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About Siren's Tale Productions

Siren's Tale Productions is an independent corporation that produces films written and directed by Kim Cummings. *Weeki Wachee Girls* will be the first feature film produced by Siren's Tale and is based on the award-winning short of the same name. Filmmaker Cummings is intrigued by stories that reflect the vastness of human emotional range, especially as felt and lived out by women and girls. Her vision offers viewers the chance to experience, and perhaps relate to, a life that may be different from their own on the outside—be it a girl under the magical spell of her first homosexual relationship, a depressed woman who is helped by the spectre of her younger self, or co-workers who's symbiotic working relationship threatens to blossom into an adulterous affair. Cummings' artistic goal centers on expanding the worldview of her viewers.

About the Film

It's another hot summer in Central Florida and fifteen-year-old best friends Katie and Maura spend their days dreaming about mermaid camp at Florida's Weeki Wachee Spring and timing how long they can hold their breath in a four-foot-deep above-ground pool. Bucking their Pentecostal upbringing and defying their parents, the girls enlist the help of a reluctant former mermaid and church outcast, Maggie, in their quest. Their friendship and their dreams start to unravel when Katie sees Maura kissing another girl. Drowning in confusion and jealousy, Katie sets into motion a series of events that could result in Maura's being sent away to be "cured"—unless Katie can figure out a way to undo the damage. *Weeki Wachee Girls* is the timeless story of girls on the cusp of womanhood, and the complexity of navigating the divide between the two.

Inspiration

In 2006, the film short *Weeki Wachee Girls* was screened at the International Jackson Heights Food and Film Festival to enthusiastic audience acclaim. After the screening, a group of teenagers from Generation Q, a safe haven for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) teens in Queens, NY, told Cummings that they had come to the festival just to see *Weeki Wachee Girls* and that they had loved it. They shared with her heart-breaking stories of straight friends who had rejected them; they quoted statistics from various sources that show how 97% of students in public high schools report regularly hearing homophobic remarks from peers, 53% report hearing such comments made by school staff, and 41.7% of LGBT youth do not feel safe in their schools because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Surprised to learn that most teens still face rampant homophobia in their schools and in their lives, Cummings knew she needed to make a feature.



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The Success of the Short

"The one to watch is Cummings' *Weeki Wachee Girls*."--Steve Persall, *St. Pete Times*

The short film *Weeki Wachee Girls* has played in more than 70 film festivals around the world and has won several "best of" awards, including from the Chicago Lesbian and Gay International Film festival, Philadelphia Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, and Crested Butte Reel Fest. It was also a finalist for best short film at the 2000 Taos Talking Picture Festival. Distributed by AtomFilms, *Weeki Wachee Girls* has aired on KQED, San Francisco's PBS station, and on NY Metro Channels' cable stations.

Fundraising Proposal

It will take between \$250,000 and \$500,000 to produce. Cummings plans to raise these funds through a series of events, grants, and private donations. The first fundraising event was held on Thursday, November 8 and was a good start to her fundraising efforts. Once she raises some money privately, Cummings will begin applying for grants from both government agencies and private foundations such as NYSCA, Jerome Foundation, Creative Capital, and Women in Film.

Charity Support

Weeki Wachee Girls is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a nonprofit arts service organization. Contributions in behalf of *Weeki Wachee Girls* may be made payable to Fractured Atlas and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Intentions

The film will be shot on super-16mm and finished on HD, which can be blown up to 35mm for distribution. Cummings used this process in a more recent short film, *Flower of a Girl*, with excellent results. Cummings has worked intermittently on the script for *Weeki Wachee Girls* over the past few years and was inspired to re-visit after the script the short played in 2006 to a sold out house and rave reviews. She realized there was still a strong desire for a lesbian film with a positive message. She began in earnest to ready the film for production. For the role of Maggie, a forty-something former mermaid who helps Katie and Maura in their quest to get to Weeki Wachee Spring, Cummings will approach name actresses like Holly Hunter, Julianne Moore, and Laura Linney, who have done brilliant work in independent films. For the roles of Katie and Maura, Cummings will seek out young actresses who are interested in breaking out of little girl roles, much like Evan Rachel Wood did with her exceptional performance in *Thirteen*.



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Budget

The budget of *Weeki Wachee Girls* will range from \$250,000 to \$500,000. At the lower end, Cummings will shoot the film on hi-definition video; at the higher end, it will be shot on super-16mm, which can be transferred to 35mm. The range also includes varying levels of cast and crew compensation.

Timeline

Over a period of 18 months, and through a series of fundraising events and proposals, Kim Cummings will raise enough money to start production of the film in Spring, 2009. Actual shooting will take three weeks followed by four to six months for editing. *Weeki Wachee Girls* will be ready for festival submissions in fall, 2009.

Festival Markets

- **Toronto International Film Festival**
- **Sundance Film Festival**
- **Telluride Film Festival**
- **Cannes Film Festival & Market**
- **Los Angeles Independent Film Festival**
- **New York Film Festival**
- **Slamdance**
- **Seattle International Film Festival***
- **South by Southwest**
- **Berlin International Film Festival & Market**
- **Frameline - The San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Film Festival***
- **New Fest – the New York LGBT Film Festival***
- **Florida Film Festival***
- **Palm Springs International Film Festival***
- **Chicago International Film Festival**
- **Hamptons International Film Festival**
- **Austin Heart of Film Festival**
- **Madcat International Film Festival (Women focused)**
- **Moondance Film Festival (Women focused)**
- **Venice International Film Festival**
- **Rotterdam International Film Festival**

*indicates festivals where the film short *Weeki Wachee Girls* played. Cummings' reputation with these festivals improve the likelihood that *Weeki Wachee Girls* the feature will be accepted



Weeki Wachee Girls

a feature film by: Kim Cummings



Reviews for Weeki Wachee Girls the short film:

"The one to watch is Cummings' *WEEKI WACHEE GIRLS*..."
St. Petersburg Times

"*WEEKI WACHEE GIRLS* is a beautifully shot film that expertly captures a hot summer filled with growing pains and new discoveries."
Image Out, Rochester Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Festival

"The [short films] that stick with me are *WEEKI WACHEE GIRLS* by Kim Cummings, a coming of age story with wonderfully self-possessed performances by three teenage girls..."
THE ROAD TO TAOS by Stuart Hynson Culpepper, Film Threat Magazine

"A keenly observed coming-of-age story told with affection."
Orlando Weekly



About the film

Weeki Wachee Girls is a feature length script based on the award winning short film of the same name.

FILM SYNOPSIS:

15-year-old best friends Katie and Maura dream of attending mermaid camp at Florida's annual Weeki Wachee Spring. Going against their Pentecostal upbringing, they defy their parents and enlist the help of a reluctant former mermaid and church outcast Maggie in their quest. But everything goes awry when Katie reveals that she saw Maura kissing another girl. Maura will be sent away to be "cured" unless Katie can undo the damage.



About the filmmaker

Kim Cummings is the writer/director of *Weeki Wachee Girls*, a 20-minute short, which played in over seventy festivals around the world. It picked up three "best of" awards and was a finalist at Taos in 2000. It aired on San Francisco's PBS station and NY Metro Channels and is distributed by Atomfilms. Previous writing credits include a one-act play, *Lunch at Tom's Ham & Eggery*, which was a finalist at New York's Strawberry One-Act Festival in 2004. Her most recent film, a 5-minute experimental piece, *Flower of a Girl* premiered at the Staten Island Film Festival. She is currently working on the feature length version of *Weeki Wachee Girls*.



Super 16mm
Released: 35MM
Running Time: 90 mins
Production: Fall 2009
Release Date: Fall 2010
Director: Kim Cummings



Kim Cummings

Awards watch

Winners of two of the most highly anticipated awards will be announced this weekend.

The Taos Land Grant Award offers five acres of land to a filmmaker who "demonstrates a passion and inventiveness in using the moving image to tell our stories." Four filmmakers already have won Cerro Montoso land near Taos: Gary Walkow, Constance Marks, Chris Eyre and David Riker. A fifth landowner will be announced at the Awards Gala party Saturday (April 15) at the Taos Country Club.

Finalists for the 2000 Land Grant Award are:

- Jeremy Stein ("The Photographer").
- Sandra Osawa ("On and Off the Res with Charlie Hill").
- Daniel Yoon ("Post Concussion").
- Deborah Hoffman and Frances Reid ("Long Night's Journey into Day").

Jurors include Ellen Osborne of Taos Talking Pictures; Jeff and Jean-Marie Jackson of Taos Land and Film Company; Alton Walpole of Mountainair Films; and 1999 Land Grant winner David Riker.

The Land Grant Award is sponsored by the Taos Land and Film Company, along with KTAO Solar 101.9 FM.

The Georges Melies Award recognizes filmmakers of short works with great promise. The award comes with up to \$20,000 in film, lab service and equipment rentals and is given to a director who "demonstrates the most creative and powerful use of the short film form."

Winners are chosen by a jury of professional filmmakers. The award is named for one of the giants of early cinema, the French magician and per-



Courtesy Daniel Yoon

Daniel Yoon, director of "Post Concussion," is one of the finalists for the Taos Land Grant Award.

former Georges Melies, who was an early innovator in fiction film.

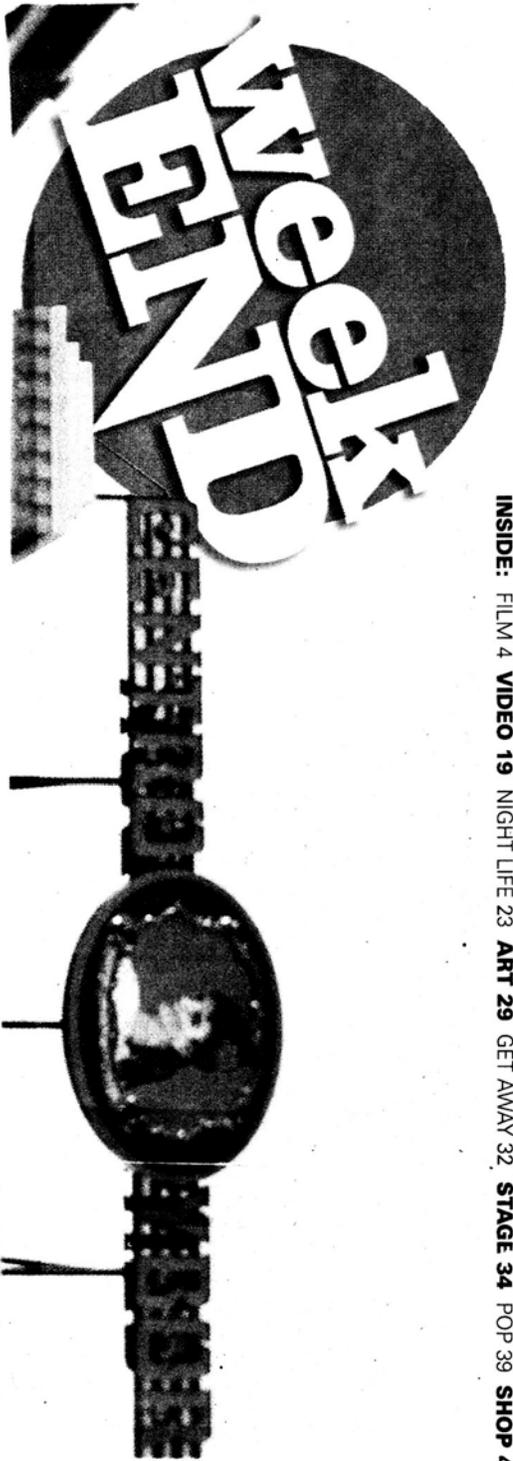
The finalists for the 2000 Georges Melies Award include:

- "Weeki Wachee Girls," directed by Kim Cummings.
- "Dominant Seventh," directed by Martin Nowak.
- "Flight of the Stone," directed by Susanne Horizon-Franzel.
- "In God We Trust," directed by Jason Reitman.
- "Dolphins," directed by Farhad Yawari.

The award is sponsored by Kodak, Seattle Post Affiliates and Ultrasonic DigTital.

For descriptions of these films and the entire festival program, visit www.ttpix.org or call Taos Talking Pictures at 751-0637 for a schedule.

INSIDE: FILM 4 VIDEO 19 NIGHT LIFE 23 ART 29 GET AWAY 32 STAGE 34 POP 39 SHOP 4



Where Hollywood rarely ventures

These films, featured at the 11th annual Tampa Bay International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, take pride in community and culture.

By STEVE PERSALL
Times Film Critic

PREVIEW

The 11th annual Tampa Bay International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, today through Oct. 15 at Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin St. in downtown Tampa. Single-event tickets are sold at the box office for \$7. Two ticket packages are available: Six-event passes (\$35) and all-access Crown Circle passes (\$95). For more information, visit the festival Web site at <http://www.pridefilmfest.com> or call (813) 231-8270.

Tuesday

7 p.m. — *Just for You Girls* is a short-film sampler including six works. The one to watch is Cummings' *Weeki Wachee Girls*, in which two girls share a crush near the mermaid haven. Cummings, a Countryside High School graduate, couldn't arrange filming at the tourist attraction. Instead, New Jersey subs for Hernando County.

9 p.m. — Seven brief films make up the collection, *Fun in Boy's Shorts*.

Wednesday

7 p.m. — *Muriel's Parents Have Had It!* when their daughter moves out and falls in love with another woman. French with English subtitles. The short films, *Love, Ltd.* and *Mother's Day* open the program.

9-15 p.m. — *Cypsis Boys* follows lonely gay men cruising San Francisco nightclubs. An ensemble cast captures the romantic highs and sometimes decadent lows of looking for Mr. Right.

CRAMER: DON'T BUY THIS DIP • HOROWITZ: ISRAEL'S AGONY

OCTOBER 23, 2000

NEW YORK

Chick Flicks

Finding a film that exemplifies the angst of the urban girl becomes so much easier this week, thanks to "Here's Looking at You Kid!," a film festival for and about girls. Screening sessions on growing up, gender bending, complicated relationships, sports, and the pitfalls of young love. (In the sports session, check out "Live and Let Ride," a documentary on skateboarding whizzes, followed by live skateboarding and double-Dutch demos. While a few of the films are okay for younger girls, most are geared for the 11-plus crowd. • 10/19-23; Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-982-1633); \$5 per session, \$3 kids 17 and younger.

Festival

Thank Heaven for Girls

Strong women have been the subject of films, and film festivals, for generations. (Katharine Hepburn. Gloria Swanson. *Bette Davis!*) But the idea of a celluloid strong girl seems to occur only sporadically. And when she does find her way into Hollywood, she's either eye candy (*Clueless*) or animated (*The Little Mermaid*, *Pocahontas*). Lyn Pentecost knows better. As an indie-film buff who just happens to be the boss at the Lower Eastside Girls Club, she got wind of a serious gap between what she was seeing in theaters and what else is being produced. "Most of what's out there in the mass market are unrealistic scenarios for real life," she says from her office off gritty Avenue B. "Girls should be looking at intelligent, more provocative work." A year ago, Pentecost contacted everyone

she knew in the business and asked for submissions to what she envisioned as the first film festival for and about girls. The screening committee, which included 12 Girls Club members and 24 women from the film industry, had to agree on what would be included. Beginning Thursday, "Here's Looking at You Kid!" (an ironic title, given that *Casablanca's* Ilsa was mesmerizing but not particularly strong) opens at Anthology Film Archives (32 Second Avenue, at 2nd Street) for a five-day run of features, shorts, documentaries, and animation that tells true-to-life stories of girls dealing with girls, boys, sex, parents, school, sports, and societal expectations. The festival also



includes dance parties with live D.J.'s—disk jockettes, for the record—heavy discussion groups, and live poetry slams. (See "Children's Events.") S.A.

The Silver

SoNo arts celebration

Westport resident Lisa Seidenberg has embraced the challenge of inaugurating the SoNo Arts Celebration's first annual film festival.

Twenty-year film veteran and Westport resident Lisa Seidenberg has embraced the challenge of inaugurating the SoNo Arts Celebration's first annual film festival, which takes place Aug. 5.

Now in its 24th year, the SoNo Arts Celebration has become a paradigm of community support for the arts, but has primarily focused on live performance and artisan offerings until now. The festival's committee has long wanted to include a film component but hadn't found the right person to take on this considerable task until Seidenberg donated her expertise and motivation to the project.

Seidenberg dispatched a call for work amidst the local art community and engaged filmmakers from New York in addition to drawing from film schools around the country. She received submissions from as far away as Arizona and California and as close as Norwalk High School. "I got everything from nationally recognized award-winning filmmakers in New York to a Norwalk High School junior," laughed Seidenberg.

The Norwalk junior—now a senior-to-be—is one Zach Miners, who makes his film debut with a short spoof on *Psycho* which he shot, directed and stars in. "It's very enterprising," quipped Seidenberg. And amusing enough to be one of the 12 films she's chosen to present from a pool of 35 submissions.

Seidenberg was pleased to include work from filmmakers in Westport, Bridgeport, Greenwich and New



I Kissed a Girl: Wecki Wachee Girls by Kim Cummings and Craig Austin will be among the films screened on Aug. 5.

NT JULY 27 - AUGUST 3, 2000

FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Night
LIFE
WHERE TO
EAT
st listings

Screen

By
Stefanie
Ramp

Films to be Screened

- *Billy's Balloon* by Don Hertzfeldt of Goleta, Calif. A humorous animated short about a mischievous balloon.
- *Mad Tea Party* by Bill Kabel of Bridgeport, Conn. An experimental piece about madness and tea parties.
- *The Lone Runner* by Duane Wood of Tallahassee, Fla. Tongue-in-cheek documentary about a super-hero jogger.
- *Wreck! Wreck! Girls!* by Kim Cummings (director) and Craig Austin (producer) of Brooklyn, N.Y. Fifteen-year-old Katie's best friend kisses a girl...
- *Beach Dreams* by Liz Millwe of Westport, Conn. An experimental dance piece filmed at Westport's Mill Pond.
- *Dogfishing* by Joe Byrnes of New York, N.Y. Humorous animated short.
- *Spending Time* by Caroline Martens, Aimee Barth and Emily McMahon of Tallahassee, Fla. Facetious documentary about husbands, wives and shopping.
- *The Shower* by Zach Miners of Norwalk, Conn. An irreverent makeover for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.
- *Asian Pride Porn* by Greg Pak of New York, N.Y. We're not sure, but it involves Chinese food.
- *The Anchor Man* by Genna Terranova and Christopher Summa of Greenwich, Conn. Action drama about a modern John Henry, African-American hero.
- *Insight* by Matt Mariska of Valley Village, Calif. An insightful take on male and female relations.
- *Lunch* by Sarah Shute of Santa Monica, Calif. A short and sweet piece about lunchtime trauma.

Haven for a solid showing of local talent. "The SoNo Arts festival is really trying to do a very grassroots, independent kind of thing, which you don't see much anymore," praised Seidenberg. "It's a community festival, so that's the kind of work I wanted."

The films included in the screening are three to 25 minutes in length and run the gamut from animation to mini-documentaries. Most are characterized by humor or a dramatic edginess to keep the screening's pace palatable for a wide audience and to reflect the exuberant energy of the SoNo Arts Celebration.

"The films are a lot of fun," said Seidenberg. "I tried to program it for things that were entertaining, so I think there are a lot of interesting things to watch that people wouldn't ordinarily get a chance to see. Most of it is on the light side because I thought on a Saturday night people would want to have a good time, and I hope they do."

Seidenberg was amused—and suspects her audience will be as well—to see area hot spots on screen. The film *Beach Dreams* was shot on Old Mill Pond in Westport while *The Anchor Man* is set against Stamford and Greenwich backdrops. One newly inducted Californian, Matt Mariska, sent Seidenberg a work titled *Insight* which he shot in Stamford while still a local.

In addition to area talent, well-known and admired Asian-American filmmaker Greg Pak has contributed one of his works, and the screening will also include a piece by professional animator Joe Byrnes of New York's Manhattan's fame. "Obviously, there are differences in technical quality amongst the submissions, but as long as it had talent, we tried to include it," explained Seidenberg.

She selected an outdoor setting for the film festival, which will run from 9 p.m. to midnight on Saturday, Aug. 5, behind the Norwalk Museum, located at 41 North Main St. Inspired by the summer screenings in New York City's parks, Seidenberg wanted to give people a multi-sensual experience. "I think a lot of people, especially younger people, have never seen a film outside," she said. "You have a lot of elements, and it just becomes a different kind of experience, which I think makes it more fun and exciting." The Brewhouse, conveniently located right across the lot from where the films will be screened, will be close at hand for refreshment.

Seidenberg's only disappointment is that she couldn't include more work. "It was the first time we had done it, and I didn't know what kind or how many submissions I would get, so we only planned for one night." The film community's enthusiastic response, however, suggests that next year's SoNo Arts Celebration will include a two-day film festival and possibly a juried event.

An indoor as well as outdoor screening venue is also on Seidenberg's wish-list for next year. "There were a few longer documentaries and dramatic works that just wouldn't work on a Saturday night outside which I felt bad about and would like to include in the future," she explained.

A handful of filmmakers are planning to attend the screening and field questions about their craft. The film festival is free and open to all. In the case of rain, Seidenberg mused that she might be reduced to drastic measures because, unfortunately, the screening will have to be canceled. ■

Official Publication of United Arts of Central Florida

FILM FESTIVAL ISSUE

JUNE-JULY 2000

arts!

M A G A Z I N E

Central Florida's Journal of Culture

Florida Film Festival

**Something old,
something new**

ALSO

Heritage Park, our new front porch
True West: Images of the f/64 artists

Alfred
Hitchcock
1972
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FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL 2000
Short Subjects



Changing Directions



Weeki Wachee Girls

Weeki Wachee Girls

Best friends Katie and Maura have dreamed of being part of the live mermaid show at Weeki Wachee Springs for years. It's the summer of '79, they're 15 and everything is changing, especially when Katie discovers a secret that threatens to destroy their friendship. Writer/Director Kim Cummings originally planned a Florida production, but moved the film to New York after casting problems and other obstacles.

Changing Directions

In September 1967, as Sweden prepares to change directions from driving on the left to driving on the right hand side of the road, Rev. Erik Larsson, respected pillar of the community, takes it upon himself to help the townsfolk through the transition. But when Sarah, a British engineer's wife, arrives in the village, he surprises himself by letting go of the past and facing the future. The film stars Krister Henriksson, a top Swedish actor, and Sarah Douglas, who was in *Superman I and II* and *Conan The Destroyer*.

One Night

Shot in black and white, this 12-minute film is a psychological drama about two women trapped in an apartment together in the dead of night. One is Lorna, an elderly woman, the other is Dionne, a young girl who may be barely escaping rape or may be a knife-wielding criminal. Written and directed by Veena Sud.



One Night