

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Kristin Luciani Apr 23, 2015



“Mija: Ogata Korin,” by the American artist Bear Kirkpatrick, is one of the pieces included in the festival’s slow art series. Photo by The Mija: Ogata Korin video © Bear Kirkpatrick

ArtPower!’s Filmatic Festival to Explore the Intersection of Science and Cinema

The film industry may have its roots in Los Angeles, but the future of filmmaking and film-going is happening right here at UC San Diego. At the second annual Filmatic Festival—the first of its kind in California—audiences will explore the intersection of film, science and technology in a series of events that include virtual reality demonstrations, one of the first public viewings of 8K digital film, screenings from the “slow art” movement and much more.

The festival is presented by UC San Diego's ArtPower!, a student-centered performing arts presenter that offers creative experiences in dance, chamber music, jazz, global music and film. The four-day festival takes place April 30 through May 3 at the Qualcomm Institute and is open to the public.

Focusing on themes of "Time and Velocity," this year's festival showcases UC San Diego research scientists as artists. Rebecca Webb, film curator at ArtPower!, describes the festival as a bridge between science and cinema. "Today's scientists are using technology to represent their ideas visually, and to communicate science cinematically," said Webb. In turn, advances in science and technology are changing how audiences view films and how artists visually tell their stories.

"I am embracing a society that consumes movies on smart phones and personal tablets—often by themselves," added Webb. "However, some audience members may feel that they are missing the simple joy of sitting in a dark theater, together, with others. The need for community is still very important, and the Filmatic Festival addresses this need by creating interactive and participatory experiences."

In addition to highlighting UC San Diego faculty and leading international artists, this year's festival has expanded to feature more undergraduate and graduate student work. This includes short films, 3D-printed drones and gaming demonstrations, as well as the return of the Up Coming Student Film Festival.

For Keita Funakawa, a third year management science major and aspiring film professional, the best part of the Filmatic Festival is the opportunity to see the work happening at UC San Diego. "Students get a chance to see first-hand the cutting-edge research and new media happening on campus," he said. "The Qualcomm Institute has one of the first permanent 4K theaters in the western hemisphere. The campus has some of the most state-of-the-art research and technology centers—but most students don't get the chance to experience these amazing spaces. With Filmatic, you really get to experience the future."



Featuring the performance of an operatic singer, "DIVA:ReDux" demonstrates the power of music to speak directly to emotions without the need for a shared linguistic language. Photo by DIVA: ReDux © Stefani Byrd

The festival kicks off April 30 with a keynote presentation titled "Weaving Mercury" by Alex McDowell, director of the University of Southern California's 5D Institute, and Sergei Gepshtein, vision scientist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. Discussing multiple threads that characterize visual experience in both natural and cinematic perception, the event will set the tone for a festival that aims to bridge science and filmmaking. Other highlights of the 2015 Filmatic Festival include:

Sonic Experiences

UC San Diego professors Mark Dresser, Lei Lang and Peter Otto explore sound and music through time, space and other dimensions. In [Sonic Explorations](#), a drop-in experience available April 30 through May 2, guests are invited to visit the audio-spatialization lab at the Qualcomm Institute and experience cutting-edge demonstrations of sound design and delivery—such as a 24-channel surround system—for a glimpse of the next generation of sound for cinema. On May 2, guests can enjoy a telematic concert: a live performance of a quartet in San Diego playing with a duo in Zurich. The concert, titled [New Integrations in Telematic Music](#), features renowned composer-improvisers collaborating across high-bandwidth networks to perform original compositions created specifically for the telematics medium.

Virtual Reality

The Filmatic Festival explores virtual reality, sometimes referred to as immersive multimedia, as a tool for narrative storytelling. “[Special Treatment](#),” an immersive virtual reality installation open April 30 through May 2, examines the strength and persistence of memory. Created by five renowned artists and technologists, the piece is shown on a VR Portal, which immerses viewers both visually and aurally, and begins on a train that deposits viewers in a sparsely populated camp, pieced together from photographs and artifacts from Auschwitz II/Birkenau in Poland. As visitors explore the camp and structures, conversations and other pieces of the past fade in and out of perception.

Slow Art Series

This series of short video loops and film screenings explores how artists respond to today’s “culture of speed” and the instant gratification of the Internet age. Film screenings include “[Visitors](#)” by director Godfrey Reggio, showing May 2 at 7 p.m. in the Qualcomm Institute auditorium. Presented in black and white, digital 4K projection, the film reveals humanity’s trancelike relationship with technology which, when commandeered by extreme emotional states, produces massive effects far beyond the human species.

Student Work

The [8th annual Up&Coming Student Film Festival](#) takes place at 7 p.m. on May 1 and features a curated selection of work by undergraduate and graduate students. The films are selected by a panel of film industry experts. This year, that includes a past Up&Coming winner, Monika Lang, who now works at LucasFilms. Other student presentations include “[First 8K](#),” a project created by students in the VIS 40/ICAM 40 Introduction to Computing in the Arts class. “First 8K,” showing at 4 p.m. on May 1, is one of the first public screenings of 8K content, which achieves 16 times the resolution of high definition images.

The Filmatic Festival's presenting sponsor is the Qualcomm Institute, the UC San Diego division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2). Ramesh Rao, director of the institute, added: "By taking advantage of the Qualcomm Institute's facilities, including the VROOM large-scale display system and the StarCAVE and WAVE virtual-reality environments, organizers of the festival have put together an adventurous program that will clue viewers into just how quickly technology is going to reshape film-making and movie-going in the 21st century."

Additional sponsors include ArcLight Cinemas, Stromer Bikes, Unofficial Cardboard, Clarion Del Mar Inn, Outside the Lens and UC San Diego Alumni.

"We are particularly thrilled about our partnership with ArcLight Cinemas, who will not only be sponsoring the Filmatic Festival, but hosting one of ArtPower!'s FOOVIE screenings of the 2015-2016 season," said Webb.

One-day passes to the Filmatic Festival are available to students for \$12 and the general public for \$35; 4-day passes are \$35 for students and \$125 for the general public. Friday, May 1, is Free Filmatic Friday for all San Diego students. For more information about the festival, schedule of events and admission, visit filmaticfestival.com.

ArtPower!'s programming, including events like the Filmatic Festival, is made possible thanks to the generosity of donors. Private support allows the organization to maintain a dynamic, robust season that engages students with the arts—both UC San Diego students on campus and K-12 students in the community. To learn more about ArtPower!, including opportunities to support its student engagement programs, visit artpower.ucsd.edu.

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