork, I was first put in mind of a Steven Soderbergh film, but it didn't stay that way, which I think is for the best. It's got the slickness in the way some of the best short films do, but there's nothing showy about it save for the script, which is so

smart and dead-on with its timing. It's as good a short as you'll find in the SciFi genre.

This is a film that turns you around, gives you one thought, set the table for you, then serves you something you completely don't expect. It's a marvelous bit of writing and a fine piece of filmmaking.



Art from Charlie Irons

Magniloquent by Michael Mastronardi

There are some short films that are made for those of us who watch a lot of short films and pretty much for us alone. These usually place themselves squarely in the middle of what my pal Jordan called 'egotistically post-modernist' genre. They're films about films, and specifically about making films. The typical example of these are films that break all the rules of what critics like, but do so knowingly and tellingly, usually by having a filmmaker doing voice-over and acting in the lead role. I see a few of these a year when viewing and they can be a real downer as they are so often too clever by half.

But when they hit, they're fucking genius!

Such is *Magniloquent* by Michael Mastronardi.

Let's start from the beginning. Mike is a college film student coasting through his years at Unnamed University. He spends his time watching movies and lazing around his Grandmother's house. She's a little on the senile side and it shows in a performance that is a bit over-the-top, but fun nonetheless. The meat of the movie is Mike, played by Mastronardi, slacking and having the kind of experience that film programmers who went to film school all share. He's short on inspiration, and likely on talent, but at the same time he's eager, excited and enthusiastic. The talent ain't there.

But his grandma is!

See, he got the bug when he made a movie with his grandma and she was a genius, though now forgotten. She's funny, and fun, and is the heart of the film. You kinda hate Mike, he's an uninspired slacker who can't make it happen himself. Grandma, she's awesome, and the fact that everyone else has forgotten her only makes her better!

There are a couple of downers about the film. The big one is that the sound mix isn't great. The voice over is over-powering at points, but it's so funny it is what makes the film work. Is it worth 15 minutes? Absolutely! It's comedy that rewards all those days you spent watching Rainer Fassbinder films in college.

Films Reviewed

2076 by Stew Redwine

A Conversation About Cheating with My Time Traveling Future Self
by Pornsak Pichetshote

<http://www.facebook.com/AConversationAboutCheating>

The Charon Incident by Allan Wylie

<http://www.facebook.com/TheCharonIncident/>

Isolates by Allan Liang

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJjUKZIA5Fs>

LIFELESS - #beingkindadeadsortasucks by VP Boyle

<http://www.facebook.com/LifelessMovieMusical>

Lullabye for Lucious and Sumat by Alvin Campaña

Trailer available at <http://vimeo.com/43288901>

Magniloquent by Michael Mastronardi

<http://tud11585.wix.com/juicyfroproductions/magniloquent>

Office Hours by Hollie Lavenstein

Other O.S. by Donovan Davis

Plurality by Dennis Liu

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzryBRPwsog>

Retrocognition by Eric Patrick

<http://www.retrocognition.ericpatrick.net/>

The Back Section

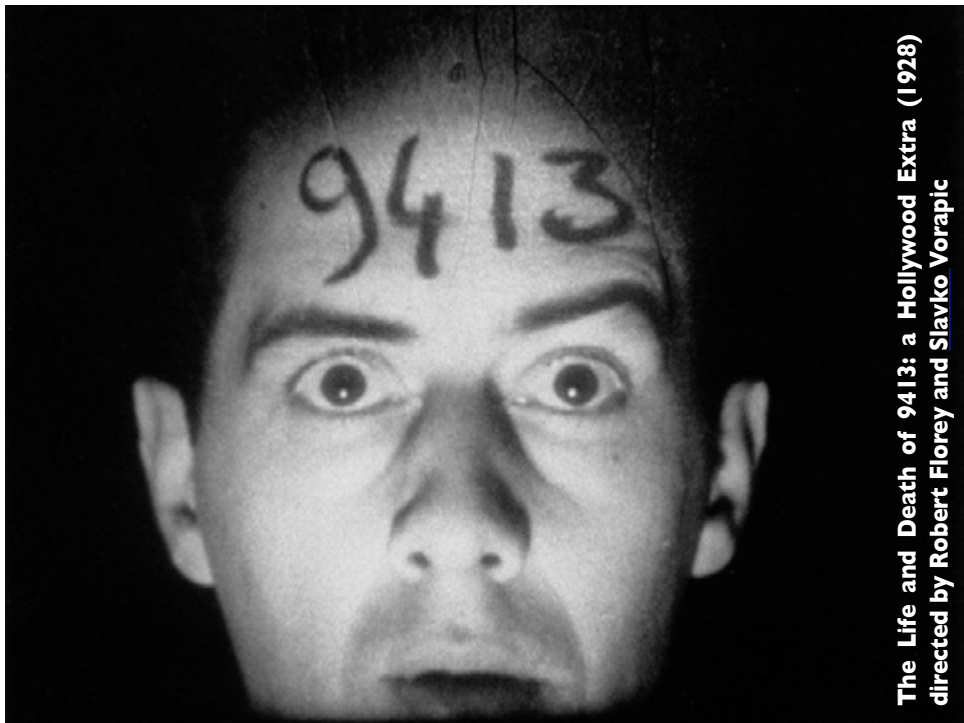
On The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra A Prose Poem by Jay Crasdan

Progress cardboard building shadows shine soft-edged focus. Trains to nowhere cross in the sky, the sun overs, irregular, in that kitchen of creation. Camera carries message - a Hollywood sans sign, for now.

9413, wide eyed everyman, comes to find his dream projected against an office wall. A kitchen table art dream of a man whose name is lost when precision is written upon his forehead. 13, lovely as a sweet star's pincurl passing; 15 never anonymous behind the mask of carved cinematic perfection.

Outlines, stencils, super-imposed hands that gather for a star born from the nothing our hero envies, fails to grasp. Number replaced with symbol speaking louder 'an Jolson. 9413 can not make marks, No Casting Today calls for him and him alone.

9413 dies: not forgotten, never known. A conveyor to Heaven takes him from a land of scorpions. In silhouette, he rises, to light, reflection, God, angles for Angels imposed on spires of dreamier metals.



The Life and Death of 9413: a Hollywood Extra (1928)
directed by Robert Florey and Slavko Vorkapic