

IndieFest Plays San Francisco Feb. 8-20

Upcoming Film Festival Not Your Run-of-the-Mill Picture Show

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In 1998 Jeff Ross had a problem. There was no avenue available for his friend Rand Alexander to show his film, *CAGED*, even though it had played the prestigious Slamdance Film Festival that same year. So, legend has it (or rather, a recent press release purports), Jeff took to the streets and put on a four-day showing which would be financed, like many of the other films presented, with his personal credit cards. Yet, as luck would have it, over 3,000 people attended.

The following year IndieFest grew to a nine-day event with over 4,000 moviegoers. Eight years after that, box office receipts revealed that over 10,000 were now patronizing the event.

Now the 9th Annual San Francisco Independent Film Festival (IndieFest) is gearing up, offering a worldwide blend of more than 100 independent films and videos, some of them probably still being financed by somebody's credit cards. It's anyone's guess what you'll find unspooling before your eyes this year, but compared to the lineup coming out of the big studios in Hollywood, you probably can't do any worse.

Indiefest runs February 8-20 at three Bay Area venues: Roxie Cinemas, 3117 16th Street; Victoria Theatre, 2961 16th Street and Cas-

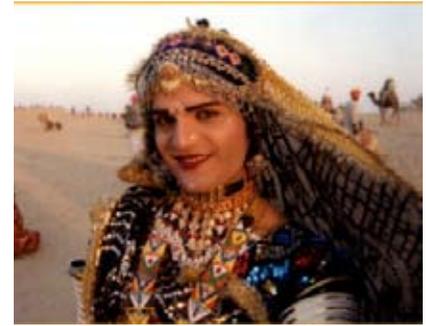
tro Theatre, 429 Castro Street in San Francisco. Tickets are \$10 for each screening; \$25 for Opening Night (including the after-party); and \$15 for Closing Night (including the after-party). For tickets or more information, telephone (415) 820-3907. Tickets go on sale (and a film schedule will become available) beginning January 15 at sfindie.com.

Opening night creeps: David Lynch's newest

Master of the surreal aesthetic, two-time Oscar nominee David Lynch will bring his newest opus of oddity, *INLAND EMPIRE* to the Castro theatre on February 8 as the opening night offering. Starring Laura Dern and Justin Theroux, the film is an epic look at an actress cast in a cursed role and the hallucinogenic horrors that ensue as her life and the life of the character she's playing become intertwined. On hand to discuss the film after its screening will be Lynch's longtime producer and spouse, Mary Sweeney.

Three films sure to arouse more than your curiosity

Aaron Katz's *DANCE PARTY, USA* offers a dark coming of age tale. Living in Portland Oregon, seventeen-year-old Gus hangs around doing nothing and being apathetic with his buddy Bill. Jessica also is seventeen and



Gypsy Caravan

anti-social. She doesn't have much in common with anyone anymore – not even her best friend Christie (Sarah Bing/*THUMBSUCKER, ELEPHANT*). At Brian's 4th of July kegger, they make a tenuous and fleeting connection when Gus confides in Jessica a secret from his past.

Joe Swanberg's *LOL* proffers a look at boys and their electronic gadgets. Featuring a nonprofessional cast, video contributions from people all over the world, and original music by lead actor Kevin Bewersdorf, *LOL* tells the tale of a trio of post-college pals trying to connect romantically and erotically with hot women using the tangle of today's technology.

Anna Biller's *VIVA* - equal parts period piece and sexploitation film – also looks at folks navigating the world of budding sexuality but through the burnished lens of the 1970s. Saturated to the hilt with vibrant color, and exquisitely detailed in its depiction of the era, *VIVA* is the tale of a bored housewife who gets unwittingly sucked into the sexual revolution. Abandoned by her husband, Barbi (Anna Biller) is introduced to the finer points of bohemia by her progressive girlfriend (Bridget Brno). A crazy freaked-out scene of nudist camps, hippies, orgies, bisexuality, sadism, drugs and skin, skin, skin ensues.