

WHOLPHIN NO. 9 - Bullies And Prison Pageants And Automatic Glockenspiels, Oh My!

Posted by Michael Tully

10/26/09

comedy | coming of age | documentary | drama | on dvd | short film | small town life



(Wholphin No. 9 is now available. Visit the [official website](#), where you can subscribe and watch a ton of good stuff.)

Well, well, well, aren't we lucky? The time has come yet again for Brent Hoff and Emily Doe to present another spectrum-spanning collection of short films in one tasty release. Yummy! Whaddya know, they're calling this one **Wholphin No. 9**. Rather than writing about everything this time, I thought I'd mention a bunch of standouts and let you discover the rest for yourselves (including works by Spike Jonze, Jeremy Clapin, and Caveh Zahidi).

Sparks (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, USA, 2009) — The only trade Gordon-Levitt doesn't employ in this adaptation of the Elmore Leonard short story is the one for which he's best known: acting. This time, he leaves that up to Carla Gugino and Eric Stoltz, who embark on a flirtatious back-and-forth as a rock star vixen and the insurance agent

who's investigating a recent house fire that she may or may not have started. Gordon-Levitt doesn't just prove that he's a skilled adapter/director. In addition to editing, he wrote and performed the film's score.

La Corona (Amanda Micheli and Isabel Vega, USA, 2007) — I was so taken by Micheli and Vega's Oscar-nominated documentary about a women prison's beauty pageant in Columbia that I wrote [a full review](#) of it in conjunction with its television premiere on HBO a year or so ago. Here is a snippet: *By respecting their real-life subjects and giving them the opportunity to share their troubled back stories, we become deeply invested in their quest for the crown. In the process, we are able to grasp that this isn't merely a frivolous desire to win a contest. It's a chance for these incarcerated women to feel free once again.*



Acting For The Camera (Justin Nowell, USA, 2009) — Nowell's unsettling, blackly funny glimpse into what goes on behind closed doors in an acting class made me thankful that I never had a serious urge to give acting a 'legitimate' shot.

Jerrycan (Julius Avery, Australia, 2008) — Avery's Sundance-winner is a gutsy, raw portrait of adolescence and how peer pressure and bullying can turn an otherwise ordinary, boring day into a dangerously climactic one.

Mompelaar (Marc Roels and Wim Reygaert, Belgium, 2007) — After struggling for a while to figure out what to say about this film, I've come up with this: **Mompelaar** is really fuckin' weird.

Sister Wife (Jill Orschel, USA, 2009) — For a short film, Orschel's intimate profile of a Mormon fundamentalist woman casts a haunting spell. DoriAnn embraces the polygamous aspect of her religion, though it's clearly a struggle being married to the same man as her younger biological sister. Disturbing stuff.

Bearings Glocken (Kawase Kohske, Japan, 2008) — Kohske didn't just stumble across the awesome spectacle documented in **Bearings Glocken** and videotape it. He helped to *create* it ([go here](#) to read and see what I'm talking about). Watching this machine filled with balls, which release and bounce to a musical rhythm, makes for an endlessly fascinating and exhilaratingly hypnotic experience.

Motodrom (Jorg Wagner, Germany, 2006) — Maybe I'm out of the loop (pun intended?) on this one, but I had to read the accompanying booklet to learn that this is an actual event, in which motorcyclists careen around a small wooden cylindrical ramp as viewers watch from above (you can watch the whole short [here](#)). Man, if **The Great Frederick Fair** had had one of these things when I was younger, my childhood would have been a whole lot more memorable.

— Michael Tully