

Vermont International Film Festival
Burlington Vermont
October 11-20, 2013

Published in Art New England 2013

This year the annual Vermont International Film Festival returned to Burlington with a renewed sense of focus and collaborative energy under the leadership of Executive Director, Orly Yadin. The screenings, receptions, profession-oriented symposium and parties that contribute to making a successful film fest feel like a celebration came together at three primary downtown venues; ECHO Science Center, Main Street Landing and Burlington City Arts. All events were within easy walking distance. This close proximity facilitated audience participation that had not been feasible in the past when the fest had to rely on suburban theaters to provide screening time.

Special events such as the closing night Sleepless in Burlington short filmmaking competition, the Vermont Filmmakers Showcase and screening of the long anticipated, *The Vermont Movie*, helped bring together students and experienced filmmakers in what felt like a cultural community of peers, a challenge for a state as small and rural as Vermont.

But, at the heart of every festival are the films; thirty seven feature length films and over forty shorts, both documentary and narrative including the compelling *Act of Killing* by Joshua Oppenheimer and the crowd pleasing Opening Night documentary *Crash Reel* were selected by the programming committee after months of deliberation. Some of the films were organized around themes; Identity, Sports, Food, Water and Artists in Action. Two films of note in this last category involved visual artists, the popular glass sculptor Dale Chihuly and enigmatic, Massachusetts based photographer Gregory Crewdson. Both artists are well known and admired, but the films about them and their work are as different as their subjects. *Chihuly Outside*, the 60 minute final film in a trilogy begun in 2008 documenting Chihuly's work was produced by the Chihuly Workshop and seemed like an expanded advertisement for the artist and his wares. It would have been better suited as a 15 minute short. *Gregory Crewdson: Brief Encounters* directed by Ben Shapiro provided a fascinating glimpse into the life and processes of this most theatrical and cinematic photographer. Crewdson's

revelations about his childhood and his discovery of the work of Diane Arbus when he was 10 years old along with commentary by novelists Rick Moody and Russell Banks provided intimacy that the Chihuly film lacks.

—Cynthia L. Close