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Fest features a documentary for everyone

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Bigfoot, cat shooters, balloon twisters and obsessed fans of fallen pop princess Tiffany all vie for attention in the seventh San Francisco International Documentary Film Festival, which opens Friday at the Roxie.

But the lady who may become the talk of the town before everything fades to black has to be filmmaker Melody Gilbert.

Five of the artist's documentaries will be shown this year, including "Married at the Mall," "A Life Without Pain," "Urban Explorers" and "Disconnected." But perhaps "Whole" is the most intriguing because of the subject matter — the film documents people who only feel "complete" after having a healthy limb amputated.

"I am constantly amazed at how many people have been so generous with opening up their lives and hearts to me," Gilbert says.

"It's such a privilege. It's just me and my video camera going wherever there's a story to be told. I'm very, very lucky."

Gilbert is also the recipient of DocFest's first Someone to Watch Award. She's expected to speak at the fest and offer a glimpse of her new documentary.



Busy, busy, busy: Five of Melody Gilbert's films are featured in this year's San Francisco DocFest, which opens next weekend at the Roxie Cinema. (Courtesy photo)