

# The New York Times

## DOCS GALORE

**By The Local**

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Searching for gold: a still from "The Hillside Crowd," showing next Friday and Saturday at the Brooklyn International Film Festival.

There is a pretty amazing-sounding 10-day film fest starting tonight in Brooklyn Heights, the Brooklyn International Film Festival. Clinton Hill-based documentary-maker and Local contributor Michael Galinsky was one of the judges for documentaries. "Usually when I've judged a film festival," Mr. Galinsky wrote, "there are a couple of stellar films that jump out and a bunch of films that are okay. This festival is different.

"I've made it through almost all of them and haven't found a single clunker in the bunch. In general the films have a very methodical visual feel. When I found out that Nathan Kensinger was the programmer, it all made a little more sense. He's that guy who slips into places like Admiral's Row and takes quiet stunning pictures. As such he tended to focus on films with a photographic feel.

"A lot of these films are having their U.S. premiere and will likely not show again in the U.S. So if you find yourself intrigued by the descriptions, make an effort to check them out."

The schedule for the films is at [wbff.org](http://wbff.org)

Mr. Galinsky asked Mr. Kensinger to write about some of his favorite selections. Here's what Mr. Kensinger said:

I wanted the documentary program to reflect both the international and the Brooklyn focus of the festival. Many of the 873 documentary submissions we received came from abroad, and many of the films we chose have never screened in the United

States. Reviewing the films is a great process of discovery. You come across so many documentaries that you otherwise might not hear of.



No More Smoke Signals

One example is “No More Smoke Signals,” a Swiss film about the Lakota Nation. This is the one documentary in the festival that I wish I could have made. It covers a huge amount of important, ignored American history, but keeps its focus on the day-to-day goings-on at a tiny radio station in the middle of South Dakota.

Another great surprise was “The Revolution That Wasn’t,” about recent political protests in Russia. It feels more like a Russian film noir than a documentary because the footage is so amazingly intimate and beautiful.

Similarly, “The Hillside Crowd” tells another fascinating story of social upheaval, focusing on the characters in a modern-day-version of the Wild West: an African gold-rush town in the hills of Burkina Faso.



The Day After the Tenth Day

Two outstanding short documentaries were “Don Roberto’s Shadow,” a poetic film about death and forgiveness in a Chilean ghost town, and “One Day After the Tenth Day,” which follows an old man and his camel through a surreal landscape on the outskirts of an Iranian city.

We are presenting the U.S. Premiere of each of those five documentaries.

On a more local level, “Between the Folds” was produced in Park Slope. It expands on its subject of modern origami to present an international story about the unlimited potential presented by a single sheet of paper. We’re presenting its New York City Festival Premiere.



The Man Who Would Be Polka King

Another quirky, entertaining local documentary is “The Man Who Would Be Polka King,” produced in Dumbo, Brooklyn. The film is about an international polka empire that collapses when it is revealed to be a twisted Bernie-Madoff-style Ponzi scheme. We are presenting its U.S. Premiere.

Overall, many of the documentary selections are united by a common theme of transformation and change, and of societies in transition. Many of the documentaries report back from the edges of a quickly changing world.

**The Brooklyn International Film Festival runs from tonight, June 5, through Saturday, June 14, at Brooklyn Heights Cinema, 70 Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights. Tickets are \$10 for a single program (many programs include more than one film), \$25 for a four-pack and \$100 for a full festival pass. More info at [www.wbff.org](http://www.wbff.org)**

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