



Flicker shines spotlight on local films

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By **Rachel Romeo / Entertainment Writer**

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Considering Austin's steady rise to the top of the entertainment industry, it's no wonder the Flicker Austin Film Festival exemplifies the artistic talent this city has to offer.

The Best of Flicker Austin screening, which showcases short films from every genre possible, was held Thursday at the Alamo Drafthouse. While Flicker usually exhibits aspiring filmmakers from world-wide, this screening contained the best of local talent only. A live performance by The Handsome Charlies and a raffle auction of seriously cool gifts donated by the Austin Craft Mafia amplified the event even further.

The films ranged from music videos for Spoon and The Handsome Charlies, to Emily, a 13-minute short by filmmaker Tate English about a girl who goes to outrageous lengths to impress her boyfriend's mean-spirited mother. The opening film, Perils in Nude Modeling by Scott Rice, is one of suspense and humor. The story revolves around a young artist struggling to sketch a nude model in art class, while a tyrannical teacher expels students who have not met his expectations left and right. A comedic favorite among guys was Scott Calonico's Japanese styled action flick, The Creepees vs. Monster Robot #2, complete with hilarious mistranslations and creative special effects. In this film, a Japanese rock band battles a robot that has kidnapped a member's little brother. It sounds bizarre, but it works.

While many of the films are offbeat comedies, Flicker doesn't discriminate against any genres. Other films exhibited were an animation based on a poem written by the director himself and a 3-minute montage of old film reels spliced together.

One director explained his inspiration for his film about a knife-wielding, redneck neighbor came from his own real-life experiences, with slight exaggeration of course.

For aspiring filmmakers, film submissions are always free, and there are only a few restrictions. Films must originate on celluloid film (8mm, 16mm or 35mm) and must be under 15 minutes long.

While the Flicker organization started in Athens, Ga, there are now branches that reach as far as France and the Czech Republic. Films accepted by Flicker are able to tour other chapters of the organization, and the festival is a great way for young filmmakers to distribute their films.

Cory Ryan, director of Flicker Austin, feels that sharing films from across the world enhances the Austin branch. Ryan, a filmmaker and student herself, said, "It helps us, as a local film community, stay in touch with what's going on in other cities and serve as a point of inspiration."

While the Flicker Austin Film Festival is smaller than other local film events, it accomplishes just as much, if not more. In 2003, the Austin Chronicle's "Best of Austin" critics declared Flicker the "Best Way for Local Filmmakers to Get Screened." The festival entertains viewers in ways your typical



Image Courtesy of slowkid.com

Scott Calonico's film, The Creepees vs. Robot Moster # 2, was featured at this years Best of Flicker Austin festival.

Hollywood blockbuster can't, while simultaneously serving as a launch pad for great local talent.

If viewing offbeat and entertaining films, hearing music from a "handsome" rock band and winning really great prizes from local designers all in one night sounds like your idea of a good time, you should check out the next screening on May 12. Or maybe you should just submit a film for all of Austin's viewing pleasure. For more information, visit www.flickeraustin.com.

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