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STEPPING OUT

Spotlight on film

The Long Island International Film Expo gets under way

Posted July 12, 2018



(/uploads/original/20180712-182220-SO 712 Dinosaur film.jpg)

Ed Asner and Robert Clohessy in a scene from the thriller "Dinosaur."

COURTESY LYNNANNE DALY

By Karen Bloom

The red carpet has been rolled out once again at the historic Bellmore Movies. Film buffs, along with filmmakers and related industry professionals have turned their attention to the latest installment of the Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE), which runs July 13 through July 19 this year.

Debra Markowitz, the longtime dynamo behind the scenes — as Director of the Nassau County Film Office and vice president of the Long Island Film/TV Foundation (which presents the Long Island International Film Expo) — and a filmmaker herself, eagerly welcomes fans and industry professionals to what has become a Long Island institution, now in its 21st year.



"It's exciting to see LIIFE become such a premiere film community on Long Island," Markowitz says. "Having had several of my own films on the festival circuit and seeing what other film festivals do to serve the filmmakers, I see just important LIIFE is to fostering a cohesive festival family for foreign, domestic and, of course, our own local filmmakers."

The festival is firmly established as one of the region's major summer events. It is highly regarded both among film industry insiders and the movie-watching public as a vital showcase for independent filmmakers, representing all genres of movie making from around the world.

In fact it's so much more than a film festival. Markowitz considers it a "filmmaker community," noting that the many workshops and networking opportunities for the filmmakers — and those aspiring to get into the film industry — are equally as important as the films themselves.

(<http://ads.liherald.com/www/delivery/ck.php?> "LIIFE has evolved," she says. "We continue to tweak as we go along, working closely with the film community. I like to think of LIIFE as a place for the film community to connect with the audience, if you will."

To that end, the Expo offers a full slate of workshops and panels exploring various facets of the film business. Topics include "The Write Stuff" screenwriting panel and "How to Take a Project from Development to Distribution" among the many subjects covered.

Of course, the films remain at the core of the event — all 147 of them. The selection represents what organizers consider the best short and feature-length films from around the world.

Among them, Fred Carpenter, a LIIFE favorite, is back with the world premiere of his latest feature "Dinosaur." Chuck Zito, Robert Clohessy, Joan Jett, Ed Asner and Kevin Brow star in this dramatic thriller about the life of a veteran police officer approaching retirement. The film examines how the cop juggles his turbulent home life, the daily stresses of his job and an apparent biker war that's about engulf his hometown of Howard Beach.

"Fred's films are always a pleasure to watch and he sells out film festival screenings with every film he makes," Markowitz says.

Markowitz is equally as enthusiastic about the other films on the schedule.

Among them, the 25-minute webisode "Playing Dirty," follows the life of a money-driven female attorney with a coke habit, who finds herself on the run from the law and mafia as a result of her corrupt and unconventional past. "It's really impressive and very sleek," says Markowitz.

She also touts the sci-fi short "The Boogeys," from writer-director Sanjay F. Sharma. On a future Earth transformed into a planetary ghetto by alien overlords, a cop turned pickpocket tracks down a missing child to be sold to the "Boogeys". The encounter will determine the child's fate and his redemption. It stars Doug Jones, the noted creature actor who appeared as the amphibious fish man in "The Shape of Water."

"We're thrilled to have this film," says Markowitz.

And, as always, at this audience-friendly event, everyone is invited to the Closing Night Party and Awards Ceremony, hosted by Kevin Brown, on July 19 at the Bellmore Movies, where the winners are honored. Among the accolades that evening, Danny Aiello will be accepting a Lifetime Achievement Award and comedian-actor Chris Roach (recently seen in "Kevin Can Wait") is a Rising Star honoree.

"We're really excited about this year's event," says Markowitz. "We hope everyone comes out to see these great films."

Long Island International Film Expo

When: July 13-19, times vary.

Where: Bellmore Movies, 222 Pettit Ave., Bellmore. For tickets and information, visit www.longislandfilmexpo.com.

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