



## The Church and Sag Cinema Enter the Ring



The opening week's films at the Sag Harbor Cinema tied to "Strike Fast, Dance Lightly" at The Church will be "Raging Bull," "Battling Butler," "Boxing Gym," and "Day of the Fight" (pictured).

By Jennifer Landes

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The kind of collaboration between arts organizations on the South Fork that has been oft promised but less frequently delivered is happening this summer in Sag Harbor between The Church and the cinema. The theme to be addressed? Boxing.

Rather than putting up their dukes, each entity will stay in its respective corner offering up what each does best, in its own way. Furthering the collaboration, The Church is also working with the Flag Art Foundation in New York City to show an additional section of the exhibition.

While a fairly common trope in film, boxing isn't the first thing that pops into one's head when thinking about art. George Bellows comes to mind, maybe those great shots Michael Halsband took of Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat in gloves and trunks ready to face off.

Still, Sara Cochran and Eric Fischl at The Church have amassed a full roster of artists who have tackled the subject in one way or another. They have accomplished this while the cinema's founding artistic director, Giulia D'Agnolo Vallan, has assembled a thoughtful list of movies, from Martin Scorsese's masterpiece "Raging Bull" to Buster Keaton's 1926 "Battling Butler," a Frederick Wiseman documentary, "Boxing Gym," and a short film by Stanley Kubrick, "Day of the Fight,"

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as part of the exhibition's opening week's programs.

The Flag Art Foundation began showing its portion of the exhibition on Friday. The project, in its entirety, is known as "Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing," with more than 100 works across both venues. The Church's show opens on Saturday.

Boxing here is taken as "theme and metaphor, evoking complex and multifaceted cultural meanings," according to the curators. The shows were "developed in tandem and curated independently," with historical and contemporary representations and new commissions addressing things worth fighting for and against, and more recent work questioning traditional portrayals of male dominance and violence as well as issues of race and economic need.

For Mr. Fischl, the art in the show is about values and "all the creative ways artists have found to deal with the monumentality of meaningful living."

"The boxer is a figure caught alone in the crosshairs of choice and fate in a moment that can change everything," Ms. Cochran said in a release. "Perhaps this is why the boxer is a poignant metaphor for our turbulent and uncertain times."



Installed across two venues, "Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing" includes work by Jeffrey Gibson, whose repurposed punching bag is called "War Is Not the Answer Feel Something Real."

Among many others, artists whose work will be included are Derrick Adams, Carroll Dunham, Fab 5 Freddy, Jules Feiffer, Barry Flanagan, Ralph Gibson, Lyle Ashton Harris, Lonnie Holley, Judith Hudson, Rashid Johnson, Howard Kanowitz, Martin Kippenberger, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Ed Paschke, Deborah Roberts, Alison Saar, David Seltzer, Gary Simmons, Charles Waller, Carrie Mae Weems, and Joe Zucker.

The Flag Foundation artists include Bellows and Eadweard Muybridge, with contemporary works by Andrea Bowers, Rosalyn Drexler, Curran Hatleberg, Vincent Valdez, and Yvonne Wells.

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The foundation section closes on Aug. 11. The Church's portion closes Sept. 4.

On the screen, "Raging Bull" will be shown at the Sag Cinema beginning tomorrow in a new 4K restoration of the original 35-millimeter negative. Irwin Winkler, who produced it, as well as the "Rocky" and "Creed" series, will take questions virtually after the screening on Sunday at 6 p.m. Robert De Niro stars in the biographical story of Jake LaMotta. Many consider it Mr. Scorsese's best.

The Keaton silent film can be seen Saturday and Sunday as part of the Kids and Families Matinees program. Keaton both acts and directs in "Battling Butler," which is based on a play about "a pampered, wealthy man who pretends to be a champion boxer to win over the family of the girl he loves." It was recently restored and will be shown with a score by Robert Israel.

Next week there will be showings of "Boxing Gym," from 2010, which documents the life of a boxing gym in Austin, Texas, capturing "the kinetic beauty of the sport" and "its function in a community's everyday life." It will be shown with Kubrick's short, which he made when he was still a photojournalist at Look magazine. The subject is the fight day of Walter Cartier, a middleweight boxer at his career high. Both are scheduled for Saturday and Monday.

The program will continue through the summer, including genres such as film noir ("The Set-Up," from 1949), Italian neorealism ("Rocco and His Brothers," from the 1960s), independent releases ("Girlfight," from 2000), documentaries, and others.

More details and screening times can be found on the cinema's [website](#).

The Church's bountiful list of related programs begins this week with Stephen Laub, an artist in the exhibition who will be this month's Insight Sundays participant at 10:30 a.m. The program has artists speaking about their processes, techniques, and concepts in the presence of their work. The public opening of the show is the night before, and those interested can see the artist's work on Saturday from 6 to 7 p.m.

Further programs and screenings will be advanced closer to their dates in upcoming issues.

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