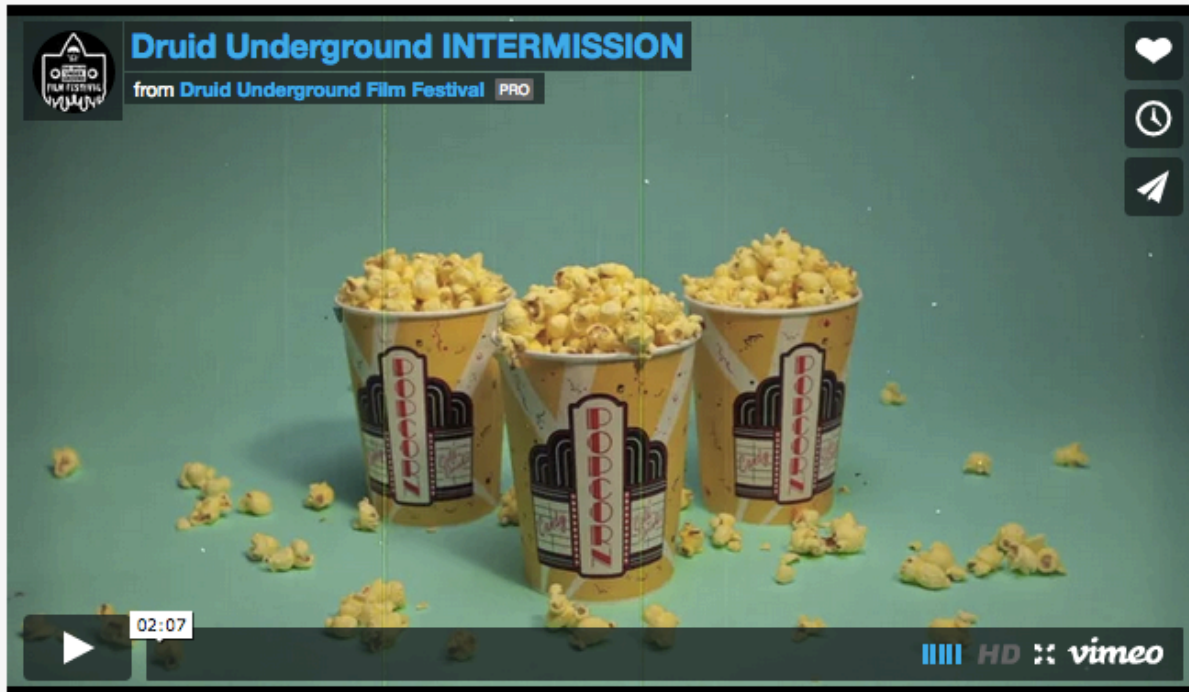


## THE 8TH ANNUAL UNDERGROUND DRUID FILM FESTIVAL COMES TO ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BY OLIVIA FLORES ALVAREZ

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2015



Billy Burgess, founder/curator and all-around head honcho of the **Annual Druid Underground Film Festival**, tells us it's hard to describe the lineup of shorts he's compiled for this year's screening. "Really, you have to see it," he tells us. Is there any one film that is representative of the festival, that captures its scope and attitude, we ask. "Well, no. I guess if you could only see one thing, I'd tell you to see the intermission reel. Once you see that, you've got a good idea what you're in for."

From Los Angeles, the fest grew to three cities in California, eventually adding screenings on the East Coast. This year the festival has a cross-country schedule of more than 15

That's the intermission reel above. Not being certified as a critic of either Druid or underground film festivals, we're withholding our opinion...except to say that we really like the black watermelon goo seen near the end.

Burgess started the festival eight years ago. He had recently graduated from Cal Arts' film program at the time and was booking acts in a tiny DIY punk-noise club in Los Angeles. "I knew there were lots of people out there making art who didn't have any way to find an audience, so I started a monthly hour-long program of shorts. Somehow it didn't suck. That grew into the festival."

cities and an international lineup. "We had just a hair under 1,000 submissions for this year. And we've got films from England, Newfoundland and France in addition to films from around the U.S."

The two-hour program features found-footage and a variety of shorts. "The first half of the program is sort of a VH1 mash-up. We have Christian scare films, police instructionals and Americana. To that I added some obscure scenes from horror movies, like aliens eating their own faces off, and what comes out is this paranoid ultra-vision of the underbelly of America."

One of the shorts for the second half of the screening is *Possibly in Michigan* by writer/director Ceclia Condit. A man is so cruel to a woman during their breakup that she labels him an "emotional murderer." Another woman joins her, and the two conspire to emotionally murder him back. "They end up cooking and eating him. So that's kind of horrible, but at the same time it's happy because these two women have bonded and come together to defeat this emotional murderer. I saw this online and I thought, 'Man, people have to see this!'

"The Internet is good for filmmakers because you can get people from all over the world to see your little three-minute film. At the same time, people from all over the world all have little three-minute films out there, too. So it seems like a lot of opportunity, but on lots of levels, it really isn't.

"That's what [we're] trying to do, to find those films that contain these kernels of creativity and deserve to be seen but that aren't being seen because of the sheer amount of film that's out there."

If you're wondering about the festival's name – ah, there actually are no Druids involved. "I think the movie theater is a scared place," Burgess says. "When I was thinking about what to name the festival, I knew that I wanted to bring people into a sacred place where magic happens and it's almost in secret. Druids are interesting to me because all of their sacred knowledge was oral; there was nothing written down and it was almost in secret. If you wanted to [get their knowledge], you had to be personally welcomed into their circle. That's what I want to do; I want everyone to know that they're welcomed at the Druid Underground Film Festival, that they can come be where the magic happens."

*See the Druid Underground Film Festival at 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13. Alamo Drafthouse – Vintage Park, 114 Vintage Park. For information, call 713-715-4707 or visit [druidundergroundfilmfestival.com](http://druidundergroundfilmfestival.com). \$10.*