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Guerrilla filmmaking event comes to Boulder

By **Matt Sebastian**, Camera Staff Writer
October 15, 2004

Next weekend, sports-crazy Boulder welcomes a whole new athletic event to town: guerrilla filmmaking.

For 24 hours — beginning at 9 p.m. Oct. 22 — dozens of crews of aspiring auteurs will fan out from the Pearl Street Mall, each lugging a camera, an original script and a herd of actors. Each will race the clock to produce an unedited short film in just one day.

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"This is the extreme sport of filmmaking," says Michael Conti, executive producer of the Shoot Out 24 Hour Filmmaking Festival.

The instant film festival — the top 10 productions will be screened Oct. 24 at the Boulder Theater — marks the first American installment of the 5-year-old Shoot Out concept, which has been a hit in its native Australia and New Zealand. Organizers hope to turn the Boulder version into an annual competition, one that inspires would-be filmmakers to put their dreams on camera.

"I think that what we're trying to do is at least plant the seed in people's minds that they, too, can really get out there and create something," says co-producer Will Campbell, who, like Conti, is a local filmmaker himself.

Conti adds: "This will give people that sense of confidence, that newfound ability to do something they've been dreaming about."

For fledging filmmaker C.G. Zarbock — a technical writer by day — the Shoot Out is an opportunity to put two years worth of self-taught skills to work. She'll be leading a 15-person team that will act out and film her script "Dante's Dnouement."

"It's a huge challenge to actually pull off a coherent story in seven minutes, let alone the production challenge," says Zarbock, an Arvada resident. "You have to really think things through. We're either going to do great or blow it. But we're champing at the bit to do this."

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WHAT • The Shoot Out 24 Hour Filmmaking Festival

WHEN • Oct. 22-24

WHERE • Around Boulder

ENTRY FEE • \$50-\$125 for initial team submission, \$20-\$25 for each additional member



CALL • (303) 641-7228 or visit www.theshootoutboulder.com
ETC. • Ten finalists' films will be screened to the public at 7 p.m. Oct. 24 at the Boulder Theater, 2032 14th St. Tickets, \$12.75, are available through the theater's box office; call (303) 786-7030 or visit www.bouldertheater.com for information.

The contest's rules are simple: Entries can't exceed seven minutes, they must be shot in sequence and can't be edited, and they must be filmed within the designated 24-hour time span. Organizers won't be providing any cameras or other equipment, other than VHS dubbing decks; regardless of what type of camera is used, all entries must be dubbed onto blank VHS tapes before the contest ends.

"This isn't about being slick," Conti says. "The least slick movie isn't necessarily a bad piece. It's all about storytelling."

Also, to ensure that the films are made within the contest period, teams must also incorporate five of 11 pre-designated locations or props into their productions. The teams won't learn of these mandatory items until five minutes before shooting begins.

As of this week, about 30 teams had signed up for the festival, including groups from Texas and Massachusetts, according to Conti and Campbell; the organizers plan to cap entries at 90. Teams will be able to sign up as late as Oct. 22, the day the festival begins.

Conti says he expects filmmakers of varying levels of experience to enter the contest.

"To me it's a lot like the Bolder Boulder, where you'll have these extreme runners coming in as well as kids and families," Conti says.

Once the films are finished, a panel of judges will view each, and select 10 finalists. Those films will be screened to the public at the Boulder Theater, where a different set of judges will award prizes in a variety of production categories.

Contact Camera Staff Writer Matt Sebastian at (303) 473-1498 or sebastianm@dailycamera.com.



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