

Spring chicks taking over the flicks



Ollie Ivin-Poole has a film screening this week at ACMI as part of the Little Big Shots film festival for kids. The film, which is about his three chickens, is called *Brunswick Browns* and stars his little sister, Rosie.

PICTURE: CRAIG SILLITOE

MAKING a movie can be tough, especially when the talent won't co-operate. "Rosie is very hard to work with," said seven-year-old Ollie Ivin-Poole, whose short film *Brunswick Browns* debuts at ACMI Cinemas this week.

Using a hand-held camera, Ollie shadowed his sister, Rosie, three, as she looked after the family's brown chooks in their Brunswick backyard.

She's good at collecting the eggs, but often strays off-script, at one point banging some toast with a rolling pin for an absurdist effect.

"Rosie never really listened to me," said Ollie. But, he concedes, she "did her own costumes".

Ollie is in year one but his love of moving pictures started

Melbourne's young auteurs are getting a festival of their own, writes Natalie Craig.

when he was three. His mum, Natalie Poole, said he would take endless photos of his toy dinosaurs on her digital camera, arranging them in order to form a kind of stop-motion movie.

But don't ask if he wants to be a film director when he grows up.

"No — I'm planning my next film now!" he said. "It's a movie called *Wonderworld*. I started on this script because I really wanted to make a really good movie a little bit like *How To Train Your Dragon*. . . It won't be scary, it will be PG."

Ollie is among scores of young Tarantino-wannabes featuring this week in Mel-

bourne's Little Big Shots: an international festival of films for kids, and by kids.

Festival director Chloe Boulton said children were becoming much more attuned to visual storytelling.

"Kids are bombarded by moving images these days," she said. "Dedicated media programs are creeping into primary schools and more kids have access to a camera. We want to highlight media literacy and help them discover how to make meaning out of moving images."

The six-day festival will include Q&A sessions with adult directors at some screenings and a stop-motion animation work-

shop for kids. The winning adult-made film", *Wee Dreaming*, by Robin de Crespigny, is a thriller about a boy who learns the hard way what happens when you don't go to the toilet before a long car trip.

On a more sombre note, the winning film in the made-by-children category is a claymation of a girl who brings hope to a town hit by bushfires.

Anna's Doll took the teachers and students at Yarraville West Primary School four months to make. Heather Britton, who heads the school's claymation program, now in its sixth year, said the project really engaged the children.

"You only have to say 'we're doing claymation this afternoon' and the kids are ecstatic," she said.

"It teaches them so much — computer skills, team work, patience, persistence, storytelling. They even write their own scores."

Other films by children include *The Wolf's Surprise*, a stop-motion film by eight-year-old Ella Upiter. It stars her stuffed toys, who ostracise the toy wolf, incorrectly assuming that he's nasty.

But it's not just the directors who are getting younger. The festival's 10 judges are all children, and won their place on the

panel by submitting a film review.

Panelist Louis Gordon, 9, has strong ideas about what he likes in a film. "I look for quite an interesting story, not just bland and plain," he said. "I quite like learning about other children and other cultures . . . I don't like it when it's zoomed up too close to the face."

He hopes to enter his own film next year, but is not sure the life of a director is for him.

"I'd like to be a psychologist or a vulcanologist or an engineer. Maybe a director. I wouldn't like to be a Hollywood star though. Just . . . all that attention would be terrible."

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