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Big exposure on the small screen

Kcet's annual series, 'fine cut,' showcases california's finest student filmmakers



Courtesy of Chris Eska

A scene from "Doki Doki," directed by UCLA film and television student Chris Eska. The short film is included in this year's "Fine Cut" series of student films airing this month on KCET.

By [Pete Flores](#)

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While many film school students hope to have their films screened in theaters, KCET is trying to expand its aspirations, although to a smaller screen.

Throughout the month of August, KCET has been showcasing the work of perhaps the next Lucas or Zemeckis as well as other student filmmakers in the series "Fine Cut: A Festival of Student Film."

Hosted by Academy and Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, "Fine

Cut" exhibits an array of live-action and animated short films from students who have attended various California universities, including UCLA.

Of over 200 films submitted by various film school deans and professors, only 22 films made the cut. Five UCLA students, Chris Eska, Tamara Maloney, Joel Sanchez, Xochitl Gonzalez and David Ottenhouse, are among the student filmmakers chosen to participate.

"Of the 200 films that hit me, I started putting them in a pile and started narrowing those down. Every film is unique and some of them touch your heart," said "Fine Cut" executive producer Bohdan Zachary.

Zachary also stresses the importance of providing student filmmakers with an avenue to exhibit their work.

"These are the filmmakers who are working very hard to go to the next step," he said. "We are not Sundance, but it is a great opportunity to showcase the best of our community films."

Funded by the Bridges/Larson Foundation, the series was designed to breed and nurture student filmmakers. Entering its seventh season, "Fine Cut" has annually displayed the finest of student films.

Many of this year's student films are also available on the KCET Web site, where Web surfers can both view the films and post responses on new message boards. UCLA student Eska's "Doki Doki" has received a positive response from viewers on the boards.

"(Zachary) said it has the biggest response of all the films they've had," Eska said.

The response to "Doki Doki" has been so strong that it will be screened on its own on KCET in November and December.

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"I got 10-15 positive postings, and then I started getting a lot of personal e-mails from people wanting copies," Eska said.

The exposure for student filmmakers that "Fine Cut" provides is both unique and much needed. Unlike independent filmmakers, students are often so busy with classes that they are not able to fully promote their work.

"The great thing about being on a KCET 'Fine Cut' series is the potential viewers that watch the films," comments Zachary.

"The exposure for brand new students who are unfamiliar to the film scene is great. Our formula works," he added.

Already funded for another season next year, "Fine Cut" will continue to offer students an opportunity to have their work seen, even if it is in someone's living room.

Check out www.kcet.org for schedules, to view the films or to post a response.

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