

Cinema on a Haystack: Outdoor Film Series With Landscaper's Touch | The Sag Harbor Express



By Vee Benard

In the overwhelmingly commercial atmosphere we find as a result of living in the Hamptons summer community, it is often difficult to find an outlet for family enjoyment without significant financial investment. That is why Silas Marder's weekly outdoor film screenings are so refreshing — conducted on the wide lawn outside the Silas Marder Gallery, the summer film series provides an atmosphere in which both adults and families can spend time together and appreciate the natural beauty of the Hamptons.

Free and open to the public, Marder's Friday night "Films on the Haywall" series seeks to revive the idea of the old-time drive-in by screening classic films in an outdoor setting. In fact, Marder's outdoor screening space sits very close to the site of the old drive-in movie theater which was torn down to make way for the Bridgehampton Commons shopping center. Citing cinema as a long-time passion, Marder explains that providing access to film classics has always been a priority, and the flexible, indoor-outdoor nature of his gallery has provided a perfect avenue for this "community service."

"There is really an idea here to give something to the public that is out of the range of the ordinary, that gives something to the community, that furthers the idea that the arts are available to all," says Marder who hopes the series will be just one in a spectrum of arts offerings out here, ranging from Guild Hall and Bay Street to music at the Old Whalers' Church and local programming on WLIU.

The Films on the Haywall series, so named for the immense haywall that acts as a backdrop for Marder's professional-sized movie screen, provides both locals and seasonal visitors with entertaining options that are appropriate for families. Currently in its third year, the series strives to offer films that aren't shown on the big screen often enough and appeal to a wide range of movie goers.

Hilary Hamann, Marder's collaborator for the series and partner in project development for the gallery, says the series is "a great thing to do with your family on a Friday night. You are not sitting in an air-conditioned box ... you are watching cinema classics under the stars in the beautifully landscaped gardens of Marder's Nursery. It is a natural extension of art, architecture, landscape, and outdoor space ... it is a truly unique experience."

The series has been a hit with many audience members, some of whom have told Marder they drive a great distance every weekend to attend the screenings.

"Depending on the nature of the film," he says, "we have parents bringing children. We see a lot of teens, a lot of seniors, and a lot of people just out for the weekend. Everyone is sitting together in beach chairs, often with food they picked up along the way."

This summer's film selection is what Marder describes as "a celebration of American and foreign classics." Starting

June 25 with Alan Pakula's 1976 film "All the President's Men," the series will include Francois Truffaut's "Jules and Jim," Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho," Stephen Spielberg's "Jaws," George Roy Hill's "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," Richard Brooks' "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," Michelangelo Antonioni's "Blowup," Jerome Robbins & Robert Wise's "West Side Story," Sidney Lumet's "Dog Day Afternoon," and John Badham's "Saturday Night Fever." Films are screened every Friday at 9 p.m. or at sunset — whichever comes first. Because there is no set standard for "child-appropriate content," parents are urged to do some research before each week's movie to make sure it is suitable for their family.

Also this weekend, Silas Marder Gallery's season-opening exhibition "Friend or Foe" begins with a reception on Saturday, June 26, from 5 to 9 p.m. For more information on screenings or art openings contact the Silas Marder Gallery at 702-2306 or info@silasmarder.com, or visit www.silasmarder.com.

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