

Cincinnati World Cinema Film Notes: THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI

In a simple, honest and personal way, this film touches on things that can make a difference in our lives and in our society:

- The power of friendship & compassion to address injustice, racism, isolation, aging, homelessness.
- The healing and restorative power of art.
- The power of the individual to survive and reconnect with family and society.

Event Basics

WHAT:

- **THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI**
- Director Linda Hattendorf, USA, 2006 35mm, TRT 74 min. Genre: Documentary
- Post-Film Discussion with the Director follows the film. This film is NR (Not Rated)
- Dinner-and-a-movie options with the Terrace Café at the CAM & Andy's Mediterranean Grill.

WHEN:

- **Tuesday, November 27**
 - **Wednesday, November 28**
 - **Thursday, November 29**
- Screening at 7:00 pm, doors open at 6:30 pm

WHERE:

- **Cincinnati Art Museum**, 953 Eden Park Drive, Eden Park/Mt. Adams. Free Parking

TICKETS:

- **Tickets are \$9 for adults and \$7 for Art Museum members and students with ID. \$7 tickets are ONLY available online, by phone, at the Museum, and at the door.**

ADVANCE TICKETS:

- **ON-LINE** toll free 1-877-548-3237
- at the Art Museum and at area outlets: Sitwell's (Clifton), Lookout Joe Coffee Roasters (Mt. Lookout Square), the Coffee Emporium (Downtown) and Shake It (Northside).

Presented by :

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Summary

THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI IS ONE OF THOSE RARE BIRDS in the documentary film world -- a first directorial work, made on a limited budget, that engages and entertains while addressing serious subjects. Although the film is sobering, "Cats" has a lot of character, thanks to the film's principal persona, colorful octogenarian Jimmy Mirikitani, who tends to be opinionated, stubborn and a bit of a rascal.

WHAT MAKES THIS a "Must See":

- Mirikitani's life-long passion for, and devotion to, his art, which has sustained him from bright beginnings, through anger and isolation, to peace and harmony.
- As a documentarian, Linda Hattendorf has captured Mirikitani's metamorphosis, moving from obscurity to vitality, from subsistence to purpose. As a person, Hattendorf was able to extend a helping hand to Jimmy, which figures significantly in the outcome.
- On a larger scale, the film invites the viewer to contemplate aspects of our history and society that merit examination and discussion.
- In the end we care deeply about Jimmy and come away with heightened awareness of the circumstances that have impacted thousands of people like him.
- The bottom line demonstrates that friendship and compassion, especially the one-on-one variety, can make a difference in the world.

THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI affirms our humanity and will appeal to all lovers of art, peace, — and cats! We urge you to see this heart-warming and uplifting film.

About The Film

IF THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI were a work of fiction, its twists and turns might have been written by O'Henry - *"There's more poetry in a block of New York than in 20 daisied lanes."*

BUT THIS FILM is not a work of fiction.

It is the true story of mistreatment and mistrust, and ultimate healing made possible by compassion and friendship.

IT IS THE STORY OF TSUTOMU MIRIKITANI, known as "JIMMY," born in Sacramento CA, raised in Hiroshima, who returned to the States in 1937 to mount a career as an artist. Jimmy's misfortunes began when he, along with thousands of Japanese Americans, was imprisoned in the U.S. government Internment Camps at the outset of World War II.



IT IS THE STORY OF ONE MAN'S STRUGGLE to survive mistreatment, and his eventual attainment of modest equilibrium. It is the story of how this delicate balance was disrupted and of Mirikitani's subsequent existence as an aging homeless person, creating art on the street for survival.

IT IS ALSO THE STORY OF LIFE in New York City in the months preceding 9-11-2001, and the impact upon the octogenarian Mirikitani as the twin towers came down that September day, echoing the loss of his beloved Hiroshima over fifty years earlier.

IT IS A STORY WITH A HAPPY ENDING.

Mirikitani was literally pulled off the streets and out of the cloud of toxic fallout on that fateful date by a Good Samaritan. As a result

we have the story of Mirikitani's reconnection with society, his positive experience with New York's social service safety net; and of his ability, at advanced age, to overcome the wounds of time, to heal, to forgive and find family members lost for decades.

THERE IS A BACK STORY, perhaps as significant as the frontline documentary:

THE GOOD SAMARITAN who befriended Mirikitani encountered him many months before 9-11 and took an interest in his artwork, his personal history and his well-being. That person was a film editor, a behind-the-scenes professional whose work involves the shaping and creation of final cuts for a number of prominent documentary filmmakers.

THAT PERSON WAS LINDA HATTENDORF, whose experience with Jimmy Mirikitani moved her to document his story on film. Against the backdrop of changing seasons in New York, this film began as a study of a unconventional artist living on the street. With the advent of 9-11 and the revelation of Jimmy's life history, the project evolved into a detective story with the filmmaker personally involved in searching out facts and solutions that could improve Mirikitani's situation. Ms. Hattendorf is not a person inclined to seek notoriety or the "lime-light" and this trait is conveyed as she stays off camera while the film focuses on Jimmy Mirikitani, not Linda's role in helping him.

"I want people to feel history ... to understand the lingering trauma of war and discrimination and the healing power of friendship and art. We are all one family."

~ director Linda Hattendorf

LINDA HATTENDORF GREW UP in Cincinnati, took drawing lessons at the Cincinnati Art Museum as a child and went on to graduate *summa cum laude* from the University of Cincinnati. At a time when 'bad news' typically fills our local airwaves and newspapers, Ms. Hattendorf's compassion, friendship, and generosity, along with her cinematic artistry in conveying this compelling story, are testimony to her roots and upbringing in Cincinnati, crediting the values to which Cincinnatians traditionally aspire.



Bio ~ Linda Hattendorf

For Linda Hattendorf, coming to Cincinnati and speaking with film audiences at the screening of her film has the excitement of a homecoming - the Queen City is where it all began for her.

She puts it this way: "We've traveled to Europe, Japan and across America with this film, but coming home is special - my family, old friends, familiar places, this is great!"

If you are over the age of 35 and attended U.C., chances are you knew, or knew of, Linda's father John. Professor Hattendorf, now deceased, spent almost forty years at the University of Cincinnati, as director of admissions, associate vice provost and professor in the division of professional practice. Linda's mother Ruth, since remarried, still lives in Anderson Township.

"We lived in College Hill when Linda was little," says Ruth, "and I remember taking her to the Cincinnati Art Museum each week for drawing lessons." Later, the family moved to the East Side, where Linda graduated from Anderson High School. After that, she attended college in Clifton and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Cincinnati with dual majors in Art History and English Literature.

After college, Linda served veggie-burgers at the New World Food Shop on Ludlow Avenue before joining the staff at *Dramatics Magazine*, published by the International Thespian Society. And she also worked at *Prologue*, the newsletter of Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park.

Linda left the familiar confines of Cincinnati to attend Radcliffe's *Publishing Procedures Course* at Harvard University, and then moved to New York City to work at Time Inc.

In New York, she earned a master's degree in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research, and began to work in documentary film.

For more than a decade now, Ms. Hattendorf has been working in the New York documentary film community and has had the opportunity to interact with outstanding documentary directors such as Ken Burns, Barbara Kopple, Josh Pais and Julia Pimsleur. Linda's editing work has aired on PBS, A&E, and The Sundance Channel as well as in theatrical venues and at many festivals.

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Awards

JURY AWARDS

Best of Festival, Palm Springs Intl Film Festival
Winner, Grand Prize, Documentary Feature, Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival
Winner, Best Picture, Japanese Eyes Section, Tokyo International Film Festival
Winner, Grand Jury Award, San Diego Asian American Film Festival
Winner, Best Director, Sun Valley Spiritual Film Festival
Winner, Norwegian Peace Film Award, Tromso International Film Festival, Norway
Winner, Best Documentary Feature, Bermuda Film Festival
Winner, Best Documentary Feature, Big Muddy Film Festival, Illinois
Winner, Best Documentary Feature, Big Sky Film Festival
Winner, Best Documentary Feature, Dallas Asian American Film Festival
Winner, Best Documentary Feature, Durango Independent Film Festival
Winner, Best Documentary, Galway Film Fleadh, Ireland
Winner, Best Documentary, Hope and Dreams Film Festival, New Jersey
Winner, Best Documentary, Philadelphia Film Festival
Winner, Best Feature Documentary, Port Townsend Film Festival, Washington
Winner, Best Feature Documentary, Durban International Film Festival, South Africa
Winner, Excellence in Filmmaking Award, Documentary, Sedona Film Festival
Winner, Spirit Award, EBS International Documentary Festival, Korea
Honorable Mention, Best Documentary, Boulder International Film Festival, Colorado
Honorable Mention, Best Documentary, Motovun Film Festival, Croatia

AUDIENCE AWARDS

Winner, Audience Award, Tribeca Film Festival
Winner, Audience Award, Biografilm Festival - Celebration of Lives, Bologna Italy
Winner, Audience Award, Durango Independent Film Fest
Winner, Audience Award, EDOCS, Quito Ecuador
Winner, Audience Award, FilmFestDC, Washington, D.C.
Winner, Audience Award, Hors-Ecran International Film Festival, Lyon France
Winner, Audience Award, Paris Cinema Fest
Runner Up, Audience Award for Feature Documentary, Palm Springs International Film Festival
Runner Up, Audience Award, Rotterdam Intl Film Festival
Runner Up, Audience Award, Documentary, Sedona
Runner Up, People's Choice Award, Vancouver International Film Festival