

Global film festival visits State College

By Lauren Ingeno
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

What began as a small film festival on a street in downtown Manhattan has grown into a famous worldwide event.

And this Sunday at the State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave., Penn State students will have the chance to be a part of it.

For the third year, State College will be one of 203 cities across six continents to host the 12th annual Manhattan Short Film Festival — the world's first global film festival.

At the festival, audiences will watch 10 short films, all less than 15 minutes in length and submitted from 10 different countries around the world.

When the films are over, audience members in every viewing location vote for the winning short film.

Before the 10 finalists were

If you go

What: The Manhattan Short Film Festival

Where: The State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave

When: 4, 7 and 9:30 p.m. Sunday

Details: Tickets \$6 for students and seniors, \$8 for public

picked, there were 440 entries submitted from 43 countries.

And while the voting is a fun aspect, Nicholas Mason, the creator of the festival, said the event has greater implications.

"The same day you're watching those films at Penn State, they're watching them in Katmandu," Mason said.

"When's the last time you were connected to something in

Katmandu or Nepal? This isn't on the Internet. If you don't walk into that cinema on that day, then you're not a part of it."

Mason said the greatest part of the festival is the human connection of all the audiences across the world watching the films during the same week, which is why the short films will never be posted on the Internet.

Throughout his life, the films he saw with a group of people were the ones he remembered the most, Mason said.

"When you go see your football team play in a stadium and when you watch it on TV that's a huge difference," Mason said.

Sam Broscoe, president of the Student Film Organization, attended the event last year and said that though the films were submitted from all over the world, many tackled issues that were relatable.

"For the most part the films don't

really conquer huge issues," Broscoe (senior-film and video) said.

"One was about a girl who was jealous of her cat because her parents pay more attention to it than they do to her. Those are the films I like best."

The festival, which began in 1998 on a street in Manhattan, was moved to Union Square Park and expanded in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, Mason said.

"The park became like a shrine. We put out all these films because the city asked us to. Then everyone who was covering Ground Zero wrote a story about it and people started submitting a lot more films," Mason said.

By 2004, seven states took part in the festival and by 2005 Europe was taking part.

By then, Mason decided that the winning film — once judged by famous actors like Susan Sarandon

— should be voted on by the public viewers.

"It became bigger than us," Mason said.

"People took it to a different dimension."

State Theatre Marketing Director Kristy Cyone said she thinks the festival will continue to grow and is important to attend.

"It's really neat to get to participate with a lot of different people from all over the world," Cyone said.

"And it's really interesting to look into the future of theatre. A lot of filmmakers start out with shorts."

In the last 10 years, at least eight films from the festival have gone to the Oscars the next year.

Mason said he urges students to participate in this global project.

"It's the stepping stone for the next generation," he said.

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Film documents benefits of Artistic Horizons

By Karina Yücel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

"Exploring the Arts" — a documentary premiering on WPSU — explores the freeing effect art can have for those with mental disabilities.

The film aims to raise community awareness for people with disabilities, said Michele Rojas-Rivera, Class of 1999, an art instructor and the founder of Artistic Horizons.

Artistic Horizons brings together individuals who have special needs and allows them to explore arts like music, theater and painting, she said.

"The documentary itself is more of the awareness of what we are doing and the importance of bringing art to these individuals," Rojas-Rivera said. "We are looking to get more students involved in volunteering and meeting these inspirational artists."

Often, this community is overlooked and forgotten, Rojas-Rivera said, but the documentary will show them in a new light.

The documentary is 30 minutes long and premieres at 9:30 tonight on WPSU, Penn State Public Broadcasting-Channel 3.

It will play again at 6:30 p.m. Saturday Sept. 25.

Rojas-Rivera and Joshua Mallory, Class of 2010, put together the documentary so Rojas-Rivera would be able to collect donations for the project.

"We got a grant from the state and an award from the state so that we could put this movie together, so that if someone wanted to donate money to the program, I wouldn't have to tell them about it, I would be able to show them," Rojas-Rivera said.

Rojas-Rivera said she found the perfect filmmaker in Mallory. At the time he was a Penn State student and unbelievably affordable, she said.

Originally, the film premiered in December 2009 at the State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave.

Because of a larger than expected attendance, Artistic Horizons expanded the showings at the recommendation of the State Theatre

and contacted WPSU, Rojas-Rivera said.

Art therapist Rhonda Stern occasionally teaches at Artistic Horizon on Mondays and Tuesdays.

"I think art helps [these individuals] in many ways," she said. "I think one of the biggest things it does is gives [these individuals] a way to connect with each other as artists. It also helps them discover meaning in life."

Stern said she recalled a day at Artistic Horizon when there was someone who could barely move at all and who seemed to have made little progress on the art project they had been working on all day.

After a while, they made a decision about the art and made a small change.

Stern remembers how she could see that the artist felt like they had accomplished something important, Stern said.

"I think it's a privilege to work with them," Stern said.

Sam Raasch, president of Penn State's Special Olympics club, said he thinks the documentary will be good for the Penn State community



Courtesy of Michele Rojas-Rivera

Artistic Horizons helps those with special needs through creativity. A new documentary hopes to shed light on the organization.

to learn about people with disabilities.

Just because individuals are disabled doesn't mean they shouldn't have some social interaction, Raasch (senior-biology) said.

It's important for everyone to interact with others and to feel a sense of worth and accomplishment, he said.

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