



VIC YEPELLO/THE STAR-LEDGER

Movie posters adorn the office of Albert G. Nigrin, a Rutgers prof who runs the New Jersey Film Festival.

# Outlet for cinema dreamers

## Fledgling filmmakers put their hopes in Super 8 competition

BY CLAUDIA PERRY  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

If it hadn't been for digital video, Ivan Velez wouldn't be a filmmaker.

Velez, 35, lives in Belleville. After working for Verizon for 11 years, he took a second mortgage on his house and completed a full-length feature, "Indiscretion," which has been entered in the U.S. Super 8 and DV Film Festival. The festival is part of the New Jersey Film Festival and takes place Feb. 17-19. The deadline for submissions is Friday at 5 p.m., and judging takes place during the next two weeks. The hundreds of entrants compete for a total of \$3,000 in prize money, and the best work tours other festivals around the world. It's not a ticket to an Oscar nomination ("We're more the mini-Sundance," organizer Albert Nigrin says), but it's the strongest stateside festival for this medium.

"If it wasn't for digital video, it would have made the whole process more difficult. I don't know what I would have done without it," says Velez.

The film, whose title covers more than one indiscreet event, was shot in 26 days in Hartford, Conn. Velez held a screening there for 300 guests and the film was well-received.

Velez made his first splash at the New Jersey Media Arts Center in 2001, when his short film "Bent" was selected for another festival. His cohorts include his wife, Rachel, and two other friends.

"I think the quality (difference) is like night and day," Velez says, comparing his 2001 work and his current film. As for "Indiscretion": "The vision of it, the story behind it and the message. I think it will move people."

Liss Platt, who taught at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers from 1997 to 2002, has entered a Super 8 film, "You Can't Get There from Here." Platt, 40, teaches digital video and new media at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

"The film is primarily Super 8, but there's some 16 millimeter film and a lot of Kodachrome. Kodachrome is hard to get but I was fortunate to have some."

Platt says she likes Super 8 because of its artistic finish.

"It has a beautiful quality that you can't achieve with digital video. The color saturation and how it looks was especially good for the content of the piece."

"You Can't Get There from Here" is about being 16 in the '80s.

"One of the things I wanted to evoke was the nostalgia of home movies. In the early '80s, people weren't shooting home video. It's a scrapbook about being a teenager then. It's an experimental film, very much bits and pieces of being 16."

Platt says this festival is one of the better showcases for a variety of filmmaking styles.

"If I submit to this festival, I think people will take a closer look to see if the work is a match for what they're trying to do. A lot of people who make short films make them look like Hollywood greeting cards. They're using their short films to audition to make commercial features."

"Super 8 is a very small niche. There are millions of festivals out there. You have to make a choice of where you will submit your work. This festival has a reputation of catering to people who make Super 8. The (\$40) entry fee also knocks out people who aren't seriously committed to their filmmaking."

If you want to enhance your knowledge about various aspects of filmmaking, the New Jersey Media Arts Center is offering several sessions throughout the New Jersey Film Festival. All require advance registration, and there are fees ranging from \$90 to \$325 for each seminar. All seminars take place at Loree Hall Room 024, Douglass College, Rutgers University.

## Festival starts with a 'Pulse'

The festival runs 7 p.m. Fridays-Sundays at Scott Hall, Rutgers University, College Avenue and Hamilton Street, New Brunswick; and 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at Loree Hall 024, Douglass College, Nichol Avenue and George Street, New Brunswick, through April 23. \$6; \$5 students and seniors. Call (732) 932-8482 or visit [www.njfilmfest.com](http://www.njfilmfest.com).

### JANUARY

**Jan. 20-22:** "Pulse," a modern horror film (2005) by Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

**Jan. 26:** "Performance," directed by Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell in 1970, starring Mick Jagger as a mobster and a washed-up rock star, with music by Jagger, Ry Cooder and Jack Nietsche, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall.

**Jan. 27-29:** "Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit," in this 2005 film directed by Nick Park and Steve Box, Wallace and his faithful pooch, Gromit, and their pest control outfit, Anti-Pesto, get caught up in the Giant Vegetable Competition, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

### FEBRUARY

**Feb. 2:** "Don't Look Now," Roeg's haunting 1973 drama set in Venice, with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall.

**Feb. 3-5:** "Everything Is Illuminated," director Liev Schreiber's 2005 film inspired by Jonathan Safran Foer's novel, starring Elijah Wood as a young man searching in eastern Europe for a woman who saved his Jewish grandfather from the Nazis, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

**Feb. 9:** "The Man Who Fell To Earth," Roeg's 1976 sci-fi drama with David Bowie as an alien seeking water for his drought-stricken planet, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall.

**Feb. 10-12:** "Pride and Prejudice," director Joe Wright's 2005 film inspired by Jane Austen's novel, with the movie starring Keira Knightley as independent minded Elizabeth Bennett, 7 p.m., Scott Hall; Irene Fizer, an English professor at Hofstra University, introduces the film Feb. 10.

**Feb. 17-19:** 2006 United States Super 8 Film & Digital Video Festival, a different selection of films and videos each night at 7 in Scott Hall. For the lineup, visit [www.njfilmfest.com](http://www.njfilmfest.com).

**Feb. 23:** Pare Lorentz Retrospective, including the director's 1930s documentaries, "The Plow That Broke The Plains" (1936), about Midwestern dust storms, and

"The River" (1937), about the continual cycles of flooding in towns along the Mississippi River, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall; festival director Albert G. Nigrin introduces the program.

**Feb. 24-26:** "ZIZEK!" is director Astra Taylor's 2005 documentary about globe-trotting Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek, 7 p.m., Scott Hall

### MARCH

**March 2:** "Don't Look Back," director D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 documentary of folk music composer and singer Bob Dylan's 1965 performance tour in England, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall; Nigrin introduces the film

**March 3-5:** "Good Night, and Good Luck," director George Clooney's 2005 drama about 1950s television journalist Edward R. Murrow's reporting of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's virulent crusade against Communists, with David Strathairn as Murrow, and Clooney as CBS-TV producer Fred Friendly, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

**March 23:** "The Pillow Book," English director Peter Greenaway's 1997 experimental film about a Japanese calligrapher, 7:30 p.m., Loree Hall.

**March 24-26:** "Brokeback Mountain," director Ang Lee's 2005 Western about the love between two cowboys, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

**March 31:** "The Take," a 2004 documentary by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein, about factory workers who try to take over their workplace in Argentina to save their jobs, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.

### APRIL

**April 1 and 2:** "The Take."

**April 7-9:** "Sir! No Sir!" is director David Zeigler's 2005 documentary about American soldiers' and civilians' 1960s opposition to the Vietnam War, including contemporary interviews with military veterans, 7 p.m., Scott Hall; Michael Rockland, an American Studies professor at Rutgers, introduces the film April 7.

**April 13-16:** "Libby, Montana" is a 2004 documentary by directors Doug Hawes-Davis and Drury Gunn Carr about workers suffering and dying from asbestos exposure in a Rocky Mountain town, 7:30 p.m. April 13 at Loree Hall, 7 p.m. April 14-15 at Scott Hall.

**April 21-23:** "The Three Rooms of Melancholia," director Pirjo Honkasalo's 2004 documentary about how the Chechen war is disrupting the lives of children in Chechnya and Russia, 7 p.m., Scott Hall.