



ARTHOUSE
FILMS

Presents

BEAUTIFUL LOSERS



A Sidetrack Films Production

A film by Aaron Rose

****OFFICIAL SELECTION****

South By Southwest Film Festival 2008

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2008

Hot Docs International Documentary Festival 2008

RELEASE DATE: August 8, 2008 in New York City at IFC Center

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FILMMAKERS

Directed by **AARON ROSE**

Co-Directed by **JOSHUA LAND**

Produced by **RICH LIM**
JOHN BARLOW

Music by **MONEY MARK**

FEATURING

Thomas Campbell
Shepard Fairey
Jo Jackson
Chris Johanson
Margaret Kilgallen
Harmony Korine
Geoff McFetridge
Barry McGee
Mike Mills
Stephen Powers
Ed Templeton



SYNOPSIS

BEAUTIFUL LOSERS celebrates the spirit behind one of the most influential cultural moments of a generation. In the early 1990s a loose-knit group of like-minded outsiders found common ground at a little NYC storefront gallery. Rooted in the DIY (do-it-yourself) subcultures of skateboarding, surf, punk, hip hop & graffiti, they made art that reflected the lifestyles they led. Developing their craft with almost no influence from the "establishment" art world, this group and the subcultures they sprang from have now become a movement that has been transforming pop culture.

Developing their craft with almost no influence from the "establishment" art world, this group, and the subcultures they sprang from have now become a movement that has been transforming pop culture. Starring a selection of artists who are considered leaders within this culture, *Beautiful Losers* focuses on the telling of personal stories...speaking to themes of what happens when the outside becomes "in" as it explores the creative ethos connecting these artists and today's youth.

Directed by Aaron Rose and co-directed by Joshua Leoard, BEAUTIFUL LOSERS speaks to the collective memory of the 1990's and sheds new lights on those unbeknownst to mainstream America.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I began working with the artists featured in this film we were all just kids. We all hung out together in New York City, skateboarding, writing graffiti, drinking, going to see bands and basically screwing around like most twenty-something's do. We were all creative people and were constantly making stuff, be it a zine, or a painting, taking photographs, or playing in bands...creativity was a serious outlet for us and helped us understand ourselves and our world.

At the beginning there were never any "goals" attached. The only goal was to have fun and share stuff with our friends. When it came time to make the Beautiful Losers movie it became very clear from the beginning that this was the most important message we could bring to life in the film. I wanted this film to inspire people. Not just artists, but anyone who faces the questions of "growing up" and the changes one goes through as this process takes place.

Even though the artists in Beautiful Losers aren't kids anymore, and have now gone on to worldwide acclaim, the basic message in all the art is still the same. Have fun and make it for your friends. This is a trying task for all of us sometimes. The world places many pressures on us to "be this" or "be that" but in my opinion all we ever have to be is ourselves. That is the reason we made this movie and it is a very important lesson to remember.

While Beautiful Losers is set in the art scene, you don't have to be an artist to understand this film. This is a wonderful story that speaks to the power of friendship, the tragedy of loss, the importance of supporting your colleagues and perhaps most importantly, the transformative power of love.

--Aaron Rose



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Barry McGee



After exploding from the streets of San Francisco as the prolific graffiti artist TWIST, Barry McGee has become one of the leading artistic figures in California youth subculture. He draws his force and inspiration from the contrast and tension that exists between the city center and the suburbs, between wealthy districts and the slums. His visual language is at once eclectic, ephemeral, radical and, above all, heavily influenced by the daily realities of the city. McGee's complex installations convey a sense of vitality and chaos, juxtaposed with a precarious nature and sense of alienation. Large-scale wall murals, clusters of small-framed drawings and snapshots, various tools and other street detritus make their way into his installations in an almost symphonic fashion. Intricate paintings are executed then rolled over with latex paint, echoing the 'buffs' that cover graffiti in urban areas. Clusters of glass bottles hang in a corner with painted portraits of derelicts and other characterizations of street "personalities." In recent years, McGee has exhibited his works internationally to great acclaim. Recent exhibitions include Museum of Modern Art in New York, UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Foundation Cartier in Paris, and the Fondazione Prada in Milan.

Chris Johanson



San Francisco based artist Chris Johanson transforms the fleeting and commonplace activities of the modern American city into very affecting stories, beautifully frozen in time for us to observe. Johanson has been creating these images since he was a teenager, often using found objects such as old wood and disused paper as canvases to convey a sense of decay and isolation. Johanson's installations consist of paintings, constructions and works on paper arranged in a carefully planned, yet seemingly haphazard three-dimensional

maze. Most recently, he has chosen to forego the physical domain for the psychological, delving into another dimension of the American landscape. He comments on the age of consumerism, as well as modern psychological phenomenon such as self-help, psychotherapy, new age and 12-step support groups. He creates a world where nude dancers, good vibes, emotionally centered people, forest energy and rainbows abut a sinister comic edge. Johanson has exhibited his works internationally and received the 2002 SECA Award, given by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He exhibits his works at Deitch Projects in New York and was included in the 2002 Whitney Biennial.

Ed Templeton



Ed Templeton was born in Orange County, California, a sprawling suburb of Los Angeles where he still lives today with his wife of 16 years, Deanna. He discovered skateboarding in middle school and quickly went pro before finishing high school. He has devoted his life to it since then. It was skateboarding that gave him opportunities to tour Europe where he spent every free moment absorbing its galleries and art museums. Templeton began to exhibit his works in small galleries and skateboard shops, eventually moving on to large galleries and institutions. His photographs give a sun-drenched glimpse of what it might be like to be young and alive in what Templeton refers to as "the suburban domestic incubator". His first major European museum exhibition opened in October 2002 at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Since then, he has exhibited his paintings and photographs worldwide. Templeton is the founder of Toy Machine, a blood-sucking skateboard company. He has also done design work for Grand Royal, Spin, Geffen and Factory Records and is currently one of the principles behind ANP Quarterly, a large format art & culture magazine.

Geoff McFetridge



Geoff McFetridge is a Los Angeles based artist and filmmaker. A graduate of Cal Arts, he has worked primarily in the world of graphic design, creating graphics and logotypes for companies such as ESPN, Burton Snowboards, Nike, Girl Skateboards, Stussy and others. His first foray into galleries was a 1997 solo exhibition at George's in Los Angeles. The show introduced his work to photographer and filmmaker Sofia Coppola who commissioned him to create the title graphics for her 1999 film, *The Virgin Suicides*. McFetridge has since mounted exhibitions of his work in New York, Berlin, London, Paris and Tokyo and was included in the 2003 Cooper-Hewitt National Design Triennial, New York. In addition to prints, his installations have included everything from furniture, film, fabrics and silkscreened wallpaper. Outside the art world, McFetridge's designs have been featured on t-shirts, album covers, stickers, buttons, patches, and even athletic shoes.

Harmony Korine



Harmony Korine is a 35 year-old artist, writer and filmmaker from Nashville, Tennessee. Perhaps best known as the "19 year-old screenwriter of Larry Clark's *Kids*," Harmony's career began on an auspicious note when he met Clark while he was skateboarding in a New York City park. He had written a screenplay and wondered if Clark would look at it. Six months later the film was in production and a hefty writer's fee was showered upon Harmony. The film went on to become one of the most criticized and controversial films of the 1990's. After *Kids*, Harmony went into production on his first venture as a commercial director. The resulting film was *Gummo*, a sordid and disturbingly comical tale of white trash in America. In 1999, Harmony joined forces with director Lars Von Trier, becoming a member of the seminal film collective known as "Dogme 95." His third film, *Julien Donkey Boy*, was created in the Dogme style, employing only lo-fi production techniques. As a visual artist, Harmony has exhibited his works in exhibitions in New York and Los Angeles and has a long-standing patronship

with Paris based fashion designer and art collector, *Agnes B.* Korine recently premiered his fourth film *Mister Lonely*, starring Samantha Morton, Diego Luna and Werner Herzog, at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

Jo Jackson



Jo Jackson is an artist from Portland, Oregon who creates striking canvases that subvert classic American graphic norms. Her paintings are charged with signs and shapes, rendered in pastel colors in high contrast juxtapositions that seem almost as if they were applied with vinyl rather than a brush. Eagles, skulls, wolves, a map of North America and people are layered ironically, subverting typical graphic imagery into a twisted miasma of something that is at once cute and incredibly dark. She re-works classic Americana symbology into soft colors that reveal their true political essence. Although her work most definitely has its roots in the streets, what she executes on canvas is far from raw (She cites the French Situationists and Josef Albers as inspirations). Jackson's aesthetic employs symbols of psychological and social chagrin, creating a form of sly protest, the secret of which is approachability. Jo Jackson has exhibited her work widely throughout the western United States and recently completed solo exhibitions in Los Angeles and Switzerland.

Margaret Kilgallen



Margaret Kilgallen's art is influenced by both American and non-Western folk traditions. Her bold, graphic art is grounded in a keen observation of the urban landscape such as the contemporary Mexican-American commercial strip that one might find in San Francisco's Mission District or the seashore towns of Northern California. It is also illustrative of commercial art found in India or Africa, where old, imported graphic conventions continue to predominate. Kilgallen's work does not follow a conceived plan. Her work has almost always been done on-site, drawing large letters completely by hand using house paint rollers.

Kilgallen's art achieves human resourcefulness on many levels. Her use of discarded materials or donated paint resonates with her family's history of making due with whatever resources they could to survive. Aside from her gallery work, Kilgallen has been involved in community based art collaborations. Kilgallen passed away tragically in 2001 from complications from cancer.

Mike Mills



Mike Mills is a graphic designer, art director, filmmaker, and curator currently living in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of the Cooper Union School of Design, where he studied with Tibor Kalman, eventually going to work for him at his firm, M & Co. It was while he was a student at Cooper he found his way to the Alleged Gallery for their first show exhibiting skateboard art. Since then, Mills has established himself as one of the most respected and sought after designers working today. His list of clients reads like a who's who of popular culture. Past projects include album cover designs for bands such as The Beastie Boys, Beck, Sonic Youth, Air and more. He has designed graphics and textiles for Marc Jacobs, and created the identity for X-Girl Clothing. He has exhibited his unique graphic installations worldwide including solo shows at Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York and Collette in Paris. Recently Mills has focused his attention on directing films. In past years he has directed numerous short films including *The Architecture of Reassurance* (2000) and *Paperboys* (2001) and the feature film *Thumbsucker* (2005). He is currently in production on his second feature.

Stephen Powers



Stephen Powers is a New York artist who is also known by his street moniker, ESPO. In recent years he has established himself on the international art scene with a body of work that reflects a fascination with graffiti, sign painting, urban marketing and con games of all shapes and sizes. Powers left college before his junior year to publish *On the Go*, a hip hop lifestyle magazine from his hometown

of Philadelphia. Publishing and editing would reduce his painting time to nights and weekends until the magazine folded in 1997. As a coda, he wrote *The Art of Getting Over* (St. Martin's Press, 1999), a book about his personal history of graffiti. He began to plan a show that would combine his love for low-level commerce and contrast it with the high stakes machinations of the art world. The result of his efforts debuted at the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art with *Indelible Market*, a collaboration with artists Todd James and Barry McGee that featured a makeshift bodega filled with items that reflected what the three artists had in their personal stock; "Street Cred, Guilt, Shame, Class and Dignity." etc. The show has since traveled to Deitch Projects in New York and the 2001 Venice Biennale. With each passing stop, Powers' artistic prowess matured into a unique style that has merged his passions for both writing and painting.

Thomas Campbell



California native Thomas Campbell is a painter, photographer and filmmaker. An entirely self-taught artist, his work directly reflects his life and draws from his experience traversing around the globe on surf trips. During his short breaks between adventures, he has been known to lock himself in for days on binges that produce literally hundreds of fresh drawings and works on canvas. Campbell has mounted solo exhibitions at galleries in New York, Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Paris and Morocco. His feature length surfing films *The Seedling* and *Sprout* have been avidly embraced by the surfing community worldwide. He is also creative director for a small independent record label, *Galaxia*, which has released records by contemporary artists Tommy Guerrero, Ray Barbee, Peggy Honeywell and Black Heart Procession.

Shepard Fairey



While attending the Rhode Island School of Design, Shepard Fairey created the “Andre the Giant has a Posse” sticker campaign, which would evolve into a cultural phenomenon called “Obey Giant.” Using graffiti techniques mixed with art concepts and graphic design elements, Fairey has been feeding the frenzied masses with a wholesome diet of “Andre the Giant has a Posse.” What began as a group of printed stickers has erupted into a growing cult following with wrestler Andre the Giant’s head as the deity. Seemingly Big Brother-esque and followed sometimes with the words “Andre the Giant has a Posse,” or “Obey Giant,” Fairey’s Obey Giant series is seeping into the collective unconscious of art and graffiti aficionados throughout the world. His body of work has extended in the past decade from the city streets to Swindle Magazine, Obey Clothing and shows at the Holly Solomon Gallery, Jonathan Levine Gallery and the New Museum of Contemporary Art employing street as well as gallery tactics to present his work to the public.

ABOUT THE CREW

Aaron Rose, Director

Aaron Rose is an artist, writer and independent curator currently living in Los Angeles. Aaron founded the highly influential Alleged Gallery in New York, curating shows there for ten years. In the 1990s, Rose produced numerous short films and worked as a producer/director for MTV Networks producing on-air promos in conjunction with contemporary artists and indie-directors. Since 2002, Rose has been working as a freelance curator, choosing artists for the Undefeated Billboard Project, a public art project in Los Angeles produced in conjunction with Nike. He is co-curator of the large-scale museum exhibition "Beautiful Losers: Contemporary Art & Street Culture", which will tour the world through the end of 2008. In addition to curating other exhibitions and publishing books under a new publishing label, Alleged Press, Rose is co-editing a quarterly large format art magazine (ANP Quarterly), which is offered free as an outreach of RVCA Clothing's non-profit initiative the Artist Network Program.

Joshua Leonard, Co-Director

As an actor, Joshua has appeared in over 30 movies including such memorable films as The Blair Witch Project, Things Behind the Sun, Men of Honor and Live From Baghdad.

In 2005 Joshua made his directorial debut with a short film entitled The Youth In Us, starring indie darlings Lukas Haas and Kelli Garner. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and has gone on to win numerous awards. He is currently gearing up to direct his first narrative feature, Spectacular Regret, which he also penned. The film will star Curtis (50 Cent) Jackson (Get Rich or Die Trying), Danny Huston (The Constant Gardener, Children of Men) and Kelli Garner (The Aviator, Lars and The Real Girl). The project was among eight scripts selected in 2007 to participate in the prestigious Film Independent/IFP Director's Lab. Leonard is simultaneously producing Live From Death Row -- a biopic of author, political prisoner, death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Joshua began his career working with documentarians and experimental filmmakers at Mystic Fire Video. There, he was involved with the production of films on such subjects as famed beat poet Alan Ginsburg, the Dalai Lama and comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell.

Money Mark, Composer

Mark Ramos-Nishita is a keyboardist whose funky, retro-flavored riffs earned him the unofficial title of the fourth Beastie Boy. Born in Detroit to a Japanese-Hawaiian father and a Chicano mother, Nishita moved to the West Coast when he was six. Some years later, he hooked up with the Dust Brothers production team, and began overdubbing keyboards for the Delicious Vinyl label. While working as a handyman, Nishita accepted a job repairing the Beastie Boys' Silverlake, CA, home. He soon became a pivotal member of the group's Grand Royal posse, collaborating and performing on both 1992's "Check Your Head" and 1994's "Ill Communication." Money Mark recently composed the songs for the Beastie Boys all instrumental album "The Mix Up" released this summer in 2007.

Recorded at his home studio, Money Mark's solo debut, "Mark's Keyboard Repair" – an infectious collection of fuzzy organ noodlings performed on vintage equipment -- appeared in 1995 as a set of three 10" records issued on the Los Angeles-based label Love Kit. Although the small pressing sold out almost instantly, the first record in the series found its way to Britain and the offices of Mo'Wax founder James Lavelle, who quickly flew to L.A. to meet with Nishita. Mo'Wax reissued "Mark's Keyboard Repair" in late 1995, and "Push the Button" followed in 1998. Mark's latest album was released by Jack Johnson's label, Brushfire Records in early 2007. When he's not releasing critically acclaimed sole efforts, Mark loves to collaborate with a diverse range of artists such as Beck and Tommy Guerrero.

Rich Lim, Producer

Prior to launching Sidetrack Films, Rich was a founding partner of Film Movement, an innovative distribution company specializing in critically acclaimed, award winning films from around the globe. Rich oversaw acquisition and distribution of a slate of over 28 films that included such festival favorites such as Sundance winner Manito and the IFP Spirit Award nominated OT: Our Town.

Rich started in the film industry at Shooting Gallery Films, where as a Creative Executive he worked on the development of book adaptations and screenplays such as Kenny Lonergan's "You Can Count on Me." There he was involved in the launch of the groundbreaking Loews Shooting Gallery Film Series, the first corporate sponsored film series to bring a slate of cutting edge foreign language art house films each season in a nation-wide release with support from brands such Visa, Heineken and Polo.

While at Sidetrack Films, Rich has executive produced the award winning documentary Favela Rising. Awarded the prestigious Best Documentary award by The International Documentary Association in 2006, Favela Rising rolled out theatrically to over 20 markets based on a grassroots campaign, positive press

and word of mouth. Picked up for television by HBO, it was recently nominated for an Emmy in 2007. Recently, he co-produced Kurt Cobain About a Son, an award winning art film narrated by Kurt Cobain and featuring an original score by Ben Gibbard and Steve Fisk, which will be released in October 2007.

Jon Barlow, Producer

Jon Barlow began his career at ABC News in Washington, DC, working two years for Ted Koppel on Nightline, a position that provided extensive experience with the production demands of a nightly news program. While there, Jon associate produced the six-part Nightline series Crime and Punishment: Women in Prison. After relocating to Los Angeles, Jon began free-lance producing for The National Geographic Channel, producing, directing, shooting and writing short documentaries for the network. Assignments included a range of topics including: a four-part series South Australia, covering pool skateboarders in Fresno, documenting avalanche rescue dogs at the Squaw Valley Ski Resort, following the release of California Condors into the wild above Big Sur, producing the four-part series Native Mexico, and traveling to Nigeria to investigate the AIDS epidemic. Jon founded Blacklake Productions with partner Arlo Rosner to produce music videos, commercials and web specific content for clients such as TWBA/Chiat/Day, Goodby, The Rehab and VISA

Sidetrack Films

Founded in 2005, Sidetrack Films is an innovative production and financing company dedicated to supporting emerging talent and unique perspectives. Sidetrack's productions include: the Emmy nominated FAVELA RISING (HBO/ThinkFilm); Independent Spirit Award Nominated KURT COBAIN ABOUT A SON (released theatrically in conjunction with Diesel Timeframes), and Sundance world premiere LOW AND BEHOLD. Sidetrack Films is currently producing the documentary KING OF THE B's about the life and influence of America's most prolific producer- Roger Corman.