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Sixth Annual Bicycle Film Festival 2006

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The new issue of Dirt Rag features [an interview with Brendt Barbur](#), who at the moment is possibly still recovering from exhaustion. The Sixth Annual Bicycle Film Festival just concluded in New York City, where the energetic Barbur rallied moviegoers into a frenzy from Wednesday through Sunday. Literally. The Bicycle Film Festival is not about sitting quietly in a theater and contemplating the relative merits of cinematography (though by all means you are welcome to). The Bicycle Film Festival is a literal celebration of all things "bicycle" and so downing a PBR and cheering the bike messengers on screen are not frowned upon—they're encouraged.



The Anthology Film Archives building is nestled in Manhattan's East Village, which happens to be the perfect setting for a film festival that repeatedly casts its spotlight on the best of urban cycling. From May 10th through 14th the building remains decorated by dozens, if not hundreds, of city bikes. Geared and single, fixed and free, mountain, road, hybrid, recumbent—you name it. There's even a pedicab. The line reaches around the corner of 2nd and 2nd, and I would be lying if I said I wasn't impressed with the number of female cyclists in attendance.

Friday night's 11:00 screening (actually, every screening) begins with a slide show appropriately titled **A Girl's Bike** by Jason Oliver Goodman. When the small theater fills to absolute capacity Barbur sprints from the back of the room and leaps to the stage. After a few short words (and some good natured heckling) the Festival Director turns the lively crowd's attention to [the festival's opening credits](#)—a fine piece of film making in its own right.

Amidst the sound of cans opening and bottles clanking, the festival begins with several shorts sponsored by the likes of [Trackstar](#) and [Puma](#). Joshua Frankel's short film **Bicycle Messengers** incites the crowd when the animated protagonist gets "doored" and chooses to walk away rather than confront the careless motorist. The film **Gasoline VS Yogurt** features a race between a 1976 Schwinn and a Ducati Monster through the streets of Manhattan. Can you guess who wins?

Films pass, and so do flasks. [Lucas Brunelle's work](#) is even more incredible on the big screen than it is on the Internet, and the visionary filmmaker's exploits on the Great Wall of China draw cheers from the audience. The evening's highlight is a short version of the yet to be completed film **M.A.S.H.**. Billed as a skateboard influenced film about fixed gear riding in San Francisco, the skid-fest does not disappoint.

Saturday's activities begin with a block party that draws hundreds of cyclists to watch trackstand and skid competitions, and I am reminded how friendly New Yorkers really are as I make one new friend after another. Of course, handing out "ride a fucking bike" and "one less car" stickers at a cycling event is a good ace in the hole.

Though the theater remains relatively empty for the 5:00 Mountain Bike Video Bash, the small group of mountain bikers (and open minded roadies, I suppose) are treated to an excerpt from **Match Video Zine Issue 8** and a short from Alex Rankin's masterpiece, **earthed 3**. The film's highlights include footage of [Megavainche](#), a downhill endurance race on Alpe D'Huez, and the amazing trials antics of Chris Akrigg.

Saturday night's screening features a welcomed repeat of Friday's best short films, as well as Kim Jensen's powerful **Ride On** and Peter Sutherland's acclaimed **Pedal**. Though **Pedal** was originally released in 2001, the film is as fresh today as it was five years ago. Documenting the lives and personalities of New York City bike messengers, **Pedal** delivers a candid look into the extremely different lives various bike messengers lead.

Quite possibly the best thing about the bicycle film festival is that it leaves you inspired to ride your bike. And while taking to the streets of Manhattan after drinking and watching Lucas Brunelle videos might not be the safest thing in the world... Well, it sure is fun. My hat's off to Barbur for putting on one of the coolest bike events I've ever attended. The festival is set to hit eight more cities around the world, and if you eat, breathe and sleep bicycles, you need to go. You'll make friends, you'll ride bikes, and you'll broaden your cycling horizons. Visit www.bicyclefilmfestival.com for more information.

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