

## Museum of the Moving Image Welcomes the ISF Film Festival

By Karen Jeanne Radley

This year the Imagine Science Film Festival will kick off at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria Queens on the former site of the Kaufman Astoria Studios. The Museum will host the opening and second night of the festival. The museum has been an active participant in the festival since 2008. Executive Director Carl Goodman and Chief Curator David Schwartz have been a big support to ISF and are founding sponsors of the festival. In the past three years the museum has undergone an impressive \$67 million dollar expansion and now that it is complete they are happy to be hosting the opening and second night of the festival.

The Museum, which opened in 1988, is a perfect partner for Imagine Science Films. Its mission is to advance the public understanding and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. It furthers this mission by collecting, preserving, and providing access to moving-image related artifacts, screening significant films and other moving-image works, presenting exhibitions of artifacts, artworks, and interactive experiences, and offering educational and interpretive programs to students, teachers, and the general public. It is a unique museum because it is the only museum in the United States dedicated to exploring the art, history, and technology of the moving image.

The museum is housed in one of the thirteen buildings that made up the former Astoria Studios Complex. This historic site was built in 1927 by Paramount in 1920 to be their east coast production facility, and produced many silent and early sound films. In 1942 the U.S. Army took over the facility in order to produce training films for WWII soldiers and was renamed the Signal Corps Photographic Center. The army left the site in 1970 and sadly as a result the site fell into disrepair. In 1977 the Astoria Motion Picture and Television Foundation was formed to restore the facility. By 1978 the foundation successfully restored the facility into a studio to produce feature films. Shortly after 1980 Rochelle Slovin was appointed Executive Director of the foundation and under her leadership the foundation decided to create a museum of film and television at the facility. In 1982 the city set aside one of the thirteen buildings at the site for the museum. The foundation was reincorporated in 1985 as the American Museum of the Moving Image and in 1988 the Museum of the Moving Image opened. In February of 2008 the museum closed to undergo its expansion and reopened in January of this year. As a result of the renovation the museum is now able to present more screenings and a wider range of programming in a brand new 267-seat theater and 68-seat screening room. The museum's core exhibition, *Behind the Screen*, has received a complete technological and artistic overhaul. A major new gallery has been created for changing exhibitions, and new spaces have been added for the presentation of video art. Additionally a new lobby, gift shop, and café have been added to the museum.

The museum has a collection of approximately 130,000 artifacts relating to the art, history and technology of the moving image. This collection is the largest and most

comprehensive in the United States, and is considered one of the most important collections of its kind in the world. The collection is a great resource for everyone, from the general public to scholars. The collection includes artifacts from all stages of film creation: producing, promoting, and exhibiting motion pictures, television, and digital media. Artifacts include licensed merchandise, technical apparatus, still photographs, design materials, costumes, games, fan magazines, marketing materials of all kinds, video and computer games, and movie theater furnishings.

The museum's commitment to film and its beautiful new screening rooms make it the perfect location to kick off the ISFF 2011. For our opening night, Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, at the museum we expect to have a feature film and panel. For the second night of the festival we will have a night of short films. We are very excited at about kicking off the festival in this wonderfully renovated facility and hope you will join us.