

Summer 2017 Indie Films

This summer, if you're looking beyond big studio emoji, fast moving CGI cars or the latest superhero mashup, prequel or sequel fare, join me as we head off the beaten path.

For films slated to debut around June, we have for starters, from Israel's Avi Nesher, a mysterious tale of two sisters called *Past Life*, about a classical musician and a polar opposite journalist who unravel a dark wartime mystery.

Follow that up with Brett Haley's *Hero*, which is about an ailing actor fighting his past and mortality, starring Sam Elliot.

Miguel Arteta and Mike White's latest collaboration, *Beatriz at Dinner*, proves to be a great independent role for Salma Hayek, portraying a holistic medicine practitioner who attends a dinner party for a wealthy client after her car breaks down.

Additionally, we have two exciting Irish films to look forward to this summer. *I, Daniel Blake*, the latest from Ken Loach, is about a 59-year-old carpenter who, after suffering a heart-attack, fights the bureaucratic forces in order to receive employment and support allowance. Nick Hamm's follow-up to *Killing Bono* is *The Journey*, a fictional account of the extraordinary story of two political enemies in Northern Ireland, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness, forced to take a short journey together, potentially changing the course of history.

And don't miss these two special film-related events for June. On June 4 at 3pm, Columbus Theatre brings the under-the-radar *The Fits*, Anna Rose Holmer's first narrative feature, about a 10-year-old African-American girl, Toni, who trains as a boxer yet becomes obsessed with a West End Cincinnati community's dance group. Balancing coming-of-age and identity with the supernatural, the story unfolds between Toni's relationship with her brother and the intensity and the "fits" that spread among the girls on the team. From June 14 -18, the Provincetown Film Festival features a diverse array of American and international narrative features, documentaries and short films, while highlighting Provincetown's rich and diverse history as an arts colony, Portuguese fishing village, gay and lesbian mecca, and a town first inhabited by Native Americans.

July brings us some powerful documentaries, a festival of animated short film stories by women and dramas with strong female leads from the UK and France.

City of Ghosts is an insightful documentary following a handful of anonymous activists who banded together after their homeland was taken over by ISIS in 2014.

The mysterious documentary *Santoalla* features a Dutch couple, Martin and Margo, who move to a remote Spanish village to start a new life, yet there is conflict with the Spanish residents resulting in the disappearance of Martin.

On Saturday, July 8, Womanimation!, the premiere showcase in the US of international women's animated short film stories, returns for one day only at the main stage at AS220. From satire to drama, from the everyday to the surreal, in styles from traditional 2D to stop-motion to computer animation, the festival features something for every taste. *Lady Macbeth*, set in 19th century rural England, is about a

young bride, Katherine, who has been sold into marriage to a middle-aged man. She discovers an unstoppable desire within herself as she enters into an affair with a worker on her estate. *Sage Femme*, a French drama starring Catherine Frot and Catherine Deneuve, presents a midwife who gets unexpected news from her father's old mistress.

In August, with more independent animation choices, we have the home release of Makoto Shinkai's *Your Name*, from Japan, about two souls who have crossed in unusual ways with neither having any idea how to control it.

Nora Twomey has an animated feature film soon to be released, *The Breadwinner*, about Parvana, a girl in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, dressing as a boy so that she can work to support her mother and sister.

The animated feature *Mary and the Witch's Flower*, by Studio Ponoc, employed many ex-Ghibli staffers to tell the story of a girl who learns she has mysterious powers, with a catch that they only last for one night.

Other highlights off-the-beaten path for August include the transcendental *Endless Poetry* in a special engagement at Cable Car Cinema, a portrait of Alejandro Jodorowsky's young adulthood set in the 1940s and '50s in the electric capital city of Santiago, where he becomes a poet and is introduced into a chic bohemian and artistic circle.

Also debuting in August is Destin Daniel Cretton's follow up to *Short Term 12* called *The Glass Castle*, with Brie Larson returning in a coming-of-age tale of a dysfunctional family of nonconformist nomads whose parents stir their children's imagination with hope as a distraction to their poverty.

Finally, Justin Chadwick's *Tulip Fever* centers around an artist who falls for a young married woman while he is painting her portrait during the Tulip mania of 17th century Amsterdam.