

# Screening shortly at Tribeca

## Brief encounters with some NYC-made films on the roster

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

### GUARANTEED TO LEAVE YOU BUG-EYED

When Isabella Rossellini starred in David Lynch's defining 1986 classic "Blue Velvet," it seemed like one of the world's great beauties had been dragged into a perverse world of queasy debauchery. But clearly Lynch wasn't the only person on the set with a delightfully skewed take on the world.

In "Green Porno," Rossellini steps up as the writer, co-director and star of a series of wonderfully explicit, straight-faced, one-minute shorts about the sex lives of insects and other tiny creatures.

Each short begins the same way: Rossellini is seen in a tight close-up and says, "If I were a dragonfly" (or earthworm or fly), and then the camera pulls back to reveal her in a goofy, oversized costume. She blithely describes their sexual habits in the most direct, scientifically appropriate language — and then demonstrates the technique on a giant, human-size replica of the female (Rossellini usually plays the male because they have more fun,

she suggests).

The shorts, which were filmed in New York, are designed for viewing on iPods, cameras and computers and will be available on demand on the Sundance Channel's Web site in June.

Watching Rossellini dressed up as a giant spider or curled up in a snail's shell or flying through the air as a bee while copulating midflight with a female of the species makes you realize how unnecessarily dull science class usually was.



Mamie Gummer, lost on the morning after Halloween

### A COSTUME DRAMA

In the short "All Saints Day," a quietly sad young woman (Mamie Gummer, daughter of Meryl Streep) is heading home in a bedraggled costume the morning after Halloween — and an unsatisfying one-night stand.

Looking for directions, she strikes up a conversation with a charming young man (Benjamin Walker) sipping a cup of coffee on his Manhattan stoop.

Writer Brooke Berman came up with the idea for the plot the old-fashioned way: She and director Will Frears (son of Stephen Frears) stole it from life.

"Will heard this great story from our friend, [actor] Logan Marshall-Green," says Berman, who is developing an expanded version of the short.

"Logan's birthday is Nov. 1, and every year on his birthday his favorite thing to do is get up early, make a cup of coffee and go sit on the steps and watch the walk of shame in costume."

With that seed of an idea, Berman, who was living in L.A. at the time, wrote the first draft in a day — after a little digging for details.

"There's nothing like being in the bacchanalia of the West Hollywood Halloween parade and going, 'Well, it's research,'" he says.



Isabella Rossellini (standing) in "Green Porno," in which she demonstrates insect sex

### 'THE NEW YORKIST': ACTING UNDER DURESS

Dana O'Keefe did what any self-respecting first-time filmmaker would do: He badgered his friends into working for free.

The result is "The New Yorkist," a droll, dialogue-free film starring O'Keefe's best friend, Alex Kliment, as a restless young spirit who yearns for adventure and rather randomly decides to conquer the distant nation of Kyrgyzstan. That's if he can rid his apartment of ants, catch up on his reading and find his way to the airport — and the grand destiny that surely awaits him.

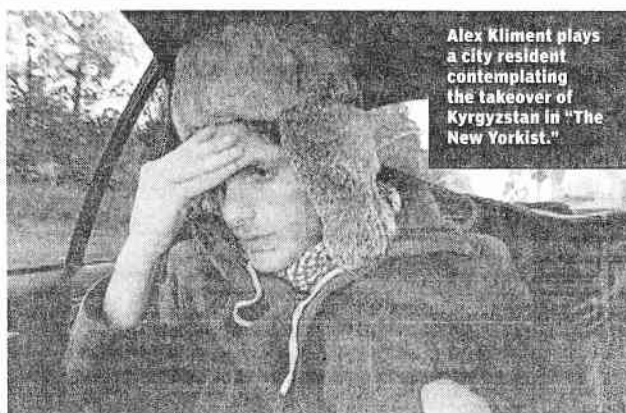
Was it easy persuading Kliment to star in his project?

"Alex was very reluctant to do so," says O'Keefe, whose friend, ironically, has since become an expert on Eastern European affairs for a think tank.

"I had to drag him kicking and screaming," says O'Keefe, 29. "But we've been best friends since we were 5 years old and grew up in New York together, so he really didn't have a choice."

"The New Yorkist" mixes stock footage, scenes from classics like Eisenstein's "Alexander Nevsky" and selections from Rimsky-Korsakov to tell its tale of a hero with a frustrated, slacker-ish Napoleon complex. And ordering Kliment around like a dictator didn't help.

"There wasn't dialogue," explains O'Keefe. "He's not an actor. So he felt like a figurine that was being manipulated for a lot of the film. It was incredibly frustrating for him. I look at it as a wildly ambitious debacle that I barely salvaged after 10 different versions of the movie and years of time."



Alex Kliment plays a city resident contemplating the takeover of Kyrgyzstan in "The New Yorkist."