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**[Film Festival \(http://www.lafilmfest.com/2010/\)](http://www.lafilmfest.com/2010/)** (LAFF), which opens tonight with the LA premiere of **[Lisa Cholodenko \(http://mubi.com/cast\\_members/48428\)](http://mubi.com/cast_members/48428)**'s KCRW-crowd-pleasing gay-marriage rom-dramedy **[The Kids Are All Right \(http://mubi.com/films/22081\)](http://mubi.com/films/22081)**, will uphold a few traditions from previous years," begins the *LA Weekly*'s **[Karina Longworth \(http://www.laweekly.com/2010-06-17/film-tv/laff-1-a-live-luv/\)](http://www.laweekly.com/2010-06-17/film-tv/laff-1-a-live-luv/)**. Those traditions include the filmmakers' retreat, the mix of Hollywood studio fare and "micro-indies" and cash rewards (\$50K) for the winners of each competition. "Pretty much everything else will be totally different." Former *Newsweek* film critic **[David Ansen \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Ansen\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ansen)** is the new creative director, for example, and the festival's moved downtown. "In tandem, these changes could fundamentally affect the festival's demographics,

personality and future viability."

As for the films, the "competitions contain at least three total knockouts, films that boldly announce new talents either behind the camera or in front of it: [Ditteke Mensink](http://mubi.com/cast_members/70380) ([http://mubi.com/cast\\_members/70380](http://mubi.com/cast_members/70380))'s experimental-but-accessible documentary *Farewell* (<http://mubi.com/films/21602>); [Brett Haley](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_brett_haley_on_his_crewless_film_the_new_year/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_brett\\_haley\\_on\\_his\\_crewless\\_film\\_the\\_new\\_year/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_brett_haley_on_his_crewless_film_the_new_year/))'s *The New Year* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote?EventNumber=1351&>), a moving drama about a beautiful brainiac in a rut, starring [Trieste Kelly Dunn](http://mubi.com/cast_members/82888) ([http://mubi.com/cast\\_members/82888](http://mubi.com/cast_members/82888)), who Ansen predicts is 'the next indie [Parker Posey](http://mubi.com/cast_members/8012) ([http://mubi.com/cast\\_members/8012](http://mubi.com/cast_members/8012))'; and [Laurel Nakadate](http://www.nakadate.net/) (<http://www.nakadate.net/>)'s *The Wolf Knife* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1364>), a wild, bored-teen spin on *Thelma and Louise* (<http://mubi.com/films/17147>). A few lesser features take enough chances and show enough promise to be more than worthy of their place in LAFF's high-stakes competitions: *Camera, Camera* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=0177>), a documentary about tourist photographers in Laos, a country that doesn't have a free press; *Dog Sweat* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1956>), a narrative made surreptitiously on the streets of Iran; and *Upstate* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=3994>), a relationship drama shot on 16 mm, which unexpectedly evolves first into an identity thriller, then into a kind of stoner comedy."

*LA Weekly* critics (<http://www.laweekly.com/2010-06-17/film-tv/laff-the-best-of-the-fest/>) present a further annotated list of "30 films to put on your to-do list" and [David Ehrenstein](http://www.laweekly.com/2010-06-17/film-tv/the-best-of-the-past/) (<http://www.laweekly.com/2010-06-17/film-tv/the-best-of-the-past/>) argues that "much of the essential action springs from the 'old,' thanks to numerous retrospective screenings of films both classic and obscure."

In the *Los Angeles Times*, [Steven Zeitchik](http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-laff-ansen-20100613.0.4891141.story) (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-laff-ansen-20100613.0.4891141.story>) profiles Ansen and [Reed Johnson](http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-et-0615-lafilmfestival-20100615,0,4200088.story) (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-et-0615-lafilmfestival-20100615,0,4200088.story>) meets [Rebecca Yeldham](http://www.filmindependent.org/content/rebecca-yeldham) (<http://www.filmindependent.org/content/rebecca-yeldham>), "the festival's ever-diplomatic, Australian-born director." [Elvis Mitchell](http://www.kcrw.com/etc/programs/tt/tt100609rebecca_yeldham_and_) ([http://www.kcrw.com/etc/programs/tt/tt100609rebecca\\_yeldham\\_and\\_](http://www.kcrw.com/etc/programs/tt/tt100609rebecca_yeldham_and_))'s interview with both on *The Treatment* makes for an engaging half-hour, even for those who don't live in LA, have no plans to attend LAFF this year but do have an interest in how festivals might address the needs of their particular communities.

### [Todd McCarthy](http://blogs.indiewire.com/toddmccarthy/archives/david_ansens_first_film_festival/)

([http://blogs.indiewire.com/toddmccarthy/archives/david\\_ansens\\_first\\_film\\_festival/](http://blogs.indiewire.com/toddmccarthy/archives/david_ansens_first_film_festival/)): "I'll be curious to check out as many films as I can, if only for the personal reason that, through the years, I grew to realize that Ansen's taste coincided with my own more consistently than that of any other critic. We'll see if that translates into a first-rate film festival."

### [Kim Adelman](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_photo_op_monks_pioneering_ska_punks_and_a_pachyderm_love_story_vie_/)

([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_photo\\_op\\_monks\\_pioneering\\_ska\\_punks\\_and\\_a\\_pachyderm\\_love\\_story\\_vie\\_/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_photo_op_monks_pioneering_ska_punks_and_a_pachyderm_love_story_vie_/))

talks with the directors of three docs seeing their world premieres at the fest: [Malcolm Murray](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3787345/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3787345/>), whose *Camera, Camera*, whose "focuses its lens on Western shutterbugs swarming Laos"; [Chris Metzler](http://mubi.com/cast_members/18234) ([http://mubi.com/cast\\_members/18234](http://mubi.com/cast_members/18234)) and [Lev Anderson](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2356371/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2356371/>)'s *Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=4402>) "gets up close and personal with the legendary Los Angeles ska-punk-funk band"; and [Lisa Leeman](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0498658/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0498658/>)'s *One Lucky Elephant* (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=4255>) "explores one man's attempt to break up with a 10,125 pound female who never forgets."

Also at *indieWIRE*, interviews with [Pernille Fischer Christensen](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_ernest_fischer_christensen_on_her_family/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_ernest\\_fischer\\_christensen\\_on\\_her\\_family/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_ernest_fischer_christensen_on_her_family/)) ([A Family](http://mubi.com/films/22949) (<http://mubi.com/films/22949>)), [Adam Reid](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_adam_reid_on_his_low-budget_multi-narrative_hello_lonesome/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_adam\\_reid\\_on\\_his\\_low-budget\\_multi-narrative\\_hello\\_lonesome/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_adam_reid_on_his_low-budget_multi-narrative_hello_lonesome/)) ([Hello Lonesome](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1002) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1002>)), [Cathryn Collins](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_collins_takes_on_russian_economics_with_vlast/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_collins\\_takes\\_on\\_russian\\_economics\\_with\\_vlast/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_collins_takes_on_russian_economics_with_vlast/)) ([VLAST](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1158) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1158>)), [Aaron Schock](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_aaron_schock_delves_deep_into_the_heart_of_mexico_in_circo/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_aaron\\_schock\\_delves\\_deep\\_into\\_the\\_heart\\_of\\_mexico\\_in\\_circo/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_aaron_schock_delves_deep_into_the_heart_of_mexico_in_circo/)) ([Circo](http://mubi.com/films/23994) (<http://mubi.com/films/23994>)), [Hilda Hidalgo](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_hilda_hidalgo/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_hilda\\_hidalgo/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_hilda_hidalgo/)) ([Of Love and Other Demons](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=3839) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=3839>)), [Jennifer Arnold](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_a_small_act_director_jennifer_arnold_be_prepared_for_anything/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_a\\_small\\_act\\_director\\_jennifer\\_arnold\\_be\\_prepared\\_for\\_anything/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_a_small_act_director_jennifer_arnold_be_prepared_for_anything/)) ([A Small Act](http://mubi.com/films/21784) (<http://mubi.com/films/21784>)), [Hossein Keshavarz](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_hossein_keshavarz_aims_to_show_the_real_iran_in_dog_sweat/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_hossein\\_keshavarz\\_aims\\_to\\_show\\_the\\_real\\_iran\\_in\\_dog\\_sweat/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_hossein_keshavarz_aims_to_show_the_real_iran_in_dog_sweat/)) ([Dog Sweat](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1956) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=1956>)) and [John Kastner](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_john_kastner_witnesses_a_confession_in_life_with_murder/) ([http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff\\_10\\_director\\_john\\_kastner\\_witnesses\\_a\\_confession\\_in\\_life\\_with\\_murder/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/laff_10_director_john_kastner_witnesses_a_confession_in_life_with_murder/)) ([Life with Murder](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=2652) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=2652>)).

Back in the *LAT*, [John Horn](http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-laff-gold-20100613,0,6067312.story) (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-laff-gold-20100613,0,6067312.story>): "Asked by LAFF artistic director David Ansen to present a particularly meaningful movie about food, [Jonathan] [Gold](http://www.pulitzer.org/works/2007-Criticism) (<http://www.pulitzer.org/works/2007-Criticism>) avoided the obvious candidates: [Babette's Feast](http://mubi.com/films/4162) (<http://mubi.com/films/4162>), [Like Water for Chocolate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Like_Water_for_Chocolate_%28film%29) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Like\\_Water\\_for\\_Chocolate\\_%28film%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Like_Water_for_Chocolate_%28film%29)), [Big Night](http://mubi.com/films/4177) (<http://mubi.com/films/4177>), [Eat Drink Man Woman](http://mubi.com/films/4382) (<http://mubi.com/films/4382>), [Mostly Martha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mostly_Martha_%28film%29) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mostly\\_Martha\\_%28film%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mostly_Martha_%28film%29))... So Gold instead selected [Udon](http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=4563) (<http://filmguide.lafilmfest.com/tixSYS/2010/xslguide/eventnote.php?EventNumber=4563>), an obscure 2006 Japanese film about a failed comedian ([Yusuke Santamaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y%C5%ABsuke_Santamaria) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y%C5%ABsuke\\_Santamaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y%C5%ABsuke_Santamaria))) turned food journalist. The plot hinges on how the writer's magazine story about noodle stalls in Kagawa sparks a national udon craze. Gold will present Udon on Saturday at 4 pm at the Downtown Independent theater."

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