

Silk Screen 2009 Film Festival

The 4th Annual Silk Screen Asian American Film Festival was held May 8-17, 2009. The event featured 20 films from Asia or by Asian American Films at 3 locations in Pittsburgh, a total of over 30 screenings. Five of these had Question & Answer sessions for audience members with visiting filmmakers.

The festival attendance maintained a solid number this year, despite a decrease in programming from previous years. In accordance with recommendations from the Silk Screen board, foundations and corporate sponsors, the number of screenings were reduced due to funding issues.

The opening night film highly acclaimed North Korean film "My Dear Enemy" from North Korea. It was followed by the colorful Red Carpet Gala, attended by over 500 guests in traditional and ethnic dress.

Visitors came to Silk Screen traveling to Pittsburgh from California, Ohio, Wisconsin New York City and New Mexico for both opening and closing week-ends. Including Consul General of India, NY, Mr. Prabhu Dayal.

Invited Filmmakers included:

Ed Ratke - producer "The Speed of Life"
L.A. Renigen - actor "Fruit Fly"
Suman Mukhopadhyay- director "Chaturanga"
Nina Paley - creator "Sita Sings the Blues"

Tate Bunker- filmmaker "The Speed of Life"
David Boyle - director "White on Rice"
Manu Narayan- actor "Love Guru"

Silk Screen Festival Q&A sessions with filmmakers increase the potential for on-going filmmaking, sight scouting, recruitment of staff and development of relationships with Pittsburgh's growing film and entertainment market. All visitors enjoyed their experience in Pittsburgh and look forward to returning for a bigger and better 2010 Silk Screen Festival. Opportunities like this will grow and increase as the festival continues.

The Red Carpet Gala was a sea of Diversity. Over 470 guests of various ethnicity, accents and national costumes enjoyed, performances, dancing and Asian food. Guests included: India Consul General Prabhu Dayal, Pittsburgh notables: Bill Peduto, US Congressman Jason Altmire several CEOs and academics were also in attendance.

Ray Dyer, Joe Mistick, Harish
Mary Beth & Tom Buchanan

Silk Screen Board Members
Ned Renzi, Jim Singer

Dr. Curtiss Porter, Amina Yahya,
Ellie Higgins

Silk Screen presented the 2nd annual People's choice Award (an Audience Award for best film) to the film "Sita Sings the Blues" by Nina Paley. It was sponsored by the RAGS foundation (Gunjan & Sridhar Tayur).

This animated film based on the Hindu mythological tale the Ramayana, tells the story of "Sita" with a whimsical modern twist. Clever shadow puppets narrate the story in parallel to modern love lost set to catchy blues tunes of the 1920s by Annette Hanshaw. "Sita Sings the Blues" was a winner at the Berlin International Film Festival, and winner of the Emerging Filmmaker at the Denver International Film Festival as well as best feature at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival.

Encouraged by the success of *Sitaö*, Silk Screen will continue to include animated features in its line-up on a regular basis. Our efforts with year-round programming and film series are expanding. New relationships and marketing to local k-12 schools will be a focus moving forward. Silk Screen is improving awareness at colleges in surrounding counties as well to increase attendance of all students 18-25 years and older.

Overall the 2009 Silk Screen Festival was a success! All attendees from far and wide enjoyed the 10 days of events. Moviegoers had great reports in both word of mouth chats as well as anonymous surveys collected at each screening. Everyone involved is looking forward to the next festival, currently set for May 7-16, 2010 in Pittsburgh.