

SAN ANTONIO'S GONG SHORTS FILM COMPETITION IS BACK!



by Kas McNally

Bunny Hat Productions just announced their call for entries for the 5th annual Gong Shorts local films competition, which is coming up on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 7 pm at Alamo Drafthouse Park North. If you haven't heard of it yet, this is the year to go check it out, especially because San Antonio's film scene has been blossoming of late, with local film producers garnering Hollywood and distribution deals. Austin may be known for keeping it weird, but San Antonio is known for keeping it fun (usually with beer), and that's what the Gong Shorts is all about!

You may be wondering, what's the deal with the gong? Remember the old Gong Show from the 70's run by the mysterious Chuck Barris – the show that launched Paul Reuben's Pee-Wee Herman character? If you don't, essentially it was an amateur talent competition where the losers got the gong, literally. They had a giant gong that the judges could take a swing at.

The Gong Shorts is a little different in that after exactly three minutes of watching each film, the audience gets a chance to call out for the dreaded gong and emcee, comedian Jade Esteban Estrada, has the honor of hitting it.

"The Gong Shorts has grown into one of the most highly anticipated mini film festivals in the region. The audience participation aspect gives it a gladiator feel. It's definitely not for the meek. We're in a hurry to reveal the superstar filmmakers of tomorrow," says Jade, who has been emcee since its inception.

Jade, who is currently in preparations for his international "Jalapeño Express" Tour, makes sure that

the audience has a blast, including the filmmakers who get gonged, which is something of a feat.

"We try to keep the atmosphere very light-hearted because it's not always easy to put yourself out there. At the same time, it's the only way to grow as any kind of artist. For the audience, it's a great opportunity to get a snapshot of an array of different films – horror, comedy, drama, music videos and more. Even when they're bad, it's fun because you know what's coming and you get to make that decision," says Kimberly Suta, Gong Shorts producer.

In the end, the audience chooses who wins first, second and third place. The winner receives a cash prize of \$100; this year second place receives dinner for two at San Antonio's amazing progressive Mexican restaurant, Mixtli, which Suta considers a more coveted prize than the cash; and third place wins tickets to the always funny LOL Comedy Club.

For more information, go to: filmbaking.blogspot.com or find them on Facebook at facebook.com/gongshorts



Alamo Drafthouse Park North
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