



June 15th, 2013

Featured Filmmaker: Tommee May of 'Illusion'



The short film *Illusion* (screening tonight at **Celestial Cinema**) is a love story. But it's a very different love story. In this one, as one of the last two people on Earth, Laura must fall in love with Mark, the last remaining man on the planet, in order to ensure her survival — and the survival of the entire human race.

Tommee May, the film's producer and star, is no stranger to film production, and has worked alongside such luminaries as David Duchovny, Vera Farmiga, Katie Holmes, Josh Duhamel, and Anna Paquin.

Tommee is on Maui attending the festival and is scheduled to introduce her film while the film's director, Jessica Hester, will be on a **Filmmakers Panel** discussing short films tomorrow. Get to know Tommee and her film a little better below.

Q: How did you get involved in film? Where and when did you start?

A: I grew up in Los Angeles, so film is not an unusual pursuit; although, for a family comprised of business people, it's neither an encouraged path. For as early as I can remember film has always been my sanctuary, a place to see myself back, to feel less alone, to learn and grow in an environment I perceived as safe. In terms of physically producing and acting, I started with theater in NY and have only the past few years, begun acting in and producing film.

Q: What inspired you to create *Illusion*?

A: Liz, the writer, told me the story and I immediately viscerally connected to Laura's character. She was tangible and yet there is nothing tangible about this story, it leaves nothing to grasp, which I found interesting and challenging and powerful. I had never heard of or seen anything like it.

Q: What was the most challenging part of making it?

A: We got an amazingly passionate and green, as in new, group of filmmakers together to create *Illusion*. We weren't afraid to admit that we didn't know what we were doing, and we learned quickly, and allowed expectation to go out the window. Our DP is an accomplished VFX artist who's just getting into cinematography and he blew me away, our art director is interested in composing so he created our beautiful score, our AD wanted to try to capture some time lapses and he did! He's actually the one who got the fluttering butterfly in the beginning and the bee circling the flower. Each step of the way we pushed ourselves to the edge, and each challenge made *Illusion* that much more worth it and creatively satisfying.

Q: What type of experience do you hope the film will bring to viewers?

A: Exactly, an experience. I would love for viewers to truly experience *Illusion*, whatever it is for her or him. To allow themselves to go on a ride without thought and maybe when you get off, you go oh right that's what that was, something resonates with you, and maybe later something else pops up for you.

Q: What do you think our Maui audience will most appreciate about your film?

A: I think Maui audiences will appreciate the visual beauty of *Illusion*, the poetry of it.

Q: Do you have any prior connection to Maui? If so, please explain

A: Maui holds a dear place in my heart. Growing up, my family and I traveled there every year together up until my father's death. So from literally when I was in my mom's belly until 11, we all went to Maui together. I am really looking forward to being back! My sister coincidentally had a trip planned to Maui at the same time, so not only do I get to enjoy the film festival, being in Maui, I get to enjoy it all with my sister and over Fathers Day.

Written by Sara Tekula, June 15, 2013 in *Maui Film Festival* – <http://news.mauifilmfestival.net>