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East Coast Cannes: Haverhill will host experimental film festival

By Mike LaBella mlabella@eagletribune.com May 30, 2017



From left, twins Jeremy and Brendan Smyth are seen at the premiere of their latest film, "News from the Sun," at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival. The Haverhill natives will present the fifth annual Haverhill Experimental Film Festival June 9-10 at Harbor Place.



HAVERRHILL — If you're looking for some out-of-the ordinary entertainment, consider the fifth annual Haverhill Experimental Film Festival, which takes place June 9-10.

Festival directors and programmers, Haverhill natives Brendan and Jeremy Smyth will bring their annual event to the new Harbor Place, hosted by HC Media.

This year's festival will feature 34 films and videos chosen from a pool of 400 submissions to showcase over the two-day event. Broken up into five screenings titled Pulse, Orbit, Closer, Blame, and Way, the Smyth twins have geared their programming towards more cultural topics to match the political climate of today.

Twelve countries are represented in this year's program from the United States to Argentina to South Korea. Ten filmmakers have confirmed their attendance from across the country to engage with the Haverhill audience.

Screenings are on June 9 at 7 and 9 p.m., and on June 10 at 2, 6 and 8 p.m.

Each screening is \$5. The only free programming available is June 10 at 2 p.m.

"We're very excited to be a part of Harbor Place, the newest addition to downtown Haverhill," said Jeremy Smyth. "HC Media agreed to host us for the first time this year, and we are happy to be more integrated into the community."

"Whenever we bring our film festival to Haverhill we receive tremendous support from the community, including business owners," Brendan Smyth said. "If it wasn't for Creative Haverhill, we would not be able to do this."

"And from our first festival, we've received help from Donald Herook of the Artist Cafe on Washington Street. Don and his wife are always helping us with a filmmaker brunch and an awards dinner they host at their cafe."

Jenny Arndt, arts and culture coordinator for Creative Haverhill, said the film festival is a unique event that draws filmmakers from across the country and the world.

"They stay in our hotels, they dine in our restaurants, and overall it's a very exiting weekend for everyone," she said. "I think it's the kind of event that everyone should see at least once in their lives. We're really lucky that Jeremy and Brendan choose to hold this in Haverhill each year."

Twins Brendan and Jeremy Smyth are 16 mm experimental documentary filmmakers who explore the globe in search of cultural oddities. Their interest in visual anthropology has sent them from Mexico to Indonesia showcasing the economic plight of workers through unique methods of storytelling.

The twins' work has won multiple awards and screened at notable festivals/venues including \$100 Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives, Antimatter, Atlanta, Chicago Underground, Columbus Int'l, Edinburgh Int'l, FLEXfest, Indie Grits, Minneapolis St. Paul Int'l, and Virginia.

Currently, the Smyth brothers live in Durham, North Carolina, where they curate a monthly experimental film series known as "UNEXPOSED." When they return to Haverhill, they stay with family in Bradford.

IF YOU GO

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WHERE: HC Media offices at Harbor Place

WHEN: Screenings are June 9 at 7 and 9 p.m., and June 10 at 2, 6 and 8 p.m.

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