

FISCAL YEAR 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

Overview

Kicking off with a blow-out 10th Anniversary party and retrospective screening series, fiscal Year 2006 (October 1, 2005- September 30, 2006) brought the continued expansion of Northwest Film Forum's operating budget, touring of Northwest programs, and completion of our Capital Campaign. The 12th Avenue home of the organization was completed, and the organization was able to once again focus on the mission of showing and creating great works of film.

Northwest work on the road

Work produced and curated by Northwest Film Forum reached broader audiences than ever before, toured the world and benefited from new programs begun this year. **Police Beat**, the feature film produced through our **Start-to-Finish** grant program, followed up its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival with film festivals worldwide, playing in 16 countries; NWFF picked up the film for theatrical release, playing it in a dozen markets in North America, where it continues to play. "Police Beat" was broadcast nationally on the Sundance Channel and will be released on DVD in August 2007. NWFF launched **Signature Shorts**, a new program commissioning 35mm short films from NW artists. The shorts are designed to reach new audiences and play before feature films, plus NWFF has arranged with six small-town Northwest venues to bring the shorts to audiences there. The first two works, from Stefan Gruber and Britta Johnson, are completed and playing now.

Under the leadership of Liz Shepherd, our Cinema K family programming and **Children's Film Festival Seattle** are beginning to have national impact. The festival toured to the prestigious Redcat (The Roy and Edna Disney Cal Arts Theater) in Los Angeles, and festival programs played to school groups for over three weeks. In May, NWFF commissioned a live score to the classic Harry Langdon silent film **Tramp, Tramp, Tramp**. Written and performed by country music legends Robbie Fulks and Danny Barnes, the film and performance have toured to eight cities, and haven't stopped yet.

Exhibition

NWFF closed FY06 with the our highest box office gross ever, selling more than \$200,000 dollars in tickets. This was particularly impressive in a year when for-profit cinemas nationally had sluggish or declining attendance. Our two festivals had strong growth years, with attendance at **Local Sightings**, our festival of Northwest work having moderate growth, and the Children's Film Festival Seattle up 37%. In-depth series **Weathering the Storm: The Enduring Cinema of Mikio Naruse**, **Earshot Jazz Films**, **Harry Smith: Connections and Transformations** and **Summer of Samurai** were well reviewed and well attended, with

Highlights Fiscal Year 2006

- NWFF works and programs toured to 16 countries and 23 North American cities
- Launched a new program, Signature Shorts, commissioning 35mm shorts from NW artists
- Completed \$560,000 Capital Campaign
- Broke all previous internal box office records, and brought two festivals and five major series to Washington audiences.
- Completed fiscal year 2006 with our largest surplus, and grew the budget by 16%

only a program of rarely-screened French director Luc Moullet faltering. In a partnership with the Cascade Bicycle Club, NWFF began **Seattle's Bike-In** new outdoor summer film screening of locally made bicycle-themed films. 12 NW films screened before more than 250 people under the stars at Magnuson Park.

In an effort to increase the diversity of the Seattle film-going and filmmaking audience, NWFF joined in a partnership with **Independent Television Service (ITVS)** to screen their **Community Cinema** series. This periodic program screens acclaimed ITVS documentaries for free prior to broadcast, including **Negroes with Guns** and **Race is the Place**. Many screenings were full, and all had local or national speakers leading a discussion after the screening. The series gave away 623 tickets to 9 screenings, and 45% of the audience had never been to NWFF before. Outside film festivals remained a strong part of the mosaic at NWFF, and brought in audiences that might otherwise not come to events here. The Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and Seattle Human Rights Film Festival have both held screenings at NWFF. In a new partnership with the Seattle International Film Festival Group, NWFF presented the Alternate Cinema program of SIFF.



Stefan Gruber's ANNAELLE, produced through NWFF's Signature Shorts program

Finances & Personnel

NWFF had its strongest financial year ever in FY06, finishing the year with a \$10,000 surplus, and opening its first savings account. Our membership hovered in the range of 1,000 – more than double the number before the move. The budget continued to grow in all income categories. Frustrated with the strain a traditional auction was having on the staff and board, the traditional auction was ditched in favor of **Irrational Exuberance**, an evening of performance and competitive bidding. The April 2006 evening was a smash, breaking all previous fundraising records, and leaving the staff and board energized. A few days later, NWFF's 3-year capital campaign was closed, thanks to the unrelenting efforts of superstar Cathy Sarkowsky and the board and staff of the organization.

A generous grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation allowed NWFF to hire a desperately needed full-time Communications Director. This allowed us to re-launch our website, expand grass roots marketing and targeted tick giveaways, and free up the time of the program staff. In FY06, longtime curator Jaime Keeling left the organization, and after NWFF's first-ever national search, Adam Sekuler of Minnesota Film Arts was hired for the position. Adam has done a stellar job, as have all of the staff and board in this year of tremendous growth and success.

Thank you for your continued support,

Alan Pruzan
Board President

Michael Seiwerath
Executive Director

Enclosed: FY 2006 Balance Sheet