



For Information and Visuals Contact:

Press Coordinator
Frank Rose
(713) 223-5522 ext. 26, Fax 713-223-4411
Email: press3@fotofest.org
www.fotofest.org

For Immediate Release

NATURE PLAYS A ROLE
A FOTOFEST2006 Film Series
March 31 - April 15, 2006
Houston, Texas

HOUSTON, TEXAS (February, 14, 2006) FotoFest is sponsoring a special Film and Video series about *The Earth* in partnership with the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Film Department.

The films are screening at The Brown Auditorium Theater at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston March 31 - April 15, 2006.

Flo Stone, artistic director and founder of the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital, is serving as guest programmer for this expansive selection of acclaimed films. Each March the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital (EFF) presents a broad diversity of documentary, feature, animated, archival, experimental and children's films selected to provide fresh perspectives on environmental issues affecting our planet. By screening a great variety of films on broadly environmental subjects, EFF seeks to incorporate environmental topics into the mainstream of life and to influence the way viewers think and act. A number of the films bring diverse global environment concerns into sharp focus, while others are inspirational, with stories of individuals confronting natural and human-made challenges.

This series is presented in association with FOTOFEST2006 – The Eleventh International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art, which has designated *The Earth* as one of its two themes. Co-sponsor of the series is the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Film Department and Director Marian Luntz. One of ten curatorial departments within the museum, the film and video department is a media arts center that emphasizes the ongoing exhibition of film and video. The museum is the premiere alternative repertory cinema in Houston and has sponsored the exhibition of film since 1939.

General admission is \$6 and matinee admission (screenings before 5:00 p.m.) is \$5. *MFAH members, senior adults, and students with ID receive a \$1 discount.* Unless otherwise indicated, admission is free for Film Buffs members and for children 5 and under.

A discount pass, good for 10 admissions, is \$50 (*\$45 for MFAH members, senior adults, and students with ID*).

The MFAH Films box office can accept payment by cash and check only (no credit cards). Tickets cannot be purchased in advance. The box office opens at 5:30 p.m. for weekend evening screenings and 30 minutes before show time for most other films.

Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind (Kaze no tani no Naushika)

Directed by Hayao Miyazaki
(Japan, 1984, 115 min., dubbed)
Friday, March 31, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 1, 1:00 p.m.

A rare opportunity to see this early film by the great *anime* director Hayao Miyazaki (*Spirited Away*) on the big screen. An epic environmental tale, the story follows Princess Nausicaa as she faces a devastating ecological disaster and resolves to save the earth from submerging beneath an expanding "sea of corruption" created by humanity. The feisty, compassionate young girl and her allies battle to heal a wounded world and its inhabitants. Miyazaki's vivid animated fantasy entertains but also carries a strong, cautionary message.

Shorts program

Various directors, 72 min.

Saturday, April 1, 3:30 p.m.

An imaginative collection of short films that encourage viewers to consider environmental concerns.

Dutch Light

Directed by Pieter-Rim DeKroon and Maarten DeKroon

(The Netherlands, 60 min., subtitled)

Saturday, April 1, 5:00 p.m.

The remarkable quality of Dutch light was memorably captured in the paintings of Vermeer, Rembrandt and many other Dutch Masters. But has its special radiance disappeared, due to pollution? This striking and original documentary features a mélange of ideas and theories, colors, images, landscapes, and of course light, in an attempt to separate fact from fiction.

Genesis

Directed by Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou

(France/Italy, 2004, 81 minutes, subtitled)

Saturday, April 1, 7:00 p.m.

Pre-release screening courtesy of ThinkFilm

From the team responsible for the riveting *Microcosmos* comes this equally unforgettable film about the cycles of life. A mystical African griot (Sotigui Kouyaté) who serves as narrator, uses the evocative language of myth to relate the birth of the universe and stars, the fiery beginnings of our planet, and the appearance of life on earth. Animals, reptiles, and sea creatures, often depicted in vivid time-lapse photography, and enhanced by an exceptional soundtrack, are the true stars of the film.

"Lensing with motion control cameras in locales from Iceland to the Galapagos, [the filmmakers] appear to have convinced colorful specimens of marine and land life to give the animal kingdom's equivalent of Oscar-caliber performances, always hitting their marks for ... crisp action footage. These guys are ready for their close-up, Mr. DeMille." – *Variety*

Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working With Time

Directed by Thomas Riedelsheimer

(Germany, 2001, 90 min.)

Sunday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.

Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy's masterpieces are made entirely of objects found in nature, which steadily threatens and destroys his art. Capturing Goldsworthy in the process of creating his trademark ephemera, this film offers a unique and visually beautiful appreciation of his use of unique materials and an approach to making art that is quite iconoclastic.

Earth and Ashes (*Terre et Cendres*)

Directed by Atiq Rahimi

(France/Afghanistan, 2004, 110 min., subtitled)

Friday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 9, 7:00 p.m.

Stunningly beautiful, this film is based on the director's novel about one family's experiences in war-torn Afghanistan. An elderly man is obliged to perform an onerous task: to reach his son, who works in a mine in the mountains, and tell him of the destruction of their village and the deaths of most of their family following a bombing by an unnamed army. Accompanied by his 5-year-old grandson, the events on this difficult journey illuminate the overwhelming effects that modern warfare has had on the region and its people. – 2004 Toronto Film Festival

Dersu Uzala

Directed by Akira Kurosawa

(Japan, 1975, 137 min., subtitled)

Saturday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.

Friday, April 14, 7:00 p.m.

A party of Russian soldiers on a mapping expedition in the vast wilderness of Siberia enlists an old hunter, Dersu Uzala, as a guide. With his knowledge of the land and his mystical ability to communicate with nature, he saves the soldiers from destruction. This Oscar-winning epic (Best Foreign Language Film) is a testament to the value of friendship and the transcendent powers of the human spirit.

Along with Film and Video, FotoFest is presenting work by artists featuring the themes, *The Earth and Artists Responding to Violence*. FOTO FEST 2006, the eleventh international Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art, takes place throughout Houston and surrounding countries, March 10-April 23, 2006.

