

Hey! A Silver Screen on a Wall of Hay at Marders

By Jamil Donith

(7/15/2008) Those who still lament the loss of the Hamptons Drive-In in Bridgehampton will be happy to know that the Silas Marder Gallery in that hamlet is now showing free outdoor movies each week.

“It’s always been a passion of mine,” Silas Marder said of the cinema. When the gallery owner and artist first started transforming his farm-like lot on Snake

Hollow Road into an indoor-outdoor gallery, he kept in mind that he wanted to do films in the future.

In previous years he has shown a film here and a film there, but this year he is offering a 10-film series called Films on the Hay Wall.

A hay wall that looms over half the perimeter of the back of the gallery ends at a shelf that has different elevations to accent the standing screen. Everything in the vicinity seems to have a particular purpose. A grassy knoll dotted with haystacks serves as the seating area. Two large hedges directly behind the outdoor theater serve as “utility rooms.”

The films have been chosen as carefully as the space has been designed. All relate in some way to the creation and perception of space, architecture, and art, offering another way to tie in the many visual mediums featured at the gallery.



Daniel Gonzalez

“Breathless,” which was screened under the stars at the Films on the Hay Wall series at Marders nursery and gallery in Bridgehampton on Friday, drew film and nostalgia buffs.

Even so, the movies have value as simple entertainment. Old favorites like Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds," Billy Wilder's "The Apartment," and Orson Welles' "F for Fake," a favorite of Mr. Marder's, are sure to "reel" in the crowds.

"They are also films we just get a kick out of," Mr. Marder said. "Films you just don't get to see."

Hilary Hamann, who develops projects with Mr. Marder, received bachelor's and master's degree in film at New York University. Ms. Hamann, who has lived in East Hampton her whole life, said that the films remind her of a childhood memory of when people used to be outdoors, rather than in designer stores.

"We want to recapture the feeling of the East Hampton that we remember," she said.

Nancy Miller of Southampton saw an advertisement for the series and thought it would be way better than driving to the Stephen Talkhouse in Amagansett on a busy Friday night. She, her husband, Pat Miller, and friends turned out on Friday to watch "Breathless," the 1960s French film by Jean-Luc Godard.

"I like old films with stories," Mrs. Miller said.

Raun Norquist of Sag Harbor used to be a film buff when she lived in New York and had seen two movies at the Hay Wall last year. "Part of your education is to see as many films as you possibly can," she said, laughing.

As a designer, Ms. Norquist knows Mr. Marder from the gallery. She said she found the films interesting and enjoyed the opportunity to be out of doors.

Unlike Ms. Norquist and Mrs. Miller, who are casual devotees of the film night, Vee Benard of Sag Harbor, a high school senior, is a serious fan, with numerous lawn chairs, blankets, and picnic baskets set up long before the show begins. Ms. Benard is a family friend of the Marders and has attended every film.

"I am probably the only one that has that track record," she said, smiling.

"It is such a cool setup because there are not really any drive-ins," she said. "All different sorts of people are watching old movies, it's really fun."

Along with the free films, movie-goers can grab a drink or some snacks at a free, self-serve concession stand.

It is hoped that the series will make more people aware of the gallery, and a number of the movies will be shown on the nights that exhibits open. However, both Ms. Hamann and Mr. Marder said that was just a bonus.

"We wanted to do something for the community, and part of it's for us too," Mr. Marder said.

Mr. Marder and Ms. Hamann have never missed a show. Once the sun disappears beneath the horizon, they too join the crowd to watch the evening's feature.

The movies will be shown through Aug. 29 and start at dusk, around 9 p.m. Fred Zinneman's "High Noon" will be tomorrow's selection, followed by "The Apartment" on Friday, July 25.

