



CREATIVE GENIUS AT HOME: SANTA BARBARA FILMMAKERS

Justin Rowe:

Crazy Art

By JEANETTE CASILLAS / CASA

THREE LOCAL ARTISTS FIND SOLACE

TIN ART as a way to help manage their schizophrenic symptoms in Justin Rowe's documentary *Crazy Art*. A sneak peek screening will take place on Monday, February 8th at 10am in Victoria Hall and its world premiere will be Wednesday, February 10th at 5pm in the Lobero Theatre.

"The film follows the lives of three local schizophrenic artists and how they are involved in different aspects of art," shared Rowe, *Crazy Art* Director. "I watched how these artists function within society and how they search for identity and a place in the world through their art."

J.T. Turner, Executive Director of Phoenix of Santa Barbara, a facility that helps people with mental illnesses and addictions, contacted Rowe with the idea for this project. "Turner thought I was a good match," said Rowe. "He had seen the documentary I made in 2004 called, *The Aphrodite Project*, a film about living life to

the fullest in spite of a cancer diagnosis."

Crazy Art starts off by setting up a basis of comparison and making a connection to Van Gogh. At the height of his madness, Van Gogh produced thought provoking art. However, channeling his energy through his art both helped alleviate and worsened his condition.

"There is a point where art helps the artists take their mind off of hearing voices and a point where too much art can lead them toward mania," said Rowe.

The three artists whose lives are chronicled in the film include Lesley Grogan, Rodger Casier, and Trinity Lopez-Wakefield. Before filming began, Rowe met with the artists a few times in order for them to get to know him. He started filming in June 2009 and is still working on adding the finishing touches for its world premiere.

"Before making this film I was under a misconception about what schizophrenia truly is," shared Rowe. "I was impressed

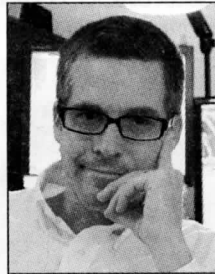
with the three artists and how they are living rewarding lives while dealing with the illness."

Rowe resides in Carpinteria where he has his own production company called 10 Toes Over. Growing up, Rowe was part of the filmmaking industry. His father was a feature film camera man in LA and his grandmother worked for Republic Pictures in Studio City. He started working in the industry at 13 years old, became a freelance camera man, and in the 1990s moved to Santa Barbara to attend the film studies program at UCSB.

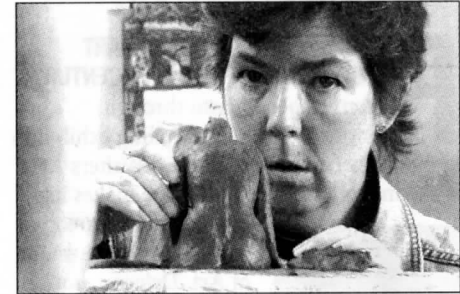
"After growing up in LA and in the film industry, I was happy to get out of there," shared Rowe. "Santa Barbara has a close knit group of independent filmmakers and professionals that offer support. It's also just far enough away that helps filmmakers keep anonymity, but close enough to reach out and use the LA services."

Crazy Art was made possible through 40 individual contributions to Phoenix of Santa Barbara and a matching grant from Jon and Lillian Lovelace. "We were very fortunate to receive the funds and support from the community," shared Rowe. "The film will give the public an insider view of the mental illness and creativity."

Tickets can be purchased through the SBIFF website at www.sbfilmfestival.org or by calling 962-8543.



Justin Rowe, Director



Lesley Grogan



Rodger Casier



Trinity Lopez-Wakefield