



## ARTISTS, ARCHITECTS, HERETICS AND STUNTMEN GIVE LOCAL FLAVOUR TO DOCO FEST\*

Nine local documentaries, with subjects ranging from modern art and architecture, to transgenderism, stuntmen and the murder defence of “homosexual panic”, have been entered into competition and will hit the big screens in Auckland, Wellington Christchurch and Dunedin as part of the 2009 DOCNZ Festival. The five documentaries competing for this year’s title of “Best New Zealand Feature” are:

***Toki Does New York*** looks at internationally-regarded New Zealand video artist Hye Rim Lee – creator of the complex and disturbing 3D bunny girl TOKI - as she tries cracking the Big Apple. Director Dan Salmon travels with Hye Rim to the Max Lang gallery in New York to get an up close and personal view of how modern art works.

***Architect of Dreams*** goes from shaking up the sixties to a hillside home in Kandallah in telling the tale of one of New Zealand’s most creative figures, architect Ian Athfield. Director Geoffrey Cawthorn explores Athfield’s evolution from a 1960s radical to a pioneer for sustainable buildings.

***Assume Nothing*** explores the notion of gender in the Pacific region and beyond. Director Kirsty MacDonald, who recently worked as Niki Caro’s assistant on *The Vintner’s Luck*, uses Rebecca Swan’s photographic book of the same name as a template to profile five artists whose identities fall outside conventional Western definitions of masculinity and femininity.

***Shustak*** examines the legacy of Larence N. Shustak, a pop philosopher and photographer who left New York in 1973 to move to Christchurch. Director Stuart Page, probably best known as the director of the infamous 1987 AFFCO music video for the *Skeptics*, uses archival images and interviews to tell the story of the quintessential radical responsible for founding the photography department at the University of Canterbury.

***The Last Western Heretic*** looks at the life and trials of Lloyd Geering, New Zealand’s most prominent theologian. Director Monique Oomen, through filming in Israel and New Zealand, explores Geering’s still-controversial ideas: there is no life after death, the Bible is not infallible and Jesus was just a man.

In the “Best New Zealand Short” section stuntmen, falcons, and an exploration of the “homosexual panic” murder defence round out the local contribution to the 2009 DOCNZ Festival.

***Rev Therapy*** directed by Luke Wheeler, spends a year exploring the uber-masculine world of professional stuntmen and asks why people are driven to make high-risk physical gambles. ***An Ordinary Person*** explores the “homosexual panic” defence that saw the killer of David McNee escape a murder conviction. With interviews with lawyers involved in the McNee case, director and one-time lawyer Susan Potter tells the story of inherent discrimination in the law. ***Chance of a Lifetime***, directed by Sandy Crichton, tracks threatened New Zealand falcons through the fading eyes of 1970s wildlife photographer George Chance. And, finally, out of competition, Kat Baulu and Alastair Jamieson’s ***The Sea Lion and the Comet*** follows a young sea lion pup growing up on the Otago coast. Adolescence can be rough in the wild: he loses his mother and faces threats from stray dogs.

The 2009 DOCNZ Festival takes place in Auckland (February 26 – March 8), Wellington (March 12 – 22) and Christchurch/Dunedin (March 26 – April 5).

For further information, interviews and screeners please contact Matt Nippert, Elephant Publicity on [elephant83@paradise.net.nz](mailto:elephant83@paradise.net.nz) or 09 368 4180 / 021 193 1011