



# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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## At 36, Atlanta Film Festival still stakes claim to indie cool

By Howard Pousner and Melissa Ruggieri  
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Beyond the expected online blather about the chance to tip cold brews and meet hot actresses, there is one recurring theme in the 101 reasons fans submitted via social media to the Atlanta Film Festival about why they are looking forward to the city's longest-running cinema fest, March 23 through April 1.



Atlanta Film Festival

Krysten Ritter and Kate Bosworth star in "Life Happens," opening night feature of the Atlanta Film Festival, March 23-April 1, a comedy centered on two best friends who attempt to keep things normal after one has a baby.

"A break from the steady stream of Hollywood fatuousness," wrote one contributor to the list posted on the festival's website, [www.atlantafilmfestival.com](http://www.atlantafilmfestival.com). "No Michael Bay," said another, referencing the "Transformers" director often associated with big studio excess.

Preparing to open its 36th edition, the Atlanta Film Festival still registers as "cool" -- the most oft-repeated phrase in the 101 list -- by specializing in independently made films that are often the product of great passions and low budgets..

From more than 2,000 worldwide submissions, festival organizers selected a slate of 125 narratives, documentaries and shorts (a handful of which will compete for grand jury prizes) for the 10-day screening extravaganza at Landmark's Midtown Art Cinema and other sites. Notably, more than 50 features and shorts this year have Georgia ties.

Here are highlights of what's in store ...

### "Pig"

Take it as a compliment, not a concern, that Henry Barrial's amnesia drama has been compared to "Memento."

"Pig" is its own film, but it gives viewers the same edgy, tingling sensation of trying to piece together fractured clues as did Christopher Nolan's critically lauded 2000 drama starring Guy Pearce.

Here, the unnamed man suffering memory loss, played by Rudolf Martin, wakes up alone in the middle of the desert with a black hood over his dazed head, his hands tied behind his back, and the name "Manny Elder" scribbled on a scrap of paper in his otherwise empty pockets.

Half dead, he's discovered, conveniently enough, by a beautiful woman (Heather Ankeny) with a cute young son who helps nurse him to health in her home and who seems oddly willing to share her life with this mystery man. But everyone our confused hero encounters seems to act a little strange, especially Elder (Keith Diamond), who, it turns out, is the super at the scroungy Los Angeles apartment building where our lost antihero had a pad.

It's so cool charging down blind alleys with the tense and intense Martin, the unknown providing the film with a jangly charge, that you can't help but be a bit disappointed when "Pig" reaches a rather pat resolution.

Showing at 8:30 p.m. March 24 at Landmark's Midtown Art Cinema. HOWARD POUSNER