



Documentary Film Club

September 2015 through June 2016

September 2015

RESISTANCE – Not All Germs Are Created Equal

From the film's maker: "Antibiotics were first massed-produced in the 1940s and their ability to fight and kill bacteria revolutionized medicine and profoundly impacted everything from agriculture to war. After less than 80 years, however, these miracle drugs are failing. Resistant infections kill hundreds of thousands of people around the world each year and there are now dozens of so-called Superbugs each with its own challenges and costs. How did this happen? Using microscopic footage, personal stories, and expert insights, RESISTANCE clarifies the problem of antibiotic resistance, how we got to this point, and what we can do to turn the tide."

On July 23, 2015, the film was screened at Emory University, co-hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which is located in Atlanta. Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the CDC, talked about the threat that drug-resistant bacteria pose to modern medicine and such techniques as organ transplants, and recommended the film as a good historical take on the overuse of antibiotics and the threat that this practice poses.

Many scientific experts are interviewed in the course of the film, and there are several case studies of people who encountered drug-resistant bacteria.

October 2015

Olmsted and America's Urban Parks

151 years after Frederick Law Olmsted designed New York City's Central Park with Calvert Vaux, it remains an undisputed haven of tranquility amidst one of the largest, tallest, and most unnatural places on earth.

With incredible foresight that spanned centuries, Olmsted brought nourishing green spaces to New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Louisville, and dozens of other US cities. Throughout his working life, Olmsted and his firm carried out over 500 commissions, nearly 100 of which were public parks. The parks, he held, were to be vital democratic spaces in cities, where citizens from all walks of life could intermingle and be refreshed.

Prior to officially committing to landscape architecture, Olmsted was a New York Times correspondent to the Confederate states, the manager of a California gold mine, and General Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. The man, a workaholic by today's standards, plagued with chronic ailments, spent the latter half of his life devoting nearly every waking minute to creating restorative green spaces for overworked city dwellers. In large part through his own words, this film weaves together his engaging and poignant personal story with those of the lasting masterpieces he left for us today.



November 2015

Climate Refugees

CLIMATE REFUGEES uncovers the unbelievable plight of people around the world displaced by climatically induced environmental disasters. The documentary illuminates for the first time the human face of climate change as civilization now finds itself facing the confluence of overpopulation, lack of resources and a changing climate. Traveling the world and interviewing several of the 25 million climate refugees now on the run, along with scholars, politicians and the like, CLIMATE REFUGEES brings to light the heart-wrenching truth of what is quickly becoming mankind's greatest challenge.

Climate Refugees is a documentary that was 3 years in the making and covered 48 countries. The multi-award winning Sundance film has screened around the world illuminating the human face of climatic change to global citizens, governments, churches, The US Senate and House, Pentagon, The Vatican, International governments, DAVOS, Harvard University, Oxford, MIT, Stanford.

December 2015

Hollywood – an Empire of Their Own

Winner of the Best Jewish Experience Documentary award at the 1998 Jerusalem Film Festival, this A&E program directed by Simcha Jacobovici was also hailed as "provocative and engaging" by John Leonard in New York Magazine and "shrewdly on target" by Caryn James in The New York Times. Essentially an adaptation of Neal Gabler's award-winning, somewhat controversial book "Hollywood: An Empire of Their Own: How The Jews Invented Hollywood", this documentary chronicles the amazing success story of the half-dozen Jewish immigrants or sons of immigrants who created the movie industry studio system and became the moguls of Hollywood during its Golden Age.

Highlights include archival footage, interviews, and commentary on these leaders, including Adolph Zukor, founder of Paramount; Carl Laemmle, founder of Universal; Jack and Samuel Warner, founders of Warner Bros.; Louis B. Mayer, founder of MGM; William Fox, head of 20th Century-Fox; and Harry Cohn, who ran Columbia Pictures.

January 2016

MISS Representation

Written and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, Miss Representation exposes how mainstream media and culture contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. The film draws back a curtain to reveal a glaring reality we live with every day but fail to see – how the media's limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and girls makes it difficult for women to feel powerful and achieve leadership positions.

In a society where media is the most persuasive force shaping cultural norms, the collective message we receive is that a woman's value and power lie in her youth, beauty, and sexuality, and not in her capacity as a leader. While women have made great strides in leadership over the past few decades, the United States is still 33rd out of the 49 highest income countries when it comes to women in the national legislature. And it's not better outside of government. Women make up only 4.6% of S&P 500 CEOs and 17% of directors, executive producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films.



Lifelong Learning

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Stories from teenage girls and provocative interviews with politicians, journalists, entertainers, activists, and academics, like Katie Couric, Rosario Dawson, Gloria Steinem, Margaret Cho, Condoleezza Rice, Rachel Maddow, and Nancy Pelosi, build momentum as Miss Representation accumulates startling facts and statistics that will leave the audience shaken, but armed with a new perspective.

February 2016

Project Nim

In 1973, an infant chimpanzee was taken from his mother's arms and sent to live with a human family as part of a Columbia University psychology experiment. The goal of the project was to see if the animal, named Nim Chimpsky, could be conditioned to communicate with humans if he was raised like a human child in a human household. He learned some very basic words in American Sign Language, but Nim continued to act like a chimp — he bit the children in the house and didn't understand how to behave like a human child. It was decided that the family could no longer care for Nim, and he was shuffled from caretaker to caretaker for several years.

In 1977, Nim attacked one of the people taking care of him, and the experiment ended. At that point, researchers said he knew more than 125 ASL signs — but no one knew quite what to do with Nim. He was sent to a medical research facility, where he lived in a cage with other chimps for the first time in his life, before being rescued and sent to an animal sanctuary. He died in 2000.

Nim and the many people who raised him over the years are the subjects of James Marsh's 2010 documentary Project Nim. Marsh and two of the people who worked with Nim join Fresh Air's Terry Gross for a discussion about the film and about the controversial experiment. "The premise of the experiment was to treat him as much like a human child as possible and to give him the nurturing of a human child in order [to see if] he would behave like one," Marsh says. "And it was quite striking that there wasn't an investigation into what chimpanzees actually were or what they're like. And the wild animal comes out in him very quickly, and [no one] was prepared for that."

March 2016

Codebreaker

This award-winning film tells the story of one of the 20th century's most important people. Alan Turing set in motion the computer age and his World War II codebreaking helped save two million lives. Yet few people have heard his name, know his tragic story, or understand his important legacy. In 1954, Turing committed suicide at age 41 after being forced to undergo chemical castration because he was gay. He left behind a lasting legacy and lingering questions about what else he might have accomplished if society had embraced his unique genius instead of rejecting it.

The film covers the highs and lows of Alan Turing's life, tracking his extraordinary accomplishments and the government persecution that led to his tragic death in 1954. In the last 18 months of his short life, Turing visited a psychiatrist, Dr. Franz Greenbaum, who tried to help him. Each therapy session in this drama documentary is based on real events. The conversations between Turing and Greenbaum explore the pivotal moments in his controversial life and examine the pressures that may have contributed to his early death. The film also includes the testimony of people who actually



knew and remember Turing. Plus, this film features interviews with contemporary experts from the world of technology and high science including Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak. These contributors bring Turing's exciting impact up to the present day, explaining why, in many ways, modern technology has only just begun to explore the potential of Turing's ideas.

April 2016

[The Tillman Story](#)

The Tillman Story is a 2010 documentary film directed by Amir Bar-Lev. The film is about the death of football player turned U.S. Army Ranger, Pat Tillman, in the war in Afghanistan, the cover-up of the true circumstances of his death, and his family's struggle to unearth the truth. It was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. It was named 2010 Best Documentary by the San Francisco Film Critics Circle, the St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association, and the Florida Film Critics Circle. The film is narrated by Josh Brolin.

Pat Tillman was a defensive back with the Arizona Cardinals, but decided to walk away from a multimillion-dollar contract to go to Afghanistan in 2002. After Tillman was killed, an investigation showed that he died by friendly fire. Tillman's family says they learned weeks later that the inspiring story the military had publicized was false. The film shows a paper trail — including a leaked top-secret document known as a P4 Memo, sent to the White House by Gen. Stanley McChrystal. Bar-Lev follows Pat's mother, Mary (also known as "Dannie"), as she goes through 3,000 pages of redacted documents trying to uncover the facts.

Bar-Lev began work on the documentary in 2007 during the congressional hearings on the incident. He asked the family for their cooperation for seven months until they agreed to participate.

May 2016

[Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#)

Angela Sun's journey of discovery to one of the most remote places on Earth, Midway Atoll, to uncover the truth behind the mystery of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Along the way she encounters scientists, industry, legislators and activists who shed light on what our society's vast consumption of disposable plastic is doing to our oceans, and what it may be doing to our health. Most people don't realize what kind of impact we have on our environment, and once we know, it's almost too late. Most people don't realize what kind of impact we have on our environment, and once we know, it's almost too late. When you see this in one of the most remote places on Earth, that's the canary in the coal mine — a warning signal. If you're wondering why many stores will soon start banning plastic bags or charging for them, this intriguing documentary, may help to answer your questions. Many fine environmental documentaries have already been produced, but this film from journalist **Angela Sun** offers valuable new insights



The centerpiece of the film is a journey that Sun takes to the Midway Atoll, best known as the site of a famous battle during World War II. The large island in the Pacific has become a massive garbage dump that Sun's camera explores. The enormous amount of waste has proved deadly to the large population of albatrosses that are one of the island's primary residents.

The photography is a strong asset, and images from Midway Island are especially striking. When Sun tells us at the end of the film that the amount of plastic in the world will quadruple by the year 2050, it is not exactly a happy conclusion to this thoughtful, chilling film.

June 2016

The Fog of War

Former corporate whiz kid Robert McNamara was the controversial Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, during the height of the Vietnam War. This Academy Award-winning documentary, augmented by archival footage, gives the conflicted McNamara a platform on which he attempts to confront his and the U.S. government's actions in Southeast Asia in light of the horrors of modern warfare, the end of ideology and the punitive judgment of history.

A bit more, from the New York Times review:

If there's one movie that ought to be studied by military and civilian leaders around the world at this treacherous historical moment, it is "The Fog of War," Errol Morris's sober, beautifully edited documentary portrait of the former United States defense secretary, Robert S. McNamara. Mr. McNamara, who was 85 when the interviews that make up the bulk of the film were conducted two years ago, served under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson from 1961 to early 1968. He has been widely vilified as a major architect of the Vietnam War, which cost more than 58,000 American lives and, according to Mr. McNamara, the lives of 3.4 million Vietnamese.

Subtitled "*Eleven Lessons of Robert S. McNamara*," "*The Fog of War*," which has the first of two New York Film Festival screenings this evening, organizes his reflections into a list of maxims about war and human error, with the cumulative message suggesting that in wartime nobody in power really knows anything.

The documentary, which has a solemn, anxious score by Philip Glass, incorporates White House tapes of conversations about Vietnam that Mr. McNamara had with both presidents, along with vintage clips from World War II and Vietnam.

Stocky and slick haired, with rimless glasses and a grand corporate manner, Mr. McNamara appears to be an exceptionally articulate, self-confident man who came to this project prepared to deflect embarrassing questions about his personal responsibility for the debacle.....

For next year, we will have another *Documentary Film Club*, starting in September. Again, we hope to be on the third Thursday of the month, at 2 p.m., at the Maravilla Theater.

Suggestions for films to be chosen for next year are welcome and should be sent to Ted Anagnoson, anag999@silcom.com or to Vistas at vistas@silcom.com