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Orinda's Indie Film Festival Showcases Local Filmmaker Julie Rubio

By Andrea A. Firth



Julie Rubio (L) at work on the set of *Six Sex Scenes and a Murder*. Photo provided

"Year-over-year, we endeavor to demonstrate our commitment to elevate one's awareness that a film festival can provide the core to transcend cultural differences and address social challenges. The 12th Annual California Independent Film Festival promotes this mission with a rich, solid, and well-diverse programming of films," says Beau Behan, Program and Promotions Director for the film festival which will be held at the historic Orinda Theater April 22nd through the 25th.

The festival will feature appearances by Academy-Award winning actors alongside the works of several Bay Area filmmakers (see sidebar). The local draw to the festival is Orinda-based filmmaker Julie Rubio, whose movie *Six Sex Scenes and a Murder* will screen on Friday night, April 23rd. Rubio wrote the screenplay for, directed, and produced the movie, which she describes as a murder mystery noir. (Lafayette resident Ramona Maramonte is the film's co-producer.) "It's a very feminist movie," says Rubio. "The girl comes back to save the man." Rubio set out to make a light, entertaining film, and she's pleased with the outcome-Netflix and iTunes have already picked up the film for distribution.

Many local moms know Rubio from the years that she taught prenatal and post partum yoga classes at Oakwood Athletic Club in Lafayette. The first two DVDs distributed by her East Meets West Productions company were her own yoga videos. Some of Rubio's subsequent film projects tackled headier subjects that she researched extensively. She produced the film *Soledad is Gone Forever*, a drama that explores the long-term psychological impact of political persecution under the Pinochet regime through the eyes of a Chilean photographer living in San Francisco. Her short film *Impression*, which had its world premiere at the former Orinda Film Festival, explored the infamous Degas' painting, *Interior* (also known as *The Rape*), with its implied brutality left open to many interpretations.

Rubio, who worked as a model and an actress from the age of sixteen, found the progression to working behind the camera natural. After growing up in Los Angeles and Hawaii and living in London, New York and then back in L.A., she landed in Orinda about 11 years ago. A consummate networker and multi-tasker (she is the mother of a 13-year old son), Rubio quickly put together her filmmaking crew in the East Bay. "I know how to get things done," she says. "In the independent film world the lines blur, and you have to be willing to do it all. It can be extremely glamorous when you are screening your film and serving champagne to a high profile investor or you can be the one cleaning up the set at the end of the day." When Brooklyn-based filmmaker Mateen Kemet was looking for someone in the East Bay to produce his short *Oakland Be Mine*, Rubio knew she had the right team and energy to make it happen. The film will screen on Friday and Saturday nights at the festival.

Already in production with her next film, *Masked Truth*, Rubio abandons the lighter side and delves into the ugly subject of pedophilia in the Catholic Church. "I really do believe that you are only as sick as your secrets," she says. Set in Hawaii, the film centers around a disillusioned therapist who has his clients wear masks to provide them with anonymity and get them to tell the truth. "Film is the most important medium there is," says Rubio. "Movies can change people, and I want to be part of that change in a positive way."

California Independent Film Festival Highlights

April 22nd through 25th at the Orinda Theater

Thursday, April 22nd

Opening Night will feature the screening of a family-oriented comedic drama *Expecting Mary*.

The film about a rich city girl who yearns for motherly love stars Oscar winner Cloris

Leachman, Elliott Gould, Linda Gray, Cybil Sheppard, and Fred Willard.

Friday, April 23rd

Academy award winner Richard Dreyfuss will make a special appearance for the screening of his movie *The Lightkeepers*.

Friday will also feature Julie Rubio's thriller *Six Sex Scenes and a Murder*, Oakland director Mateen Kemet's short *Oakland Be Mine*, Concord High School alumni Daniel Zacapa's film drama *The Things We Carry*, and Lafayette's Vicki Abeles' documentary *Race to Nowhere*.

Saturday, April 24th

Richard Dreyfuss and Producer Saul Zaentz will be honored with the festival's Golden Slate Awards at the Festival Gala to be held at the Blackhawk Auto Museum. Orinda native and pianist Chloe Pang will perform at the gala.

Iron Filmmaker Contest's Participants screen their three-minute films.

Oakland Director John Korty shows the restoration of a 1927 Steinway grand piano with his documentary *Miracle in a Box, A Piano Reborn*.

The Bay Area Showcase highlights works of filmmakers from the Bay Area.

Sunday, April 25th

The closing night film, *Lovely Still*, is a holiday fable about a sad and lonely elderly man who finds love for the first time. It stars Academy Award winners Martin Landau and Ellen Burstyn.

The Bulgarian drama film, *The World is Big and Salvation Lurks Around the Corner*, selected among the top nine foreign films competing for Best Foreign Language Film in this year's Academy Awards, will also be shown.

Tickets are available online at the festival's website (www.caiff.org).

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