

DOCUTAH 2013

Film Selections

A Poem in Exile. The Manger: By Pablo Casals and Joan Alavedra (Spain, Puerto Rico) 77 minutes

The unpublished correspondence between the great musician Pablo Casals, and the Catalan poet Joan Alavedra, and the accounts given by experts, will tell the story behind the creation of “The Manger,” a musical composition born of a poem by the same title, which became a message for world peace.

A Space for Music, A Seat for Everyone: 100 Years of UMS Performances in Hill Auditorium (USA) 57 minutes

Hill Auditorium, a building incredible not only due to its rich history and remarkable acoustics but also due to its function as a cultural incubator for the arts community in southeastern Michigan, has united a diverse community of music enthusiasts for 100 years. Through concert recordings, news articles, and anecdotal interviews, this documentary will provide historical context for UMS performances in Hill Auditorium while highlighting the evolving community function of the venue.

An Ordinary Hero (USA) 91 minutes

Feature in Competition

The amazing true story of one white Southern woman's courage to choose her convictions and join the Civil Rights Movement. By the time she was 19, Joan Trumpauer was shot at, attacked, and put on death row but that's just the beginning of her remarkable journey to help change the world. Heralded as an unsung hero but disowned by her family, Joan takes us on an incredible journey of her life in the Civil Rights Movement and the power of the human spirit to persevere against the world. Shot over the course of a year in six states, “An Ordinary Hero” is the only complete story of Joan Trumpauer and includes interviews with scholars, authors, journalists and those who fought alongside this courageous woman.

Art is the Tree of Life (USA) 26 minutes

Short in Competition

At 95 years, Wilma Daubenspeck Cliff is an undiscovered American artist with a life well lived. But, her life also is not without tragedy and that centered – and distinguished – her art. In this documentary, the artist narrates her journey.

Beauty and the Breast (Canada) 86 minutes

A first time documentary filmmaker offers a compelling insight into a devastating reality of breast cancer, as seen through the eyes of several female patients helping demystify the disease while painting poignant and often humorous intimate portraits of survival. The film depicts the process of learning and accepting the terrifying verdict, and details the complexities of every stage of this disease. All interviewed patients have different experiences living with mutilated bodies while still maintaining strength. This film is not only invaluable as a testament to human resilience but it also proves that it's possible to blossom in the face of adversity. But as the fight continues, the wisdom and beauty within us can help us conquer the beast until we find the cure.

Before You Know It (USA) 109 minutes

Feature in Competition

Three LGBTQ seniors navigate the adventures, challenges and surprises of life and love in their golden years.

Born This Way (USA, Cameroon) 85 minutes

More people are imprisoned each year for homosexuality in Cameroon than any other country in the world. With intimate access to the lives of two young gay Cameroonians, *Born This Way* sketches a vivid portrait of day-to-day life in modern Africa. Lyrical imagery, devastating homophobia, glimpses of American culture and a hidden-camera courtroom drama coalesce into a story of what is possible in the global fight for equality.

Cello Tales (Germany, Luxembourg) 75 minutes

Feature in Competition

Four strings; a wooden box that has lived for 300 years.

The cello is the most human-like of all musical instruments in shape, size and sound. A daughter searches for her father's stolen instrument for a decade. An artisan looks for the best way to craft the perfect piece of wood. A soloist travels the world playing. A copyist recreates the sound of the Renaissance. The cello. More than just a musical instrument.

Do Not Duplicate (USA) 31 minutes

Short in Competition

“Do Not Duplicate” chronicles the man and his art, focusing on one specific installation – what he considers his crowning achievement. For two years, Phil labored to transform the entire façade of his building into a celebration of his profession as a locksmith and homage to the New York City of his childhood, what he calls his “one true love.” His work, created to be a permanent visual and personal monument, captures the creativity and energy of an evolving Greenwich Village.

Driving Blind (USA) 76 minutes

Two brothers, Tod and Justin Purvis, who suffer from a degenerative eye disease, and are going blind circumnavigate the United States, seeing the great sights that make America beautiful. Limited sight, with unlimited vision.

Eyes in the Forest: The Portraiture of Jim Lawrence (Canada) 13 minutes

Short in Competition

Follow experimental filmmaker Miriam Needoba in this rare view of British Columbia's remote Selkirk Mountains as seen through the eyes of wildlife photographer Jim Lawrence. Interweaving the startling imagery of Lawrence's still photography with Needoba's sublime cinematography, “Eyes In The Forest: The Portraiture of Jim Lawrence” is as much restrained study of landscape and wildlife as it is a conversation between two artists and their art forms.

Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement (USA, Canada) 61 minutes

Feature in Competition

A haunting, subtle, urgent documentary, “Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement” questions commonly held beliefs about disability and normalcy by exploring technologies that promise to change our bodies and mind forever.

Forced Confessions (UK, Canada, Germany, Iran, USA) 58 minutes

Feature in Competition

“Forced Confessions” is Maziar Bahari's personal journey through the history of forced confessions in Iran. As a victim of forced confession, he can testify that no other form of torture is as intrusive as being forced to recant your values in order to save your life. 32 years after the first use of forced confessions by the Islamic government in Iran, no one believes in their validity, but the government still insists on using it, and the confessions still ruin lives.

Furever (USA) 80 minutes

Feature in Competition

“Furever” explores the dimensions of grief people experience over the loss of a pet. It examines the sociological evolution of pets in the U.S. today, particularly their position in a family unit, and how this evolution is affecting those in the veterinary profession and death care industry. With interviews from grieving pet owners, veterinarians, psychologists, sociologists, religious scholars, neuroscientists, and the many professionals who preserve a pet's body for their devastated clientele, or repurpose a pet's cremains in unique ways (taxidermy, cloning, mummification, freeze-drying, and many more), “Furever” confronts contemporary trends, perspectives, and relevant cultural assumptions regarding attachment, religion, ritual, grief, and death, and studies the bonds that form between humans and animals, both psychological and physiological.

Geil of Doylestown: Forgotten Explorer (USA, China) 43 minutes

A preacher who held thousands spellbound. A photographer who captured images of vanishing cultures. An explorer who ventured to the ends of the earth. And a life story lost ... A century ago, William Edgar Geil, the first man to travel the length of the Great Wall of China, was one of the world's most celebrated travelers and speakers. Yet he remains unknown to modern audiences, even in his Pennsylvania hometown. This documentary restores his extraordinary legacy.

Get Together Girls (USA, Italy, Kenya) 76 minutes

Feature in Competition

“Get Together Girls” is the story of an Italian woman who moved to Kenya to create a tailoring project that has transformed six former street girls into fashion designers. Living in the peaceful environment of Anita's Home, a rehabilitation center for street girls in the mountains of Ngong, a few miles from the capital Nairobi, the colorful and creative activities of GtoG Collection take place together with daily struggles, laughs and the devotion for the project, knowing that there is always the awareness that those young women can hope and aim for a better future to support their families and help them stay away from the slums and its miserable life.

Ground Operations: Battlefields to Farmlands (USA) 41 minutes

“Ground Operations: Battlefields to Farmfields” tells the stories of combat vets who are restoring their lives and serving their communities through new careers in organic farming and ranching. The heroes in this film blow the lid off military stereotypes. They are compelling, funny, entrepreneurial, engaging and you'll be rooting for them all the way to your local farmers market. America needs a million new farmers.

Haas & Hahn (Netherlands, Brazil, USA) 38 minutes

Short in Competition

This film focuses on the duo Haas & Hahn (Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn) who try to improve people's lives through art projects in neighborhoods with serious social problems. It documents projects in Rio de Janeiro (Favela Painting) and Philadelphia (Philly Painting), improving the visibility of the disadvantaged neighborhoods through creating enormous works of art in unexpected, amazing places.

Heart of the Andes (USA, Peru) 13 minutes

Filmed on location in Peru, “Heart of the Andes” tells the story of the international humanitarian organization Heart Walk Foundation based in southern Utah. Tim and Penelope Eicher (Tim is a university professor and Penelope a mental health therapist) learned of the plight of the Q'ero Tribes living high in the Andes Mountains while they were traveling in Peru ten years ago. Through the eyes of a small boy, learn how Heart Walk Foundation hiked to the Q'ero villages to deliver hope and opportunity to a once forgotten and impoverished people. You'll discover something unforgettable about the resilience of human nature, and the hope that education and assistance can bring to a people once destitute and desperate to survive.

Horisont (Norway) 22 minutes

Horisont is a film from the open coastal landscape, with its beacons, flocking birds, ships, waves, grazing animals, stone fences and fields. It is a poetic, almost dreamlike film, inspired by painting and music.

Juma (China) 12 minutes

A Chinese student filmmaker looks at the Muslim religion as practiced in China. Made while citizens are worshipping in a Chinese mosque this film questions and explains what drew them to the Islamic faith.

Making Waste (USA) 29 minutes

“Making Waste” is a funny, touching, and inspirational look at one man's seven year journey to complete his first feature film. After beginning this odyssey with his life savings and a dream, filmmaker Tom Thompson has endured an avalanche of business failure, personal tragedy, and financial ruin. Through it all, and now facing homelessness, he continues the struggle to finish what he started.

Medora (USA) 82 minutes

In America's basketball heartland, four boys from rural Medora, Indiana fight to end their high school's team's losing streak, as their dwindling town faces the threat of extinction.

Mike's Migration (USA) 54 minutes

A story about a young man who grew up in Alaska and how his family was able to make a living. Gives an interesting look at family dynamics living and working together. Also features beautiful photography in Alaska.

Musicwood (USA) 80 minutes

“Musicwood” is a modern twist on a classic story; an urgent battle between the white man and Native Americans, where age-old land disputes upend our simplistic view of the past. A band of world-famous guitar-makers travel together into one of the most primeval rainforests on earth. Their mission: negotiate with Native American loggers before it's too late for acoustic guitars.

No Horizon Anymore; A Year Long Journey at the Bottom of the World (Antarctica) 77 minutes

From summer to winter and back again, “No Horizon Anymore,” takes you on a journey few have experienced. Less than 2,000 people have spent the austral winter at the South Pole Station. Here, we follow members of the winterover crew from 2009 as they share their views on the interactions, the people, the environment, and the science that takes place during a busy year.

One Man Riot (UK) 47 minutes

The violent antics of Welsh wrestling promoter Bassey and his lycra-clad warriors raise the spirits of kids in downtrodden Merthyr Tydfil. When a contestant suffers a spinal injury Bassey resigns, but the 40-year-old bouncer struggles to let go of his 'local hero' identity and relinquish his power in the ring.

Past Their Prime (USA) 23 minutes

Short in Competition

A look at the world of geriatric zoo animal care, through Colo – the oldest living gorilla in captivity--on her 55th birthday.

Piano Rites (USA) 23 minutes

Short in Competition

Piano Rites is a portrait of a rambling, hole-in-the wall warehouse in the South Bronx cluttered with 400-odd pianos and peopled by the eccentric characters who restore them. This short documentary film touches on the decline of a once-majestic instrument and the dying craft of piano restoration.

Racing the Rez (USA) 59 minutes

In the rugged canyon lands of Northern Arizona, Navajo and Hopi cross country runners from two rival high schools put it all on the line for tribal pride, triumph over personal adversity, and state championship glory. Over the course of one racing season, life on America's largest Indian reservation emerges from the perspective of high school boys on the cusp of adulthood. Win or lose, what they learn in the course of their season will have a dramatic effect on the rest of their lives.

Reporting on the NY Times: The New York Times and the Holocaust (USA) 18 minutes

Short in Competition

Inspired by Laurel Leff's award winning book, "Buried by The Times," this film explores how The New York Times handled reports of The Holocaust during World War II.

It also explores why The Times, a Jewish owned newspaper, buried more than one thousand articles in its back pages. Was it simply an oversight? Or did the publishers and editors fear an American anti-semitic backlash? Through interviews and testimony of a Holocaust survivor, historians, journalists, and American citizens who lived through World War II, "Reporting on The NY Times" encourages audiences to reevaluate America's place at The Great Liberator. The film also asks viewers to consider the power of the press in creating change.

Return to Honor (USA) 74 minutes

"Return to Honor" explores the life, trials and triumphs of the wounded soldier who returns from the battlefield and the Warrior's Weekend organization's efforts to honor them. Follow the wounded soldiers from across the country as they travel to south Texas to participate in a one-day fishing tournament. What the soldiers don't expect is the overwhelming welcome they receive from the surrounding communities. Riding along with the soldiers, we hear candid discussion on the battles they face, as they fight their new battle of returning to "normal" life. Through their journey, we gain a greater understanding into the post-deployment life of the wounded veteran and see how a community united can plant the seeds for healing.

Road Warriors (USA) 54 minutes

Welcome to the fastest, most brutal traveling circus in America! "Road Warriors" 2012 documents a year of motorcycle road racers competing in the 2012 AMA Pro Road Racing Championship. These athletes are the fastest riders in America risking life and limb for the sport they love. Riders, crews and families laying it all on the line for a shot at the national championship. This project is dedicated to the memory of our heroes paid the ultimate price in pursuit of their dreams. Peter Lenz No. 45; Marco Simoncelli No. 58; Kenny Anderson No. 12. Race In Peace

Sole Survivor (France, USA) 91 minutes

Feature in Competition

In the history of aviation, there have been only 14 of them: sole survivors of a commercial aviation disaster. Most have never spoken publicly about the loss, the guilt, the immense pressure of feeling "spared." Who, after all, could ever truly understand?

The answer is: only each other. "Sole Survivor" brings four of them together (George Lamson, Cecilia Cichan, Bahia Bakari and Jim Polehinke) to share their very complex, personal stories for the first time. They revisit the most harrowing moments of their lives in an effort to heal and overcome their most perplexing questions.

Storm Soldiers: The Untold Story of America's Other Heroes (USA) 61 minutes

Power is a necessity in today's modern world. Most of us take for granted the work that it takes to build and maintain the power grid that supplies us with the electricity that powers our lives. "Storm Soldiers" is a film about the men who make it all happen. The linemen who work tirelessly behind the scenes so we can power our computers, heat our homes and light our lives. Danger is around every corner for linemen and the job is constantly on the top ten list for most dangerous jobs. This film is a tribute to the men and women that literally put their lives on the line every day.

Swingman (USA) 53 minutes

Firefighter Marshall Allen always said when the Grim Reaper came calling, they would find claw marks on the wall where he fought him to the end. After twice being returned to an adoption agency, Capt. Allen was abused in the foster care system only to be adopted by an abusive family. His severe depression remained undiagnosed despite building rage and hopelessness while he became a Golden Gloves boxer, the first black firefighter in Salt Lake County, Utah, a power lifting champion and a rising star in the Fort Worth Fire Department. Then a freak accident left him physically paralyzed and emotionally cured. It left him a quadriplegic in a wheelchair only to discover the first blood relative he would ever know. It left him in wonder.

Tales from the Organ Trade (Canada, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Philippines, Turkey, USA) 82 minutes

Feature in Competition

"Tales from the Organ Trade" is a gritty and unflinching descent into the shadowy world of black-market organ trafficking: the street-level brokers, the rogue surgeons, the impoverished men and women who are willing to sacrifice a slice of their own bodies for a quick payday, and the desperate patients who face the agonizing choice of obeying the law or saving their lives.

From Manila to Istanbul, from Colorado to Kosovo, from Toronto to Tel Aviv, the film brings to the screen a compelling cast whom fate has brought together where the gift of life meets the shadow of death.

The Age of Anxiety (Canada, Moldova, USA) 51 minutes

Is anxiety a disease of modernity, or is our highly competitive and material culture itself undermining our nerves? "The Age of Anxiety" examines this phenomenon, and how the disorder is being re-defined by the medical community and the pharmaceutical industry.

The Highest Cost (Italy, USA) 24 minutes

John and Jeff, two 9/11 First Responders, are fighting to be recognized and compensated by the U.S. Government while they are battling the cancer which developed from months of working at Ground Zero.

The Last Safari (USA, Kenya) 79 minutes

Feature in Competition

“The road less traveled just got paved.”

Renowned photojournalist Elizabeth L Gilbert sets out on an unforgettable journey through remote Kenya, returning to the tribespeople whom she documented a decade earlier. Along the way, she learns just how rapidly modern Africa has changed.

The Keymaster: Patrick Olwell’s Story (USA) 85 minutes

From a Liberal Arts college in Massachusetts to the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Patrick Olwell's journey has led him to become one of the great wooden flute makers of all time. His flutes are played by some of the top Irish musicians in the world, including Matt Molloy of The Chieftains and Seamus Egan of Solas. With a quirky sense of humor and the voice of a storyteller, Patrick recounts his humble beginnings as an instrument maker, living in a cabin in rural Virginia with no electricity or running water, and his slow climb to prominence as his flutes become some of the most sought after instruments in Irish music. “The Keymaster” is a genuinely human portrait of an intelligent, passionate craftsman.

The Missing Piece: The Truth About the Man Who Stole the Mona Lisa (USA, Italy) 84 minutes

Feature in Competition

This is the story of the man who stole the Mona Lisa from the Louvre in 1911, his 84-year-old daughter who thought he did it for patriotic reasons, and the filmmaker who spent more than 30 years trying to find the truth.

The Price of Gold (Sweden, USA) 60 minutes

Feature in Competition

Every day, athletic stars are honored for their success. TV monitors broadcast their faces across the world. To create international Olympic champions, nations put their young talents through rigorous training programs with huge financial support from their governments and sponsors. But the price of the gold is high. This film examines exactly how much blood, sweat and tears top athletes invest in their quest for success. Is it worth it - and what happens to ones who sacrifice everything to reach the top but who in the end, for various reasons don't make it?

The Storyteller of Amsterdam (USA, Netherlands) 62 minutes

Feature in Competition

With a financial crisis looming, Karel Baracs performs the duties of the first official city storyteller of Amsterdam by bringing communities together, teaching children and uplifting the idea of a modern storyteller, while showcasing the city he lives in and loves. Will this be the last year for the city storyteller?

TINY: A Story About Living Small (USA) 62 minutes

What is home? And how do we find it? One couple's attempt to build a “tiny house” with no construction experience raises questions about sustainability, good design, and the changing American Dream.

Tongan Ark (New Zealand, Tonga) 69 minutes

Walking the line between culture and power, an Oceanic liberator gazes on the infinite as the world around him crumbles with change.

Ancient philosophy, opera and Tongan culture come together in this intimate portrait of a teacher, his school and his people as they navigate a sea of repression and doubt in a small but troubled Pacific island kingdom.

Valentine Road (USA) 89 minutes

At the height of the bullying scandal that rocked the U.S. in 2008, a 15-year-old boy named Larry King asked another boy to be his valentine in a suburban schoolyard in California. The next day Larry was dead, shot in cold blood by his 14-year-old crush Brandon McInerney. At turns shocking, devastating, and outrageous, “Valentine Road” bores deeply into the homophobia, sexism, racism, and class-struggle that inform everyday American life — and reveals an American justice system that is utterly unprepared to deal with the realities of teenage crime and punishment. Directed by first-time feature documentarian Marta Cunningham, “Valentine Road” is an unforgettable exposé of society’s pervasive and deadly intolerance of young people who don’t conform to its gender “norms.”

Way of Life (USA, India, Nepal) 78 minutes

Feature in Competition

“Way of Life” follows the story of Michael Daube, a young man of modest means from small town America who finds a valuable piece of art in the garbage, sells it at auction and builds a hospital in one of the most remote areas of India.

The film follows an organic path around the world, focusing on the aspects of Daube's work that inspire us to consider and appreciate our own best intentions.

With camera work that is both intimate and stunning, director/cinematographer, David Driver interweaves moments of this incredible journey to illustrate how Daube's simple, ground level approach to working with marginalized communities in the developing world transforms the lives of those involved.

We Women Warriors (USA, Columbia) 83 minutes

Feature in Competition

“We Women Warriors” follows three native women caught in the crossfire of Colombia's warfare who are using nonviolent resistance to defend their people's survival.

In Colombia there are 102 aboriginal groups, one-third of which are in danger of extinction because of the ongoing conflict. Trapped in a protracted predicament financed by the drug trade, indigenous women are resourcefully leading and creating transformation imbued with hope.

“We Women Warriors” bears witness to rights abuses and interweaves character-driven stories about female empowerment, unshakable courage and faith in the survival of indigenous culture.

Zipper: Coney Island's Last Wild Ride (USA, Honduras) 76 minutes

A story about greed, politics and the land grab of the century, “Zipper” chronicles the battle over an American cultural icon. Small-time ride operator, Eddie Miranda, proudly operates a 38-year-old carnival contraption called the Zipper in the heart of Coney Island's gritty amusement district. When his rented lot is snatched up by a real estate mogul, Eddie and his ride become casualties of a power struggle between the developer and the City of New York over the world-famous destination. Be it an affront to history or simply the path of progress, the spirit of Coney Island is at stake. In an increasingly corporate landscape, where authenticity is often sacrificed for economic growth, the Zipper may be just the beginning of what is lost.