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Repertory Film: Fighting of Life, Overseeing Death

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By [STEVE DOLLAR](#)

2012 Human Rights Watch Film Festival

Film Society of Lincoln Center

165 65th St., (212) 875-5601

Thursday-June 28



Enlarge Image

FSLC

Ugandan gay-rights activist David Kato in the documentary 'Call Me Kuchu.'

Dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is the most publicized figure championed by this annual festival, now in its 23rd year. Alison Klayman's years-in-the-making "Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry" holds down the spotlight selection on Friday, lauded by Sundance audiences and very much newsworthy as its subject remains critical of China's regime, posting YouTube videos while under house arrest. With 15 other films, from such places as Egypt, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, the festival tells

stories of lives and situations that have been overlooked by the media. Kirby Dick's "The Invisible War" exposes an epidemic of rape in the U.S. military, while the more hopeful "Salaam Dunk" follows the triumph of a mixed-heritage women's basketball team at the American University in Iraq. The struggle isn't always only in front of the lens: Susan Youssef smuggled cameras into Gaza to shoot "Habibi," a fictional drama about young romance undone by family and the cultural force of "morality police."

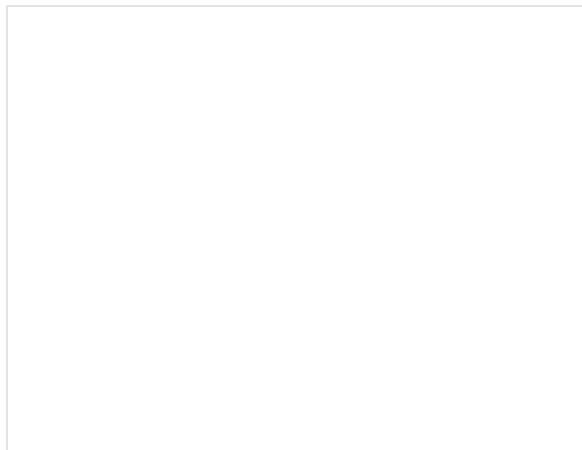
'El Velador'

Museum of Modern Art

11 W. 53rd St., (212) 708-9400

Thursday-June 20

Mexico's transformation into a madhouse at the mercy of murderous narcotics gangs has given dramatic momentum to a growing body of films, including Gerardo Naranjo's beauty-pageant allegory "Miss Bala." The bullets have already flown for the silent



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subjects of this documentary. They are residents of the ornate and absurd mausoleums of the Jardines del Humaya in Culiacan, the final resting place for the drug kingpins who rule Sinaloa, the Mexican state whose name has become synonymous with the violent drug trade. Director Natalia Almada shows brilliant counterintuition in her still, quiet observation of Martin, the graveyard's night watchman, whose presence mediates over the cries of mourning women and laughing children who treat the landscape as a playground. The silence speaks volumes, of course, interrupted by the crackle of a radio, reporting yet more mayhem.

'Extraterrestrial'

reRun Gastropub Theater

147 Front St., Brooklyn, (718) 766-9110

Friday-June 21

Imagination, rather than special effects, buoys this breezy riff on romance and paranoia. In Madrid, a man wakes up in a woman's apartment after a drunken one-night stand. His awkward exit is interrupted by an apparent alien invasion. Expecting "War of the Worlds," the woozy bedfellows Julio (Julián Villagrán) and Julia (Michelle Jenner) find themselves isolated as a spaceship hovers in the sky. They aren't really alone: Julia's stalker-like neighbor, Carlos (Carlos Areces), arrives to plague them. Then her boyfriend comes home, full of apologies for a spat the previous evening. Deceptions abound, as the new lovers navigate budding emotions while everyone acts crazier and crazier and the little green men remain a tantalizing cipher. Spirited director Nacho Vigalondo ("Timecrimes") visits from Spain for the premiere Friday. Sadly, it's the next-to-last attraction at the reRun Theater, at least for the time being. Programmer Aaron Hillis, who recently bought a video store in Cobble Hill, has announced his departure, and reportedly the management is done with the movie business.

Northside Film Festival

Various locations

northsidefestival.com/film

Monday-June 21



Enlarge Image

SXSW

Louisa Krause in 'King Kelly,' screening at the Northside Film Festival.

This sidebar to the annual indie-music free-for-all in Williamsburg is packed with surprises. Tucked away in the schedule is the New York premiere of "Cherry," the directorial debut of novelist Stephen Elliott ("The Adderall Diaries") whose take on a young woman's entry into the bondage-porn scene is shaped by the experiences of co-writer Lorelei Lee (an NYU graduate student and S&M performer). The risks of intimate exposure also concern the performers in "The Zone," part of a recent

spree of new films from indie director Joe Swanberg, whose Greenpoint-set remake of "Teorema" falls apart as the (often naked) cast members question how far they should take a bedroom encounter for the sake of cinema. As "King Kelly," the title character of Andrew Neel's YouTube thriller, Louisa Krause displays no such concern. An online "cam girl" with a rabid fan base, she's the auteur of her own voyeuristic trainwreck in a tour-de-force performance.

'We Won't Grow Old Together'

BAMcinématek

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, (718) 636-4100

Thursday

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More in New York-Culture

Here's your last chance to catch the premiere American theatrical run of this anti-romance from 1972. The second feature from French director Maurice Pialat (1925-2003), revived here by the Cinema Conservancy four decades after blockbuster success in France, is of a perfectly combative piece with his later work. The story is composed of episodic glimpses of a love affair heading south, mean and slow, after six years. The unhappy couple: Jean (Jean Yanne), an arrogant, middle-aged, married filmmaker, and Catherine (Marlene Jobert), an aspiring actress half his age. The performances are full-tilt, each scene edited for maximum intensity—as if all that was left of the relationship was bad memories. The director adapted the plot from his own novel, and is as unsparing with his onscreen surrogate as Jean is toward his erstwhile lover, who nonetheless offers him enough to cling to until the bitter end.

A version of this article appeared June 14, 2012, on page A26 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: A Fighter for Life, a Steward of Death.

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