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H-Town PASSIONISTAS



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These local 'passionistas' share their obsessions, explain how you can join them and tell how they're making a difference.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF PASSION

Hey, Bayou City, what's your passion? Are you a hobbyist chef? A wine-loving oenophile? Or perhaps you gravitate toward something more off the beaten path, like fencing (Will Smith and Tom Cruise do it) or collecting model trains (Ben Stiller). Or maybe you collect something else—passionately. It might or might not surprise you to know that Angelina Jolie is obsessed with collecting antique daggers, or that Tom Hanks can never be too far from his 200 old, manual typewriters. Whatever it might be, life as a "passionista" can often be healthy and inspiring.

Take a moment to be inspired by these Bayou City passionistas: Learn how they're following their passionate pursuits here in H-town, find ways to follow your own passions and see the ways some have channeled their obsessions into a means of helping others.

Unquestionably, movies move us all. From the moment in 1896 when audiences were startled to witness an actual "moving picture" of the otherwise commonplace arrival of a train into a French station, up to the present time, when "computer generated imagery" or CGI has created a sensational new dimension in moviemaking, the medium has never failed to fascinate us. But very few of us plunge into the cinematic arts with the pure passion that Robert Saucedo does. As an avid collector of all things film and as programming director for the Houston Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas, Saucedo can rightly claim that he lives and breathes cinema.

Saucedo says Houston is a great place to be a movie-lover. "As the fourth largest city in the country, there are

ROBERT SAUCEDO

Movie-lovers are always finding something cool to watch or collect in H-town.

MOVIE MAVEN



Robert Saucedo says movie watching is a "communal experience." Houston is full of experiences for movie fans, including events Saucedo helps create at the Alamo Drafthouse.



plenty of places and ways to watch movies. You may have to drive a bit, but most noteworthy films get a theatrical release somewhere in this city at some point. This allows us Houstonians a great opportunity to discover—not just films, but theaters and new communities around our city. Discovery and a love for film go hand in hand."

"It started in high school," Saucedo says, of the origins of his passion for movies.

"It was 1999, which happened to be a fantastic year for film. Movies like 'American Beauty' and 'Fight Club' and 'Being John Malkovich' were all released around the same time. I was taking theater class and my teacher introduced me to a lot of these films, and they just really ignited in me a love for cinema."

Since then, Saucedo's been true to his supercharged appreciation for the cinematic arts. Not only is he directly responsible for everything that gets screened for the three Houston-based Drafthouse theaters, he also collects film paraphernalia—movie posters, comic books, VHSs and DVDs (he has more than 3,000) and, as if to put a fine point on his passion, 35mm film prints, that remnant of movie raw materials that's now fading into the limelight in the same way that silent films did nearly a century ago.

One inevitable question: What are three films that stir Saucedo's passion?

First, he says, the 1981 animated film "American Pop." "It's all rotoscopes, and has this amazing, realistic beauty to the animation."

Next up, director David Cronenberg's 1986 version of "The Fly." "I truly believe it's the best horror film ever made—it's a movie that I watch every year and don't feel my year is complete until I've watched it," Saucedo says.

Third, from 2002, "The 25th Hour," a Spike Lee film starring Edward Norton. "The performances are just outstanding," he says.

Whatever genre or films you're drawn to, Saucedo has some suggestions for the aspiring film buff or collector. "My biggest piece of advice is to keep your eyes open. You never know what you're going to discover in this city—or who you're going to meet," Saucedo says. "There's always something cool and unique right in our backyard—I've found super rare 35mm prints off of Craigslist—and driven out to Conroe to meet a man who found a bunch of film cans in his father's storage unit."

For Saucedo, no genre escapes his passionate eye; he's equally in love with classics, horror, sci-fi, action, musicals, westerns, foreign films, documentaries and what have you. At the root of his passion for films, he says, is the idea of sharing the ones he loves with other people. "For me, movie-watching has always been a communal experience—it's always been about viewing them with friends and family or even strangers. It's seeing other people discover something in a film that you yourself love ... their reactions ... a laugh or a gasp ... there's just something about it that never ceases to amaze me." ♦