

## **2009 NEW YORK INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL** **FEB 27 – MARCH 15**

### **2009 Jury:**

**John Turturro, Gus Van Sant, Susan Sarandon, James Schamus,  
Matthew Modine, Christine Vachon, Evan Shapiro, Rob Minkoff**

### **Festival to Present 100 Films from 30 Countries – for ages 3 to 18**

**US & NY Premiere Feature Films: *Mia & The Migoo* (France/Italy), *Circus School* (China), *Dragon Hunters* (France) *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger* (Australia) *The Secret of Moonacre* (Hungary/UK/France), *West of Pluto* (Canada), *Heart of Fire* (Kenya/Germany/Austria), *Son of a Lion* (Australia/Pakistan) and *Tahaan* (India)**

### **Filmmaker Events w/Director Q&As**

***Mia & The Migoo* (France/Italy), *Battle for Terra* (USA), *Azur & Asmar* (France), *Circus School* (China), *Sita Sings the Blues* (USA), *West of Pluto* (Canada)**

### **Special Film Series – *Children & War***

### **NYICFF Benefit Event – *Film & Food***

### **NYICFF Awards, Best of Fest & Closing Night Party**

### **Film Production Workshops**

**Tickets on Sale Feb 1, 2009 at [GKIDS.COM](http://GKIDS.COM) or 212-349-0330**

**Hi-res press images at [www.gkids.com/press09.html](http://www.gkids.com/press09.html)**

New York, NY, February 1, 2009 – The critically acclaimed **New York Int'l Children's Film Festival (NYICFF)** kicks off its 12<sup>th</sup> edition with the U.S. premiere of *Mia and The Migoo* by Jacques-Rémy Girerd at the DGA Theater. NYICFF 2009 runs Feb 27-March 15 at five NYC locations, with attendance of over 20,000. The festival will present ground-breaking new works for ages 3-18, with major feature premieres, NYICFF's renowned short film programs, a special *Children & War* series, filmmaker presentations, workshops and the closing night *Best of Fest & Awards Ceremony* at the DGA Theater. Tickets to all events go on sale Feb 1, 2009 at [www.gkids.com](http://www.gkids.com) and 212-349-0330.

**A New "Film for Kids"** – NYICFF is North America's largest festival of film for children and teens and stands at the forefront of a movement to define a new, more intelligent, relevant and compelling film for kids. Since 1997 the festival has presented the best animation, live action, and experimental film from around the world, including US premieres of new works from renowned directors Danny Boyle, Hayao Miyazaki, Katsuhiro Otomo, Michel Ocelot and others.

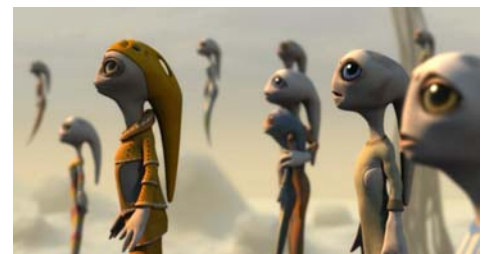
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*Mia and the Migoo*



*Hey Hey Its Esther Blueburger*



*Battle for Terra*

This year NYICFF has put together an exciting slate of movies and events which include (full schedule and ticket information available at [www.gkids.com](http://www.gkids.com) / (212) 349-0330):

- **Opening Night U.S. Premiere: *Mia and The Migoo*** (France/Italy, ages 7+) a gorgeously animated, eco-adventure that pits a plucky, wild haired young heroine Mia, against profit-hungry capitalists with the future of life on earth hanging in the balance. **Q&A with director Jacques-Rémy Girerd and reception follows.**
- **Additional U.S. & NY Premieres: *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger*** (NY Premiere, Australia ages 12+), an inspired teen-comedy that vaults over coming-of-age conventions with a droll sense of humor celebrating the awkwardness of youth; ***Circus School*** (NY Premiere, China, ages 12+), an awe inspiring, shocking look behind the scenes of the Shanghai Circus School where children acrobats are undergoing grueling training in preparation for the prestigious national finals; ***Dragon Hunters*** (East Coast Premiere, France, ages 5 to 12), an action-packed, lusciously animated adventure set in a fantastic kingdom in the sky; ***The Secret of Moonacre*** (US Premiere, Hungary/UK/France, ages 5 to 12), the a fairy-tale fantasy adventure from director Gabor Csupo, with misty castles, a danger-filled forest, a black lion, and a plucky young city-girl-turned-princess. ***West of Pluto*** (US Premiere, Canada ages 14+), a subtle, brilliantly constructed film that paints a dead-on unfiltered portrait of the high-school experience.
- **Children & War Series: *Tahaan*** (NY Premiere, India, ages 8+), set in the strife-ridden Kashmir, a young boy looking to gain back his beloved donkey finds himself recruited by a young terrorist; ***Son of a Lion*** (East Coast Premiere, Australia/Pakistan, ages 12+), a rare window into the tribal regions of Northwest Pakistan where guns are a way of life, the Taliban is accepted or tolerated, and some believe the World Trade Center attacks were a U.S. plot; ***Heart of Fire*** (NY Premiere, Germany/Austria, ages 12+), a live action drama about a ten year old girl who it taken from her orphanage to live with the washed-up rebel father she never knew.
- **Short Films in Competition:** The centerpiece of the festival consists of six ground-breaking competitive short film programs that present the absolute best in new animation, live action and experimental film from around the world, with screening organized by audience age. Many filmmakers will be in attendance and all audience members complete voting ballots to select NYICFF Award winners, presented March 15 at the NYICFF Awards and Best of the Fest celebration.

### Special Events:

- ***Battle for Terra*** (USA, ages 7+), a thrilling animated film about Terra, a world of peaceful, tadpole-like people whose way of live is threatened when they are invaded by humans fleeing Earth which has been destroyed by war and environmental devastation. **Q&A with director Meni Tsirbas follows the film, which is being released theatrically by Roadside Attractions.**
- ***Azur & Asmar*** (France, ages 6+), a poetic, fairytale-like story that weaves together themes of family, culture and tolerance within a shimmering landscape of brilliance and beauty, the film was praised as “beautiful” (*New York Times*) and “absolutely gorgeous” (*Time Out New York*). **The event will include Q&A with director Michel Ocelot and door prizes and giveaways including the not-yet-released DVD.**
- ***Sita Sings the Blues*** (USA, ages 9+), tragedy, comedy and music collide in this gloriously animated film from NY’s own “One Woman Pixar” (*Wired*). **A Q&A with director Nina Paley follows the film.**
- **Girls’ POV:** short films for teen and ‘tween girls include the U.S. premieres of ***Mums are Falling*** (Italy); ***Opening Night*** (Netherlands); ***The Yellow Envelope*** (Belgium) and the New York premieres of ***A Stranger in Her Own City*** (Yemen); ***Lucy: A Period Piece*** (USA) and ***Bua*** (Ireland.)
- **Food & Film Benefit:** An afternoon of cinematic and culinary exploration with a one-of-a-kind NYICFF food-themed film program, followed by an international feast from New York City’s top restaurants. The event will include a silent auction and activities and gifts for kids.
- **NYICFF Best of the Fest and Awards Ceremony:** The culminating event of the festival combines a short, kids-friendly awards ceremony with a Best of Fest screening of the winning films, and an all-ages catered food and cocktail reception. Event will be attended by jury members, celebs and festival VIPS.

### **NYICFF Mission**

“The Festival’s mission is to define a new, more intelligent, nuanced and eye-opening cinema for young people, and to expand horizons by presenting truly phenomenal works from the four corners of the globe,” states festival founder and director, Eric Beckman. “This year we continue to shake up the industry and conventional notions of children’s entertainment, by providing a slate of stunning new works to audiences starving for an alternative to mainstream media. For us, film for kids is not just about entertainment, it is also about beauty, truth, nuance, paradox, humor, life... all the things that human beings young and old respond so deeply to and that cinema is so uniquely able to express.”

One of NYICFF 2009’s more serious themes include a special series, *Children & War*, that features three new films from noted directors – *Tahaan*, *Heart of Fire* and *Son of a Lion* – which use film that to explore the world’s conflicts and how they affect the younger generation. The festival also continues to explore teen issues with its *Girl’s Point of View* series and teen-targeted features like *West of Pluto*, *Hey Hey It’s Esther Blueburger* and *Circus School*.

### **NYICFF 2009 Jury**

NYICFF Award winners are chosen by audience ballot and NYICFF also presents a Special Jury Award, selected by a celebrity panel which includes newest member Emmy® winner and Golden Globe® nominated actor John Turturro (*Quiz Show*), Academy Award® winning actress Susan Sarandon (*Dead Man Walking*), Academy Award® nominated director Gus Van Sant (*Milk*), Academy Award® nominated filmmaker James Schamus (*Brokeback Mountain*, *Milk*), actor Matthew Modine (*Birdy*), director Rob Minkoff (*The Lion King*), Producer Christine Vachon (*I’m Not There*, *Boys Don’t Cry*), Evan Shapiro, President of Sundance Channel and The Independent Film Channel (IFC TV) and *New Yorker* contributor Adam Gopnik.

### **New Initiatives**

Over the past two years, NYICFF has expanded beyond the scope of the annual festival with several new national and year-round initiatives:

- The NYICFF online festival is available at GKIDS.TV ([www.gkids.tv](http://www.gkids.tv)), a place where children and adults can view, rate, review, and share their favorite short films, write reviews and blog with filmmakers, and find independent film on DVD.
- Now in its second year, the Best of NYICFF tour brings Festival films to cities across the country.
- Most recently, NYICFF organizers have entered into theatrical film distribution through the newly launched distribution shingle GKIDS. GKIDS is currently distributing the French animated film *Azur & Asmar*, in partnership with the Weinstein Company.

### **About NYICFF:**

Over the past 11 years, NYICFF has earned the reputation as one of the finest film festivals for people under 18 by programming an uncompromising slate of the best new animation, live action and experimental film from around the world, with filmmaker Q&A’s, hands-on production workshops, red-carpet premieres, audience voting, and the NYICFF Awards. Programs are organized by age group, with screenings available for all ages from tots to teens. Winners are chosen by audience ballot and NYICFF also presents a Special Jury Award. In recognition of its efforts, NYICFF has been twice honored by the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, while NY State Council for the Arts named NYICFF "a model for youth programming in New York State."

Tickets and info: [www.gkids.com](http://www.gkids.com)  
212-349-0330

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