

# Value of alternative films stressed at festival

By Ben Moebius  
Oregon Daily Emerald

New York filmmaker Catherine Saafeld spoke about the importance of alternative media and her own experience with producing videos on Saturday afternoon, as part of the University's second annual Queer Film Festival.

Saafeld said that when people make their own media productions, they learn more and are able to keep control of their own image. She said the mainstream media have failed to effectively cover gay, lesbian and bisexual issues.

Saafeld urged the small audience to get involved in public access television and find other ways to create their own videos.

"Video is one of the most accessible media forms," Saafeld said.

In addition, Saafeld discussed ways to generate funding, produce and distribute videos using illustrations from her own 10-year background in filmmaking.

Saafeld started in video production while working for a large, low-budget collective based in New York City called

the *Paper Tiger*. The collective produced a weekly show that focused on ways to look at the information industry.

The name, *Paper Tiger*, was taken from a quote by Mao Tse-Tung that compared capitalism to a large, angry-looking tiger, which when seen up close, can be easily torn apart.

Saafeld also talked about the problems she faced in New York City while working for ACT UP, a radical AIDS awareness group. Scarce funding and an initial lack of experience, coupled with the fact that people in the organization were dying of AIDS, made things hard.

"Every tape we made was dedicated to someone who died," she said.

Saafeld also spoke about many practical problems with filming such as protecting equipment from damage. She related an experience of having New York City police throw her video camera in the snow.

"When you pick up the camera and see water pouring out of it, you know it's all over," she said. "You can get insurance, but no insurance covers the police."

Saafeld recommended film-

**"We have had a good turn out, and people's reactions have been positive," Martin said. "Everything has gone well."**

— Debby Martin,  
Queer Film Festival organizer

ing with a partner who can watch out for potential danger. She said those experiences were very important to her.

"It's because of those early experiences that the collective approach to filming stuck with me," she said.

Most of the work Saafeld has done as a video activist, writer, director and producer has been with other people.

Saafeld is currently associate producer of *HIV Weekly*, a PBS four-hour series about HIV and AIDS targeted for HIV communities. She said it was a change from most of her projects.

"What I am doing now, albeit far from mainstream, is the most mainstream thing I've done yet,"

she said.

Saafeld is also working on a feature-length narrative that explores interracial relationships in lesbian communities.

Saafeld's documentary called *Sacred Lies, Civil Truth* drew almost 300 people when it was shown on the first day of the festival.

Saafeld said the entire film was made in five weeks.

"And I did not sleep during those five weeks," she said.

The film presented a close look at the context of anti-gay initiatives and religious fundamentalism across the country.

The presentation of some of the Queer Film Festival winners Friday night also drew about 300 people, as did a feature film shown Saturday called *Forbidden Love*. A presentation by Merym Ersoz on the construction of lesbians in film focused on lesbian representation in the silent film era. The film festival ended Sunday evening with the remainder of the film festival's winners.

Debby Martin, who helped organize the event, said the last night of videos especially presented a large cross-section of different kinds of film.

# Troupe performs parody of 'Dracula'

By Anne Moser-Kornfeld  
For The Oregon Daily Emerald

The New Vic Theatre of London performed its version of *Dracula* Feb. 18 at the Silva Concert Hall in the Hult Center.

The show, titled *Dracula* and subtitled *How's Your Blood Count*, was a parody of Bram Stoker's novel first published in 1897. *Dracula* literally means "Son of the Devil."

The vampire legend is almost as ancient as the mountains of Transylvania. The New Vic Theatre of London brought an energetic production that takes place in the 19th century "Oxford Towers."

The English comedy troupe has a way of either winning over the newly converted or leaving the uninitiated with the sense that they have missed out on the joke. Their humor is filled with sexual innuendo, puns and satire.

The cast, consisting of John Chancer, Meg Durkin and Micky O'Donoghue, took the story of *Dracula* and altered it ever so slightly to create an interpretation that was highly innovative.

O'Donoghue portrayed Renfield and Dr. Van Helsing. Renfield, a salesman, competes with

Jonathan Harker, played by Barnaby Shepherd, to sell *Dracula* a prime strip of real estate in London.

O'Donoghue formed the New Vic Theatre with Michael Bogdanov in 1980. Since then, they have gone on to play to audiences in Europe and the United States.

Audience participation was a mandatory element to the show. The audience could walk all over the stage, buy gingerbread crosses to ward off the evils of the un-dead, (sadly, when the cookies were needed for protection most audience members had eaten their crosses) and garlic was passed out at intermission. *Men of Garlic* was sung in our efforts to destroy Count *Dracula* and his coven of vampires.

*Dracula's* presence was magnanimous. He was unable to get a girlfriend from Eugene, as Renfield was. Renfield found himself making plans with an audience member following the play. *Dracula* did have the ability to convey all the fear and horror only a self-respecting vampire could have projected.

The Hult Center brings New Vic Theatre family-oriented shows to the Eugene-Springfield area on a regular basis.

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