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Downtown is a state of mind, not a zip code.
Great cinema, 10 blocks from the Roebling bridge.**

Print Edition: Sunday November 29, 2009

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20091127/NEWS0103/911280352/>



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Group turns Carnegie into art house

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Tim Swallow and his non-profit Cincinnati World Cinema again will take Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentuckians on such a cinematic trip Sunday, with departures at 4 p.m. for Mozambique and 6:30 p.m. for Indonesia, part of the Global Cinema Series.

The first film, "Sleepwalking Land," explores civil war-torn Mozambique, where an orphaned refugee wanders the countryside searching for his mother with an elderly storyteller amid the chaos of war. The unrated film is in Portuguese with English subtitles, and will start at 4 p.m.

The second film is called "The Photograph," and is from Indonesia, where a beautiful prostitute hopes to start a new life with the help of an elderly portrait photographer. It also is an unrated film, spoken in Indonesian with English subtitles. It plays at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, and at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday. .

The double-feature cost is \$12 in advance through the Web site and \$15 at the door.

"We are the closest art house cinema to Fountain Square," Swallow said. "People don't think of it that way." There once were places like the Movies Repertory Cinema on Race Street that lured suburbanites to art films for many years before closing in the 1990s. But now, the Carnegie is closest.

It's a tough task to attract Ohioans in big numbers even a mere **10 blocks south of the Ohio River**, he says. And yet, Ohioans make up an estimated 85-90 percent of a typical audience, which is a better Kentucky showing than when Cincinnati World Cinema started in 2002.

"People come across the Roebling bridge, and all you have to do is go straight, you're on Scott Street, and boom, you're there," Swallow says. "There's plenty of parking and it's safe - it's just getting people to venture out from their little cocoons," he said.

Natalie Bowers, director of the Covington Arts District, calls the Cincinnati World Cinema programming in the Carnegie theater "amazing," calling it a real asset to Covington as an arts destination.

The organization shows documentaries, international films, short films, American independent works, plus local and regional screenings, even the occasional world premier by local artists.

"We show things that do not play at the multiplexes," said Swallow, a native Cincinnati living in Fort Thomas who retired from his systems-integration business in 2000 and co-founded the all-volunteer, non-profit cinema group as a labor of love.

"Our belief is that Downtown is a state of mind, not a zip code," Swallow said. "We think that Downtown Cincinnati should be aware of things in Northern Kentucky, and those who publicize things in Downtown Cincinnati should also publicize things in Northern Kentucky - and vice versa: Covington and Newport should do the same."

At the top of his Web site, www.cincyworldcinema.org, there's an image of the Roebling Suspension Bridge partially obscured by fog. The photo's caption wittily proclaims: "The fog is lifting, come to Covington for Cincinnati World Cinema," with driving directions that show how easily people can reach the Carnegie from Cincinnati.

Nobody in the organization is paid, so all money raised from ticket sales and other income goes toward renting films and the theater, and paying to advertise upcoming films.

The cinema group also shows lighter fare, such as comedies and animated short films, at the Redmoor in Mount Lookout Square, the former site of Mount Lookout Cinema Grille. At that theater, the kitchen and bar are open to the theater, so the films have to be ones where the movements of servers delivering food and drinks are not as much an interruption as they would be during a serious film.
