

THE BOSTON PHOENIX

The RIFF takes on the world

Roxbury Conglomerate

By PETER KEOUGH | July 28, 2010



Nothing brightens a neighborhood's outlook quite like the illumination from movie screens. The Roxbury International Film Festival — which runs from July 29 to August 1 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Wentworth Institute, Massachusetts College of Art, and other venues — has been shedding this kind of light for the past 11 years, showcasing films with local connections by and/or about people of color. This year, though, they've decided to expand beyond the immediate community and extend their gaze world-wide — hence the inclusion of the word "International" in the event's title.

This translates into at least 50 features, documentaries, and shorts from several countries. I'm particularly impressed with the docs, which include Mark Claywell's edgy-looking *American Jihadist* (August 1, 4 pm at Wentworth Institute), a portrait of a home-grown terrorist whose experiences growing up in a DC ghetto contributed to his conversion to radical Islam.

The festival has not abandoned the local scene by any means. Tze Chun's heartbreaking *Children of Invention* (July 31, 1 pm at the MFA) is shot in the Boston area and Boston independent film icon Robert Patton-Spruill directs *Do It Again* (July 31, 9 pm at Massachusetts College of Art), a doc about local journalist Geoff Edgers's quixotic quest to reunite the Kinks.

Nor does every film tackle the big issues. Make room for "Dinner and a Movie" on Friday night at 6:30 pm at the Haley House, when a hearty meal might be unwisely paired with a screening of Sasha Krane's *Machete Joe*, in which students decide to make a slasher film about the title urban myth, which of course turns out to be gruesomely real.

For more information, call 617.541.3900 or contact roxburyfilmfestival.org.