

# AMERICAN PRAIRIE ARTISTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

*A HANDMADE LIFE:*

**A New Documentary Film about Persistence,  
Resourcefulness and an American Dream.**

Ventura Film Festival, July 10, 2011, 4:00pm  
Ventura Beach Marriott Hotel, Grand Ballroom  
2055 East Harbor Boulevard, Ventura, California

*A Handmade Life* by director William Stetz has been made an official selection of the 2011 Ventura Film Festival (festival director, Jordan Older), to show in its upcoming festival on Sunday, July 10th. The subject of the bio-documentary is Ventura County resident Rick Mecagni and centers around Mr. Mecagni's lifelong goal, trials and tribulations of finding a place and making a home where he could raise his family. While that sounds like the goal and reality of millions of Americans, no one does it quite like Rick Mecagni on as grand a scale for as little money in as extraordinarily beautiful a place as the Santa Monica Mountains with the Pacific Ocean shore of Ventura County as his backdrop.

This film, completed in the summer of 2010, serves as hope and a guide for the disenfranchised homebuilders, home buyers and the young starting their journey into a 21st century American economy forbidding the dream of owning their own home.

If it were merely the feat of searching, working and saving for years in order to discover his 'place,' it would be trial enough. But for Rick Mecagni, neighbors who betray, a building commission that questions Mr. Mecagni's approach, a Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy that dwells on blocking his path, choosing materials that provide the most mileage for the least cost and taming a natural jungle atop a mountain are some of the more daunting things that make this an adventure of pride, artistic interpretation and inspiration. In a lesson for the global 'us,' belabored by lack of money, material and resources in a world stricken down for overspending, Mr. Mecagni teaches that beauty and grandeur is literally formed from earth, thrift and through use of imagination for using found and discarded materials.

The 34-minute documentary *A Handmade Life*, is presented in widescreen color and High Definition and visually spins off the photographic talents of award-winning art director-filmmaker-photographer, William Stetz whose career includes capturing portraits of Hollywood's prominent directors, editors and performers for publications the likes of the Directors Guild (*DGA Magazine*), the Motion Picture Editors Guild (*Editors Guild Magazine*) and *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Mr. Stetz' architectural photography and portrait photography has been shown in exhibitions throughout Southern California and has previously been shown in the Ventura Art Walk. William Stetz' photographic work was recently featured at The Factory in Los Angeles for Fabrik Magazine's show of architectural photographers. Mr. Stetz was raised in the Chicago area and is now a resident of Burbank, California.

Through a chance meeting on Valentine's Day, 2010, filmmaker William Stetz and Rick Mecagni met and upon seeing Mr. Mecagni's home and hearing his story, the idea for the film was sparked. Two weeks later, filming began. Photographed and edited between February and July of 2010, the film explores a very different side of Malibu and Ventura County that the public does not necessarily know.

With the influences of Rick's neighbor and friend, world-famous designer Tony Duquette (now deceased), Rick Mecagni discovered that using found and salvaged things could become the foundation of functional and architectural beauty and thus his adventure continues to this day. Built on the pinnacle of a mountain in the Santa Monica Mountains with wide views spanning Malibu, Oxnard and Ventura coastlines and beyond, the expansiveness and beauty of his place is breathtaking.

Inspirational in nature, Rick Mecagni leaves the audience with the firm conviction that we are not limited by money, education or professional experience. He maintains that our results are not determined by what society would have for us, but by what we determine for ourselves. *A Handmade Life* screens July 10th at 4:00pm in the Grand Ballroom of the Ventura Beach Marriott Hotel as part of the 2011 Ventura Film Festival. Tickets are available at the door.

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If you would like more information or to schedule an interview with William Stetz, please contact:  
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