

## Interview: Spotlight on Director Bradley Bischoff at Chicago's Music Box Theatre on March 16, 2016

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 14, 2016 - 2:22pm

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CHICAGO – It will be a director's "Debutante Ball" as filmmaker Bradley Bischoff comes into the spotlight at the historic Music Box Theatre in Chicago, at a showcase event presented by the Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP Chicago) and the theatre on March 16, 2016. Bischoff will showcase his short film package, and talk about the pre-production of his first feature film, "The Grasshopper."

Bischoff is from the Chicagoland suburbs, and completed his filmmaker training at Columbia College here in 2009. His short films have screened at festivals all around the world, including Cannes, Montecatini and the Chicago International. The short "Where the Buffalo Roam" was a Vimeo Staff Pick in 2013. The IFP Chicago Spotlight will include a screening of his short films at the Music Box Theatre, and a discussion/audience interaction talk with the filmmaker.



Director Bradley Bischoff Will be in the Spotlight at the Music Box Theatre in Chicago, March 16th, 2016

*Photo credit: MusicBoxTheatre.com*

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed Bradley Bischoff, to preview his spotlight event, and to get some insight from an emerging voice in cinema.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You've done six films so far. Which one did you learn the most about yourself as a filmmaker, and knew through that film that the profession would be your destiny?

**Bradley Bischoff:** It was 'Where the Buffalo Roam.' This film was about me and my brother, since we grew up in the suburbs, and it was made on the last day before I moved permanently from the suburbs to the city of Chicago. My brother and I have emotional barriers, and things we'd never talked about, so instead of having that type of conversation, we made a film together. There is an emotional connection in that film for me. The film was intended as a documentary, but we shot it in such a narrative sense. It was huge push for me in the sense of

'what is real and what is not.'

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Each film you have made is a spotlight on you as an artist communicator. When that light is on, through those 24 frames a second, which emotion do you hope the audience feels most, by using any of your films as an example?

**Bischoff:** That's hard to say, as each film had their own feel. I do have some unconventional casting in my films. My most recent film, 'Lady of the House,' I worked with my wife's sister. She used to be an opera singer, and the story I wrote was about an opera singer who had stopped singing to become a Mom. She wasn't necessarily an actress, but I felt if we designed the film around her life, we could get a raw and honest performance from her.

So my films are about people who live one way, but desire to live another way. I guess emotionally that means that these people are 'displaced,' thinking that they have what they want, but they are obsessed with the 'shadow' of what they need.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** In three of your films, you've taken a piece of writing or poetry and placed images upon it. What moves you about a precise piece of writing, which creates a path towards the images that you use to illustrate it?

**Bischoff:** These are the 'found footage' pieces. They are associated with a period in which I couldn't come up with original stories to film. During that two year period, I just wanted to find a way to tell a story without having to get a full production off the ground, so I used found footage. It was an exercise in a different style of filmmaking.



The Short Film 'Nomad,' Directed by Bradley Bischoff

Photo credit: Chicago International Film Festival

**HollywoodChicago.com:** This Music Box spotlight will take place in one of the most special places in the Chicago film scene. What is your goal that night, in the sense of introducing Bradley Bischoff to this next phase of the world?

**Bischoff:** First, the Music Box is one of my favorite film venues in Chicago, and it was the location of one of my significant movie moments in 2005. It was 'Tarnation' [directed by Jonathan Caouette] and it changed the way I looked at film. So I am so honored to screen my films at the Music Box Theatre. I've been a filmmaker in Chicago for ten years, and I love this city, and this feels like my introduction to the city. I'm here and in the backyard, come play ball with me.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Film is a collaborative art, and you have stuck with your own 'Brad Pack' of creative partners. What is an example of one of those partners carrying you over a goal line of bringing a project to life?

**Bischoff:** He's right here, holding the camera, my photography director Jake Zalutsky. We grew up together, and started out making skater videos together, and got interested in film at the same time through that work. I remember that we learned the proper angles through those videos, for full cinematic impact. Together, we thought, how can we take this to the next level? We decided to make a music video one day, and from there we've been growing and morphing.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You were nurtured in the suburbs, and shaped your craft in the city. How do those two environments come together and how also do they clash in what you do as a filmmaker?

**Bischoff:** I do love the suburbs, even though I grew up thinking I had to run away from them. When I actually did move to the city, it was



magical. There were always people out and about, and I felt all the possibilities here. But that's when I thought about my feelings regarding the suburbs, it has a very motherly hold on me. I can walk on their quiet streets and everyone has set up their home.

I feel like you can dream in the suburbs, and sleep quietly, whereas in the city you have to be it and do it everyday. In that sense, my parents gave me the structure that allowed me to be spontaneous in my life. Whenever I'm in the city, I wish I was in the suburbs, and vice versa. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Your new film is *The Grasshopper*, your first feature film, which you describe as 'suburban fever dream.' What was the inspiration for the concept and how did it expand into a feature length vision?

**Bischoff:** As I referred to in the last question, my parents gave me this playground for me to grow up in, which gave me time to think and feel. This film is about a middle age man who has a Peter Pan syndrome, which is something I think I've been dealing with for a long time. It's about confronting adulthood – I just had a child last year – but I still have these hopes, dreams and visions for my life that doesn't follow a nine to five structure, or a picket fence. It's my goal to not live within that structure.

This film is about a guy confronting the rules of society. Do we have to live nine to five? The way I've been talking about it is that it's my darker version of 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off,' but instead of a kid ditching school and having the best day of his life with no repercussions, it's about a middle age man ditching work and having catastrophic consequences. The older you get, the harder it is to run away from responsibilities.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Why the title 'The Grasshopper'?



Bischoff on the Red Carpet

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

**Bischoff:** It's inspired by that old fable, 'The Grasshopper and the Ant.' The ant works constantly, so when winter comes he has prepared a home, food and security. The grasshopper, plays and dances all summer, so when winter comes he has no food, so he has to ask the ant for help. I'm a Millennial, we all want to be grasshoppers, but we tend to forget about the ants.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Which film director has inspired you to the point that you include little tributes to them in your films, and what is an example of one of those tributes?

**Bischoff:** There is a French director, Leos Carax, who did the film 'Lovers on the Bridge.' I feel like he plays in a magical realism-type world, the whole story is just so metaphoric that they can live, dance, sing, breathe and throw fireworks off a bridge without a need for explanation. There is somewhat of an energy like that in my work.

The other is American Frank Perry, whose most notable film is 'The Swimmer' [1968], which is my favorite films of all time. If I can make something like that statement, I would be very happy.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What do you think the line is between creativity and insanity, and how often have you walked that line?

**Bischoff:** I just I can relate it to the hustle that I'm feeling and living right now. I have a full time job, but I have this desire to create art. Whenever I do lunch at work, I try to meet with someone in the arts community. When I get out of work, I'm going home to be a family man, but at the same time I'm writing and scripting, and as soon as the baby goes to sleep, I'm working on the next script.

In order to get to where I want to be, it's all nonstop. It's like the '25th Hour' every day. I think that is the insanity part. It's in trying to be human while at the same time trying to be an artist.

*IFP Chicago and the Music Box Theatre Presents the "Filmmaker Project Member Spotlight" featuring director Bradley Bischoff – Wednesday March 16th, 2016, at 7:30pm – at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport Avenue, Chicago. [Click here](#) [14] for more information.*



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