

Tucked away in the San Juan Mountains is this spectacular hamlet of Telluride where, year after year, film artists, critics and movie buffs gather for what is essentially one of the leading cinematic festivals.

As if on cue, every Labor Day weekend Telluride buzzes with excitement at the prospect of the “who” and the “what” will arrive in this world-renowned resort town. The selections from last year’s Telluride Film Festival brought pride to festival organizers with 15 Academy Award nominations and recognition from the Golden Globe Awards, most notably *Babel* and *Last King of Scotland*.

Slated for the 34th year at the highly-acclaimed Telluride Film Festival is guest director, Edith R. Kramer, retired senior film curator and director of the Pacific Film Archive at the University of California-Berkeley. According

to public relations manager for TFF, Shannon Goodwin Mitchell, “admired locally, nationally and internationally for her tireless commitment to film preservation and collection development, Ms. Kramer brings her 22 years of experience at the PFA with her to Telluride, enhancing the already prestigious program with rare film collections, discussions and an unparalleled enthusiasm for the art of film.”

As hosts of a world-class film festival, Telluride is a favorite venue within the film industry and among the thousands of movie lovers who travel here to take the first look at what will be another remarkable season for the Telluride Film Festival. Because of the legendary secrecy surrounding the film festival, programs are not revealed until the festival begins. But if history does repeat itself, film-festivarians are in for another defining experience in cinematic art.

SUSAN BILLINGS: COMPLEX SIMPLICITY

WRITTEN BY KERI BRIDGEWATER



Recently selected as one of Colorado’s 10 most collectible artists, Susan Billings brings her vibrant paintings to the Telluride Gallery of Fine Art June 28th. Billings studied under glass artist Dale Chihuly at the Rhode Island School of Design, graduating with a BFA in 1975. She moved to Colorado soon afterwards to pursue an eclectic career in art, sculpture and mountaineering. After several adventurous years mountain guiding and traveling in the Himalayas, Alaska and Europe, she settled in Boulder and set up graphic design firm Billings/Quine Design. Clients included Patagonia, *Rock and Ice Magazine*, and the Colorado Dance Festival; an array of awards for illustration and print design soon followed.

Yearning for a quieter lifestyle, Billings moved with her husband and two children to Norwood in 1992, building a sustainable solar powered adobe home and studio on the edge of Naturita Canyon. Looking out over high mesas, the huge skies and sensational light around the home provide a constant source of inspiration for her paintings. Favoring a bright, warm palette Billings incorporates a range of mediums in her work. Watercolors create the initial image then pastels, charcoals, inks and sometimes gold leaf are applied to develop depth and create transparent layers. The final images are transformed into simple, yet complex pieces.

A valued Board of Artists member and teacher at the Ah Haa School for the Arts, over the past seven years Susan has co-designed three of the original Art Cars, mentored General Schwarzkopf on his 2005 mixed media painting, which sold for \$17,000, and designed several posters for the Mountainfilm Festival. Represented by the Telluride Gallery of Fine Art since 1998, Billings’ work is currently on display and will show her newest pieces, including this year’s original Telluride Wine Festival painting. ■

FILM FESTIVAL > AUG 31 - SEPT 3

BLUES & BREWS > SEPT. 14-16

Telluride ends the festival seasons with another winning combination. Bursting out-loud with legendary blues music and smart-tasting microbrews, the Telluride Blues & Brews Festival is considered to be one of the more popular festivals by locals and festivarians who come for everything great about Telluride.

Relatively new, (13 years) the Blues & Brews Festival has grown from a nominal gathering of 1,000 beer aficionados to an extraordinary attendance of 24,000 who come for a weekend of cool music, chilled brews and crisp mountain air. Set among the incomparable beauty of the massive rock-faced San Juans, the burst of energy from great blues music while chugging beer with fellow festivarians makes for a sweet ride in Telluride.

This once “little beer festival” attracts an impressive line-up of stellar blues musicians, over 100 beers to savor, (start a collection of the ultra-cool labels) fabulous foods to delight the palate and late-night jammin’ at the blues bars in town. Telluride Blues & Brews Festival is a weekend of unending fun and a template for festival fun. ■

