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Los Angeles Greek Film Festival Highlights: Economic Crisis Forged Into Bold Creativity

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by Carlos Aguilar

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"Miss Violence" at the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival

Emerging with diverse artistic visions, Greek filmmakers have managed to mold the chaotic and uncertain situation of their country into cinematic statements ranging from the utterly realist to the

most audacious. This weekend several of these unique perspectives were screened at the 8th Edition of the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival with a program that included documentary features, shorts, and some of the most daring narratives to come out of the Hellenic nation recently. More prolific than ever, Greek Cinema voices the experiences of those affected by the economic crisis, those trying to make amends between tradition and fast-paced modernity, and above all it is fertile ground for exploration and reinvention.

Miss Violence

Dir. [Alexandros Avranas](#)



Miss Violence

Any film that opens with a girl committing suicide on her 11th birthday announces itself as something out of the ordinary. Alexandros Avranas' "**Miss Violence**" can easily be considered a new addition to the unofficially named Greek Weird Wave movement. Its closest reference is the Oscar-nominated "[Dogtooth](#)". Much like [Lanthimos](#) film, "**Miss Violence**" focuses on a family in which a controlling patriarch ruthlessly decides over its members' lives. While "**Dogtooth**" deals with a distorted perception of reality created by the monstrous father, Avranas' film is darker, more puzzling, and at times unbearably unnerving. Conformed by a mother, two

daughters, and two grandchildren, the family mechanics are never easily presented. Dozens of theories can be at play in the viewer's mind as one tries to decipher what is the evil truth behind it all. A shattering must-see, "**Miss Violence**" is a twisted tale of submission and perversion cleverly concealed by apparent righteousness. Full review coming soon.

[Standing Aside, Watching](#)

Dir. [Giorgos Servetas](#)



Standing Aside, Watching

When an educated and self-sufficient woman, Antigone ([Marina Symeou](#)), decides to return to her small town, she soon realizes that things haven't improved much from what she remembers. After finding a job as a teacher and reconnecting with her old friend Eleni ([Marianthi Pantelopoulou](#)), Antigone finds a younger boyfriend who makes things in the sleepy community more exciting. Sadly for this independent woman, that relationship will unearth the viciousness of the town's bully. Reveling in their archaic ideologies, people here uphold male chauvinist values that condone violence against women. Those protected by the corrupt local authorities enjoy impunity. Furthermore, the film points at indifference as the source of injustice. Outspoken about the outrageous gender inequality that still exists, this effective thriller is infuriating and

poignant until its culminating sequence. [Servetas](#) film is an extraordinarily brave and important statement not only for Greece, but anywhere where women still need to struggle for the most elemental respect.

[The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas](#)

Dir. [Elina Psikou](#)



The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas

Delusions of grandeur take on a new form when famed talk-show host Antonis Paraskevas ([Christos Stergioglou](#)) decides to orchestrate his own kidnapping as a publicity stunt. Hidden in a remote hotel out of service for the winter, he spends his days reading what the media says about his disappearance and endlessly practicing a recipe for molecular pasta all in hopes of a triumphal return. Subtly comedic and occasional unsettling, Psikou's film makes blunt observations about a man's obsession with his own image and status. Aware that his antics to turn himself into a legendary figure are failing, Antonis' arrogance will drive him to carry out increasingly more deranged tactics in order to recover his position and keep his fans interested. Embellished by a couple magical realist episodes, "**The Eternal Return**" peculiarly depicts the cult of celebrity and instant glorification, which is something that rings true now more than ever.

To The Wolf

Dir. [Aran Hughes](#) & [Christina Koutsospyrou](#)



To The Wolf

Bleak and meditative, this hyperrealist story evolves around two impoverished families in a precarious Greek mountain town. Set in the midst of the financial crisis, **To The Wolf** examines the daily struggles of an elderly couple and their son Giorgos ([Giorgos Katsaros](#)), who is goatherd unable to sell any of his animals and can't find any other way to make a living. Desperation quickly sets in followed by a dark feeling of despair. These families are in debt, they don't know where their next meal will come from, and they are completely disenchanted with a government that has forgotten them. Extremely minimalist visually and employing non-professional actors, the film exists ambiguously between documentary and fiction. It includes explicit social commentary about the terrible living conditions people in rural communities have been forced to endure, as well as the dismal disparities between them and their urban counterparts, of whom they are only aware via their ramshackle television.

Committed

Dir. [Stelana Kliris](#)



Committed

This English-language road trip romantic comedy set in Cyprus is an entertaining work that relies heavily on its two protagonists' ability to be engaging. Driving around the island to clear his head after a fight with his girlfriend, George ([Orestes Sophocleous](#) [Orestes Sophocleous](#)), an engineer of Greek origin who studied in England, runs across a bride ([Melia Kreiling](#)), wedding dress and all, who is walking alone on a deserted road running away from something or someone. He offers her a ride and what ensues are a series of conversations about love, the boredom of conventions, and of course, fear of commitment. Even if the performances appear overdone and rather generic at times, there is still a lighthearted chemistry between the two actors that makes the journey simplistic, but enjoyable. It would come as no surprise if the concept is adapted and remade with an American cast. This is the type of story that Hollywood craves, especially with the added bonus of a somewhat intriguing twist.

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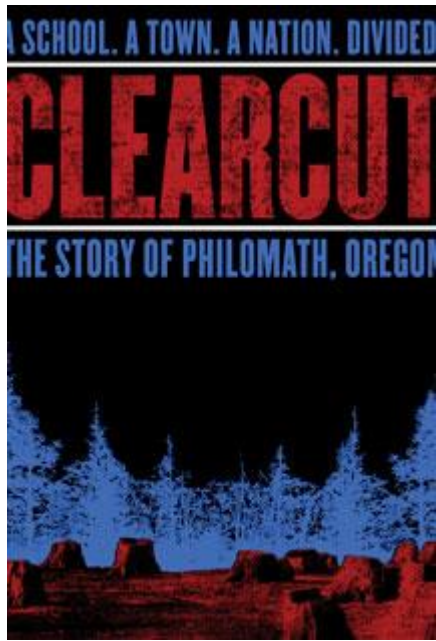
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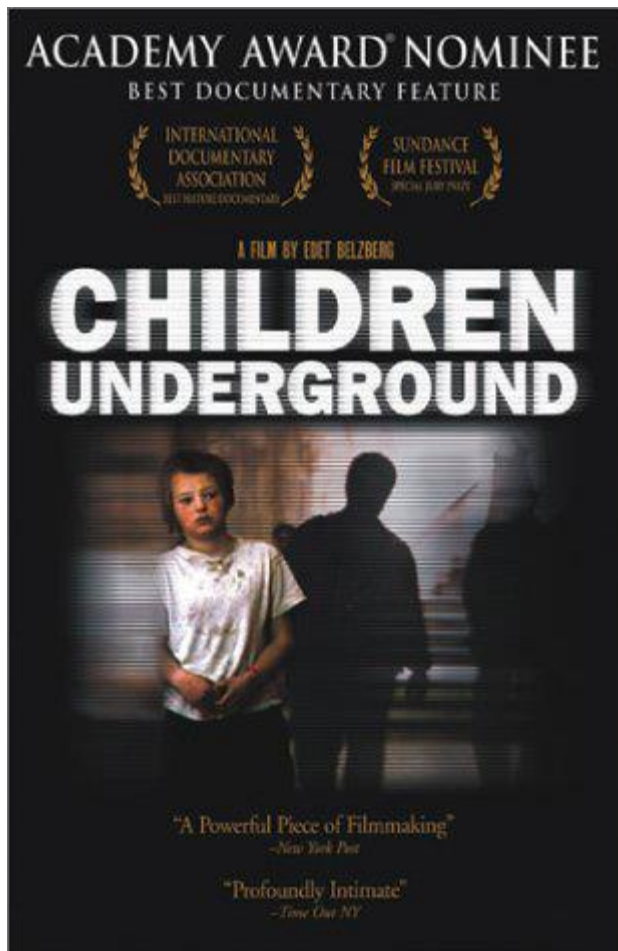
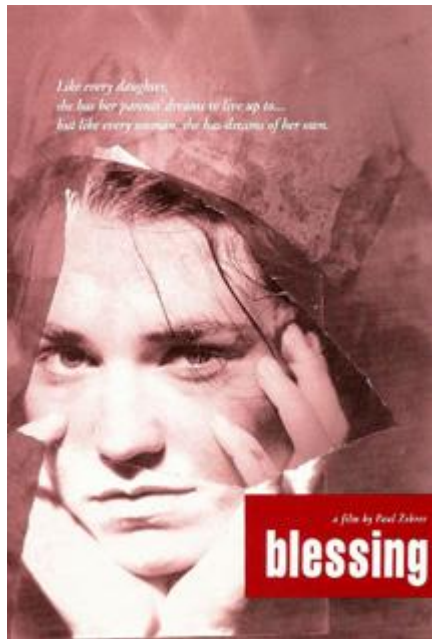
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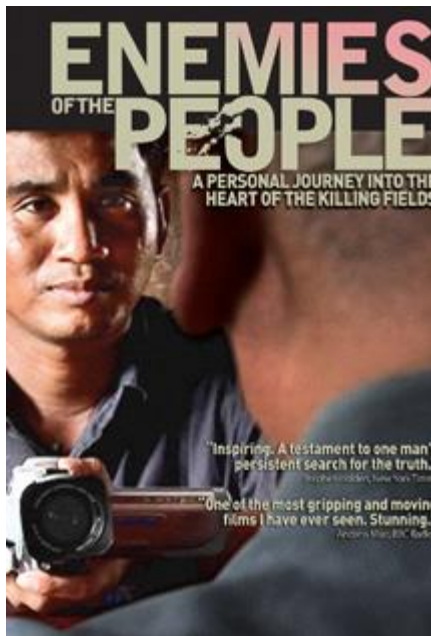
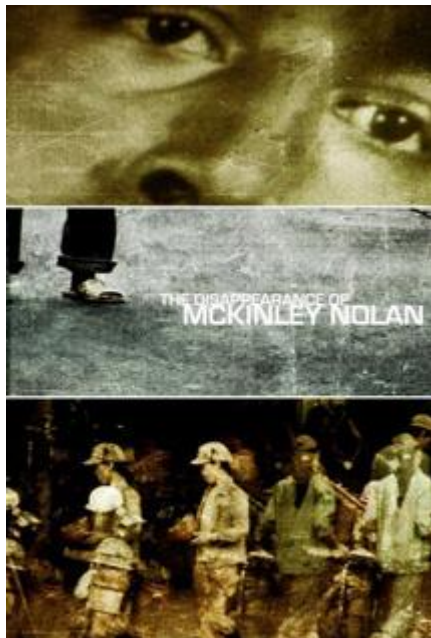
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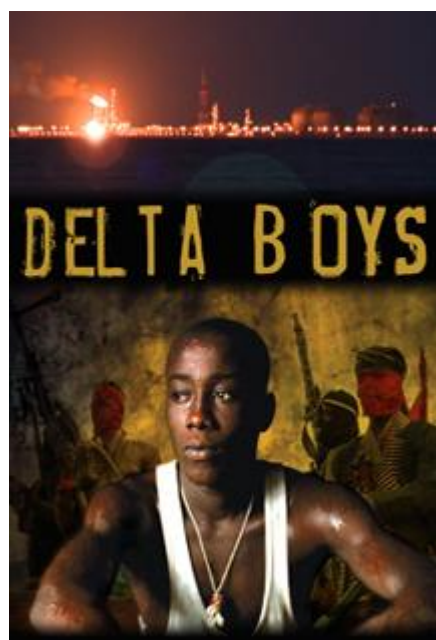
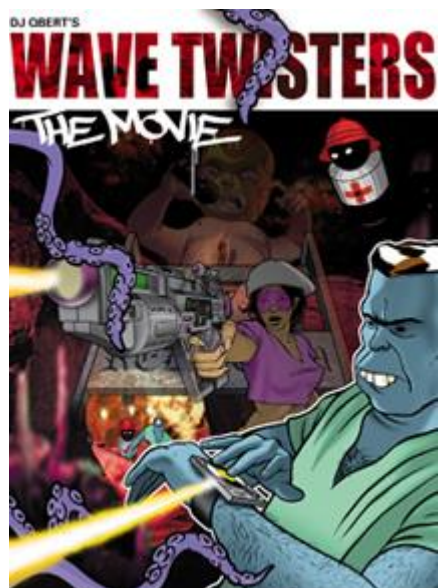


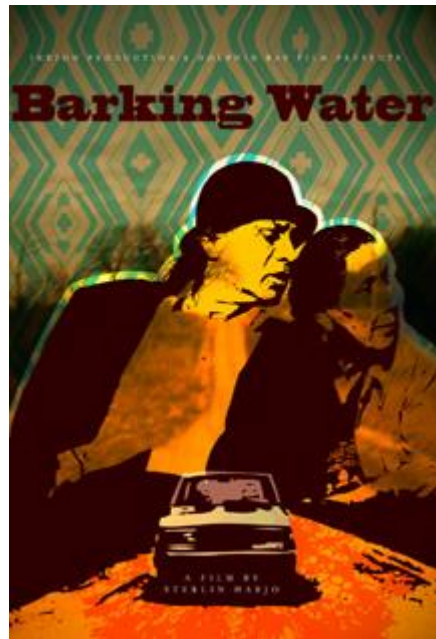


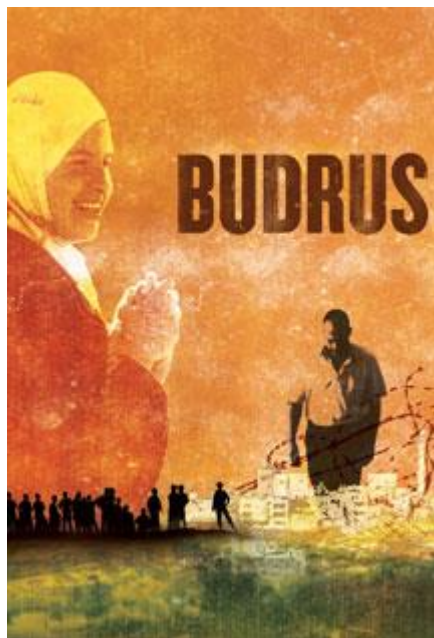


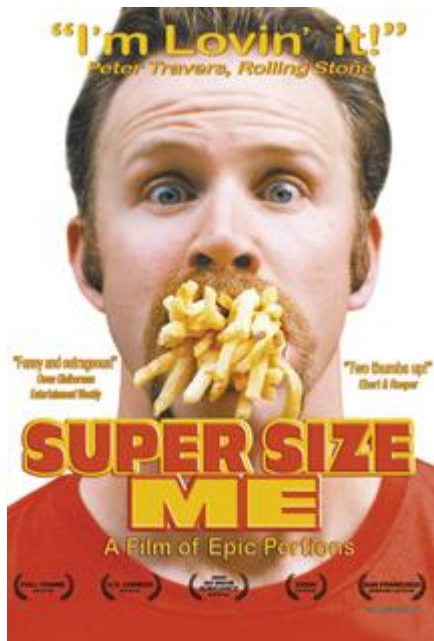


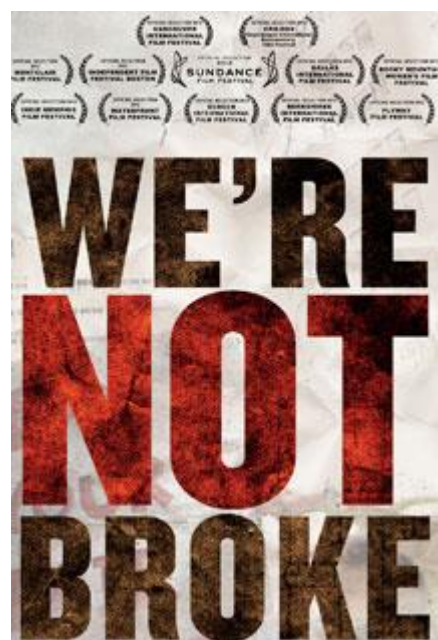
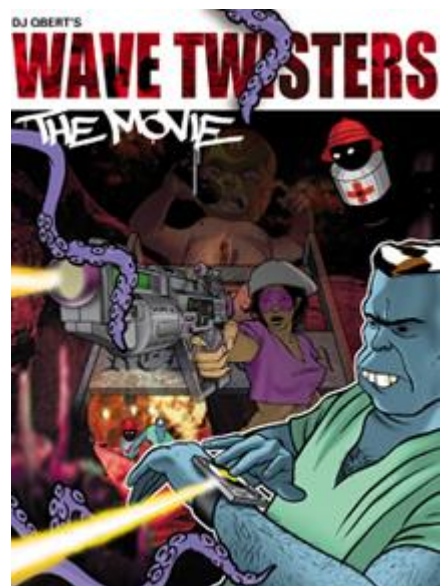


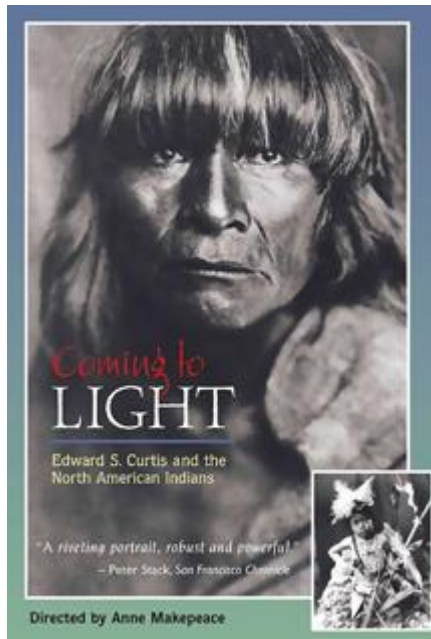
















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