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SEARCH

JUNE 17 - 23, 2005

in this week's issue

features

Dancing on Live Grenades: Rise — über-photographer David LaChapelle's lovingly depicted documentary about krump dancing and its inner-city originators — is one of the buzz films at this year's Los Angeles Film Festival. By ERNEST HARDY.

Chicanos and the Man: Comedian Paul Rodriguez and his skateboarding son, Paulie, are rich, famous and pioneers in their professions. But that's nothing compared to what Pablo did to get them here. BY BEN QUIÑONES

news

BILL BRADLEY on the [special election nobody wants](#).

MARC COOPER goes [looking for trouble and finds Arnold](#) giving the commencement address in Santa Monica.

STEVEN MIKULAN takes in the Santa Maria scene with [diehard Michael Jackson fans](#).

DOUG IRELAND [diagnoses Howard Dean](#) and his loose mouth.

STEVEN MIKULAN on the abrupt end of [L.A.'s hotel labor dispute](#).

MARGARET WERTHEIM on the increasing [absurdity of the stem-cell debates](#).

LA WEEKLY STAFF BLOGS

Joshuah Bearman: Leveraging the Infosphere

Marc Cooper: Blowing up political myths and deceptions

Doug Ireland: Analysis from veteran political journalist Doug Ireland

Judith Lewis: Restoring environmental truths and

Los Angeles Film Festival Critics Choices and Schedule

Writing in these very pages one year ago, on the occasion of its 10th anniversary, I suggested that the Los Angeles Film Festival was really only 4 years old — its rebirth marked by the moment when the Independent Feature Project/Los Angeles took control of the erstwhile Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and began a fruitful process of reinvention. One year later, it's the IFP/L.A. itself that has been born again, having recently broken rank with the five other national IFP chapters and re-christened itself Film INDependent (or FIND for short). Though little change will be evident to the outside observer — the IFP/L.A. staff remains in place, as does its involvement in both LAFF and the Independent Spirit Awards — the move speaks to the maverick attitude of an organization that has consistently and diligently sought to expand our definition of "independent" film. To wit, the imaginatively programmed lineup of this year's LAFF (which runs today through June 26) juxtaposes new films from the far corners of the globe against those made right here in our own back yard, music videos against short films, and the favorite movies of veteran director Sydney Pollack against those of hip-hop wizard The RZA. And that's just for starters! Also on tap: sneak peeks at some of the summer's most anticipated art-house films (including Wong Kar-Wai's *2046* and Jim Jarmusch's direct-from-Cannes *Broken Flowers*), posthumous tributes to three seminal figures of the American independent cinema (Morris Engel, Ossie Davis and Stan Brakhage) and an in-depth discussion with legendary screenwriter Robert Towne. You can FIND out more at www.lafilmfest.com. In the meantime, our critics offer their takes on those films and special events made available for preview.

—Scott Foundas

A list of the films and their showtimes can be [found here](#).

"SIR! NO SIR!" (USA)

This enlightening documentary chronicling the Vietnam War era's GI protest movement has, by



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columns

A CONSIDERABLE TOWN

[The Ego Has Landed](#): Clive Davis at the Learning Annex.

[Semi-naked defiance](#) at Topanga Beach.

ERIN AUBRY KAPLAN's not-so-great [expectations in North Carolina](#).

DAVE SHULMAN's [COLUMN DAVE](#).

[A Father's Day story](#) by JOE DONNELLY.

Plus, [a cartoon](#) by BRUCE ERIC KAPLAN.

[LALA LAND](#) by COLE GERST.

[Party shots](#) by MARK "COBRASNAKE" HUNTER.

LA VIDA

[A good catch](#): MARC COOPER's favorite fishing holes.

[The Shop](#): ERIN AUBRY KAPLAN's beloved Last Chance.

In STYLE, KATERI BUTLER contemplates [the little black dress](#).

Plus, LIBBY MOLYNEAUX's [HOOPLA](#)

[Letters](#)
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[ROCKIE HOROSCOPE](#)

arts

FILM
SCOTT FOUNDAS interviews [Yes woman Sally Potter](#), whose film screens at the Los Angeles Film Festival.

Our critics round up LAFF's other [unusual suspects](#).

ELLA TAYLOR on the heavenly creatures and infernal attachments of [My Summer of Love](#).

TV
ROBERT ABELE's [SURF REPORT](#).

BOOKS
[Suicidal Redundancies](#): BRENDAN BERNHARD on Nick Hornby's new novel, *A Long Way Down*, plus Mitch Cullin's Sherlock Holmes.

And MICHELLE HUNEVEN on Michael Cunningham's genre bender.

accident or design, a homegrown, cut-and-paste quality, much like the movement itself, which was spurred along by mimeographed newspapers secretly distributed



[Enlarge Image](#)

from base to base, and by GIs in the war zone itself. Such rebellion within the ranks stunned military brass and got more than one soldier court-martialed or sentenced to hard labor. Director David Zeiger brings to fresh light all manner of half-forgotten events, from brave on-base protests that date as far back as 1965, to cultural minutiae such as the wittily elaborate handshakes black soldiers devised to distinguish their units. Only ostensibly a primer for Vietnam-era recruits, including an onscreen glossary of slang words like "Charlie" and "grunt," *Sir! No Sir* — which probably doesn't have a Fox News Channel airing in its future — offers rare footage of the antiwar stage shows organized (by Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland, among others) as counterpoint to Bob Hope's boost-the-troops extravaganzas. Fonda's actor son Troy Garity narrates, and the Lightning Rod herself, clearly delighted at being quizzed, for once, by friendly inquisitors, shakes her head in wonder that men fierce in their unity and free in their hearts once dared to lay down their guns and say "No."

—Chuck Wilson

DGA1, Sun., June 19, 7 p.m.; DGA2, Thurs., June 23, 5 p.m.)

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: THE RZA

Few in either Hollywood or the world of hip-hop have demonstrated as strong and smart a grasp on the deep blood ties between rap/hip-hop and movies as has the Wu-Tang Clan's sonic architect, the RZA. His music production has always had a cinematic scope to it: the meticulous yet organic layering of beats, samples and studio wizardry that underscores the imagery of their accompanying rhymes; the evocative way his grooves build in emotional power, then fall away to let the vocals and lyrics hold sway. Even Wu Tang's very construction is lifted from martial-arts films that the RZA and his cohorts consumed as kids. Having scored Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: the Way of the Samurai* to critical acclaim, and become Quentin Tarantino's favorite musical go-to guy (*Kill Bill Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*), the RZA is now appearing in front of the camera as well — his segment with Bill Murray was one of the highlights of Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes*, and he'll soon appear with Clive Owen in *Derailed*. As this year's LAFF artist in residence, he's programmed two



The RZA
Photo by James Lozeau

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THEATER

[Bushwhacking](#): STEVEN MIKULAN reviews David Hare's *Stuff Happens* at the Taper.

ART

[Beatnik Renaissance Man](#): DOUG HARVEY on the multiple visions of Brion Gysin.

MUSIC

On the stage and behind the scenes at the [L.A. Weekly Music Awards](#).

[Spoon's Britt Daniel](#) speaks the truth to MICHAEL HOINSKI.

[Sleater-Kinney rocks](#) LIVE IN L.A.

ALAN RICH's [A LOT OF NIGHT MUSIC](#)

Plus, LINA LECARO's [NIGHTRANGER](#)

RESTAURANTS

JONATHAN GOLD meets [the Ironic Chef](#).

In WHERE TO EAT NOW: [Steak Houses](#)

In WHERE TO DRINK NOW: [Live Jazz](#).

Plus, ASK MR. GOLD about [a beautiful burger](#).

CALENDAR

[>Picks of the Week](#)

[>Music Picks of the Week](#)

[>Neighborhood Movie Guide](#)

[> Crossword](#)

films that were huge influences on him (*The 36th Chamber of Shaolin* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*) and one where he flexes his own creative muscle (*Ghost Dog*). But the don't-miss ticket is Toon Time With the RZA, where he will deejay live to a lineup of offbeat animated shorts.

—Ernest Hardy

The 36th Chamber of Shaolin screens at DGA 1 on Tues., June 21, at 10 p.m. and at Sunset 5 on Fri., June 24, at 11:45 p.m.

Toon Time With the RZA screens at Ford Amphitheater on Wed., June 22, at 8:30 p.m.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly screens at Sunset 5 on Sat., June 25, at 10 p.m.

Ghost Dog screens at Sunset 5 on Sun., June 26, at noon.

ROMÁNTICO (USA)

If ever a life was defined by Sisyphean struggle it's that of Carmelo, an itinerant mariachi who works San Francisco's Mission District, cranking out melancholy love songs with his beloved but sporadically drunk partner, Arturo. Caught between dire poverty and



[Enlarge Image](#)

the desire to keep his suffering family together, the 57-year-old Carmelo must choose between making \$100 on a good night in an American city and 30 pesos a day — an improvement on his hardscrabble childhood — servicing weddings in his down-at-heel Mexican town. Mark Becker spent more than three years following Carmelo back and forth, and the result is a rich, devastating portrait of a man gifted with great charm and burdened by the painful combination of determination and fatalism that so often comes with adversity. Inventively shot on 16mm, *Romántico* echoes the changing rhythms of Carmelo's world. If this terrific documentary doesn't adjust your idea of what it means to have a hard life and a good attitude, you haven't been paying attention.

—Ella Taylor

Sunset 5, Fri., June 17, 7 p.m.; Sunset 5, Fri., June 24, 10 p.m.

NINE LIVES

A troubled woman (Lisa Gay Hamilton) who was abused by her father as a child revisits the home where she grew up and, for a moment, recaptures her lost innocence; an ex-wife (Amy Brenneman) finds herself falling back in love with her ex-husband (William Fichtner) on the occasion of his second wife's funeral; and a mother (Glenn Close) spends the afternoon visiting a family cemetery plot in the company of her precocious young



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daughter. Those are but three of the *Nine Lives* canvassed by writer-director Rodrigo García over the course of his new ensemble drama. As with his 2002 debut feature, *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her*, García (the son of Gabriel García Márquez) adopts a cinematic form less novelistic than it is a collection of short stories — some interrelated, others stand-alone, and each is filmed as a single unedited tracking shot. Though a few of García's tales — which range from melodrama to farce, and yes, even magic realism- — are inevitably more compelling than the rest, the nine female characters who form the stories' centers are all remarkable creations, as are the gifted (and largely under-appreciated) actresses who play them. (In addition to those mentioned: Kathy Baker, Holly Hunter, Molly Parker and Mary Kay Place are also onboard.) In the film's most plangent scene, two old flames (Robin Wright Penn and Jason Isaacs) reminisce about a relationship that was "lovely in fits and starts" as they traverse the aisles of a grocery store — its shelves seemingly stocked not with dry goods, but with the emotional ramparts of their shared past.

—Scott Foundas

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Tues., June 21, 7 p.m.

MUSIC VIDEO SHOWCASE

The two Eclectic Mix programs in LAFF's inspired festival sidebar represent a carefully assembled buffet of artists, genres and visual styles. The collections work in tandem to highlight the fact that — contrary to the looped formulas you see on MTV — some very inventive work is being done in the field of music videos, among it Badly Drawn Boy's "Year of the Rat," Orisha's "Naci Orishas," the unedited version of Jay-Z's "99 Problems" and Los Abandoned's "Van Nuys (Es Very Nice)," which subversively placates fears about the Latinization of L.A. by placing the Latino alterna-rock outfit (clad in Silver Lake-hipster thrift-store chic) in the midst of a high school cheerleading practice full of charmingly bumbling young Latinas, then interspersing the performance footage with images of Latino families performing all-American acts of shopping, eating and just chilling in the market square. But if you can only catch one video showcase, make it She Said: The Music Videos of Floria Sigismondi, a retrospective of the work of the celebrated visual artist who brings her interests in surrealism and the avant-garde to the music clips she helms. In particular, Sigismondi's fascination with the remnants of beauty that cling to decay and destruction (as found in devastated landscapes and bombed-out buildings) marks the minifilms she makes. Marilyn Manson's "Beautiful People" and Christina Aguilera's "Fighter" are probably the best-known examples of her work (and proof of the extremes within which she's comfortable working), but there's also exquisite imagery in clips she's done for Tricky, Leonard Cohen, The Cure and underground R&B cult goddess



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Amel Larrieux. A highlight is her "()" video for Sigur Ros, in which the viewer is slowly transported from what seems like the interior of a boarding school for young, solemn-faced kids to a barren, otherworldly landscape where the kids trash a burned-out old car in slow motion. As we're slowly drawn into an unfamiliar setting of despair and violence, the effect is simultaneously discomfiting and oddly soothing.
—Ernest Hardy

Eclectic Mix Program #2(featuring "Year of the Rat," "Naci Orishas," "99 Problems" and "Van Nuys (Es Very Nice)") screens at DGA 2 on Sun., June 19, at 1:45 p.m. and Sat., June 25, at 9:45 p.m.

She Said: The Music Videos of Floria Sigismond screens at DGA 2 on Fri., June 24, at 7 p.m. and Sat., June 25, at 2:45 p.m.

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