

'Tea Space' a cinematic oasis

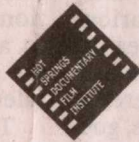
Paris is a city of soaring gothic cathedrals, baroque buildings and grandiose formal gardens. But in a serene garden along a Parisian side street, there stands a relatively narrow and deceptively unassuming edifice made of earth, stone and wood – a "space" for the tea ceremony – a teahouse built by the Japanese for the National Museum of Asian Arts.

The film "Tea Space" follows the construction of that teahouse, but it is far more than a how-to-build-it documentary. Beautifully constructed and edited, "Tea Space" is a meditation on the significance of the tea ceremony and how that Japanese tradition can adapt and thrive



Reel Opinion

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in an otherwise foreign milieu. The elderly architect of the teahouse, Masao Nakamura, alludes to his personal journey with the "spirit of the tea as transformative in his approach to his life's work. He describes the teahouse

as "a pole, an extremity of architecture, where art and spirit dominate, dedicated to the universe of the tea."

Filmmaker Julien Pueble has done a masterful job in creating a cinematic oasis of contemplation for his audience. The discipline, attentiveness to detail and aesthetic concern of the tea ceremony is mirrored in his filming of the construction of the teahouse. The craftsmen's attention to the framing, tiling, plastering and paperwork are a feast to the eyes.

The film lingers on the hands of the stonemason as he holds a small river rock, contemplating its placement in the house's foundation. The spare musical

soundtrack beautifully complements the meditative aspect of the film. This film will be of special interest to Hot Springs residents in fostering a greater understanding of the traditions of our sister city of Hanamaki, Japan.

Pueble will arrive from Paris, France, for the world premiere of his film 7:05 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 26, at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, and 12:20 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28. All films and programs are subject to change. Visit www.hsdfi.org or call at 321-4747.

Donna Casparian is an HSDFI Board Member, screening committee member and has worked tirelessly as the Educational Liaison for Festival screenings and events.