

## Cincinnati World Cinema

presents its fifth annual screening of the

# LUNAFEST SHORT FILMS

Tuesday February 9 and Wednesday February 10

The Carnegie Arts Center, Covington KY

**6:30 pm . . . Social Hour** and cash bar hosted by **Women Writing for (a) Change**

Learn about WWfaC and meet founder **Mary Pierce Brosmer**, who will be signing her new book

**7:30 pm . . . Lunafest Film Program**, the winning 10 short films from 800 submissions

**9:10 pm . . . Post-film Audience Discussion**, led by

filmmaker **Sara Mahle Drabik**, educator & producer-director at Norse Media, Northern Kentucky University and **Kristen Erwin**, executive director, Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky Film Commission.

### PROGRAM NOTES

[Posted for download: [http://www.cincyworldcinema.org/download/CWC\\_LunaFestProgram2010\\_web.pdf](http://www.cincyworldcinema.org/download/CWC_LunaFestProgram2010_web.pdf)]

For the fifth year in a row, Cincinnati World Cinema is pleased to present the Lunafest Short Films, sharing original perspectives of women from all walks of life. These are great short films about women, their families and universal issues; made by women filmmakers, for women and the men who care about them. The Lunafest mission plays a vital role in advocacy of women filmmakers as well as advocacy of films that *intelligently* and *realistically* feature women in leading roles.

The 2010 Lunafest winners bring us characters representing myriad nationalities and ethnicities -- American, African American, Australian, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Indian, Israeli and Vietnamese; created by an equally diverse array of accomplished filmmakers with roots in Australia, Bulgaria, China, Costa Rica, Germany, India, Scotland, the UK and the USA.

**“You’re not a director ... you’re a girl.”** In the course of researching each of the Lunafest films this year, I came across an open letter from Ela Thier, director of *A Summer Rain*, part of the current program. Her passionate writing is testimony to her own steadfast hope and the imperfect state of the film industry today. I urge you to read it: <http://www.crucialminutiae.com/an-open-letter-from-a-female-director>.

Some of us are already familiar with these statistics: Of the 250 top-grossing films in any given year, roughly 5% are directed by women. In 80 years of Oscar history, with roughly 250 directors receiving a nomination for best director, 3 nominations went to female directors. No woman director has ever received an Oscar for best picture.

Over the years, the program mix at Cincinnati World Cinema has been different: Slightly more than 25% of the films we’ve presented were made by women – 5 times the percentage of the top 250 films. Not because we impose an arbitrary bias in favor of women filmmakers (although we are highly receptive), but simply because we *do not* discriminate based on the gender of the filmmaker or the gender of pivotal characters when assessing the merits of a given film. In short, the women directors we’ve encountered make great films!

The synopses, filmmaker biographies and web-links that follow are offered to enhance your appreciation of the Lunafest 2010 short film lineup. Thank you for supporting Cincinnati World Cinema and our mission to present high-quality films you would not otherwise see in this area. We look forward to seeing you at the Carnegie Arts Center in February.

Best Regards,

Tim Swallow, Cincinnati World Cinema

## A SUMMER RAIN

Director Ela Thier, USA, 2009, 16.5 minutes, live-action, in Hebrew with English subtitles.

[http://thierproductions.com/a\\_summer\\_rain.html](http://thierproductions.com/a_summer_rain.html)

Film clip: <http://thierproductions.com/id141.html>

### SYNOPSIS

When Ellie, an 11-year-old Israeli girl with little knowledge of English, immigrates with her family to Connecticut in 1982, she navigates culture-shock, homesickness, and the beginnings of adolescence. Hoa, a Vietnamese refugee her age living next door, is in the same situation but Ellie somewhat rudely shies away from making friends. Instead, through a series of letters read aloud in the film, she shares her experiences with her best friend back in Israel. After a while, the letters from Israel arrive with diminishing frequency and Ellie decides to befriend her next door neighbor.

### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

A writer by trade, **Ela Thier's** screenplay, *The Wedding Cow*, was produced by SWR, a major German TV network, garnering twenty awards at international film festivals including nine *Best Feature* and five *Audience Choice* awards.

Ela studied Film at New York University, and has written, directed and performed in several short projects. In 2008 she received an Artists' Fellowship Award in Screenwriting from the New York Foundation for the Arts, and used the grant to write, direct and produce *A Summer Rain*, which is screening this year at over 150 festivals and venues across the US and Canada, receiving numerous nominations and awards. She is currently in post-production on the feature-length version of *A Summer Rain*, titled *Foreign Letters*.

Thier has written, directed, produced and performed in over a dozen short films including *Plato's Symposium*, *Be With Me*, *Clamor*, and the short version of her feature project, *A Story for Old Lovers*. She has also been involved with the development and production of numerous shorts including *Red*, *Midas' Son*, *What Happened on the Fourth Date*, *BFF*, *Nights* and *The Way Home*. This year she'll be directing two shorts: *Gentle Cycle Only*, written and produced by Mrinalini Kamath, and *Judo Girl*, written and produced by Sandy Chase.

Thier is a recipient of an Artists' Fellowship Award in screenwriting from the New York Foundation for the Arts. A prolific writer, her feature scripts were selected by the Independent Film Week (formerly IFP Market) four times in three years. In 2006 Thier's first screenwriting workshop was attended by eight writers. In four years, with reputation spreading word-of-mouth, over two-thousand writers had attended her seminars in New York. Thier now offers workshops in film producing and directing as well, under the banner of [The Independent Film School](http://www.thierproductions.com).

### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Winner Best Short, Vietnamese Intl Film Festival  
Female Eye Film Festival, Toronto Canada  
Children's Intl Film Festival, Mumbai India  
Feel Good Film Festival, Los Angeles CA  
San Diego Intl Children's Film Festival CA  
Women's Intl Film Festival, South Florida  
Finalist, Lunafest Film Festival

Best Short Nominee, Heart of Gold Intl Film Festival, Australia  
Beijing International Movie Week, China  
Nashville Film Festival, TN  
San Francisco Bay Area Intl Children's Film Festival CA  
San Francisco Women's Film Festival CA  
1 Reel Film Festival, Seattle WA



## PLASTIC

Director Sandy Widyanata, Australia, 2009, 7.5 minutes, live-action.

<http://www.plasticthefilm.com/home.html> Trailer/Award Clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBGcvCiOSVc>

### SYNOPSIS

While Anna is preparing for a first date with Henry, a man she has secretly loved for years, everything goes wrong and Anna slips into a downward spiral of self-criticism. If only she could change a few things about how she looks. Standing in front of her mirror, she suddenly discovers that she can sculpt her appearance to any shape she desires. How far should she go in changing her body structure and looks?

A feast of visual effects demonstrating the obsession many young women have with having a perfect body, it won the Visual Effects Society Award for students in 2009. While the live-action shoot took only four days, the entire process took almost a full year. Pre-production planning took two months and post-production took eight months because of the special effects intricacies involved with Autodesk Maya 3D and Apple Shake.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Born, raised and educated in Germany to Indonesian parents, and now living in Australia, Sandy Widyanata received her B.A. in Film Studies and Journalism at the University of Bochum. She trained in editing and visual effects at the European Institute for Film & Television. She also worked as a set assistant and graphic artist at the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, one of Germany's major public television and radio broadcasting stations.

In 2000, Sandy was invited to Sydney to screen a clay animated short film she made during university. She decided to make Australia her new home and continued working as a multimedia designer and animator for major corporate clients. Sandy has just completed a Masters at the Australian Film Television and Radio School where she wrote and directed her thesis film, *Plastic*, about the obsession for a perfect body image. Sandy currently works as a freelance VFX artist in broadcast design and commercials while developing feature film projects. She aspires to continue making and working on films that she believes can make a difference.



### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Outstanding Effects in a Student Project, 2009 Visual Effects Society Awards, Los Angeles, CA

Winner Best Short, In the Bin Short Film Festival, Australia

Finalist, Best Short Fiction, ATOM Awards, Australia

Palm Springs International Short Film Festival

Hatchfest Short Film Festival, Bozeman MT

Rencontres Langlois International Film Festival, France

Omaha Film Festival, NE

Malta International Film Festival

Heartland Film Festival, IN

Los Angeles Intl Short Film Festival, CA

Silver Award, ACS Awards, Australia

Nominated Best Special Effects, Australian Film Institute

Winner, Most Innovative Film, Sichaun TV Festival, China

St. Tropez Film Festival, France

Flickerfest Intl Short Film Festival, Australia

Cleveland International Film Festival, OH

Manhattan Short Film Festival, NY

World of Women Film Festival, Australia

International Video Festival, Bochum, Germany

## ROZ (AND JOSHUA)

Director Charlene Music, USA, 2008, 3 minutes, documentary.

<http://www.charlene-music.com>

### SYNOPSIS

At just three minutes in length, this black-and-white documentary offers what many longer films do not – a poignant, poetic three-part narrative documentary that quickly and compellingly engages viewers.

When social workers took Joshua away from Roz he was only seven months old.

Today he is 12 and Roz is allowed to visit him three times a week. The reason for the separation is simple: since 1993 Roz has been homeless. She lives in an old van, with a bicycle parked beside it that she rides to work every morning. While coping with destitution, Roz maintains her optimism and the fervent hope that one day she will live with her son. Roz's chance encounter with filmmaker with Charlene Music changed her life. Since the film was released, Roz is training to become a massage therapist and is no longer homeless.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Charlene Music was born and raised in Costa Rica. After studying photography at Harvard (Magna Cum Laude, 2004), she worked as a documentary filmmaker in India, where she produced domestic violence prevention films in collaboration with rural communities. She works with international and humanitarian organizations to effect social change and empower communities through photography and film. Her outreach work has also included youth counseling and improving public health and educational programs.



In Costa Rica, Ms. Music founded the video production departments at Eureka Comunicación and Café Britt and directed human rights films for organizations including the National Children's Hospital. She also worked with children in the Costa Rican slum Ciudadelas Unidades, teaching them photography and film. Filmmaking has taken Charlene to Africa, China, Cuba and the United States, where she has more recently made documentaries in collaboration with the Center for Responsible Travel and Stanford University's Cochlear Implant Center.

Charlene graduated from Stanford's MFA in Documentary Film program in 2009 with her thesis *Danza del Viejo Imigrante*, an intimate documentary about the challenges and opportunities facing elderly Latinos in the U.S. She is received awards from CINE, the University Film & Video Association, the National Academy of Television, and Kodak.

### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Winner, CINE Special Jury Award – NY  
Finalist, Angelus Student Film Festival – CA  
Cinema du Reel -- France  
True/False Film Fest-- MO  
Hamburg Short Film Festival -- Germany  
Documenta Madrid  
Festival de Cine y Video Documental  
Blue Sky Film Festival – NV  
Reel 13 -- PBS NYC

Winner, Festival International des Tres Courts -- France  
Silverdocs Documentary Film Festival -- Washington, D.C.  
SXSW (South by South West) Intl Film Festival -- TX  
Tiburon International Film Festival -- CA  
One World International Film Festival -- Czech Republic  
Festival de Cine Centromericano  
Film Festival Film Academy -- Vienna  
Fresno Film Festival -- CA

## MONDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

Director Courtney Cox, USA, 2008, 19.5 minutes, live action.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1260677/>

### SYNOPSIS

Academy Award nominee **Laura Dern** stars as Theresa, a single woman who loves her full life in this life-affirming film. Pressed by her best friend (Courtney Cox) to find a relationship to provide what's "missing" from her life, she begins to have doubts a year after her mother's death. Through a chance encounter Theresa realizes that the life she lives is exactly what she wants. Costarring **Rosemary Harris**, this is the film debut for Cox as a writer/director.

### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Alabama native Courtney Cox gained overnight fame as the neurotic yet loveable Monica Gellar on NBC's Emmy® Award winning comedy *Friends*. Prior to this, her TV credits include starring in *Family Ties* as Michael J. Fox's girlfriend Lauren.

Cox's film career began in the '80s with *Masters of the Universe* and *Shaking the Tree*. She was in the 1994 film *Ace Ventura Pet Detective* and in 1996 starred in Wes Craven's horror/comedy *Scream* and went on to reprise her role two additional times for the *Scream* Trilogy. Courtney's other film credits include *3000 Miles to Graceland*, *Mr. Destiny*, *Cocoon: The Return*, *Zoom*, *November*, *The Longest Yard* and *Barnyard* and Disney's family comedy *Bedtime Stories*.

In 2004, Courtney and husband David Arquette established their own production company, Coquette. Projects have included an interior design show for cable's WE (Women's Entertainment) Network called *Mix It Up*, the comedy *Daisy Does America* for TBS and most recently, *The Tripper*, a horror film written and directed by David Arquette. In fall of 2009, Cox reteamed with *Scrubs* creator Bill Lawrence on the new series *Cougar Town* for ABC as actress and producer.

In 2009, she made the segue from producing to directing for *Glamour's* Reel Moments Project and *Monday Before Thanksgiving* marks her directorial debut. *Glamour* Reel Moments is a series of three short films based on real women's stories written by *Glamour* readers. The project benefits a women's program for FilmAid International, an organization that uses the power of film to promote health, strengthen communities and enrich the lives of women around the world.

### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Palm Springs International Film Festival, CA

United Film Festival, Los Angeles CA

Williamstown Film Festival, MA

Lady Filmmakers Film Festival, Santa Monica CA

Nashville Film Festival, TN

Glamour Reel Moments Premiere, Los Angeles CA

Los Angeles Shorts Fest, CA



## DIY: EMANCIPATION 101

Director Lynn Robinson, USA, 2009, 1 minute, animation.

<http://lynn-robinson.com>

### SYNOPSIS

Barely one minute in length, this amusing animation suggests the demise of the corset and bustle was due to the emergence of the bicycle as a mode of transportation and recreation for women.

“Let me tell you what I think of bicycling ... I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world.”

- Susan B. Anthony



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

As the visual economy of her film might suggest, **Lynn Robinson** is a New Hampshire-based motion graphics designer and Principal at Black Cap Studio who collaborates with talented creative teams and clients on projects intended for web, broadcast, print, and mobile device delivery.

Since graduating from Rhode Island School of Design's Film, Animation, Video Program, Lynn has been fascinated with films made in historical and traditional methods. The Bolex film camera (human-powered by hand crank), even in this age of digital video, is still her favorite. Her personal work is inspired by the roots of filmmaking, the "do it yourself" nature of the early hardcore/punk movements, and by hand-made bike culture.

Lynn feels fortunate to be working in a medium that has a tremendous ability to bring people together, and as a result, has had the pleasure of showing work at numerous film festivals across the United States. She attempts to balance her sedentary creative endeavors with teaching digital media, rock climbing, mountain biking and growing organic produce. Her vegetable of choice is, always, spinach.



### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

New York Bike Film Festival

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Filmed By Bike Film Festival

New England Film and Video Festival

Women in the Director's Chair Film Festival

Boston Institute of Contemporary Art

Chicago Public Television's "Image Union"

Lunafest Film Festival

San Francisco Film Festival

## THE KINDA SUTRA

Director Jessica Yu, USA, 2008, 8.5 minutes, live-action/animation, documentary.

[www.thekindasutra.com](http://www.thekindasutra.com) Film Clip [http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/kinda\\_sutra/](http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/kinda_sutra/)

### SYNOPSIS

Among Lunafest standouts this year is Oscar-winner Jessica Yu's very amusing *The Kinda Sutra*, in which a group of middle-aged people discuss their wacky childhood notions of how babies were made. For example, "My mother has an oven in her tummy."

These impressions from early childhood are then played out in animation by an Indian couple and their son in a comical take-off on The Kama Sutra. Next, the animated scenes are followed by on-target assessments of human creation by a group of 5-year-olds, each of whom seems to have graduated from a sex education class. This all may sound complicated, but the result is a seamless and very entertaining short documentary that offers a tantalizing view of people's youthful misconceptions about conception.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

**Jessica Yu** is a fifth-generation Chinese American, her father's family is from Shanghai and her mother's is from Guangdong. Now based in Los Angeles, Jessica grew up in Palo Alto before attending Yale University, graduating with a B.A. in English, Phi Beta Kappa and Summa Cum Laude.

Ms. Yu is a prolific filmmaker who is comfortable working in a wide variety of media and genres, from shorts and documentaries, to episodic television, features and commercial spots. Her documentary short film *Breathing Lessons* won an Academy Award and more than 20 awards at major festival. Her HBO documentary *The Living Museum* was a Sundance selection, as



was her Emmy-winning *In the Realms of the Unreal*, which also received film festival honors nationwide. Her latest documentary, *Protagonist*, garnered Jessica her third nomination for the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, and is in distribution by IFC Pictures.

On the narrative side, Jessica is a well-respected director of episodic television programs including *Grey's Anatomy*, *E.R.* and *The West Wing*. Her independent comedy feature *Ping Pong Playa* premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and is currently in theaters nationwide. In the commercial world, she has helmed campaigns, featuring both real people and actors, for Secret, BP, MasterCard, Microsoft and Jet Blue. Her most recent projects, the multi-city *Swap Your Ride* and *Drive One* campaigns for Ford, have become a staple on the web and TV nationwide.

Yu has also written articles and fiction pieces, which have appeared in *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *Buzz*, *Worth*, and the *Pacific News Service*. She is a recipient of the Murrow Award for Journalism from the Skeptics Society, the DREAM Media Award from the Western Law Center for Disability Rights and ACV's Asian American Media Award. In 2000, Yu was the artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. She has been a board member of the International Documentary Association, and more recently, an artist trustee of the Sundance Institute.

### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Sundance Film Festival, AFI Silverdocs, Telluride Film Festival, Aspen Film Festival, Full Frame Documentary Festival, L.A. Asian Pacific Film Festival, Canadian Film Center Worldwide Short Film Festival and many more too numerous to list in this program.

## A VIDA POLITICA

Director Katrina Mansoor, Brazil/UK, 2008, 3 minutes, live-action, documentary.

<http://www.animalmonday.co.uk/> Film Clip [http://www.animalmonday.co.uk/a\\_vida\\_politica.html](http://www.animalmonday.co.uk/a_vida_politica.html)

### SYNOPSIS

Reminiscent of the "Oscar Short Docs" CWC has presented over the years, this lively, richly colored, and beautifully shot film documents the dynamic political activism of a Brazilian woman through the celebration of styling hair. Negra Jho uses hairdressing as a way to promote black identity and the message that "beauty is politics." Her activism has transformed her own life while empowering others.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

[http://www.animalmonday.co.uk/kat\\_mansoor.html](http://www.animalmonday.co.uk/kat_mansoor.html)

Kat Mansoor runs an independent media production company, Animal Monday Ltd., in Brighton England, which provides engaging, original films and documentaries for television networks and community interests. Her roles include the direction and production of documentaries, development of business ideas, fundraising for new projects, production of new media and the formation of innovative partnerships.

She is also co-founder and advisory board member of the New York-based Vital Edge Aid, a media-based NGO focusing on humanitarian micro-aid for specific causes and communities, <http://www.vitaledgeaid.org/blueprint/index.html>.



### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

SXSW International Film Festival, TX  
Davis Feminist Film Festival, CA  
Discovering Latin America Festival

Birds Eye View Film Festival, London  
A Corto Di Donne, Naples Italy  
PSBT Open Frame Festival

## ANJALI

Director Maya Anand, USA, 2009, 14.5 minutes, live-action.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1282021/>

### SYNOPSIS

*Anjali* is a drama about Anjali Gupal, a rebellious Indian-American teenager whose family struggles daily to accommodate both their traditional Indian values alongside more contemporary American concerns.

The generation gap seems especially hard to bridge when Anjali sneaks home for a little 'afternoon delight' with her all-American boyfriend. She is surprised to find someone else is already there, doing the same thing. She investigates, and secretly witnesses her father with another woman.

Faced with this devastating information, Anjali must decide whether she will share her secret, and risk destroying the family to which her mother has so earnestly committed herself. Finally, Anjali must bring herself to see her parents as the flawed adults they really are.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Maya Anand was born and raised in New York. A pianist and singer, she has studied music since the age of 4. After receiving her B.A. in English Literature from Harvard University in 2003, Maya remained in Cambridge, MA to study filmmaking with director Hal Hartley. While at Harvard, she was Music Director of the Radcliffe Pitches - Harvard's oldest female acapella group.



In 2004 she returned to New York and worked for producer Robert Greenhut on several feature films, including Sidney Lumet's *Find Me Guilty*, Kirsten Sheridan's *August Rush* and, in 2006, as post-production supervisor manager for *Return to Rajapur*, filmed in India. Recently Maya completed the 2008 Academy (AAMPAS) Internship Program, providing development assistance to director Bennett Miller (*Capote*) while she pursued her M.F.A. at the Film Division of the Columbia School of the Arts, where she was the recipient of the 2008 Lifetime Student Development Award. In 2009, May directed *Iris*, a short thriller currently on the film festival circuit, and is the producer of William Saunders' *Sweet Little Lies*, now in post-production.

### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Faculty Honors & Audience Choice Award, Columbia University Film Festival

Best Director, CA Next Gen Film Festival, Sacramento CA

LA Shorts Fest, CA

Sonoma Wine Country Film Festival

Savannah Film Festival, GA

Roxbury Film Festival, MA

Bahamas International Film Festival

Angelus Film Festival, CA

DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival

Woods Hole Film Festival, MA

Barbados International Film Festival

Palm Springs Shortsfest

San Diego Asian Film Festival

AFI La Femme Film Festival, Los Angeles

Indo-American Arts Council Film Festival, NY

## OMELETTE

Director Nadejda Koseva, Bulgaria, 2008, 5 minutes, live-action.

<http://www.koseva.com/> <http://www.frontfilm.eu/> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1352841/>

### SYNOPSIS

In 1996, a young Bulgarian mother struggles with the challenges of a collapsing economy, food shortages, rampant inflation and social upheaval. As prices rise before her eyes in the queue for food, a series of events commence that separately break each of the three eggs she can afford to purchase.

Part of a project of 15 short films encapsulating each of the 15 years of Bulgaria's political transition out of communism, the five-minute *Omelette* is a compactly shot and evocative rendition of real life during the period it portrays – doing a lot with a little.



### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Nadejda Koseva was born in 1974 in Sofia, Bulgaria. After graduating from the Bulgarian National Film and Television Academy, Nadejda directed the short fiction film *The Ritual*, part of the omnibus work *Lost and Found* which premiered at Berlin IFF 2005. Nadejda and Svetla Tsotsorkova founded the production company FRONT FILM and produced the short film *Waltzes and Tangos from the Village of Whitewater* which premiered at Locarno IFF 2007. Her filmography as a director includes *Cake* (1997), *The Three Sisters* (1998), *That's It* (1999), *The Herd of Pavel Koichev* (2000), *Execution I* (2000) and *Veronyka's Destiny* (2002).



### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Honorable Mention, Short Film Award, Sundance Film Festival  
Best Short Film, Cine Black Sea Jury, Romanian Intl Film Festival  
Audience Award, Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgaria  
Brussels Film Festival  
Hamptons International Film Festival, NY  
Thessaloniki International Film Festival  
Sarajevo Film Festival, Bosnia  
Pamplona Film Festival, Spain  
Festroia International Film Festival, Lisbon Portugal  
Nashville Film Festival, TN  
Calgary International Film Festival, Canada  
Huesca Film Festival, Spain  
Expresion En Corto International Film Festival, Mexico  
Breda Film Festival, The Netherlands

## THE McCOMBIE WAY

Directors Kristina and Nick Higgins, USA, 2005, 6.5 minutes, live-action documentary.

<http://www.doubledogfilms.com/> [http://www.apowerfulnoise.org/crewbios\\_higgins.html](http://www.apowerfulnoise.org/crewbios_higgins.html)

### SYNOPSIS

Wonder Valley, California is a small and remote high desert community sparsely inhabited (pop. 814) by retirees, artists and ordinary folks just making a living. For every occupied home, there are five deserted broken



down cabins, usually with the haunting remains of the last occupants' belongings strewn about the landscape. Shortly after moving to Wonder Valley, filmmakers Kristina and Nick Higgins came upon a series of cabin properties that had been cleaned up and landscaped, the existing bushes watered and rock walkways made for imaginary occupants. They wondered who could be toiling away in the 100-degree heat, creating such beauty for so few people to see. To their surprise, they discovered an older woman in a massive sombrero, creating a rock wall by the side of the road. That woman was Ann McCombie.

Over the years, McCombie, who gardens 15 acres every day, built a road to her house from the fire station and is single-handedly cleaning the blighted landscape of a deserted community. Along the way she figured out the secret to a happy life. The 83-year-old self-reliant Ann McCombie delivers her philosophy of living life in the here-and-now with a great deal of wisdom and personality: "What is past is past...you've got now and if you're going to have a happy life, you enjoy all your nows." In this plain spoken no-frills cinematic slice of American life, the grit and optimism of Ms. McCombie shines like the hot desert sun.

### FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Double Dog Productions was born in a tiny Himalayan village in 1999 when Nick and Kristina Higgins discovered their shared passion for film, adventure and each other. So they got hitched and start making documentary films. Since then, their documentary and narrative work has appeared on PBS, The Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, A&E and in festivals worldwide. They have documented elderly eccentrics living in the Mojave desert, desperate health workers in Nepal trying to secure supplies and parents across America pioneering new ways to integrate work and family life.

#### **Kristina Higgins, Director, Producer**

Kristina started her career as a research consultant for Fortune 500 companies. Early on she was asked to go undercover as a Mary Kay sales recruit to document their recruiting process. The women she met and the world of Mary Kay were just too fascinating for a mere PowerPoint presentation. So she wrote and performed an award-winning solo show about her experience, thus launching her theater career. Her storytelling evolved to writing and directing for the screen and lead to a grant to study at The American Film Institute. She has since won numerous awards for her narrative and documentary films, including the Audi Documentary Audience and Grand Jury prizes for *Life as You Know It*.



#### **Nick Higgins, Director, Director of Photography**

For the best part of the 1990s, Nick shot films clandestinely while selling GE 747 aircraft engines in Hong Kong and Rio De Janeiro. On the day his camera case outweighed his briefcase, he realized a career shift was in order. A couple of years at graduate school gave him the unusual distinction of being the first Scotsman to receive a Masters in Cinematography from The American Film Institute. He was the Director of Photography for National Geographic's *My Brilliant Brain* and Robert Greenwald's *Iraq for Sale*.



### AWARDS & SCREENINGS

Winner, PBS Independent Lens Award  
Palm Springs International Shorts Fest, CA  
Slam Dance Film Festival, UT

AFI Film Fest, Los Angeles, CA  
HiLo Film Festival, San Francisco, CA

[LUNAFEST](#)<sup>®</sup> is a traveling film festival dedicated to promoting awareness about women's issues, highlighting women filmmakers, and bringing women together in their community.

LUNA created LUNAFEST<sup>®</sup> to support women on a number of levels. Here is our mission:

- To provide women filmmakers the opportunity to be seen and heard
- To empower women by showcasing women's issues, stories and amazing moments
- To support women's health and our partnership with the Breast Cancer Fund
- To support local communities by providing non-profit groups a creative medium to raise funds for local organizations
- To provide women with a forum to communicate, share, and inspire social change within their communities



## THE BREAST CANCER FUND



the Breast Cancer Fund is dedicated to eliminating the environmental causes of breast cancer. Through public education, policy initiatives, outdoor challenges and other innovative campaigns, The Breast Cancer Fund mobilizes the public to secure the changes needed to stop this devastating epidemic. To date, [LUNAFEST](#)<sup>®</sup> has raised over \$150,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund. For more information or to make a donation, visit the [Breast Cancer Fund](#).

## CINCINNATI WORLD CINEMA

Now in our ninth year, Cincinnati World Cinema is an all-volunteer organization showcasing outstanding motion pictures not normally shown in Cincinnati, with a focus on high-quality films that explore the human condition and celebrate cultural diversity. International, independent, documentary and short films are typically followed by discussions with filmmakers or local experts to enhance the educational experience.



<http://www.cincyworldcinema.org> 859 781 8151