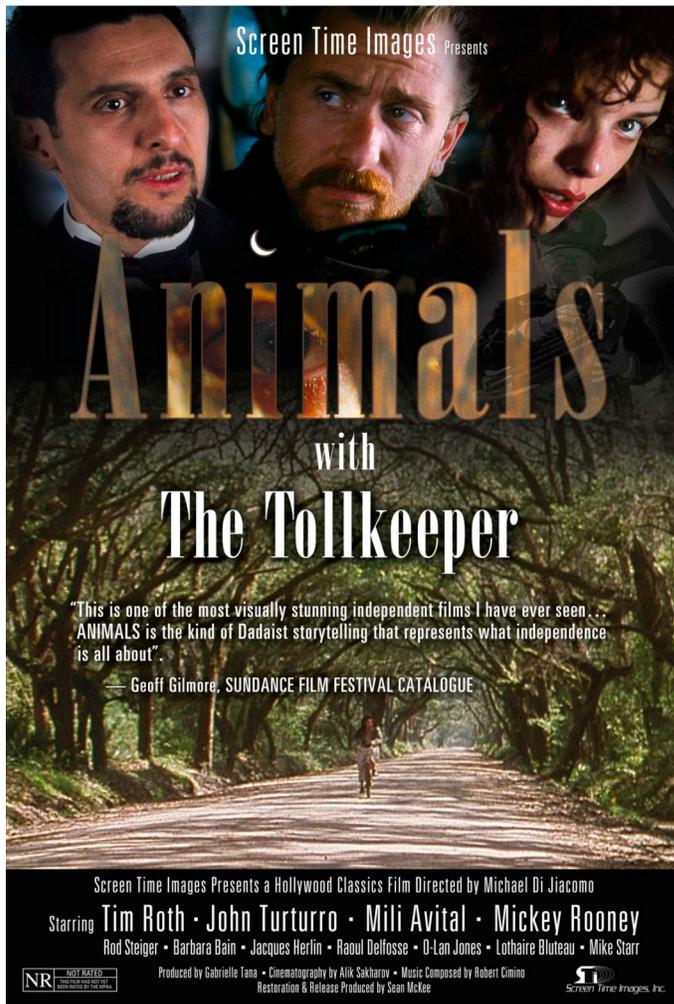


10 Year Old Lost Film, “Animals with The Tollkeeper”, starring Mickey Rooney, Tim Roth and John Turturro, To Be Released By Screen Time Images



Schaumburg, IL. April 3, 2008

“Animals With the Tollkeeper,” a surreal romantic fantasy written and directed by Michael Di Giacomo, was reviewed as “...one of the most visually stunning independent films I have ever seen” by Geoff Gilmore, Sundance Film Festival Catalogue. While the film won many awards including Best Director at the Sitges Film Festival, Spain, and the Jury Prize at the Yubari Film Festival, Japan, and earned great reviews when it debuted at festivals 10 years ago, it subsequently became enmeshed in legal issues and disappeared into obscurity. Now Screen Time Images, a Chicago-based company well known for film restorations, has acquired distribution rights. The movie will be shown at the Palm Beach International Film Festival on April 14, with a North American first-run theatrical release to follow. Mickey Rooney will be present at the screening, and will be receiving honors for his career. As a special feature at the festival, selected scenes from “Animals” and other examples will be shown in 3D using new technology that requires no special 3D glasses.

Tim Roth stars as a broken dreamer who finds new meaning in the pursuit of an elusive love (Mili Avital) after a trio of elderly French documentary filmmakers hijacks his Checker cab to drive from New York to South Carolina. Praised as intelligent, sensitive, wise, artistic, funny and weird, *Animals* captures the story of three wayward souls guiding one man’s search for happiness and love.

The film starts with a 13-minute B&W set piece, "The Tollkeeper", which finds the Frenchmen, led by Lothaire Bluteau, in the Utah desert in 1933 filming Mickey Rooney as a cranky tuba player manning a way station to nowhere. Back in present-day New York, Roth's driving a cab and contemplating suicide when the French doc crew appears again. The film has an all-star supporting cast, including Rod Steiger, Mike Starr and Mili Avital.



Former Disney exec Garielle Tana produced the film, and the film was shot by cinematographer Alik Sakharov, who went on to be the director of photography for the Sopranos, and subsequently directed several episodes of the HBO series 'Rome'. International proponents of *Animals* include Roman Polanski, Jeremy Irons, Tchecky Karyo, Kazuko Kurosawa, Isabelle Pasco and Gilles Jacob of Cannes Film Festival.

Through all the film's legal issues, the film was held by the now-closed, film completion bond division of the CNA insurance company. John Flynn from Hollywood Classics, an international distributor of major studio titles, contacted CNA's attorney, and became aware of 'Animals' newly cleared legal status. Flynn approached Sean McKee, President of Screen Time Images, to acquire rights and partner with on a first-run theatrical release of the film. McKee's company has enjoyed an 11-year status as a premier provider of film restoration services to the major studios, networks, home video distributors, actors' estates, and archives. In recent years, They have expanded operations with new divisions to include licensing and rights acquisition, distribution, and new content development.



After previewing a poor-quality, 9-year old VHS copy as the only starting point for reference, McKee and company poured through boxes of film, containing various rolls of original camera negative, work prints, audio tracks and outtakes. The elements were in varied condition, with some rolls of film exhibiting some shrinkage and warping. The proper sequence of the movie was reassembled, and after a chemical bath, the film was scanned in to computers at 4K resolution.

Time was not kind to the original negatives. The scanned frames of film were treated to an exhaustive, 6-month restoration process, typically reserved only for 'A-List' classic films with massive revenue potential during a re-release. According to McKee, "Although 'Animals' is only now about to reveal itself to the market, because I own not only the distribution rights but also a restoration company, I was in a unique position to muster the resources required to ensure that this unique and wonderful film is shown at its best."

The bulk of the remastering was performed using specialized tools made by da Vinci Systems, as well as proprietary software and techniques developed in-house by programmers at Screen Time Images. Each frame was manually restored to perfection, and a new surround soundtrack was created.

After the restoration was completed, the next step was to perform color enhancement. The original film lab's printer lights timing settings were discovered, which the da Vinci color corrector was able to emulate. Since color enhancement technology has come a long way in the decade since the film was made, these settings were used as merely a starting point in the palette with which to 'paint' and enhance the colors with, bringing deeper visual emotion to the film than was possible ten years ago. A special pleasure was having director Di Giacomo sit in for final color adjustment and approval.

For the showing at the Palm Beach Film Festival, Screen Time Images has partnered with Xtreme Electronics Systems (XES), maker of autostereo 3D displays and software, to bring to life several scenes from "Animals" in three dimensions. Clips demonstrating this amazing new technology will be displayed throughout the weeklong festival. In addition, Screen Time's McKee will join representatives from XES to host a seminar at 4 p.m. April 15 at the Marriott Delray Beach, 10 North Ocean Boulevard, Delray Beach, Florida, to discuss restoration, and emerging 3D display technologies.



McKee concludes, "This film is so beautiful in story, direction, performance and cinematography, that I feel very strongly it will be a contender for an Oscar nomination this year. After one of my first viewings, I noticed some very subtle Salvador Dali-esque visual themes at several points in the film, which being a fan of and owner of several of his pieces, truly intrigued me. When I mentioned this to Michael Di Giacomo, he confirmed my observations, and went on to tell me that he first met Tim Roth while discussing a Dali painting at the Sundance Institute. This only solidified my feelings of what an artistic masterpiece this film is. Every frame is drop-dead gorgeous, especially (in my opinion) after Tim's character Henry meets the girl Fatima (played by Mili Avital).

...and when it comes out on home video and you're watching it on your flat screen on the wall, you can hit pause at any time and leave it there, because it is pure art."

Screen Time Images is located at 974 Estes Court, Schaumburg, IL 61093. Phone is 847-534-9000. Web site is www.screentimeimages.com.