Student film collection exhibits avant-garde style

BY SONAM MIRPURI – POSTED ON JANUARY 26, 2014

Avant-garde cinema is the inspiration behind the student films currently displayed in the Pollak Library Salz-Pollak Atrium Gallery. The assemblage exhibit of short films was created “in response and in conversation with seminal works by European avant-garde filmmakers of the 1920s and 1930s and American avant-garde filmmakers of the 1940s and the 1970s,” as described on the Pollak Library website.

The exhibit, titled “Do You See What I See?” opened Wednesday with the intent of introducing a new concept of cinema to its audience and build a greater understanding of student created work in non-narrative filmmaking.

The films featured in the exhibit are radio-TV-film students’ final projects from the Experimental Cinema course (RTVF 376). The instructor of this course, assistant RTVF professor, Rebecca Sheehan, is also responsible for the organization of the exhibit.

Sheehan said the significance of the exhibit is to showcase the work completed by RTVF students.

“This is a wonderful way to show what students are working on as well as provide the public with exposure to avant-garde cinema,” Sheehan said.

The works on display are student projects from the fall 2012 semester, which was the last time Experimental Cinema was taught in the Radio-TV-Film Department, according to Sheehan.

Instead of doing a final exam or a final essay, Sheehan provided her students with the opportunity to “produce a short film in dialogue with one or several of the filmmakers (her students) studied throughout the course of the semester,” said Brandon Kyle Goco, 22, RTVF and American studies double major.

Goco is the curator for the exhibit in addition to being one of the students with work on display. Goco’s featured short film is titled For Maya.

Sheehan said the projects created by her students were so impressive that they became the inspiration behind this exhibit.

“The ‘Do You See What I See?’ exhibit was selected to promote the work of our students, faculty, and staff,” said Janeiacovetti, coordinator of Pollak Library Fiscal Services and Exhibits Program Committee member. “Previous exhibits had not touched on film media and its contribution to the learning experience.”

Sheehan described the exhibit as a “gallery installation of four experimental student films playing on separate channels.”

It provides the audience with a general overview of the history of European and American experimental filmmaking specifically focusing on films and filmmakers who inspired the student work featured in the gallery.

Along with Goco, the other three students that have their works on display are Heaven Ramirez, Alex Varela and Wesley Nguyen.

Nguyen’s work, The Small Sleep, was an official selection of the Vietnamese International Film Festival.

“Avant-garde cinema may not follow the three-act structure or use traditional editing techniques, but sometimes an
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experimental film says more about life than a typical, mainstream narrative," said Ramirez, a 25-year-old RTVF graduate.

The specific style characterizing this genre of film heightens the importance of proper attribution and artist consent for a public exhibit such as “Do You See What I See?!"

“These films are not like any other, they are personal—some of them, extremely personal—and so the consent to display their work in a public space was imperative," Goco said.

The purpose of the films on display are to extract emotion from the viewers. The success of this is determined by the individual’s personal interpretation of each work.

“These films, especially the one’s by the students, are not only meant to entertain, but to evoke and provoke,” Goco said.

The “Do You See What I See?!" exhibit will be on display until Mar. 31. For more information on the exhibit, visit the Pollak Library website at Library.Fullerton.edu.

TAGS: "Do You See What I See?!", Brandon Goco, Pollak Library, Professor Rebecca Sheehan, Radio-TV-Film, RTVF

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