The Dam Short Film Festival returns to Boulder City

Josh Bell
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After last year’s 10th-anniversary celebration, the Dam Short Film Festival has scaled back a bit to four days, but it’s still set to feature 141 short films in 21 different programs, plus mixers and get-togethers for film fans and a closing-night awards ceremony. Over the years, the DSFF has evolved into a major Boulder City cultural event, and it’s also one of the most filmmaker-friendly festivals around, including limo and red carpet opportunities for all filmmakers at the awards ceremony. That friendliness extends to local filmmakers, who get their spotlight in the “Battle Born Filmmakers” showcase (February 6, 7:30 p.m.). Veteran local filmmakers Adam Zielinski, Sean Jackson and Douglas Farra are among those presenting new shorts.

Festival director John LaBonney highlights three more notable festival programs: “DSFF Noir” (February 5, 6 p.m.) is an entire program devoted to noir-style shorts. “Each year a handful of noir-ish films are submitted, but this year we had enough to give them their own program,” LaBonney says. “Not Like the Others” (February 5, 7:45 p.m.) is a collection of “wacky, bizarre, and nonconformist films that blaze their own trails,” according to LaBonney. And “Underground: The Naughty Side of DSFF” (February 6, 10 p.m.) is the closest thing the festival gets to avant-garde. As LaBonney notes, it’s “nothing that you wouldn’t see in an LA film festival, but in Boulder City it’s after-dark material.” That mix of small-town quaintness and artistic expression is exactly what makes the DSFF so special.

**Dam Short Film Festival** February 4-7, times vary, $9 per screening; passes $30-$100. Boulder Theatre, damshortfilm.org.

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