

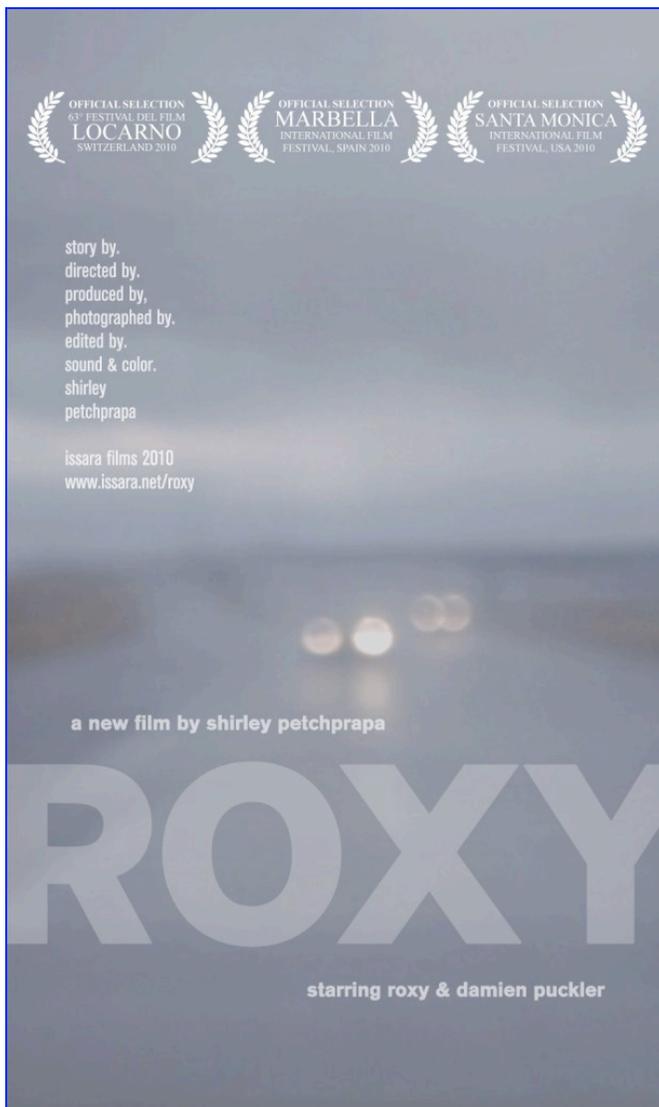
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REEL TIME: Short film ROXY (and Shirley Petchprapa) will WOW you!

by Jim on August 14, 2010



Hopefully, ROXY will be seen by everyone...a truly amazing achievement

In the business of big Hollywood movies, special effects and anything having to do with vampires seems to guarantee big grosses but what about the films that are just a great story plain and simple? And what do you do when you find a short film that was made on a miniscule budget, has no dialogue but impacts you more on a mental and emotional level than anything else you've seen in a long time at the Cineplex? That's how I felt when I watched **Shirley Petchprapa's** short film *Roxy*, which is currently making the rounds at some of the biggest film festivals around the world. Having just appeared at the **Locarno** in Switzerland and the **Santa Monica Film Festival** and will also appear at the **Mill Valley Film Festival** as well as **Marbella International Film Festival** in Spain in October.

The film, a no-dialogue story of a man (played by Damien Puckler) and his dog is one of the most compelling pieces of film I have ever seen so I was more than happy to sit down with the multi-talented Petchprapa (and I'm serious about calling her multi-talented—the woman did it all on this film) just before she left for Locarno and asked about putting the film together, working sans dialogue

and if she has feature-length aspirations.

Jim Halterman: Where did the idea for *Roxy* come from?

Shirley : It's a little convoluted because it started with me wanting to make a film with my resources, which is basically my camera. I know how to edit and I can do anything...



Producer/Writer/Editor/Director (among other things) Shirley Petchprapa

JH: You *did* do everything in this film!

SP: [*modestly smiles*] I did do everything. There was no other soul but me, the actor and the dog and that's it. The idea came from that in a way. I like doing films about people in their personal space so what better to do than with an animal. People have amazing relationships with animals. We started there – I had a camera, my friend and his dog and no idea. I've always dealt with suicide and I'm not sure why. I don't want to be presumptuous but I feel almost everybody in life – whether or serious or not – it is a recurring theme for the most depressed and even the most happy. This was an idea I was having about a man and his dog and then the entire time we're watching him we don't know what he's doing. We're just following his steps and how mundane that can look; these mundane steps leading up to something really tremendous and final.

JH: You made the choice to have no dialogue in the film. Why?

SP: I guess it's two-fold. As a filmmaker, I feel that there are so many films that rely on dialogue and interaction and there could have been words between the man and the dog but I just felt we didn't need it. There's so much that can be revealed through motion and action and edits and imagery. I did want to force the audience to be engaged without being told what was happening.

JH: There are also themes of relationships in the film even if it is with an animal. Can you talk about putting the story together?

SP: Before I started shooting, I had the story in my head absolutely. I think the dog was integral even more than another human being. When one commits suicide there's always fall out and people who are left behind [and] often left without answers and abandoned and wondering. This dog represented everyone in his life and there's no talking and even less understanding between dog and human being. Whenever I deal with the subject of suicide I like to think not only about the person doing it but also the people left behind. It can be seen as selfish but there's so much there.

JH: How long was the shoot of the film and where did you shoot?

SP: We shot two full days but spread it out over two weekends because there was a need to reshoot some things but that would be just five minutes here and there. We drove up to Palm Desert, jumped out of the car and it was like 'Ok, that looks cool. Let's shoot there.' The motel was where we shot most of it.

JH: How much footage did you shoot for the roughly 10-minute film?

SP: Not even an hour. It's hard to tell because when you shoot digitally you put it on cards and just dump it.

JH: So you did all your editing on a computer?

SP: Final Cut Pro on a laptop!

JH: Amazing! What's the next step for *Roxy*?

SP: I leave for Switzerland tomorrow for Locorno. I'm in Santa Monica's film festival (held last weekend) then Spain in October.

JH: Sundance has gotten so huge. Is that still a goal for independent filmmakers?

SP: Absolutely. I've submitted there but they won't get back to me until December. Festivals cost money and it really racks up. From my last film, I have some European viewership so I pick and choose the festival.

JH: Without any dialogue, *Roxy* comes across as a very accessible film. Do you think about the International market when you're making a film?

SP: No, not really. I think it's just a by-product.

JH: Talk to me about the music, which I thought fit in so naturally with what was happening in

the film.

SP: I have a friend who knows this band called Edison Woods and they're based out of Brooklyn. I've been a fan of theirs and they make music the way I want to make films. They're rough around the edges, visceral and sort of empty in a sense and not over-produced. When I edited the film, it was a silent film before I did the foley. I would try to get a pacing for certain things and so I started laying down the soundtrack music that I like to listen to when I'm editing. It's really hard to edit when there's nothing there [in terms of sound]. You see people walking but there's nothing there. I had placed that song [at the end of the film] and that song worked so well. When I talked to Julia Furdahl, who wrote the song and is in Edison Woods, I asked her if I could use the song and she said yes!

[NOTE: The song at the end of the film is called MUTED THUNDERSTORMS by Edison Woods. Find more at www.edisonwoods.net]

JH: One always assumes that short filmmakers aspire to be feature filmmakers. Is that the goal for you?

SP: Absolutely! I would love to do that! It's my next move but, ya know, funding...

JH: Would it be a silent film like *Roxy*?

SP: I don't think it would be completely silent for ninety minutes. Even if the dialogue came from external sources like if the protagonist is sitting in a café and you might not hear them speak but you hear the conversations across the way because that is someone's reality.

JH: Finally, in regards to *Roxy*, is your friend's dog really named *Roxy*?

SP: Yes, it is!

For more information on *Roxy*, go to <http://www.issara.net/roxy/> and follow filmmaker Shirley Petchprapa on [Twitter @issarafree](#).

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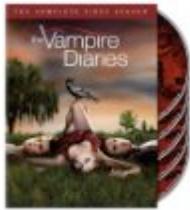
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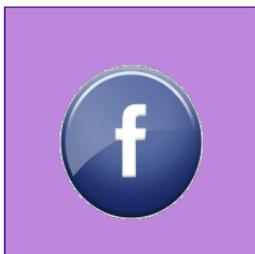


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