

Filmmakers Club broadens focus

BY CHARLOTTE KEENAN
Staff Reporter

Sophomore Drew Turner grew up in Kirksville and worked at Downtown Cinema 8 for five years.

"I've seen a lot of crappy Hollywood formulaic movies," he said. "I've been down to Columbia [Mo.], with the Ragtag [Cinema] and had that experience, and I'd love to go to a theater like that four times a week."

With a mind to bring more independent films to Kirksville, Turner recently joined the University Filmmakers Club, he said.

"I was hoping ... that we could start organizing some kind of grassroots sort of connection of movie nights," he said. "Just having club members suggest movies that they would want to watch, and my hope is that they'd pick a movie and then be able to kind of lead a discussion on it."

Turner's ideas came at a turning point for the Filmmakers Club, which will be organizing a series of film workshops and screening events this semester in an effort to broaden the club's mission and to attract greater campus participation.

Until recently, Filmmakers Club members exclusively focused on producing one film per semester, said senior Jimmy Moore, Filmmakers Club president. But this year the

group discussed expanding its numbers beyond eight core members, he said.

With this goal in mind, the club will host independent filmmakers screenings of and discussions of their films, he said.

"[These filmmakers] are the freshest of the fresh because their stuff hasn't been in theaters," Moore said. "It's kind of a 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' situation because they get their stuff shown, we get to show films, and we also have interviews and questions afterwards, so everybody wins."

Moore said the Filmmakers Club also will coordinate a series of educational workshops outlining the filmmaking process from beginning to end. The workshops will feature topics including script writing, producing, directing, camera work, stage acting and editing, he said.

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Jimmy Moore
Senior

He said the film screenings and workshops tentatively are scheduled to begin in October.

Filmmakers Club adviser Todd Kuhns said he will be leading a workshop exploring the duties of film producers.

"A film producer basically is the person who organizes all the groups and parties to-



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Sophomore Claudia Cappuano and junior Nate Sullivan audition Tuesday night for the new film that will be shown at the end of the Fall semester.

gether to make the shoot and everything happen," he said. "So it's basically gathering the right crew together, hiring the right crew, doing the scheduling [and] things like that."

He said his discussion mainly will focus on the film producer's role in small, independent film projects. His and other Filmmakers Club workshops might be interesting to both individuals interested in making film and those who simply enjoy film, Kuhns said.

"The [Filmmakers Club] sees its purpose as twofold — not just to support local filmmakers and make films, but also to spread the appreciation of films in general on campus," he said. "And I think now they're really redefining themselves, in many ways solidifying that goal and purpose."

Turner is working to develop that mission by applying for a Student-Initiated Learning Opportunity grant, he said. With money from the grant, the group possibly will be able to produce multiple films per year and organize a local film festival, he said.

"It would again have that independent, amateur-minded spirit and could be something fun for the campus," he said.

Turner said he thinks students should create their own culture and entertainment rather than waiting for their environment to change.

"I think too many Truman students complain about Kirksville not being exciting," he said. "And I think even if [Filmmakers Club] can't bring anything within one year, it's worth the effort for the future."

Films cross national, cultural borders

BY PAUL BISCHOFF
Staff Reporter

It might be well worth the time to attend a free movie during the International Film Festival at the Downtown Cinema 8 on Wednesday nights.

The University received a grant to host the annual Tournées Festival in cooperation with the French Embassy and the French Ministry of Culture. The festival brings nine award-winning international films to Kirksville, five of which are French. The others hail from Romania, Israel, China and Austria/Germany. Several professors are rewarding students with extra credit or substituting missed work for attending the festival.

"Hollywood cinema is no longer leading the world," said Professor of English and linguistics Bob Mielke, who teaches the Film, Form, and Sense course. "They tackle issues that American film considers off limits. ... 'Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days' is about a college student in Romania at the end of the communist regime trying to help her roommate get an abortion. This is a subject that American cinema wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole."

Mielke commented further on the weaknesses of American film and what it lacks when compared to its international counterparts.

"Maturity, good script writing, transgressive themes, and that's just overall — there are lovely exceptions," Mielke said. "But the

films we've been watching at the film festival are made for adults instead of 14-year-olds. ... It's like having steak or lobster instead of just junk food."

Mielke said American film has deteriorated since the '60s and '70s. French and Italian films have been at the forefront of cinema in the past few years. French professor Tim Farley explained why international cinema hasn't become mainstream in the United States.

"Americans have been looking at their navels," Farley said. "We've never been very open to the rest of the world. We love the rest of the world to be looking at us, and we're terrible at looking back."

This digression might not be the fault of Hollywood, however, Farley said American audiences have become accustomed to generic plot lines, dumbed-down scripts and juvenile themes.

"They know what they are going to get, so they go to have their aspirations fulfilled," Farley said. "International films don't fall in that category. We can't walk into a French film and know how it's going to end, let alone know how it's going to get there."

Graduate student Jennifer Lee is attending her fourth international film festival this year. She said she encourages students to attend the festival and experience the films on the big screen.

"It's really important to look at the film festival as a way to expand our horizons," Lee said. "It's nice to escape the culture of Kirksville every once in a while. ... French

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Bob Mielke
Professor of English

DOWNTOWN CINEMA 8	
Le scaphandre et le papillon (Diving Bell and the Butterfly).....	9/10/08 France
4 luni, 3 saptamâni si 2 zile (4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days).....	9/17/08 Romania
L'Intouchable (The Untouchable).....	9/24/08 France
Ha-Buah (The Bubble).....	10/1/08 Israel
Persepolis.....	10/15/08 France
Xiang ri kui (Sunflower).....	10/22/08 China
La faute à Fidel (Blame It on Fidel).....	10/29/08 France
Die Fälscher (The Counterfeiters).....	11/5/08 Austria/Germany
Ne le dis à personne (Tell No One).....	11/12/08 France

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film has a sort of charm to it that adds not only to the cultural effect, but they have a different way of thinking in general."

Lee recalled her reaction to "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly," the first film of the series. The movie tells the true story of a man who has suffered a stroke and is completely paralyzed with the exception of his left eye. With the help of a therapist, he writes his memoir through an alphabetic system of blinking based on the frequency of letters in the French language.

"It was an absolutely excellent film," Lee said. "It kind of shook me to the core and, to an extent, helped me figure some things about my future in general, which was kind of awesome."

The Tournées Festival has had

huge success in past years, especially since it has moved to the Cinema 8. So far, three films have been shown and six remain. Show times are every Wednesday at 6:45 p.m. Admission is free for students with an ID. The next film to show on Oct. 1 is "The Bubble." Descriptions and trailers for all of the films can be found at <http://rcp.truman.edu/internationalfilm.htm>.

"Last year, it was a very large success," Professor of French Gregg Siewert said. "We had people coming, and they didn't have seats — between 180 and 210 people at the best attended. ... I think the number of audience participants has shown that it didn't really work well in Violette 1000, but you put it on the big screen and people are ready to go."

For students unable to attend

the festival or for those who simply want to experience more international film, the answer might be closer than expected.

"They should go immediately to the second floor of Pickler Memorial library and start looking through the card catalog," Siewert said. "There's going to be about 300 to 400 French movies made by French directors that they can take home and look at, or watch right there. ... They have the Criterion Collection, which is the best European and American movies that have ever been made."

Siewert encouraged students to take the initiative to find international films on their own.

"These films are out there, but you have to make an effort to go see them," he said.



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