

# Lone Star Film Festival giving Fort Worth an indie image of its own

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If nothing else, Dennis Bishop — the new director of the Lone Star International Film Festival that kicks off Wednesday in various Tarrant County locations — wants Hollywood and the rest of the film community to know that Fort Worth is *not* Dallas.

"We consider the festival to be about Fort Worth," he says. "We want to bring films to a town where there is only one venue to see indie films and that's the Modern. If a film premieres in Dallas, that doesn't mean anything to us. We will bring the film here. We are trying to bring quality film to Fort Worth and give filmmakers opportunities they wouldn't get otherwise."

Thus, the second annual five-day Lone Star features some star power (Dustin Hoffman in closing-night *Last Chance Harvey*, Amy Adams and Emily Blunt in opening-night *Sunshine Cleaning*), talked-about imports (the Swedish vampire romance, *Let the Right One In*; five films grouped together under New Russian Cinema), the locally themed Panther City Showcase series (with the documentary *Teen-A-Go-Go*, about Cowtown '60s garage bands), and industry panels ranging on a variety of topics from the TV show *Dexter* to funding Texas filmmaking.

Bishop admits putting together this year's event, following on the heels of last year's inaugural festival, has been a bit of an uphill climb. In addition to convincing studios and filmmakers to take a chance on a fledgling festival in a market where Dallas is already home to many festivals, there was the shuttering of one of the AMC multiplexes in downtown Fort Worth and the staff restructuring following the exit of former artistic director Tom Huckabee last December. (Actor Bill Paxton, who was allied with last year's festival, is also no longer involved.)

All of this delayed getting the lineup nailed down. "We didn't lock in our opening and closing until a couple of weeks ago," Bishop said last week.

But Bishop, who took over from Huckabee, says those troubles are in the past. Lone Star is now allied with the organizers of the AFI Dallas festival for assistance and staffing. He says meetings with the mayor, chamber of commerce, convention and visitors' bureau, and local museums have led to an awareness that the festival plans to be a fixture every November. "It's fall, it's film, it's Fort Worth," Bishop says of the theme.

Bishop, who's from Dallas, has worked in Los Angeles for HBO, was associated with film festivals such as Sundance, produced the pilot for Showtime's *Dexter* and helped out with Lone Star last year. He says he had no qualms about taking over the Lone star reins partly because the debut was considered a success.

He says about 7,500 tickets were sold in 2007. When combined with tickets that were given away, he estimates as many 10,000 people attended events. Bishop hopes to increase that number by 50 percent this year.

"The buzz and word out on the streets about Lone Star is very, very positive," he says. "That helped us get people on the phone."

The dates for the 2009 event, Nov. 11-15, are already scheduled so planning for Lone Star 3.0 shouldn't be as seat-of-the-pants as this year's. "We can start promoting the festival in January and go to film festivals around the country and talk about our festival a year away," Bishop says. "We couldn't do that last year."

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## Lone Star International Film Festival

Wednesday through Sunday

AMC Sundance Square, Four Day Weekend Theater, Kimbell Art Museum, The Modern, Norris Conference Center, University of Texas Arlington, Amon Carter Museum

Individual screenings (\$8 or \$10 depending on the film); one-day access pass (\$75); movies and panels pass (\$175); five-day premier pass (\$250); VIP All Access Pass (\$395).

(817) 924-6000; [www.lsiff.com](http://www.lsiff.com) For a full schedule, go to the web site but here are some highlights:

7:30 Wednesday: Opening night film, *Sunshine Cleaning*, starring Amy Adams and Emily Blunt (AMC Sundance Square, 3rd and Calhoun, Fort Worth)

6 p.m. Thursday: *Nirvana*, one of five films that are part of the new Russian cinema series, shows off Igor Voloshin's highly stylized point of view. (Four Day Weekend Theater, 312 Houston St., Fort Worth)

8 p.m. Thursday: In Jaffar Mahmood's *Shades of Ray*, Zachary Levi (star of TV's *Chuck*) plays a half-Pakistani man torn by cultural confusion. (AMC Sundance Square)

7:30 p.m. Friday: *12*, a Russian updating of the classic *12 Angry Men* and now set in Chechnya, directed by Oscar winning Nikita Mikhailkov. (AMC Sundance Square)

8 p.m. Friday: *They Came to Play* is a documentary following competitors in the Van Cliburn Amateur Piano Competition. (The Modern, 3200 Darnell, Fort Worth)

10:30 p.m. Friday: *Let the Right One In* is the talked-about contemporary Swedish vampire flick. (AMC Sundance Square)

11 a.m. Saturday: Acclaimed video artist Mary Lucier discusses her work. (Amon Carter Museum)

12:30 p.m. Saturday: Panel discussion led by James Manos who talks about transforming his novel, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* into the Showtime hit series *Dexter*. Also featured is co-star Lauren Velez and pilot producer Dennis Bishop. (University of Texas Arlington, Room 114)

1 p.m. Saturday: New Russian Cinema's *Mona Lisa on the Asphalt* (AMC Sundance Square)

3:30 p.m. Saturday: *Financial Incentives: Putting Texas Back in the Game* panel. (Norris Conference Center, 304 Houston St., Fort Worth)

4 p.m. Saturday: Acclaimed new Russian film *The Banishment* (AMC Sundance Square)

6:30 p.m. Saturday: *Karma Police*, John Venable's movie about a secret agent organization that assures good people are rewarded, screens as part of the local-film Panther City Showcase. (Norris Conference Center)

6:30 p.m. Saturday: *One Fast Move or I'm Gone: Kerouac's Big Sur*, a documentary about Jack Kerouac featuring Sam Shepard, Tom Waits, Patti Smith, and S.E. Hinton with music by Son Volt's Jay Farrar and Death Cab for Cutie's Benjamin Gibbard.

7:30 p.m. Saturday: The official closing night film, *Last Chance Harvey*, starring Dustin Hoffman and Emma Thompson (AMC Sundance Square)

9 p.m. Saturday: New Russian Cinema's *Live to Remember* (AMC Sundance Square)

3:30 p.m. Sunday: Sidney Lumet's *12 Angry Men* (AMC Sundance Square)

5 p.m. Sunday: *Teen-A-Go-Go*, Melissa Kirkendall's look back at vintage Fort Worth garage rock of the '60s. (Norris Conference Center)

6 p.m. Sunday: Sidney Lumet's classic *Network* (AMC Sundance Square)