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Inspirational Ride: Mountainfilm 2020 Wrap-Up

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson June 2, 2020

My first Mountainfilm Film Festival also was the first virtual Mountainfilm! Exceptional documentary filmmaking about issues that matter. I count my lucky stars in crossing paths with Nora Bernard.



Nora Bernard, the 46th Telluride Film Festivalâ??s Production Office Manager, wrapping up a travel

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I recall our first meeting at the 2019 Telluride Film Festival Production Office. We exchanged the usual introductory pleasantries and Nora asked if Iâ??d been to Mountainfilm. I had not and asked her what it was. Anyone who knows Nora when sheâ??s working, pleasantries are one thing â?? small talk is another. Time passed and we stayed friends on Facebook and I noticed her post in early May of this year regarding Monutainfilm and the new Bivvy Pass. Up to then, I was feeling blue as festival after festival was being canceled. A hundred-plus on-demand films with mesmerizing introductory clips, additional symposiums, events, and special presentations for $75 over a ten-day period sounded pretty awesome and my friend Nora was part of the Programming Team!

I bought it and spent the next ten days watching the best outdoor, political, social, cultural, and environmental films that matter including *Watson, Current Sea, By Hand, Personhood, Apart, Big Fur*, the Adrenaline Shorts Program w/ *Fire On The Mountain* and the award-winning short *Origins*, *Mossville: When Great Trees Fall*, *Second Sight*, *Snow Wolf, Five Years North,* and *The Path of the Anaconda.*



Baato, a sharply written, sharply executed documentary by Lucas Millard and Kate Stryker on life an mountainous regions of Nepal. (Photo courtesy of Mountainfilm)

My first selection fell under the Limited Screening category â?? truthfully, I monitored this section closely. *Baato,* a sharply written, sharply executed documentary by Lucas Millard and Kate Stryker, chronicles a family that collects medicinal herbs in the mountainous region of Nepal. Each year the family treks 300 km to a low-lying urban market to sell the herbs to keep the home afloat. Along the way, the family faces shakedowns, a new roadway being cut into the terrain, and a ramshackle bus ride. *Baato* proved to be a cultural feast with some enlightening perspectives. Highly recommended viewing.



Public Trust, executively produced by Robert Redford*,* exposes a movement within the Trump Admir their profits without remediation. (Photo courtesy of Mountainfilm)

My next selection, *Public Trust* also a Limited Screening selection, was a Robert Redford executively produced exploration of the United States public lands, utilizing recent news footage, present-day interviews with tribal leaders, historians, government whistleblowers, journalists, of the United States public lands. The public landâ??s sacredness to indigenous tribes, ranchers and outdoor enthusiasts is revealed as is the Trump Administrationâ??s overt push to privatize the lands for their profits. *Public Trust* received the 2020 Audience Choice Award. A must-see!



Lost on Everest, a National Geographic film made its World Premiere at the 2020 Virtual Mountainfil of Mountainfilm)

Lost On Everest, a National Geographic film about an expeditionary team tracking one of the early British attempts to stand on top of the world was making its World Premiere at the 2020 Virtual Mountainfilm Festival. I was ready for a mind-boggling extreme mountaineering experience. And, by golly, thatâ??s exactly what I got. â??Rising up to a peak of 29,035 vertical feet, Mount Everest has long captivated the imagination of climbers from all parts of the world.

Lost on Everest documents an elite group of research climbers who undertake a mission to locate and retrieve a camera from Andrew â??Sandyâ?• Irvine, a twenty-two-year-old climbing partner of the

legendary British mountaineer, George Mallory. The two disappeared in 1924 just 800 vertical feet from the top of Mount Everest. Malloryâ??s body was found in 1999, approximately seventy-five feet from his last known location. Irvineâ??s body and the camera he was carrying have not been found to this day and have long been speculated about.â?• (excerpt from *Lost On Everest*)



Director Tom Shephardâ??s *Unsettled* follows asylum seekers transitioning into life in the United Sta
of Mountainfilm)

Just as I began setting in, I selected (yes, another Limited Screening film) *Unsettled* from Director Tom Shephard. *Unsettled* was screened with Eva Rendleâ??s short film, *All That Remains â??* a sobering look at the undocumented workers in the Santa Rosa, Calif. area following the massive 2017 wildfire that devastated one of the worldâ??s foremost wine-producing regions. *All That Remains* set the tone for what came next â?? a case managerâ??s reality as *Unsettled* tracked the transition of asylum seekers, Junior, Subhi, Cheyenne and Mari as they navigate new freedom realizing the streets of America are not paved with gold and learning to deal with their lives on lifeâ??s terms.



A Home Called Nebraska, from filmmakers Beth and George Gage, highlights an anomaly inside the
courtesy of Mountainfilm)

A Home Called Nebraska (Limited Screening) came next. Nebraska, a conservative state, provided many new homes for innocent victims of terrorism, civil war, rape, attempted murder, and persecution through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. Unfortunately, the Trump administrationâ??s policies have fueled a growing hatred of Muslims and refugees. 2019 saw the lowest number of refugees entering the US since the inception of the program in 1980. Notwithstanding, *A Home Called Nebraska* highlights a community welcoming newcomers, building bridges, and dispelling fear while combating the hatred of racist nationalism.



Charles Lindsay, left, and Nicholas Paul Brysiewicz co-hosted the Magical Realism Meets Future Fic Virtual Mountainfilm Film Fest. (Photo courtesy of Mountainfilm)

Presentation. Magical Realism Meets Future Fiction. This had me at hello. I was excited before the presentation even began. Charles Lindsay and Nicholas Paul Brysiewicz co-hosted this presentation. Charlie was zooming in from Kyoto, Japan, sharing his cultural perspectives on the intersection of consciousness and enlightenment. Brysiewicz shared his insights on decoupling time/person experience. Both seemed to agree on the premise of alternative time-spaces as sacred. Now thatâ??s what Iâ??m talking about.



US Kids, directed by Kim S Snyder, received the Best Documentary Feature Award at 2020 Mountai power of film, art, and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world. (Photo courtesy of Mounta

One of the most exceptional films, *US Kids,* a direct cinema-style, full-length feature followed the classmates from Marjory Stoneman Douglas School in Parkland, Fla., as they launched a nation-wide, gun control crusade for a safe learning environment and to effect the 2018 elections. Stops in cities strife with gun violence and a National Rifle Association presence like St. Louis, El Paso, Dallas, Houston, Sioux City, Milwaukee, San Antonio, Las Vegas, and Orange County are made. Along the way, a bond and mutual respect developed among the peers.

They also experienced the rigors of campaigning for a just cause as they questioned the National Rifle Associationâ??s lobbying efforts and the politicians who fill their coffers with dubious contributions. The NRA fights back sending nefarious characters in cowboy attire with red mirror-reflective sunglasses to agitate barking at the young men and women telling them they are pawns. The responses from the Stoneman-Douglas survivors were deep and heartfelt leaving the agitators dumbfounded and scratching their heads.

US Kids won the Jury Prize for Best Feature at the 2020 Mountainfilm Film Festival. Letâ??s not forget! On February 14, 2018, a nineteen-year-old former student opened fire inside the school with a semi-automatic rifle killing seventeen students and wounding seventeen others without any apparent motive. *US Kids* is not only a highly recommended film, but it is also a critical and seminal socio-political artifact.

Stay tuned for more as Mountainfilm is scheduled to return next year in Telluride, Colo., with run dates of May 28th â?? May 31st. Hope to see you there!



Category

1. Documentary
2. Mountainfilm
3. Telluride

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