

IN ADDITION

THE ROOT OF MARGE'S HAIR Marge Simpson's gravity-defying blue beehive is a hybrid creation, revealed the series' creator, Matt Groening revealed. The Simpsons matriarch's impressive hair was inspired by The Bride of Frankenstein and by his own mother's hairdo from the 1960s, Groening told The New York Times Magazine in an interview. Marge, Homer and the rest of the Springfield gang will make the leap from TV to the big screen when The Simpsons Movie opens in cinemas here on Thursday. In the movie, the Oval Office is occupied by Arnold Schwarzenegger. "We needed a president who'd make people laugh," Groening said. "Schwarzenegger was the obvious choice." — AP

IN HONOUR OF IRWIN The late "Crocodile Hunter", Steve Irwin, who was killed in a stingray attack last year, will be honoured with a new wildlife reserve in Outback Australia, the government announced on Sunday. Irwin spent part of the money he earned from his TV show on animal-conservation projects. His family vowed to continue his conservation work. — AP

A 333,585-acre piece of land near Weipa in the far north of Irwin's home state of Queensland will be named after him and managed by his family. The area includes habitats for the endangered northern quoll, a carnivorous marsupial, and the spear-tooth shark, as well as a gallery of dry vine forests.

A SHORT AT FAME

Budding directors show their short films at Singapore Short Cuts next month



CHOICE CUT: Kirsten Tan's Fonzi.



AN EYE FOR BEAUTY: Namiko has been painting the female form since she was four.

PORTRAITS OF A DANCER

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THE female form has fascinated Namiko Chan Takahashi for almost 30 years. Since she was four, the artist, who specialises in life-size — and frequently-nude — portraits, has been painting the female form, because it is "more lyrical". "It's really beautiful how a small change in the line of the female body — a tilt of the head, a gaze — can express so much grace," the 33-year-old told TODAY at the opening of her latest exhibition Meeting yesterday.

"It's the inner fire, the determination, the strength ... you can see her character showing through. I'm drawn towards strong women because they're so magnetic." But sketching and painting Georgia was challenging. "She came to my studio for six hours a day for a week. It was very tough for her because (as a dancer) she's used to movement," said Chan. The self-professed feminist also hopes her artworks will raise awareness on female rights. "I look out for issues that women face — empowerment, for one," said Chan, who is married to local poet Aaron Lee, 35. But back to the female form. The neck is her favourite part. "You can tell a lot about the strength women put into everyday life from it." For one who appreciates the beauty of the female form, would she ever consider cosmetic surgery? "Definitely not, no way!" Meeting is on at the Jendela Gallery, Esplanade until

BEFORE directors make their first cinematic feature, they make short films that get their first airing at Singapore Short Cuts.

The annual short film festival, which is into its fourth instalment this year, is where budding directors get the opportunity to showcase their works to a wider audience.

Colin Gon and Woo Yen Yen — the husband-and-wife team who directed Singapore Dreaming — as well as Han Yew Kwang, who made the comedy, Unarmed Combat, screened their early works at Singapore Short Cuts last year.

This year's screenings will be held every Saturday from Aug 11 to Sept 1 at the National Museum.

One of the highlights is Ah Ma, which won a special mention award at the Cannes film festival in May.

Other films include Sun Koh's Bedroom Dancing, Kirsten Tan's Fonzi, Boo Jun-feng's Katong Fugue, and Loo

Zihan's Embryo. Incidentally, Loo is the co-director of Solos, Singapore's first gay film that is slated for release in the later half of the year.

Audiences will also get to interact with the film-makers, as a discussion will follow each screening.

This year's festival will also have a retrospective of the works of Rajendra Gour, a pioneering independent film-maker who was active in the 1960s and 1970s.

The screenings are free, and tickets are given out on a first-come-first-served basis on Mondays before each weekend's screening. Remaining tickets will be distributed at the door on the day of each screening.

WHAT: 4TH SINGAPORE SHORT CUTS WHEN: AUG 11 TO SEPT 1 WHERE: NATIONAL MUSEUM ADMISSION: FREE

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