

The Martha's Vineyard Times

Film : Martha's Vineyard Film Festival: 10 years and counting

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Published: July 1, 2010

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The Chilmark-based Martha's Vineyard Film Festival continues the celebration of its 10th year, begun in March, with a roster of nine films, primarily documentaries. Each of the films will be attended by a director, producer, guest speaker, or panel, who will answer questions.



The New York Times photographer Bill Cunningham hard at work.

Cinema Circus, the children's component, returns with even more activities than last year, including its own series of films. Locally produced food from the Scottish Bakehouse and live music make up the third component of the popular Wednesday evening Festival.

"Bill Cunningham New York," next week's adult fare, will screen on Wednesday, July 7. Director Richard Press and his husband, Producer Philip Geffer, will attend the screening.

"Bill Cunningham New York" is an affectionate tribute to the legendary New York Times photographer whose columns, "On the Street," and "Evening Hours," revolutionized fashion coverage. As Vogue editor Anna Wintour put it, "We all get dressed for Bill."

Produced by The New York Times Company, the film follows its octogenarian subject around as he bicycles through Manhattan looking for the latest fashion trends to photograph.

From the beginning, Mr. Cunningham was fascinated with women's fashion. Dropping out of Harvard, Mr. Cunningham worked first in advertising, then made hats, before being

drafted to serve in the Korean War. His career at The New York Times began in 1978 with a photo he had taken of elusive movie star Greta Garbo. Ironically, the photographer, who has little interest in celebrities and was working as a writer for the Chicago Tribune at the time, was fascinated only by the cut of Garbo's nutria coat.

"...I don't see the people I photograph. All I see are the clothes," he says. Another of the first photos he submitted to The New York Times was of Farrah Fawcett, but again Mr. Cunningham was interested in the clothes and didn't know who the actress was.

A reclusive, unpretentious man who says he has never entered a romantic relationship, he has had 27 bicycles stolen over the years. His favorite spot for reporting on how women and men are dressing is Fifth Avenue and 57th Street.

Mr. Cunningham's astute eye for fashion trends is illustrated by his choosing the designer Courreges over St. Laurent when he worked as a writer for Women's Wear Daily in the 60s. Another time, he left a fashion show he was covering to photograph flower children in Central Park because he found their clothes more trend-setting. Now 82 years old, Mr. Cunningham was made a chevalier in the French Cultural Ministry's prestigious Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2008.

An expanded Cinema Circus precedes the 8 pm screening with the Dutch film "Eep!" about a family that welcome a phantasmagoric bird-girl into their lives.

Starting at 5 pm, Cinema Circus features trapeze artist May Oskan, along with stilt-walkers, face painters, a unicyclist, and fortune teller. Pizza will be available from the Scottish Bakehouse, which will serve adult fare starting at 7 pm. Throughout July, Cinema Circus will also present puppetry by the PigPen Theatre Company.

"Eep!" and Cinema Circus, Wednesday, July 7, approximately 6 pm, Chilmark Community Center. \$10; \$5 for members, available online at tmvff.org and at the door.

"Bill Cunningham New York," Wednesday, July 7, 8 pm, Chilmark Community Center. \$14; \$7 for members.

A summer resident of Oak Bluffs, Brooks Robards is a frequent contributor to The Times.

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