

Global Film Fest raises awareness

The Global Visions Film Fest is upon us! From 1-4 November, a collection of world-spanning will be shown in Edmonton, and a few Gateway writers got to take an early look at some of the showcased films.

Strong Coffee

Coffee is the second most traded commodity on the international market. This is reason enough to look into the message presented in Sharon Bate's movie *Strong Coffee*—although you might want to look elsewhere.

The movie tells the story of the Café Femenino Foundation in Peru; the foundation is a group of women coffee farmers trying to make ground in a very patriarchal marketplace. By showing their lives, *Strong Coffee* has a great message of both equal rights for women in Peru and remaining conscious of coffee consumption.

However, Bates' movie is trying to take the role of the consumer one step further and promote sexual equality within many of the underdeveloped nations which constitute the "coffee belt"—where the world's supply of coffee is grown.

Although the message of the movie is important, the presentation of *Strong Coffee* is flat, like something found on PBS at 4am. Any information found in the film can quickly be found on the website, so save your film festival dollars for another, more entertaining film.

—Tom Reikie

Super Amigos

If I hadn't be told beforehand, I never would have thought *Super Amigos* was a documentary. You wouldn't expect it from a film about a motley crew of *lucha libre* fighting social injustices in Mexico; it's a premise that would collapse under its own

silliness if the execution wasn't so clever. *Super Amigos* is very charming: it makes these Social Luchadors seem like real-life super heroes who all happen to have the same power: social consciousness.

Each of the five *luchador* has a story of their origins, told through comic book-style animation. The film moves between Fray Tormenta, Super Gay, Super Barrio, Super Ecologista, and Super Animal, all fighting to defend and empower the people of Mexico, albeit in very different ways. Super Animal, for example, fights against animal cruelty. In the film, he rallies 500 complete strangers to sign a petition against cowardly bullfighters and the murder of innocent bulls.

Despite tackling real problems that plague Mexico, the film isn't mired by its heavy issues. Like the Amigos themselves, the film manages to be both colourful and insightful. By the end, you can't help but root for these Super Amigos.

—Ramin Ostad

War Dance

War Dance is a thought-provoking film that quickly divides into two subplots. The first introduces three children (Rose, Nancyb, and Dominic) living in a displaced person's camp in northern Uganda.

The trio describe in horrific detail the murders they have witnessed—or were forced to commit as child soldiers—prior to being moved to the camp. The second plot line revolves around the children's school at the camp, showing the students preparing for a national music and dance competition.

The two story lines contrast effectively, showing that children who have experienced the most gruesome horrors of war can still find solace in music and dance. The most poignant aspect of

the film is their innocent nature: even though they've witnessed (and survived) some of war's worst atrocities, these kids still become unnerved at the prospect of competing in front of thousands of people and not bringing home any trophies.

Although a bit too glossy, this film is definitely worth seeing, both for its political insights and its colourful music and dance scenes.

—Maria Kotovych

Anita: The Beekeeper

This May, *Anita: The Beekeeper* toured around rural India, screened from the back of a brightly coloured truck. The film is part of Girl Stars, a UNICEF-sponsored series that portrays true stories of girls overcoming socio-economic barriers to become role models of female independence.

The story is very simple, summed up by the young narrator's adorable monologue: "Anita made money from honey so that she could go to school." The short film is clearly geared for children, and director Vikash Nowlakra keeps the tone of this film vibrant and imaginative, telling Anita's tale like a storybook.

Anita Khushwaha is now 17 years old and attends college. She says, "I thought, if these little insects can achieve so much, why can't I achieve anything? I decided to nurture the bees and become like them and remain busy like them."

Bring along your inner child and prepare to smile.

—Jeffrey Klassen

A Promise To The Dead

Around the time of Augusto Pinochet's death last December, director Peter Raymont was in Santiago, Chile with exiled writer Ariel Dorfman. Dorfman,



who served as the artistic and cultural liaison to the socialist government of the early 1970s, was forced into exile in 1973 after Pinochet's oppressive military regime took hold in a violent coup on 11 September.

The documentary is a keen insight into the experience of living in exile; the feeling of displacement and distance from home shines through as Dorfman revisits the streets of Santiago and plays catch-up with other key figures in Allende's former company. His testimony of the final days of the Allende administration and the dark times that lay ahead for Chile read just like his poetry.

Still, the film captures just enough genuine emotion from the effect of exile on Dorfman's family dynamic—and a parallel sense of loss and longing in the families who fell victim to the more recent 9/11—to avoid being gushy.

—Matt Hubert

24 Days in Brooks

Set in Brooks during the 2005 Tyson Foods / Lakeside packing plant strike that received nationwide attention, this short documentary interviews

workers, union leaders, the mayor, and others to give a glimpse at the amazing cultural diversity of Brooks and how this affected the strike, accompanied with footage from the demonstration. Though slanted (somewhat justifiably) against Tyson Foods, the film provides excellent insight from the immigrant workers that populate the plant on the difficulty of such a life.

As a native of Brooks, Alberta, it was easy to determine that the film's overall fault lies in the continual assertion that race was not an issue during the strike, despite undeniable racial tensions that were mounting in the town prior—tensions which continue to exist.

As a resident, I found this disparity hilarious, but it led to an oddly dissonant overall tone to the film. While the director could have used the strike as a springboard to go into a more intimate look at race relations in one of Canada's most provocatively diverse cultural islands, this obvious and far more pertinent direction is ignored in this decent, but ultimately superficial, look at the strike itself.

—Jon Kmech

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Joe Orton's

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- Mike Percy (Dean, School of Business)
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