

CULTURE

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M O N D A Y , A P R I L 5 , 2 0 1 0

Child's play

The Taiwan International Children's Film Festival combines films about children, for children and even a Kids as Directors segment that puts children at the helm

BY **HO YI**
STAFF REPORTER

Inukshuk, an animation short from France, is being screened at The Taiwan International Children's Film Festival.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TICFF

When documentary filmmakers Henri Li (林文龍) and Chang Shu-man (張淑滿) first asked the children of a Rukai (魯凱族) tribal village in Maolin Township (茂林鄉), Kaohsiung County, about Typhoon Morakot, which devastated their community in August, the youngsters didn't show any signs of trauma.

Only after Li and Chang devised art courses that encouraged self-expression through painting and taught the children how to make clay animation and shadow puppets did their inner thoughts and feelings emerge: mudslides became monsters and rescue helicopters turned into hovering shadows.

The resulting short film, *Rainbow Over Troubled Water* (大雨過後的美夢), is part of the four-part documentary *Bye-Bye Monster Morakot* (Bye-Bye莫拉克), which features young survivors of the calamity recounting their own tales. The documentary is being screened in its entirety at the Taiwan International Children's Film Festival (台灣國際兒童影展).

Bye-Bye Monster Morakot was initiated by the festival within a week of Morakot smashing into southern Taiwan, and took six months to complete.

"It's [the festival's] first self-produced project. Rather than just showing films from other countries, we thought we should make our own works that address local issues and problems, especially as there are very few local movies made for children," said festival curator Wang Chiung-wen (王瓊文), who is also the documentary project's producer.

Set up by the Public Television Service in 2004, this year's 10-day edition of the biennial festival comprises film screenings, an art exhibition and workshops, and ends Sunday.

Among the movies showing at Vie Show Cinema and Eslite Xinyi Store in Taipei, the animation, documentary and fiction films in the Kids as Directors segment saw children from Norway, Italy, Belgium, Ethiopia, Kenya and Taiwan take over the filmmaking process.

Under this year's theme, listening and understanding, the festival highlights works that encourage young minds to probe the wider world.

Apart from *Bye-Bye Monster Morakot*, featured documentaries include *Katrina's Children* and *Syawal Was Very Scared ...*, which respectively reveal the stories of young survivors of Hurricane Katrina and the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami of 2005.

On a lighter note, *The Magic Tree*, an immensely popular television series-turned-film from Poland, tells the tale of two children who chance upon a chair made from a magical oak tree that fulfils the wishes of anyone who sits on it, while *Little Nicholas*, the festival's closing film, brings the children's literature classic *Le Petit Nicolas* (Little Nicholas) to the bring screen.

The workshops to be held at Juming Museum (朱銘美術館) this coming weekend include a class on stop-motion animation using edible materials such as cookies and candy.

For more information on the workshops, call (02) 2633-2000 or (02) 2498-9940.

FESTIVAL PICKS, COMPILED BY HO YI

A Beautiful Tragedy

David Kinsella's documentary follows one girl's struggle to become a prima ballerina. Perfection doesn't come easy for 15-year-old Oksanna, who has spent the last nine years studying at a prestigious ballet school in Russia. The students are permitted to only see their parents twice a year, and are subjected to immense pressure in the quest for physical and artistic excellence.



Antoine

Antoine is a blind five-year-old boy of Vietnamese origin who leads a happy school life at a regular school in Montreal, Canada. Director Laura Bari doesn't just follow Antoine and his schoolmates with her camera; she devises games, plays with the children and examines how they interact with each other. The students argue, laugh, fight and cry, but being blind, or not, is never a problem.



A Light in the Darkness

Professor Satoshi Fukushima is the first deaf-blind person to pass Japan's university entrance exam. In *A Light in the Darkness*, part of the Tell Us About Your Life series produced by Japan's NHK, he returns to his former elementary school to share his world with its students. After an exercise that

simulates blindness, one child says what he fears most is the feeling of absolute solitude. The professor cries, and says that that was also his biggest fear.



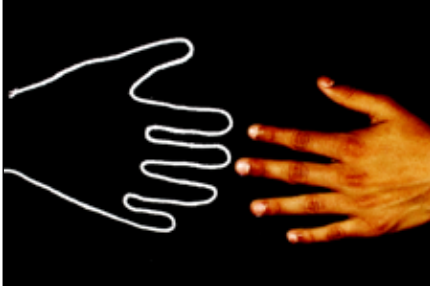
Esterhazy

Our hero Esterhazy, a young, diminutive rabbit of the Esterhazy dynasty, is sent by the head of his family to find a large wife in divided Berlin, circa 1989. After several setbacks, he discovers rabbit Eden and Mimi, the love of his life. But the Berlin Wall falls and Esterhazy and his new friends get caught up in the politics of the day. Human history as seen through bunny eyes.



Knitting for Human Rights

What would a group of 13-year-olds make of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights? In this stop-motion animation short made by Italian teenagers, the concept of human rights is envisioned as a hand and cotton thread that try to discover ways to stay together.



For a Moment, Freedom

Movie about the plight of Iranian refugees who flee to Europe. Three groups are stuck in Turkey's capital, Ankara, grinding through the asylum application process. Two of the refugees, youngsters Asy and Arman, try to join their parents, who are in Austria, but can't help wondering why they can't just stay home and play with their friends.



Hudud

Hudud, a short animation film made by 12 young Palestinians from Bethlehem and the Dheisheh Refugee Camp in the West Bank, shows how everyday life for teenagers living in the Palestinian territories involves curfews, heavily guarded check points and violence. A Palestinian song plays as the end credits roll: "Enough of the promises and lies! Now we want the truth. Enough dreams. Time to wake up ... We are hungry for freedom."



The Crocodiles

The Crocodiles is the coolest gang that every kid wants to join. Ten-year-old Hannes and his wheelchair-bound friend Kai are no exception. After a burglary takes place, the two friends join The Crocodiles to solve the case and get to take on a real criminal gang along the way. This well-crafted teen adventure movie is based on Max von der Grun's novel of the same title. Actor Nick Romeo Reimann, who plays Hannes, is in Taipei for the festival.



The Way I Miss You

The story of Yu-mi, a young girl from Siaolin Village (小林村), Kaohsiung County, which was completely wiped out by Typhoon Morakot in August. Out of the 78 students at Siaolin elementary school, which she attended, 46 died in the disaster. The film forms one segment of *Bye-Bye Monster Morakot* (Bye-Bye莫拉克), a four-part documentary that tells the tales of young survivors of the typhoon.



FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: Taiwan International Children's Film Festival (台灣國際兒童影展)

WHEN: Until April 11

WHERE: Vie Show Cinema, Xinyi District (信義區秀影城), 18 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路18號); Eslite Xinyi Store (誠品信義店) at 11 Songgao Rd, Taipei City (台北市松高路11號); Eslite Bookstore Dunnan Store (敦南誠品書店), 245, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段245號); and Juming Museum (朱銘美術館), 2 Sheshihu, Jinshan Township, Taipei County (台北縣金山鄉西勢湖2號)

ADMISSION: Tickets cost NT\$50 per film, available through ERA ticketing outlets or at www.ticket.com.tw

ON THE NET: www.ticff.org.tw

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

MARCH 26 TO APRIL 1



1 SHE and SHERO with **45.46** percent of sales

2 Show Luo (羅志祥) and Rashomon (羅生門) with **19.02%**

3 Kan Kan (康康) and Bei Piao (北漂) with **2.07%**

4 A-lin Huang (黃麗玲) and Before, After (以前·以後) with **1.68%**

5 Tiger Huang (黃小琥) and Simple/Not Simple (簡單 / 不簡單) with **1.56%**

ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC (WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW), BASED ON RETAIL SALES

PLANET POP



Erykah Badu is getting a slap on the wrist for stripping off in public.

PHOTO: AFP

12-year-old charges that he roughed up his mother with a gun.

Howse, 36, whose stage name is Flesh-N-Bone, was in jail Monday, a day after he was taken into custody during a show in the group's hometown of Cleveland.

Sheriff's spokesman John O'Brien said deputies didn't wait until after the show because Howse seemed to notice them, invited audience members to the stage and tried to slip out. He was arrested backstage.

O'Brien says Howse was wanted on domestic violence and felonious assault charges. The rapper is accused of striking his mother with a gun in 1998, leaving a 2.5cm gash on her head.

Oscar winner **Anna Paquin** came out as bisexual on Thursday in a video campaign for gay rights advocates, surprising the *True Blood* star's fans and causing the organization's Web site to crash.

The actress' message came in a celebrity-laden public service announcement for the Give a Damn campaign, a Web-based anti-discrimination effort backed by singer **Cyndi Lauper's** True Colors Fund.

"I'm bisexual," Paquin said, before adding that "one hate crime is committed approximately every hour of every day in this country."

Paquin last year confirmed that she is engaged to her boyfriend and *True Blood* co-star **Stephen Moyer**.

Lauper, **Whoopi Goldberg**, **Elton John** and **Sharon Osbourne** were among the other stars who appeared in the message.

"I've come to realize equality means a lot to people who don't have it and that, as a straight person, I have a responsibility to stand up for gay and transgender people each and every day," Lauper said in a statement.

Paquin's disclosure came as a surprise to fans of her work on television and in the movies.

Aged 11 she won an Oscar for best supporting actress in 1993's *The Piano*.

Since 2008, the Canadian-born Paquin has played a telepathic person in vampire TV series *True Blood* on cable network HBO.

British band The Libertines, which broke up in 2004 and includes troubled singer **Pete Doherty** in its lineup, performed on Wednesday, ahead of an appearance at the Reading Festival in August. Doherty, who famously dated supermodel **Kate Moss** and has been in and out of court for a string of drug and driving-related offences, appeared with **Carl Barat** and **John Hassall** at a press conference in a north London pub.

Lawyers for **Michael Jackson's** doctor on Thursday asked a California court not



to revoke his medical license because he would be unable to defend himself on charges of involuntary manslaughter in the King of Pop's death.

California's attorney general last month asked the Los Angeles Supreme Court to suspend **Conrad Murray's** medical license in California, in view of the "reckless" way he administered drugs that made him "a danger to the public."

The doctor, who could face up to four years in prison if convicted, acknowledged giving the anesthetic propofol to Jackson following the singer's "repeated demands/requests" for the drug.

Murray's lawyers argued that if he is barred from practicing medicine in California, where he no longer does since Jackson's death on June 25, he would "be unable to practice medicine in Texas and Nevada," where he also works.

"His ability to pay for his own defense depends almost entirely on his ability to continue to treat patients in Nevada and Texas," they added in the plea.

— AGENCIES

Anna Paquin, left, came out of the closet.

PHOTO: REUTERS