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Wisconsin Film Fest Runs Through Weekend

Festival Celebrates 10th Year

By [Adam Malecek](#), Staff Writer

POSTED: 5:37 pm CDT April 3, 2008



MADISON, Wis. -- Movie lovers looking for something to do this weekend will have an opportunity to check out many accomplished films playing in downtown Madison as part of the Wisconsin Film Festival.

This is the [Wisconsin Film Festival's](#) 10th year, and more than 200 films will be shown at several venues around downtown Madison from April 3-6.

The incredible variety of offerings -- from American independent, world cinema, narrative, documentary, shorts, experimental and restored classics -- and topics should be able to satisfy nearly any adventurous movie fan looking for unique films that are off the beaten path.

Many great films are being screened Thursday and Friday afternoon, but here's a guide to a few of the films playing over the weekend that caught my attention:

- "The Flight of the Red Balloon"** ("Le Voyage du Ballon Rouge") This French film (with English subtitles) uses Albert Lamorisse's 1956 classic short film "The Red Balloon" as its starting point. In the contemporary telling, young Simon is a modern kid in a tangled city rushing at a chaotic pace. His mother (played by Juliette Binoche) is a toused, harried parent who is completely preoccupied with her career as a puppeteer and resorts to hiring a Taiwanese au pair for Simon. Watch the [film's trailer here](#). Read reviews of the film [at this Web site](#).
- "Chop Shop"** Directed by Ramin Bahrani, whose "Man Push Cart" was well-received at the 2007 Wisconsin Film Festival, this film tells the compelling story of Alejandro, a 12-year-old Latino street orphan in the "Iron Triangle," a vibrant, sprawling, industrial neighborhood teeming with auto-body repair shops, scrap yards, and garbage dumps on the outskirts of Queens, New York. Watch the film's [trailer here](#). Read reviews of the film [at this Web site](#).
- "Stuck"** This bloody, visceral thriller, directed by UW alumnus Stuart Gordon, fills the late-night slot Saturday at the Orpheum Theatre's main room, where "Severance" made a killing in the same slot at last year's festival. Starring Mena Suvari and Stephen Rea, the movie tells the story of Brandi, who hits Tom with her car, pitching him head-first into her windshield. "It'd be a hit-and-run, except Tom gets firmly wedged into the windshield frame as Brandi spins off home. The two square off in a battle of guts as Brandi hides the car in her garage, hoping he'll eventually expire, and Tom becomes fueled by a survival instinct and some seriously bottled-up rage," according to the film festival guide. Watch the [movie trailer here](#).
- "The Meaning of Tea"** This documentary explores the romance and complexities surrounding tea, a universally beloved and widely consumed beverage. The film travels through eight countries, unveiling many reasons behind tea's mysterious appeal. "By visiting places where tea is still revered and by investigating its role in these societies, 'The Meaning of Tea' suggests the profoundly positive role tea may play in our future," the film guide says. Watch the trailer [at the film's Web site](#).
- "Jerabek"** This documentary is "an intimate portrait of one family that confronts the tragedy of war. Ryan Jerabek wanted to get out of Green Bay, Wis., see the world and do something different. Moved by what happened on September 11th, the honor student and varsity athlete joined the Marines and left for boot camp weeks after his high school graduation. Nine months later, he was killed in Iraq. The film chronicles, over two years, the changes in the lives of his family. Beyond politics, headlines and statistics, 'Jerabek' offers a candid, personal look at the toll one death takes on a family, a marine company and a community," according to the film guide. Watch the [trailer at the film's Web site](#).
- "Crazy Sexy Cancer"** In 2003, 31-year-old actress and photographer Kris Carr was diagnosed with a rare and incurable cancer. Weeks later she began filming her story. "Taking a seemingly tragic situation and turning it into a creative expression, Kris shares her inspirational story of survival with courage, strength, and lots of humor. As Kris's amazing journey unfolds, she realizes that healing is about truly living rather than fighting. 'Crazy Sexy Cancer' is more than a film, it's about rising to the challenge of life, and no matter what, refusing to give up who you are at your core," the film guide says. Watch the [film's trailer here](#).

"Madison" This film tells the story of Michael, an emotionally damaged war correspondent, who returns to his college town of Madison, Wis., in search of solace and his lost idealism. "Interspersed with striking shots of Bascom Hill, the Memorial Union Terrace, and State Street, Madison's wintry stillness contrasts the desert chaos that psychologically haunts Michael; heightening the distance between where he is and where he has been. American Players Theatre fans will be happy to see a cast of APT favorites such as James DeVita, Brian Mani, Sarah Day, and Gerry Neugent, as well as the acting debut of DeVita's daughter, Sophia. Writer/director Brent Notbohm teaches media studies at UW-Superior," the film festival guide says. Watch the [trailer for the film here](#).

Tickets for most of these films -- and many others -- are available for sale the day of the show at the individual

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theater where the film is playing. [For more ticket information, look in the right-hand column of this Web page.](#)

All tickets sold at the individual theater box offices, including rush tickets, are \$7 general and \$4 student. Students should bring their school ID.

If all of the advance tickets to a film are sold out -- as is the case with "Madison" -- there is still a chance that you can see it by getting "rush tickets" in a special line at the venue before the show.

Some tickets are set aside, and many people buy tickets but might be unable to come to the show -- so there is a chance that open seats can be filled right before the start of the film. This is why ticket-holders must arrive at least 15 minutes before a show to have a guaranteed seat. Get more information on [rush tickets here](#).

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