



BREATHING LESSONS: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien

A film by Jessica Yu
Produced by Inscrutable Films and Pacific News Service

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News 3/25/97:

BREATHING LESSONS: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien has just won the Academy Award for Best Documentary (Short Subject)!

For more information and for interviews, call Pacific News Service at 415-243-4364.

"A magnificent film about a man in an iron lung who turns his breath into poetry."
-- Lynn O'Donnell, producer of *Crumb*

Winner of
International Documentary Association (IDA) Achievement Award for Best Short Documentary
Best Film in the Category of Disability Information/Educational Resources, Disability Film Festival,
Atlanta, Georgia
The Audience & Horizon Awards, 1996 Aspen Filmfest,
The Silver Snire Tronhv in Biooranhv 1996 San Francisco Film Festival's Golden Gate Awards

Best Short Documentary, 1996 South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Competition,
Best Documentary Short, 20th Cleveland International Film Festival (March, 1996),
Best Nonfiction Film, National Short Film & Video Competition, USA Film Festival, Dallas, Texas
(April, 1996),
Filmothek-Forum Prize, Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, Germany (April, 1996),
Juror's Choice Award, Charlotte Film and Video Festival (May, 1996),
Centaur Prize for Best Short Documentary, St. Petersburg International Film Festival, Russia (June,
1996),
The Grand Jury Prize for Best Short Documentary, Florida International Film Festival (June, 1996),
& "The Great Prize of the City of Vila do Conde," The International Short Film Festival of Vila do
Conde, Portugal (July, 1996).

SYNOPSIS



BREATHING LESSONS, a new documentary by award-winning filmmaker Jessica Yu, explores the unique world of Mark O'Brien, the poet-journalist who has lived for four decades paralyzed in an iron lung. Incorporating the vivid imagery of O'Brien's poetry and his candid, wry, and often profound reflections on work, sex, death and God, this provocative documentary asks: What is a life worth living? By presenting O'Brien's life from his point of view, the film provides an intimate window into the reality of a life of severe disability, as well as an illuminating portrait of a remarkable artist.

Director/Producer/Writer/Editor

JESSICA YU <InscrutF@aol.com>

Yu's other films include the black & white short **SOUR DEATH BALLS**, which won several awards, including Best Live Action Short at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, was featured at many international film festivals, including Berlin, Sundance, Telluride, Toronto, the San Francisco International Film Festival, Sydney, and the New Directors/New Films series at the Museum of Modern Art, and was broadcast on the national PBS series **ALIVE TV**; **THE CONDUCTOR**, a musical comedy short featuring Mark Salzman (**IRON AND SILK**), shown at the Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival, the International Festival for Comedy Films in Vevey, the AsianCinevision Film Festival, and the Festival der Nationen, Austria, where it won a Silver Bear; and **HOME BASE: A CHINATOWN CALLED HEINLENVILLE**, on permanent exhibit at the San Jose Historical Museum, winner of a CINE Golden Eagle, American Film and Video Association, National Educational Film and Video Festival, MUSE, and Joey Awards. She was associate producer on the Academy Award-nominated **ROSE KENNEDY: A LIFE TO REMEMBER** and **MAYA LIN**, recent winner of the 1995 Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary.

Yu recently served on the Board of Directors of the International Documentary Association,

where she was an organizing committee member of the first International Documentary Congress. Yu has also written for Pacific News Service, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, and Buzz magazine. She won the Edward R. Murrow Award for Journalism from the Skeptics Society in 1995. She has been a featured guest on THE JON STEWART SHOW, THE OTHER SIDE, and GOOD DAY L.A.

Yu's recent Independent Television Service (ITVS) presentation, MEN OF REENACTION, a feature documentary about Civil War reenactors, is scheduled for public television release in May 1996. Check your local listings!

Cinematographer

SHANA HAGAN <SHaganDP@aol.com>

Shana Hagan has shot over 30 films, both narrative and documentary. She recently completed shooting her first feature film, INDEMNITY, an ultra-low budget project shot in Oregon. Some of her other cinematography credits include A WEDDING STORY for the Discovery Network, Yu's MEN OF REENACTION and THE CONDUCTOR, OPERATION WALKING SHIELD - A HOME FOR THE SIOUX, PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST - VICTOR HUGO ZAYAS, and THE MAKING OF "APOLLO 13". Her film GRACE won Loyola Marymount University's Jack Haley, Jr. Award. Shana has just finished directing and shooting a documentary profiling a group of volunteer American surgeons in Kazakhstan, Russia.

Composer

SANDRA TSING LOH

Sandra Tsing Loh's solo piano CD, PIANOVISION (K2B2 Records), recently licensed to Japan via May Kiss records, can be heard frequently on NPR's "Morning Edition." In 1994, the Los Angeles Chamber Ballet commissioned her piece "Cabin Fever," which was nominated for a Lester Horton Award in composition. Her other works include: "ShiPOOpeE! The American Musical Deconstructed," featured at the International Design Conference, and the mini-opera "The Golden Ring," commissioned by eXindigo! She appears frequently on Bonnie Grice's "Commuter Classics" on KUSC. She is a member of the Independent Composers Association and the Lo Cal Composers.

Loh also writes a monthly column for Buzz magazine. Her first humor collection, **Depth Takes a Holiday: Essays from Lesser Los Angeles**, was published by Riverhead Books in June, 1996.

For information about PICASSO MAN, the upcoming CD featuring music based on Sandra Tsing Loh's original themes for **BREATHING LESSONS**, please contact:

Kittridge Street Records
14431 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 114
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
Phone: (818) 377-5285

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AWARDS



Mark
and his friend
Elizabeth DuVall

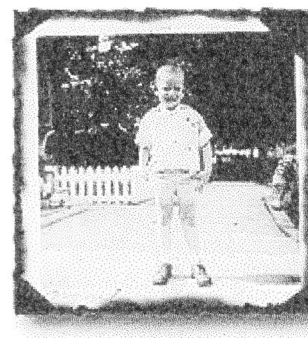
- International Documentary Association (IDA) Achievement Award for Best Short Documentary
- Best Film in the Category of Disability Information/Educational Resources, Disability Film Festival, Atlanta, Georgia
- Screening debut at the [Sundance Film Festival](#), January, 1996.
- The Audience & Horizon Awards
1996 Aspen Filmfest.
- The Silver Spire Trophy in Biography
[1996 San Francisco Film Festival's Golden Gate Awards](#).
- Best Short Documentary
[The South by Southwest \(SXSW\) Film Competition](#), March, 1996.
- Best Documentary Short
[20th Cleveland International Film Festival](#), March, 1996.
- Best Nonfiction Film
National Short Film & Video Competition, USA Film Festival (Dallas, Texas), April, 1996.
- Filmothek-Forum Prize
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- Juror's Choice Award
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- Centaur Prize for Best Short Documentary
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- Grand Jury Prize for Best Short Documentary
Florida International Film Festival, June 1996.
- Grand Prize: "The Great Prize of the City of Vila do Conde"
The International Short Film Festival of Vila do Conde, Portugal, July, 1996.

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SCREENING INFORMATION

- **Sheffield International Documentary Festival:**
(10/21/96 - 10/27/96).
For more information, call +44 114 276 5141
- **The Disability Film Festival at the Third Paralympic Congress, Atlanta Georgia:**
8/12/96 - 8/16/96.
For more information, e-mail: [<debby@miramar.com>](mailto:debby@miramar.com), or call (800) 543-4116, ext. 410.
- **The Sun Valley Writers' Conference, Sun Valley, Idaho:**
8/27/96 - 8/30/96. Screening times TBA.
For information, call (208) 726-6670, or fax (208) 788-0106.
- **The British Short Film Festival, London:**
Monday, 9/23/96, 8:00 PM.
For more information, fax 0181 740 8540.
- **Nordisk Panorama, Denmark:**
9/25/96 - 9/29/96. Screening times TBA.
For more information, call 45 33 93 19 14, or fax 45 33 93 19 12.
- **Hamptons International Film Festival, East Hampton, NY:**
10/16/96 - 10/20/96.
For information, call (516) 324-4600, or fax (516) 324-5116.
- **Vancouver International Film Festival, Canada:**
10/4/96 - 10/20/96. Screening times TBA.
For more information, call (604) 685-0260, or e-mail: [<viff@direct.ca>](mailto:viff@direct.ca).
- **The Northwest Film Center, Portland, Oregon:**
10/23/96.
For more information, please call (503) 221-1156.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

BREATHING LESSONS is produced by [Inscrutable Films](#) and [Pacific News Service](#).

The educational distributor for **BREATHING LESSONS** is [Fanlight Productions](#) in Boston. For information on videocopies, please contact Fanlight at **1-800-937-4113** or [<Fanlight@tiac.net>](mailto:Fanlight@tiac.net).

For other distribution inquiries, please contact [Inscrutable Films](#) [<InscrutF@aol.com>](mailto:InscrutF@aol.com) or call Pacific News Service at (415) 243-4364.

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