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## Inside Connections Bring A-List Films to Local Festival

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Chatham, NY—You might call it The Little Club That Could, though officially it's known as the Chatham Film Club. Once again, this die-hard group of local movie-loving volunteers has launched **FilmColumbia**, a world-class, four-day cinematic festival to be held at three separate venues in the village of Chatham on October 22-25.

Now celebrating its 10th year, **FilmColumbia** will showcase its best-ever lineup of movies, according to Peter Biskind, executive director and co-programmer of the event, as well as contributing editor for *Vanity Fair* magazine and author of *Down And Dirty Pictures*. Laurence Kardish, **FilmColumbia**'s other co-programmer, is the senior film curator for MoMA—a post which allows him to pre-screen movies from around the world. Kardish and Biskind both expedite cinematic selections for the club, “but we also have several new Advisory Board members who work in the film industry.” Biskind explains, “Their connections have given us access to some really exceptional movies this year. There are no klinkers.” He cites producer Ron Yerxa, who brought the much-loved *Little Miss Sunshine* to the screen, as one of the industry movers who helped get significant new releases for the Chatham festival. “We have more far-reaching tentacles into the film community,” Biskind notes, adding, “This year, there’s also a fine selection of work from local filmmakers.”

Of the more than 25 films to be screened at **FilmColumbia** this fall, a last-minute entry called *Precious* (showing at the Crandell Theatre Sunday night at 8:00) comes with much media buzz. Directed by Lee Daniels (who produced *Monster's Ball*), the film depicts the hellish life of a black teenage girl in Harlem circa 1987. Hailed as “an

overwhelming, masterful” work and “standout drama,” *Precious* won the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival and won the Audience Award and Grand Jury prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Even TV host Oprah is praising the film’s brute-force intensity.

But beyond harrowing urban drama, “We have something for everyone,” says **FilmColumbia** director Calliope Nicholas. Award-winning romance, comedy, animation, fantasy, history, documentary, environmental films, and student submissions are all offered in “our best line up to date.” For a complete listing of movies and events at this year’s festival, go to [www.filmcolumbia.com](http://www.filmcolumbia.com). Tickets may be purchased individually for each film or moviegoers can pre-order an All-Film Pass (\$80 members; \$110 non-members) or a Gold Pass (\$125 members; \$175 non-members), which allows entry into all events. Ticket sales to Chatham Film Club members are by mail or telephone (518-392-3445). Sales to the general public start October 9, including online ticket orders and in-person advance sales at the Chatham Bookstore. Tickets may also be purchased during the festival at the Tracy Memorial, however most films sell out early, so advance purchases are highly recommended.



Nurse John (Lenny Kravitz) and Precious (Gabourey Sidibe) in a scene from “Precious,” based on the novel “PUSH” by Sapphire. Photo Credit: Anne Marie Fox

