The James River Film Society Presents

The Twenty Second Annual

James River Film Festival



Thu April 9 - Sun 12 2015 Richmond VA

Virginia's Festival for the Independent Minded

lames River Film Festival Guests 1994-2014

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Cover Image: from the film Wizards by Ralph Bakshi with Michael Pope and Kevin Jerome Everson

THURSDAY, APRIL 9



Citizen Kane

(dir: Orson Welles, 1941, 120 mins.) Noon, Richmond Main Public Library **Admission Free**

Considered the greatest film ever, Citizen Kane, Orson Welles' Hollywood debut, was almost nipped in the bud before release. Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst was a powerful figure on the American scene, and he objected to the comparison of Charles Foster Kane's fictional life to his own: in particular, he objected to the significance

attached to "Rosebud", Kane's dying word. This is one of many anecdotes surrounding this masterpiece of the American cinema. Like a Russian egg, Citizen Kane reveals itself on many levels—as a puzzle, as collaboration between director and d.p., as a seminal American film noir, as sound design prototype. A film this rich must be screened repeatedly to be fully appreciated. Whether it's your first time, or tenth, join us for this free screening. Michael Jones, who teaches film studies at VCU and R-MC and is a co-organizer of the JRFF, will introduce.

Opening Reception

5 pm-6:30 pm, **Visual Arts Center Commons Admission Free**

Meet other independent-minded cinephiles, volunteers and special

guests, take in the latest show at the True F. Luck Gallery, sample hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and screenings by regional women filmmakers upstairs in the Dominion Community Room.





3 Recent Short Films by Women Filmmakers

6 pm-7 pm, Vis Arts, Dominion Room (upstairs)

The Emotional Dimensions of the James River

(Michelle Marquez, 2014, 3 mins.) This beautiful short film is a rollercoaster experience of sound and image that coordinates emotion and time perception scientifically. Cine/edit: Patrick Gregory; music:



Lincoln Mitchell. Michelle Marquez is a Richmond area high school scholar whose film has screened at numerous festivals.



Big Time, A Doodled Diary (Sonali Gulati, 2014, 14 mins.)

A doodled diary of a teenager growing up in 1980s India. Sonali Gulati is an awardwinning filmmaker who teaches in VCU's Department of Photography and Film. A Richmond premiere!

Wallpapers (Jennifer Tarrazi-Scully, 2014, 9 mins.)

An infectious dance collaboration that vibrates with music, motion, color and texture. Cine./prod. by Jeff Roll, JRFF festival co-director. Jennifer Tarrazi-Scully is an Atlanta-based choreographer and director.



Notes on Marie Menken

(Martina Kudlacek, 2009, 97 mins.) 7 pm, Vis Arts, Dominion Room Admission \$7/JRFS members \$5

Director Kudlacek had previously profiled avantgarde choreographer and filmmaker Maya Deren (*In the Mirror of Maya Deren*), and here tackles another icon of American experimental film— Marie Menken. Menken advocated a "lyrical cinema"—exclusively hand-held and mobile—and talked of film as "eye-music". She was a founding member of the New American Cinema of the early



60s, and a mentor to filmmakers Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger and Peter Kubelka. *Notes...*weaves interviews of artist friends with archival finds, including a Bolex camera duel between Andy Warhol and Menken; also features a sampling of Menken's own works, including *Glimpse of the Garden* ('62).



NeoVoxer

With JRFF guest Michael Pope (Michael Pope, 2004, 93 mins.) 9 pm, Vis Arts, Dominion Room Admission \$7/JRFS \$5

NEOVOXER is an experimental, nondialogue feature focusing on three travelers in a post-apocalyptic terrain. Invoking a mythology of dream and super-sensory archetypes, Pope's film

draws comparisons to cult works like Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo*, Matthew Barney's *Cremaster Cycle* and Elias Merhige's *Begotten*. Shot over several years in various locations and formats, this will be a RVA premiere screening. "An unforgettable sensory experience." **The Boston Globe**. Pope will be on hand for a Q & A.

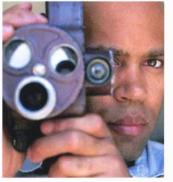
FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Environmental Prototypes: The Plow That Broke the Plains/The River

(Pare Lorentz, 1936/1938, TRT 75 mins approx.) Noon, Richmond Main Public Library, Admission Free During the Great Depression,



the U.S. government produced a series of documentaries on current problems—poverty, housing, drought. Young Pare Lorentz had been chosen by FDR to head the project, and his first two offerings represent the beginnings of the environmental documentary form. His first, *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, was an acclaimed account of the causes and consequences of the Dust Bowl; his second, *The River*, is an ecological history of the Mississippi River, from its origins to its mouth at the Gulf. As Carl Sandburg said, "*The River* is among the greatest of the psalms of America's greatest river." Both films feature scores by Virgil Thomson and narrations by Thomas Chalmers. Introduction by Michael Jones of the James River Film Festival.



Working with Life: An Evening with Filmmaker Kevin Jerome Everson 6:30 pm, VMFA, Leslie Cheek Theatre Admission \$8 (VMFA, JRFS members \$5) One of the more prolific and original voices today belongs to filmmaker Kevin Jerome Everson.

Everson stays busy—with over 90 films to credit, shorts and features, shot on 16mm,

almost all dealing with African-American working class life. As such, they have the feel of documentary but he augments his filmed reality with scripted and spontaneous dialogues, reenactments, montage editing and, recently, shots of longer duration. *In The Island of St. Matthews* (2013, 64 mins.), Everson seeks his parents' roots in Westport, Miss. but finds few threads since almost all local cultural artifacts—photographs, news clippings, family Bibles—were destroyed in the calamitous flood of 1973. *Ten Five in the Grass* (2012, 32 mins.), is a unique slice of black rural life—shot in Louisiana and Mississippi, it captures African-American cowboys and cowgirls readying for a rodeo. *Rhinoceros* (2012, 8 mins.), is a fictional treatment of Alessandro de Medici in 16th century Italy, shot in Florence, part of a planned feature. JRFF guest Mr. Everson will participate in a Q & A session after the screening.



Bad Brains: A Band in D.C. (dir: Ben Logan & Mandy Stein) (2012, 104 mins.) Midnight, Byrd Theatre Admission \$7/JRFS \$5

No band ever played faster—some songs lasted less than 60 seconds—or had such wide-ranging influences with their hyper-punk energy and reggae rhythms. From Nirvana to the Beastie Boys to No Doubt, countless musicians have cited the Bad Brains as a formative influence. Still together after 30 years, this film tells their on-going, underappreciated story, w/ recent and archival tour footage, plus animations by Rita Lux and Grant Nellessen. Starring the Bad Brains, Dave Grohl, Mike D., Adam Horowitz and more! Played loud, large and late at RVA's favorite movie palace! (Note: Richmond had a vibrant punk scene in the 80s and the Bad Brains were frequent visitors along w/ Black Flag, Minor Threat, Flipper, Ramones, Circle Jerks, T.S.O.L., Fugazzi and others.)

Sponsored by Deep Groove, Plan 9, Steady Sounds, Vinyl Conflict—support RVA's vinyl shops!

SATURDAY. APRIL 11

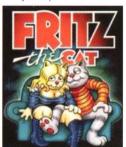
Hands-on-Film: New Short Films by Jonathan Hancock

With special JRFF guest, Jonathan Hancock (2014-2015, TRT 80 mins. approx.) 10:30 am Studio Two Three, Admission Free

Guest filmmaker Jonathan Hancock is a self-avowed analog practicioner, and he's so old school he types



his scenarios on a typewriter! Based in Cincinnati where he shoots in the small studio he built, Mr. Hancock participated in the Sept.'14 edition of the James River Filmmakers' Forum here. That night he screened films simultaneously on 16mm-- we were so impressed we asked him back for the 22nd JRFF. Hancock has produced over twenty films on super 8 and 16mm, and diligently re-works his filmed footage—scratching and drawing, re-shooting it—then may show the film solo or mult-project it. He's designated three new films for this program: *Chiken, MTNdoc,* and *Skull Rider—*"a sequential three-reel experience…animation, hot rods and spooky skeletons".

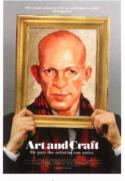


Ralph Bakshi, R. Crumb and Fritz the Cat

With Dr. Thomas Inge and Eddie Bakshi (TRT 100 mins approx.) 1 pm, Byrd Theatre Admission \$7/JRFS \$5

"Very rude and very funny!" NewYorker
When Fritz the Cat was released in 1972, it was
more than simply the first X-rated animated
feature—it was the product of a collaboration
between two of the most controversial artistic

talents of the time, underground cartoonist Robert Crumb and avantgarde animator Ralph Bakshi. Both had pushed the boundaries of their respective mediums in outrageous directions, and the two artists left huge imprints on the counter-culture audiences of the 60s and 70s. Before *Fritz*... was finished, Crumb tried to back out, but Bakshi persisted. Crumb promptly killed off Fritz's comic character to prevent any sequel. Irreverent, and so not PC, the odyssey of *Fritz the Cat* remains a cult masterpiece and an effective deconstruction of the psyche/spirit of American culture in the 1970s. Dr. Thomas Inge, Professor of English and distinguished scholar of pop culture, Randolph-Macon College, and Mr.Eddie Bakshi, son of director Ralph, will introduce.



Art and Craft

With JRFF guest composer/musician Stephen Ulrich (dir: Mark Becker, Sam Cullman, 2014, 90 mins.)

(dir: Mark Becker, Sam Cullman, 2014, 90 mins.) 3:30 pm, Byrd Theatre

Admission \$7/JRFS \$5

In the tradition of *Finding Vivian Maier*, The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl, and Crumb, Art and Craft focuses on the dialectic between artists' public and private lives, in this case, notorious art forger Mark Landis. Landis is

not only a master reproducer, he's been extremely productive and over 30 years forged hundreds in all styles and periods. Landis then "donated" his impeccable copies to museums, forcing them to verify their own holdings. Once discovered, Landis went legit and even had a show, but seemingly cannot stop. A diagnosed schizophrenic, whose elaborate and gentle con is a bid for acceptance, Landis' story is more than another art caper—it's an exploration of the universal need for acceptance and purpose. JRFF guest Stephen Ulrich, who composed and performed the score for the film will be available for a Q & A after the film. Later in the evening, Mr. Ulrich and his band, Big Lazy, will play Gallery 5 at 10 pm (doors open 9 pm)—admission \$10.

The Misadventures and Moving Pictures of Michael Pope

With JRFF guest filmmaker Michael Pope 7:30 pm, Visual Arts Center Admission \$7/IRFS \$5

A retrospective highlighting the work of NY-based independent director, producer and

screenwriter Michael Pope. Clips, lots of rock videos—Pope has worked with Amanda Palmer, Dresden Dolls (he directed their concert film *Live: In Paradise* in 2005), Ben Folds, Bang Camaro, and Gene Dante—and a behind-the-scenes documentary about the making of his non-dialogue 2004 feature, *Neovoxer*—never before screened in VA. Mr. Pope will also discuss the "art v. commerce" aspect of his career—a career spanning several decades with countless commercial jobs, but one balanced by a love for the potential of art in the medium. *Neovoxer* star, dancer/director choreographer Jennifer Tarrazi-Scully will also be in attendance. A must-see program for film students!



JRFF Guests Stephen Ulrich and Big Lazy 10 pm, Gallery 5 Admission \$10

Hear the sounds of NY-based Big Lazy live at RVA's Gallery 5! Doors open at 9 pm! Mr.Ulrich is a composer and guitarist

who scored the film, *Art and Craft*—his band is Big Lazy, and they've just put out their fourth album, *Don't Cross Myrtle*, to rave reviews from heavyweights like Robert Christgau. New Yorker described Big Lazy as

an "elegantly gritty instrumental trio led by the extraordinary guitarist, Stephen Ulrich, who plays stunningly beautiful music that evokes everything from truckers' romps to the haunting film scores of Bernard Herrmann". And if you don't know who Herrmann is, try remembering the music in *Vertigo*.

SUNDAY, APRIL 12



Lord of the Rings

With JRFF guest Ralph Bakshi who will join us after the screening via live Skype! Introduced by JRFF guest Eddie Bakshi (dir: Ralph Bakshi, 1978, 132 mins.) 1 pm, Byrd Theatre Admission \$7 advance/\$10 door This adaptation was a long time coming—Disney had the rights to Tolkien's trilogy in the 50s and reportedly Stanley Kubrick had toyed with a live-action version. Bakshi's version though could hardly be better, successfully mixing animation with live action tracings, he even mirrored some of Tolkien's own drawings, and wisely tackled only the first 2/3 of

the trilogy. His choice of British actors (among them John Hurt) adds a note of authenticity and Leonard Rosenman's score seals the deal. Long cherished by Bakshi and Tolkien fans alike, a must-see for the entire family, or just the kid in you.

Note: Join us after the screening for a live Skype Q & A with JRFF guest Ralph Bakshi, emceed by Eddie Bakshi, and a sale of Bakshi memorabilia.

Wizards

Introduced by JRFF guest Eddie Bakshi (Bakshi memorabilia—posters, cels, etc.—sale to follow the screening!) (dir: Ralph Bakshi, 1977, 80 mins.) 4:30 pm, Byrd Theatre Admission \$7 advance/\$10 door

According to director Bakshi, *Wizards* depicts the on-going struggle between technology and magic, and represents his desire to make a non-Disney-like animated feature. The classic good/evil storyline has never-the-less inspired two generations of fantasy fans with its bold artsy style and it's reluctant, red-



bearded sorcerer hero—the original Avatar! When evil brother Blackwolf threatens his peaceful utopian kingdom, Avatar is forced to embark on a dangerous mission to the bleak lands of Scorth, inhabited by goblins and wraiths and darker forces that test his ultimate powers! Featuring the voice of Mark Hammill (*Star Wars* also in '77), Wizards is a seminal film of the current fantasy cycle, and a stunning celebration of animated art. **Note:** Join us at 3:30 pm, before the screening, for a Live Skype Q & A with director/animator JRFF guest Ralph Bakshi, hosted by Eddie Bakshi!



Kawashima's Curve

With director David Williams! (dir: David Williams, 2007, 90 mins.) 6 pm, Visual Arts Center Admission \$7

Richmond director David Williams (*Lillian*, *Thirteen*, *Long Art*) screens his documentary of Japanese bamboo sculptor Shigeo Kawishima. Shot in spring 2006 during

the artist's resdency at the Visual Arts Center in RVA, Williams' camera follows the process of selecting and harvesting the bamboo, the working of it by Kawishima and on through to the exhibition later of his first large indoor installation. *Kawashima's Curve* is a continuation of Williams' ongoing inquiry into the discipline and craft of the artist. Mr. Williams will join the audience for a Q & A after the screening.

The Last Limousine

With VGIK puppet animations from Moscow! (dir: Daria Khlestina, 2014, 75 mins., Russian/w English subtitles) 8 pm, Visual Arts Center Admission \$7/IRFS \$5

"Imagine an episode of The Office set in a Russian car factory, and you're close to the ambience of The Last Limousine!" <u>Hollywood Reporter</u>

The late director Daria Khlestina was editing this film in Amsterdam as she received cancer treatments; later she scrapped the initial edit and started over despite her condition. Khlestina gently and probingly toys



with the Soviet ideal of the proletariat, and seems to find in her film the answer she hoped for.

Faced with the demise of the car factory where they work six employees—engineers, bosses and laborers—cling to professional pride and delusions as their world seemingly crumbles around them. Then, miraculously, an order comes in for three of the company's deluxe hand-built limousines, the same limos that once squired Party dignitaries through parades in Red Square. They throw themselves tirelessly into fulfilling the order on time, but will it save the factory? Also, three animated puppet shorts from the VGIK, the Moscow Film School. (TRT running time 105 mins. approx.) Special thanks to Kevin McNeer, our JRFF correspondent in Moscow!

LOCATIONS

Byrd Theatre, 2908 West Cary St. (in Carytown) **Gallery 5**, 200 West Marshall St.

Richmond Public Library, Main Branch, 101 East Franklin St. Studio 23, 1617 West Main St. (just west of Lombardy St.)
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 North Boulevard (at Grove Ave.)
Visual Arts Center, 1812 West Main St.



all James River Film Society * Most Recent III

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ABOUT OUR 2015 GUESTS

Ralph Bakshi was raised in NYC and introduced to drawing as a troubled teen. He rose quickly from colorist to supervising director at Terry Toons in New Rochelle (Mighty Mouse, Deputy Dawg) and never looked back, re-inventing the animated feature by cultivating an audience beyond Disney's reach—the midnight moviegoer! As king of the underground cartoon, along with collaborator Robert Crumb, Bakshi rose to prominence in the 70s with a string of cult hits: Fritz the Cat('72), Heavy Traffic ('73), Wizards ('77), and Lord of the Rings ('78). Mr. Bakshi will join us for a Live Skype Q & A session at 4 pm, Sunday, April 12, at the Byrd Theatre during the intermission between Lord of the Rings and Wizards. Eddie Bakshi, Ralph's son, will emcee the interview with his father and sell Bakshi memorabilia (cels, posters, etc.) after the Wizards screening.

Kevin Jerome Everson was born in Ohio, received his MFA from Ohio University and currently is on the faculty at the University of Virginia. One of the more experimental film voices, Everson is incredibly prolific—a body of work that includes more than ninety short and feature films, mostly shot on 16 mm and video, including the award-winning Erie, Cinnamon, Quality Control, Chevelle, Fifteen an Hour. As a child he was captivated by Godzilla movies, yet his films seem to be overly focused on working life and his own style of realism—"(Everson's) unique vision is as distant as possible from the repertoire and rhetoric of mainstream media, he defies cliches and challenges the stereotypes or expectations we may not even know we subscribe to, forcing us to question our socially constructed realities." Film Comment Mr. Everson will screen and discuss his work on Friday, April 10, 6:30 pm at the VMFA's Leslie Cheek Theatre.

Jonathan Hancock is an analog filmmaker from Cincinnati, Ohio who screened with the James River Filmmakers' Forum in September, 2014. His multi-projected installation so impressed us we invited back

as a guest of the 22nd James River Film Festival. As a child, Hancock discovered the optical phenomenon, "persistence of vision", realizing he could emulate the moving frames of movies by blinking his eyes rapidly. He shoots only on super-8 and 16mm film stocks, often in his homemade darkroom/studio, and spends months living with his creations—scratching, drawing and recording the score. Hancock's produced over twenty films, and will screen three of his shorts--Chiken, MTN doc, and Skull rider—for our festival audience on Saturday, April 11, 10:30 am at Studio Two Three.

Michael Pope was born in NYC and made his first films on super 8 at age seven. He's a self-taught director/producer/screenwriter who has screened his works internationally and received commissions from the like of the Boston Pops, but before his commercial success worked multiple jobs—house painter, bike messenger, even in a bakery in Richmond years ago. Pope works in multiple mediums and formats, and has produced a diverse body of works from long pieces like NEOVOXER, to installations, Bang Camaro, Gene Dante, to rock videos for Dresden Dolls, Amanda Palmer, Ben Folds and more. Mr. Pope will screen NEOVOXER on Thursday, April 9, 9 pm, and a retrospective of short works on Saturday, April 11, 7:30 pm, both at Vis Arts Center.

Stephen Ulrich & Big Lazy are our special musical guests this year—they provided the score for Art and Craft, which plays during the festival at the Byrd Theatre, Sat., April 11, 3:30 pm. Ulrich is a guitarist and composer (HBO's Bored to Death) and with the band is Big Lazy, a hot instrumental trio featuring guitar, acoustic bass and drums out of NYC. "The Big Apple Crème de la Crème: an instrumental trio that doesn't so much balance jazz dexterity and rock aggression as stick 'em both in your ear." Robert Christgau Big Lazy has played the Whitney and burlesque in New Orleans, on Saturday, April 11, 10 pm, they'll be appearing at Gallery 5!

David Williams is a dean of Richmond filmmaking who holds an MFA from VCU's Dept. of Photo and Film. A recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation grant, his debut feature film Lillian was championed by critic Roger Ebert. Williams has produced a half-dozen features all funded independently, often shot on weekends over long periods with non-actors. A frequent participant, Williams will screen his recut 2007 film, Kawashima's Curve, on Sunday, April 12, 6 pm at Vis Arts Center, where most of it was filmed originally.

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Michael Clautice, design/web; Julia Ratliff, volunteer co-ordinator; Tim Sinclair, T-shirt design; Victor Escobar, social media; Jim Collier, Robert Ellis, Ken Hopson, Michael Jones, Kevin McNeer, Jeff Roll, programming.

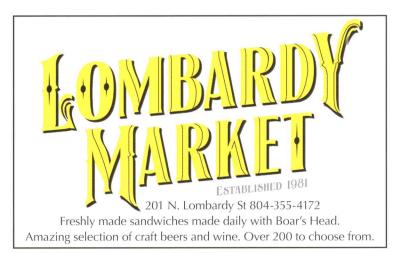
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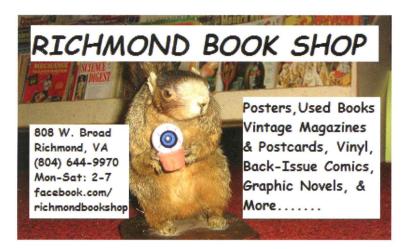
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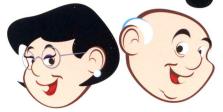
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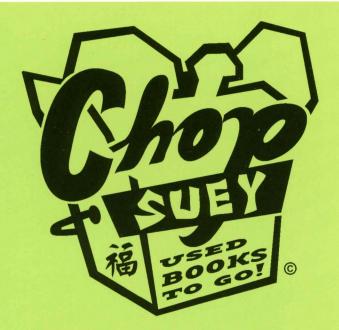


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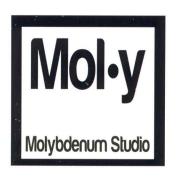


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