

A&amp;F

## UNC Asheville alumni begin new indie film festival

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From the brains of four friends united by their passion for film, The Cat Fly Film Festival springs forth like a conceptual Athena, taking life and rising up from the streets of Asheville with gusto to accentuate the enormous creative potential of the Southeast.

"Cat Fly was inspired to get local filmmakers together in one room and show their work," said Keeley Turner, the 24-year-old co-founder of the Cat Fly Film Festival. "We work so hard on these micro-budget short films and we want them to be seen."

The Cat Fly Film Festival came to fruition from the efforts of founders Brittany Jackson, Madeleine Richardson, Catherine Wityk and Turner, all friends who graduated from UNC Asheville and want to give their community an outlet for film expression.

Wityk, a 22-year-old recent graduate of UNCA, seeks to utilize her creativity as a storyteller, spreading wisdom and life lessons to other people.

"I really wish I could push things like empathy," Wityk said. "In this day and age, political situations are so complicated and it relates to people in their personal lives and relationships. Things get really complicated, people make mistakes. If we just had more empathy for one another we'd be able to listen and understand better. We could all coexist."

The festival will be comprised of three nights, each with a different theme from March 31 to April 2, ranging from drama-horror, comedy and

experimental indie-artistic films, kicking off night one at The Magnetic Theater in the River Arts District.

"Themes that are very human that everyone can relate to are most important in any artistic work, but I hope to latch onto themes like that in my own work," Wityk said, mentioning a recent music video she directed about the intimacy and endurance of friendship. "I'm welcoming people to listen."

Turner said she wants to inspire people to search for and grow through the acquisition of their passions. Much of her own work deals with exploring the complexities of the inner worlds of her characters.

"Making short films is my passion," Turner said. "I want to inspire others to go within and search themselves, rather than going through their daily routines and getting stuck in that, waking up one morning and not knowing who they are because they didn't search."

The founders

strive to give a platform to the original voices of Asheville filmmakers, as film possesses the ability and responsibility to broadcast poignant moral and societal messages, according to the festival mission statement; people shape the future.

"We got a lot of submissions," Turner said, delight in her voice. "We had our own screening that we watched every single submission we chose. We were just looking for professional, creative work, paying attention to the quality — of the story, the visual — and that had something to do with Asheville."

Wityk expresses similar delight as

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Catherine Wityk is one of the four creators of the Cat Fly Film Festival, which seeks to celebrate the hard work of Asheville film makers.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 18