

Fantasy fest

By Ivy Ugarkovic

Fans of fantasy and science fiction tend to be pretty die-hard, so it's hard to believe that there hasn't been a film festival solely dedicated to the genre-until now. The Fantasy Worldwide International Film Festival took its inaugural bow this past weekend at the Bloor Cinema, encompassing the mythology, science fiction, and historical fiction genres.

"We are excited to bring together a global community of filmmakers and filmgoers who love fantasy and science fiction films," founder and executive director Johanna Kern said.

Submissions came from an exciting array of talent from 13 countries around the world, Kern explained.

"(We have) feature films, documentaries, shorts or animations-exceptional tales from six continents that will bewitch you, abduct you and let you experience your mythological side," she continued.

With over 30 selections, including animated films, the festival tried to program something for everyone. The Varsity caught a few of the many diverse screenings over the festival weekend, including:

Kiss Me

Directed by Antonio Cunha Telles, this Portugese feature film (subtitled in English) takes us into the world of a woman who has had her share of traumatic experiences in life and decides to deal with her anguish by living the myth of the seemingly "perfect" Marilyn Monroe as if it were her own life.

Moving to a new Portuguese hamlet during the 1950s, Laura decides to come to terms with herself and her new life. Quickly, every man in town becomes bewitched by the beauty and raw sex appeal of this mysterious newcomer. But where there is beauty, there is jealousy and deliciously devilish lessons to learn. The audience gets a taste of reality under Portugal's cruel fascist regime, which tries fervently to make it clear that there is no place for myths or fantasies in real life.

Not My Religion

In his compelling short film, Canadian director Christopher Cordell depicts a bizarre encounter between a mermaid and Jesus who meet underwater. This intersection between religious belief and pagan myth is clearly meant to provoke the audience's theological ideologies, not to mention their take on world issues. The audience at the Fantasy Worldwide screening certainly reacted strongly to the closing scene, an

audible murmur arising throughout the theatre.

Moongirl

Fun-filled tales and animations for children were also offered at the festival, such as the delightful animated short Moongirl. Directed by Henry Selick, who has helmed many successful features such as *The Nightmare before Christmas* and *James and the Giant Peach*, the movie makes you feel as if you are 10 years old again, off on your very own top-secret adventure.

After a young boy named Leon and his flying squirrel are captured by an enchanted fish and taken to the moon, they're thrust into a world of fantasy and fun. Leon meets Moongirl and her magical cat, and he must help these magical characters save the moon from being completely destroyed by the evil Gargaloons.

This imaginative and adventurous short left the festival audience at the edge of their seats, thirsting for more.

On the whole, the first edition of the Fantasy Worldwide filmfest may not have drawn huge crowds, but if it continues to program an expansive, thought-provoking selection of films like it did this year, in the future it will surely draw in more moviegoers looking to expand their horizons.