

Black Maria Film + Video Festival

Amherst College, Merrill 4 — Sunday, 29 March 2009, 3.00 PM
Introduction — Gene Gort, University of Hartford

Ichthyopolis — 9 min. DVD by André Silver, Wilmington, NC

Grand Prize - Animation

Creative wizard André Silver has created a techno-animation wonderfully populated with a singing gold fish, an opera diva, claymation characters and watercolor washes in this digitally triumphant work.

Bob's Knee — 4 min. DVD and 16mm film by Michael Attie, Menlo Park, CA.

Audience Choice/ADA Award

"How do we walk?"— Frustrated by the fallibility of his joints, a home garage inventor employs unconventional methods to understand the mechanics of the human knee. *Bob's Knee* is a delightfully offbeat and appealing ditty for all ages.

Qualia Diaries — 16 min. DVD by Emily Mode, Brooklyn, NY

Juror's Choice Award

The word "qualia" refers to the internal and subjective aspect of sense perceptions, arising from stimulation of the sense by phenomena. The filmmaker of this arresting work explores her struggle with Epilepsy yet this is not a predictable exploration of selfhood. Rather it is a multi-layered exploration, a rich and also conceptual expedition into the psyche, into the experiential, voyage to another place, with references to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* or *Through the Looking Glass* as it seeks both the self as well as another self, another realm as it bravely treks through the filmmaker's experience of "qualia" and the ramifications of her Epilepsy.

The Death of Grandma Gladys — 8 min. by Kate Lain, Bozeman, MT

Director's Choice Award

The filmmaker found old photos of her grandmother after she died and in those pictures her grandmother most often wore men's clothing and usually seen with female pals in playful poses. The filmmaker talks about the intriguing images and the possible subtext both culturally and personally.

Night Train — 3.5 min. by John Zissovici, Ithaca, NY

Jury's Citation Award

In 2003 Oscar Peterson embarked on what was likely the last of his more than 20 concert tours in Japan, performing at the Blue Note clubs in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka. Likely traveling by train the musician passed some of the nation's 10,000 driving ranges perched atop high rise buildings on Japan's skylines. It is not known if Oscar Peterson ever visited any rooftop driving ranges or if he had expressed interest in them, but thanks to him and GoogleEarth, the film brings together golf and jazz, Japan's two great obsessions while barreling along on "C-Jam Blues" on the aerial fast track of Peterson's famed "Night Train."

Les Chaises — 9 min. HD (16:9) Video by Vincent Grenier, Ithaca, NY

Juror's Choice Award

Sunlight is projected through wind swept leaves on red vinyl-padded folding chairs, a sleepy day in the country in upstate New York. — VG

"With Vincent Grenier's *Les Chaises* (2008), the suspended moment is loosened and stretched, and like the wind that blows throughout, there's no sense of where it starts or stops. The HD views, which should quiet once and for all any remaining skeptics of the medium, are appropriately breathtaking; under the rustling leaves of a quiet afternoon subtle

gradations of light and shadow, red and green, form. In one recurring shot, Grenier fixes on the vinyl surface of a red chair, inviting us to sit and get lost in the image. The mottled reds, seemingly endless in their variation, fill the screen, and become more than an image, more than just an abstract rendering of a commonplace object, but an experience of the sublime. In Grenier's hands, the HD camera becomes a tool for discovery, a way of seeing, an open path."

— *Shadows and Outlaws, The 12th edition of the New York Film Festival's Views from the Avant-Garde* by Genevieve Yue.

Yours Truly — 7 min. by Osbert Parker, London, England

Jury's Choice Award

Film icons burst through lost layers of yesterday's emulsion in this astounding assemblage of noir cinema clips and recreations, told as a mixed media mystery/romance with unexpected plot twists as the lovers find more than they bargain for when their two worlds of animation and live-action cutouts collide in a frenzied tribute to celluloid history.

Nora — 35 min. DVD by Alla Kovgen, Somerville, MA

Grand Prize — Narrative

An extraordinary, thoroughly captivating narrative/dance film shot in South Africa. *Nora* is based on childhood memories of dancer Nora Chipaumire who was born in Zimbabwe in 1965 and now resides in Manhattan. Amid stunning close-ups of drumming, and panoramas of majestic African scenery Nora's striking presence amid local tribal members brings to life a rich and expressive heritage, an amalgam of modern/interpretive dance and indigenous performances. The protagonist creates a visually poetic portrait of her life in this cinematic tour de force. The original score was composed by a Zimbabwean legend, Thomas Mapfumo.

Circles of Confusion — 10 min. DVD by Phoebe Tooke, San Francisco, CA

Jury's Citation Award

In this reflexive work, a filmmaker's mechanical process of making a film is part of the work, but more importantly this is a work about the filmmaker from New Orleans, Stevenson J. Palfi. This film, which includes images of Palfi's ruined photos and films, acts as a testament to the creative process itself and to the filmmaker whose documentary "Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together," was a 1982 look at three generations of Big Easy piano greats, Palfi died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound Dec. 14 2005, at his home, where he left a suicide note. He'd been severely depressed after Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters destroyed years of files, photographs and other possessions at his home in the Mid-City area.

Stigmata — 1.5 min. by Tony Buba, Pittsburgh, PA

Jury's Citation Award

The long standing, sometimes bad-boy of offbeat documentary returns to the Black Maria with another one of his good-natured stabs at the status quo and injustices of rust belt America. Buba knows well the belief of the faithful that the marks corresponding to those left on Jesus' body by the Crucifixion, and said to have been impressed by divine favor on the bodies of St. Francis of Assisi is sacrosanct for many Roman Catholics. But the idiosyncratic filmmaker turns the legend on its ear as he hovers like a monk over the abandoned steel mill in his hometown of Braddock, PA.

The Idiot Stinks — 2 min. by Helder K. Sun, Los Angeles, CA

Director's Choice Award

The Idiot Stinks is an utterly insane, inventive, truly outlandish and riotous scratchboard animation about one character's wild displeasure with another character.

Temporary Services — 3.5 min. by Dina Noto, Los Angeles, CA

Director's Choice Award

This highly amusing animated work is a send up of the male ego. It playfully retells the maker's experience as a fertility clinic nurse who could almost always read the physical condition of a client based on the motility and configuration of a man's spermatozoa.