MOVIES

Sofa spuds, rejoice: Just when you thought Seattle couldn't possibly embrace another film festival comes Couch Fest Films, a one-day event encompassing 200 films being shown in 10 private homes. It's the brainchild of Seattle filmmaker Craig Downing, who said he wanted to share his love of film and video in an unpretentious environment. The festival of short films runs Saturday, with the first showings at 11 a.m. and the last at 7 p.m.

Each home will focus on a particular genre, such as animation, comedy, music or "inappropriately awesome." The animation category includes "Little Dinosaurs" (pictured here) by Dana Dorian of the United Kingdom. It's a 60-second film in which a Scottish boy discusses the best way for a group of small dinosaurs to stop a big dinosaur from picking on them. A festival pass costs $5 at brownpapertickets.com, $10 at the door.


COMING UP
Rebekah Denn's latest Product Watch column is the "masquerade edition," featuring dressed-up candy that's trying to sneak over to the gourmet-foods aisle.

WEDNESDAY

'DEALER'S CHOICE'

'Century 21' tries to define art that matters in Seattle

BY REGINA HACKETT
P-I art critic
that matters in Seattle

BY REGINA HACKETT
P-I ART CRITIC

If art dealers are successful in their choices of artists, they bathe in art’s reflected glory. Seldom are they the target of the spotlight.

“Century 21: Dealer’s Choice” is that rare art exhibit whose primary focus is the dealer. Art collector Virginia Wright inspired the show by asking gallery owner Greg Kucera to curate an exhibit in the Wright Exhibition Space, and he decided to make it a collective enterprise of the Seattle Art Dealers Association.

In essence, the show is about freedom. What would SADA dealers choose to endorse if they moved outside their responsibility to the artists they represent? They were asked to select three artists (young, middle-age and veteran), none from their own galleries, to represent the aesthetics of the city in the 21st century.

Could the list they develop mean something? Well, yes, but not what Kucera initially intended. Just because dealers align themselves in a group doesn’t mean they have anything in common.

SEE ‘CENTURY 21,’ C3

Alice Wheeler’s high-life version of Kurt Cobain, the grunge king.
THE LIST

The 17 Seattle art galleries that make up the Seattle Art Dealers Association and participated in "Century 21" were asked to pick three artists (young, middle-age and veteran) for the exhibit, the only restriction being the artists they chose couldn’t be from their own galleries.

Here’s the list of who picked whom. Note that, among SADA dealers, “young” means under 45. Why? Because SADA dealers don’t know enough artists under 35 to make the category work.

Sam Davidson, Davidson Galleries
Under 45: Drew Dalrymple, Greg Kucera Gallery
45-55: Fred Birchman, Francine Seders Gallery
Over 55: Peter Millett, Greg Kucera Gallery

Betsy Fetherston, Fetherston Gallery
Under 45: Katy Stone, Greg Kucera Gallery
45-55: Robert Yoder, Howard House
Over 55: Dave Kane

Phoebe Foster, Foster/White Gallery
Under 45: Amne Siens, Grover/Thurston Gallery
45-55: Steve Davis, James Harris Gallery
Over 55: Joe Max Emmering, Grover/Thurston Gallery

Andria Friesen, Friesen Gallery
Under 45: Preston Snelgrove, Traver Gallery
45-55: Mark Rediste, Foster/White Gallery
Over 55: Pati Warrington, Howard House

Gail Gibson, Gibson Gallery
Under 45: Samantha Scherzer, Davidson Galleries
45-55: Richard Hutter, Lisa Harris Gallery
Over 55: Scott Fife, Platform Gallery

Karen Light, Garde Rail Gallery
Under 45: Saya Moriyasu, G. Gibson Gallery
45-55: Alice Wheeler, Greg Kucera Gallery
Over 55: Jerry Turrell, Grover/Thurston Gallery

Susan Grover/Richard Thurston, Grover/Thurston Gallery
Under 45: Claire Cowie, James Harris Gallery
Selected by Grover
45-55: Jeff Mitchell, James Harris Gallery (Grover)
Over 55: James Martin, Foster/White Gallery (Thurston)

Jim Harris, James Harris Gallery
Under 45: Joseph Park, Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco
45-55: Whiting Tennis, Greg Kucera Gallery
Over 55: Robert Helms, Linda Hodges Gallery

Lisa Harris, Lisa Harris Gallery
Under 45: Nealy Blau, G. Gibson Gallery
45-55: Mark Calderon, Greg Kucera Gallery
Over 55: Michael Spafford, Francine Seders Gallery

Linda Hodges, Linda Hodges Gallery
Under 45: Dante Marioni, Traver Gallery
45-55: William Morris, Friesen Gallery
Over 55: Dale ChiHuly, Traver Gallery

Billy Howard, Howard House
Under 45: Jeffrey Simmons, Greg Kucera Gallery
45-55: Doug Jeff, Traver Gallery
Over 55: David Hu, Francine Seders Gallery

Greg Kucera, Greg Kucera Gallery
Under 45: Claude Zervas, James Harris Gallery
45-55: Chris Bruch, Lawrimore Project
Over 55: Alden Mason, Foster/White Gallery

David Martin, Martin-Zambito Fine Art
Under 45: Nola Averino, Catherine Person Gallery
45-55: Brian Ganger, Bestham Gallery
Over 55: William Elston, Davidson Galleries

Jerry Sipman, Pacini Lulub Gallery
Under 45: David French, Linda Hodges Gallery
45-55: Martin Dingus, Francine Seders Gallery
Over 55: Gaylen Hansen, Linda Hodges Gallery

Francine Seders, Francine Seders Gallery
Under 45: Victoria Haven, Greg Kucera Gallery
45-55: Victoria, Howard House
Over 55: Wako Takamori, James Harris Gallery

Carolyn Staley, Carolyn Staley Fine Japanese Prints
Over 55: Art Hansen, Davidson Galleries.
(Because Staley herself represents almost no living artists, she thinks she lacks the knowledge to pick anyone under 55.)

Alden Mason, "Summer Blusher" abstraction from his Burpee Gardens series.

Bill Traver/Sarah Traver, Traver Gallery
Under 45: Lead Pencil Studio (Annie Han and Dan Mihalyo), Lawrimore Project
45-55: Laurence Grossman, Howard House
Over 55: Trimpin

Painting from Jeffrey Simmons’ "Larger Chorus" series.
'CENTURY 21': Youth is elusive

Like every other city with a thriving gallery scene, Seattle's galleries run on different tracks. Most specialize in intimate home decor. As long as there is a market for art that contains no criticality in its approach to content, there will be galleries to provide it.

Even those galleries that regularly rise beyond it have a tendency to cushion their bottom lines by providing at least a sampling of what is easy to swallow. But when asked to pick three artists whose work will help define the region in the new century, it is not surprising that dealers who deliver little more than a space for visual niceties have difficulty imagining what ambition might look like. What is surprising is that almost everybody found at least one plausible candidate.

In Seattle, apparently, if you're under 45, you're young. Originally, young was going to be 35 and under, but too few dealers had candidates. I tend to think of youth as an advantage in the art world, but that's not true in Seattle. If you're under 35, few SADA dealers have heard of you.

But "Century 21: Dealer's Choice" is not the disaster I envisioned when first perusing the list of participants. Walking into the Wright Space, I thought it looked plausible.

This exhibit will not mark its moment. There are too many essential artists left out and too many minor ones included. On the other hand, it doesn't entirely miss its moment, either.

Art is not a test. Artists who pass do not gather on one side of a line with failures on the other. Each artwork en-
Doug Jeck's "Figuine," a small ceramic homage to the ancient Greeks, with wit and horror.

Lead Pencil's "Accumulation," which is a critique of painting and a closet, and a room with a ceiling, a floor and walls made of paint drips. It takes up more space than it actually has.

Alden Mason's "Summer Blusher" from his Burpee Garden series, abstraction from the 1970s that holds its own with the Color Field painters of Washington, D.C.

Peter Millett's "Weeping Woman," a seductive approach to the suggestion of massive form.

Jeffry Mitchell's "Black Fu Dogs," scribbles within scribbles within art historical scribbles.

Joseph Park's "Wino-grand," a silky homage to "Women Are Beautiful," not the prints but the book, a painting of pages turning.

Samantha Scherer's "Or...

Jefry Mitchell's glazed earthenware "Black Fu Dogs."

This show is like a light bulb flickering on and off in the lost-and-found.

Here's what looks good anyway, with an assist from being at the Wright Space, one of the best places to look at art in the region.

Nola Avienne's "Small Conversation," a pair of mounds made of metal filings reaching toward each other across a gap.

Cris Bruch's "Harbinger," an ash-black twister whose dark tail uncoils from the ceiling.

Mark Calderon's "Nocturne," a vase that could be waving its tendrils at the blind bottom of the deep sea.

Claire Cowie's "The Peacock," a watercolor whose rigorous internal balances does not stabilize the essential fragility of the composition.

Dale Chihuly's lean scribble of a nesting sea form set from 1981.

Drew Daly's "Mirror Merge," a 21st-century combination of Cubism and Mystery Spot tourist trap. I'd love to see it next to Sean M. Johnson's sculptural balancing acts, but (alas) Johnson is not in the show.

Steve Davis' "Benito, Green Hill," a partially shaded head of a young man named Benito, a colossus who fuses August Saucer with Nan Goldin.

Marita Dingus' glass ba...

Jeffry Mitchell says the show turned out better than he expected. To those who complain that there are 37 male artists to 13 female, he points out the majority of dealers in SADA are women.

"To the extent that my colleagues took the challenge seriously," he said, "I think it turned out very well."

El Centro de la Raza's First Annual Auction Banquet

A Tribute to las Américas: