

THE BATTALION

TEXAS FILM FESTIVAL

Eighth annual film festival begins today

Troma's Kaufman featured at festival

By MATT MCCORMICK

The Battalion

The eighth annual Texas Film Festival is set to kick off a week of independent films with a bang. Running today through Sunday, the festival opens with a night of animated shorts by acclaimed director Don Hertzfeldt, including his film *Rejected*, which is nominated for an Academy Award. Showing a wide array of independent films, of feature length and short films, live-action and animated, the Texas Film Festival is the largest student-run film festival in the nation.

The festival received roughly 350 entries for this year's competition, 400 less than the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, which is the biggest film festival in the United States.

The festival, which began in 1993, has brought high-profile filmmakers to the campus in the past. Directors like Spike Lee, Oliver Stone and Robert Rodriguez are only a few of the impressive filmmakers who will attend this year's festival.

It had been rumored that Sandra Bullock, who wanted to attend last year's festival but could not because of

scheduling difficulties, would attend this year's festival. Unfortunately, this will not be the case; she again has schedule conflicts.

Among this year's most notable guests, however, is cult favorite Lloyd Kaufman, the man responsible for such classics as *Toxic Avenger* and *Tromeo and Juliet*. Kaufman's films will be served up all week in a retrospective to honor his work.

There will be a special effects workshop featuring Kaufman and many of his co-workers as they demonstrate how effects can be achieved inexpensively.

This is only one of the five workshops to be held this year. Of particular interest is the panel discussion "Hitchcock and Modern Filmmaking" and the popular "Production War Stories," which features great stories from many of the filmmakers in attendance.

A&M is not the type of campus that one would normally associate with an event of this magnitude. Festival co-director Logan Youree said MSC Film Society hosts the festival to bring an alternative to big-budget studio films to College Station.

"It offers them [students] the chance to observe independent films," Youree said. "It brings stuff to them that they could not see without attending a much larger festival."

The Texas Film Festival gives attendees the opportunity to interact with filmmakers on a more personal level, that larger film festivals cannot offer.

Youree said the festival is great for film buffs and general audiences alike.

"I think [the festival] is important, and we at Film Society have a love for it and we want to share that with everyone else," Youree said.

Passes for the festival are available at the MSC Box Office, and cost \$20 for the week or \$2 per individual film. The weeklong passes also allow passholders to attend a luncheon with the filmmakers on Saturday. For more information about the festival or a detailed schedule of films and workshops, call 847-8478 or log onto the festival's homepage at <http://films.tamu.edu/festival>.

By MIKEL PARENT

The Battalion

Toxic mutation, sub-humanoids, exploding heads and scantily clad actors: just another day in Troma-ville. Texas A&M beware! The president and co-founder of Troma pictures will be invading this year's Texas Film Festival, and he is bringing Troma-ville with him.

Troma is one of the few production companies that remains truly independent and has not succumbed to pressure from larger studios and corporate conglomerates. The rest of the independent studios have been absorbed by the major studio affiliates such as Miramax, New Line and Fox Searchlight. But Troma, headed by Lloyd Kaufman, has managed to keep its independent edge since 1975.

Troma's staying power as a production company comes from the staunchly independent co-founder Kaufman. Kaufman started Troma with his friend and partner Michael Herz when they attended Yale in 1974. During the '70s the team created films like *Squeeze Play* (1979), but it wasn't until *The Toxic Avenger* was released in 1984 that Troma received wide recognition and developed a cult following.

The Toxic Avenger is among Troma's best-known films. It tells the story of a mistreated nerd who mutates into a toxic superhero after encountering vile toxic waste. The film set the tone for many of the Troma pictures that followed. The elements are all there: blood, guts, sex and mutants. The 2001 Texas Film Festival will feature several Troma films, including the original *Toxic Avenger*, which will show at midnight Wednesday. On Thursday, Shakespeare aficionados and horror fans alike will be able to enjoy an 11 p.m. showing of *Tromeo and Juliet*. On Friday, a blood-lust double feature will show *Terror Firmer* and *Cannibal! The Musical*, showing at 10 p.m. and midnight.

Despite their extreme nature, Troma films typically regard themselves in a self-critical and ironic fashion. The self-conscious comedy that Troma's films revel in stems from their ability to not take themselves too seriously. There are plenty of laughs despite the shock resulting from the occasional on-screen decapitation.

While there is an evident comedic element, Troma does

take on serious issues. Troma films commonly approach issues of political and cultural importance. For example, *The Toxic Avenger* explores long-term environmental pollution in an ironic and satirical tone. A newer Troma film that examines the clash between Japanese and American culture and the struggle for economic supremacy is *Sgt. Kabukiman, NYPD* (1976). This film has been one of the recent Troma films, along with the Shakespeare parody *Tromeo and Juliet*, to gain widespread recognition and critical acclaim.

In the spirit of Roger Corman, premier B-movie maker of the '70s, Kaufman's company features low-budget films with lots of creativity and innovation. For instance, it has been alleged that the appearance of the green Satan in one of the *Toxic Avenger* sequels was because of the refusal by Troma to buy red paint. Another aspect of Troma that recalls Corman's company is the attention it gives to young and daring filmmakers and actors. Corman's company featured the early work of talented artists such as Jack Nicholson, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese. Likewise, Troma featured Oliver Stone in *The Battle of Loves Return* (1971), Kevin Costner in *Sizzle Beach, U.S.A.*, and the work of "South Park" creator Trey Parker in *Cannibal! The Musical*.

Kaufman will attend the eighth annual Texas Film Festival. Some of the events that will feature Kaufman include autograph sessions at local bookstores and a special effects workshop at Rudder Fountain. The workshop is titled "Live! Toxic Variety Show: Make-up and Special Effects." The workshop will show filmgoers and filmmakers the key concepts to creating cheap and effective special effects. Kaufman will also speak at 9 p.m. on Friday in Rudder Theater. Following his presentation will be a showing of *Terror Firmer* and *Cannibal! The Musical*. On Saturday, he and many other filmmakers will participate in the "Production War Stories" panel. The panel will feature directors, producers, actors and writers telling their favorite hilarious, terrifying and outrageous stories about situations they encountered while making films. If Kaufman's production stories are half as zany as the films he produces, festival-goers are in for a real treat.



PHOTO FROM THE FILM MIRROR, COURTESY OF LEE LANIER



SCENE FROM THE FILM STAR LIGHT, COURTESY OF IN JAE JONG



SPRING 2001 BUSINESS CAREER FAIR

TUESDAY

- H-E-B Grocery Company
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- American National
- Bridgestone/Firestone
- AIM Funds
- The St. Paul Companies
- Ernst & Young
- Mutuals.com
- Bed Bath & Beyond
- EDS
- The Expo Group
- J.D. Edwards & Company
- Skilled Services Corp.
- e2i
- Enron Corp.
- Sewell Automotive Companies
- Automatic Data Processing (ADP)
- Wal-mart Stores Inc.
- Donovan and Watkins
- KPMG, LLP
- Mervyn's California
- Valero Energy
- Dell Computer Corp.
- Zale Corporation
- Syseo Corporation
- Luby's, Inc.
- Ryan & Company
- Maxim Healthcare Services
- Allegiance Healthcare
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Adjoined Technologies
- Sherwin-Williams
- Neiman Marcus
- IBM Corporation



- Hope Lumber & Supply Company
- Kurt Salmon Associates
- ABB, Inc.
- Guaranty Bank
- Ford Motor Company
- Smith & Associates
- Deloitte & Touche
- Walgreens
- Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
- Sam's Club
- Halliburton Company
- H&R Block Financial Advisors, Inc.
- Randalls/Tom Thumb Food Markets
- El Paso Energy
- National Instruments
- Office Depot
- United States Gypsum Co.
- Reliant Energy
- UCS
- JC Penny
- Equiva Services
- TEK Systems
- Foley's
- Sears, Roebuck and Company
- H.D. Vest Financial Services
- Cintas
- Ferguson Enterprises, Inc.

WEDNESDAY

- Grainger
- McLane Company, Inc.
- Grant Thornton LLP
- NASA Johnson Space Center
- Toys R Us
- Houston Chronicle
- JP Morgan Chase-Texas
- Kohl's Department Stores
- CMS Energy Panhandle Pipe Line Companies
- Harte-Hanks
- Harley-Davidson, Inc.
- Salomon Smith Barney
- Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)
- Arthur Andersen
- DHL Worldwide Express
- Southwest Bank of Texas
- VarTec Telecom
- Concert
- Payless ShoeSource
- Blockbuster, Inc.
- Hewitt Associates
- Compaq Computer Corporation
- Consolidated Graphics
- Conoco Inc.
- Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.
- Guaranty Bank
- Ford Motor Company
- Smith & Associates
- Deloitte & Touche

Walgreens

- Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
- Sam's Club
- Halliburton Company
- H&R Block Financial Advisors, Inc.
- Randalls/Tom Thumb Food Markets
- El Paso Energy
- National Instruments
- Office Depot
- United States Gypsum Co.
- Reliant Energy
- UCS
- JC Penny
- Equiva Services
- TEK Systems
- Foley's
- Sears, Roebuck and Company
- H.D. Vest Financial Services
- Cintas
- Ferguson Enterprises, Inc.
- Onsite Companies
- Unocal Corporation
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- TXU
- USAA
- Target Corporation
- Exxon Mobil Corporation
- KPMG Consulting
- American Express Financial Advisors, Inc.
- Frito-Lay, Irving Operations

THURSDAY

- Sai Software Consultant Inc.
- Royce Homes LP
- Crate and Barrel
- Pepsi Bottling Group
- SBC Communications Inc.
- United States Marine Corps
- Ford Motor Credit Company
- Wells Fargo Financial
- E & J Gallo Winery
- First Avantis Securities
- Accenture
- Aramark
- General Mills
- Harold's Stores, Inc.
- Gap Inc.
- WebTPA
- Hastings Entertainment, Inc.
- Duke Energy
- Baker Botts, LLP
- Dynegy Inc.
- Pannell Kerr Forster of Texas, P.C.
- Peace Corp
- Vista Analytics, LLC
- Fidelity Investments
- PSS/World Medical
- Federal Reserve Bank - Houston
- Merck & Co., Inc.
- Onsite Companies
- Unocal Corporation
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- TXU
- USAA
- Target Corporation
- Exxon Mobil Corporation
- KPMG Consulting
- American Express Financial Advisors, Inc.
- Frito-Lay, Irving Operations

FEBRUARY 20-22

www.wehner.tamu.edu/bsc