What a Pool Believes Questionnaire

**Ted, in all of the years I have known you and your work, you have always have had this fascination with the classic, the retro, the respect for the old films of yesteryear. Tell me, where did the idea and passion for this film come from? In other words, what compelled you to do “What a Pool Believes”?**

It’s funny you mention that, because it’s not something I actively think about or love. I’m not a Guy Maddin-like filmmaker. I don’t obsess about silent film or the Silver Age of Hollywood, and my knowledge of that period is actually very poor. But I seem to keep making these kind of films! This time the impetus came from the DIY Silent Film Contest. I wanted to make something that looked faithful to the period, but took on modern issues, like the drought and the invisibility of a laboring class. Chaplin’s famous creation The Tramp was a homeless guy, and that made me think how that would never be popular now. We don’t have the empathy for it. So that’s how “Chuy” came about, and being a comedy, it he gets a happy ending.

**Did you always know you wanted this to be a short film?**

Well, for the contest it had to be exactly 3 minutes! I like restrictions like that. In reality, Chaplin/Keaton/Lloyd shorts were about 10 – 20 minutes, cartoons are about 8 minutes. So ours was a challenge.

**Please talk a bit about the process you went through in the production of the film, and what equipment you used.**

It was all shot on a Panasonic GH-4, then the timing was sped up in post to replicate silent film. Then it was sent through an iPad app called 8mm. The director of “Searching for Sugarman” used the same app to mimic 1970s Super 8 film and he won an Oscar…so that’s good enough for us! As for the underwater sequences, we used professional housing that looked like a Ziploc bag!

**What were some of the challenges you had to face?**

Shooting everything in one day, which we did. We were blessed with the weirdest weather: blazingly hot and sunny for the outside shots, and then when we went underwater, it clouded over and sprinkled! We rushed to grab every remaining ray of sunshine.

**If you could go back, would you do anything differently, and if so, what would that be?**

If you had asked that about any of my other films, I’d have a list. But this is the first film that I’m very satisfied with.

**“What a Pool Believes” won UCSB’s Arts and Lectures’ Summer Silent Film Contest last year, that in itself is a great achievement, but now that your film is screening in one of the biggest stages, the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, how do you feel?**

We’re all very excited. The film screened last summer in front of 4000 people in the Sunken Gardens, which was mind-blowing, by the way. The cool thing about showing at SBIFF is that you get to meet other Santa Barbara filmmakers, many of whom I’ve never met or heard of. (Most likely they’re saying that of me, too). It’s also a chance to feel a part of a bigger filmmaking world, the “I” in SBIFF.

Is there anything else you would like to add that I didn’t ask?