

Glen Viewings Presents

Creating Your Own Story: Life Changing Lives

“My name is Temple Grandin. I’m not like other people. I think in pictures and I connect them.” – Temple Grandin (*Temple Grandin*)



Temple Grandin
(103 min/PG/2010)
March 18
2 & 6:30 PM

The Social Network
(120 min/PG-13/2010)
April 15
2 & 6:30 PM

Skin
(107 min/PG-13/2009)
May 20
2 & 6:30 PM

Creating your own story means being able to define your own status or destiny, irrespective of what others think or accepted paths towards achievement. Temple Grandin’s success came from the recognition that, although autistic with brain functions different from most, her unique ability to think in pictures enabled her to be a pioneer in the fields of livestock handling and autism, when many would have simply defined her as disabled.

Sadly, *Skin* shows just how difficult it can be to overcome discrimination. The inability of others, and particularly her own family, to think beyond Sandra Laing’s skin color led to a life marked by extreme sadness and personal tragedy. However, this moving film also does justice to her remarkable resilience in the face of these tragic circumstances. Although Sandra is unable to regain lost time and truly triumph over racism, she never compromises her dignity.

The Social Network portrays a world of pride and prejudice in the status-obsessed Harvard environment. Mark Zuckerberg's social awkwardness and frustration at his place within this rigid environment of class and cliques drives him to achieve a stunning breakthrough and invent **Facebook**. Yet, he is also ruthless, abandoning his closest friend as he attempts to redefine himself as a superstar businessman. Aaron Sorkin's Oscar-winning screenplay suggests that while our modern age may be more connected than ever, our valuing of the true worth of others remains an elusive social ethic.

The impact on the world of these three very different lives has been profound. Zuckerberg's **Facebook** is defining the way an entire generation communicates, Dr. Grandin’s studies have been instrumental in shifting perceptions of autism, and Laing’s life story is now taught as a chapter of South African history in the nation’s schools. These three films serve to remind us of the fragility of the human spirit and the grand effort it can take to overcome society’s judgments.

GlenViewings Presents

Creating Your Own Story: Life Changing Lives

“You know, you really don't need a forensics team to get to the bottom of this. If you guys were the inventors of Facebook, you'd have invented Facebook.”

Mark Zuckerberg (*The Social Network*)

Reel to Reel

	Temple Grandin	The Social Network	Skin
Director:	Mick Jackson	David Fincher	Anthony Fabian
Writers:	Christopher Monger Merritt Johnson	Aaron Sorkin	Anthony Fabian Helen Crawley Jessie Keyt Helena Kriel
Producers:	Scott Ferguson	David Fincher Scott Rudin Dana Brunetti Michael De Luca	Anthony Fabian Genevieve Hofmeyr Margaret Matheson
Stars:	Claire Danes Julia Ormond Catherine O' Hara	Jesse Eisenberg Andrew Garfield Justin Timberlake	Sophie Okonedo Sam Neill Alice Krige
Budget:	Not made public	\$40,000,000	\$3,000,000
Revenue:	Not made public	\$220,812,855	\$351,283
Major Accolade:	Emmy: Outstanding TV movie	Golden Globes: Best Picture	Palm Springs Film Festival: Best Film

Did You Know?

- HBO bought an entire herd of cows just for use in *Temple Grandin*. However, during the scenes where cows appear to be drowning or in pain, animatronic models were used.
- The opening scene in *The Social Network* ran for 8 script pages and took 99 takes to film.
- *Skin* was twice requested for screenings by the South African parliament, was screened for the United Nations, and won 18 film festival awards. However, it was not released theatrically in the US, with distributors reportedly reluctant to tackle the issue of race.

Things to Explore

- In telling the story of their central characters, how do the three films also thematically comment upon the values of their respective eras and locations?
- A critic wrote that the Laing family's "refusal to conform was either heroic or tragi-comic or merely dysfunctional. Or perhaps all three." Do you think the comments are justified? Could these judgments also apply to Zuckerberg and Grandin?
- In what ways do the filmmakers try to put you "in the head of" the main characters in each film, and why? At which moments are they most successful in doing this?

Themes

- Identity and difference
- Class and status
- Judgment and tolerance

GlenViewings Presents

Creating Your Own Story: Life Changing Lives

"I'm happy for the country. But it's too late for me." - Sandra Laing (*Skin*)

Library Resources

1) Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism, Temple Grandin
Temple Grandin's bestseller is an acclaimed and in many ways unprecedented insight into the mind of an autistic person. Combines her own brilliant life story with sparkling insights into the science behind the condition.

Copy	Material	Location
616.85882 GRANDIN	Book	Nonfiction

2) The Accidental Billionaires, Ben Mezrich
Mezrich's breezily readable style and eye for juicy yet compelling details are a great match for the story of how a group of unlikely nerds took over the world but lost their friendship once the dollars started rolling in.

Copy	Material	Location
338.761 MEZ	Book	Nonfiction

3) When She Was White: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race, Judith Stone
This is a full account of Laing's tragic story, drawing on extensive research and personal testimonies from the Apartheid era in South Africa.

Copy	Material	Location
350.896 STO	Book	Nonfiction

4) The New Biographical Dictionary of Film, David Thomson
Recently voted the greatest book ever written about the movies by a poll in *Sight and Sound* magazine, Thomson's reference epic is an indispensable guide to the icons of cinema who have lived life-changing lives while creating the modern ages' greatest cinematic stories.

Copy	Material	Location
791.430922 THO	Book	Nonfiction

5) Temple Grandin (DVD)

Copy	Material	Location
DVD TEM	DVD, Fiction	Audiovisual Room

6) The Social Network (DVD)

Copy	Material	Location
DVD SOC	DVD, Fiction	Audiovisual Room

7) Skin (DVD)

Copy	Material	Location
NEW DVD SKI	DVD, Fiction	Audiovisual Room

Glen Viewings Presents

Creating Your Own Story: Life Changing Lives

“Nature is cruel but we don't have to be.” - Temple Grandin (*Temple Grandin*)

Online Resources

Temple Grandin

<http://www.hbo.com/movies/temple-grandin/index.html>

HBO's website for *Temple Grandin* contains high quality resources including behind the scenes features with the actors and Dr. Grandin, and a downloadable coloring book for autistic children.

<http://www.templegrandin.com/>

Dr. Temple Grandin's official website is filled with information on her life, the film, and her work on autism and livestock studies. A great resource for anyone interested in her story.

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2010/02/02/temple-grandin/6833/>

An interview with Dr. Grandin about her experience with the film, her recommendations for assisting people on the autism spectrum, and her visual thinking.

The Social Network

<http://www.thesocialnetwork-movie.com/>

The super slick *The Social Network* official website has video featurettes with all of the principal cast and crew, a wealth of material on the 'zeitgeist' around the film, and a number of behind-the-scenes segments. You can also download Aaron Sorkin's Oscar-winning screenplay.

<http://creativescreenwritingmagazine.blogspot.com/2010/12/aaron-sorkin-social-network-q.html>

An excellent, hour-long interview with *The Social Network*'s Oscar-winning screenwriter Aaron Sorkin that covers his inspiration for the script and his working practices as a writer.

<http://www.slashfilm.com/the-social-network-fincher-and-sorkin-on-charlie-rose-the-sound-of-the-film-and-armond-white/>

A good collection of articles on the film; a Charlie Rose interview with Sorkin and Fincher; an in-depth feature on the film's sound design; and a scathing review from one dissenting critic.

Skin

<http://www.skinthemovie.net>

The official website for *Skin* features the trailer, a blog, reviews, and a forum for viewer feedback.

http://www.indiewire.com/article/skins_anthony_fabian_for_days_afterward_i_had_a_lump_in_my_throat/

Skin director Anthony Fabian discusses his career journey as a director, and why he was so determined to bring Sandra Laing's story to the screen.

http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/families/article6725566.ece

A great feature article on Laing's life that contains more on her struggle and ongoing impact on South African society.

GlenViewings Presents

IF YOU LIKED **Creating Your Own Story: Life Changing Lives...**

Amelia

(Mira Nair/111 min/PG/2009)

--Hilary Swank and Richard Gere star in this biopic that traces the life of famed aviator Amelia Earhart -- who made history in 1932 by becoming the first woman ever to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

A Beautiful Mind

(Ron Howard/134 min/PG-13/2001)

--Based loosely on the book of the same name, this is the true story of mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr.'s long fought battle with schizophrenia as he struggles to gain control of his mental state.

Conviction

(Tony Goldwyn/106 min/R/2010)

--Inspired by a true story, Betty Ann Walters (Hilary Swank) goes back to school to get a GED and a law degree to help free her brother from being wrongfully imprisoned.

Horse Boy

(Michel Orion Scott/93 min/NR/2009)

--Documentary that chronicles the journey of Rupert Isaacson and Kristen Neff and their autistic son Rowan as they travel on horseback to Mongolia to locate a band of shamans that can help heal autism.

Iris

(Richard Eyre/91 min/R/2001)

--Biographical portrait of author Iris Murdoch based on two memoirs by her husband John Bayley that chronicles their life and romance from their meeting as fellows students at Oxford through the struggles with old age as Iris's mind deteriorates under the ravages of Alzheimer's disease.

Milk

(Gus Van Sant/129 min/R/2008)

--Academy Award winner Sean Penn plays the title role in Gus Van Sant's biopic tracing the last eight years in the life of Harvey Milk, the ill-fated politician and gay activist whose life changed history and whose courage still inspires people.

GlenViewings Presents

Persepolis

(Marjane Satrapi/Vincent Paronnaud/95 min/R/2007)

--Based on author Satrapi's bestselling autobiographical graphic novel that chronicles the trials faced by an outspoken Iranian girl who finds her views challenged during the Islamic revolution.

Pirates of Silicon Valley

(Martyn Burke/120 min/NR/1999)

--This tech-world biopic traces the fortunes of personal-computer companies Apple and Microsoft from their obscure dorm-room and backyard origins to their very public battle for corporate supremacy.

Shine

(Scott Hicks/105min/PG-13/1996)

Nominated for seven Oscars with an Oscar winning performance by Geoffrey Rush, *Shine* tells the true story of gifted Australian piano prodigy David Helfgott, a brilliant musician who overcomes a history of debilitating mental problems.

Sicilian Girl

(Marco Amenta/115 min/NR/2009)

--Real-life story of seventeen-year-old Rita Atria that chronicles how she documented her local mob's criminal activity in an attempt to bring the killing to a stop in her Sicilian village after her father and brother are slain. English subtitles.

Also Directed by David Fincher:

Seven (125 min/R/1995)

Fight Club (139 min/R/1999)

Zodiac (156 min/R/2007)

Also Starring Claire Danes:

Shopgirl (116 min/R/2005)

Me & Orson Welles (113 min/PG-13/2009)

Also Starring Jesse Eisenberg;

The Squid and the Whale (88 min/R/2005)

Adventureland (106 min/R/2009)