

MOVIEMAKERS

A Chosen Few Win Festival Slots

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A decade ago, when Carol Bidault organized the first DC Independent Film Festival, 30-odd films were submitted for consideration. And 30-odd films were included in the lineup.

It's not that way anymore.

This year the festival received 2,300 submissions; 108 of those will be shown over the course of 11 days.

"These are truly independent films, and there are amazing gems out there," says Bidault, now the executive director of the festival, which will adopt George Washington University's Jack Morton Auditorium as its home this year.

It might not be Sundance, but this scrappy, volunteer-run movie extravaganza has a lot to recommend it. The theme for its 10th anniversary is "The Politics of Film," though the whole range of genres — comedy, romance, horror flicks — will be represented.

Film fest newbies shouldn't expect a typical moviegoing experience. The movies are bundled together by length and genre so several films of varying length will be screened at each sitting. And after each screening, the filmmakers will be on hand to answer questions and talk about their process.

"Many of these films really lend themselves for us to get together and discuss their themes," Bidault says. "And that's a big part of why you have a festival ... to organize people so they're communing and discussing, so you add value to the theatergoing experience."

To further that goal of communing, DCIFF is also hosting a music festival, with more than 20 bands scheduled to perform between screenings and at the end of every evening. For current and would-be filmmakers, there is also a series of seminars on such topics as anime, feature film direction and distribution of independent documentaries.

Bidault says interest in the festival and in the art of filmmaking has grown over the past decade. She attributes that trend mostly to techno-



DC INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

Movies selected for the 10th annual DC Independent Film Festival include "Funniest Fed 2007," above and left, and "Disfigured," below left.



um film today." But it also means there's a greater need to shine the spotlight on those "gems" that might otherwise be overlooked.

"At least people will be seeing these provocative films," she says. "You're going to be seeing films that — except for this festival and maybe a couple other places — you'd never get to see."

Consider the documentary "Disfigured" (playing Saturday at 4:30), about a friendship between an anorexic woman and one who is obese. Or "FL324," a short feature about the family conflicts faced by a young Asian gay man (Monday at 8 p.m.). Or "Funniest Fed 2007," a documentary about the search for the Washington area's funniest federal worker (Thursday at 8:30).

Tickets to most sessions are \$10 and include admission to the post-show discussions.

"Our mission is to solidify and bring this film community together," Bidault says. "We're really hoping people will just come down and hang out — there's always going to be