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## News from Charleston's Art Community

### *Artifacts*

**By John Stoehr**

#### **A New Festival in Town**

It's called the Charleston International Film Festival and it hopes to showcase the cinematic talents and visual creativity of Charleston and the Lowcountry, as well as independent work from international directors and producers, in the way that Spoleto Festival USA showcases the performing arts from around the world.

The first-time event is slated for four days starting May 1, 2008 at the Terrace Theater on James Island. It plans to offer more than 40 short films, documentaries, and feature-length movies. Like most film festivals, there will be an awards show and banquet, as well as an after-party for four consecutive nights, says Summer Spooner, the festival director.

"The idea is to educate the community about the art and science of film," Spooner says. "I fell in love with the art and culture that's here. I knew it was the right thing to do to bring a film festival to Charleston."

The festival, which has an estimated operating budget of about \$50,000, according to Spooner, will be the first of its kind in nearly a decade since WorldFest-Charleston International Film Festival relocated in 1998.

Spooner has been the director of the Beverly Hills Film Festival since 2004. When her business partner, Brian Peacher, suggested they explore establishing a film festival in his native city (he grew up in the Lowcountry), Spooner agreed. Earlier this year, they secured nonprofit tax status with the IRS. By November, they had launched a website.

From now until May, they will be soliciting sponsors, including national corporations like Anheuser-Busch and Visa, while inviting local, regional, and international filmmakers to submit their best work for consideration.

The line-up will be announced in March.

The projected number of attendees, according to the press material I received last week, is about 15,000. That may be an overly ambitious target, but why not? Reach for the stars, right? Organizers anticipate that about 55 percent will be men; about 45 percent women.

The primary demographic, furthermore, is between ages 18 and 39. They are "affluent and discerning,"



"hip and open to trying new things," "active, successful, worldly influencers," "technologically savvy," and "attracted to luxury," according to the press material.

Hmm, kinda sounds like someone who reads *City Paper*.

For more about the festival, plus instructions on how to submit work for consideration, visit [www.charlestoniff.com](http://www.charlestoniff.com). —*John Stoehr*

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