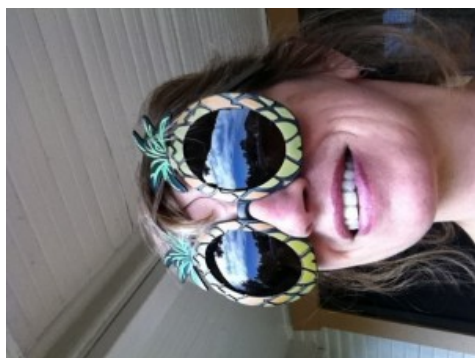


About Gemma Dempsey

Film, Music, Travel, Culture & groovy stuff

LA Film Festival, Dance Camera West, The Flaming Lips , The Devils Double, Senna , The Guard

Posted on [June 25, 2011](#) by [gemmadempsey](#)



Well it has indeed been a while since I wrote my blog . Bit bloody pointless having a blog and not writing it I hear you scoff ! A lack of discipline is part of the problem – that and the fact that I’m busy going out and about doing fun things to write about in my blog! If only there was some kind of technology that could transcribe my witty thoughts and details of my global peregrinations and shameless hob knobbing, it would be so simple. I suspect such a gizmo is being developed as I type at MIT but for now I will try and do better and carve out some writing time for me on a more regular basis. Wow that kind of felt like a

confession – takes me back to the days of kneeling in a glorified cupboard while a dodderly old priest with a severe case of halitosis would ask me what naughty stuff I had been up to. I gave up going to confession after Father Kavanaugh started to look at me from behind the grill – its one thing to confess one’s sins in anonymity, quite another to be identified. So as my sexual urges began to awaken and my misdemeanors developed from swearing at my mum to wanting to commune with a nice patch of moss in the back garden, I decided I better stop going for fear of being embarrassed or giving Father K a heart attack.

Since SXSW in March I have been to New York and London – both fantastic. But I’m going to write in reverse order so I’ll kick off with last night at The Los Angeles Film Festival (LAFF).



Miranda July – artist, writer, actress, director, great legs, lovely eyes, abundant curly mop – it could be easy to hate her but instead I revere her multiple talents. And only hate her a little bit. I'd been hearing about her movie 'The Future' since Sundance and finally got to see it last night at REDCAT. It's a simple story that takes kooky turns as it unfolds and embraces you in rather like a beautiful warm blanket. I'd heard about the talking cat in it and having just had her husband Mike Mills on the radio show I produce, talking about his film 'Beginners' that featured a talking dog, I wondered which of them had hit upon the idea of a conversant beast first or was it coincidence or just the type of thing that happens when you are in tune with your mate.

I liked both of these films – each charming in their own way. 'The Future' comes out end of July and Beginners is currently in theatres – and by the way don't be put off seeing Beginners if someone says its sad and about an old guy coming out of the closet in his 70's, finding sex and love and then contracting cancer. If anything this is a film about embracing life and being honest with yourself and those around you and its never too late – until of course you pop your clogs.



Thursday Summer Solstice Night – Stacy tempted me out to The Bootleg where Jason Eldredge was djing before Shana performed some of her new songs – she was in the band Bitter:Sweet and is now doing her own thing and doing it very well too!



I also bumped into Debi Mae West who I hadn't seen since her excellent Family Affair atop the Standard Downtown .

Wednesday – LAFF for The Guard – produced by my friend Chris Clark and his wife Flora Fernandez Marengo – and starring Brendan Gleason , Mark Strong and Don Cheadle directed by John Michael McDonough. Chris and I had tried to meet up in Sundance but he was busy selling his movie so it was good to have a quick chat with him on Wednesday.

My dear friend Rachel O'Meara joined me and we had a good chuckle at



this excellent dark comedy, brilliantly written and directed by John Michael and beautifully acted by the entire cast.

Monday – my first movie screening at LAFF – The Devil’s Double – my pal Rez had been talking about this since he saw it at Sundance (how many times can I drop that festival’s name? I think that is the last time...)

I met the director Lee Tamahori on Friday at the filmmaker’s reception. I had forgotten that he directed the brutal but totally compelling film ‘Once Were Warriors’ – so brutal it could put you off visiting his home country of New Zealand. He was very chatty and we talked about the soundtrack for his film – a young composer called Christian Hewson recorded the score at Air Studios in London and used a Soweto guitar – a recycled gallon drum with strings attached to an amp that sounds wonderfully dirty and distorted – the perfect choice for this film which is inspired by the story of Saddam Hussein’s pathological son - Uday Hussein – who hired a body double to do his bidding and deflect bullets . The lead roles of the double and the son are played by the magnificent and delish Dominic Cooper.

They were shot one after the other so Dominic had to change character then act against himself. Pretty amazing. French actress Ludovine Sagnier played her role really well too. The party afterwards was mind blowing – held on the 24th floor of the Ritz Carlton, the guests included Bono, Sarah Palin and George Bush were there! Well, there doubles were J I thought I was tripping when I saw my own double only to find it was me reflected in a mirror!

Saturday June 18th I went to hear Mike Figgis present his dance film ‘The Co(te)lette Film as part of Dance Camera West’s 10th anniversary celebrations at the Hammer in Westwood. <http://vimeo.com/15798684>

I’m not a big contemporary dance fan and had never heard of this dance festival but as a friend of Mike’s I was excited to see his film and hear him talk about it – it was the first time he had been back to LA in almost 6 years and he was clearly enjoying not having to deal with the normal crapola of presenting a studio movie.

‘The Co (te)lette Film is extraordinary. You must check out this link and then make sure you see the full length – it’s a mesmerizing portrayal of what it is to be a woman portrayed in the most physical, honest and astounding way I have ever seen. Its not performed very often as you can see the toil it takes on the dancers – Mike shot it over 5 days and I think he has done an amazing job of capturing choreographer Ann Van den Broek’s stunning work.



Wednesday The Flaming Lips performed The Dark Side of the Moon at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. Only in LA! What a kooky venue – perfect for this kooky band. Allen and I brought some food and arrived at sunset – the opening act was pretty horrendous – lots of distortion both of a guitar and vocal variety. It was a perfect night as there was a lunar eclipse, which we were able to see until the clouds descended.



Check out the cool lunar images on this link – shots from all over the world

<http://asterisk.apod.com/viewtopic.php?f=29&t=23957&start=25>

I can't say I'm the biggest Lips fan but I like being entertained and I was certainly not disappointed – the performance was more of a mash up of my beloved The Wizard of Oz and Dark Side of the Moon and they threw in some of their classic tunes too. The stage was the biggest I have ever seen at the cemetery and the light show was terrific. Wayne had come out earlier to warn people of the flash and strobes so any epileptic sufferers would know to look away – so when I was flashing away with my digital camera I wasn't aware of what I was taking as there was lots of subliminal images being thrown up on the backdrop – much to my surprise and horror I discovered I had taken the picture of a huge vagina! And the band had entered the stage from a door in the backdrop – effectively looking like they were coming out of the ladies pudenda! Only then did it dawn on me the etymology of the band's name!



My friend Marine bounded across our picnic blanket and having got her attention with a greeting 'Marnie Fucking Castor!' she and her friend joined us, ate all our food and then fucked off. Hey a friend with food is a friend indeed right?

A quick wrap up of the rest of June –

June 11th was the anniversary of my Dad's death and my first wedding anniversary – so a day of mixed emotions as you can imagine. Ex husband #2 emailed me to remind me of the former fact – as if I needed reminding! I'm glad I had just been to the UK as I visited the cemetery where both my parents are buried and cleaned up the grave, bought some new plants – a bougainvillea to represent California and Australia where my sister Yvette lives, a fuchsia as this was one of Dad's faves , and a busy lizzy (Impatiens) as my mum kept a

huge one alive in the kitchen and bits kept breaking off and she kept transplanting them – and washed the bird shit off the gravestone and tore some bark off the dying Oak tree to decorate the edges of the grave. It was the Sunday of a holiday weekend in the UK and apart from seeing one car enter the cemetery grounds I was the only person there. It was both eerie and soothing to be there. That might sound weird to those of you who have yet to lose a close relative. I tried to find Grannies grave having found it last year but either the ivy has taken over her sad little stone or I didn't go far enough.

June 7th I saw the excellent documentary Senna about the amazing Formula 1 raced driver Ayrton Senna – Kevin MacDonald who directed the brilliant 'Life in A Day' is one of the producers and its editor is Chris King who had the herculean task of putting the maze of tapes belonging to Mr Brainwash together for Banksy's 'Exit Through the Gift Shop' documentary. Working Title's Eric Fellner is one of the main producers on the film – I'd bumped into him at SXSW – it was his first visit to Austin and he came for Senna's US festival premiere

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrbJPsPtTyU>

I like F1 and remember Senna but can't say this is normally a film I would single out to see but am really glad I did – it's a great testament to the human spirit , and the willingness to risk everything – even your life – if that is what it takes to fulfill your dream ... 'walking away from the dark forces just doesn't become an option'

June 8th was a good knees up at the British Consulate – I bumped into a former work colleague who shall remain nameless because after an initial 'How good to see you ! Its been so long ! etc etc' he returned to whisper in my ear 'You know I lusted after you don't you??' Ugh. How does one tactfully respond to such a statement? Truth of the matter all I could think about was his hairy back which his now ex wife had talked about at a dinner party – TMI!! – and how unattractive I had found him. But in the spirit of being in a social

situation I laughed politely and said ‘Oh but you were married!’ not my best or wittiest riposte but under the circumstances it was the best I could do – and far better than saying what was really on my mind! Unfortunately it didn’t deflect him for long because he returned, and said ‘Well you were married too at the time!’ . I didn’t know what to say at this point. Technically it was true but I had left my drug addled ex and was getting a divorce while he was still playing happy families with his wife. It reminded me of a director who shall also remain nameless who said a similar thing to me – something like ‘I’ve always wanted to jump your bones’. Again, I didn’t find him in the slightest bit attractive so what are you supposed to bloody well say to that? ‘Thanks!’ ?? ‘Me Too!’ ‘God I thought you’d never ask – what a shame we’re standing in a car park in daylight!’

Any witty retorts would be most welcome !

That’s enough for now – if you have read this far – well done! and you will have noticed I haven’t proof read this very well or figured out how to turn photos around – well I will have to do that another day as I need to get ready for one more LAFF event tonight – The Seduction of Ingmar Bergman with music by Sparks will tell you about that next time -

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