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SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

Boise Meets World

Idaho International Film Festival begins

BY [RACHAEL DAIGLE](#)

Five years ago, Boise's film scene was little more than a lump of clay with nothing but uncertain potential. Since then, film festivals have sprouted all over the state, including four in Boise—True West Cinema Festival, Sawtooth Mountain Film Festival at Boise State, i48 and the calendar year's final word on films, the Idaho International Film Festival. Boise's only international film festival is heading into its fifth year, and as some of this year's selections indicate, the festival—like Boise's growing film scene—hardly resembles its once amorphous beginnings.

"This is our strongest year yet," says festival publicist Celeste Aller. When *BW* first talked to Aller five months ago as she was gearing up for IIFF, she described year five for a film festival as pivotal because it tends to be a "make-or-break year." As the festival prepares to open next weekend, Aller says one of the reasons IIFF is so strong is that it's become exactly what festival organizers hoped it would be: the kind of festival with quality local and international film that creates dialogue, fosters a local film community and broadens viewers' horizons.

According to Aller, IIFF composes the festival's docket each year like most festivals of its size in the country, through invitations extended to filmmakers (which are being turned down less often these days, thanks to IIFF's growing reputation) and submissions from lesser-known filmmakers.

This year's screenings include a pastiche of made-in-Idaho feature and short films sharing screen time with films from some of the industry's heaviest hitters, like *The Walker* from director Paul Schrader (*American Gigolo*).

Aller credits festival and submission director Bruce Fletcher as one of the most obvious reasons that higher quality films, with bigger names attached, are screening this year. The last installment of Schrader's lonely-man trilogy starring Woody Harrelson, Lauren Bacall and Willem Dafoe has yet to be released in theaters. IIFF's screening is a rare sneak preview.

How does IIFF line up Schrader's newest film to open the weekend's festivities? It's all about whom you know, says Aller.

"The best festivals send people to other festivals," she says, explaining that it's Fletcher who travels to other festivals on IIFF's behalf. "We're building a strong enough festival—thanks to Bruce, he doesn't live here anymore, but we're so lucky to have him—that other festivals are willing to be a part of [IIFF]."

When it comes to local films, says Aller, aside from simply supporting the local scene, one of the most telltale signs of IIFF's success with local filmmakers is the return of shorts from previous years as feature length films.

"If we can show, side by side, the newest products from Idaho as well as quality pictures from around the world, that gives some validity to our film community, and I know it fosters young filmmakers from Idaho," says Aller, who emphasizes that it's IIFF's mixing of local and international films that sets it apart from other festivals in Boise. "We put films that will make it into the theater next to films that will never make it to 'the big screen.' And it's so important to bring other points of view from all around the world, bounce them around and let people come away with something different than they would get otherwise."

Idaho International Film Festival, Sept. 27-30. For more information on film schedules and synopses, lectures, tickets and locations, visit [IdahoFilmFestival.com](#).

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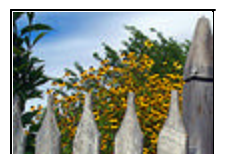
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