



Brooklyn Daily Eagle



July 27, 2011



Archives
Brooklyn Public
Library's
Brooklyn Daily Eagle
Online (1841-1902)

Archives
Brooklyn Eagle (2003-present)

Read about
Brooklyn Eagle
and Contact Us

Categories

- ▶ Main page
- ▶ RSS Channels
- ▶ Bay Ridge
- ▶ Atlantic Yards
- ▶ Photo Galleries
- ▶ Brooklyn Today
- ▶ Brooklyn People
- ▶ Brooklyn Cyclones
- ▶ Courthouse News & Cases
- ▶ Brooklyn SPACE
- ▶ Features
- ▶ Crime
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Street Beat
- ▶ Brooklyn Inc
- ▶ Brooklyn KIDS
- ▶ Editorial viewpoint
- ▶ OUTBrooklyn
- ▶ Brooklyn Woman
- ▶ Art
- ▶ Up & Coming
- ▶ Hills & Gardens
- ▶ Auction Advertiser
- ▶ On Food
- ▶ Historically

Art



Brooklynites Make Strong Showing at Cannes

by contributor (contributors@brooklyneagle.net), published online 06-29-2011

By Marian Masone

Make no mistake: the Cannes Film Festival is the holy grail of festivals and film markets. Obtaining a spot in one of this festival's sections is special indeed. Since many artists and media-makers reside in the borough, Brooklyn is always represented at Cannes, and this year was no exception.

In fact, the festival opened with *Midnight in Paris* by Brooklyn native Woody Allen. This was not the first time an Allen film opened the festival; his comedy *Hollywood Ending* opened the festival in 2002, and *Manhattan*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters* all had red carpet screenings in the festival's Palais.

But current residents have also found their way onto the Croisette. Two Brooklyn filmmakers made appearances with feature films in official sections, while two other directors found other paths — one in the festival's Cinefondation, for emerging filmmakers, and another in the festival's market, an arena for film sales, big and small.

Return, by Boerum Hill's Liza Johnson, was the only American film selected for the Directors Fortnight section of the festival. *Return* is Johnson's first feature film and stars Linda Cardellini ("E.R.") as a soldier returning home to the Midwest who can't share her wartime experience with her family. Communication fails, and she also comes up against the drug culture that is rampant in the mid-section of the country, as well as the financial crisis that has closed shops, companies and factories across the country.

Attending a major festival with a feature film is a big undertaking. This was Johnson's first trip to Cannes and the experience was, she said, just what people said it would be.

"It was a very intense experience because the film culture of France is so specific," she said. "It feels really good because people are paying attention and asking in-depth questions. It feels, for a moment, like the world really values you, which is a very nice feeling." Since she was in the Directors Fortnight, she didn't get the full Cannes glamour treatment, but it's hard to avoid it completely. To get to her sales agent's office, she said, she'd have to make a left "between Hermes and Bulgari;

that's how you describe the geography!"

The Cannes experience is also an expensive one. Without a distribution company, Johnson had to pay for many things for herself and her cast and crew



Daily Cover



Weekly Cover



Real Estate Brooklyn



- ▶ [Historically Speaking](#)
- ▶ [Health Care](#)
- ▶ [Get A LifeStyle](#)
- ▶ [On This Day in History](#)
- ▶ [Obituaries](#)
- ▶ [Community Boards](#)
- ▶ [Stars and stripes](#)
- ▶ [Community News](#)
- ▶ [Brooklyn Yellow Pages](#)

Contact Us

If you'd like to contact us [click here](#)

Read about Us [HERE](#)

Business:

salon

Location:

brooklyn,ny

Search

- ▶ [Blinds](#)
- ▶ [Buffet](#)
- ▶ [Cabinets](#)
- ▶ [Clothing](#)
- ▶ [Condos](#)
- ▶ [Curtains](#)
- ▶ [Deli](#)
- ▶ [Frozen Yogurt](#)
- ▶ [Gift Baskets](#)
- ▶ [Gift Shops](#)
- ▶ [Greeting Cards](#)
- ▶ [Home Decor](#)
- ▶ [Home Repair](#)
- ▶ [Home Security](#)
- ▶ [Home Theater](#)
- ▶ [Lamps](#)
- ▶ [Mens Clothing](#)
- ▶ [Nanny](#)
- ▶ [Nursery](#)
- ▶ [Party Supplies](#)
- ▶ [Pet Stores](#)
- ▶ [Preschool](#)
- ▶ [Shoes](#)
- ▶ [T Shirts](#)
- ▶ [Theater](#)

with her teacher's salary.

"We rented a very nice apartment, but while many actors in films that have distributors may stay in a suite at the Majestic (one of the tonier hotels on the Croisette), we were staying in a reality show-style apartment! But Linda (Cardellini) said it was like our production — scrappier, and a bit do-it-yourself."

For Sean Durkin, a founder of Borderline Films, this was not his first trip to Cannes, but it was his first time in the section known as Un Certain Regard, where he presented his film Martha Marcy May Marlene. (Last year he attended Cannes with a short film, "Mary Last Seen," in the Directors Fortnight and won an award there.) We asked Durkin to compare this year at the festival with previous outings.

"Every time we've been to Cannes it's a little different," he said. "This time in Un Certain Regard there's a bigger spotlight and being a feature film director there's also more attention."

Last year he was also at the festival as a producer of Two Gates of Sleep in the Fortnight. "As a producer you can sit back and hide a bit," he says, but with two days of press interviews this year, hiding was not an option. The first day was devoted to the French media, while the second day was about the international press.

Durkin told us of journalists who would ask about his political views and how they were reflected in the film. When he told them his political views weren't a part of the film, they would always seem quite disappointed.

Martha Marcy May Marlene is the story of a young woman (Elizabeth Olsen) who returns to her family after time with a cult. Here, as in Return, experiences can't be communicated and the families of these characters become outsiders who cannot relate. Durkin's feature received much attention when it premiered at Sundance earlier this year (as he won the directing award there), and it was picked up for distribution by Fox Searchlight. So this film will be released in the U.S., most likely October.

There are other ways to have one's work seen at Cannes. Susan Youssef, who was born in Bay Ridge, simply took Habibi, her just-finished, first feature film, to the market to try to find a sales agent who could help the film get international distribution. The film hasn't begun to make festival screenings yet, but a sales agent is important to have right from the beginning, as they can help get a film seen by festivals as well as distribution companies around the world.

Youssef is a truly independent filmmaker. Habibi, a Palestinian production, was made without support from institutions or production companies. "I'm very proud of what I did," she said. And she did everything — write, produce, direct what might be the most independent Palistianian feature to date. And sometimes the networking pays off: Dubai Entertainment and Media Organization have come on as co-producers.

Even student filmmakers can find their way to Cannes. If student films are accepted, students more than just screen time for their film. They are encouraged to see other films in the festival (so they've all "walked the red carpet," as they say), and attend brunches and meetings so these young filmmakers can talk with festival programmers, producers and others.

A few U.S. student filmmakers had films accepted into the Cinefondation's student film section and among them was Simao Cayatte — born in Portugal, but now a student at Columbia University, living on the border of Williamsburg and Bushwick. His short film, "The Trip," was inspired by a Portuguese short story.

"I've received attention for the short film and have been able to talk to people about other work. It's been more than I could hope for." He's working on a script for his first feature film.

Four filmmakers. four different experiences of one festival — and each one at a



Susan Youssef, director of Habibi



Bay Ridge Eagle



... different point in the long journey of getting films to the screen.

* * *

Questions? Comments? [Sound off to the Editor](#)

(c) Brooklyn Daily Eagle 2011 All materials posted on BrooklynEagle.com are protected by United States copyright law. Just a reminder, though -- It's not considered polite to paste the entire story on your blog. Most blogs post a summary or the first paragraph,(40 words) then post a link to the rest of the story. That helps increase click-throughs for everyone, and minimizes copyright issues. So please keep posting, but not the entire article. arturcatt at.gmail.com