

Vancouver's DOXA festival opens with Occupy documentary

BY GLEN SCHAEFER, THE PROVINCE APRIL 30, 2013



Corey Ogilvie says he is grateful to Mark Achbar, the Vancouver-based director behind *The Corporation*, for his critique of the first cut of Ogilvie's film *Occupy: The Movie*.

This year's DOXA festival kicks off with *Occupy: The Movie*, the latest in a long tradition of politically-aware films out of B.C.

Occupy director Corey Ogilvie was a University of B.C. sociology student eight years ago when he was inspired to get into filmmaking by watching the award-winning documentary *The Corporation*.

Since then, Ogilvie has filmed in Vancouver's downtown eastside for the 2010 documentary *Streets Of Plenty*, and followed his childhood idol basketball star Steve Nash for the 2011 film profile *Nash* — a project that also got him five minutes in the White House with U.S. President Barack Obama in 2010.

"Obama was more than willing because Steve had worked on some humanitarian work," said the 31-year-old director, adding he was allowed "five minutes, to the second" with Obama.

With his latest movie, *Occupy: The Movie*, Ogilvie took to the streets of New York City to documentary Occupy protests in the fall of 2011 against U.S. bank bailouts — while also coming full

circle back to the widely-seen movie that had inspired him to pick up a camera in the first place.

When he finished a first cut of his new movie last year, he went for advice to Mark Achbar, the Vancouver-based director behind *The Corporation*.

"Mark was gracious enough to critique the first edit of *Occupy*," Ogilvie said.

Achbar, whose movie explored the contentious legal notion of corporations as legal persons, sent Ogilvie a long email after watching the new movie. "It was way better than I thought," Ogilvie said. "I thought he was going to tear it apart."

Occupy: The Movie examines the rise and fall of the tent-based protests, and the political and economic events that gave rise to them.

The new movie serves as a sort-of sequel to Achbar's earlier film, with Ogilvie's movie examining new U.S. court decisions that give corporate spending the protection afforded to personal freedom of speech.

"A lot of *Occupy: The Movie* is the same gene pool as *The Corporation*," said Ogilvie, adding he interviewed some of the people who appeared in Achbar's film.

Ogilvie interviewed many of the unofficial organizers of the New York Occupy protest months after the tents had been cleared away. What started out as a protest about U.S. banking had become a collection of disconnected social complaints.

"I hope on one level that this film acts as a utility that future protest movements can learn from," Ogilvie said. "The beautiful thing was, the key organizers know where they went wrong. They aren't in denial about it."

The film played Toronto's Hot Docs Festival this week before its Vancouver debut. Ogilvie was meeting there with distributors about a wider release in Canada and the U.S.

Also on the DOXA schedule from B.C. filmmakers is the personal documentary *Father Figures*, from co-directors Gillian Hrankowski and April Butler. That movie follows Butler's efforts to understand her 72-year-old father's plan to marry a much younger Filipino woman he met online. Butler follows him from his Kamloops home to the Philippines, and is at first perplexed, but then deeply disturbed at her father's increasingly creepy behaviour.

Director Richard Martin's *BackBone: Vancouver Experimental Cinema from 1967-1981*, goes back to some of the unsung stars of the pre-Hollywood North era, when film-makers were learning as they went, far from the filmmaking mainstream.

Tom Braidwood, Sturla Gunnarsson, David Rimmer and others reminisce about a free-wheeling time when they explored the cutting edge "unencumbered by knowledge," in Gunnarsson's words.

Antoine Bourges' *East Hastings Pharmacy* appears at first to be a fly-on-the-wall look at the comings

and goings in a downtown eastside methadone clinic. But end credits disclose that it is in fact the result of improvisations among addicts, the director and an actor playing a pharmacist, which blunted its impact.

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DOXA Documentary Film Festival

Where: Vancity Theatre, 1181 Seymour St.; The Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St.; Vancouver Playhouse, 600 Hamilton St.; Rio Theatre, 1660 E. Broadway.

When: Friday to May 12. Schedule at doxafestival.ca

Tickets: \$12 general admission, \$8 weekday matinees, \$10/\$6 youth, opening night film \$20, available online or at the door. Festival pass \$150.

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