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Monday, August 11, 2008

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DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - This week Downtown Los Angeles will see another in a line of high-profile happenings that would have seemed impossible a decade ago. On Aug. 13-17, the community will welcome the inaugural Downtown Film Festival, during which audiences will be able to catch nearly two dozen features and documentaries as well as approximately 180 short films at seven venues (for highlights of the festival, see the story on page 24).

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It may not be a miracle, but putting together all the moving parts to make the five-day festival roll out is something close to miraculous. The organizers deserve credit for their vision and hard work, and hopefully Downtown residents, workers, visitors and film buffs from outside the community will flock to the screenings.

- BEST OF
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There is a lot to like about the Downtown Film Festival, starting with the diverse offerings, everything from an indie film at the historic Orpheum Theatre on opening night to four short-film packages at the Laemmle Grande. There is a program dedicated to Latino films, another one for films with ties to Africa, and even a full day of screenings and panels focused on "green" living and sustainability. It's an impressive slate.

DOWNTOWN LA SCENE

Equally impressive is what having the festival here says about Downtown: Like the thousands of residents who have flocked to the community in the past eight years, and like the scores of bars, restaurants and other businesses that have arrived on the scene in that time, this says in yet another way that Downtown is a worthy place to plant a stake. The festival is the latest in a series of great "gets" for the community, one that further cements the area's reputation as a place to spend quality time.

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While many in Downtown already know this, the festival has the potential to show off the community to thousands of newcomers. Film festivals, of course, can generate large crowds, and the screenings at Broadway movie palaces, MOCA and Los Angeles Center Studios (among other locations) will undoubtedly lure people to the area who otherwise would not come here. Which means, in addition to being a great event, it is also a unique marketing opportunity for all of Downtown.

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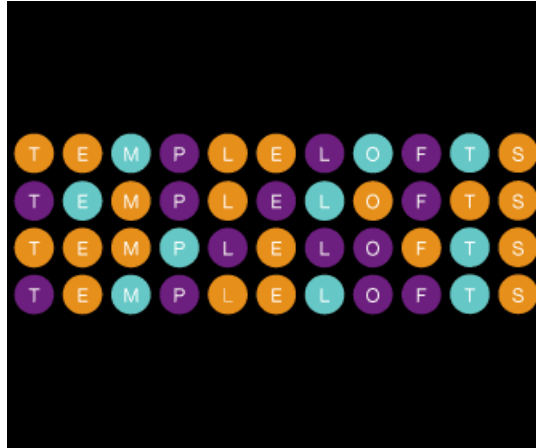
In a way, we're not surprised that Downtown now has its own film festival: While the community is slim on theaters showing first-run movies, it has a history of attracting people for special cinematic events. For more than two decades the Last Remaining Seats has pulled thousands every summer to see classic films in the Broadway theaters, while the area is also host to a bandit drive-in theater, a thought-provoking lineup at REDCAT and a sparkling, still-new theater, the ImaginAsian Center. Other events - from one-off films at California Plaza to the

Editorial - Urban Scrawl

Jules Verne Adventure Film Festival - prove that if you show the right movies, people will come.

This will be an exciting and potentially invigorating week. Those who come Downtown will be exposed to new works of art, as well as to the area's attractions, residents and architecture. The organizers have done a momentous job in bringing this together.

Downtown now has its own film festival. Hey, that's cool.



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Reader Comments

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LA Shorts Fest wrote on Aug 11, 2008 10:01 AM:

" The 12th Annual LA Shorts Fest returns to Hollywood August 15-21, 2008 at the Laemmle Sunset 5 theatres. LA Shorts Fest will be honoring Shane Black, writer/director/producer, with the prestigious Maverick Filmmaker Award on opening night, August 15, at 7:30pm. Shane Blacks credits include Lethal Weapon, starring Mel Gibson and Danny Glover, as well as the films The Last Boy Scout, starring Bruce Willis, The Long Kiss Goodnight, starring Geena Davis, and Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang.

The festival also includes celeb directorial debuts: Josh Brolins X, Kirsten Dunsts Welcome starring Winona Ryder, Rita Wilsons film The Trap starring Janine Tripplehorn. Other short films star Adrien Grenier, Jenna Elfman, Bodhi Elfman, Kelly Preston, Ed Begley Jr., Robert Redford, David Koechler, Laura Kightlinger, Mickey Rooney, Adam Corolla, Tony Shalhoub, Sam Rockwell, and Whoopi Goldberg.

The festival will also feature a handful of music videos, including the U2 music video for Window in the Skies. We received over 42 original creative commercials submitted by top ad agencies, including CAA, Arnold Worldwide, Fallon and Leo Burnett.

Our esteemed list of jurists includes Sandra Oh (Actress, Greys Anatomy), Andrew Reimer (HBO), David Bossert (Disney Animations), Seth Cohen (Comedy Central), Alex Meenehan (Smoke House), J. Sikura (Robert Evans Company), Susan King (LA Times) and Ernest Hardy (LA Weekly) www.lashortsfest.com "

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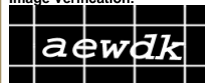
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