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Deserted Mega-malls, Invasion of the Squirrels, Rise of the Cranes,
The Female Body Beautiful (and Plastic), Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2009,
On PBS’s POV Series

“Utopia, Part 3: The World’s Largest Shopping Mall,” “Nutkin’s Last Stand,” “34 x 25 x 36”
And “City of Cranes” in a Special Short-Film Program

Features aren’t the only game in documentary filmmaking. On Tuesday, Aug. 18, PBS’s POV (Point of View) series showcases four award-winning short films that demonstrate the punch and poetry of short-form filmmaking. On the bill are Sam Green and Carrie Lozano’s Utopia, Part 3: The World’s Largest Shopping Mall — and it isn’t in Minnesota; Nicholas Berger’s Nutkin’s Last Stand, in which a hardy band of English nature lovers rises up to fight the most successful invader of the island since 1066 — the American gray squirrel; Jesse Epstein’s 34 x 25 x 36, an inside look at a mannequin factory where the perfect female form is crafted (or is it?); and Eva Weber’s City of Cranes, in which we share a soaring view of man’s urban works, not through the eyes of the birds but through the eyes of the men who sit in steel cages atop the giant machines that make and remake our world.

These films have their American broadcast premiere on POV’s special Shorts Program on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2009, at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.) American television’s longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking. The series’ 22nd season continues on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. through Sept. 22, and returns with two specials in November and December.

Is nothing American sacred anymore? The largest mall in the world turns out not to be the famous Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. It’s the South China Mall outside of Guangzhou, China. Outdoing the techniques of American consumerism, South China Mall is Disneyland, Las Vegas and Mall of America rolled into one. There are carnival rides, mini-parks, canals and lakes amid classic Western-style buildings with space for hundreds of shops.

But along with the glitz and glory of middle-class shopping, the mall’s Chinese developers seem to have imported something else — a cautionary tale of capitalist hubris. Alex Hu, a local Guangzhou boy who made it big in international business, wanted South China Mall to be a hometown monument to his success — even though Guangzhou has no major airports or highways nearby. And four years after its construction, the mall sits virtually empty of both shops and shoppers. But the Chinese have imported yet another concept familiar to Americans — South China Mall is considered too big to fail. So, employees line up for flag-raising ceremonies and pep talks about “brand building” before going off to maintain the deserted concourses meticulously. If China is the future of the world economy, Utopia, Part 3: The World’s Largest Shopping Mall just may be a startling peek at what’s to come. Website: www.samgreen.to. A production of the Free History Project. Length: 13:00.
Talk about sacred! The aggressive North American gray (or grey, when it gets to England) squirrel is threatening to displace the English red squirrel. Immortalized in Beatrix Potter’s *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* and much beloved by English nature lovers, the red is the island nation’s only native species of squirrel. But it is being driven to extinction by the invading gray’s combative nature and a squirrel pox it carries, against which the reds have no resistance. And so, with characteristic national pluck, a cross-section of English men and women — from lords to priests to artists to farmers — has risen up to turn back “the grey menace” and save the reds. *Nutkin’s Last Stand* is touching and often humorous. But species loss is no laughing matter, and the film rises to a haunting evocation of the stakes in the survival of a little red squirrel. Website: [www.nutkinslaststand.com](http://www.nutkinslaststand.com). A *Pinecone Pictures* production. Length: 18:00.

**34 x 25 x 36** is Jesse Epstein’s third installment in a trilogy of films (along with “The Guarantee” and the Sundance award-winning “Wet Dreams and False Images”) examining issues of body image from quirky and revealing angles. This time, we are taken into the inner workings of the Patina V Mannequin Factory in the City of Industry, Calif., where the artistry, craft and marketing that go into creating “the ideal woman of the moment” — in plastic — are accompanied by a remarkable amount of reflection on just what that ideal means (one thing it means is a 34” x 25” x 36” figure). Patina V is a place where the owner will tell women (and then run for cover), “There are no perfect bodies out there. We make the perfect body.” And the chief designer harkens back to the roots of his craft not only in French 19th-century wax figures but also in the religious icons of medieval times. Website: [www.JesseDocs.com](http://www.JesseDocs.com). Distributed by New Day Films. Length: 7:00.

It used to be said the most distinguishing feature of European cities and towns was the cathedral spire. *City of Cranes* convinces us that even more than the skyscraper that has long since overshadowed the church, these cities’ most distinctive feature has become the construction crane that erects the skyscraper. A rhapsodic visual meditation on cranes, the power and grace of massive loads in motion and the life of the city (in this case, London), *City of Cranes* is narrated by the reflections of the operators who sit in steel cages atop the giant machines. Called “sublime visual/audio poetry” by indieWIRE, the film demonstrates that if you ask working people about their jobs, you may well receive answers in which shoptalk is mixed with generous amounts of poetry and philosophy. Website: [www.cityofcranes.com](http://www.cityofcranes.com). An *Odd Girl Out* Production. Length: 14:00.

**About the Filmmakers:**

**Utopia, Part 3: the World’s Largest Shopping Mall**  
Sam Green, director/producer/editor, is a San Francisco-based documentary filmmaker whose credits include the Academy Award-nominated “The Weather Underground” and the award-winning documentaries “The Rainbow Man/John 3:16,” “Lot 63, grave c,” “N-Judah 5:30” and “Pie Fight ’69.” He teaches at the University of San Francisco and the San Francisco Art Institute. He has been a resident at the MacDowell Colony, the Bellagio Study and Conference Center, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the Marin Headlands Center for the Arts. Green received his master’s degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied documentary film with Marlon Riggs.

**Carrie Lozano, director/producer**, is a journalist and documentary filmmaker. She produced and directed an award-winning film about journalist Randy Shilts, “Reporter Zero,” and produced “The Weather Underground.” She is currently a post-graduate fellow at the Investigative Reporting Program at the University of California, Berkeley’s Graduate School of Journalism, where she contributed to PBS *Frontline’s* “Black Money” and is working on a series of stories about the United States’ chemical weapons stockpiles.

**Nutkin’s Last Stand**  
Nicholas Berger, director/editor, was born in San Francisco and has lived in San Diego, New York and Berlin. He attended Brown University where he received a bachelor’s degree in philosophy. He subsequently spent two years working on documentaries for PBS and the History Channel before
attending Stanford University’s Documentary Film program where he recently received a master of fine arts degree. Berger’s credits include “The Legend of Rosalie” and “The Man with the Electric Boots.”

34 x 25 x 36

Jesse Epstein, director/producer, is a filmmaker and youth-media educator. She received a master’s degree in documentary film from New York University and was recently named “One of 25 Filmmakers to Watch” by Filmmaker magazine.

**City of Cranes**

Originally from Germany, Eva Weber, director, is a London-based filmmaker working in both documentary and fiction. Her short documentary “The Intimacy of Strangers” received the President’s Award at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. “City of Cranes,” which premiered on England’s Channel 4 and was shown at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, has won numerous awards, including Best Documentary Short at the Los Angeles Film Festival and the Jury Award for Best Short at Full Frame. “The Solitary Life of Cranes,” Weber’s follow-up, premiered at last year’s Britdoc Film Festival, where it won the Best Short Documentary Award; the film will have its U.S. premiere at this year’s SILVERDOCS Documentary Film Festival. In 2005, Weber set up her own production company, Odd Girl Out Productions, with Samantha Zarzosa. Weber is currently developing a number of feature-length projects, including the documentary “LA Storage” and the fiction feature “Ghost Wives.”

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today’s best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, **POV’s Borders**. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

**POV Interactive** ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov))

POV’s award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, **POV’s Borders**. In addition, the **POV Blog** is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

**POV Community Engagement and Education**

POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, **POV’s Youth Views** works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

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American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)
American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic-engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | POV

**DVD REQUESTS:** Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.

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