



Making the most of SIFF's closing week

Here's some help sorting through a schedule packed with world premieres, screenings, directors' receptions, and a closing gala featuring "Life in a Day," the snapshot-style film Ridley Scott made with the help of YouTube.

By Pamela Biery

June 07, 2011.

The Seattle International Film Festival begins its final week with a full calendar. There are still world premieres, receptions, directors in town, and a bevy of exciting new films squeezing in one more screening before they open more broadly in theaters this summer.

Also coming up, of course, are the SIFF Space Needle Awards brunch and the Closing Ceremony Gala, which this year features producer Ridley Scott and director Kevin Macdonald's YouTube collaborative film "Life in a Day."

One important note: A Warren Miller Tribute night, planned for Wednesday (June 8), has been postponed until fall because Miller had a scheduling conflict. The event was to include a film screening, an interview with the action/documentary filmmaker, a reception, and presentation of a "Golden Space Needle Award" marking lifetime achievement. A new date will be announced soon, and refunds will be made when requested.

Here are other highlights of the week to help you plan:

World Premieres and Visiting Directors

At least two feature-length world premieres are set for this week — "Sushi: The Global Catch" and "Holy Rollers: The True Story of Card Counting Christians." All dates and attendees are subject to change — please refer to www.siff.net for the most current information.

"Sushi: The Global Catch" screens at 7 p.m. Wednesday (June 8) at the Admiral Theater and 4:30 p.m. June 10 at the Harvard Exit.

The documentary includes interviews with fishermen, chefs, market-watchers and educators. Sushi now is served from Russia to Australia and beyond. While sushi demand is increasing, tuna supply is decreasing. Director Mark Hall, who is expected to attend the June 8 premiere, looks at the consequences of a cultural mash-up: sushi, global trends, and the impact on fisheries. "One thing I can guarantee you is that we will run out of tuna before we run out of oil," says one sushi chef interviewed in the film.

"Holy Rollers: The True Story of Card Counting Christians" screens at 6 p.m. Saturday (June 11) at Admiral Theater, but tickets are on standby basis only. A ticketed showing is set for 3:30 p.m. Sunday (June 12) at SIFF Cinema.

This film, the directorial debut of Seattle native Bryan Storkel, is based on a true story. It is an incongruous glance at another side of gambling and of Christianity all at the same moment, with action and suspense in the mix. Storkel follows the evolution of a Seattle-based Church group from casual meetings to the professional card room.

Storkel, producer Jason Connell, cinematographer Brian Liepe, and other cast and crew members are scheduled to attend both showings of the film.

"Revenge of the Electric Car" screens at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday (June 8) at Kirkland Performance Center and at 7 p.m. Friday (June 10) at the Egyptian Theatre.

Following up his successful documentary "Who Killed the Electric Car," director Chris Paine, a veteran guest of many late-night talk shows, is scheduled to attend the Wednesday (June 8) screening of his new documentary, which follows on the first. "Revenge of the Electric Car" picks up the story line in 2006, when as many as 5,000 modern electric cars were destroyed by American manufacturers. Less than five years later, companies compete in a race to bring affordable electric cars to market. "Revenge of the Electric Car" profiles Nissan, GM and Tesla Motors, along with an independent backyard converter, with insights into their process, problems, and products.

Awards Presentation Brunch

SIFF's 2011 Golden Space Needle Awards, including audience-selected awards, will be announced at the Filmmaker and Select Guests Brunch on Sunday (June 12). Watch the website to see who won.

Closing Ceremony Gala

"Life in a Day" is a groundbreaking new concept film brought into being through the collaboration of YouTube, Executive Producer Ridley Scott, National Geographic Entertainment and sponsor LG.

What if 80,000 people filmed their lives in one day, each responding to the same questions? The answer is "Life in a Day" — a meticulously crafted, 90-minute film drawing on the considerable talents of Director Kevin Macdonald, Editor Joe Walker, Executive Producer Ridley Scott, Producer Liza Marshall, and a Herculean editing team capable of sorting and combing through some 4,500 hours of footage.

The message sent to contributors by Macdonald was a simple one: Tell us what you fear, what you love, what makes you laugh, and what's in your pocket. The day of filming was July 24, 2010. "Life in a Day" has its theatrical release July 24, 2011.

Organized in a timeline from midnight to midnight, the viewer traverses our Earth, beginning under the gentle glare of the full moon as seen from a dozen perspectives around the globe. A second layer of sequencing is created by organizing answers to the film's questions — time and topic build a loose scaffold for this compilation of the human experience.

Macdonald drew inspiration for "Life in a Day" from the work of British filmmaker Humphrey Jennings, who founded a movement called Mass-Observation in the 1930s. Mass-Observation's goal was to document the beauty and strangeness of everyday life.

What emerges from "Life in a Day's" real-life, first-person footage is truly the extraordinary beauty of the ordinary, the magic of this brief lantern show we are all players in. Macdonald and Scott resist the urge to stay with cinematically appealing or mawkish, evocative emotions and instead ask the audience to reach a little deeper in their own pockets for a human experience that is joyful, humorous, touching, and altogether enlivening.

"'Life in a Day' was a wonderful opportunity to hear the voices of ordinary people describing the world as they see it — telling us their fears and loves. I always knew this would say something fascinating about who we are as a species and what we value — but I never realised how emotionally affecting the result would be." — Kevin Macdonald, director.

Event Details: SIFF Closing Night Gala, Pan Pacific Hotel, 6 p.m. Sunday (June 12). Tickets, which include two complimentary drinks, cost \$40 in advance (\$35 SIFF members). Premium gala tickets, which include an open bar at the post-film reception and preferred entry into the screening, cost \$80 in advance (\$70 SIFF members).

Also this Week

Many other movies are still screening throughout the city. For film synopses, venues and other details, and to order tickets, go to www.SIFF.net. Tickets also can be purchased by

phone (206-324-9996); at the festival's main downtown box office on the second level of Pacific Place, 600 Pine St., Seattle; or at SIFF's South Lake Union Office, 400 Ninth Ave. N., Seattle.

Pamela Biery is a freelance writer and communications professional living in Seattle. Her work has appeared in regional and national publications. She maintains a website at www.PamelaB.com.

View this story online at: <http://crosscut.com/2011/06/07/arts/20995/Making-the-most-of-SIFF-s-closing-week/>

© 2011 Crosscut Public Media. All rights reserved.

Printed on June 08, 2011