

Popcorn culture

By Karen Butler

for The Brooklyn Paper



Movie bigwigs are all in Cannes for the infamous French film festival, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music is showing a slew of films that already ran in Utah, so where is the film-conscious Brooklynite to turn for a celluloid fix?

From June 1 to 10, he'll have the Brooklyn International Film Festival, a borough-based movie series that puts the emphasis on fascinating films, not swag-seeking celebs.

"When we decided to call ourselves 'the Brooklyn International Film Festival,' we basically decided on a territory to be proud of and to serve," executive director Marco Ursino told GO Brooklyn this week. "The bottom line is, I believe, we still have a precise identity."

This year, the festival's theme is "Identity," an idea explored in films like "Arranged" (pictured), the story of two young, female Brooklyn school teachers who find shared ground in their arranged marriages, even though one is an Orthodox Jew and the other is Muslim; and "Sunny," the tale of a Hollywood lawyer who returns - model girlfriend in tow - to his small, boyhood town in Germany.

Asked how his series differs from the popular, glitzy, yet somewhat amorphous Tribeca Film Festival, Ursino replied: "They truly are different planets. Our service is to a first or second-time filmmaker; those are the people we can help. I honestly don't know how to take [Martin] Scorsese to the next stage."

And lest pint-sized cineastes be left out of the fun, a children's film festival is also part of the plan. Featured in the lineup - on June 3 and 9 at the Brooklyn Children's Museum - are screenings of animated shorts as well as live-action mini films like Harry Kellerman's "Little Gorilla," the tale of a young boy summoning the courage to scale a daunting jungle gym.

The Brooklyn International Film Festival will take place from June 1-10 at the Cobble Hill Cinemas (265 Court St., at Butler Street in Cobble Hill) and theaters across the borough. For information, visit www.wbff.org.

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