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Film : Upcoming flicks at Vineyard theaters

By *Brooks Robards*
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PAGE ONE

INSIDE THE NEW YORK TIMES

Martha's Vineyard Times File Photo

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Three high-quality movies will keep the Island's film buffs busy this coming week. The Martha's Vineyard Film Festival will present "Page One: Inside the New York Times," on Wednesday, July 27, with director Andrew Rossi, producer Kate Novack, and Times Media columnist David Carr in attendance for discussion.

The Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute will play "Anita," about the misadventures of a young Argentine woman who has Down syndrome, on Sunday, July 24. And on Tuesday, July 26, the Martha's Vineyard Film Society will screen "Le Quattro Volte," an award-winning Italian film that will be introduced by West Tisbury painter Rez Williams.

"Page One"

Death by Internet-inspired social media may soon be in store for the nation's newspapers. Even the prestigious New York Times, subject of the fascinating new documentary "Page One" playing at the Chilmark Community Center, may not survive the new world of virtual reality.

Director Rossi's fly-on-the-wall portrait of the great "Gray Lady," as The Times is known in the newspaper parlance because of its reliance on words over pictures, opens with a colorful mélange of the giant paper rolls used in newspaper production and the machinery employed in printing papers. These well-worn images serve as an homage to classic 1940s newspaper movies like "His Girl Friday" or its '30s predecessor "Front Page."

A focal point for "Page One's" discussion of the state of The Times and the newspaper business in general comes from journalist David Carr. The former cocaine addict was

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named The Times's media columnist after the newspaper created a media desk in 2008 and since has been busy tracking the state of the media.

Other well-known media voices add their two cents about what's happening to the newspaper business. They include Gay Talese, former Times reporter and author of "The Kingdom and the Power," a 1969 study of the newspaper; The New Yorker Editor David Remnick; blogger-turned-Times-writer Brian Stelter; laid-off deputy obituary editor Claiborne Ray; and, of course, the Times's management staff.

"Page One" never really provides a persuasive answer to the question of whether newspapers will survive the onslaught of new web-based technologies. But it leans toward the hopeful side, pointing out that The Times remains the source for a lot of the day's news, regardless of where people retrieve it, and saluting the arrival of Apple's iPad as a viable form of electronic newspaper.

Mr. Carr remains an optimist about The Times's survival. He calls its current struggles nothing compared to his own raising two kids as a single father on welfare. "Page One" may meander a bit, but its asides usually turn out to be interesting ones.

Cinema Circus, which precedes the screening of "Page One," will feature a short about a hippopotamus, among others in its program, "Only You." Filmmaker Yvette Edery will attend.

Summer Institute's "Anita"

Set in Buenos Aires, "Anita" is a compelling portrait of a young woman with Down syndrome who lives with her mother until an anti-Jewish bombing disrupts their lives. As played with poise and sincerity by Alejandra Manzo, Anita is well loved and cared for by Dora (Norma Aleandro, nominated for an Oscar in "Gaby, A True Story").

Bombing of the nearby Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) in 1994, an event that actually took place, leaves Anita disoriented and alone. Wandering the streets of a city that has the largest Jewish population in South America, and unable to communicate adequately what has happened to her, she befriends a variety of people who temporarily take her under their wings.

First comes Felix (Luis Luque), an alcoholic photographer with a host of problems who reluctantly brings Anita home for the night and, to his surprise, helps her bathe. Meanwhile, Anita's brother Ariel (Peto Menahem) and his wife are desperately searching for Anita.

Felix decides to bus Anita to a mental hospital, drops her off, but doesn't stick around. Hunger eventually spurs Anita to enter a little Asian market, where she picks out some food but has no money.

Eventually the irritated woman who runs the market relents and takes in Anita. Anita happily settles there until an attempted robbery scares her away. She bumps into her would-be buddy Felix again, who delivers her to his sister.



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In each case, Anita's naturalness and simplicity bring out a touch of humanity lurking in the strangers she befriends. When she is finally reunited with Ariel, she happily climbs into his car and heads home to deal with what has happened to their mother.

"Anita" illustrates the resourcefulness and innate intelligence of an individual with Down syndrome. Director Marcos Carnevale tells Anita's unusual story with tenderness and subtlety.

"Le Quattro Volte"

Last but hardly least in the week's lineup comes "Le Quattro Volte," a gem of a movie. Translated literally from Italian, the movie's title means "The Four Turns."

Director Michelangelo Frammartino has eliminated dialogue and conventional narrative from this story of a shepherd's life. He relies entirely on a series of exquisitely striking images and still shots that follow the routines of the shepherd and the residents of a Calabrian village.

Island artist Rez Williams emailed MVFS director Richard Paradise to recommend the film and agreed to introduce it.

"We were just bowled over by it," says Mr. Williams, who saw "Le Quattro Volte" in New York with his wife, artist Lucy Mitchell. "It's visually stunning. It's low-key, it's subtle."

Mr. Williams points out that Calabria, the area of southern Italy where the movie was filmed, was the birthplace of Greek philosopher Pythagoras. The movie's structure reflects the traditional fascination of early philosophers with the four elements: air, fire, earth, and water.

The shepherd's goats become characters as important as the shepherd himself and the villagers. Church processions take place, as well as a ritual felling of a tree that villagers turn into charcoal. Proceeding like a tone poem, "Le Quattro Volte" celebrates the villagers' simple ways and their close connection to the natural world. If you are a film lover, don't miss this one.

"Anita," Sunday, July 24, 7:30 pm, M.V. Summer Institute at the M.V. Hebrew Center, Vineyard Haven. Suggested donation \$10. For more information, see mvsummerinstitute.com.

"Le Quattro Volte," Tuesday, July 26, 8 pm, Union Chapel, Oak Bluffs. \$10; \$7 MVFS members. Doors open at 7:15 pm. For more information, see mvfilmsociety.com.

"Only You," Cinema Circus, Wednesday, July 27, 5 pm, Chilmark Community Center. \$10; \$5 MVFF members.

"Page One: Inside the N.Y. Times," Wednesday, July 27, 8 pm, Chilmark Community Center. \$14; \$7 MVFF members. For more information see tmvff.org.

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