



Documentary in film festival shows ‘**Milltown, Montana**’ as seen through German eyes

By [JAMIE KELLY of the Missoulian](#) | Posted: Friday, January 15, 2010 4:30 am

The growing popularity of the documentary film genre – with fans and filmmakers alike – is itself a well-documented phenomenon, one that’s blossomed over the last decade.

Major movie studios have realized that there’s a buck to be made in documentaries, as their budgets are typically far below those of feature films, and the sheer number of filmmakers has exploded as the technology to make them has become more accessible. It’s a blessing and a curse.

The bad news for filmmakers is that there are still very few festivals to exhibit the films, which means the competition is fierce. The good news for audiences is that the competition is fierce.

The **Big Sky Documentary Film Festival**, which opens next month, is only one of 13 such events in the United States. And you can bet that the makers of the 130 films that will appear on the big screen at the Wilma Theatre count themselves fortunate to have made the cut from a staggering 1,000 entries. Here’s another big number: 10,000. That’s the number of people the festival expects to attract to its screenings and other events from Feb. 12-21.

What started out as a small up-and-coming festival seven years ago is now an enormous attraction, with major corporate sponsorship, a regionwide audience and national acclaim. Earlier this week, the **BSDFF** released its catalogue of official entries, and as usual, the unusual rules.

Orgasms and Milltown, for starters.

The film that will surely draw a packed audience is “**Milltown, Montana**” a breathless, dialogue-free portrait of the timber town we all know.

Funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation and directed by Rainer Komers, “**Milltown, Montana**” is a half-hour look at the scenery we take for granted, but also the scarred earth of a dam’s removal and a century of mining waste.

The film, in the **BSDFF**’s “**Big Sky**” competition category, has already won a festival prize in Europe, and is a dark but beautiful look at corporate greed and the damage left in its wake.

As is “**Orgasm Inc.**” which may appear by the name to be exploitative, but is itself a searing look at the pharmaceutical industry.

In it, filmmaker Liz Canner, an employee of a major drug company, takes an insider’s look at her employer, which is trying to develop a drug for female sexual dysfunction (a Viagra for women, essentially).

In it, Canner suspects the company is taking advantage of women and endangering their health in the quest for its “orgasm pill.” What is, she asks, the price of pleasure?

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