FILMSLAM 2019
43RD CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
STUDY GUIDE

FILMSLAM IS PRESENTED BY

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MIDDLE-SCHOOL LIGHT SHORTS PROGRAM

IAN
Argentina, 2017, 9 minutes
Abel Goldfarb

FUNKY BUTT
USA, 2018, 15 minutes
Jonnie Stapleton

GAME CHANGER
USA, 2018, 3 minutes
Aviv Mano

CURRICULUM LINKS
Social Studies, Global Studies, English Language Arts, Art, Media Studies

CURRICULUM GOALS
- Improve media literacy
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Engage in interdisciplinary learning
- Hone oral and written communication skills
- Foster global awareness and social justice

FILMSLAM VIEWING GUIDE
The Art of Filmmaking

Filmmakers of both narrative and documentary films (of either short or feature length) make numerous artistic decisions throughout the filmmaking process, beginning with the conception of the film, through filming, and finally during distribution and marketing. Understanding film terms and the production process helps viewers to identify and interpret these artistic choices.

Crew: The people who are involved with the production of a film and who do not appear in the film. The following are a few of the numerous people that make up a film crew:
- **Producer:** The person who oversees the entire filmmaking process. The producer finds the script, hires a director, finds financing to make and distribute the film, and markets the film.
- **Director:** The person who supervises the creative aspects of a film and instructs the actors and crew.
- **Screenwriter:** The person who creates the story, action, and dialogue.
- **Cinematographer:** The person who is responsible for the camerawork and lighting.
- **Editor:** The person who selects what he/she considers are the best shots and pieces them together to produce scenes, then larger sequences, and ultimately the film.

Development/Pre-Production: The process of preparing the film concept, assembling the crew, and determining a budget and shooting schedule. The following are terms often associated with this phase of the filmmaking process:
- **Synopsis:** A short description of the film.
- **Screenplay:** A detailed written account of the dialogue and action of a film, often including basic camera directions.
- **Literary Elements:** Films share numerous elements with literature, including plot, characters, setting, point of view, mood, and theme.
- **Genre:** A type or classification of films with identifiable similarities. Comedies, westerns, musicals, horror films, and science fiction films are popular genres.
- **Storyboard:** A series of drawings showing the scenes, shot by shot, and transitions for a film. The storyboard gives a director a clear idea of how the film will look.

Photography: The process of capturing visual images with a camera. The director and cinematographer make artistic choices about the following aspects:
- **Frame:** A single photograph of the larger film strip.
- **Shot:** A unit of film or series of frames over which the camera does not stop filming.
- **Take:** The length (in terms of time) of a single shot.
- **Focus:** The variable degree (from **hard** to **soft**) to which the image is clear and sharp.
- **Camera Angle:** The placement of the camera relative to the subject. When a camera is placed above (looking down upon) the subject, the camera is at a **high angle**. When the camera is placed below (looking upwards at) the subject, the camera is at a **low angle**.
- **Range:** The apparent distance between the camera and the subject, differentiated as **close-up shots** (framing the head from the neck up), **medium shots** (framing the body from the waist up), and **long shots** (framing the entire body).
- **Composition:** The organization of subjects or objects within the frame of the film.
- **Lighting:** The use of natural or artificial illumination and shadows for the purpose of visual clarity and/or mood.
- **Camera Movement:** There are number of common types of camera movements, including **panning** (in which the camera pivots from right to left, or vice versa), **tilting** (in which the

camera pivots upwards or downwards), and **tracking** (in which the entire camera moves forwards, backwards, or sideways).

Sound Design: The process, completed during or after filming, of capturing, creating, and interweaving dialogue, sound effects, and music. The following are terms associated with this process:
- **Soundtrack:** The recorded sound of a film, including dialogue, sound effects, and music.
- **Voiceover:** A voice of a narrator, generally not seen but heard on the soundtrack of a film.

Post-Production/Editing: The process, typically after filming has concluded, of combining shots, scenes, and sequences with the soundtrack. The following are terms associated with this phase:
- **Cut:** The distinct, abrupt transition from one frame to another.
- **Fade Out/Fade In:** A technique in which a shot gradually darkens until a new one emerges from the darkness.
- **Dissolve:** A technique in which one image gradually transitions into another image in such a way that the viewer can temporarily see both images at the same time.
- **Flashback:** A sequence of a film that shows events that happened prior to those already shown.
- **Title Sequence:** Written material at the beginning of a film, usually including the names of the people involved in the production of the film (the director, producer, screenwriter, cinematographer, featured actors, etc.) and sometimes called the opening credits or titles.
- **Intertitles:** Text displayed on the screen in between photographed shots or superimposed over a photographed image.

Distribution/Marketing: The process of selling and supplying films to exhibitors, including mainstream theaters, art house theaters, film festivals, television networks, and websites.

A Short History of Filmmaking: Short Films

The earliest films, usually consisting of a single shot, were undoubtedly short, rarely lasting more than a minute. While films gradually increased in length at the turn of the twentieth century, only "prestige" films—including biblical epics and films showcasing boxing matches—exceeded an hour. In the 1910s, the feature-length film grew in popularity, but short films of multiple genres (comedy, melodrama, educational, animation, etc.) remained part of mainstream exhibition programs for several decades. Screened before feature films, short films offered major Hollywood producers an arena to evaluate new talent, try out new technologies, and attract diverse audiences. During the 1950s, the screening of short films in mainstream theaters rapidly declined, but the concurrent rise of international film festivals and the popularization of television provided new exhibition venues. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®—who annually recognize the Best Documentary Short, Best Live Action Short, and Best Animated Short—a short film does not exceed 40 minutes. Today, the Internet has facilitated the resurgence of short films, and young and established filmmakers continue to refine their craft through abbreviated fare.

Sources and Suggestions for Further Reading: Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010); David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010); Donald Crafton, *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Harper Cossar, "Bobby Jones, Warner Bros., and the Short Instructional Film," in *Convergence Media History*, edited by Janet Staiger and Sabine Hake (New York: Routledge, 2009); Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen, 1950-1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY

Assess the students' experiences viewing short films. Which short films, if any, have the students seen? Discuss, for example, SNL Digital Shorts, Comedy Central Short Form, or other shorts they may have watched on YouTube, Vimeo, or Facebook. Watch one short film as a class. Identify the various artistic choices the filmmaker made. Encourage students to consider how these choices affect their interpretation of the film and its message.

MAKING THE MOST OF POST-SCREENING Q&As

FilmSlam offers a unique opportunity for teachers and students to interact with filmmakers and/or local experts on the subject of the films screened. While teachers and students should feel comfortable asking any question inspired by their viewing of the films, the following questions (and many others) may help viewers understand the production process, how the subject of the film is important to their local community, and/or how they can get involved in local organizations.

What inspired the filmmaker to make a film on this subject?

What does the filmmaker hope audiences will take away from the film? (After the Q&A, consider if the filmmaker's answer aligns with or differs from your reaction to the film.)

How did the filmmaker get funding for the film?

How did the filmmaker assemble the production team? How big was the production team?

How long did the film take to produce?

Where else has or will this film be screened?

How or why is the subject of this film important to the students' local community?

How can students get involved?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES/PROMPTS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION*

Ian (Abel Goldfarb, 2017)

While the animated character of Ian doesn't say any words in the film, his actions express a lot of emotion. Write an internal monologue from Ian's perspective. What motivates his actions? How does he respond to the actions of the other characters? How has he changed by the end of the film?

What in particular prevents Ian from becoming friends with the other children? How do the children react when Ian becomes frozen by his disabilities?

What happens to Ian when he becomes aware of his disabilities?

Why do you think Ian's mother continues to take him by the playground? How does she react to his feelings of defeat?

Discuss the symbolism of the fence. How does Ian ultimately make the fence disappear?

Consider the style of animation used in the film. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to depict the children as a combination of many different small pieces?

Discuss the use of live action footage of Ian during the credits at the end of the film. How do these scenes inform your interpretation of the rest of the film?

Funky Butt (Jonnie Stapleton, 2018)

Interview a grandparent or older relative or family friend. Find out what has given him/her joy in his/her life. Think of ways you can help him/her recreate that feeling. Then, write a short story or poem in honor of the relative or friend. Share your work with the class.

Initially, why doesn't Jasmine want to go stay with her grandpa Joe?

How do Jasmine's mom and the nurse Dolores treat Joe?

What is the "funky butt"? Why does Joe care so much about it?

How does Jasmine get swept up by the "funky butt"? Who else can't resist the "funky butt"?

Why won't Jasmine's mom let Joe play in the club? According to Jasmine, what is her mom's problem?

When Joe moves to the nursing home, how do Jasmine and her mom bring joy back to his life? How does his joy affect those around him, including his daughter?

How does the **soundtrack** guide the pacing of the film?

Game Changer (Aviv Mano, 2018)

Write a short story from the perspective of one of your favorite childhood toys. How did the toy initially react to being purchased? How was the toy welcomed into your life? What ultimately happened to the toy?

What assumptions does the toy make about the child based on attire?

What are the various tactics the toy uses to defeat the child? How do these tactics underscore the toy's "strength" and "manliness"?

What makes the toy change its mind about the child?

What message does the film convey about the way toys are sold to girls and boys separately?

*Definitions for terms in **bold** can be found in the FilmSlam Viewing Guide.

Prepared by Elena Bonomo, Ph.D., FilmSlam 2019

INTERNATIONAL SHORTS "LIGHT"

82 minutes

Arachnoid
Directed by John Maslowski
USA, 1 min.
A giant spider lurks in the forest.

Out of the Garden
Directed by Jack Brancatelli, Nick Bunge, Zach Holly, Austin Jaks, Owen O'Donnell, Dylan Zsigray
USA, 7 min.
From January to May of 2017, 23 International Baccalaureate Film students at St. Edward engaged in a rigorous process to document the refugee crisis as it pertained to Greater Cleveland.

1 - 0
Directed by Nada ElAzhary
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, 10 min.
When a flirty text to her crush accidentally gets sent to her dad's phone instead, a shy teenager must do whatever it takes to delete the message before her dad finishes watching the match and checks his phone.
In Arabic with English subtitles.

First Day
Directed by Lindsay O'Keefe
USA, 5 min.
After Emily and Charlie's first day of school, their family will never be the same.

When Jedi Practice
Directed by James P. Koorey Jr.
USA, 2 min.
A stop motion where a Jedi is battling.

Ian
Directed by Abel Goldfarb
ARGENTINA, 9 min.
Ian was born with cerebral paralysis. Like everyone else, he wants to have friends. Like no one, he needs to work hard to get it.

Slurp
Directed by Florent Hill
FRANCE, 4 min.
Grandson tries to fix an annoying eating habit his grandmother has.
In French with English subtitles.

Funky Butt
Directed by Jonnie Stapleton
USA, 15 min.
A shy young girl spends time with her eccentric grandpa while her mother is away for work. Together, they embark on an adventure with a magical cornet that makes people dance.

Game Changer
Directed by Aviv Mano

USA, 3 min.
A macho toy arcade prize is quick to judge a young girl who wants to win him, and goes on a life changing journey in attempt to stop her from winning enough tickets and taking him home.

Blanket Blessings
Directed by Mike Berry
USA, 10 min.
A young girl helps the homeless by supplying them with blankets.

Lost and Found
Directed by Andrew Goldsmith, Bradley Slabe
AUSTRALIA, 8 min.
A bumbling knitted dinosaur must completely unravel itself to save the love of its life.

The Bicycle Thief
Directed by Kerry Skinner, Stewart Alexander
UNITED KINGDOM, 8 min.
You don't want to come between this girl and her bike.