

# Keeping you up to date with all Haldane sports action.

2014-09-03 / Front Page

## Peter Sanders' Film Set for Theatrical Release

BY TIM GRECO & VIRGINIA CALIFANO



**Altina Schinasi is the subject of her grandson's latest film. PHOTO PROVIDED**

In this week's "Focus on Philipstown," Tim Greco sits down with filmmaker Peter Sanders to discuss his latest project.

"Altina was always full of surprises," said Cold Spring's award winning director and producer Peter Sanders. He found the story of his largerthanlife bohemian grandmother captivating enough to create a documentary, and now has major hit film on his hands. "Altina" is set for theatrical release later this month.

Sanders, fresh off his win for Best Picture and Best Director at the Toronto Jewish Film festival, said enthusiastically, "It was the highlight of my career," of his latest project. Sanders is a third generation film maker, so film making is in his blood, as his grandmother Altina was once nominated for an Academy Award for her film making efforts.

The film is an epic sweeping American story about the fascinating life of Altina Schinasi. Sanders said that both of Altina's parents were immigrants, her father a tobacco tycoon. However, being an heiress did not define her. Altina became a woman who was way ahead of her time by breaking the barriers of a man's world.

Altina was as unique as she was successful, and as unpredictable as she was loved. Her bold, uninhibited bohemian lifestyle enabled her to achieve great success.

"I did have a thread all through the life that made me want to be an individual and make something out of myself," Altina said. Sanders said his grandmother chose not to pursue higher education, instead choosing to follow her own desires. She married Morris Sanders in 1928, but divorced shortly after – something quite uncommon for the early 1930s.

Altina's confidence and romantic taste never faded just because of a failed marriage. One day she was walking down Madison Avenue and saw beautiful Harlequin masks in the windows of upscale stores. She was inspired to design Harlequin eyeglasses, or cat glasses, which revolutionized women's fashion. They became all the rage in the 1930s and are still in vogue to this day.

Passion dictated everything Altina set her mind to. Her steadfast determination enabled her to succeed in newlyadopted challenges. She delved into filmmaking as a way to speak out about the Holocaust, only to create "George Grosz' Interregnum," an artisticallythemed work that earned multiple awards worldwide.

Through the changing times in America, she became fast friends with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, and helped him along with his cause to bring racial equality to all, no matter their color.

In the field of visual arts, her creations were an extension of her open sexuality and love for all things romantic. The four-time wife created "chairacters," unconventional seats that depicted humans in the midst of their most vulnerable states: in love and connected with one another, or in reflection alone and at loss. They were made in a way that was distinctly hers, though desired by many, including Mary Tyler Moore, Clare Boothe Luce, and collectors nationwide.

Sanders hopes viewers will be inspired by Altina's story, and that they will adopt her ability to live life without conforming to any expectations other than their own individual inhibitions. The film will premiere in New York City's IFC Theatre on September 12, and in Los Angeles at the Laemmle on September 19.

Visit [Focusonphilipstown.com](http://Focusonphilipstown.com) to see the entire interview.

[Return to top](#)

[Share / Save](#) [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [d](#)

## **Philipstown's newspaper**

Published by Elizabeth Ailes; edited by Douglas Cunningham. The only real newspaper, in print and online, for Cold Spring, Philipstown, Garrison, Nelsonville and Putnam Valley. 845-265-2468. Check our free community site at [putnamcountybugler.com](http://putnamcountybugler.com), too.

© 2009-2014 The Putnam County News and Recorder, LLC

All rights reserved. No material may be reproduced without written permission.