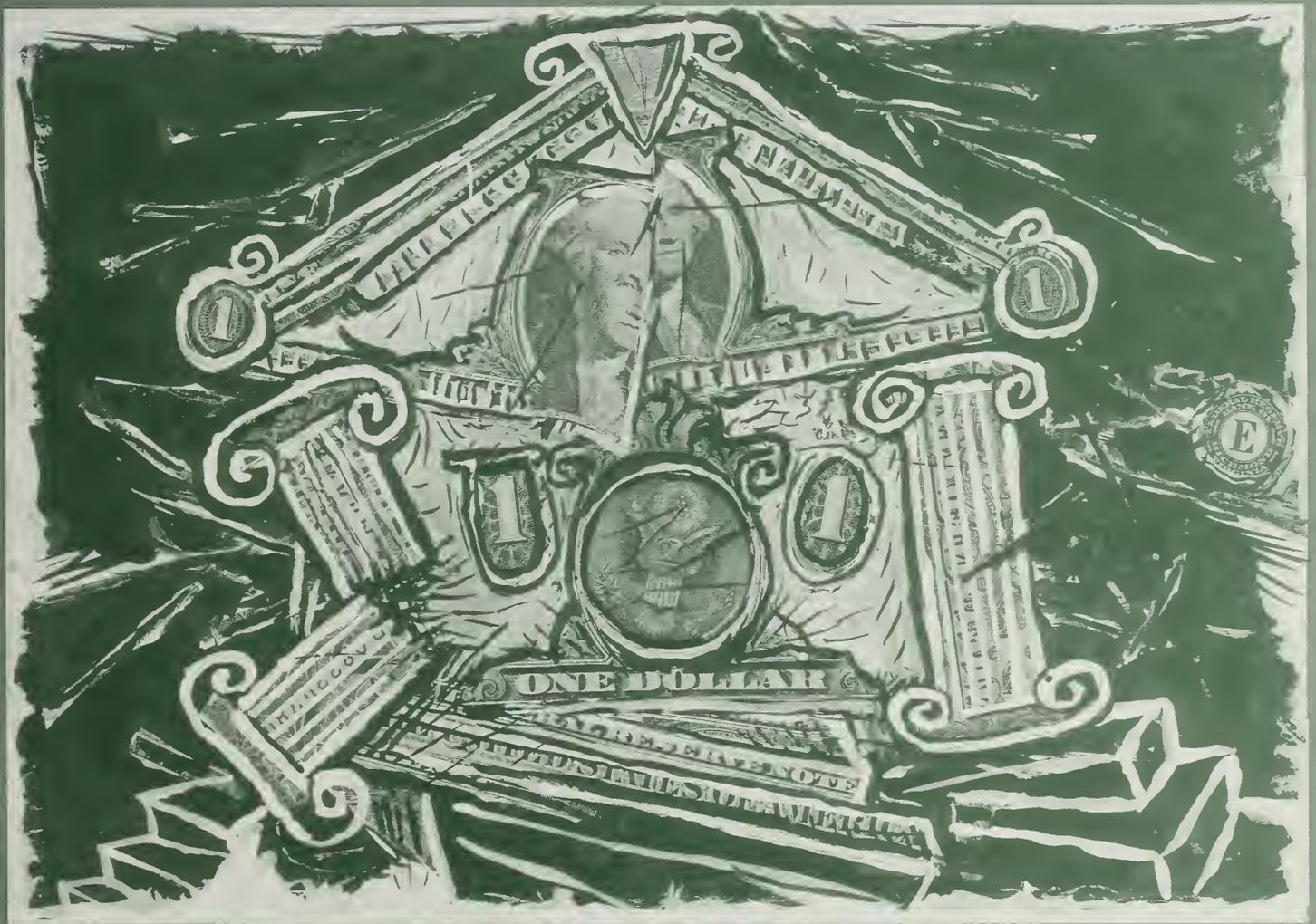


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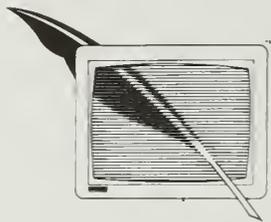
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## PICTURE PERFECT

To the editor:

I read with interest Rick Prelinger's article on film archives and stock footage libraries [October 1991]. Because of the high cost of archival footage, I have located a number of excellent sources of still photographs, which for the money-strapped filmmaker can be a viable, cost-effective alternative to archival footage. Regional historical societies like the Chicago Historical Society and photo collections of city libraries like the Los Angeles Public Library are incredibly helpful. But one of the most improbable sources of images I found was the Lake County Museum in Wauconda, Illinois, which houses the Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

Teich was a German immigrant who set up a postcard company in 1898. The company went on to become the country's largest printer of postcards until its closing in 1974. The archives, which contains 380,000 images of every conceivable description, was established in 1982 and is supervised by curator Katherine Hamilton-Smith. Whether it's images of alligators, roadside diners, or cemeteries, the Curt Teich Postcard Archive is likely to have it. And because I was doing photo research for a nonprofit project (Richard Schmiechen's new film *Changing Our Minds: The Story of Evelyn Hooker*), the museum was able to give us the images for a very modest license and laboratory fee. The request they were able to fulfill? A photo of the Sherman Hotel in Chicago, circa 1956.

The Lake County Museum, Curt Teich Postcard Collection, Lakewood Forest Preserve, Wauconda, IL 60084; (708) 526-0024.

—Flora Moon  
San Pedro, California

## CANNES GAME

To the editor:

It was clear, although not clearly stated, from Barbara Scharres' article "Pros and Cannes: The Cannes International Film Festival" [November 1991] that being a woman director is a very, very big con.

At Cannes, just like almost everywhere else in this wide, wide world, your chances of being considered important enough to be seen and heard are correlated to sex and race in the following order, from best to worst: 1) white male, 2) non-white male, 3) white female, 4) non-white female.

—Nina Menkes  
Los Angeles, California



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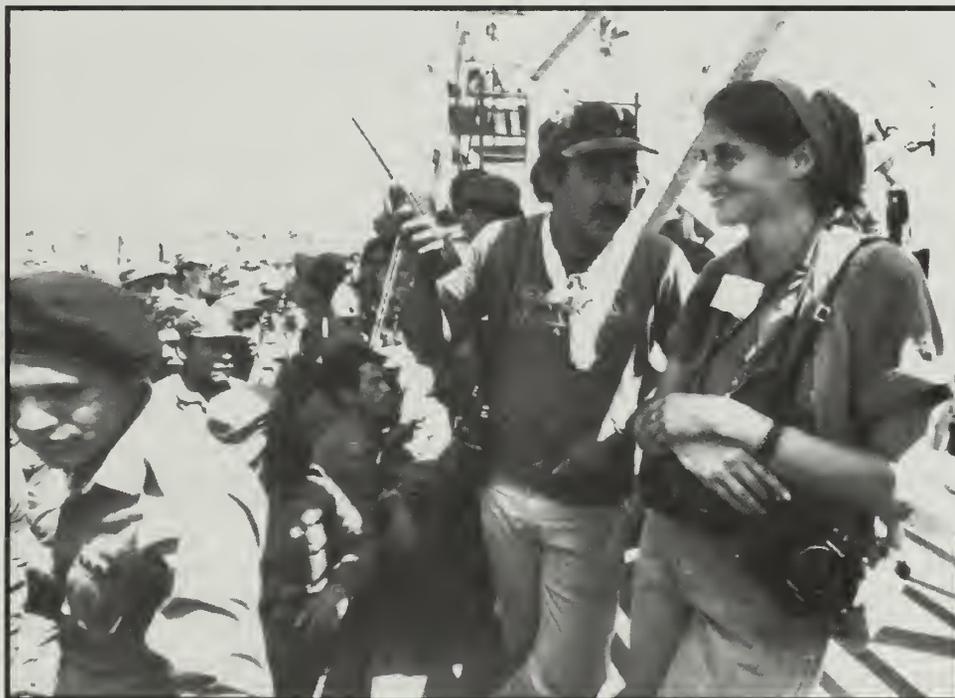
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## WHAT'S ON THE TELLY?

### BBC Premieres *Fine Cut* Documentary Series

"Without risks the documentary genre is moribund." Such is the austere declaration of André Singer, executive editor of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) new series *Fine Cut*. Due to begin broadcast on BBC2 in February 1992, the series follows in the footsteps of Channel Four's *True Stories* by offering a regular slot for feature-length documentaries. Unlike *True Stories*, which is an acquisitions series, *Fine Cut* will commission and fund completion of works-in-progress.



Susan Meislas (right) in Nicaragua for *Pictures from a Revolution*, which received substantial funding from *Fine Cut*, the BBC's first feature-length documentary series.

Courtesy BBC

*Fine Cut*, which is scheduled during primetime on Saturday evenings, emphasizes the auteur approach to the genre in an effort to move away from the more familiar format of the fact-packed TV documentary. "There are no narrative constraints for the series," asserts Singer, who also imposes no limitations on the program's subject matter. "[*Fine Cut*] is a mechanism to help put funding behind great directors whose creativity is not always respected or demanded by broadcasters, but whose passions and work need and should get a wider audience."

"There was a major gap in scheduling for feature-length documentaries [on the BBC]," Singer explains. "Occasionally a Fred Wiseman film was picked up and aired late night, but we weren't seen as a broadcaster in that area." The project began as a personal crusade, with Singer

selecting international documentaries "that were not going to cost the earth" and pitching them to BBC2 controller Alan Yentob one by one. "Once we had three or four, I said, 'Surely we should run these as a series,'" Singer recalls. After the series was extended to include nine films, the controller agreed that it should be an annual program.

Singer, himself a documentary producer, sees the series as a reflection of the current state of documentary filmmaking internationally. Titles in the first season run the gamut from personal and polemical statements to chronicles and diary pieces. The line-up includes such diverse works as Les Blank's *Innocents Abroad*, a tale of middle Americans on a European pyjama tour; Robert Gardner's *Forests of Bliss*, a personal portrait of the River Ganges; and *Last Images of War*, directed by Stephen Olsson and Scott Andrews, which explores the deaths of four journalists covering the Afghanistan War. Other featured works are Peter Adair's *Absolutely Positive*; Otto Olejar's *The Forgotten Men*; John Davis' *Hobo*; Jean Pierre Gorin's *My Crazy Life*; *Pictures from a Revolution*, by Alfred Guzzetti and Richard Rogers; Russ Karel's *In Black and White*; and Werner Herzog's *Lessons of Darkness*, a documentary about Kuwait at the end of the Gulf War which is scheduled to air February 29, a year after the war's end.

Despite an avowed emphasis on the international, much of the work comes from the US, an inconsistency Singer attributes to a more established tradition in the US of making and distributing feature-length documentaries. The glaring absence of female directors—only one is included in the first series—is harder to explain, but it is an imbalance Singer says he intends to redress in the second season.

Because of the way the program developed, there was no funding policy for the series up front. Singer argued for funding each project individually. In the end, the BBC fully funded three of the first season's 10 documentaries, including John Davis' *Hobo* and Jean Pierre Gorin's *My Crazy Life*, and provided completion monies for most of the others.

Singer is keen to get involved in projects as early as possible. For the second series he intends only to commission work and provide completion funds for work-in-progress. The BBC will provide about £70,000 (approximately \$120,000) toward each work, but this figure does not represent the total funding available through *Fine Cut*. Singer anticipates raising funds from other divi-

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sions within the BBC, as he did with the first season, to provide up to £150,000 (\$250,000) for each program. "If there's any lesson I've learned from the current changes in broadcasting, it's that we're in a very flexible period. We can find ways of funding now that we wouldn't have been able to before."

The second season is already being compiled. Approaches should be made immediately and directly to: André Singer, editor, Independents Unit, Documentary Features, British Broadcasting Corporation, Kensington House, Richmond Way, London W1, England.

JANE WILLIAMS

Jane Williams is former director of the Association of Independent Producers in London and a freelance media consultant.

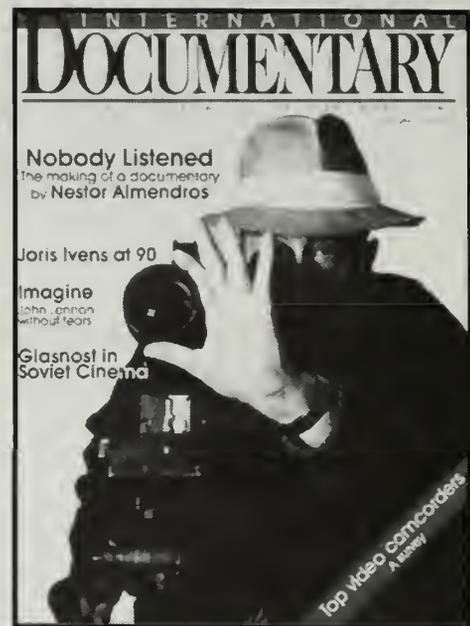
## INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY DOWN BUT NOT OUT

On July 15th the board of directors of the International Documentary Association (IDA) voted to suspend publication of *International Documentary*, the Los Angeles-based organization's quarterly journal. The glossy 44-page magazine, which had a print run of 4,000, was the only national film publication dedicated exclusively to the documentary film form.

The decision to close the respected journal was the result of financial considerations, according to Harrison Engle, IDA's publications chair and a past president of IDA. "We found that the slick, upscale look of the magazine was too expensive for us to sustain," Engle explains. But W.B. Peale, *International Documentary's* former managing editor, contends that the magazine was closed as much for philosophic as financial reasons. "A lot of the board members didn't like the idea of a journal that dealt with ideas and theories," says Peale. "They were more interested in a glossy trade journal that would validate documentary within the industry rather than a journal that would validate documentary within the realm of art and ideas." A typical issue might contain features on the making of *Paris Is Burning* or *Imagine*, interviews with Cuban director Jorge Ulla or cinematographer Maryse Alberti, news, coverage of technology, international festival reports, notices, and member updates.

Board members were admittedly critical of the journal. "With the quarterly, ideas and issues were often six months old," says board president Jon Wilkman. IDA board member Chuck Workman, who spearheaded some of the board's criticism, felt that "the editorial approach really overlooked local documentaries. I felt people like Marlon Riggs were being neglected for people in Europe we'd never heard of."

"There's no question that the budget had to be raked in," says former editor Denise Bigio, "but I got the feeling [Wilkman] didn't want to talk about what we could put out on a reduced budget.



The issue was, "What standing did the magazine have in the organization? How serious were fundraising drives for the magazine going to be? Was it a question of cutting the magazine back because it was not a high-priority while money went to other things?"

With the closing of the quarterly, IDA's monthly calendar has been expanded and its format changed to replace the magazine. Nancy Wilkman, Jon Wilkman's wife, is editor of the new publication. Jon Wilkman sees the new format as a way to "be very current. We're trying to take the strengths of both the calendar and the quarterly and make one."

The new publication borrows stylistic elements from the journal—such as the bannerhead and distinctive red, black, and white color scheme—but little in the way of content so far. Its premier October edition—which ran 18 pages instead of the calendar's typical eight—contained only one brief article in addition to the standard member and organizational news, classified ads, events calendar, and notices.

Wilkman anticipates increasing the number and length of articles, the number of pages, pictures, and quality of paper stock in the future. With the financial pressure easing off—the current publication is produced by a volunteer staff out of Wilkman's office for the cost of the paper and postage—an effort is underway to rebuild the magazine. The magazine hasn't lost any advertisers, according to Wilkman, and subscriptions are up by 25 to 30 each month.

Not everyone is comfortable with the resolution, however, which leaves little distance between the board and the publication. "I think it's problematic that the president just became the editor with his wife," observes one board member who declined to be identified. "I think it's important that the magazine doesn't become an IDA mouthpiece," adds Bigio.

Others worry less about the new magazine than the gap left by the demise of the old. "The maga-

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zine was a really significant contribution to the field of documentary study," says Professor Michael Renov, chair of Critical Studies at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television. "It was finding the crossover figures between the realm of ideas and the world of film practice. It's all the more regrettable that its closing should coincide with a rising interest within the critical community toward documentary. There's nothing to take its place."

ELLEN LEVY

## AMERICAN CENTER MAKES WAVES ON THE SEINE

The ambitious revitalization of the American Center in Paris represents the flip side of the present export of American culture overseas, primarily via Hollywood films. Dedicated to the promulgation of US art seldom seen by Parisians—including independent film and video—the American Center will soon be moving into a significantly larger building. Its expanded film and video department will play a larger role in exposing the city to the freshest offerings from this side of the Atlantic.

The development of the center's film and video department has obvious advantages for US independents seeking exposure in Western Europe. The program will be under the direction of Lucinda Furlong, former assistant curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The

newly constructed center will house film and sound recording spaces, an audio/visual center, an archival area, a film theater with 16mm and 35mm capabilities, and a lecture hall. Residency spaces and educational programs are among other features slated for the center's new facilities. Venues for collaborative works and multi-media installations will also be available.

"There are a lot of issues dominant in American works that are virtually nonexistent in France," says Furlong. "I'd like to introduce a lot of work that isn't being seen."

In the wake of the extreme nationalism coming into vogue in France, Furlong's programming ideas promise more than an alternate take on American art. They will likely provoke discussion on such sensitive topics as multiculturalism—an issue she hopes to address in her programs—in a newly unified Europe. "I'd also like to pursue thematically organized and focused exhibitions, such as *verité* versus direct cinema, that possibly draw on cultural differences," adds Furlong.

Despite the blessing bestowed on it by President Bush, the American Center will rely solely on private donations and ambitious fundraising drives to cover its budget. The center's central building, to be constructed in Bercy Park on the Seine and designed by renowned California architect Frank Gehry, will alone cost \$40-million. It is scheduled to open in the fall of 1993.

TROY SELVARATNAM

## SEQUELS

In January President Bush will have the opportunity to name nine nominees to the National Council on the Humanities, the 26-member council which oversees the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. If this round of appointments follows patterns of the recent past, the deck will be stacked with right-wing ideologues rather than scholars, despite the council's mandate to provide "comprehensive representation of the views of scholars...in the humanities." Bush's last nominee, Dr. Carol Iannone, failed to attain the post after the Modern Language Association, Phi Beta Kappa, the College Art Association, PEN, and other scholarly groups mounted a campaign against her. Iannone, a non-tenured professor in English at New York University, had few published works after 20 years of teaching, and was vice president of the National Association of Scholars, a new organization dedicated to combatting "political correctness" in academia. With appointees serving six-year terms, they have lasting consequences on the NEH and its \$200-million grant pool.



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## SLOUCHING TOWARD 1992

### The Changing European Television Market



The commercialization of European broadcasting may mean harder times ahead for US producers. "I thought it would be much easier to sell this program," says the German distributor of Pola Rapaport's *Broken Meat*.

Courtesy filmmaker

JENNINE LANOQUETTE

Over the past two to three years, much has been made of the explosion of new television channels in Europe and the potential sales opportunities they afford US independent mediamakers. In the past, the educational and cultural nature of European government-owned channels offered US independents a more sympathetic arena in which to sell their work than did most television outlets in the United States or other parts of the world. Consequently, American independents have a particular stake in understanding the exact nature of the changes occurring across the Atlantic and how these will affect prospects for foreign TV sales.

The rapid expansion of the European television market was initiated in the mid-eighties, when the television industry began pressuring governments to loosen their monopolistic hold on the airwaves. This started a trend among European governments toward the deregulation and privatization of broadcasting. Concurrently, the advance in new cable and satellite technologies on European ground created the opportunity for a rapid in-

crease in television viewership and potential markets and added to the pressure to privatize. The new, more commercial character of the television landscape was then furthered by the gradual lowering of economic boundaries between the 12 nations of the European Community in preparation for the elimination of all internal trade barriers in 1992.

A couple of years ago, in anticipation of 1992, there was much discussion within the European television industry about the cultural impact of a unified television market. Among the more contentious issues were the viability of government-imposed programming quotas to keep under control the rapid infiltration of Hollywood product and the challenge of promoting a pan-European television industry without succumbing to the pressure to produce only in English.

However, the preoccupying fear among European producers—that commercial competition would lead to the dominance of lowest-common-denominator Hollywood programming—has not been completely realized. While it is certainly true that commercial US product holds the lion's share of foreign imports, it has also been found that local audiences most prefer programming that is indigenous and in their own language. In

some cases, this only means that instead of airing the American *Wheel of Fortune*, for instance, an Italian broadcaster will buy the rights to the concept and produce its own version, with Italian hosts and contestants. So from the point of view of US independents, the problem remains—European television is becoming significantly more commercial.

The expanded marketplace presents a difficult bind for public (government-owned) television stations in Europe, including those with which US independents are accustomed to interacting—ARD and ZDF in Germany, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Channel Four in Britain, and NOS-TV in the Netherlands. The government funding they receive usually carries a mandate to foster educational and cultural programming. At the same time, the new commercial climate requires that they also be able to compete with the private channels for audience share. This has led to much soul-searching about programming philosophy within public television.

"The idea that 'What we think is important is what we should give the audience' is no longer viable," says Henk Suer, head of Features and Documentaries at NOS-TV. "Now we have to think about what the audience wants and give

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them that. For me, public broadcasting is founded on the idea that you have to be the communicator of thoughts and opinions of the whole nation. What the commercial stations can't do is to think of minorities. So this is the obligation of the public stations. But we haven't found the solution for combining this with earning money."

Fortunately, Suer has not yet had to change his buying patterns of US independent films and videos. "I like the level of probing in American documentaries and their structure for storytelling. I still buy about five hours of programs from the United States each year."

In Germany, public stations ARD and ZDF are experiencing much more direct competition from the proliferation of new German private channels—RTL-Plus, SAT 1, PRO 7, and Tele 5. "Right now, state-owned television has to fight to keep its audience," says Peter Steinhart, head of Feature Film Acquisition at ARD. "So my department has to take special care to get enough mainstream Hollywood movies to show in primetime. But when you are showing something like 90 percent American movies in primetime, you have to think about where to put the movies from the rest of the world. And usually you put them in the time-slots around midnight, which are the same time-slots you would give to the independents from America."

But Steinhart does not assume that the current situation will last. "I think it will be just three or four more years that the space for ambitious, off-beat movies in the television networks will remain so scarce. Now all you see on the commercial channels are old German soft-porn films or movies of pop singers from the sixties that nobody really cares about, except that it is a name from childhood. It's camp. The worse the German movie is, the more fun it is for the audience. But as soon as these are no longer a novelty, the curiosity for new productions will become higher again."

In the meantime, the more commercial trend is having a devastating effect on independent distributors, who historically have relied on a film's television sale to support its theatrical release. Now they are finding they need a theatrical release in order to generate interest from television stations. "An unknown American film with an unknown director will get a very, very low price from German television," says Arno Reckers, of the Berlin-based distributor Mega Film. "The only way to bring this price higher or get a better contract is to have cinema distribution, because then all the newspapers are writing about it and the name of the movie and the director become known. Then you are in a position to do business with the television stations."

For documentaries, the situation appears even more difficult. Ex Picturis is a Berlin-based distributor which recently expanded from documentaries into features for the more lucrative television sales. "We are a small company," says Ex Picturis president Peter Rommel. "We don't have the money in our pockets. So before we pick up a



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Ralph Arlyck's *Current Events* sold to the BBC's *Self-Exposure*, a series partly motivated by a need to compete with Channel Four's independent specialty programming.

Courtesy filmmaker

film, we first have to see if there is television interest in it, and then work with it on both sides. We have a documentary from the States called *Broken Meat*, by Pola Rapaport, that I was able to sell to ZDF/3 Sat. But I haven't sold it to foreign, and I haven't sold it to England. I thought it would be much easier to sell this program."

ZDF/3 Sat is a satellite cable channel that broadcasts low-budget art and minority-oriented programming as a complement to the more commercial direction that the terrestrial ZDF has taken. For example, when ZDF recently programmed a series of Canadian films, including Atom Egoyan's *Family Viewing* and *Speaking Parts*, ZDF/3 Sat ran a similar program featuring films like Guy Madden's more challenging *Archangel*. The downside is that a film sold to 3 Sat will get significantly less money than it would from ZDF.

A similar relationship exists between the first German channel, ARD, and the regional "third channels" that are part of the ARD network. The third channels are able to take much greater commercial risks because they broadcast to smaller segments of the population. They also have had some success showing foreign-language programs, whereas ARD and ZDF stick to dubbed films in view of the overall German population's intolerance for subtitling. But, as with ZDF/3 Sat, the third channels pay far less for the programs they acquire.

French television, being culture-centric and highly protective of its language, has never offered much fertile ground for US independents, with the possible exception of the pay-cable channel Canal Plus. Recently, however, the French public channel La Sept, known for its huge archive of cultural documentaries amassed in only a few years, has been reaching beyond its borders to interact with foreign producers and television channels. Having exhausted the start-up funds that were provided by the French government, La Sept formed an alliance with ARD and ZDF last April to promote a new Franco-German cultural channel called Arté. As a result, everything they now produce is by nature a coproduction. In view of this, they have recently begun exploring

coproduction opportunities with producers in the United States.

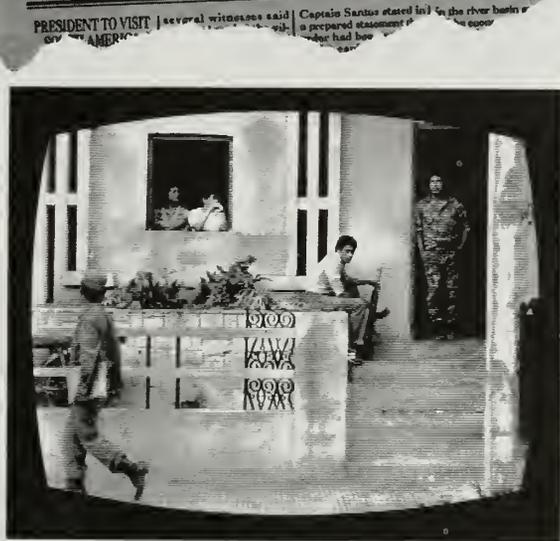
"La Sept doesn't have money problems," says Jane Weiner, their US representative. "So they aren't looking for coproductions to raise the money. They are looking for a coproduction of ideas. And American independent documentaries tend to be the kind of documentaries that are of interest to La Sept."

Weiner has also recently been employed by the BBC to scout for documentaries to fill a new series called *Self-Exposure*, which focuses on independent documentaries from around the world that have a personal point of view. The series was motivated at least in part by a need to compete with Channel Four for more independent specialty programming. But Weiner gives an example of the kind of identity confusion that many public stations exhibit when expanding their programming philosophy to meet a competitive marketplace. "When I was asked to do this job, the BBC executives said, 'We want you to find programs for us before Channel Four gets them.' Then when I showed them Ralph Arlyck's *Current Events*, they said, 'It's a great little film, but wouldn't it be better for Channel Four?' And I threw up my hands. But they took it in the end."

So old habits die hard as the individual European countries lurch toward a unified and competitive, yet indigenous and diversified television market. According to Steinhart, "The difficulty will always be to make movies with a national identity that will still have, despite that, an international appeal. I don't see that very much will change with 1992."

*Jennine Lanouette is a freelance writer living in New York City.*

# CURRENT EVENTS



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## NORTHWESTERN EXPOSURE

## Portland and Seattle Find a Place in the Sun

MARY JANE SKALSKI

In New York and Los Angeles, the sight of a film crew on the streets is met with a mixture of boredom and annoyance at the intrusion and inconvenience created, but in the Pacific Northwest, there's the sense that it's all in the family. Here the media community really *is* a community, where people know one another and frequently help with each other's projects. If someone goes walking down Yamhill Street in Portland, spots a

where you can see work, so people are bound to run into one another. Oregonians are friendly people, so we're bound to start talking."

Many professional relationships have begun just this way. Animator Chel White recalls moving to Portland seven years ago and having other filmmakers come up to him after his screening at the now defunct Media Project. From that moment, he was part of Portland's palpable anima-



From Chel White's xerox animation *Choreography for Copy Machine (Photocopy Cha Cha)*, with music by Citizen M.

Courtesy filmmaker

production crew at work, and offers to lend a hand, chances are they'll be taken up on it.

"Portland has a kind of magic," says John Campbell, codirector of photography for *My Own Private Idaho*, by Portland resident Gus Van Sant. Campbell is currently at work on his own film, *Tony the Catman*, a portrait of a former jockey-turned-maintenance man at a state hospital that is overrun with cats. "There is a lot of freedom to be as creative as you'd like, because the film and videocommunity isn't jaded," Campbell observes. "There is a real spirit and community that's flourished, partly because there are only a few venues

tion community. White was also drawn into Van Sant's production circles, as have been many other area mediamakers, working on the visual effects crew of *My Own Private Idaho*.

Similarly Kelley Baker, who acted as supervising sound editor on *Idaho*, is a producer in his own right. Baker is making a documentary about Kay Boyle, America's last living expatriate from 1920s Paris. In 1987 he completed *Criminal Justice*, a look at Portland's criminal justice system. And he continues to work on his autobiographical trilogy—*That Really Obscure Object of Desire* (1988); *Enough with the Salmon*, a short about

Baker's family vacations in the Northwest; and *Love the One You're With*, a look at Baker's "disastrous high school dating career."

In addition to Van Sant's feature films, Portland has a number of places that act as production hubs for local mediamakers. Such commercial facilities as Portland's up-and-coming animation studio Jim Blashfield Productions and the claymation studio of Will Vinton draw in the area's independents, who collaborate on a project, then fan out to their own, very diverse work.

White made his latest film, *Choreography for Copy Machine or Photocopy Cha Cha*, while working at Blashfield Productions. Part of his job for Blashfield was using the copy machine to reproduce animation backgrounds. As White notes, "Anyone who has worked with a copy machine late into the night knows that sooner or later the urge to put your hand or face down onto the glass becomes unbearable." White turned the moment into a humorous and surreal film collage of faces, assorted appendages, fruit, and the flotsam of emptied pockets—key chains, coins—that appear trapped behind this modern-day looking glass.

White has plenty of company. The Northwest is filled with animators and cartoonists, from Lynda Barry and Matt Groening to Joanna Priestly and Will Vinton. In Portland, animators have a reasonable number of places to meet and show work. Filmmaker Rose Bond credits the Animation Collective, formed by Portland animators in the 1970s, together with the Media Project with coalescing the animation community. Although both are now defunct, a third organization—the local chapter of ASIFA, the international animation society—still carries on. ASIFA meetings usually draw 20 to 35 animators, who gather to discuss topics of interest and screen work. In addition, Tecknifilm Labs opens its doors to independents for screenings of their work, as does Will Vinton Studios, which also offers selected local projects what some consider a Faustian financial arrangement—money for production in exchange for the completed work's copyright. This type of support, coupled with low-cost classes and equipment at the Northwest Film and Video Center, have provided a strong base for animators.

Recently these Portland animators joined forces for a five-minute film, called *It's About Peace*, which utilizes the talents of Tom Arndt, Amy Blumenstein, Rose Bond, Scott Campbell, Webster Colcord, and Andy Collen. The idea originated with Collen, who wanted to make a film that would bring his peers together and pitched the idea to an enthusiastic ASIFA crowd. Various peace-related topics were allotted 30-second segments, which the artists divied up and animated in their own style. The resulting film incorporates everything from traditional cel animation to paper doll cutouts. Collen kept the animators on schedule—and financed the film with money out of his own pocket and comp time at Tecknifilm Labs. Now Collen is assembling animators for another collaborative project based on the book *50 Simple*

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*Ways to Save the Earth*, by the Earthworks Group.

Portland seems to be emerging as the Northwest region's cultural center and meeting place. This past year the city hosted annual conferences of the National Alliance for Media Arts Centers, the National Federation of Local Cable Producers, and the Creative Conference, a gathering of over 900 film and television professionals.

However, financing independent media remains tough in Portland and throughout the state. The Oregon Arts Commission distributes only \$10,000 annually for independent production. Sometimes this is awarded to one artist, other times it is broken up into smaller grants. Historically the economy in Oregon has been tied to the lumber industry, which has been particularly depressed in recent years. As the state attempts to diversify its revenues, it has begun to allocate more funds to attract commercial film and video production by publishing a slick directory and maintaining an organized and efficient film office to work with visiting crews. Local producers are keeping their fingers crossed. The more outside productions come into the region and provide freelance work, the more Oregon's mediamakers are able to pay the bills for their own projects.

By many accounts, Seattle's film and video community isn't as closely knit as that in Portland. One reason, according to Robin Reidy, executive director of Seattle's 911 Media Arts Center, is that independents in Seattle haven't had the benefit of diverse media arts groups like Northwest Film and Video, ASIFA, the Media Project, and the Animation Collective.

However, the state of Washington has a percent-for-art program, which mandates that a portion of the budget for public buildings be reserved to commission works of art. Usually static work is commissioned after the structure is well under-

way, but recently building planners in Washington have begun to look at video as a form of art that can transform and energize public space, not just decorate it. Video artists have not only been asked to create installations, but they've also been invited to work with architects and designers on the overall plan.

Video artist Frank Video (not just a startling coincidence; Video had his name legally changed) used his visual sensibility to help architects design traffic patterns and lighting, as well as his own video installation, for a new Student Activities Center at Seattle Central College. He wanted to weave the history of the school into the structure of the space—raising questions and citing quotations on monitors and walls in one area of the building and responding to them in another. Video is also collaborating with two artists on a new wing for the Harborview Medical Center. Once the team completes its research, they will lay out the medical center's artistic foundation, identifying themes and blocking out space for other artists to elaborate on later. Video's interactive video wall will serve as the cornerstone.

Washington state has seen an increase in commercial studio activity in the past few years. Both *Twin Peaks* and *Northern Exposure* were shot there, considerably raising the region's profile within the industry and among the general public. This attention is seen by locals as part of the "Californication" of the region. Californians have been steadily migrating to the quiet, peaceful, natural settings of the Pacific Northwest in an attempt to leave their crowded, suburban, strip-mall existence behind. Unfortunately many Pacific Northwesters feel that the Californians are just bringing it all with them, so there are mixed feelings about the increased attention. Many film- and videomakers interviewed for this article were

Portland is home to director Gus Van Sant (behind camera), whose *My Own Private Idaho* and other film projects often draw on the local community of below-the-line talent.

Courtesy Fine Line Features

quick to remark, "Don't make it sound too great here, we don't want more people to move in."

Producers in the area do cite drawbacks. These include the relatively paltry level of support from state arts councils and feeling out-of-touch with the politics of funding and distribution, especially in the public television arena, whose decision-making nexus is 2,500 miles away. But in light of the fact that arts budgets are being slashed almost everywhere and given the commitment of local media arts centers like Northwest Film/Video and 911 to keeping them informed, Oregon and Washington artists are more than happy to stay where they are.

Mary Jane Skalski is a freelance writer temporarily based in Oregon.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

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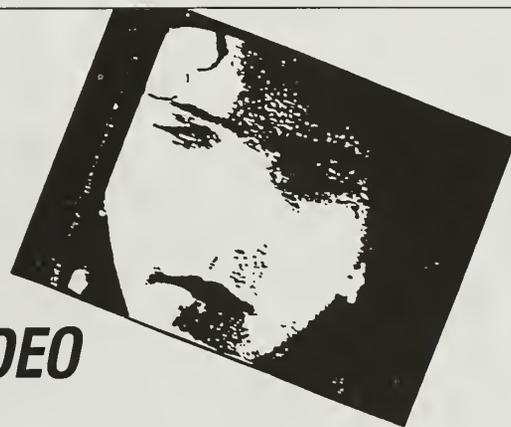
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## CAN WE TALK?

## Cuban Mediamakers Size Up Their Future

KELLY ANDERSON AND TAMI GOLD

Cuba is a complex and overdetermined concept in the North American popular imagination. While the public has been presented with repetitive images of a totalitarian/communist state, the political Left has often idealized Cuba. The current moment in history, however, is filled with contradictory and evolving media images of Cuba—a byproduct of the reeling political and economic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Tabloid covers fantasize Fidel Castro's impend-



Juan Carlos and housemate doing dishes at an AIDS sanatorium in David Beaton's *How to Live with AIDS in Cuba*.

Courtesy filmmaker

ing demise. Analyses of Cuba's future litter the op-ed pages of the *New York Times*. During the recent Pan American games broadcast live from Cuba, people saw Fidel doing "the wave" in a Havana sports stadium.

This is a complex moment for Cubans, who are facing the worst economic crisis in 32 years now that the USSR, Cuba's primary trading partner, has sharply curtailed aid and imports as a result of its own economic woes. This past May we spent 10 days in Cuba as part of an exchange organized by the Center for Cuban Studies and sponsored by the CUNY-Caribbean Exchange Program at the

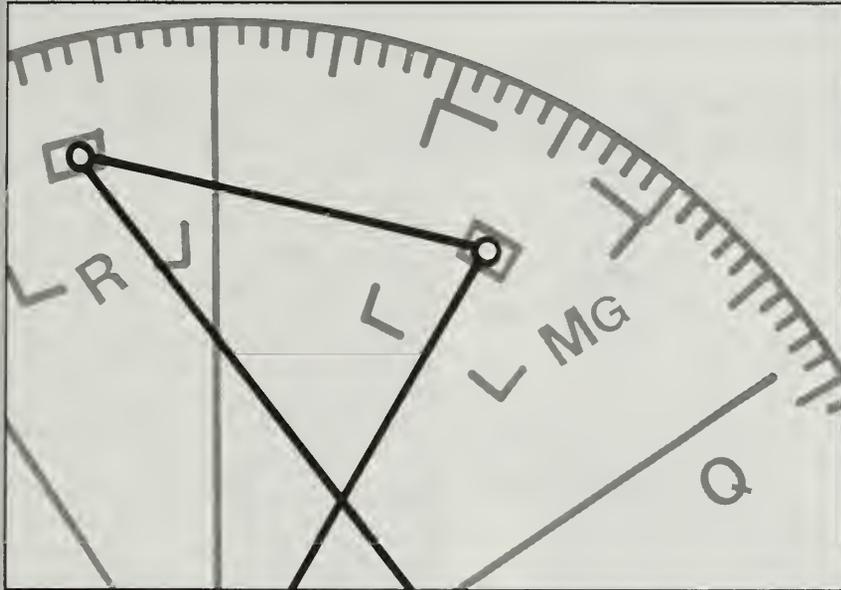
City University of New York. We arrived during what the Cuban government termed a "special period," a phase of severe economic restriction and reorganization necessitated by the abrupt reduction of Soviet trade, as well as the US embargo which has been on-going since 1962.

We spoke with numerous film- and videomakers about the problems and changes underway. Many of their questions are important for North Americans as well as we face our own economic and political crises: What are the dynamics of freedom of expression and censorship during an economic crisis? How are political and cultural identities formulated and reflected in cultural production? How do generational differences affect political identities and strategies for change? Can Cuban socialism continue to move forward during this historical moment of the New World Order?

"The most interesting thing going on in Cuba is debate," summarized filmmaker Rebecca Chávez. "We are beginning to ask new questions." Many artists expressed a commitment to Cuban socialism, but felt that the dialectical nature of their political process necessitates open criticism and difficult discussion. Many of the post-revolutionary binarisms that characterized Cuban nationalism—revolutionary versus imperialist, Cuban versus *gusano*—are beginning to dissolve. This open debate is happening in Cuba at official levels, and it is exploding throughout society, often pushing the boundaries of the "official line." The following reflects the nature of the dialog that was occurring last spring and gives a sense of this important and complex period in Cuba's history.

Rebecca Chávez is one of Cuba's veteran filmmakers. She began working in the news department of ICAIC, the Cuban Film Institute, more than 15 years ago, and has produced numerous documentaries addressing divorce, pregnancy, birth control, and other issues relevant to women. As Chávez explained, "This has been said many times, but it's such an elemental truth that I must say it again. I wouldn't be a filmmaker if it wasn't for the revolution. My projects are funded and paid for by the state, and the only thing I'm asked in return is to be talented. Cuba would not be able to have a film industry without socialism. Film is a luxury, and this country cannot afford that luxury—yet it does."

Underscoring Chávez's point, 30-year veteran filmmaker Santiago Alvarez noted, "The first cultural law Fidel signed created ICAIC." Both Chávez and Alvarez have had prolific careers, a fact they credit to the state's support of the film



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industry. Alvarez, who is often called the father of experimental documentary in Cuba, said, "I've done more than 120 documentaries and 600 news-reels. If you took the film stock I've used, it would go around the equator 10 times."

Chávez illustrated a similar point with a story about Ana María García, a Cuban filmmaker living in Puerto Rico. Chávez worked on García's film *La Operación* when it was in postproduction in Cuba in 1981. "I had never made a film before," Chávez recalled. But since that time, "Ana María has not been able to make her second film. And I've already made 15."

Another ICAIC filmmaker is Sergio Giral, whose early work broke new ground by reclaiming the historic role of Afro-Cubans. His films include *El Otro Francisco* and *Maria Antonia*. "The most important thing the revolution has given me," said Giral, "is an identity. We, as a country, have been colonized for centuries, and so we have looked outward. Before the revolution, people focused on the American way of life. Now a large percentage of Cubans here—and in Miami—have a strong sense of where they belong. You participate in a historical moment in whatever way—for socialism, or against it—but you participate. The saddest thing is not feeling part of a historical process."

Cubans have different relationships to this historical process and Cuba's revolution. Younger artists who did not experience the early 1960s see themselves in conflict with the institutions founded by the first post-revolution generation. They are challenging the existence of an official culture that defines the parameters of "acceptable" expression.

Many belong to a new organization for young mediamakers called *Hermanos Saíz*, named for two young brothers killed during the revolution, which hosts an annual film and video festival. Although independent of ICAIC and UNEAC (the Union of Writers and Artists), it is an official organization recognized and funded by the government. As *Hermanos Saíz* member and video artist Ricardo Acosta described it, "We are trying to find a space for people born after 1959 to do artistic work. We're creating a body of work you don't see at ICAIC. We have differences with the previous generation and want to recover a reflective humanism which has been lost in Cuban cinema. Cubans have a need to communicate—not on an ideal level, but on the level of being human."

"If I wanted to work in ICAIC, it would be 15 years before I could produce my first film," Acosta continued. "There is an explosion of young producers who want to create work, without the channels or space to do it. This creates the first generational conflict."

The struggle for alternative channels of production and exhibition is complicated by the current economic crisis. When we visited ICAIC's national office, the halls were without lights because the parts necessary to support the fluores-

Poster for *Che, entre Leyendas*, by Rebecca Chávez, who insists, "Cuba would not be able to have a film industry without socialism."

Courtesy Center for Cuban Studies



cent bulbs were unobtainable. Production was nearly at a standstill for this internationally recognized and ordinarily prolific film industry.

Acosta also emphasized, "It's important for Hermanos Saíz to remain independent, because it's a way of allowing other perspectives." Among the "other perspectives" now emerging in Havana are those of gays and lesbians. It's in this area that the US embargo, which is as much ideological as economic, has impeded North American's ability to recognize change in Cuba. What shapes public opinion instead are films like Nestor Almendros' *Improper Conduct*, which documents the incarceration of gay men in reeducation camps during the 1960s, and US press condemnations of Cuba's AIDS sanatoria.

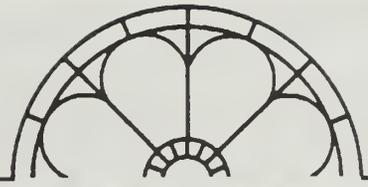
In fact, things have changed significantly since the enforcement of repressive policies towards gay men and lesbians in the 1960s and 1970s. In April, for instance, an award-winning short story by Senel Paz about a party militant's relationship with a gay man had just been published. We visited several gay couples living together and heard about the greater openness and acceptance many felt was imminent. Several lesbian and gay cultural exhibitions were being planned, including one organized by Acosta for Hermanos Saíz called "For The First Time." "My intention was to do a gay exhibition without foreign artists, because it's important for us to represent ourselves as gay Cubans," said Acosta. "The people who most resist this idea are gays, because we've overlearned the discourse of forgiveness. The show isn't saying, 'Forgive us.' It says, 'We exist. We have our own reality.'"

While Cuban filmmakers expressed many different opinions on the place of gay politics and gay-themed media in Cuba, one question was recurrent: How to advocate for the rights of specific groups, such as gays and lesbians, in a context where the dominant identity is that of the nation, and where the expression of difference is often viewed as divisive?

This tension was played out repeatedly in discussions, as when Sergio Giral talked with his partner Armando Dorrego, who wrote the screenplay for *Maria Antonia*. "If we projected an image of two men kissing," said Giral, "people would reject it, get angry, laugh. We aren't prepared." Dorrego interjected, "When Sergio says 'We're not prepared,' those of us who are younger object. We have suffered a lot from this kind of paternalism." Dorrego continued, "If the process moves forward, it will be beneficial for the people. Now we have Senel's novel, a festival of gay cinema coming up, and we are doing a film with a gay character. Before we couldn't do this—not because of repression, but because of culture."

Many artists disagreed over the importance of gay media. Ivan Arocha, for instance, an ICAIC film editor, sculptor, and performance artist who also produces video with the independent multimedia group Z, said, "I often ask myself whether the gay theme is most important within our context. I think there are more important themes—like leadership, the economy, and national issues like aggression. I don't like the word 'aggression' because it sounds like a clichéd anti-imperialist poster, but in addition to being a clichéd, it's also a reality."

When Arocha presented a rough-cut of *Como Vivir con el SIDA en Cuba (How to Live with AIDS in Cuba)*, which he edited, at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center in New York in 1989, anti-communist Cubans living in New York City attacked him physically and verbally, accusing him



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of being a Castro agent. What's more, said Arocha, "a lot of gay North Americans and Cuban Americans wouldn't let me say a word. They see Cuba as a country without gays, and therefore wouldn't let me speak. They are gay, and I'm gay, but I can't identify with these people. I have to identify with another ideology—a political one, a humanitarian one—and defend my position as gay within that."

While women have not had to prove the legitimacy of their existence, they, too, have struggled for their rights within the revolution. As Chávez noted, "It's not enough to have five laws saying you're equal. That's a piece of paper you can throw in the garbage. You have to go out every day and demonstrate this right." Her own experience speaks to this. She recalled, "Women at ICAIC would only advance to a certain level, such as editing, producing, or administrative work. But the artistic work, such as directing, was hard for a woman to get. I've had to prove that I'm intelligent, talented, and capable of directing a film. We women have to fight every day, because when you reach one point, there's always another. Therefore my themes continue to change. Now I feel free to do more artistic work, without pressure to make a speech about the role of women."

During our stay in Cuba, the United States was in heated debate over the National Endowment for the Arts and public funding for the arts, censorship, and freedom of expression. Although these North American concepts cannot be applied uncritically to Cuba, we found many Cubans struggling with similar issues. While we were surprised at the extent to which censorship and other controversial issues could be discussed at official meetings, the debate was always pushed further when it took place in people's homes. This open dialogue has enabled a critique of the exist-

**Sergio Giral's films, such as *El Otro Francisco*, reclaim the historic role of Afro-Cubans.**

*Courtesy Center for Cuban Studies*

ence of "official" discourse and the censorship that inevitably ensues.

"A society cannot develop with two discourses—one the official ideal and the other our day-to-day reality," Acosta insisted. "In order to know who we are as a people, we need one level of dialogue." He continued, "[Hermanos Saíz's] principle is that we are going to show our work in public and defend our positions in front of the community."

Despite differences of opinion about the country's future, everyone we spoke with felt an investment in Cuba as an independent and socialist nation. When asked, "What do you want for Cuba?," Arocha responded: "That people could see our reality without being dominated by the US. We see seven or eight Hollywood films a week. People see a mechanic living in a mansion with two cars. They think that when they go to the US, they're going to Hollywood. It's natural that people should want to go...The sad thing is, they can't come back."

"It's a hard moment economically," Dorrego emphasized. "But I don't think the answer is to abandon everything and leave—and not see any results. In a few years, we will win the gay struggle, and there will be so many more. The revolutionary process is young."

*Kelly Anderson, a producer, writer, and educator, is coproducing a video exchange about gay identity and politics in Cuba and the US. Tami Gold is a producer and professor at Hunter College, and is currently working on a documentary exploring the multiple constructions of gender.*

# WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU

## Film/Tape Image Conversion

RICK FEIST

*This article is eleventh in a series written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs. The previous chapters of this editing guide reviewed video recording formats, time code, off-line editing, switchers, digital video effects, tiling methods, video painting systems, audio for video, and audio processing.*

### INTERLACE

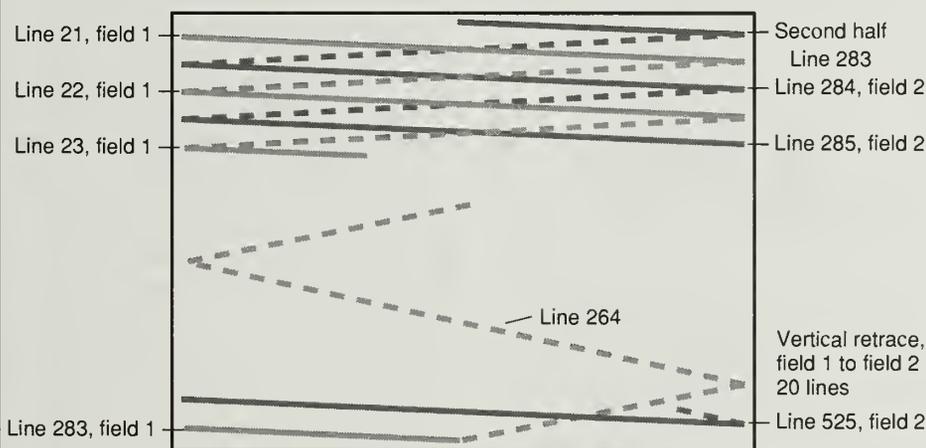
A series of rapidly changing still pictures creates the illusion of motion. Because of the persistence of vision, each image lingers in the brain for a fraction of a second. To overcome flicker, the images must change faster than the human capability to discern them separately. The number of times that a moving image is updated is called the refresh rate. Flicker-free motion is obtainable with a refresh rate of 50 to 70 images per second, depending on lighting conditions and the sharpness of detail.

Film and the various video standards record a different number of frames per second. In Europe, film is shot at 25 frames per second, the same rate as the PAL and SECAM video standards in use there. In the United States, the National Television Standards Committee (NTSC) stipulates 30 frames per second, with 525 raster lines per frame. Film, shot at 24 frames per second, must be converted to 30.

These frame rates are inadequate to overcome the threshold for persistence of vision. Therefore, each film frame is actually held in the projector gate and displayed two or three times through the blades of a shutter. This adds up to 48 or 72 images per second. A video frame is divided into two sequential fields, providing a refresh rate of 60 images from the nominal 30 video frames per second (or 50 from 25 in PAL and SECAM). To divide a frame into two fields, all of the odd-numbered raster lines (1, 3, 5 ... 525) are scanned as the first field, and then the even-numbered lines are scanned to produce the second field. The two fields are interlaced. Although progressive scan (a full-frame scan at a refresh rate of 50 to 60 full images per second) would provide greater image definition, the band width required would be prohibitively costly for both components and transmission.

Interlace causes visual artifacts, or aliasing effects. If motion in the image is faster than the frame rate, the motion is distorted. Paradigmatic are the spokes of a revolving bicycle wheel that seem to spin backwards. Since the lines of field two are scanned after the completion of field one, any motion within the image will be later by one-sixtieth of a second in field two. Viewing the two fields combined as a frame produces a blur as the image rapidly alternates between the two different positions. To prevent this blur, a single field must often be used for a freeze frame if there is motion in the image.

### INTERLACED-SCANNING PATTERN



Video is an outlet for images derived from other media. Converting images may require more than a video camera. In computer graphics, an image consists of a matrix of pixels, each assigned digital values for the amount of red, green, and blue (R-G-B) present. An encoder is necessary to produce an analog video signal from the digital data ["What the Manual Didn't Tell You: Digital Video," May and June 1990] The transfer of film to video is an industry in its own right. And video standards themselves are converted among such acronyms as PAL, NTSC, and SECAM.

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## FILM-TO-TAPE TRANSFER

The texture of film is ubiquitous on television. Yet video is clearly incapable of the fine-grained resolution of 35mm film. The contrast of film—the range of brightness values it can record—yields subtle colorations that are literally squeezed to fit within the limited bandwidth of video. A significant amount of detail is lost. Still, the demand for this type of conversion continues unabated for films new and old.

Film is the production medium for most major television productions, as well as the commercials during the breaks. Since the image ends up on video, wouldn't a video camera reproduce the original scene just as well? No. The grail of the "film look" has led to the development of telecine machines that provide more sophisticated control over picture quality than the best video cameras. A nostalgia for film grain instilled in the hearts of filmmakers will follow them to the grave.

A telecine, formerly called a film chain, copies film onto video. By swapping guides and rollers, the same machine accommodates both 16mm and 35mm film formats. Super 8 film transfer is a specialty, though creative solutions have emerged, such as the excellent transfers done by Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway in Boston.

## 3-2 PULLDOWN

To transfer a film running at 24 frames per second (fps) to video (requiring 30 fps) involves the so-called 3-2 pulldown. The first film frame is transferred onto two video fields. Every second film frame is transferred onto three video fields. This produces 12 extra fields per second (or six video frames) which make up the difference to 30 fps.

The digital framestore provides the means to make conversions in frame rates ["What the Manual Didn't Tell You: Digital Video," May 1990]. Incoming pictures are sampled and stored in memory. Entire fields are interpolated or elided for output at another rate. Most telecines use progressive scanning, employing a framestore to create interlaced video for television standards.

There are noticeable shortcomings in any frame rate conversion. Motion artifacts are evident during lateral (cross screen) movements, which appear jagged or halting because every sixth frame is repeated or missing. In some systems, a film edit between two different scenes or angles becomes a one-frame mix, with the first field and first scene woven by interlace into the second field and scene. Visually this looks like a blend of the two images.

The increasingly sophisticated digital filtering of recent telecine devices can mask many of these problems. The sophisticated URSA system virtually eliminates aliasing. The frame-store in the telecine is also involved in variable speed transfers. The Bosch FDL system can make transfers at any speed between two and 600 fps.

An alternative is to shoot film at 30 fps. No frame conversion is required, and single video

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Film	25		Europe
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PAL	25	625	Western Europe, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Israel, Central and Southern Africa, the Middle East
SECAM	25	625	France, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, North Africa, the Middle East

frames, derived from a single, static film frame, are jitter free. This is critical for laserdiscs utilizing still frames.

Various technologies have come and gone through the development of film-to-tape transfers. The first continuous motion telecines appeared in the 1970s. These made it no longer necessary to physically stop the film in the gate to scan a frame, as the frame was converted as it moved past the video scanner. The flying spot scanner became the byword of film-to-tape conversion. A tiny beam of intense light is projected through the film onto a photocell sensitive to the variations of brightness. The spot progresses along each raster line of the television image. A cathode-ray tube (CRT) generates the flying spot, though laser beam systems have been developed. Rank Cintel is famous for its flying spot scanners.

The most common system used in newer NTSC film chains is the charge-coupled device, or CCD scanner. A CCD scanner utilizes a solid state device (a chip) which has a bar of 1,024 photosensitive elements that take a line-by-line reading of the film. CCD scanners are more durable than their CRT-based flying spot counterparts. If greater vertical image stability is required for paintbox retouching or exact matting in compositing video effects, an electronic pin-registered (EPR) transfer is recommended to prevent slight up-and-down oscillations of the image. Such a transfer is time-consuming and can only be fully successful when a pin-registered film camera has been used in production.

The zoom, pan, and tilt capabilities of telecine

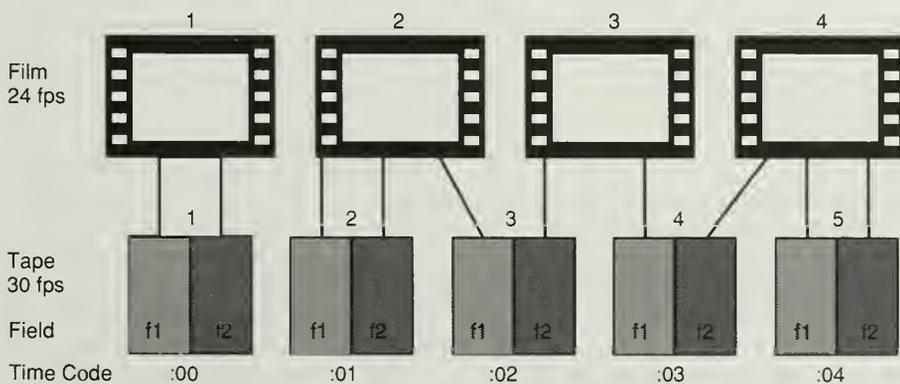
machines vary. If the telecine utilizes a zoom lens, the film-to-tape transfer is the best time to perform such maneuvers, when the enlargement quality is far superior to that of a digital effects device. Often it's advisable that such material be transferred twice—once at normal size and once with the effect or enlargement—for coverage during editing.

### COLOR CORRECTION

The most sophisticated video color correction capabilities are available in the film-to-tape transfer—you won't find these machines again in an edit suite. The bright, medium, and dark balance of each of the video primaries (red-green-blue) can be separately filtered and adjusted. A Sunburst or Da Vinci corrector provide for the selection of a single color or color area, such as a red dress, to be isolated and separately amplified (saturated) or suppressed (desaturated) without affecting the rest of the image. An Ultimatte can also be employed to generate a black and white hi-conkeying signal from filmed blue-screen chroma key backgrounds.

A one-light film-to-tape transfer uses a single setting to transfer an entire roll of film. Such a transfer can be unsupervised and is not too expensive. Alas, most all film-to-tape transfers are supervised, and the brightness and color of each camera angle is adjusted to the satisfaction of the producer and often the cinematographer. For this reason the film-to-tape process is often called color correction.

### 3-2 PULLDOWN



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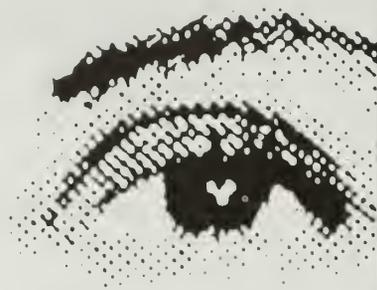
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The operator of the film chain will often use a digital disk-recorder to store still frames of important scenes for later comparison of light and color balance. Earlier scenes may be retransferred to better match later camera angles. All in all, progress may be slow.

## FILM SOUND

Transferring dual system sound with picture is even more cumbersome. The sync-smart system utilizes a Nagra reading center-track SMPTE time code. The quarter-inch sound slaves to the film as it is transferred to video, but each take requires syncing-up, as with film dailies. A special electronic slate that displays the Nagra SMPTE time-code number at the moment the sticks impact is filmed by the camera. This expedites the alignment of the sound. Reel changes must be made regularly, and the Nagra takes a fixed amount of time to cue to a given point on the reel. Very few film soundpersons understand time code. Non-ascending time code ["What the Manual Didn't Tell You: Time Code and Computer Editing," October 1989] can cause the tape to spin off. Any inaccuracies in the script or sound notes can stop a film-to-tape session dead in its tracks. It is embarrassingly expensive to search for a missing sound take under these circumstances. Transfers can also be made utilizing 16mm or 35mm mag film. Holes are punched (start marks) at the beginning of each film reel and sound reel to align the tracks.

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## AND BACK AGAIN: CONFORMING FILM NEGATIVE

If the film negative is to be conformed to the final video edit, the best method in use is the key-code system. Bar codes are exposed along the edge of the film to encode the time of day in SMPTE time-code format. Special time-code generators can be slaved to these numbers to record them on the videotape transfer. The film can be conformed directly from the edit decision list (EDL). The alternative method is to transfer entire reels of film with a hole-punch start mark aligned with the beginning SMPTE code. Later, frame offsets can be calculated from the EDL.

Though reconforming film negative for a film print results in superior technical quality, the practice is rarely done. The cost of titles and other film opticals, quickly done in video, are prohibitive in film.

Alternatively, video can be transferred to film. Everyone has seen kinescopes—films shot directly off of a television monitor. When done on a professional system, the shutter speed of the film camera is controlled synchronously to the video field rate. Still, the low video resolution and contrast are obvious. More sophisticated electronic beam transfer systems utilize a laser to scan the film frame from the video signal. Such a

system is expensive (\$100 per minute without a print), but usually produces acceptable results with most video material.

## STANDARDS CONVERSION

NTSC video was developed in the United States in the 1950s, operating at 30 fps with 525 raster lines. A second signal, the color modulated onto a subcarrier, is added to the black and white signal. After the standard was implemented, it became apparent that the phase of the color signal often drifted, resulting in changes of color.

In Europe, color standards were developed from the experience of NTSC. France and the Soviet Union broadcast in SECAM (Sequential Color with Memory). Two color subcarrier signals are alternately transmitted on every other raster line, providing the means for comparing them and correcting color drifts. In PAL (Phase Alternate Line), the phase of a single color subcarrier is inverted on every other line of video, which not only provides for correction but produces less noise than SECAM. Both the PAL and SECAM standards utilize 25 fps rates with 625 raster lines. In countries utilizing the SECAM standard, production is usually done in PAL and converted to SECAM only for broadcast, as PAL circuitry is simpler and more common.

Standards conversion is accomplished by using specially designed framestores that sample the video in one format and read it out in another. To convert the 625 lines of the PAL standard to the 525 lines of NTSC, every fifth line is elided. Inversely, every fifth line is repeated to boost 525 NTSC lines to the 625 lines of PAL or SECAM. Likewise, entire fields are repeated or deleted to convert frame counts, as in the 3-2 pulldown of the telecine.

Aliasing is the result, and, once again, digital filtering is involved. Interpolation is an averaging process to reduce motion problems and discontinuities when lines or entire fields are repeated or deleted. By comparing a line to the adjacent lines above and below, an average is derived to modify each of the lines accordingly. Each video field is compared to the previous field. The sophistication of the software used for interpolation is often the determining factor in the price of a standards converter.

The price of framestores, however, has fallen dramatically over the last decade. Affordable tri-standard VHS decks can play and even convert tapes of any standard. Though this is not a classy conversion, it is a very functional translation. The framestore has finally made the multi-standard VCR possible.

Today's video standards are set to be the lowest common denominator for all forms of imaging. With the help of framestores, almost any conversion can be programmed. Digital image quality could be better than it is now (eight to 10 bits), but only for a price. And video has become universal because it is affordable.

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# THE GULF WAR

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## • A N D T H E •

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# DEATH OF TV NEWS

DANNY SCHECHTER

IN THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE GULF WAR this January, there were several panel discussions probing the news media's coverage of the conflict. The New York Bar Association witnessed a senior editor of *Newsweek* turn towards Pete Williams, the super-slick Pentagon flack, and call for civil disobedience among journalists if press pools are imposed during the next war. Editor Jonathan Alter asked his colleagues to risk prison by defying press restrictions, amplifying on a critique that led 17 leading news organizations to write to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney months after the war to complain that "the restrictions imposed during the Iraq conflict made it virtually impossible for reporters and photographers to tell the full story." Amazing, isn't it? These are the same people who were on the air around the clock with what they reported at the time *was* the full story.

If the mainstream media is now admitting some of its own failures, independent journalists who challenged the coverage and, in many cases, the war itself, can merely chuckle on the sidelines. The only pools they were allowed in were at the hotels, far from the fighting—if they could afford to get there.

Independent, nonmainstream reporting was virtually frozen out from the outset. There was no independent television news gathering operation on the scene. Of American independents, only Jon Alpert, with coproducer Maryanne DeLeo made it to Baghdad and, as is now well known, his stories for NBC News were suppressed and he was discharged. Most critics believe that Alpert, a long-time stringer for the network, was fired because his behind-the-lines images challenged the dominant pro-Pentagon news frame.

Every network had its generals in residence, none its dissidents. In the war's aftermath, there were some polite postmortems focusing on the problems reporters had with pool coverage. Some journalists were given air time to challenge the Pentagon's news management approach. *Nightline's* Forrest Sawyer was among the most outspoken and articulate. But few if any

challenged, or could comfortably challenge, their own network's complicity in agreeing to the rules. As Michael Massing observes in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, "Access was not really the issue. Yes, the pools, the escorts, the clearance procedures were all terribly burdensome, but greater openness would not necessarily have produced better coverage." For him, what we lacked were not freer reporters in the field but more digging into the real reasons for the war, fewer "Scud studs," as NBC's Arthur Kent was called, and more I. F. Stones to burrow in the bowels of official Washington to get at the story behind the story.

While we wait for a PBS superseries on the Gulf War some years hence—once the issue leaves the realm of controversy and enters the high ground of "history"—we can be grateful for a handful of dissenting documentaries, most notably Deep Dish TV's *Gulf War TV Project*, *Frontline's* look at post-war Iraq, Bill Moyers' *After the War* series, and some stories on *The 90's*. But most of them focused on the policy, not the press.

In my view, the media's performance has to be analyzed as an extension of government policy, because in this war much of the media was carefully and deliberately orchestrated as a policy marketing tool—often with its own full complicity. In effect, the media was deployed as an extension of a well-planned government dominated information system. *Newsday* even quoted a reporter as saying, "the line between me and a government contractor is pretty thin." And that system—as a matter of policy and practice—kept independents and critics at arms length.

The frustrating reality is: even if independents could get access to the frontlines, it's doubtful they could get access to the airwaves.

After being rejected by NBC, Alpert's unique footage was turned down by ABC and CBS as well. (CNN had Peter Arnett there, so they didn't need it.) The only stations willing to show Alpert's reports were WNET-New York and MTV. When public television station WNET aired the footage, the material was packaged with a discussion between Alpert and host Roger Rosenblatt (a regular contributor to *MacNeil-Lehrer*), whose hostility and skepticism about the reports were barely veiled.



When CNN journalist Peter Arnett became a political lightning rod, his adversaries included CNN's own general-in-residence.

Courtesy CNN

MTV News provided the only national broadcast for this footage. The network invited our company Globalvision to produce a series of news reports on the war for their *Week in Rock* magazine—including a story showing snatches of Alpert's work. Though not a place most Americans tuned for their war coverage, it at least allowed different angles on the conflict to be seen nationally. But when the war ended so quickly, so did our reports on MTV.

**W**HY WAS OUR TELEVISION SYSTEM SO UNIFORM IN ITS COVERAGE OF THE WAR? HOW did the Pentagon manage the news and news media so well? And why is it that the media became such a battleground in this conflict?

The answer to the first question is to be found in the architecture of network news, including CNN. Corporate cultures exist within news organizations the way they do in other organizations, with unwritten rules steering you towards being one of the team. At ABC News, a list is circulated daily detailing where everyone in the organization can be reached. It's labelled The Troops. It should be no surprise that dissent and democracy are no more encouraged inside the news army than inside "Today's Army." In both places, there are clear limits placed on your being "all that you can be." In this context, no eyebrows were raised when ABC, flush with victory in the network ratings war-within-the-war, posed its anchor/stars in a military-like line-up for a stylish publicity portrait, which was splashed all over bus shelters in New York City. The copy tag read simply, "Air Supremacy." How's that for borrowing your imagery from the people you are reporting on?

Network news was not always as homogeneous as it is today. For years, the big three networks worked hard to project distinctive identities. Nowadays these differences are blurred. It's not surprising when Dan Rather's producer becomes Ted Koppel's producer, and Ted's former producer becomes George Bush's producer. (It's true. *Nightline's* executive producer Dorrance Smith left ABC News for a news job at the White House.) Their graphics may feature different colors and designs, but their stories, approach, and "feel" are pretty much the same. Even CNN, which came to life in the eighties, has essentially copied existing formats, putting pictures to all-news radio. It's ability to go live has been its signature, but the content of CNN is the content of mainstream TV news—only there's more of it.

Why this sameness? According to David Altheide and Robert Snow, authors of the new book *Media Worlds in a Post Journalism Era*, the TV media has its own imperatives—what they call "media logic," which turns the news world ultimately into a world of its own, with its own language, grammar, ideology, and interests. What is and isn't covered often has as much to do with how a program is seeking to position itself and the perceived or real demographics of its audience as with the inherent importance of any one story.

Media mechanics—the compression of all information into prefabricated formats—has already brought us the death of journalism as it has traditionally been practiced. "The journalism enterprise," Altheide and Snow contend, "especially TV news, essentially is reporting on itself; it addresses events that are cast in its own formats and frames of relevance, rather than attempting to understand the events in their own terms, and then trying to communicate the complexities and ambiguities of 'real world conditions.'"



The Pentagon's chief in-house briefer drew laughs on Johnny Carson when describing how they met before press conferences to plan who to call and who to ignore. The "troublemakers" were put in the back, out of camera range.

Courtesy CNN

**H**OW DID THE PENTAGON INSINUATE ITSELF INTO THIS KIND OF DECISION-making process and manage the news so well? The Pentagon has long considered the media an enemy. The top brass has been smarting for years over its defeat in Vietnam, with many blaming the media, not the military. Since then they've been studying media management techniques at the War Colleges, borrowing ideas from the British experience in the Falklands and then trying them out, first in Granada and then in Panama. A Defense Information School in Ohio trains platoons of so-called Public Affairs Officers or media minders.

Media techniques soon permeated the Pentagon itself. The Gulf War was mounted like a film or TV production, with an eye for careful casting and visuals that would put themselves in the best light. While slick briefers like Pete Williams held down the front in Washington, character-actor generals like Stormin' Norman became heroes playing against type in the field.

A decentralized, competitive media was no match for a centralized, well-organized Pentagon with a game plan finely tuned over the decades. Command and control of the propaganda operation was coordinated by a high-level Deputies Committee, made up of the seconds-in-command from all the national security and military agencies. Every policy pronouncement was calculated and coordinated. Incidentally, that committee was headed by our new CIA director, then deputy director Robert Gates. He was the enforcer of a list of "Do's and Don'ts" that governed what officials could discuss. When Air Force General Dugan committed a "don't" by disclosing that there were plans to bomb Baghdad months before the onslaught actually began (the disclosure was, of course, denied), he was fired. Dugan ended up working for CBS News.

The Pentagon's chief in-house briefer, General Thomas Kelley, would later joke with Johnny Carson about how easy it was to control the press conferences. He drew laughs when describing how the briefers met beforehand to strategize and plan who to call and who to ignore. The "troublemakers" were put in the back, out of camera range. When Kelley retired after the war, he was promptly hired by NBC News. ABC's military consultant Anthony Cordesman previously worked at a conservative think tank and for Arizona Senator McCain, an ultra-right wing Vietnam POW. He displayed his objectivity by penning an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* that ran the day the war ended. It pleaded for no cuts in the defense budget. Now Cordesman is back in McCain's office—jumping back from the center of media power into politics.

The networks, which had been playing into the Pentagon's hands all along, soon found themselves junior partners in the military game plan. Their executives met with the Defense Secretary to map out the pool system. Once in place, there was little they could do but try to work within it.

With journalism that could easily be mistaken for jingoism, the networks pumped up the war psychosis with sustained coverage of the dangers facing the troops. Some local news anchors tied yellow ribbons to their studio sets. A climate was created that insured critical coverage of the war would become a commercial and political risk.

The few journalists who decided it was not their job to win a popularity contest nevertheless cooled their aggressive questioning at Pentagon press briefings as the winds of war boosterism started blowing through their news organizations. They began to feel isolated and out of step, especially after *Saturday Night Live* made journalists, not the generals, the target of their spoofs. According to the *New York Times*, once the Pentagon felt it had won legitimacy from such an unlikely source, it would not revise its media



A fish monger tells independent video journalists Jon Alpert and Maryanne DeLeo how his market was destroyed by allied bombs. Such close-up, behind-the-lines reportage was notable for its absence on television news.

Courtesy videomakers

restrictions. The distinctions between entertainment programming and news further slipped away.

Soon we were seeing all of those music videos of bombs bursting in air and planes roaring into desert sunsets. But there were also reports filtering back of network correspondents actually urging the Military Police to arrest reporters operating outside the pool. We heard about a hit list for renegade American reporters who would be busted if captured. And then there was the story of CBS's Bob Simon who was arrested—but by the other side.

**T**HE GULF WAR WAS ULTIMATELY WON NOT BY THE UNITED STATES BUT BY CNN. For CNN, the war was a godsend for several reasons. Its strength is crisis reporting and live coverage. Ted Turner's news teams spent a small fortune but recouped their expenses by jacking up the cost of their ads and getting the cable industry to come up with a supplementary per viewer assessment. CNN marketed its service to cable systems worldwide and even cornered the video cassette market. When the war was on, their ratings were hot. When it ended, they were not.

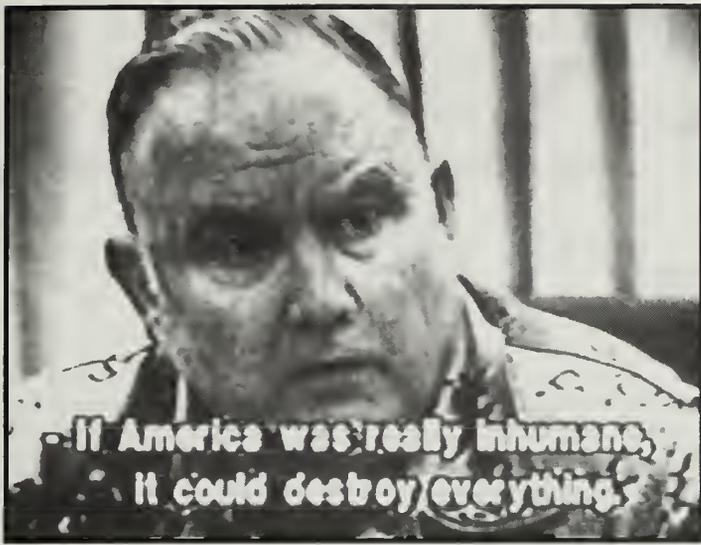
This is not to take away from CNN's many exclusives and strong on-the-scene reporting. But there did come a time when some of their news bulletins became repetitive and virtually devoid of news. (A caller to a New York radio station quipped, "I feel like my consciousness has become a target of saturation bombing by CNN.") You'll also recall how CNN's Peter Arnett became a target of right-wing criticism for his Baghdad broadcasts despite the network's constant efforts to point out that Arnett's stories were often subject to Iraqi censorship. To its credit, CNN backed Arnett. Friends at CNN tell me the network was very nervous about the well-orchestrated anti-Arnett campaign and were careful to insure that all his reporting was surrounded by disclaimers and quickly followed by interviews with experts who tended to treat Arnett as an advocate, not a journalist.

In a new book called *How CNN Fought the War*, CNN's general-in-residence, retired Major General Perry Smith, recounts his battle to keep the Pentagon position the dominant one inside CNN's Atlanta newsroom, a place insiders often call "the bunker." Smith explains how he waged his own war to "balance" Arnett's "misleading" coverage. "Throughout this entire period of time," he writes, "I kept trying to figure out Peter Arnett. Was he biased in favor of the Iraqi government? Was he an anti-war advocate.... was he fundamentally anti-American?"

This TV general finally decided that Arnett was not an ideological bad guy after all. His diagnosis: "The more I watched the Arnett coverage, the more I talked to people who knew him well, the more I came to believe that he was a 'feeler.' In other words, Arnett is someone who empathizes with the people around him." Feeling and empathy are apparently considered a high crime and misdemeanor in some circles. Arnett's accuracy was evidently less important than the fact that his message and "feelings" were out of line with the official line.

Also out of line, apparently, was tough objective reporting about civilian casualties. The authoritative human rights monitoring organization, Middle East Watch, issued a 402-page report in November revealing how both sides committed serious violations of the laws of war. "Selective presentation of this information," the group charges, prevented the American people from seeing through a "carefully constructed image of a near flawless allied campaign."

Middle East Watch applies legal standards to the allied performance that



From photographer Barbara Alper's book project *The Gulf Channel*, on the French media's coverage of the Gulf War, as retransmitted on US cable TV.

Courtesy artist

most US media applied only to Iraq. The report finds many violations in the means and methods of attack and the selection of targets. The study is called *Needless Deaths*, and in an even-handed manner, it condemns Saddam Hussein's violations, too.

What's significant about the study is that it contradicts many of the images that American television pounded home hour after hour. If you watched TV news, you'd think most of the US bombing employed so-called "smart bombs." Not true. According to the study, these accounted for merely 8.8 percent of the munitions used. The "dumb weapons" hit their targets only 25 percent of the time. How much Pentagon footage did we see of these misses?

Conversely, Patriot-Scud encounters made for great pictures, but had little military meaning. Remember all the talk they inspired about "proving" the validity of Star Wars-type defense systems? After the war, an MIT researcher testified before Congress that the Patriots actually caused more damage than the Scuds they shot down. In November, the Israeli government confirmed this assessment.

Middle East Watch also discloses that the Pentagon admits it knew that the Ameriva air raid shelter in Baghdad, where as many as 300 people were incinerated, had been used as a civilian shelter during the Iran-Iraq war. Some British journalists reported that the shelter was bombed to kill the families of Iraqi leadership thought to be using it. You'll recall that after this atrocity occurred, most of the US media reported Pentagon claims that the facility was used for military purposes. None, of course, noted Article I of a protocol signed by the United States which provides that even if a civil defense structure is used for military defense, it cannot be attacked before a warning is issued.

*Needless Deaths* also documents the intentional targeting of food, as well as agricultural and water treatment facilities. The report faults the allies "for their apparently deliberate silence regarding the extent of civilian casualties in Iraq attributable to allied bombing."

In early November, the Pentagon's Pete Williams astonished an audience in New York by asserting that the US government has officially put the number of civilian casualties at 557. He explained that the Geneva Conventions require the United States only to report on the number of civilians that our own forces bury.

So on the war's first anniversary, this issue is still far from settled. My point in these summaries is not to set the record straight, but only to suggest that it never was. During the Gulf War, most of the media got along by playing along. Unknown even to most reporters, there was an economic dimension to the story that needs more thorough probing.

IT TURNS OUT THAT JANUARY 1991 WAS NOT THE BEST TIME FOR THE NETWORKS to confront a popular president and his popular war. Just as the smart

bombs started flying, a lot of smart network money was engaged in a massive lobbying effort to change the FCC's Financial Syndication rules.

These rules limit the networks' right to own and market their own programming. Imposed at a time when the public airwaves were thought fit for regulation in the public interest, the Financial Syndication rules were meant to limit the networks' ability to monopolize the marketplace. This meant that program suppliers, not the networks, would forever make the big money when *The Cosby Show* and others went into syndication. Needless to say, this arrangement pleased the producers, not the networks. As television became more competitive thanks to cable and VCRs, network profits began to plunge. Hence the rationale for the networks' high-stakes "reform the rules" campaign.

The Federal Communications Commission, which has the power to revise those rules, was dominated at the time by a group of Reagan-Bush appointees. One of the commissioners, James Quello, a former station manager of Detroit's ABC affiliate, was the networks' point man on this issue. Just before the war started, Quello made a very public display of criticizing journalists' aggressive questioning at Pentagon press briefings, labeling it unpatriotic in a speech to the Oklahoma Broadcasters Association. What kind of signal do you think that sent network higher-ups? What network would want to antagonize the same Administration from which it was seeking a major financial dispensation?

By the war's end, when I spoke to Quello, he had moderated his critique, saying that he now felt the networks did a good job. Incidentally, he voted for changing the FCC rule—but the networks did not get all they sought; they won only a limited but lucrative compromise giving them the right to sell their shows overseas.

I don't have the full story yet of just how this FCC sideshow affected the war coverage in the main ring—and perhaps never will, since the principals are unlikely to discuss it. Globalvision is trying to produce a documentary that explores the subject but so far has been unable to raise the money. And even if we do, who will run it?

The only positive in all of this is that the sentiment within journalism against the pools and the media managers is growing. The media itself is coming under greater scrutiny as well. Organizations like Fairness and Accuracy in Media (FAIR) staged large, noisy, and popular protests outside the networks during the war. To my knowledge, this is the first time that media coverage of a war attracted as much alarm as the war itself. We know that the media did not explain the origins of the conflict clearly, the economic interests involved, or what was likely to happen next. No wonder that even *Time Magazine*, one of the war's biggest cheerleaders, carried a cover months later asking, "Was It Worth It?"

We need more regular coverage of media coverage. And we need it on television. Where are the Siskel and Eberts of TV news? Where are the independents willing to create critical media programs and lobby to get them on the air? Where is PBS? We need more eyes on the media storm. Let's not wait for the next war to take up the challenge of monitoring, reporting on, and even competing with network news.

*Danny Schechter is executive producer of Globalvision, which produced the news series South Africa Now and is currently developing a human rights series, Rights and Wrongs. He has worked as a producer for PBS, CNN, and, for many years, ABC News.*

# The Quiet Crisis

## IS DEBT DOING IN THE ARTS?

NELLO MCDANIEL AND GEORGE THORN

*This article is second in a series on the long-term systemic changes in the media arts field. Our deepest challenges have less to do with specific funders, distributors, and equipment choices than with the larger shifts in economics, political climate, and technological options open to independents. As the following essay describes, the highly publicized attacks on arts funding and free expression by conservative political forces in the last two years is only half the story; over the past decade, the entire economy of the arts has been quietly reorganized. This report, issued by the Foundation for the Extension and Development of the American Professional Theater (FEDAPT), sketches the patterns of this quiet crisis and offers suggestions for how organizations can respond.*

**W**HATEVER THE BALANCE OF THIS DECADE HOLDS, OUR ASSUMPTIONS about the role of the arts in the complex and contradictory scheme of American life have begun to unravel. And our assumptions about the strength, endurance, and resilience of our arts institutions have been challenged by the hard economic realities of the Reagan/Bush era. We are caught in a crossfire of circumstance brought about by design and neglect. While we will ultimately view this period in the light of many economic, social, environmental, and political events, the situation for the arts has been, and still is, defined by two crises. These crises arise from separate but related—and, at times, conspiratorial—sources.

### The Crisis of Note

The crisis that has most captured our attention has been the attack on the National Endowment for the Arts led by Jesse Helms and Donald Wildmon. It began with seemingly isolated cases of criticism of certain NEA-supported arts projects by certain conservative members of Congress. Today, it has become a major debate over government funding of the arts and over freedom of expression. The NEA has been attacked before, but this is a very different situation. When we look at a few of the attendant circumstances, it seems strange that we were so surprised.

Ronald Reagan, in his first major budget address in 1981, gave notice that government support for the arts was targeted for dismantling. Although unable to obliterate the NEA, his administration successfully reduced funding while undercutting the political power base the agency had enjoyed under previous administrations.

Also, at that time, Reagan laid out the blueprint for shifting government priorities. Kevin Phillips, in his book *The Politics of the Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath*, points out, "Since the American Revolution, the distribution of American wealth has depended significantly on who controlled the federal government, for what policies, and on behalf of which constituencies...the Reagan era reversed

what late twentieth-century Americans had become used to. The liberal style that prevailed from 1932 to 1968 had left a legacy of angry conservatives indignant over two generations of downward income redistribution. A re-orientation in the opposite direction was all but inevitable in the 1980s."

While the Reagan budget policies set the stage, other events have fueled the assault on the arts. For example, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe has refocused the attention of the radical right to new issues. Since Gorbachev's reforms have been underway in the Soviet Union, extraordinary resources, both human and financial, in the US have been turned to the forces fighting free choice and abortion rights.

The fact that Senator Jesse Helms was coming up for reelection was another sign that some type of attack on the NEA was imminent. Since Helms relied heavily on campaign support from outside North Carolina, he had to create an issue that would generate national press coverage and provide him a pretext on which to solicit national conservative dollars. Helms outspent his opponent, Harvey Gantt, by a dollar ratio of two-and-a-half to one. And of Helms's \$15-million reelection campaign war chest, 65 percent came from sources outside North Carolina. His pattern is consistent—the arts is his favorite issue to distort for political gain.

Now another ingredient has been added—a new force primarily represented by Donald Wildmon, leader of the American Family Association, and surreptitiously by Pat Robertson, evangelical host of the *700 Club* and 1988 presidential candidate. While many in the arts community regard Wildmon and Robertson as fanatics who need not be taken seriously, the two in fact represent a growing movement in this country—the Christian Reconstructionists.

While these people may not hold this country's political system in the highest esteem, they are adept at using the system. The religious right's ability to generate voluminous anti-NEA mail almost overnight, to raise millions of dollars to reelect Helms, and to attack selected targets, such as the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and corporate supporters of Planned Parenthood, such as AT&T and Dayton-Hudson, are small demonstrations of the strength they command.

The arts communities' ability to organize and sustain a broad-based effort to fight the religious and political right wing and to help the American public understand the need for supporting the arts is a primary requirement for the 1990s. The time, resources, and commitment we bring to this challenge will be greatly influenced by how effectively we deal with the other crisis.

### The Quiet Crisis

The second crisis afflicting the arts is much harder to see or understand, but it is at least as threatening as the first. The quiet crisis is about mounting debt and organization dysfunction.

This crisis is not about incompetent management or bad managers. It is not about lack of accountability or bad boards. Nor is it about unappreciated productions or bad art. A confluence of factors, financial and otherwise, that have developed during the last 10 to 15 years has changed the world by happenstance and by careful, calculated design. The three most dramatic factors are (1) financial shifts and the debt culture, (2) the shrinking human

capital pool, and (3) overregulation and stagnation in the arts structure and community.

• *Factor One: Financial Shifts and the Debt Culture*

About government support of the arts, Ronald Reagan was direct and straightforward—he didn't believe in it. Reagan expressed his intention to eliminate government support of the arts in word and action. After he took office in 1981, Reagan encountered opposition to these plans and had to settle for substantial budget cuts. The cuts were anything but welcome, but they were preferable to agency elimination. In the true spirit of "the glass is half-full because it could have been shattered," the NEA and the field almost gratefully accepted the budget cuts. We made the necessary financial adjustments and resolved to make up the difference in other ways.

But while the arts community was settling into this new relationship with the federal government, the Reagan/Bush ideological and economic policies were penetrating the private and public sector, redistributing wealth and creating a very different order of business, power, and debt.

According to Kevin Phillips, "Under Reagan, federal budget policy, like tax changes, became a factor in the realignment of wealth...The first effect lay in who received more government funds. Republican constituencies—military producers and installations, agribusiness, bondholders and the elderly—clearly benefitted, while decreases in social programs hurt democratic interests and constituencies—the poor, big cities, housing, education," and the arts.

The Reagan administration presided over the biggest peacetime military buildup in US history. To finance the defense buildup while cutting taxes, the government borrowed heavily and national debt soared. Simultaneously, federal spending levels for national defense and human resource programs were reversed. In 1980, human resources received 28 percent of the federal budget while defense received 23 percent. By 1987, human resources were down to 22 percent and defense had climbed to 28 percent. Several studies of the not-for-profit sector at large estimate that over \$100 billion has been withdrawn from human resources by the federal government during the 1980s.

While the eighties celebrated *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, the Reagan/Bush policies primarily benefitted a relatively small percentage of very wealthy individuals. The eighties boom was built on moving assets around on paper, not creating new assets. And, of course, it was about borrowing and spending money at nearly incomprehensible levels. From 1980 to 1990, the US went from the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor nation. The combined public and private debt rose from \$4 trillion in 1980 to \$10 trillion in 1990. Those who assert that the arts need to be more like business and government should take note that the arts have achieved this rather dubious goal—we are deeply and dangerously in debt.

• *Factor Two: The Shrinking Human Capital Pool*

The development of the not-for-profit arts field coincided with the coming

of age of the baby boom generation. This great bulge in the population consisted of bright, young, urban-dwelling adults with disposable time and income. The boomers provided an extraordinary earned income base, which helped fuel the rapid emergence and growth of many arts organizations.

But the boomers provided a second benefit. Baby boomers were entering the job market just as many arts organizations were getting organized. This provided the key ingredient—human capital—to an industry historically and notoriously low on financial capital. From the late sixties through the seventies, arts organizations offering learn/invent-as-you-go entry level jobs found a large, eager pool of young, well-educated, idealistic individuals.

The development of the not-for-profit arts organizations and the coming of age of the baby boomers are integrally connected. But as the boomers have aged, their lives, interests, responsibilities, and behavior have grown far more complex. They are married with children or are heading single-parent households. They have greater job responsibilities. They have moved out of the urban areas, which are too expensive and less desirable for raising families. Mostly, they have less disposable time and income than before. Many boomers have left the arts for jobs that can better support their families and lifestyles. And they have not been replaced by the next generation of the workforce, which is considerably smaller. Those who stayed in the field have been quickly absorbed into senior-management positions.

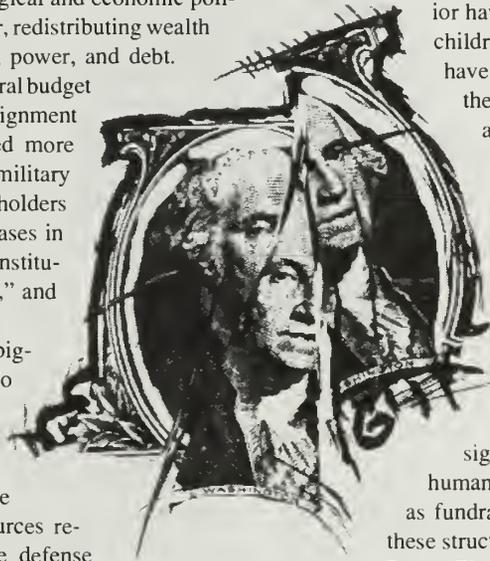
Access to human capital has been and will continue to be as limited as access to financial capital. The traditional organizational model designed in the late sixties and seventies relies heavily on human resources to fill middle-management functions such as fundraising, marketing, finance. Arts organizations with these structures are having a difficult time keeping jobs filled.

• *Factor Three: Overregulation and Stagnation*

While the first two factors—financial and human resources—have changed significantly, the third is an example of too little change in the field. The not-for-profit arts have come to possess all the characteristics of an over-regulated industry.

In the book *Who Profits: Winners and Losers and Government Regulation*, Robert Leone points out that no industry or enterprise in America can escape some amount of government regulation. The winners are those enterprises that can maintain a safe, profitable, and reasonable distance from government regulation. The losers are those who become too close and too reliant on regulated conditions, environments, and marketplaces. They become so concerned organizationally, managerially, and strategically with responding to public policy, funding requirements, and accountability that they remove themselves from the swirl of the real, fast-changing marketplace. Over-regulated industries, over time, come to exist in a state of near-suspended animation with little memory of how to function, compete, or adapt to an unregulated set of conditions.

A good example of this is the airline industry. When the airlines were



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*Expense budgets are driven by growth, and income budgets are created to balance those expenses without regard to whether the goals are achievable.*

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deregulated in the late seventies there were glimmers of improvements. For a while, fares were reduced, and new airlines such as People's Express promised to redefine the entire industry. But the established airlines could not adapt to such a radical and unfamiliar set of conditions, and in a few short years the airlines have virtually recreated the regulated environment they existed in, understood, and were comfortable with prior to deregulation.

What is viewed as bad management in an overregulated industry may in fact be very competent managers whose normal patterns of strategic response to public policy are either (1) overwhelmed by radical change in a given condition in the overall environment or marketplace or (2) made ineffective over time by numerous subtle changes that eventually render organizational, management, and strategic functions obsolete. In either case, the response is to do more of the same and clamor for change in public policy in the form of increased resources or more favorable conditions in which to operate. And there are some excellent managers who are highly adept at bringing about sympathetic change in public policy. But eventually, the environmental change is too great, or the public policy makers grow weary of or indifferent to the overly dependent industry. We may have witnessed some of this attitude during past battles over NEA reauthorization in recent years.

## **Debt Pathology/Symptoms and Behavior**

These conditions have created an environment for the arts that ranges from volatile to hostile. Consequently, we observe all arts organizations attempting to function at a level which is 30 to 50 percent above the floor of available human and financial resources. We believe this gap results not only from eroding human and financial resources but from inappropriate growth.

Throughout the evolution of the not-for-profit arts movement, growth has been the primary, if not the only, criteria for measuring success. Growth has defined success. In many arts organizations, the drive for growth is also the usual response to adversity—arts organizations attempt to outgrow their problems. For most organizations, growth may have been a possibility in the eighties; it will not be possible in the early nineties.

A great number of organizations have attempted to close the gap by simply spending the money anyway, and they have accumulated debts that are becoming debilitating or life threatening.

While no arts organization deliberately courts failure, many create situations that preclude success. Expense budgets are driven by growth, and income budgets are created to balance those expenses without regard to whether the goals are achievable. These "mythical" income budgets set up the staff, board, and volunteers for failure. Marketing and fundraising staffs, who are often inexperienced, untrained, and immature, feel defeated. Frequently they are fired because unrealistic targets are not met. Board

members and volunteers are berated for failing to achieve artificial goals that they, secretly, never believed in. Board members believe that if the artists would just learn what the audience wants and give it to them, they would sell more tickets and raise more money.

Of at least equal concern is the attempt by organizations to close the gap by using human capital—thereby creating a human deficit. When budgets do not balance, one frequent response is to lay off staff and ask everyone left to work harder. The result is negative energy turned inward—tension and frustration building among individuals and a feeling of failure becoming systemic within the organization.

Frequently, these people begin to believe they are the problem. "If I just worked harder or longer....If I were smarter....If I did the right things, then I would have the right board, the right marketing plan to sell more tickets, the right fundraising plan to raise more money"—this is the internal dialog. Another effect of the human deficit is that, too often, people feel they are victims. They are smart and working hard. They are doing all of the right things. But the gap continues to grow, and a sense of being a victim begins to take hold. The number of arts professionals and volunteers who are experiencing anger, frustration, and feelings of failure is growing at an alarming rate. The number leaving their organizations is daunting.

Community leaders and funding sources are becoming aware of the gap but still feel it can be closed through more and better board development, long-range planning, market research, and marketing strategies. Funding sources hope that not only will the gap be closed through these techniques but that surplus income will be generated, so they can reduce funding to arts organizations. By focusing their money and energy in these "self-help programs" for arts organizations, they are postponing any discussion of the real problems and solutions.

## **Defining the Gap**

We have observed certain symptoms and warning signs of behavior throughout the rise of this crisis. Often these symptoms result from actions and decisions intended to alleviate the stress and to solve the crisis. More often, however, they contribute to the deepening crisis, creating a cycle of behavior that becomes increasingly difficult to break. These symptoms include:

A. Crisis Management—This is the most common symptom and quickly evolves into ongoing behavior. The process of facing one emergency after another, day after day, prevents both thoughtful assessment of problem situations and long- or short-range planning. In short, crisis management becomes the only form of management.

B. Debt Driven—As financial debt increases, many organizations become debt driven rather than art or artist driven. A debt-driven mentality bases almost all decisions and actions—artistic, financial, operational—on how the debt will be affected.

C. Cash Flow—Cash shortages demand immediate solutions and trigger strong emotional responses at both staff and board levels. The solution is always immediate fundraising, which undercuts regular fundraising plans and board involvement. Cash flow, fundraising, and board responsibilities become fused, muddled, and inseparable issues.

D. Secrecy and Denial—Secrecy becomes too common; information is treated as a dangerous commodity, and communications—internal and external—are held hostage to fear. The outward appearance of being “sound and solid” is aggressively asserted to prevent erosion of funding and community support. As a result, no one really understands the true condition of the organization.

E. Faltering Systems and Organizational Memory Loss—The rapid turnover among staff and board due to stress and burnout threatens the operating systems and organizational memory. Three fundraising directors in a 12-month period will radically alter even the best fundraising program.

Defining the gap involves placing an organization on a continuum of organizational stability. Several benchmarks exist along this continuum that we have labeled “pre-edge,” “at the edge,” and “over the edge.”

• *Pre-Edge:* These organizations are overextended; however, the problems are still manageable. There are increasing cash flow problems, but financial debt, which has been increasing in the past few years, is being dealt with by rolling over season ticket income; by extending accounts payable; by stacking vendors; and by taking out loans. More than likely, lines of credit and cash reserves are being converted to debt financing. Soon there is growing confusion between cash flow problems and debt. Revenue shortfalls result in staff reductions. Earned income projections are based on each production and program being successful, and there is no room for a production not to work. Contributed income targets are increased without any change in human resources or any plan for how these goals will be achieved. When any aspect of income is discussed, the word “hope” is a constant qualifier: “We hope to raise \$50,000.”

The stress on human resources is beginning to show; tension is growing among artists, staff, board, and volunteers. More and more discussions of solutions focus on board development and expansion. Finger pointing may be beginning. Artists begin suggesting that the board is not raising enough money and that the marketing staff is not using the right tools. Board members begin suggesting that the artists are not giving the audience what it wants. Funders begin pushing for more board development, market research, and long-range planning. Ultimately, all energy is going toward closing the gap.

• *At the Edge:* An organization at the edge experiences a great deal of stress and begins feeling a sense of crisis. Dealing with the growing debt and cash-flow problems becomes nearly all-consuming. Accounts payable are very high, meeting payrolls is problematic, and tax liabilities become a reality. While actual income levels out for two to four years, the need to balance both growing expense budgets and necessary debt reduction drives income projections ever upward, resulting in more unrealistic goals for both earned and contributed income. Record keeping and data collection begin to fall behind, and the organization does not know its true financial condition. At this point, decision-making breaks down and planning processes are absent.

Human deficit is very high. Staff has been reduced; salaries are frozen; turnover is high; and morale is low. Staff with financial responsibility spend all of their time dealing with creditors, cash flow, meeting payrolls, and saying “no.” Marketing and fundraising staff are fired or resign because unrealistic income targets cannot be met. The search for a quick fix dominates everyone’s thinking.

The board and volunteers become very frustrated. Attendance at board meetings is low, and it is often hard to get a quorum. The executive committee assumes all of the work of the board. Other committees have almost stopped functioning. Fundraising by board members becomes problematic because of many members’ secret concern that the organization may not make it. Perhaps the most critical condition is the sense of denial—an enormous amount of energy goes into maintaining a facade toward the community that implies everything is all right.

• *Over the Edge:* All of the conditions described above are greatly intensified. For all intents and purposes, the organization is unable to operate—it is bankrupt. Heroic efforts by a couple of board members or a patron may keep enough money coming in to meet the absolute minimum to operate each week. Every possible way to borrow money has been utilized: Cash reserves are depleted; every grant award letter has been converted to bridge loans; and accounts payable are overwhelming. Vendors refuse to extend credit. Any of a number of events could be the trigger for collapse—a bank closes the account; the IRS takes control of the bank accounts; an emergency request to a funder is rejected; the state arts council grant is held back; the artists or staff refuse to continue working without pay, etc.

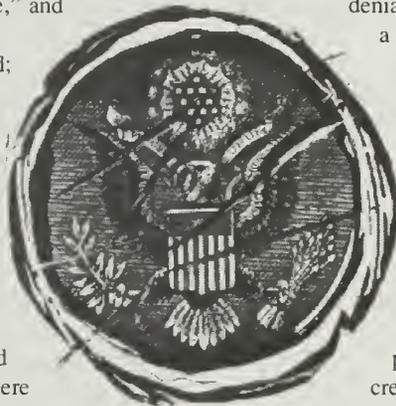
In this situation, decision making and planning has stopped. Marketing and fundraising plans are abandoned, and the most obvious tasks are not accomplished. A siege mentality settles in, and staff turnover is constant. The debt has become pervasive and pathological.

## A Process Leading to Recovery

The approach we have developed is based upon the specific condition of individual organizations. The following description of our process should be viewed as a composite and approximate guideline. In general, our work with “at the edge” and “over the edge” arts organizations occurs in three phases:

• *Immediate Diagnosis/Intervention:* First we try to determine if the human resources have the will and commitment to continue. Does the energy exist to perform the heroic work necessary to save and stabilize the organization? If not, we suggest that they begin the process of closing the organization.

If the leadership believes that the will and commitment exist, we look for vital signs of health. So often, groups have been in crisis for so long they have lost sight of any signs of strength. To help regain a sense of hope, we ask the group to visualize the organization as an island: Who and what are



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# The gap will not be fixed by giving the audience what we think it wants, nor by just selling more tickets or just raising more money.

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on the island? What assets exist—the acceptance and stability of the art and programs? What about sustained earned and contributed income levels? What about a committed audience? Then, we identify what assets are not on the island and begin to develop strategies to get them there.

We then try to determine the real financial situation. What is the debt? What financial resources exist and are available to be able to operate on a day-to-day and a week-to-week basis?

To better understand the organization's financial condition, we look at income projected for the current year against actual income for the past three to four years. Has the income been consistent and stable? Has the income base been decreasing? If so, in what areas? In most cases, the debt has not been created by overspending, but by underachieving income goals.

The next step is very difficult and painful—to immediately cut operating expenses to the level of income. This will seem draconian, but the alternative is to close. If there is any hope for survival, the hemorrhaging must be stopped. The organization must prove to itself and the community that it will not dig the hole any deeper and that it is in control of its operation. This balancing of expenses with income is a very difficult equation to find. Expense cuts will affect income, which will trigger other cuts. It will not be possible to make these expense cuts by working through the budget and trimming here and there. Given the size of the expense cuts required, major expense sections usually have to be eliminated. Whole projects or programs will have to go. If the organization is to continue, it is better that decisions are made internally and not by external local entities such as creditors or a citizens bankruptcy committee put in place by a funder.

A small group of staff and board needs to be identified and charged with the responsibility of developing strategies for debt financing or refinancing. This tool is essential as we begin the stabilization and recovery process. In order to refinance debts, convincing proof must be shown that income projects for the current year are coldly realistic, expenses have been reduced to align with the income budget, and the organizational behavior has changed.

In most cases, organizations have denied that there is a problem. A face of "everything is all right" has been directed toward the community. Thus, the organization must begin communicating with all its constituents—artists, staff, board, volunteers, audiences, funders, media and community, state and national leadership. This is not a frantic, save-the-organization approach. It is a very thoughtful and frank discussion of the realities of the community, the condition of the organization, and the short-term strategies. Each group is asked for appropriate support and restraint. This communication must continue throughout the entire recovery and reconceptualization process.

The organization's key leadership will be designated as the crisis action team. This team will need to meet once a week and draw upon other staff, board members, and volunteers as resources. This recruiting of more help should not focus on getting more board members, as this is the very worst time to try to recruit people for the board. The approach is to identify all of the jobs that need to be done and then to cast the appropriate people to do the jobs.

• *Assessment and Evaluation/Stopping the Hemorrhaging:* In the second

step, a team of arts marketing, fundraising, and financial experts is brought in to do an in-depth analysis of the organization. Often the organization does not know its true operational, financial, and debt situation. The absolute bottom line must be found so that planning, strategies, and actions can be based on this knowledge. Nothing is more demoralizing than for the organization to describe its financial situation and a month later discover another pocket of debt.

This phase is concerned with stopping the hemorrhaging. This requires a change of behavior by the organization—any attempted reversion to the old behavior must be stopped. The belief that "just as soon as we have gotten through this crisis we can go back to business as usual" is false.

• *Stabilization/Recovery:* The next phase is to build a secure foundation under the real floor of human and financial resources. The goals of this phase include: increasing the number and quality of the human resources involved with the organization; developing and executing timely and effective marketing and fundraising programs; restoring infrastructure to staff, board, and volunteers; developing a debt reduction plan; and beginning appropriate planning cycles. Up to this point, the work has been reactive—putting out fires.

THE PROCESS OF WORK WITH PRE-EDGE ORGANIZATIONS CAN BE VERY PRODUCTIVE, satisfying, and liberating. The process is thoughtful, positive, organic, and moves at a controlled pace. There are two phases to this work: understanding the gap and stabilizing and strengthening the floor.

• *Understanding the Gap:* This phase focuses on understanding the degree to which the organization is overextended. In doing this, there are three areas to explore. First, we must understand that up until now, goals, expectations, and growth as measures of success have been driving the organization. Second, everyone must begin to understand the new realities of the world in which the organization exists, how much the environment has changed, and how it is anticipated that it will continue to change. Third, given the artistic work and environment, everyone must clearly understand the floor of human and financial resources that are realistic and achievable.

These three explorations will help the organization develop the understanding that the stress it is experiencing and the potential threat it faces are the result of the gap. The stress is not the result of bad art, bad management, or a bad board. It will also be clear that the gap will not be fixed by giving the audience what we think it wants, nor by just selling more tickets or just raising more money.

• *Stabilizing and Strengthening the Floor:* The purpose of this phase is to make sure that the organization makes every effort possible to generate the maximum amount of earned and contributed revenue. In many organizations there are a great number of distractions that direct energy away from achieving income goals. Delays in planning, a lack of decision making, inappropriate or ineffective materials, staff changes, disappointing committee leadership, and focusing on projects that are of little direct benefit are some examples. The goal of this phase is to take all distractions off of the table, so everyone's energy will be effectively directed toward stabilizing and strengthening the floor of financial resources.

## A Process for Reconceptualization and Redesign

Whatever process of recovery an organization may work through, when it is stabilized, we strongly recommend a process of reconceptualization and redesign. Up to this point, survival was the question. At this point, the leadership can come together to thoughtfully and positively explore whether or not there is a different organization to be conceived.

This begins with discussions about the artistic work. Is the organization satisfied with the work and the plateau of human and financial resources? Is the organization dissatisfied with the artistic center, and does it wish to alter or enhance the work? This does not mean reverting to old behavior by building a wish list that is not in relationship to the realistic and available human and financial resources. Any change in the artistic work will require a change in human and financial resources.

Reconceptualization and redesign begin with a return to the center of the organization—a confirmation of the philosophy, the aesthetic, and the person or persons who make the decisions about how the organization fulfills its mission. Only arts professionals can lead this process.

The next step is to find the throughline or foundation required for the core mission to be achieved. What is the irreducible minimum for the organization to fulfill its mission? That is, what elements of the organization are demanded by the work and the work process, not by what we expect, deserve, desire, or think is expected by external forces? Each existing program and project must be examined to see if it supports the center.

The next question is, "Can the throughline or foundation be brought into balance with the floor of human and financial resources?" Solving this equation will require creativity and flexibility. By focusing early attention on those elements of the organization that are necessary for achievement of the mission, the givens that are not negotiable are established. Once the givens are determined, everything else is subject to question.

Reconceptualizing and redesigning an arts organization is not a matter of downsizing. Arts organizations are already downsized—they are underfinanced, understaffed, and overextended by 30 to 50 percent. We have tried to close the gap by getting smaller, which amounts to balancing the equation on the backs of human resources. This does not work.

One obstacle to reconceptualization is how arts organizations regard growth and institutional development. It has been a guiding principle that every organization would grow until it could meet everyone's personal, professional, and artistic needs. Hiring more artists, for more money, for longer periods of time, having an artistic home, expanding middle management, and providing health care, pensions, and sabbaticals are all manifestations of this assumption. We have assumed that, eventually, everyone could make their living and be artistically satisfied by the organization. In today's environment, arts or-

ganizations cannot be large enough to meet everyone's personal, professional, and artistic needs.

This may mean we are going to have to redefine what is meant by professional. What are an organization's responsibilities? What are the criteria for defining serious professionals who are not necessarily making their living from an organization? We must begin to identify the arts professionals who are critical to the organization and secure their artistic, professional, and personal needs. Outside of these, no other arts professionals can expect their needs to be fully met by the organization. This seems like an extreme measure, but the decision not to take this step will continue unrealistic expectations of growth, leading to burnout and debt, and, eventually, to closing institutions.

The process of reconceptualization and redesign must include the possibility of closing the organization. Perhaps the core mission has been fulfilled. Perhaps the artists have chosen to move on. Perhaps the equation cannot be balanced and the resources to support the work are no longer available. Closing an arts organization should be a choice based on a thorough and positive process of reconceptualization. Again, the closing should be well planned and dignified, and the body of work that has been created should be celebrated.

Will an organization brought into balance be locked at this size forever? No. Once the floor of human and financial resources is stabilized, it can be altered. Over time, the human resources may increase with the ability to generate more income. The outside environment may change, freeing more resources. Or, short-term projects may be developed. If the throughline is the foundation supporting the body of work, then other projects, when funded, can balloon up from that foundation. And when the project is complete, the balloon collapses and the throughline has not been altered.

While these are very stressful and discouraging times, we believe there are encouraging things to note. By acknowledging that the arts are reflecting the same patterns of debt and dysfunction as business and government, our survival becomes a success. It is remarkable that the most overregulated, undercapitalized segment of all—the not-for-profit arts—has fared as well as it has. And we know that the same extraordinary arts professionals who have kept body and soul together under current conditions are equal to the task of creating a new order of business for the arts.



This article is excerpted from FEDAPT's 1989/1990 Annual Report, entitled *The WorkPapers: A Special Report—The Quiet Crisis in the Arts*. For a complete copy, contact: American Council on the Arts, 1285 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 245-4510.

*Nello McDaniel was executive director of FEDAPT from 1987 until its closing in 1991. George Thorn was a FEDAPT consultant and is director of the graduate program in Arts Administration at Virginia Tech. McDaniel and Thorn recently cofounded and codirect ARTS Action Research, an arts consulting and research group based in Alexandria, Virginia.*

Born in Berlin and raised in Charleston, South Carolina, author Ludwig Lewisohn (1882-1955) grew up to become one of the most outspoken critics of US materialism, bigotry, and puritanism in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Despite his success as a poet and scholar and his conversion to Methodism, Lewisohn was denied membership in the local fraternity and barred from teaching at universities because he was born a Jew. Making his personal conflicts into emblems of deep-seated dilemmas, the brilliant, paranoid Lewisohn illuminated dark corners of Victorian America with works such as *Up Stream* (1922) and *The Case of Mr. Crump* (1926) which, though censored in the US, became classics abroad. Production has begun on **A Touch of Wildness: The Story of Ludwig Lewisohn**, a 90-minute film directed by expatriate Roy Lekus, written by novelist Harlan Greene, and produced by Peter Wentworth (coproducer of *Metropolitan*). *A Touch of Wildness*: Peter Wentworth, Allagash Films, 701 East Bay St., Charleston, SC 29401.

At last a video that will make you "happier and healthier, improve your sex life, and even create miracles." Created to inspire more sensual and sexual pleasure in women's lives, **The Sluts and Goddesses of Transformation Salon**, by Maria Beatty and Annie Sprinkle, is an absurd and worshipful look at sex. Eroticist Annie Sprinkle, with her team of transformation facilitators, guides the viewer through the 45-minute video, revealing the erotic side of such pleasure stimulators as flagellation by oak leaves, gender bending, body shaving, body painting, menstrual blood, rhythmic deep breathing, passionate safe sex, and more! Premiering at the Kitchen in New York City, February 16th. *Sluts and Goddesses*: Maria Beatty, 303 East 8th St., #DE, New York, NY 10009; (212) 260-2431.

California documentarians Beth Sanders and Randy Baker are in production on a one-hour video documentary about self-censorship by the press. Focusing on the stories of journalists who have experienced censorship within their news organizations, **Fire Wall** includes interviews with Sydney Schanberg, Francis Cerra, and John Hess of the *New York Times*; Ben Bagdikian, professor of journalism at the University of California, Berkeley; Lowell Bergman, a producer with CBS' *60 Minutes*; and Jon Alpert, a former freelance producer for NBC. By reviewing press coverage of three stories—the viability of nuclear power, the US war in the Persian Gulf, and the surge of homelessness in the 1980s and 1990s—*Fire Wall* examines the institutional constraints under which journalists create news and how these constraints

affect content. *Fire Wall*: Beth Sanders, 302 31st Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121; (415) 752-9616.

General Electric says that they "bring good things to life." But do they? **Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons, and Our Environment**, a half-hour video by Debra Chasnoff, juxtaposes pieces of GE's television commercials with the harrowing stories of people whose lives have been devastated by the company's nuclear weapons manufacturing. The tape was commissioned by INFAC, the national corporate accountability organization that is promoting a GE Boycott. *Deadly Deception*: 2017 Mission Street, 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415)



**Move over Jane Fonda! *The Sluts and Goddesses of Transformation Salon*, by Maria Beatty and Annie Sprinkle, revamps the self-improvement video.**

Courtesy videomakers

252-1344; fax: (415) 863-9314.

For anyone who has missed the miles of billboards that line I-95, here's an opportunity to experience South Carolina's South of the Border without getting out of your car. **South of the Border**, a half-hour verité documentary by North Carolina independent Lisa Napoli, was shot on the grounds of the 130 acre South of the Border roadside park during the 1990 Labor Day weekend. The videotape captures a wedding, a family reunion of descendants of slaves, a family moving from Massachusetts to Florida in a Grateful Dead-type bus, and sundry tourists who offer diverse reasons for why they stopped and what they find. *South of the Border*: Lisa Napoli, (919) 852-4590.

With 95 percent of California's original redwood forests gone, what will be left for future

generations? **The Forest through the Trees**, produced by Frank Green, examines the dispute between environmentalists and the logging industry over old-growth redwoods in California's Humboldt County. Narrated by Sydney Pollack, *The Forest through the Trees* is available through the Video Project, as is **Rain Forests: Proving Their Worth**, by Jonathan Schwartz. Traversing the landscape of rain forest commerce, *Proving Their Worth* combines archival footage with first-person accounts to look at recent efforts to save the rain forest and its people. *Rain Forests: Proving Their Worth and The Forest Through the Trees*: The Video Project, 5332 College Avenue, Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (415) 655-9050; fax: (415) 655-9115.

On May 1, 1990, homeless people in eight cities took the law into their own hands. From the blocking of a HUD house auction in Oakland, to the seizing of five houses in Minneapolis, to a police riot in New York City's Tompkins Square Park, Americans took over houses rather than living and dying in the streets. **Takeover**, a one-hour documentary by Pamela Yates and Peter Kinoy, is an insider's view of these national house-ing takeovers. Shot simultaneously by 12 crews in eight cities over three days, the film brought together local organizers with volunteer crews willing to risk arrest to shoot the footage. Yates and Kinoy had one month lead time and almost no money to mount the shoot of unspecified illegal actions in a dozen cities by people extremely distrustful of the media, but support from Bruce Springsteen, Michael Moore, and the MacArthur Foundation enabled the project to go ahead. The film incorporates footage shot by amateurs and professionals in 16mm, 35mm, and a variety of video formats. Kinoy and Yates are develop-

ing five additional programs on the emerging poor people's movement. *Takeover*: Peter Kinoy/Pamela Yates, 330 West 42nd St., 24th fl., NY, NY 10036; (212) 947-5333; fax: (212) 643-1208.

An accident that temporarily blinds and hospitalizes a man becomes the narrow thread by which his philosophies and notions of life are woven in **The Madness of the Day**, a 35mm film written and directed by Terrance Grace. Adapted from a story by Maurice Blanchot, *The Madness of the Day* retains Blanchot's elusive narrative within the series of monologues presented by the nameless main character. Struggling to recount the events, the man brings to the surface his relationship with The Doctors and a woman whom he refers to as The Law. The film transforms literature and theater into a surreal cinematic environment, creating a tangible space born of the word and concepts of madness and challenging the idea of story. *The Madness of the Day*: Terrance Grace, 301 West 45th St., Suite 12B, New York, NY 10036; (212) 307-0523.

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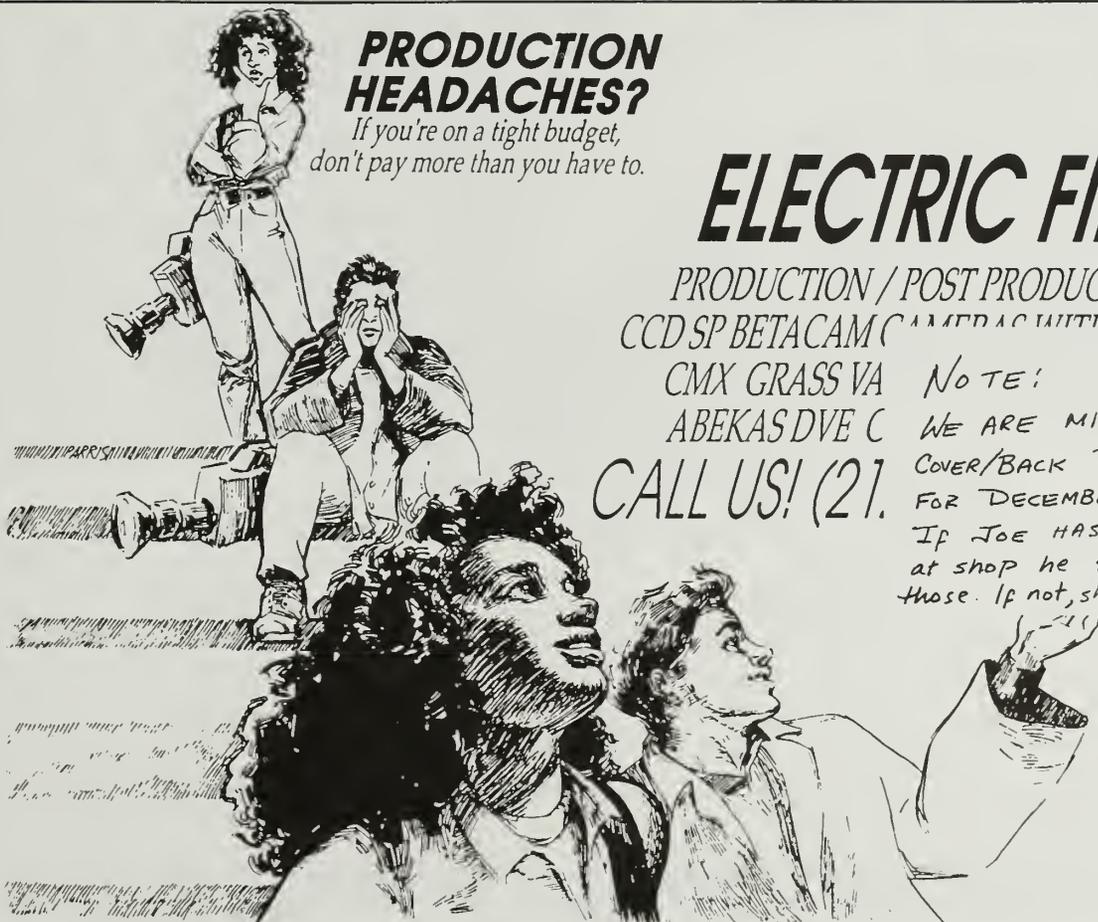
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## Domestic

**ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June, NY. New film & video prods by established & emerging Asian & Asian American producers are focus of noncompetitive fest, now celebrating 15th anniv. Features & shorts accepted. Cats: experimental, doc., narrative, installations. Fest goes on 5 mo. tour of N. Amer. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Peter Chow, Asian American Int'l Film Festival, Asian CineVision, 32 E. Broadway, New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685; fax: (212) 925-8157.

**ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 1-7, OH. Unique forum for ind. & int'l work that seeks to expand horizons of regional Appalachian audience & large multicultural univ. community. Cats: narrative (traditional & narrative), doc. (traditional & narrative), experimental, animation. Screenings of selected competition works, variety int'l features, lectures, workshops & screenings by guest artists. Selected works awarded rental fees for fest showings. Entry fees: \$25-50, depending on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm/camcorder. Deadline: Feb. 24 (film), Mar. 9 (video). Contact: Athens Center for Film & Video, Box 388, Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330.

**BIG MUDDY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Feb., IL. Now in 14th yr, competitive fest for ind. film & video organized & run by students; 3 ind. filmmakers present work & serve as judges. Sections: best of fest, jurors' presentations, competition, children's films, animation. Entries must be completed after 12/90. Entry fee: \$25-35, depending on length. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Big Muddy Film Festival, Dept. of Cinema & Photography, S. Illinois Univ. at Carbondale, Carbondale, IL 62901; (618) 453-1475.

**CINE-COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL NONTHEATRICAL EVENTS GOLDEN EAGLE FILM & VIDEO COMPETITION**, Dec. 5-6, DC. Nontheatrical films & videos w/ exception of TV ads & spot announcements eligible for competition, which awards Golden Eagles in cats: amateur, agriculture, animation/children's films, arts/crafts, business/industry, doc., education, entertainment/shorts, nature/environment, history, medicine, oceanography, public health, safety/training, science, services, sports, travel. Entries must be US prods. CINE enters award winners in foreign fests. Winners also eligible for Academy Awards nominations. Awards ceremony marks CINE's 35th yr. Entries judged by various juries comprising over 500 film/video professionals. Last yr 716 entries received. Send appl. first; no films or tapes until instructed. Entry fee: \$45 & up, depending on length. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: CINE, 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 1016, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 785-1136; fax: (202) 785-4114.

**HOMETOWN USA VIDEO FESTIVAL**, July. Sponsored by Nat'l Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP); competitive fest, begun in 1977, recognizes outstanding local programs produced for or by local organization & public, educational & government access operations. Awards: 4 special awards for overall excellence in public access programming, local origination, educational & government access; finalists, honorable mentions & winners in 34 cats. Cats incl. performing arts; ethnic expression; entertainment; sports; by & for youth; live; municipal; religious; educational; instructional/training; informational; innovative; int'l;

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

by & for senior citizens; PSA; doc. profile/event/public awareness; video art; music video; local news; magazine format; original teleplay. Entries must be produced in previous yr. Fest annually receives 2100 entries from 434 cities. Entry fees: \$20-50, incl. \$5 postage for return shipping. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 6. Contact: Sue Buske, The Buske Group, 2015 J St., Ste 28, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 441-6277; fax: (916) 441-7670.

**INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 1-4, MT. Films & videos w/ focus on any nondomesticated wildlife eligible for competition, as well as productions concerned w/ habitat or its destruction, conservation, ecology, research, plants, special art forms, or people's interaction w/ wildlife. Cats: agency/private group; independent; low-budget ind.; music video; PSA; student/amateur; TV news feature; TV news spot; TV series episode; TV special; art/experimental; children's; hunting/fishing; human dimensions; indigenous people; wildlife habitat/environmental concerns. Great Bear Award for Best of Fest. Entries must be produced, completed, or released in 1991. Fest activities incl. major environmental/music event, underwater filming workshop, art displays, photo contest, speakers, field trips. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$25-125. Deadline: Feb. 28. Contact: Charles Jonkel, Int'l Wildlife Film Fest, Box 9383, 280 E. Front, Missoula, MT 59807; (406) 728-9380; fax: (406) 543-6232.

**NEIGHBORHOOD FILM/VIDEO PROJECT FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENTS**, May, PA. Film, video & audio works of all forms, genres, & lengths by artists based in Delaware Valley accepted for 7th edition of fest. Works in progress considered if final work will be ready by 4/10/92. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Linda Blackaby, director, NFVP, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6542; fax: (215) 895-6562.

**NEW ENGLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 21-23, MA. Open to ind. & college student film & videomakers w/ works completed since 1990. Media works of all lengths eligible. No more than 2 entries per artist. Awards of up to \$5,000 in cash & services in ind.

& student cats, w/ separate award distinctions for outstanding film & video. Work accepted in narrative, doc., animation & experimental genres. Copresented by Arts Extension Service & Boston Film/Video Foundation & sponsored by *Boston Phoenix*. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$35 independents, \$25 college students. Deadline: Jan. 31 (ind.), Feb. 7 (student). Contact: NEFVF, Arts Extension Service, Division of Continuing Education, 604 Goodell Bldg., Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360; fax: (413) 545-3351.

**NEW JERSEY YOUNG FILM AND VIDEOMAKERS FESTIVAL**, May, NJ. Entrants w/ current or family residence in NJ eligible for fest celebrating student talent. Cats: elementary, middle, jr. HS, college, univ., ind. Any style on any subject, max. 30 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1990. Entry fee: \$15. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Robert Lynch, NJ Young Film & Videomakers Festival, Humanities Dept., NJ Inst. of Technology, Newark, NJ 07102; (201) 596-3281; fax: (201) 565-0586.

**NYU/SCE FILMMAKERS NETWORK FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 29, NY. Juried fest open to current & former New York Univ./School of Continuing Education film & video students. Features, short narrative, music video, animation, experimental, docs accepted. Entry fee: \$35. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Jan 17. Contact: NYU/SCE Filmmakers Network, c/o Film, Video & Broadcasting Dept., 26 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-7296; fax: (212) 995-4136.

**SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, May 14-June 7, WA. Now in 18th yr, fest one of largest non-competitive in NW. Features (over 60 min.) & shorts (under 20 min.) accepted. Each yr about 140 films from 40 countries screened. Program incl. several US & world premieres & special events (tributes, seminars, midnight screenings). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: \$50 (features), \$10 (shorts). Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Darryl MacDonald, Seattle Int'l Film Festival, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: (206) 324-9998.

**SLICE OF LIFE FILM AND VIDEO SHOWCASE**, July 10-11, PA. Presented in Central Pennsylvania Festival of Arts, fest seeks films & videos that depict "special moments of everyday life—those moments of truth that would otherwise go unrecognized." Accepted artists will receive cash award & prizes. Deadline: Apr. 1. Send work (@ 30 min.) on 16mm or 1/2" w/ return shipping. Contact: Sedgwick Heskett, director, Slice of Life Film & Video Showcase, Documentary Resource Center, 106 Boalsburg Pike, Box 909, Lemont, PA 16851; (814) 234-1945.

**UNITED STATES INDUSTRIAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June 5, IL. Competitive fest devoted exclusively to sponsored, industrial & business films & videos. Cats: advertising/sales/promotion; agriculture/forestry/oceanography; art/culture; career guidance; community development; doc.; education; employee relations/dealer communications; environment/energy/conservation; fundraising; history/biography; industrial/technical processes; medicine/health; nature/wildlife; politics; PR; recreation; religion; safety/insurance; sciences; specialty productions; TV commercials; TV/home video programming; training; travel/geography/transportation. Awards: Gold Camera Award, Silver Screen Award, Certificate of Creative Excellence. Entries must be completed in 18 mo. prior to deadline. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$130.

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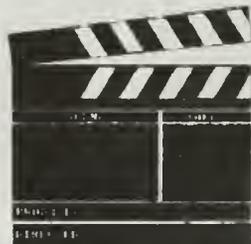
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Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: J.W. Anderson, chair/Patricia Meyer, executive director, US Industrial Film & Video Festival, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126-1291; (708) 834-7773; fax: (708) 834-5565.

USA FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 23-30, TX. Fest has 3 major components: major noncompetitive feature section (now in 22nd yr); National Short Film & Video Competition (in 14th yr); & KidFilm (held Jan. 13-19) for shorts & features. Feature section programmed by artistic dir. To submit feature or short film, send preview cassette w/ publicity & prod. info. Short film/video competition showcases new & significant US work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1991. Cash prizes awarded in cats of narrative (\$1,000); nonfiction (\$1,000); animation (\$1,000); experimental (\$1,000); Charles Samu Award (\$500); 5 special jury awards (\$250). Grand Prize winner flown to Dallas to receive cash, award & present winning film/video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Mar. 2. Contact: Richard Peterson, artistic director; Ann Alexander, managing director, USA Film Festival, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 821-6300; fax: (214) 821-6364.

WORLDVEST-HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 24-May 3, TX. Establ. in 1979, competitive fest has grown to event attracting over 3,150 entries from 43 countries, premiering over 100 features & 200 shorts, docs & experimental prods. Competition in several cats, incl.: feature, doc., TV prod., experimental & ind. film/video, shorts, TV commercials & PSAs, music videos, screenplays, student prods & new media. Cash prizes & trophies awarded. Worldfest also incl. market w/ buyers & distributors in attendance; works-in-progress section in market. Fest entry fee: \$25-100; market entry fee: \$200. Fest held at Greenway Plaza Theaters, Museum of Fine Arts, Rice Media Center. Deadline: Mar. 2. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, director, 25th WorldFest, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256-6566; tel: (713) 965-9955; fax: (713) 965-9960.

### Foreign

BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL, June 7-13, Canada. Fest includes int'l competition which awards "Rockies;" conference for TV professionals; & informal coproduction marketplace. Cats: TV features, limited series, continuing series, short dramas, TV comedies, social/political docs, popular science programs, arts docs, performance specials, children's programs. Entries for competition must be made for TV (films in theatrical release ineligible). Entries originally in English or French must TV premiere between Mar. 29, 1991 & Apr. 1, 1992. Entry fee: \$188 Canadian. Deadline: Mar. 17. Contact: Banff Television Festival, Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada, TOL 0C0; tel: (403) 762-3060; fax: (403) 762-5357.

BLACK INTERNATIONAL CINEMA BERLIN, Apr. 23-May 3, Germany. Organized by Fountainhead Tanz Theatre in assoc. w/Cultural Zephyr, fest screens cinema from African diaspora focusing on works of artistic, cultural, or political nature coinciding w/ interests of African people. Program incl. films, seminars, exhibitions & performances by multinational, multicultural, multiracial & multiethnic artists, filmmakers & intellectuals. Award of \$1,000 each & plaque to: best film/video by black filmmaker; best film/video on matters relating to black experience (open to all non-German filmmakers); best film/video by German filmmaker or

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filmmaker residing in Germany that portrays injustices inherent in racist, sexist, or homophobic society. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Black International Cinema Berlin 1992, c/o Stephan Gangstead, US Embassy Office-Berlin, Unit 26738 A.H. (R.S.), A.P.O. A.E. 09 235-5500.

**CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, May, France. 45th yr of largest int'l fest, attended by 35,000 guests, incl. stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Intensive round-the-clock screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's major film markets. Screening or award at Cannes provides fame & prestige. Selection Committee, appointed by Administration Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (about 20 films) & for Un Certain Regard section. Films must be made w/in prior 12 months, released only in country of origin & not entered in other film fests. Official component consists of 3 sections: In Competition, features & shorts compete for major fest awards (Palme d'Or, Special Jury Prize, Best Director/Actress/Actor/Artistic Contribution); Special Out-of-Competition, features ineligible for competition (e.g. films by previous winners of Palme d'Or); Un Certain Regard (noncompetitive), for films of int'l quality which do not qualify for Competition, significant innovative features, films by new directors, etc. Parallel sections incl. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Directors' Fortnight), main sidebar for new talent, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors; La Semaine de la Critique (Int'l Critics Week), selection of 1st or 2nd features & docs chosen by members of French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 2 yrs prior to fest) & Perspectives on French Cinema. Market, administered separately, screens films in main venue & local theater. Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short) & Camera d'Or (best 1st film in any section). For info & accreditation, contact: Catherine Verret, French Film Office, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10151; (212)832-8860, fax: (212)755-0629. Official Sections: Festival International du Film (deadline Mar. 1), 71, rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 1 46 66 92 20; fax: 1 42 66 68 85, telex: FESTIF1 650 765 F. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (deadline Apr. 17), Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 215 Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 1 45 61 01 66, fax: 1 40 74 07 96. Semaine International de la Critique (deadline Mar. 1), Claude Beylie, president, 90, rue d'Amsterdam, 75009 Paris, France; tel: 1 40 16 98 30. Cannes Film Market, attn: Marcel Lathiere, Michel P. Bonnet, 71, rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France, tel: 1 42 66 92 20; fax: 1 42 66 68 85; telex: FESTIF1 650765.

**MEDIAWAVE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF VISUAL ARTS**, Apr. 29-May 3, Hungary. Accepts films, videos, installations, image/sound experimental works that reflect ethnic, religious, musical, sexual & other aspects of small communities, ethnic groups, spiritual & other communities. Entries must be completed after 1989. No entry fee, but enclose \$10 for return postage. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: International Festival of Visual Arts, Soproni utca 45, H-9028 Gyor, Hungary; tel: 36 96 18825/10559; fax: 36 96 10559/31559.

**MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June 5-20, Australia. Now in 41st yr, fest is one of Australia's two largest & its oldest. Director programs eclectic mix of ind. work showing "innovation & originality," w/special interest in feature docs & shorts. Each yr substantial program of new Australian cinema

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programmed. Int'l short film competition (now in 30th yr) important part of fest, w/cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix (\$4,000) & \$1,500 each in doc., fiction, experimental, student, animation, & science. Especially looking for entries for children's section & new science film award. Competition entries must be under 60 min. & completed on 35mm or 16mm since Jan. 1991. Super 8 & video screened out of competition. Fest useful window to Australian theatrical & nontheatrical, educational distribs & new Australian TV networks interested in buying shorts. Entry fee: A\$20 (about US\$15). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 20. Contact: Tait Brady, director, Melbourne Int'l Film Festival, Box 12367, 41 A Beckett St., Melbourne 3000, Australia; tel: 03 663-2953/663-1896; fax: 03 662-1218.

**MONTBELIARD INTERNATIONAL VIDEO AND TELEVISION FESTIVAL**, June 16-21, France. 7th yr. int'l competition for video (film transfers not accepted) that is original in style & reflects personal research. Fest theme: In the Blind Spot of Reason. All cats accepted. Awards: Grand Prize: 100,000FF; 2nd Prize: 50,000FF; 3rd Prize: 25,000FF. Entries must be produced after June 30, 1990. Program incl. special screenings, debates, professional meetings & workshop on video editing. Format: 3/4". Entry fee: 250FF. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Manifestation Internationale de Vidéo et de Télévision, Centre International de Création Vidéo Montbéliard Belfort, BP5 25310 Herimoncourt, France; tel: (33) 81 30 90 30; fax: (33) 81 30 95 25.

**OBERHAUSEN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS**, Apr. 30-May 6, Germany. FIVF will again work with Oberhausen this yr to collect preview cassettes and arrange for preselection by fest rep. Gunter Minas, who will be in NYC at FIVF's offices at end of January. Now in 38th yr, fest showcases innovative ind. & experimental short & doc. films of all genres. Competitive event, recognized by IFFPA, programs social doc., new developments in animation, experimental & short features, student films (esp. from film schools). 1st films & works from developing countries. Sections & int'l competition screens films only, up to 35 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1990, German premieres. Beginning in 1993, videos also admitted to int'l comp. To incl. countries that ceased producing short film for financial reasons, fest is inviting videos for special programs (e.g., from Latin America). Awards: Grand Prize of Town of Oberhausen—10,000DM; 4 Principal Prizes—2,000DM; Special Prizes—1,000-5,000DM; Alexander Scotti prize to best film on "Old Age & Death"—2,000DM; Best film on educational politics—5,000DM; FIPRESCI Prize—2,000DM; INTERFILM Prize—2,000DM; DGB Prize—3,000DM. Special programs focus on commercial spots, including several retros from individual countries. Fest also incl. German Competition, retro. of film schools (focusing on NYU, Harvard & Cal Arts); 23rd Filmothèque of Youth & 15th Children's Cinema, which for first time will award prize of 3,000DM, decided by jury of children. FIVF will consolidate shipment of tapes & return them to filmmakers after fest preview. Fest format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8. We will preview on cassette only. For entry forms & info, send SASE to: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Entry fee: \$25 AIVF

members, \$30 nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Deadline: January 21. In Germany: Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Angela Haardt, fest director, 38 Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Christian-Steger-Strasse 10, Postfach 101505, D-4200 Oberhausen 1, Germany; tel: (208) 807008; fax: (208) 852591.

**SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 7-21, Australia. Fest dir. Paul Byrnes will again visit FIVF in February to seek out US ind. work for fest's 39th yr. He is particularly looking for feature docs & shorts, preferably under 30 min. This major Australian film event is one of world's oldest fests. Noncompetitive int'l program mixes features, shorts, docs & retros in selection of over 130 films from several countries. Many films shared w/ Melbourne Film Festival, which runs almost concurrently. Recently fest held 1st Children's Film Fest & is firming up dates for 1992 children's program. Most Australian distributors & TV buyers attend fest, which has enthusiastic & loyal audience. Excellent opp. for publicity & access to Australian markets. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers. Entries must be Australian premieres completed in previous yr. Fest pays roundtrip group shipment of selected films from FIVF office. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$25 AIVF members, \$30 nonmembers; payable to FIVF. Deadline: Jan. 31. For info & appl., send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Festival address: Paul Byrnes, festival director, Sydney Film Festival, Box 25, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia; tel: (02) 660-3844; fax: (02) 692-8793.

### FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations, and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation; the Rockefeller Foundation; the Consolidated Edison Company of New York; the Beldon Fund; and the Funding Exchange.

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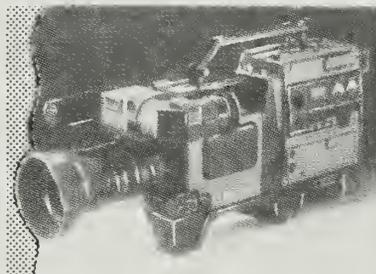
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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION SCREENING CONFERENCE (INPUT)** to be held May 24-30, 1992 at the Omni Hotel, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Clyde Maybee, coordinator or Dorothy Petersen, executive producer, Maryland Public Television, 11767 Owings Mills Boulevard, Owings Mills, MD 21117; (301) 526-0635; fax: (301) 356-9334. Training grant deadline Jan. 15. Contact: Sandie Pedlow, national coordinator, USINPUT Secretariat, 2712 Millwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29205.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ASIAN CINE VISION**, NY-based media arts center, seeks entries for Videoscape: An Asian American Video Showcase. Works must be originally produced on video, subtitled if not in English & by artists of Asian heritage. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Videoscape, Asian Cine Vision, 32 East Broadway, New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685; fax: (212) 925-8157.

**CINEMA GUILD** seeks new docs, TV programs & special interest videos in a variety of subject areas. Contact: Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522.

**EYE** is seeking entries for a weekly cable series on Manhattan Cable Channel 35. All genres accepted. Deadline: Feb. 17. For entry forms, contact: Eye, c/o Speedin' Demon Entertainment, Box 1998, New York, NY 10013-1998; or call (212) 713-5460.

**THE FORUM GALLERY** seeks work in any medium for exhibition on an ideal socio/political reality. All work received will be displayed if possible. Exhibition catalog will be published. Deadline: Feb. 21. Contact: Forum Gallery, Jamestown Community College, 525 Falconer St., Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 665-9107.

**IV-TV**, weekly Seattle cable program, seeks work in all genres by video-oriented indivs. Contact: John Goodfellow or David P. Moore, IV-TV, 2010 Minor E. Suite B, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 633-4773.

**NATIONAL MEDIA AWARDS** seeks to reward outstanding projects on the elderly. Prizes from \$500 to \$5,000. Entries must be produced in US & released or broadcast between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1991. Deadline: Feb. 4. Contact: Center for New Television, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 915-6868.

**NORTH AMERICAN OUTDOOR FILM/VIDEO AWARDS**, 30-yr-old int'l contest, seeks entries in cats: Conservation/Natural History & Recreation/Promotion. Send 16mm, 3/4", or 1/2" & \$50 entry fee by Jan. 21 to: Bob Dennie, committee chair, Louisiana Department of Conservation, 2000 Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70898; (814) 234-1011.

**PEOPLE TV/CABLE NETWORKS' Your 15 Minutes "R" Up** seeks work from video- & filmmakers living on the southeastern & eastern seaboard. Contact: Mikel K., Your 15 Minutes "R" Up, 1146 Portland Ave., SE, Atlanta, GA 30316; (404) 622-2740.

**PORT JEFFERSON VILLAGE CINEMA** seeks feature-length docs or short films on censorship for fall 1992 program. Contact: Myrna Lee Gordon, Box 191, Port Jefferson, NY 11777; (516) 473-0136.

**PRIMETIME PUBLIC TV SERIES** seeks films & tapes by independent media artists. All genres & styles accepted. Deadline: Jan. 15, 1992. For appl. contact Elly Schull, (215) 483-3900. *Through the Lens*, WYBE-TV

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., January 8 for the March issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

35, 6117 Ridge Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

**THE SHOOTING GALLERY** is accepting submissions for short film/video cable series. All genres accepted. Chosen entries' directors will be briefly interviewed on air. Send 3/4" or VHS tapes w/ SASE to: the Shooting Gallery, 359 Broadway, 2nd fl., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-0776.

**TRICOASTAL FILMS** seeks short films by women for possible broadcast. All genres accepted. Send VHS copy to: L. Bernhardt, TriCoastal Films, 3 Sheridan Square, New York, NY 10014.

**SCRIPT SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT** for Nate Monaster Memorial Writing Competition. Winners receive paid internship w/ LA TV program. Scripts for half-hour comedy, 1-hour drama, or TV movie. Deadline: Jan. 10. Contact: Nate Monaster Memorial Writing Competition, University Film & Video Association, Loyola Marymount Univ., Communication Arts Department, Loyola Blvd. & W. 80th St., Los Angeles, CA 90045; (310) 338-1855.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**CUMMINGTON COMMUNITY OF THE ARTS** offers private residencies of two weeks to three months & space for workshops, retreats & group residencies to artists of all disciplines. Deadline for July & Aug.: Apr. 1. Contact: Cummington Community of the Arts, RR 1, Box 145, Cummington, MA 01026; (413) 634-2172.

**DIRECTOR OF MEDIA EDUCATION AND TRAINING** sought by Film/Video Arts to design curriculum, hire, supervise, administer scholarships & evaluate part-time instructors. Req: previous media education, combined w/ prod. skills in film &/or video. Salary: \$23,500-\$27,000. Send resumé to: Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**DOCUMENTARY VIDEO PROJECT IN LEBANON** seeks individuals & groups interested in participating in prod. Video equipment & editing facilities avail. to people in Lebanon interested in filming their own short narratives, docs & home movie projects. Contact: Jayce Salloum, 110 Rivington St. #2, New York, NY 10002; (212) 982-8967, or Walid Ra'ad, c/o Ghanem Ra'ad, rue Amine

Gemayel, Imm. Ghorra 5th fl., Beirut, Lebanon; tel: 398-635.

**EQUIPMENT MANAGER** sought by Film/Video Arts. Req: strong technical & managerial skills. Salary: \$20,000-\$25,000. Send resúmes to: Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** seeks experienced editors for Video Fine Edit service. Salary: \$15/hr. No guaranteed minimum & no additional benefits promised. Must be familiar w/ Convergence 195 controller, Grass Valley 100 switcher & Chyron VP2 character generator. Send resumé & reels to: Fred Hatt, director of operations, Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**INTERNSHIPS** avail. at Film/Video Arts. 15 hrs/wk in exchange for free media classes, equip. & facilities. Req: plan for an ind. project in film or video. Contact: Angie Cohn, Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**MAINE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS** seeks general manager of retail, mail order & commercial operation & general manager. 1st position requires 6 yrs experience in photo retailing &/or lab management. 2nd position requires experience in running educational or arts org. Contact: Maine Photographic Workshops, Rockport, ME 04856.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH** seeks model lessons for teaching w/ or about media (incl. TV, film & video). Indivs will be invited to give presentation at Conference on Media Language Arts, Jun. 25-28 at Univ. of Pennsylvania. Send outline for 45-min. lesson followed by 45-min. discussion w/ description of materials & student activities. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: John Garvey, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd, Urbana, IL 61801.

**NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART** seeks education asst. & planning & development director. Send resumé & cover letter to: managing director, New Museum of Contemporary Art, 583 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

**OHIO UNIVERSITY'S** School of Film seeks asst professor for tenure-track position. Teach grad. & undergrad. courses in 16mm film prod., advise MFA students, serve on school committees. Req.: MFA teaching exp., demonstration of professional/creative work. Salary: \$30,000-\$32,000 beg. Sept. 1, 1992. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: David Thomas, director, School of Film, Ohio Univ., 378 Lindley Hall, Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-4229.

**RESIDENCIES FOR VIDEO ARTISTS** offered by Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest for 3 to 6-months at sites throughout world. Artists share experiences w/ communities upon return. Appls jointly submitted by artist & organization to sponsor community activities. Deadline: Jan. 17. Contact: Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest International Artists, Arts Institute; (212) 984-5370.

**SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO** seeks asst/assoc. professor in video, tenure-track. Duties incl.: teach basic video prod., video strategies, grad. projects classes, develop new classes, alternate as department chair. Req: MFA or equiv., teaching exp., exhibition, prod. exp., competency in theory. Send letters of appl., teaching philosophy, video portfolio w/ descriptions, reviews, resumé & 3 recs. Deadline: Feb. 26. Contact: Susan Cornier, Divisional Chairs Office, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 37 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL

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UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS seeks animator to fill full-time tenure track position. Rank & salary commensurate w/exp. Send resumé, work samples, statement of teaching philosophy & 3 names. Deadline: Mar. 16. Contact: Alida Fish, Photo/Film/Animation Dept., The Univ. of the Arts, Phila College of Art & Design, 333 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE seeks inter-media artist for tenure-track ass't professor position. Req: MFA or equiv., some teaching exp. & ability to work in intermedia or public art directions. Beg. Sept. 1992. Deadline: Feb. 3. Send vitae, statement of teaching philosophy & adequate representation of production, w/ 3 refs & SASE mailer to: Catherine Lord, chair, Dept of Studio Art, Univ. of California, Irvine, CA 92717.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON seeks asst/ assoc. professor of video prod. Tenure-track. Beg. Sept. 1992. Req.: teaching & professional exp.; in ind. doc., narrative &/or experimental prod.; knowledge of contemporary art & media; terminal degree or equivalent. Salary competitive. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send vitae, tapes, reviews & articles, catalog, names of 3 refs & SASE to: Video Search Committee, Dept of Art & Art History, Univ. of Texas at Arlington, Box 19089, Arlington, TX 76019; (817) 273-2891.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN seeks asst. professor of interactive multimedia &/or industry analysis & lecturer in film TV screenwriting. Deadline: Jan. 10. Contact: Search Committees, Department of Radio-Television-Film, CMA 6.118, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712-1091; (512) 471-4071; fax: (512) 471-4077.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ seeks assoc. professor in video/film theory, aesthetics & history. Salary: \$35,900-\$38,000. Req: PhD in relevant discipline; expertise in video/TV studies; demonstrated ability to teach large lecture courses & small seminars. Send curriculum vitae, letter outlining teaching interests, syllabi for previous video/TV courses, writing sample, dissertation abstract & teaching evaluations if available to: Search Committee, Theater Arts Board, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ seeks 1-yr replacement to teach critical studies in film (2 large intro. courses, silent film, film theory & film genre class). Salary to \$45,000. Req: PhD in Cinema Studies or related discipline; exp. in teaching film at undergraduate level; publication record & proof of teaching. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send vitae, 3 letters of rec., course syllabi, sample of publications & teaching evaluations if available to: Search Committee, Theater Arts, Univ. of Southern California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA seeks assoc. professor/professor to chair Visual Arts Department. 12-month tenure-track position. Req: MA, MFA, PhD or equiv. in Art or Art History; ability to lead dept. of 22 faculty; must be active artist/art historian. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send letter of appl., resumé, statement of educational philosophy, art samples & 3 letters of rec. to: Lou Marcus, search chair, Univ. of S Florida, College of Fine Arts Personnel, FAH 110, Tampa, FL 33620-7350; (813) 974-2301.

### Resources ■ Funds

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## Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Visitation Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to view work.

### Member Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

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Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

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In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

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National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

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SC, TN & VA for Southeast Media Fellowship program. Deadline: Feb. 3. Contact: SEMFP Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108.

**CHICAGO RESOURCE CENTER** funds nonprofit lesbian & gay orgs advocacy efforts & occasionally media projects. Contact: Chicago Resource Center, 53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 315, Chicago, IL 60604; (312) 461-9333.

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER** offers \$500 finishing funds for electronic art works. Deadline: March 15. Contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, program director, Experimental Television Center Ltd., 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

**FLORIDA CULTURAL GRANTS:** Discipline-based funding for arts & non-arts orgs & indiv. artist fellowships for 10/1/92-9/30/93 grant period. Deadline: Jan. 17. Contact: Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Dept of State, the Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250; (904) 487-2980.

**INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS)** offers funding to ind. producers for single projects in all genres. Deadline: Mar. 16. For guidelines & appls contact: ITVS, Box 75455, St. Paul, MN 55175; (612) 225-9035.

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY ARTS FUND** supports community-based arts orgs that do not have access to gov't funding. Indiv. artists living in Manhattan may apply under aegis of qualified org. Max. grant: \$3,000. Contact: Katie McDonnell, program coordinator; (212) 432-0900.

**MISSISSIPPI ARTS COMMISSION** offers Artists Fellowship Program in screenwriting & interdisciplinary art forms. Deadline: March 1. Contact: Mississippi Arts Commission, 239 N. Lamar St., Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201; (601) 359-6030.

**NATIONAL ASIAN-AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION** accepting appls for 1992 media grants of up to \$25,000. All film & video genres accepted. Deadline: Feb. 14. Contact: NAATA/1992 Media Grants, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814.

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF MEDIA ARTS CENTERS'** 1992 Media Arts Fund offers grants from \$3,000 to \$15,000 to support exhibition, artist services, distrib., artist-in-residencies, media education, marketing, management assistance, collaborations, or general operating support. Deadline: Feb. 14. Contact: Mimi Zarsky, NAMAC, 480 Potrero, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-0202.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS'** Multi Site Collaborations Program awards grants to visual artists' orgs from approx. \$5,000 to \$25,000/project. Deadline: April 20. For guidelines contact: NAAO, 918 F St., NW, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 347-6350.

**NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS** deadline for production & organizational grants: Mar. 1. Applications available in Jan. Contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7004 in NY; (800) GET-ARTS all other states.

**THE POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION** has grants avail. to mixed media artists from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Contact: The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., New York, NY 10021.

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**COVER:** Women take center stage in this special issue of *The Independent*. Yvonne Welbon looks at African American women directors who have been largely ignored by Hollywood but are breaking professional barriers and broadening black cinema's style and content. Elizabeth Larsen looks at video collectives working on reproductive rights campaigns, and performance artist Carolee Schneemann reflects on sex and censorship at the Moscow Film Festival. Also included are reports on AFI's Directing Workshop for Women, *Five Feminist Minutes*, and director/cinematographer Emiko Amori. Photo: Zeinabu irene Davis' *Cycles*, courtesy Women Make Movies.

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# RANTING AND RATING

## Fort Worth Gives Thumbs Down to Local Film Ratings Board

Last summer, a group of 200 citizens filed into the chambers of a bewildered Fort Worth city council and asked to be put on the agenda. Housewife Debbi Dena, the group's spokesperson and former president of the local chapter of the American Family Association (AFA), had come to city hall to present a 15-page ordinance for Fort Worth entitled Motion Picture and Videotape Classification. The proposed bill was intended create a politically appointed local ratings board to review all films exhibited and rented in Fort Worth theaters and home video stores.

**The first film to receive an NC-17 rating, *Henry and June* is the sort of cinema ratings boards love to hate.**

Courtesy Universol City Studios



As a piece of test case legislation, its ripple effect could have been tremendous. But after months of contentious debate, the bill was stopped in its tracks. The Fort Worth mayor's specially appointed task force dropped the ordinance in January after the mayor's counsel found it unconstitutional. They instead issued a resolution urging theater and video store owners to enforce the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings system already in place.

Although this is a decided victory for the film industry and free speech advocates, the contest in Texas may be a harbinger of battles to come, should right-wing pressure groups press ahead with similar ordinances in other parts of the country, as they've promised.

The outcome in Fort Worth owes much to the lobbying efforts of the film and home video industries, supported by People for the American Way, local chapters of the American Library Association

and American Civil Liberties Union, and a citizen's group headed by Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger. They quickly marshalled their forces in opposition, remembering how private pressure groups in Fort Worth succeeded in banning *The Last Temptation of Christ* and even bumping *Geraldo* from an afternoon to a late-night time slot.

Fort Worth ordinance supporters insist their proposal originated locally, but most observers believe the right-wing National Association of Ratings Boards (NARB) was the real author and catalyst. NARB was created in November 1990 at

a conference attended by AFA, Morality in Media, and a dozen or so other right-wing pressure groups—all smarting from their recent defeat in the battle with the MPAA over the new NC-17 rating category [see "The X Effect: Distributors Challenge MPAA Rating," November 1990].

Although its staff is small (NARB is essentially two men with a newsletter: Thomas Radecki, chair of the Champaign, Illinois-based National Coalition of Television Violence, and Ted Baehr, chair of Good News Communications, based in Atlanta), the group has big plans. They aim not only to establish local ratings boards, but ultimately to influence the nature of films produced. As the inaugural issue of *NARB News* states, the organization seeks to "shift profits away from films with harmful content...pressure the movie industry to increase the number of pro-social movies, and protect children from movies and videotapes that may be detrimental to their psy-

chological and spiritual health."

"The NARB has a play-by-play book for getting legislation passed," says MPAA director of state affairs Vans Stevenson, "and what the people in Fort Worth have done is right out of that playbook." The language of the Fort Worth ordinance is "virtually identical" to that of the NARB's boilerplate ordinance. Stevenson observes. Further establishing the link, Radecki and Baehr testified at the Fort Worth hearings on the ordinance in September.

The ratings board, as described in the ordinance, would comprise up to 26 members appointed by city council, with six sufficient for a quorum. The board would screen each film—at the distributor's expense—and rate it as suitable for young persons, not suitable, or prohibited to young persons, and may attach the following symbols: C for "criminal activity depicted without the express portrayal of significant adverse legal, physical, emotional, or societal consequences;" D for illegal drug use; L for "obscene language or language used to describe sexual conduct, defecation, urination, or genitals;" N for nudity; P for "a perverse person such as a masochist, sadist, pederast, or other aberrant sexual person;" S for sexual conduct "or implicit sexual conduct;" and V for "serious bodily injury to a person or animal...[or] serious damage to or destruction of property."

Unlike the MPAA ratings system, which is voluntary and overseen by the industry, the Fort Worth ordinance would have been law. Misdemeanor charges could be filed against exhibitors, distributors, and employees who show, rent, show a preview for, or advertise a film without a local rating. Children under 17 viewing or renting films deemed "not suitable" or "prohibited" would be committing a legal offense. Video stores would be subject to misdemeanor charges and \$200 fines for not posting a warning sign every 500 square feet reading, "Public Service Message: Extensive research finds violent or sexually degrading entertainment may have harmful unconscious effects on children and adult viewers."

Gail Markels, MPAA vice president and counsel, contends that, "The ordinance is so broad it exceeds what courts have said a town can regulate. They look at violence, drugs, property damage. It goes way beyond the *Miller* obscenity test."

The NARB and advocates of the ordinance made much of the fact that Dallas has a local ratings board, which they claim is constitutional. Although it rates only theatrical films, not home

videos, it was held up as a precedent and model for Fort Worth. But Markels counters, "To say it's constitutional is a misstatement, because every time a federal court has looked at it, they've said 'no.'" However, each time the courts struck it down, Dallas city officials simply made minor changes and reinstated it. Faced with this response, the industry periodically resorts to suing over the rating of individual films.

Ordinance proponents said they were just trying to protect the children. But what most fueled the ire of Fort Worth citizens was the ordinance's usurpation of parental authority. According to the American Library Association's Betty Brink, "You can't always get people stirred up about the First Amendment, but you can get parents stirred up about people imposing their views about what they should be doing as parents. The argument about protecting the children turned on [the proposal's advocates] a little."

From the film industry's point of view, the ordinance would have presented an economic and logistical nightmare. Well over 400 films are released each year by the studios and independent distributors. An equivalent number go each month to home video stores. Having a local ratings board review all this material, Markels asserts, "would clearly disrupt the distribution process by delaying the opening of the films and videos."

At best, an additional review would bog down the distribution process. At worst, studios may choose to forego a local release rather than hassle with the delays, the expense, and the revised ads. Paul Weisblatt, owner of the three-store chain Sam's Video and vice president of the North Texas chapter of the Video Software Dealers Association (VSDA), points out, "The average studio isn't going to send a film to this board after the MPAA has rated it."

"What this group is really after," Weisblatt believes, "is to go back to things as they were under the Hays Office, which really censored scripts." Markels concurs, "They want to make it so difficult for Hollywood to distribute films that Hollywood will invite them into the script review process." The *NARB News* makes glowing reference to the Hays Office's Production Code and the pivotal role of the Protestant and Catholic churches in encouraging production of "pro-social movies" from the 1930s through the 1950s.

The Hays Office was created in 1922 when President Harding appointed postmaster general Will Hays, a conservative Republican, to head the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), a newly established self-regulatory trade organization. The MPPDA was meant to quell public outrage over several lurid scandals implicating Hollywood stars in rape, adultery, murder, and death by drug overdose.

To mollify the public and stave off censorship laws under consideration in 36 states, the Hays Office established a Purity Code. In 1934 this was replaced by the more draconian Production Code. Drafted and overseen by a Jesuit priest and two Catholic layman, the code allowed them editorial



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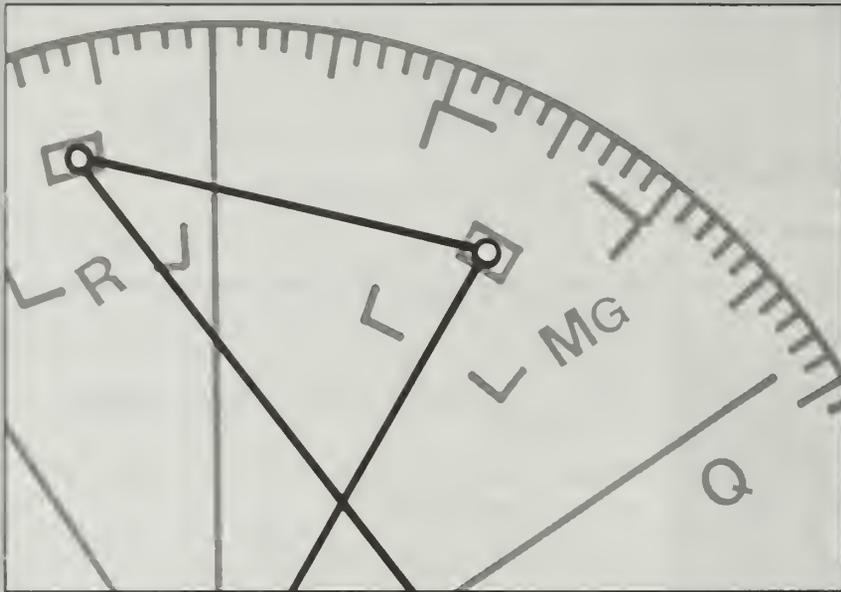
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input from the initial story conference to final cut on every studio film. This stricter code came about when religious groups protested the greater degree of violence and realism in the new sound pictures. As a result, "scenes of passion" were prohibited, as were "vulgar utterances" (including "cripes" and "nuts"), excessive drinking, nudity, "excessive and lustful kissing," and all but the most delicate and plot-essential references to rape, prostitution, and illicit sex. Even animated cows went udderless. Crime couldn't pay, police couldn't die at the hands of criminals, and weapons couldn't be discussed.

The public outcry against sex and violence was not in itself enough to produce the Hays Office and Production Code. More critical were the threats of boycotts issued by religious groups in economically tough times. In the early 1920s, radio and the automobile were siphoning off theatergoers. In 1934, the country was deep in the Depression. At neither time could Hollywood risk the further erosion of audiences.

Today the NARB is encouraging similar profit-punishing tactics. In *NARB News*, Baehr exhorts readers to picket local theaters, call exhibition chains, send letters to MPAA president Jack Valenti and newspapers running ads for NC-17 films, take legal action against any theater selling an NC-17 ticket to a minor, and, finally, set up local ratings boards across the country.

Given the continuing recession and the slump in ticket sales, the question arises: Just how vulnerable is the film industry today to such pressure? The MPAA's Stevenson replies, "There will be absolutely no compromise in this case, because you're talking about the very foundations and freedoms that allowed the motion picture industry to flourish in this country. What they're attempting to do is so clearly unconstitutional and un-American: to restrict access to motion pictures, and not just for kids, but adults, too."

The victory for ordinance opponents is particularly sweet, as it was not easily won. Says Weisblatt, "Had we not started with the postcards and petitions, this would have been passed a long time ago."

However, the issue does not die in Fort Worth. Two days after the task force's announcement, Los Angeles' Cardinal Roger Mahony called for a new Christian production code similar to that of the Hays Office. Details were announced February 1 at a seminar held by the Archdiocese Commission on Obscenity and Pornography and the Knights of Columbus. Presenting the updated code was none other than NARB's Ted Baehr.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## NO FREE DUB AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

When Robert Stone was researching his documentary *Radio Bikini* in the early 1980s, he went to the National Archives and Research Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC—one of the world's largest collections of film, video, and

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NARA's new no-dub policy stalled Bill Jamerson's historical documentary about Mexican farmworkers in Michigan.

Courtesy filmmaker

sound recordings—to make nonbroadcast-quality copies of US government films for free, with his own equipment. He used the trailer made from NARA materials to begin fundraising.

In November, Michigan filmmaker Bill Jamerson thought he'd do much the same thing. Planning to make a demo reel for a historical documentary about Mexican farmworkers in Michigan, he arranged to work for two days in the archives. But while Jamerson was on a train to Washington, a little piece of news in the *Federal Register* was changing his plans for him. As of November 19, according to an archive ruling (FR Doc. 91-27830), users can no longer make dubs from reference copies with their own equipment, as they have for at least eight years. Now they must pay to have NARA staff copy the material they want at a rate of \$60 per reel.

When Jamerson walked in, he discovered the rule change. Without the resources for an extended stay in Washington to select from the archives' holdings or to pay for blanket copying from which he might later make selections, he turned around and went home. His project is on hold.

Issued without public notice or comment, the new rule bans personal copying equipment from the archives because of the risk of copyright violation. According to the new rule, procedures in place to prevent copyright violations were "being circumvented" by researchers. A leaked internal memo issued last May by NARA official Les Waffin notes that "Supreme Court officials" visiting the archives demonstrated concern about the adequacy of NARA's arrangements for preventing copyright violation. (Some sources say Supreme Court interest was triggered by the taping of a segment of Supreme Court oral argument by a researcher who didn't know that it was off-limits.) Waffin's memo also mentions as a consideration the projected 1994 move of the bulk of the archives material to suburban Maryland, where expanded collections, longer hours, and the architectural layout would make patrolling the public more difficult.

Independent filmmakers and researchers immediately expressed alarm. "Fortunately we com-

pleted the research before this rule went into place," says Lance Bird, who made extensive use of the archives for his most recent documentary, *Pearl Harbor Surprise and Remembrance*. "It would have cost enormous hardships to this production." Independent filmmaker Kitty King contends that her 1980 film *Silver Wings and Santiago Blue*, about women Air Force pilots, "would not have been made without this [free dubbing] policy." King is among the film- and videomakers who joined the Open Access Archives Committee, an ad-hoc coalition opposing the ban.

Members of the committee have repeatedly asked for specific instances of "circumventing" the regulations and have been denied every time. The "review conducted by...staff" mentioned in the new rule was nothing more than an "informal observation," according to one NARA official. Archives public relations officer Jill Brett told *The Independent* that "abuse of the system" triggered the change, and cited "several instances of unauthorized taping," but there have been no lawsuits or charges by copyright holders.

The committee and many veteran users insist that copyright concerns are being met now. Copyrighted material is segregated from public domain material and requires prior approval by archives staff for copying, as well as a signed statement of responsibility by the researcher. In their formal response to the archives' ruling, the committee writes, "It appears that the hundreds of researchers who abide by the rules are being made to pay for the abuses of an unknown few." If more need to be done, two rooms could be created—especially since a new facility is being designed now.

Veteran researchers argue that if there is a problem, there are better ways to solve it. They contend that the new regulation will make a slow process even slower. The archives already takes several weeks to make broadcast-quality copies; now researchers will have to wait for their final and research copies. They also worry about the wear and tear from extensive copying of intermediates and fragile originals.

The committee and other concerned users met with assistant archivist Trudy Peterson and several other archives staff members in November

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and December, and a Congressional subcommittee sent a letter of inquiry. After six weeks, no change was forthcoming, but Brett holds out hope. "The National Archives is the most user-friendly archives in the world within the limitations of archival research," she says. People here are concerned with the research community's views, and to accommodate them, we are looking both at pricing and at [improving] delivery time."

But what the committee and other concerned users want is a return to free dubbing. "In an era of dwindling resources for independents," says Ed Gray, director of *Mr. Sears' Catalogue* and *The World that Moses Built*, "the open policy of the archives was invaluable. It also seemed to reflect simple common sense."

For further information, contact: Open Access Archives Committee, Beth Glatt, C-SPAN, 400 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20001; (202) 626-4862; fax: (202) 737-3323.

PAT AUFDERHEIDE

Pat Aufderheide is an assistant professor in the School of Communication at American University and a senior editor of *In These Times*.

## USIA BIAS BARRED

The Beirut Agreement has nothing to do with hostages or even with the Middle East. It does, however, have a great deal to do with international film distribution. Designed to facilitate the "international circulation of visual and auditory materials of an educational, scientific, and cultural character," the 44-year-old international treaty provides for the granting of Certificates of Educational Character that exempt qualifying materials from customs duties. For low-budget independent film and video, a certificate can be a deciding factor in whether a work can afford to be distributed abroad.

Recent legislation is putting teeth back into the Beirut Agreement and laying to rest a dispute that has raged over the selective granting of certificates by the US Information Agency (USIA) since the Reagan era. Last October, new guidelines for the implementation of the Beirut Agreement, "intended to ensure that government regulations do not make subjective judgements about the political content or message of documentary films, and thereby impede their circulation abroad by the denial of educational certification," were signed into law as part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act [FY 1992, 1993]. The new guidelines specify that a film cannot be denied a certificate "because it advocates a particular position or viewpoint," "because it might lend itself to misinterpretation," "because it does not augment international understanding and goodwill," or "because in the opinion of the agency the material is propaganda."

During the Reagan era, the USIA began denying certificates to films that it deemed promote "special points of view" or might be "misinterpreted by audiences lacking adequate American

points of reference" ["USIA's Truth," November 1983]. The agency routinely sent films to "outside specialists" to judge the films' educational character. Not surprisingly, the Department of Energy recommended against a certificate for *In Our Own Backyard*, an examination of uranium-mining practices by independents Susanna Styron and Pam Jones, and the 1979 ABC News documentary *The Killing Ground*, an exposé on toxic waste, was nixed by the Environmental Protection Agency. On the other hand, *Radiation—Naturally*, sponsored by the Atomic Industrial Forum, received a certificate.

In 1985, more than a dozen distributors and producers along with the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers filed suit against the USIA (*Bullfrog Films v. Wick*), challenging the constitutionality of the agency's granting policies. A federal judge ruled that the USIA guidelines were unconstitutional and ordered the agency to rewrite them. After a failed appeal, the USIA rewrote the guidelines, but the judge ruled that these, too, were unconstitutional—a ruling that is currently under appeal.

According to David Cole, attorney for the plaintiffs in *Bullfrog v. Wick* and an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, the new legislation should resolve the seven-year-old lawsuit. Cole says that the new act "requires the USIA to adopt the very regulations that we suggested it adopt some four years ago."

The battle may be won, but the war is far from over. After the Supreme Court's *Rust v. Sullivan* decision last May—which upheld the federal government's right to deny funding to clinics that discuss abortion—the USIA asked the appeals court to apply *Rust v. Sullivan* to *Bullfrog v. Wick*, arguing that since the agency is in a sense funding films (by granting tariff exemptions), it can determine what the films can say. Cole believes the argument is rendered irrelevant by the new Foreign Relations Authorization Act, but he predicts the issue will not go away. "The application of *Rust v. Sullivan* to freedom of speech in films," says Cole, "will be battled out in the courts for the next 10 to 15 years."

WENDY LEAVENS

*Wendy Leavens is a writer and communications assistant with a New York City-based environmental organization.*

## MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

A federal anti-pornography bill purporting to protect the rights of victims of sex crimes is spurring worried opposition within the film, video, publishing, and recording industries, and attracting the attention of anti-censorship groups. The Pornography Victims' Compensation Act (S-1521), introduced into the Senate last July by Senators Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Charles Grassley (D-IA), Strom Thurmond (R-SC), and Charles Packwood (R-OR), would enable victims of sex crimes—as well as their estates and families—to

sue the producers, distributors, and sellers of child pornography and obscene materials if such materials are found by a judge or jury to have caused the crimes. Opponents charge that the proposed legislation poses an unconstitutional threat to free speech and artistic expression without addressing the root causes of violence against women.

If passed, the bill would have a "chilling effect on artists whose works deal with sexual issues or contain sexual scenes," says Marjorie Heins, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) Arts Censorship Project. Low-budget independent film and video productions containing sexual content or sexually explicit material targeted as obscene could be crippled by costly lawsuits and damaging publicity.

"Obscenity laws are already a loaded canon waiting to go off...even if you aren't making pornography or obscenity," Heins warns. "This legislation would make the situation more severe by creating the possibility of ruinous judgments about creative works based on some theory that the work influenced some sick individual to commit a crime."

According to Leanne Katz, executive director of the National Coalition Against Censorship, S. 1521 is based on an unproven theory promoted by the Meese Commission condoning the porn-made-me-do-it syndrome. "Even though the Meese Commission admitted that there was no credible evidence to support a link between pornography and violent behavior, their premise that sexually graphic words and images cause violence against women has been increasingly—and dangerously—used, not just as a theory, but as fact."

The Pornography Victims' Compensation Act is a modified version of a bill introduced into the Senate last spring which would have enabled sex crime victims to collect compensation from producers and distributors of any "sexually explicit" work judged instrumental to a sex crime. The Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings on the original bill last July in an effort to appease strong opposition from over 20 major industry groups, including the Motion Picture Association, the National Cable Association, the American Booksellers Association, the Video Software Dealers Association, and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. One day before the hearings were to be held, the bill's sponsors revised it to limit claims to those brought against "hard core pornographic material."

Yet the threat to constitutionally protected material with sexual content remains substantial, warns Chris Finan, executive director of the Media Coalition, which has spearheaded opposition to the proposed legislation. "Under S. 1521, the gun is in the hands of the victim, and there is a great danger that victims of savage attacks will strike out against any sexually explicit material they feel played a role in the crime, even if it didn't," Finan explains.

If it becomes law, the Pornography Victims' Compensation Act could create a national obscenity standard reflecting the values of the most

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conservative communities, Finan warns. "Currently, local communities are given considerable leeway in defining obscenity: works that are legally produced and sold in one place are illegal in others," he explains. "Under S. 1521, however, a producer or distributor who disseminated a work that was legal under the standards of the community where their business was located could be sued if it were linked to a sexual assault in a place where the community regarded it as obscene."

Significantly, the cases tried under S. 1521 would be civil rather than criminal suits. "Where the 'obscenity' of material must be proved 'beyond a reasonable doubt' in a criminal prosecution, a mere 'preponderance of the evidence' is enough to establish liability in a civil case," notes Finan. Sympathetic victims might sway a jury into finding material obscene that would not be found illegal if the jury had not heard the details of an attack and its aftermath.

Finan fears that the proposed bill will become another weapon in the arsenal of right-wing censorship groups that might use the legislation to suppress material that is neither obscene nor child pornography. Donald Wildmon's American Family Association (AFA) already highlights in its newsletter press reports of sexually explicit materials found in the homes of alleged rapists, according to Finan. Under S. 1521, he fears the AFA might actively seek out the victims of sex crimes and encourage them to file suit against the creators and distributors of such materials.

Despite continued opposition from a broad range of literary, artistic, professional, and anti-censorship groups, the sponsors of the Pornography Victims' Compensation Act have not backed down. The ACLU is calling for new hearings to allow for testimony against the revised bill, but none have been scheduled as yet. Members of the Judiciary Committee are expected to recommend a vote in the Senate in early February. With right-wing groups vocally supporting the bill and no scheduled hearings, the Congress "urgently need letters of objection," asserts Katz.

Even if the Pornography Victims' Compensation Act is eventually defeated, the disquieting assumption behind it may not be. "The underlying theory—that producers and distributors of media of all kinds can be held responsible for criminal acts committed by others because words and pictures cause crime—remains unchanged," asserts Finan. "This is a truly radical idea that is clearly capable of expansion beyond the realm of sexually explicit material."

Laurie Ouellette

*Laurie Ouellette writes frequently about media and censorship issues. Formerly with the Utne Reader, she currently works with the Institute for Alternative Journalism in New York City.*

### AIRWAVE ROBBERY?

Last summer Appalshop, a Kentucky-based media arts center, received a request from the Gillette Company for a copy of *Chemical Valley*, an

Appalshop documentary which aired on the Public Broadcasting System's *P.O.V.* series. When Appalshop's Carolyn Sturgill followed up the next day, however, she learned from a secretary that Gillette had already obtained a copy of the show at a lower price from the Boston office of the Video Monitoring Services of America (VMS).

The trespass against Appalshop's exclusive distribution rights set off alarms within the Independent Media Distributors Alliance (IMDA), an alliance of distributors organized to promote independent distribution.

As part of IMDA's investigation into VMS, Brenda Shanley of Fanlight Productions placed an order with VMS for a copy of *The Elder*, a film exclusively distributed by Fanlight which aired on WGBH's *New Television* series. The order was filled "without asking any questions," contends Ben Achtenberg, a member of IMDA's executive committee. "It seems VMS is in the habit of taping the networks and PBS off-air and selling programs to anyone who requests them," Achtenberg concluded in a memo to the executive committee.

In August, Ivan Bender, a lawyer with the Association of Instructional Media Equipment (AIME), sent VMS a cease and desist warning, demanding an account of all VMS excerpts sold in the last 10 years, but VMS refused to comply. The national 24-hour news and public affairs programming monitoring service does not deny that it provides video copies of programming to its clients. But VMS legal counsel Bill Keller, in response to Bender's request, claims that the company's activities are "protected by the fair use provisions of the 1976 Copyrights Act."

The fair use provision permits limited use of copyrighted material without permission under specific circumstances. To qualify, a work must be of a noncommercial or educational nature; only a limited portion of the copyrighted material may be used; the original material must be of a public, versus a private, nature; most importantly, the work should not negatively affect the market value of the original.

Keller claims that VMS' activities are protected because the company's services do "not compete with or adversely affect the demand for the original product," but "enhance that demand by making available, generally on an overnight basis, relevant and time sensitive information." Keller further maintains that "[VMS] does not systematically record and sell copies of entire programs, but merely transcribes or copies segments upon request." Because VMS is providing "access to ideas," Keller asserts their activities satisfy a principal concern of courts in determining fair use.

VMS has successfully employed a fair use argument before to defend its monitoring of CNN programming in *Cable News Network v. Video Monitoring Services of America*. Last year, an Eleventh Circuit federal court reversed a grant of a preliminary injunction against VMS, according to Keller, "in large part because the court recognized that certain future VMS uses of the [CNN]



**Chemical Valley is among the independently distributed programs pirated by Video Monitoring Services.**

Courtesy Appalshop

programming may be allowable as fair use...[and] the importance of access to ideas in evaluating the proper scope of allowable copyright protection."

But IMDA coordinator Bob Gale points out that unlike "news and public affairs programming which is not in active videocassette distribution ...the materials in question" are harmed by VMS' activities. And in the case of series like *New Television*, which may screen several shorts in one show, VMS' claim that it only transcribes segments of programs is misleading. *The Elder*, which VMS sold to Fanlight as a six-minute program segment, is in fact a complete short film.

"VMS cites its victory against CNN as its legal authority," says Gale. "But whether the court meant for VMS' limited use of news and public affairs style programming to be extended to include experimental documentaries and drama...is highly questionable."

VMS' fair use argument is not airtight. As Keller himself points out in his response to Achtenberg's letter, the most important fair use factor is "the effect of the use upon the potential market value of the copyrighted work." But, as the sale of the Appalshop tape demonstrates, VMS' operations have directly undercut sales by independent distributors.

Even with just cause for action, it might be difficult for IMDA to take on VMS because of simple dollars and cents. Achtenberg is loathe to "get involved in any expensive legal action," he admits, "at least and until it becomes clear that some of our members were significantly injured."

IMDA is continuing to collect information about VMS' activities. For further information, contact: IMDA, c/o ArtBase, Box 2154, St. Paul, MN 55102; (612) 298-0117.

ELLEN LEVY

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) has announced the recipients of its first round of

grants. The awards, which range from \$30,000 to \$300,000, will underwrite the production of 25 programs selected from a pool of 2,000 applicants to ITVS' open call solicitation. The total amount awarded in this round is \$3-million, leaving \$2- to \$3-million for the second open call, which has a March 16 deadline. A request for proposals for "focused programming" will be issued this spring.

The grant recipients are: Barbara Abrash and Esther Katz (\$16,500), *A Public Nuisance: Margaret Sanger and the Brownsville Clinic*, which documents the media's role in early public debates about birth control; Suzie Baer (\$50,000), *Warrior: The Case of Leonard Peltier*, on the incarcerated Native American activist Peltier; Christine Chang (\$29,872), *Be Good, My Children*, about a Korean immigrant family; Shu Lea Cheang (\$300,000), *For Whom the Air Waves*, a dark comedy set in a sushi bar during an environmental crisis; Tony Cokes (\$39,210), *Love, Labor, Language*, an inquiry into love, work, family, and money; David Collier (\$34,140), *For Better or for Worse*, about five elderly couples who have been together for more than half a century; Anna Maria Garcia and Eduardo Aguiar (\$152,684), *Endangered Species: The Toxic Poisoning of Communities of Color*, on the public health crisis and efforts to counteract it; Faith Hubley (\$77,375), *Tall Time Tales*, an animated short about the faces of time; Paul Kwan (\$75,358), *Anatomy of a Springroll*, which uses the metaphor of food to explore Southeast Asian culture; Helen Lee and Kerri Sakamoto (\$26,795), *Little Baka Girl*, about the romance between a Japanese American and a recent Korean immigrant; Victor Masayeva, Jr. (\$297,000), *Imagining Indians*, on how Native Americans have been imagined in popular American media; Ruth Peyser (\$30,250), *Go to Hell!*, an animated short in which a woman trips and falls into a dream; Sam Pollard, Peter Miller, and John Valadez (\$149,758), *Citizen Dhoruba*, about a former Black Panther falsely accused of a crime; Joanna Priestley (\$38,837), *Aging Grace*, an ani-

mated film about the pains and pleasures of middle-age; Puhipau and Joan Lander (\$294,936), *An Act of War: The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation*, a documentary about the 1893 American overthrow of Hawaii from a native Hawaiian perspective; Marlon T. Riggs (\$245,000), *Black Is...Black Ain't*, a documentary exploring the meanings of blackness to African Americans; Kathe Sandler (\$100,000), *A Question of Color*, about color-consciousness among African Americans; Lynn Smith (\$37,512), *Sandburg's Arithmetic*, an animated film for children based on the Carl Sandburg poem *Arithmetic*; Gary Soto (\$65,000), *The Pool Party*, about a Chicano boy who makes a splash in a pool; Veronica Soul (\$65,425), *Ghost Story*, about time and memory from the perspective of a Chinese immigrant family; Ellen Spiro (\$78,604), *Out Here*, about southern gay and lesbian culture; Ela Troyano (\$100,000), *Once Upon a Time...*, exploring relationships between young Latinas and Latinos; Edin Velez (\$197,955), *Memory of Fire*, a stylistically rich narrative reassessing the discovery of the New World by Columbus; Clay Walker (\$92,155), *Post No Bills*, about the process of creating political street art; the Wooster Group (\$55,669), *White Homeland Commando*, a take-off on a TV cop show in which a special unit of the police force infiltrates a white supremacist organization.

## SEQUELS

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's reauthorization for 1994-96 may be heading into troubled waters. After the bill, which applies to PBS, NPR, and ITVS, sailed through the House, some unnamed Senators put it on "hold," a tactic that can indefinitely delay debate on a bill. An aide to Senate minority leader Robert Dole confirmed that certain Senators were concerned with what they perceived as public television's left-leaning bias. Among people lobbying for the privatization of public television is Dole's former speechwriter and right-wing media watchdog David Horowitz. Programs that have been singled out include Bill Moyer's documentaries on Iran-Contragate, a National Audubon special on environmental damage caused by cattle called *The New Range Wars*, and various *Frontline* programs. Congressional observers expect CPB's opponents in the Senate to seek concessions, possibly in the form of content restrictions or in closer congressional oversight through an annual reauthorization procedure, rather than the current three-year bill.

## WOMEN'S WORK

## AFI's Directing Workshop for Women

BARBARA OSBORN

The aspiring director's situation is "a classic catch 22," says Hollywood producer Gale Anne Hurd (*Terminator 2*). "In order to get your first job as a director, you have to show that you already know how to direct." But getting this initial experience is no simple matter, particularly for women. Since 1974, the American Film Institute (AFI) Directing Workshop for Women (DWW) has been helping women do just this, bringing would-be directors to the AFI campus in Los Angeles where they can develop their talents.

applicants evaluated on the basis of a script and personal statement.

The seminars are taught primarily by DWW alumnae and cover everything from grip equipment to story meetings. This year actress Jennifer Warren, DP Nancy Schreiber, and editor Carol Littleton, among others, offered nuts-and-bolts advice on surviving one's low-budget directing debut. Warren, a DWW fourth cycle director, showed her film and talked about her experience making it. She offered a useful laundry list of production dos and don'ts: "Test your camera before you take it out." "Get a good location scout." "Keep location moves to a minimum."

Many of the women had never worked with actors and zeroed in on Warren's experience as an actress. She advised them to create "a safe space" for actors. "Share as much information as you can," Warren encouraged. "Tell them what you want. A good director puts people on the same wavelength." As the women sat around a large conference table at the AFI's Manor House, an easy give-and-take evolved. Participant/actresses Shirley Knight and Joyce Van Patten amplified Warren's advice, drawing from their own experiences with effective and ineffective directors.

During the seminars, information is generously given and gratefully received. At least as important, the women develop a solidarity among themselves, sharing experience, resources, and contacts. That energy helps sustain them through the cold shower of the filmmaking process. Sixth cycle director Mary Benjamin speaks for many when she says, "The seminars were fun, but I learned by making the film."

Much of that learning process occurs by simply diving into the chaos of low-budget filmmaking, where inexperience and lack of money often lead to disaster. By way of warning, Warren told the DWW directors her personal horror story. After the first day of shooting, her leading actress telephoned to say she was leaving for New York the next day. "I'd lost my leading lady and a day of shooting," she remembers, her voice trembling with anger and disappointment nearly 10 years later. Her back against the wall, Warren regretfully took the role herself, knowing that her film was doomed to look like an acting showcase.

When Warren made her short in 1980-81, the DWW offered \$1,600 towards making the film. What the AFI offers participants has varied from year to year. Some years film equipment was available. Other years it was only money. Some-



Choreographer Karole Armitage takes a crack at directing during AFI's Directing Workshop for Women.

Photo: Jeff Hyman, courtesy American Film Institute

The DWW offers two weeks of training seminars which provide practical information on how to direct a movie. In addition to directing a three-minute test piece during the seminar, participants are also given the opportunity to direct a short film using AFI resources. These shorts, which usually run about half an hour, are undertaken with a volunteer crew and cast assembled by the director. Following the October seminar, DWW participants return to the AFI campus over the next 18 months to two years to direct their shorts.

Many DWW neophytes come from unrelated fields and start out knowing little about the process of filmmaking. The 1991 group, representing DWW's eighth cycle, was a typical mix of film professionals and artists from other disciplines. Among the 12 women were novelist Rita Mae Brown, choreographers Karole Armitage and Sarah Elgart, songwriter Allee Willis, and documentary filmmakers Lyn Goldfarb and Michelle Parkerson. They were selected from a pool of 400

times a little of both. Until the sixth cycle in 1987, there were no training seminars. Participants took what they were offered and went to work. Many sunk significant sums of money into their films. Warren, for instance, spent \$15,000 on hers. (The AFI retains all rights to the productions regardless of the amount of personal money directors invest in their projects.) Recently DWW resources have become relatively standardized. The seminars are now an integral part of the program, and a cash allowance of \$5,000—the Gale Anne Hurd Production Grant, named for the program's staunchest financial supporter—is awarded to each participant. The AFI contribution includes an eight-day schedule with a Betacam rig, a month of off-line editing, and one week of on-line at AFI's Sony Video Center.

Each woman is asked to raise at least another \$5,000 for her film. For the well-heeled, the money comes directly from a bank account. Others go to friends and family. The AFI provides a "Dear Friend" fundraising letter to help solicit money—small comfort to women unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the beg-and-borrow mode of production. Indeed, most DWW alumnae report that fundraising and calling-in favors is the hardest aspect of production for them.

Director Michelle Parkerson admits to being taken by surprise by the need to raise matching funds. Once she began calculating, Parkerson realized that she was likely to need twice the specified amount, since she has to keep her documentary projects afloat in her home base of Washington D.C., while she is in Los Angeles directing her DWW film, a sci-fi story that's liable to require pricey effects work unavailable at the Sony Video Center.

The production process, difficult under the best of circumstances, is exponentially harder for non-Los Angeles residents like Parkerson. Without friends, contacts, or a place to live, would-be directors from out of town confront a lot of simple logistical problems. Many past DWW directors, like Mary Benjamin, a documentary producer from Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Carole Oligiario, a New York actress, have interpreted the DWW award as a reason to move to Los Angeles.

"Women don't know exactly what to expect when they get here," admits DWW director Tess Martin. "They see it as a short cut to make a film, but the projects have big limitations." Despite innumerable warnings voiced by alumnae during the seminars, it's hard for most DWW newcomers to realize that the award is a mixed blessing. Women arrive thinking the AFI is giving *them* something, only to realize down the line that it is they who have to give and give in order to get the film done. It's a brutal realization. "I know exactly what the women are feeling," Martin says. "They look at me and think, 'What did you get me into?'" The women feel lost and think the film won't happen."

DWW films sometimes take years to finish.



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Once completed, they are expected by many DWW participants to pay off as "calling cards," opening doors to directing work by demonstrating the director's skill. For a few directors, the strategy has worked. Fourth cycle director Randa Haines' DWW project first led to screenwriting work, then to directing for PBS, and ultimately to two features, *Children of a Lesser God* and *The Doctor*. Lesli Glatter, a director in the fifth cycle and choreographer with no prior experience in film-making, got an Academy Award nomination for her short. Steven Spielberg saw her work and hired her to direct several *Amazing Stories* TV episodes. That led to episodes of *Twin Peaks*. Next summer she's set to direct a new David Lynch feature script. Glatter says she wouldn't be where she is today were it not for the DWW.

Despite Haines and Glatter's success, the DWW tries hard not to be product-oriented. Martin emphasizes, "It's much more important that the women leave learning a lot, not that they have a piece that will get them a job. The product doesn't mean anything to us. The goal is to explore their ability as directors." Although three DWW projects have received Academy Award nominations in the short dramatic film category (Glatter's *Tales of Meeting and Parting*, Matia Caroli's *Cadillac Dreams*, and Dyan Cannon's *Number One*), Martin is quick to note, "The Academy Award is not what we're about."

In fact, the DWW's shift from film to tape production in 1987 makes the productions ineligible for Academy Award consideration. It also restricts distribution and potentially limits the projects' viability as calling cards, since video is still regarded by many in Hollywood as film's bastard brother. Though regretted, the switch was a financial necessity. The DWW lives a cycle-to-cycle existence, each cycle running 18 months to two years. According to Martin, its budget of \$250,000 per cycle could no longer support a film program. The fact that there have only been eight DWW cycles since 1974 is also an indication of the program's on-going financial precariousness.

The DWW's emphasis on process over product is well-intentioned, albeit a little disingenuous. The program is hardly for unambitious weekend artists. But the DWW's soft-stepping assures the program achievable objectives. "The program isn't about getting women work as directors," says Martin. "That would be an unrealistic goal to make." Indeed, it would be foolish to count on an industry that rewards so few women. Directors' Guild of America statistics for 1990 indicate that a paltry nine percent of its members are women.

The DWW clearly helps women get experience directing, but getting work is another story. Once the DWW experience is over, the alumnae still have to meet the right person or get their hands on a must-buy property to move ahead in the film industry, which is where many DWW participants want to be. Nevertheless, DWW alumnae suggest that their time, money, and effort at DWW pay off in confidence and self-empowerment. Oligiaro, a DWW second cycle director,

says, "The program was an opportunity to validate myself as a director. I might have just continued acting. At least I know now that I can do this. It gave me a lot of confidence, and it's given me the basis for perseverance. You had to sink or swim."

By going through the DWW process, some women learn that they *don't* want to be directors, reports Martin. Others set modest expectations for themselves. Some independents never aim to get on the Hollywood track. For Kathe Sandler, an African American from the seventh cycle, it's simple realism. There isn't support within Hollywood for films by and about women, let alone women of color, she explains, while her work as an independent documentary filmmaker is well-recognized. None of the DWW women are eager to trade-in an established career for the inconstant world of feature filmmaking. Michelle Parkerson sees the program as "a great opportunity for me to make a shift into narrative work." But she is also hedging her bets, waiting to see whether to plunge into dramatic filmmaking full-time or continue to build her career as a documentary filmmaker. Parkerson calls the DWW a much appreciated "opportunity to fail. In the independent community," she explains, "everything has to pay back. This time, if it works, wonderful. If not, I learned a lot."

The DWW presents women with an opportunity, but it's one with risks attached and no guaranteed pay-off. Not all participants understand the bargain at the outset. Although several DWW alumnae are making their living as directors, most are not. Many are still working as script supervisors, writers, actors, and musicians as they struggle for their chance to direct a production for the big screen. Getting women into the industry will take far more than simply creating a larger pool of qualified directors. More women are needed at higher executive levels. At the box office the stigma of "women's films" must pass for audiences. Ultimately, women must get beyond the "woman director" label among their peers, which limits the kinds of projects they are offered. Gale Anne Hurd sums up the situation with a kind of zen koan: "Once women directors stop being special," she says, "we'll see more movies by women."

*Barbara Osborn writes about film and television for Millimeter and Television Business International. Her last article for The Independent was a profile of British director Ken McMullen.*

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## SHORT CIRCUIT

Canada's *Five Feminist Minutes* Meets Distribution Difficulties

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

What happens when you give \$10,000 and 600 feet of 16mm film stock to 16 different women directors of widely varying sensibilities and styles, and tell each to make a five-minute film? Three years ago, the Canadian National Film Board (NFB) decided to find out. The result is *Five Feminist Minutes*, a nearly two-hour feast of shorts that is richly eclectic in approach and content.

Completed in February 1990, the program functions as a photo album of sorts, unified solely by length, medium, and gender. Filmmakers from British Columbia to New Brunswick address topics ranging from the intersection of poverty and pregnancy to a Saskatchewan pioneer who fought in 1916 for women's right to vote. The series encompasses everything from rap videos to a paperdoll cut-out animation with prostitutes, police, and johns, from a quiet and powerful evocation of incest to a live action comedy about a girl's first period. *Five Feminist Minutes* is an effective reminder of the potential of the short film form and the wealth of talent and ideas among Canadian women directors. The project also inadvertently reveals the chronic difficulties in packaging and distributing short films.

*Five Feminist Minutes* was created to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the NFB's women's unit, Studio D. Of the 240 submissions, 16 projects were selected, with the directors merely instructed to compose five minutes of "what was on their minds and in their hearts."

From the start, Studio D's project producer, Mary Armstrong, recognized the symptomatic problems of distributing short films, which rarely find their way into theaters these days, having been shouldered aside by movie previews, paid screen ads, and tighter daily exhibition schedules. So, recognizing that theaters are more likely to book a feature-length package than individual shorts, the NFB contracted to package the shorts as a single feature-length film and, at the same time, to give each filmmaker the rights to her own piece. Filmmaker Alison Burns (*Let's Rap*) remembers, "They said, 'You can have it both ways.'" Furthermore, Armstrong arranged that the NFB wouldn't distribute the feature; instead,

it would be handled by the company of the filmmakers' collective choice. However, with 16 producers spread out across Canada and no centralized mechanism for decision-making, *Five Feminist Minutes* became an unwieldy and sometimes unruly creation.

The NFB thought it best they not handle the feature because of their inexpensive, two-dollar video rental system. "Independents wouldn't have

acted solely as the project facilitator, the production money was seen as a grant, and NFB maintains the right only to exhibit the film in festivals and at NFB screenings.

Despite the good intentions, this arrangement has not worked out as well as everyone had hoped. Armstrong laments, "We made an effort to make each filmmaker happy and offered the artists the most creative freedom and control over their own films, but it backfired." She explains, "The small independent distribution companies clearly don't have the means, the kind of machine that the NFB has. They can't fire off copies of the film because it costs so much money." Burns adds, "There we [filmmakers] were with this package. And we're only connected by the National Film Board. We all talked informally for over a whole year, but we didn't have the funds to meet. So, the board brought us together once when the film premiered and we discussed [distribution] then." But even at the end of this meeting, there were many issues still unresolved. "Most people wanted to stay in touch [to continue discussion of bundling and distribution options]; some didn't."

*Five Feminist Minutes* was picked up by the Vancouver distributor Women in Focus in January 1991. Soon thereafter, this outfit temporarily ceased distribution due to a lack of funds. Also in January, the package went to the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center (CFMDC), a noncommercial, artist-run enterprise now in its twenty-fifth year, which has the largest collection of independent and experimental work in Canada. According to CFMDC staff member William Beattie, the organization characteristically gave a good deal of attention to *Five Feminist Minutes* when it arrived, aggressively generating valuable screenings at galleries, universities, and festivals. The package also had successful short runs at some alternative theaters and repertory houses, including the Brattle Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Nickelodeon in Santa Cruz, California. And it appears every few months at Montreal's biggest repertory cinema, the Realto. But despite the concerted effort, CFMDC, like all smaller independent distributors, faces the usual obstacles of expensive print duplication and publicity.

Half of the *Five Feminist Minutes* producers have opted to have their shorts also distributed separately by CFMDC. They include Christene



***We're Talking Vulva* has found a distributor, but it's singing, swinging, five-foot star may make it hard to peddle in Peoria.**

Courtesy Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center

gotten anything out of [NFB distribution] but exposure," Armstrong acknowledges. What is more, the NFB's system would have undercut sales and rentals for any independent distributor also handling the package. As director Burns explains, "The NFB was getting flack from independent distributors for taking their business" and for getting a feature film for cheap (\$160,000). "So they said, 'Okay, we won't distribute this. We're not trying to make a profit.'" Armstrong

Richly eclectic, *Five Feminist Minutes* encapsulates feminism's diversity in the nineties. Still from *The Untilled Story* by Frances Leeming and Cathy Quinn.

Courtesy Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center



Browne (*No Choice*), Elaine Pain (*A Letter from Violet*), Cathy Quinn and Francis Leeming (*The Untilled Story*), Michelle Mohabeer (*Exposure*), Gwendolyn (*Prowling by Night*), Janis Cole (*Shag-gie*), Ann Marie Flemming (*New Shoes*), and Burns (*Let's Rap*). To the producers' advantage, CFMDC has demonstrated numerous innovative strategies for getting shorts out, since they constitute the majority of the catalog. Of their 1,300 titles, there are only a few feature-length pieces and a handful of epic avant-garde experiments.

As originally expected, none of the individual pieces has been booked theatrically. But they have found interested audiences elsewhere. Academics and independent programmers have curated these thematically with other works. For example, the market for *Exposure*, which investigates racial and sexual identity expressed through a dialogue between two lesbians of color, intersects film festivals highlighting lesbians and gays and people of color, as well as women-focused exhibitions. CFMDC has also found a niche for *Prowling by Night*, an animated docudrama exposing police harassment of prostitutes when they legally give out condoms and HIV information on the streets. *Prowling* is being screened in venues concerned with issues of sexuality, AIDS, and sex trade workers, such as New York's Gay and Lesbian Experimental Film Festival.

Distribution possibilities also increase when the filmmaker has a body of work. The emphasis of CFMDC has been to promote filmmakers more than individual films. So someone with several shorts in distribution, like Ann Marie Flemming, has had *New Shoes* exhibited alongside her four other shorts. *New Shoes* takes place in a bright kitchen over tea, where a woman recounts how her former fiancé tried to murder her and then killed himself.

Burns made her film debut with *Let's Rap*. This cute dance and music number, which touches on freedom of choice, safer sex for lesbians, job equity, cross-generational exchange, and legal protections, has enjoyed varied audiences. Burns chose to have Cinema Libre in Montreal also distribute her piece. They have attached *Let's Rap* to a feature about Lea Roback, a compelling feminist, union organizer, and Communist Party member. When the feature is ordered, the distributor suggests beginning the program with *Let's Rap*.

The leeway NFB gave individual producers to negotiate their own distribution arrangements has been a hindrance in some cases, when package

deals have gotten bogged down because of the size of the group. Women Make Movies in New York City expressed interest in packaging a few pieces and began discussions with the individual filmmakers, but these petered out. Nor have any other efforts to create a mini-series come to fruition. Producer Burns sighs, "Logistics were just too much for us to put something together. We tried. Sixteen people—all with different viewpoints and in different areas of the country—made it too hard to keep anything together."

So far, neither the package nor any individual shorts have been shown on national Canadian television. Armstrong says, "TV [programmers] look at it and say, 'The quality varies substantially.' And they won't go near it." She notes, "We could have packaged it differently so the hottest and the best went out, but that wouldn't have been fair. No one agreed to that." Two of the hottest are *Prowling by Night* and Shawna Dempsey and Tracey Traeger's *We're Talking Vulva*. Perhaps the most popular piece in the collection, *We're Talking Vulva* has been picked up for distribution by Zeitgeist in New York. But it is unlikely fare for most broadcasters, since it features a singing, swinging, pro-choice, pro-sex, five-foot vulva. Both films have become the target of a mild controversy, stirred up, says Armstrong, by "some yahoo trying to get his name in the paper."

Despite the difficulties that *Five Feminist Minutes* has encountered, *Let's Rap* director Burns still believes the project was worthwhile: "I always thought it was a wonderful idea to have 16 films from women all across the country, with no common topic and no restrictions. It's important for Canada to have this kind of record of what women were thinking about in the nineties." But, as she observes, the project never had the chance it deserves. "Right after it came out, when none of the distribution agreements were firm, it was getting press, but we couldn't run with it." In contrast to the United States, where filmmakers encounter discouraging roadblocks from the earliest stages of fundraising, exceptionally high-quality work is being funded and produced in Canada. The regrettable missing link is an adequate distribution plan.

Catherine Saalfeld is a videomaker, writer, and project coordinator of the *Seeing through AIDS media workshops*.

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# Calling the Shots

## BLACK WOMEN DIRECTORS TAKE THE HELM



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YVONNE WELBON

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“I’VE BEEN A TOKEN ALL MY LIFE, AND I’LL BE A TOKEN EVERY DAY UNTIL I burst through those doors and bring everybody with me,” says Daresha Kyi, 30, one of four blacks enrolled in the American Film Institute’s (AFI) director’s conservatory program.

“Everybody” is the dozens upon dozens of black women filmmakers who have, against tremendous odds, brought their stories of the African American experience to the screen. Together, America’s black women filmmakers are creating a small revolution through their style, stories, and strategies. They are forging ahead with or without the blessings of Hollywood, which has conspicuously ignored them in its rush to embrace the newly prominent and profitable crop of black male directors, including Ernest Dickerson, John Singleton, Bill Duke, Reginald and Warrington Hudlin, Mario Van Peebles, and Spike Lee.

Julie Dash (left) directs Barbara-O in *Daughters of the Dust*, a turn-of-the-century drama about a Gullah family preparing to emigrate North. Dash's film radically departs from the homeboy pictures now popular among black male directors.

Photo: Floyd Webb, courtesy filmmake

Julie Dash, Neema Barnette, Zeinabu irene Davis, Michelle Parkerson, Delle Chatman, and Ayoka Chenzira are just a few of the women who are graduates of top film schools and programs, including the University of California-Los Angeles, New York University, AFI, and the Warner Brothers Writers Program. They have won numerous awards, including a student Academy, Emmys, and the Black Filmmaker Foundation's Best Black Film of the Decade (Dash's *Illusions*). They have worked for PBS, CBS, NBC, ABC, Columbia Pictures, Warner Brothers, and smaller production companies. They have proven themselves to be financial wizards, creating very original works with low budgets. Faced with every "ism" in the book, America's black women filmmakers are making great strides. Except in one area.

In terms of directing features, Hollywood's doors have remained closed to America's black women directors. To date, the Hollywood studio system has produced and distributed the work of only one black woman director, the Martinique-born Euzhan Palcy (*A Dry White Season*).

Of the approximately 450 features released in 1991 by the studios and major independent companies, 12 were directed by black men and none by black women. The fact that more black films were produced in 1991 than in the entire decade of the 1980s would seem cause for celebration. But the attention given the black male directors is something of a double-edged sword. As Barbara Scharres, director of the Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago, points out, "On one hand, black women directors want to join in the celebration—but the fact is, it's more of that same old thing called sexism."

Be it sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, or whatever is popular at the time (homeboy movie), black women directors have developed ways to combat obstacles in their paths that might prevent them from getting their films made and seen. "I deal with obstacles one at a time. It's been happening for so long," says Julie Dash, 39, director of *Daughters of the Dust*. "It's like having your period. You know it's going to be there, and you know there is going to be some pain."

For Michelle Parkerson, 39, writer/director/producer of a number of independent documentaries, including *Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey in the Rock* and *Storm: The Lady of the Jewel Box*, the "isms" were a given. "I knew I'd run up against them," says Parkerson, "and I was prepared for them." Other black women filmmakers agree. But what they continue to name as their biggest obstacle is "other people's expectations."

Delle Chatman, who recently completed a screenplay for Sidney Poitier and Columbia Pictures, says that there are certain kinds of stories expected from black filmmakers. "When Gus Blackmon, vice president of story and vocational administration for Warner Brothers, walks my script into a producer's office, they see the color of his skin, ask about the color of mine, and expect a homeboy story, not a western or a sci-fi screenplay. Still, I believe that if I were a white male writer I'd still have a problem because my work is considered left of the mainstream—politically, philosophically, and spiritually."

Denise Pendleton, 33, an independent producer who worked for Motown Productions for seven years, is the first and only black woman to produce programming for pay-per-view cable. "If a black woman gets a chance to make a movie, it won't be about sluttin'. That's not the way we see ourselves."



Shart an cash, Daresha Kyi played director and star (as well as caak) for her award-winning film *Land Where My Fathers Died*.

Courtesy Women Make Movies

Says Cheryl Dunye, 25, an independent filmmaker and video artist, in reference to the crop of recent homeboy films like *Juice*, *Hangin' with the Homeboys*, and *Boyz n the Hood*, "All blacks aren't working their way up from the ghetto, struggling and facing hardship." Zeinabu irene Davis, 30, an independent filmmaker and associate professor at Northwestern University, contends, "The homeboy movies present a very myopic vision of what black film is. It's not a male versus female thing. There is a very specific type of movie that is being put out right now." Parkerson agrees. "Certain filmmakers like Charles Burnett and Wendell B. Harris, Jr. aren't getting the attention that the makers of homeboy movies are. It doesn't cut down the gender line."

"We don't need to change ourselves, but we can work toward changing the way we are perceived," says Pendleton. And so they are, both in front of and behind the camera. Michelle Crenshaw is an independent producer and cinematographer (*Skin Deep*, *The Contract*) who has worked as a camera assistant on independent projects like *Eyes on the Prize II* and *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, as well as on a number of Hollywood features, including *Home Alone*, *Babe*, and *Mo' Money*. Crenshaw says she won't even put herself out for a job unless she is absolutely positive that she can do it. "It's hard for me to be accepted as an equal [in Hollywood]. Both white men and women have a hard time accepting a black woman on the set. And while men are given the opportunity to make mistakes, women are not." Parkerson adds, "Black women rarely have the luxury of an apprenticeship. For us, every film is critical." As Pendleton says, "Black women filmmakers are only as strong as the weakest link."

Dunye, who is creating a body of work about the black lesbian experience, feels that black lesbians have been disenfranchised. "We are grouped



African American women directors offer a new take on love relationships, as in this fantasy scene from Zeinabu irene Davis' *A Powerful Thang*.

Courtesy/Women Make Movies

with black gay men," says Dunye, "but I'm not a black gay man. My experiences and stories are different."

Kyi experienced another form of discrimination when she tried to enter the commercial film industry in New York. "I had worked in the independent film community for 11 years, but nobody knew me in the commercial industry. Commercial filmmakers felt that my independent skills wouldn't translate. And I just thought, wait a minute, I can make an entire film by myself, but I don't have the skills to help you make a commercial?"

Scharres believes these double standards are magnified for black women directors. "If a man directs an exploitation film and then goes after some other kind of film, it shows that he is enterprising. But if a woman directs a certain kind of film, it would mean that she could only do that one thing. In addition, if a white man directs a film, it is seen as having overall appeal. But if a black woman directs a film, it is perceived as having a specialized audience." According to Kyi, Hollywood doesn't seem to know what to do with the films of black women directors.

It's no wonder that when Julie Dash began shopping her newly completed feature, *Daughters of the Dust*, around Hollywood looking for national distribution, she couldn't get a deal. Dash says, "They had never seen a film like *Daughters*. They wanted to see black people as they know them, doing things and saying things in a manner in which they had seen before." Scharres says it comes down to money. "If the distributors thought there was a demand for such a film, they would put money into it. But it hasn't been proven that there is an audience for such a movie," because such a film has never been made or distributed before. Sounds like a catch 22.

*Daughters* is the first major translation to film of the aesthetic found in the literature of contemporary black women writers, such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara, and Gloria Naylor. Dash sees it as a general audience film because "it's about family and the carrying forward of traditions, religious beliefs, and social mores from generation to generation. And everybody has a family." When it was shown as part of the Blacklight Film Festival in Chicago last August, it played to sold-out crowds, and even though an additional show was added, more than 100 people were turned away. *Daughters* sold out in similar showings in Germany and in Oakland, but national distributors were still not convinced that there was a real market for such a film.

Dash believes that white men—those who make decisions about distribution—have problems watching women's movies. "A lot of men had a problem with *Thelma and Louise*," says Dash. "The way I see it, when you watch a movie you either role play or disengage. And most white men don't want to be a black woman for two hours. It's two hours too long. But they

will spend those same two hours being a homey, because it's a male fantasy and they can walk out of the theater without worrying about getting shot."

Dash eventually signed *Daughters* with an independent distributor, Kino International. According to Scharres, such a move was the best an independent could make, because small independent films sometimes get lost within large companies. Witness Charles Burnett's *To Sleep with Anger*. "Sometimes the films are seen as tax write-offs and never handled properly," says Scharres. "But an independent distributor's livelihood is

based on a film like Julie's being a success, and they will do everything they can to make sure it's a success. They aren't handling Julie Dash on one end of the spectrum and Steven Spielberg on the other. Julie Dash is their Steven Spielberg."

The black women closest to making major studio films are those who developed their directing skills through primetime television. Affirmative action and a 25 percent black primetime audience market share helped black women move into the areas of writing and directing for television.

Actress/choreographer/television director Debbie Allen (*Fame*, *A Different World*) currently has film projects in development at both Paramount and Warner Bros. Neema Barnette, the first black woman to direct a primetime television sitcom, has directed episodes of *The Cosby Show*, *China Beach*, *A Different World*, and *Frank's Place*. She recently signed a three-picture deal with Columbia Pictures. But she remains cautious about her new status.

"Frank Price at Columbia really wanted to do a movie with me. He kept offering me these *Beach Blanket Bingo*-type films, and I wasn't interested. Finally, at one of these meetings they asked me what I wanted to do. I pitched a film I was writing with my husband called *The Guide* in five sentences. And the next thing I knew, I signed a three-picture deal with Frank Price. But Price is now no longer with Columbia. My film is scheduled to go into production this spring, and I've decided to make the film regardless."

Barnette experienced a similar chain of events when she was set to do her first feature a few years ago, an adaptation of Sharon Bell Mathis' *Listen for the Fig Tree*. David Puttman, who had started a minority producers program at Columbia, was out and Dawn Steele was in. Barnette's black Kwanzaa classic was shelved.

It is exactly this fickleness that has led some black women directors to bypass Hollywood entirely. Even though black women have films in development in Hollywood, one has yet to be produced.

Dash began developing *Daughters of the Dust* in 1976 while she was a scriptwriting fellow at AFI. She used grants from numerous sources, including the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and a Rockefeller Fellowship, to shoot a trailer. Lynn Holst of American Playhouse saw it and agreed to fund the 113-minute feature to the tune of \$650,000, with CPB adding another \$150,000.

Ayoka Chenzira, who has directed a number of documentaries and animated films, didn't even consider Hollywood funding for her first feature, *Ya So Dey So: A Love Story*, currently in progress. Nor did Zeinabu irene Davis for her 57-minute feature *A Powerful Thang*, about a day in the life of an African-American couple.

"I was lucky I got out of California," says Davis. "I wasn't able to raise any money for my film there. But once I got to Ohio, I was able to get funding through a number of grants. I also received a \$35,000 Rockefeller award." Davis shot *A Powerful Thang* for about \$90,000. "To fund my film I also did the Spike Lee number. I sold T-shirts, postcards, and posters. I sold videos of my film *Cycles* for \$20 each. I tried everything, and I have to say selling T-shirts works," she admits.

Daresha Kyi used a similar strategy to fund her 24-minute award-winning film *Land Where My Fathers Died*, in which she starred. "It was raise the money, cook the food, feed the crew, jump back in front of the camera." Funding for this piece about the damaging effects of alcoholism on the family came through two New York State Council on the Arts grants, an Art Matters grant, and a grant from the Women in Film Finishing Fund, which allowed Kyi to complete postproduction. The budget for the film came in at just under \$40,000, but Kyi depended on a lot of volunteer crew help to make the film so inexpensively.

Camille Billops, a documentary filmmaker and visual artist, says, "When I begin conceptualizing a film, I also start thinking of how to get the money. It's like when you think about eating. You don't think about eating a cow, but rather a steak. So I see myself receiving my money in small pieces." Billops is currently raising \$70,000 to fund her film *The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks*, which "examines the dynamics of everyone's racism." In addition to applying for grants she is selling 3,000 posters of her artwork for \$10 each to raise funds.

Michelle Crenshaw is able to fund her independent work from the money she earns working on Hollywood features. Her short *Skin Deep* is an autobiographical piece about a young African American girl's confrontation with racism.

Michelle Parkerson, who was one of the 11 women recently accepted into AFI's Directing Workshop for Women, believes that subject matter may be one of the key factors in determining how long it will take to raise funds for a project. She has spent four years with Ada Griffin raising money for a documentary on Audre Lorde, a black lesbian, poet, activist, and cancer survivor. But she was able to get grants immediately to do a documentary on black women in the ministry.

Subject matter is another reason that black women look outside Hollywood. Some of the stories they want to tell aren't seen as Hollywood

material. According to Gloria Gibson-Hudson, assistant director of the Black Film Center/Archive and assistant professor of Afro-American studies at Indiana University, "Black women filmmakers are putting out messages that haven't been put out before."

The main difference is the focus of the films—black women. "While no one film can reflect the diverse realities of a particular group—and black women constitute a diverse group—there is a thread that goes through and penetrates each woman in the group," says Gibson-Hudson. "Black women filmmakers address with honesty a wide range of issues that relate to everyday life and cultural identity. There is usually a metamorphosis of the main character, and a message to us all that we should be a different person tomorrow."

Barnette's goal in her work is to be true to black people, "because selling out only means delay. If we don't think positively of ourselves, how on earth can we expect others to do so?" she asks. "Those of us in the position to make a difference in the way we are perceived as a people have a very special responsibility. Our work must act as a mirror reflecting truth and correcting distortions."

"I've been labeled as experimental, but I don't know if I accept that," says Davis. "My philosophy is that film is a cinematic language, and just as blacks have created new musical languages like jazz, blues, and rock and roll, I think that we do the same with cinema."

Billops, together with husband and coproducer/codirector James Hatch, chooses to do films that others won't do. "I'm interested in what's in-between and what's not discussed and seen." Her film *Suzanne Suzanne* looks at addiction and abuse. *Older Women in Love* examines relationships between older women and younger men. And *Finding Christa* explores the filmmaker's decision to put her four-year-old daughter up for adoption in 1962.

**Making the most of her "triple negative"—as a black, a queer, a woman—videamaker Cheryl Dunye puts positive images of black lesbians on screen.**

Courtesy filmmaker





Comille Billops' *Finding Christa*, about her reunion with the daughter she gave up for adoption at age four, shored the Documentary Grand Prize of Sundance this year.

Courtesy filmmaker

"Out of multiculturalism there has grown a realization that there are other groups of people making films and an awareness that their work is valuable. We are seeing a focus on groups like blacks, or lesbians and gays," says Gibson-Hudson. "These films are entertaining. They're showing a different perspective. And they aren't just for blacks or for lesbians and gays."

"I'm riding in that gap of change from affirmative action to multiculturalism," says Cheryl Dunye, whose 24-minute *She Don't Fade* has been screened at festivals around the world. The video presents some of the first positive images of black lesbians loving each other. Dunye mixes humor and storytelling to get her political, social, and cultural messages across.

"I've been able to take advantage of my triple negative," says Dunye. "Like other marginalized groups, I've been in the spotlight. But I'm not the one turning the switch on and off. I'm not the one deciding what stories are being told and who else will be in the spotlight."

Aarin Burch's first film, also about black lesbians, did well in festivals here and abroad. Her recent film *Spin Cycle*, an autobiographical work in which the 27-year-old filmmaker ruminates about her relationships, is also being well received. Burch believes she has been successful because "people are so hungry for works by black women, and black lesbians in particular."

Both Dunye and Burch, who have screened their films and videotapes mainly at lesbian and gay festivals, wonder if their work will be able to cross over to straight audiences. Burch's latest work concentrates on artists like herself who are bi-racial. Dunye's most recent work is an autobiographical look at her relationship with her mother, called *Love Me Mother*.

Given the nontraditional subject matter of their work and the increasing across-the-board cuts in public arts funding, black women filmmakers find themselves in a difficult position. Scharres suggests that all filmmakers put their energy into being smart rather than depressed about the situation. Parkerson believes that filmmakers "shouldn't get sucked into the independent versus mainstream dichotomy. The division is narrowing. Because there are more venues, it's not just a studio system anymore." Michelle Mattered, associate director of Women Make Movies, believes "black

women filmmakers need to create a network in which we support each other's work." Dunye believes that if black women filmmakers start an organization where everyone works together, more will be accomplished. "We need to get over that independent auteur mentality that has been thrown on us by Hollywood," says Dunye.

"We need to have black women working in different areas," says Davis. "I'd love to work with a black woman cinematographer. I'd like to see more film criticism written by black women. We need to be involved in all areas of film production, promotion, and distribution—not just directing."

"It's hard to say if Hollywood will remain the center of activity or just become a clearing house for projects independently produced for cable, video, theatrical release," says Chatman. "But we will begin to see more films produced that cost less." Adds Mattered, "As Hollywood realizes that films that look like Julie's can be made for under one million dollars, then the doors will begin to open."

"Black women are positioning themselves in places where their work can be screened more, and where they can affect change," says Gibson-Hudson, who considers academia to be among the most important of such places. "The American public needs to be educated," says Pendleton. "Men laid this foundation, and we really need to be in the classrooms to undo it." Both Davis and Chatman now teach at Northwestern University. Parkerson, who has taught at a number of institutions, will also be teaching at Northwestern this spring. Crenshaw is an instructor at Columbia College in Chicago, and Chenzira teaches at City College of New York.

"In academia you have creative and financial stability. You also have control over your life," says Chatman, currently director of Northwestern's new Creative Writing for the Media Program. She recalls, "I left Hollywood because as a TV writer I wasn't able to contribute in a way that was commensurate with my abilities. I was so busy having a career that I couldn't write personal pieces. There is little creative freedom—although I was able to create the character of the black cowboy for the *Young Riders* television series.

"I'm a refugee from the sixties, and being in the classroom allows me to contribute to people's lives. I am influencing future filmmakers," Chatham continues. "When they begin working in the film industry, they will actually think about black women because today they are being taught by one."

"At Motown I had a job. I was not in control," says Pendleton. "I think it is important that black women get into positions of power so that we can begin to make some changes. We need to stop whining and do something about our situation. I left Motown because I was tired of being afraid. Being safe got me nowhere. With pay-per-view cable I have real numbers in dollars and cents to show what kind of money my work produces. You can't touch that."

For Barnette, one of the most important things that a black woman filmmaker can do is to have a sense of history. "If we know where we've been and where we are today, then we'll know where we're going," she says. "It is most important for us to set our own standards and be true to our own vision."

*Yvonne Welbon is a filmmaker and writer who lives in Chicago.*

# Notes from the Underground

## A FEMINIST PORNOGRAPHER IN MOSCOW

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

In 1965 Carolee Schneemann, a painter, performance artist, and originator of "Kinetic Theater," embarked on her first film. Schneemann's *Fuses* became an early landmark in feminist filmmaking. Intending to present a woman's view of intimacy and erotic sex, Schneemann shot sequences of herself and her lover in bed, interspersed with ocean scenes and images of ordinary domestic events. She burned, cut, glued, layered, and edited the film for two years, building a fluid collage of what she describes as "imagery compounded in emotion."

Twenty-four years later, Schneemann was invited to bring *Fuses* to the Moscow Film Festival. It was to be screened as part of a sidebar entitled *Sexuality in American Film*, organized by the San Francisco Film Society in conjunction with the American/Soviet Kino (ASK) initiative.

JULY'S STARS BLAZE. LIGHTS WITHIN THE 6,000 DULL GLASS RECTANGLES of the Hotel Rossiya are extinguished. Somewhere behind us a Los Angeles film executive passes a guard five US dollars, pushing through the iron gate to take his midnight plunge into the feathery blue Moscow river. The sound of his long body breaking the glassy surface is explosive.

Ahead the Hotel Rossiya shimmers, pierced on its four symmetrical sides by 6,000 windows, 6,000 rooms. The Mezzanine Terrace Restaurant is mobbed. We push into a babble of languages, squeezed between flutters of fabric, colors, textures, perfumes. The gypsy orchestra plays rock and rock—Stevie Wonder, heavy on the violins. A Bengali film director is bribing a waiter for bottles of champagne. The Berlin film producer presses dollar bills into a waiter's hand, and a table and chairs materialize for his group. Vladimir and I drink the burning shots of vodka passed around and then join the shrieking dancers.

On the opening night of the Moscow Film Festival, *Fuses* is screened as a short following *Heavy Petting* by Obie Benz. The audience seems stunned; not a chair squeaks. Vladimir, assigned by the festival to be my personal translator, is transfixed. I feel his breath move with the film cuts, all the risks it represented in 1965 renewed in this hushed Moscow theater 24 years later.

The next morning we meet in the lobby. "Vladimir, I've been trying to phone you. I've been here only one day and the phone in my room is dead!"

"Moscow joke! Don't worry," he says. "I've been here 35 years and this morning my phone is also dead."

It's an easygoing sort of chaos trying to find out which films are showing where and when. Notices appear and disappear, like the piles of rubble left around building projects.

*Moscow joke: Our workers always leave some piles of debris so the cold, characterless consistency of the new apartments have an organic reminder nearby of life's imperfections.*

In the Hotel Rossiya lobby everyone involved in the Moscow Film Festival mills about, looking for someone or being looked for. Film directors, famous and unknown, entrepreneurs, journalists, photographers, actors, actresses from all over the world—all suffer the indignity of squeezing past each other through the only open door where a guard firmly checks the IDs hanging on strings around our necks.

We are looking up at the walls with today's sidebar film listings. In addition to its opening night screening, *Fuses* was supposed to run repeatedly as a short throughout the one-week festival. All the titles for *Sexuality in American Films* are listed in both English and Russian—except *Fuses*.

"Vladimir, my film isn't on the schedule for this afternoon! Let's go to the office and ask."

"They say they don't know."

"But they typed the program."

"Wait here, they're calling the movie house.... They said, 'The projector is broken.'"

"Vladimir, go back please. Ask them how can there be only one 16mm projector in Moscow, film capital of the Soviet Republic, during the International Film Festival."

He goes to the telephone once more. "They said, 'That is a very clever question.'"

Meeting many young English-speaking translators, writers, teachers, and artists, I sense a gender split. Among the men, there is a shared irony and skepticism. But among the young women, sadness, cynicism, and desperation dominate. They face an almost certain defeat of creative identity: highly-educated women do not make proportionately higher salaries; marriages are compressed in assigned housing and suffer all the woes reported in the western press—lack of space, etc. Women anticipate the prospect of a rigorous job, raising children often all on their own, and the struggle to



Stills from Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1965)

Courtesy filmmaker



provide for daily sustenance. Ambiguity, metaphor, irony, layers of personal and historical meaning move smoothly in intense conversations. At home, I disbelieved much of what I read about the Soviet Union, mistrusting it as exaggerated grimness, while my Russian friends believed the veiled information they received on Western society—shaded luxury, greed, plenty, indulgences of creative and material possibilities. With *perestroika*, many of the intelligentsia travelled to Europe and the States for the first time. They say, "It is exactly as I imagined."

*I pester Vladimir with questions about managing with scarcities. He tells the domestic joke of his week. The good news: His grandfather (a retired mathematician) stood in line for three hours to purchase three bars of soap for the family. The bad news: Although the grandfather also waited in another line for several hours, he could not get any toilet paper. The good news: Even though they have not had any toilet paper for months, now when they wipe with their fingers, they can wash off with the new soap.*

This is an economy in which soap, tampons, condoms, toilet paper, diapers, and underwear are usually unavailable. The demeaning daily struggle exhausts everyone. How can I discuss an equitable, expressive sexuality in which neither partner is subject nor object—a female examination of erotic intimacy—and not have it seem a luxury?

*Moscow joke: Many friends and visitors bring gifts of Walkmen and music cassettes—but we have no batteries to run them.*

*Moscow joke: When light bulbs burn out and there are none to replace them, we read by the light of the TV.*

This absence of consumer goods in the Soviet Union underscores the erotic materialism with which the US economy diverts both political will and social engagement and measures social function. For us indulgence in the consumer economy is an erotic act and a contribution to an illusory societal well-being. Our consumer culture provides levels of expressiveness—a connection to products as artifacts with which we can involve and satisfy our essential needs and nonessential desires. In the Soviet Union, there is no such relief or distraction from a grim, boring struggle to provide for basic needs. Capitalism and communism stand like inverted hourglasses draining sands of gross profusion, gross scarcity.

"Vladimir, let's go to the office and ask what's going on today," Sveltana greets me. "How's your room? Are you enjoying yourself? We are typing Vladimir's Russian translation of the critics' notes on *Fuses*, as you requested. Your film is definitely scheduled for midnight tomorrow at the cultural center; no problem."

Vladimir manages to arrange for TV crews and journalists to meet with us at each scheduled screening of *Fuses*. We will have interviews about the film process if it's shown, or concerning censorship/*perestroika* if it is not. I continue my reading of the *Introduction to Marxism* pamphlets given me by the Soviet airline Aeroflot. Alone on the narrow bed in the narrow room, my mind spins between reform and repression, repression and reform.

Tumbling backwards, what is being censored? Where does my will to demystify intersect with their will to posit psychotic taboos as normal, sexual repulsion as idealization?

Everything seems familiar but results from a different historical event. *Perestroika* may invite its version of "a thousand flowers to bloom," and reactionary forces—as close under the surface of change as those in China—could emerge to punish the persons and institutions effecting

liberalization. There may be a happier spirit these days in Moscow, but its translucent underside admits the Russian "dark soul." They have no faith, no optimism. The attempted censorship of *Fuses* remains a small index of the wavering forces for liberalization.

*We were walking in a large park—lovely, gloomy. A young couple passed us, arm in arm. She was wearing navy blue shorts. Our Moscow friends are debating: "She's foreign." "No, Russian!" "She must be foreign." "No, you can do that now." "What? Walk arm in arm?" "Until last year she would have been arrested for wearing shorts—indecent exposure."*

At home facing the cliffs I can write anything I wish about this trip to Russia. Even though *Fuses* is a small fish in the festival pond, it causes consternation, conflict. I am considered "a pornographer" and "a dangerous woman."

"Vladimir, here's the program for tonight. *Fuses* isn't listed."

"Wait for me in the dining room; I'll go find out...They said, 'Don't worry, this isn't the final program.'"

The bed is narrow as a child's bed. Arms enfold me, a body stretches beside mine. His shadow rising, whispers in English, "I must go home now."

I try to guess how far he must walk to reach the family apartment. Small room cluttered with books, manuscripts, journals, dumbbells, music cassettes. Later that week we hear about the raid on the hotel. Young women, without proper ID cards—called "prostitutes"—have managed to sneak past the guards to be lovers with foreign men in the film festival. The police arrested many of them. Have Russian men been arrested recently for being in the room of a foreign woman after 11 p.m.?

*Soviet joke: Everyone agrees we need better sex education and freer pleasurable sexuality to help the many marriages which flounder on sexual repression. Birth control is a key, but there are no condoms or I.U.D.s or spermicide or....*

What radical economic changes can avert the grinding contradictions everyone endures?

"Vladimir, we've invited all those artists and journalists and the film isn't listed on tonight's schedule!"

"I'll get you a vodka, wait here for me on the stairs...They said, 'The projector is being fixed—tomorrow, no problem.'"

Fallen down on the rough green carpet which wraps the length of 6,000 identical rooms. So drunk—imagine we are spinning into a resort hotel by the sea in a forgotten part of the world where I've never been, this best friend at my side, devoted, stolid, caring, whose shoulder my hair falls over; he is holding my hands so I will not fly out the window, who knows we could be arrested prostitution, for "uncivil behavior" lying here on the sixth floor hallway of the Hotel Rossiya—our lips merging in an unexpected gesture of *glasnost*.

*Moscow joke: How do you know your business deal is underway with a Lithuanian? When he tells you, "Don't worry, your check is in my mouth and I won't come in your mailbox."*

*Moscow joke: Do not ask more than two questions a day—it will overburden the system.*

Behind the sharp, ironic perceptions of my Russian friends, a deep Western influence merges with Russian metaphysical traditions to fuel profound longings: to be released from paranoia and punishing consequence, to express convictions, passions which were life-threatening for the



past 70 years. It is impossible for us to realize Stalinist terror. The suppression left not one person, place, or thing unscathed. How do they now contemplate a life of un-

changed economic scarcity and hardship with a new frankness or creative expressiveness? All this produces an odd social atmosphere of tension and graciousness. (Last night in my little red-walled room, his legs layered across mine, Vladimir exclaimed, "I feel relaxed! This might be the first time I've felt relaxed since I was a child in the Ukraine!" We drink another vodka to soften the contradictions.)

Back in the US, friends say, "Well, if it's like that, why don't they rebel?" I tell them what the Lithuanian rock drummer told me in the airport on his way to an unprecedented gig at Lincoln Center: "For 70 years they fought and destroyed, fought and destroyed. Nothing was left intact, nothing. They never found a compromise. They never achieved a concept which was not destruction. They never made a positive step."

*Moscow joke: See that huge office building in the center of our city? Do you notice that it has two symmetrical sides with different facades? How curious; why is that? The architect took two designs to Stalin for his choice. Stalin was very busy, he looked down at the layout and said, "Fine." Unable to have another interview, the architect built half of each design.*

The legislated "equality" of women in the Soviet Union has been used against them—to standardize their social and maternal contributions, just as artists have been required to fulfill social realism to idealize the State mythology if they are to participate in any of the rewards of the State: a studio, relatively decent housing, positions with reasonable salaries, etc. Female "equality" has been defined by a sexist, male-dominated, authoritarian society. Feminist analysis, which has exposed and dismantled suppressive male cultural traditions in the West, is only now resurfacing in the Soviet Union after a hiatus of 40 years. During the Russian Revolution, women's rights were legislated: equal pay for equal work, guaranteed child care, maternal leave, abortion on request. But with all they lost in the Second World War, the Soviets also lost connection to Western cultural contexts, including the exploration of human sexuality as evinced in the works of Freud, Reich, Jung, as well as Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf, and other feminists. So this innocent "pornographer" or "dangerous woman" introduces echoes of early Russian radicalism. Where did it get them back then? Only greater repressions, as if such consciousness stirs fascist self-righteousness to greater justification and outrage. As recent critics have written about Jesse Helms' attempted suppression of erotic art, we are looking at the same thing, but seeing completely different things.

*Moscow joke: What's the difference between Romania and Auschwitz? In Auschwitz they had gas and light! (Treading our way down four flights of broken stone stairs with no light whatsoever from the apartment of a celebrated film director.)*

*At the PROCC cultural center a crowd mills around the ticket desk and swirls away. Vladimir's face is turning red, his eyes enlarged. "What's going on now?" I ask, my skin prickling.*

*"Look at this!" he shouts. Posted on the wall, the program of tonight's*

*midnight showing has an X drawn across it. "Yes, that showing is canceled," says the helpful young woman at the desk.*

Tiny Mme. Lavritskaya (director of Soviet Sexual Education Programs), who considers me a "pornographer," is pushing through the crowd. *She's* probably responsible for this, I think, glowering down at her; but she is genuinely alarmed, stunned, asking Vladimir in Russian, "What's happened to the film screening?" Video crews, journalists are setting up lights around me. Get me double vodka now. Get the print of *Fuses* in my hands before there is any interview or discussion; I will not leave this building until I have my print. If they produce the print I will not be photographed here in front of these degraded, suppurating oil paintings of nudes (females of course). *And I want an explanation for the cancellation.* Vladimir agrees, "In a bureaucratic cultural center like this, there's a bureaucrat to be found."

I HAVE LEFT VLADIMIR WITH ALL MY BOOKS AND MAGAZINES, TINS OF sardines, herrings, vodka, and chocolates from the special store for foreign currency. He's planned a network of journalist friends traveling in Europe who will forward his letters to me in the States and has given me an address where I can write to him with less chance of my letters disappearing. He hugged me, held me, pushed me into the lines straggling towards inspection and the departure gate. The flight will be on Pan Am, not Aeroflot. The hours and the crowd seep into disjunctive, exhaustive delays. Leaving my place on the floor, I struggle through crowds to get a bottle of water, but there is no more. Only the Americans settle down on the floor, leaning their shiny heads on each other's hips and rucksacks, accepting the delay of one hour, two hours, three hours, as nap time.

The overt attempt to censor *Fuses*—as if it among all the "sexual" films were "too much"—differs from the classic response in the US: the implicit suppression of rewards, recognitions withheld from those feminist artists who pioneered essential, lost meanings of the body. Nonetheless, I could describe a common paternalistic morality in which the loss of the sacred erotic and the lived experience of female sexuality are denigrated. I recognize the same male structures which disguise fantasies and which mask fears of the unconscious, the forces of nature, the female body. I recognize familiar posturing: the heroic at the expense of the domestic, authoritarian delusion at the expense of ecological common sense.

Crushed into a line, entering the steel body, collapsed into the narrow seat. The steward down the aisle pushing a drinking cart asks, "Would you like juice? Apple, grapefruit, or orange?" Large unexpected tears begin to seep down my cheeks. I say, "Orange!" In two weeks I had completely forgotten such a drink. Balancing the juice, reaching for the headphones, clamping them on, I hear the voice of Bill Cosby trashing President Reagan. A flood of tears takes me by surprise. The plane taxis, lifts off. In my heart I am blessing my unknown Russian ancestors who long ago left this vast green sparkling expanse and whose leaving added to the random toss of my own life, so that I can depart Russia, having been an invited guest of the 1989 Moscow Film Festival and their own "pornographer and dangerous woman."

*Carolee Schneemann is a painter, filmmaker, and performance artist whose works address issues of feminism and sexuality. This year she had major kinetic installations at the Venice Biennale, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Carnegie International in Pittsburgh.*

# Our Bodies/ Our Camcorders

## Video and Reproductive Rights

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ELIZABETH LARSEN

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**I**N THE SPRING OF 1988, JULIE CLARK, A GRADUATE STUDENT IN COMPARATIVE literature and adamant pro-choice supporter, was told by a someone in the New York University Women's Center that a new anti-choice group calling itself Operation Rescue had arrived in New York City. Launched one-and-a-half years earlier in Pensacola, Florida, Operation Rescue was planning to inaugurate its national crusade against abortion by staging huge blockades at clinics throughout the city. Operation Rescue supporters had flown in from all over the United States for the event. In response, Clark and about 25 other like-minded women met early one morning and followed the hundreds of Operation Rescue troops from their hotel to the streets of Manhattan's Upper East Side. Hoping that, with any luck, they could sprint ahead of the crowd of hymn-singing, flag-waving anti-abortionists and keep the clinic open, Clark and seven other members of her group struggled to the front of the demonstration only to find themselves pressed up against the door of the targeted clinic standing face to face with hundreds of Operation Rescuers. The scene was nothing short of utter mayhem. "I was terrified," she remembers. "I had an elbow in my back and a priest broke my friend's glasses. It was hand-to-hand combat." Shaken and angered, Clark felt that no one would believe what she had experienced without seeing it. So, with absolutely no background in film or video, she used the rest of her fellowship money to buy a video camera and begin documenting subsequent attacks.

In a country where *America's Funniest Home Videos* is a top-rated television program and most people think of video as a source of pleasure rather than power, it is a rare moment when someone other than a videomaker sees the medium as a potent tool that can be used to achieve activist goals. Were this any other issue, the daunting and repressive political atmosphere surrounding the debate and keeping all but stop-watch-balanced news reports off the air might be demoralizing enough to make independent video- and filmmakers pack up their social agendas and produce wildlife films. But, thanks to a burgeoning grassroots movement of pro-choice videomakers—many working collectively and in alliance with local reproductive rights groups—the threat to a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion will not be ignored.

Although women have used video as a consciousness-raising and activist tool since the early 1970s, it has been only in the last few years that reproductive rights has gotten much attention from videomakers. In part, this time-lag can be attributed to the sense of comfort resulting from the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973—which ruled that a woman's right to choose to have an abortion is constitutionally protected as part of her right to privacy. Up until the late 1980s, when abortion opponents and state legislatures began seriously undermining women's legal right to an abortion, feminist videomakers felt they could focus on other areas of concern.

And so they did. According to Chela Sandoval, who was a member of one of the early women's video collectives, the Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective, "Abortion wasn't focused on the same way it is now." Instead,

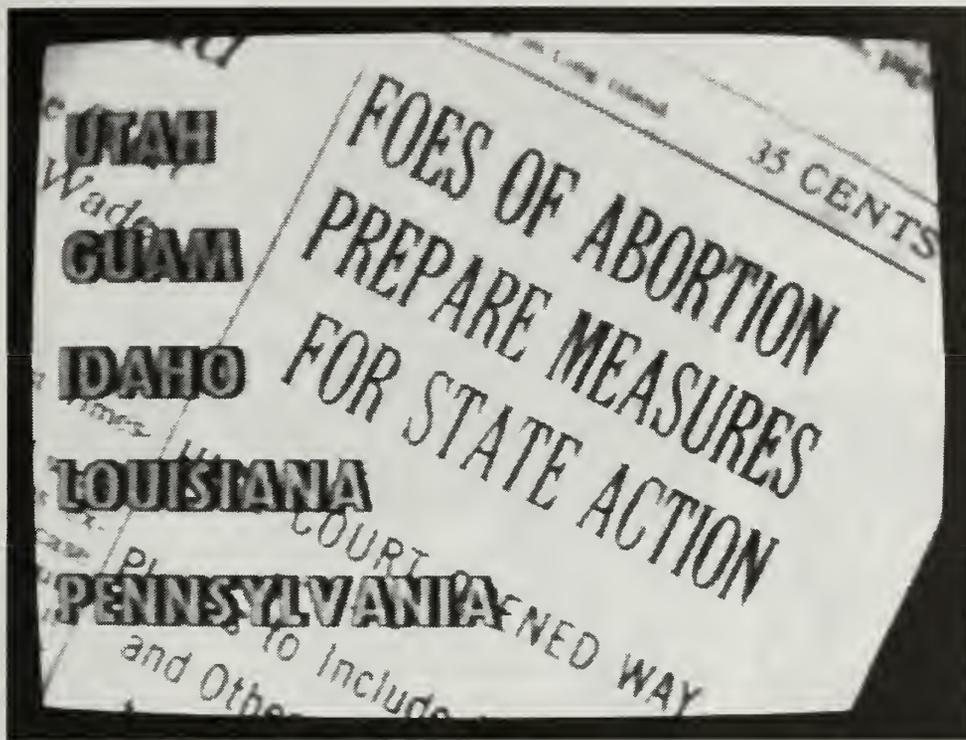
her collective, which was active throughout the seventies, produced documentaries on related topics like "women and sexuality" and "women and health care." Sandoval points out that women's media collectives, like the one in Santa Cruz, were a vital arm of the women's liberation movement and could be found in almost every major urban area. They would show their programs and hold discussion groups in community centers, women's bookstores, universities, and on public access channels.

By the 1980s the energy that went into these video collectives began to dissipate as members moved on to other jobs in media and elsewhere. Some entered academia, and the spark that was previously found in videomaking shifted to film theory, as many women who had originally achieved a sense of intellectual and practical empowerment in the video collectives formed discussion groups focusing on feminist film theory. According to Sandoval, "In the eighties there was an energy in the feminist film theory collectives which really moved thinking about media forward."

The abortion debate muscled its way into feminist videomakers' agenda in the late eighties. In July 1988, just months after their attack in the New York City area, Operation Rescue gained national attention by blockading abortion clinics in Atlanta during the Democratic National Convention. Then, exactly one year later, the right to a legal abortion met a serious defeat when the Supreme Court upheld the restrictions on abortion in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*. The Court specifically upheld the state of Missouri's expensive and time-consuming requirement that all women seeking an abortion in a hospital that receives federal funding undergo a test to assess whether or not the fetus would be able to sustain itself outside the womb, thus placing an unfair financial burden on low income women. This decision, coupled with Operation Rescue's increasingly vociferous attacks, would prove to be the catalyst for many women's re-entry into the women's movement—and into using video as a part of their crusade for abortion rights.

Surprisingly, mainstream abortion rights supporters like the National Organization for Women (NOW), National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), and Planned Parenthood haven't widely used video as a way to educate, inform, and advise people about reproductive rights. NOW has made two videos: one on the pro-choice march in Washington, DC, in April 1989 and one commemorating NOW's twentieth anniversary. Planned Parenthood has made videos about condoms, birth control, and abortion. And the Fund for a Feminist Majority produced *Abortion Denied* and *Abortion for Survival*. These tapes are essentially in-house productions, with director and crew employed on a work-for-hire basis.

Independent producer Karen Clay, who worked with the Women's Video Collective in Boston to make the video *Our Bodies/Our Choice*, suggests, "NOW and NARAL think that in order to use video it has to be a huge \$35,000 project—instead of pulling together grassroots groups and efforts." *Our Bodies/Our Choice* also documents the 1989 march in Washington (where, incidentally, NOW hired a man to make their documentary). According to Clay, the 58-minute video would normally have cost approximately \$25,000 to produce. But because the collective members donated their time and received postproduction services for free, the biggest expenses were tape stock and transportation. *Our Bodies/Our Choice* wound up costing less than \$500.



ReproVision's *Access Denied* puts the abortion question in historical context, intercutting archival footage of women's healthcare with contemporary clips.

Photo: Meryl Levin, courtesy ReproVision

If video activists are working with any women's rights organizations, it's more likely to be smaller, grassroots groups like the Women's Health Action and Mobilization (WHAM!) in New York and the Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights (BACORR) in northern California. Both groups contain video collectives which document the organizations' demonstrations and produce pro-choice documentaries. Other video groups function separately. These would include the Women's Video Collective in Boston, the Media Coalition for Reproductive Rights in Buffalo, New York, and the Stand Up for Choice project in Washington, DC.

One year after Julie Clark's violent encounter with Operation Rescue, she joined WHAM! Started after the *Webster* decision, this group of activists harnessed the energy of young New York women who, using ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) as a model, decided to take to the streets with their pro-choice demands. While taping a clinic blockade, Clark met a woman named Dolly Meieran, who was also documenting such attacks as a way of convincing armchair activists that Operation Rescue meant business.

Together with a third WHAM! member named Dana Nasrallah, Clark and Meieran started ReproVision. This video collective is affiliated with WHAM! in much the same way that Testing the Limits is the media production arm of ACT UP. ReproVision produced a popular pro-choice PSA, which the public access satellite network Deep Dish TV has been liberally mixing into its programming. Portions of ReproVision's *This Is Not a Federal Preserve* also appeared on Deep Dish TV's *Behind Censorship: The Assault on Civil Liberties* series last spring, in the program *Who Owns This Body?* The collective recently completed *Access Denied*, a 30-minute pro-choice tape which combines quick MTV-like cuts from Operation Rescue blockades with interviews with women who have had abortions and archival footage showing historical images of women's healthcare. The result is an upbeat and compelling activist tool.

By 1989, the Supreme Court decision in *Webster*, as well as the pro-choice march in Washington, had catapulted the abortion debate onto the nightly news. Not surprisingly, the mainstream media's adherence to "balanced" reporting frustrated many activists, who had a hard time believing that a group of people who violently prevented women from receiving legal health care deserved the credibility bestowed by press attention.

Many videomakers started their projects in part as a way to provide the

public with antidotes to what was being shown on the nightly news. Such was the case with A.C. Warden and Alix Litwack, producers of *Stand Up for Choice*, a four-part video documentary series on abortion clinic defense. According to Litwack, "Most of the images on television are fairly benign. The Operation Rescue people are shown sitting down, chanting or praying, looking almost beatific. But the reality of the situation is so different. It's violent and extremely noisy."

These pro-choice videos have proved empowering to reproductive rights activists on a legal level, since they are often used as defense testi-

mony in court cases where Operation Rescue has tried to sue a clinic defender on charges of battery. Stand Up for Choice, ReproVision, and BACORR have all given video footage to clinic lawyers for court proceedings. According to Helen Jones, a BACORR videographer, "With the videos, they acquit us in about 15 minutes."

Using video for legal purposes has proven so effective that Operation Rescue has begun to make its own. "The most interesting case was when a [woman from BACORR] was accused of hitting a man from Operation Rescue in the face," Jones says. "They submitted a video, which shows her hitting him, without the sound. When our lawyers forced them to bring in the audio, it was clear that she was yelling, 'Let go of me! Let go of me!' Well, it turned out that the man had his hands down low [out of the frame] and was holding on to her."

Such BACORR tapes as the lively *We Won't Go Back: Born Again Bigots, GO AWAY*, which documents BACORR's successful campaign to shut down Operation Rescue efforts in northern California, are shot with home video camcorders. In addition to their portability, the fact that videotape is considerably cheaper than film stock makes them popular with media collectives, many of which are entirely self-supporting. In addition, volunteer labor is easier to find when using video, and the finished product is more quickly accessible. "Film is a very beautiful art form," says Clay of the Women's Video Collective. "But with video cameras like the S-VHS you can do special effects while you are still [at the demonstration]. If you are creative enough, you can save a lot of postproduction time and costs. Also, when it's political work, instant accessibility is very important and video is great at capturing an event and bringing it into people's lives quickly."

None of these collectives believe that their videos are made specifically to convert anti-abortionists to the pro-choice side. Rather, one of the primary goals for all of these video groups is to promote dialogue about abortion rights within a wide range of audiences. While ReproVision has absolutely no interest in swaying the opinions of a pro-life audience, they do not see their videos as preaching to the converted. "We made *Access Denied* to spur dialogue with people who are supposedly pro-choice but are maybe couch potatoes," says Clark. "We want it to draw more people into the abortion struggle as well as expand the definition of reproductive rights. There's a connection between the health care crisis, women's health care, the AIDS crisis, and the cutbacks by the United States government on

Images can speak louder than words and more credibly in court, where video footage refuted Operation Rescue's fraudulent assault charges against clinic defenders.

Courtesy BACORR

Belying the benign TV images of Operation Rescue, the Stand Up for Choice project chronicles violent confrontation in *The Blockade*.

Courtesy Stand Up for Choice



women's reproductive freedom. By working together and linking these issues, people will begin to get a broader perspective, and perhaps we can all struggle together."

*Stand Up for Choice* is aimed at the converted, namely women who are training to become clinic defenders and escorts. Seeing that there were no educational or training videos about clinic defense, coproducers Warden and Litwack developed four training videos that will help prepare defenders for the physical and emotional intensity of an Operation Rescue hit.

Currently only *The Blockade*, a documentary of a typical Operation Rescue blockade, is complete. The other videos, which are also 15 minutes in length and are currently in varying stages of production, are *Escort Training*, on how to protect clinic patients from harassment; *Clinic Defense Training*, illustrating non-violent clinic-defense techniques; and *Who Is Operation Rescue?*, providing background information on this most vocal of the pro-life groups. Their final video, a half-hour documentary entitled, *Abortion Rights—and Wrongs*, will examine the current status of abortion rights and efforts to protect freedom of choice.

Unlike *Stand Up For Choice*, the audience for videos by the now disbanded Buffalo-based Media Coalition for Reproductive Rights, which was active in 1989-90, was anyone who happened to stumble upon one of their programs on the local public access channel. "We figured that, with the exception of the people who had read our publicity notices scattered throughout the Buffalo pro-choice network, our viewers would just be flipping through the channels and come into the show halfway through, watch for a few minutes, and go onto something else," says former collective member and independent videomaker Chris Hill. As a result of the anticipated short length of viewing time, most of the programs were broken up into brief, often extremely humorous, thematic segments. A repeated text often ran across the bottom of the frame, providing information ranging from the fact that local policemen were extremely unsupportive of abortion clinic defenders during an Operation Rescue blockade to how to contact local pro-choice networks.

The collective decided to use public access out of what Hill calls a deep



conviction that "Women tend to talk privately about their reproductive histories, and these private conversations need to be made public." This sentiment is explored in both Hill's *Reproductive Histories Update* and the collectively produced *Public Forum Solicitation Tape*, for which home-made videos about abortion were actively solicited from viewers. When the group received only three tapes, it was forced to round out the series by producing five additional programs. Even though the collective members have since disbanded in order to pursue other projects, they remain active in the area of reproductive rights, curating video exhibitions on the subject for media centers in Buffalo.

All the groups agree that the nonhierarchical emphasis on equal participation, inherent in most any collective, is ideologically in keeping with the values of the women's movement. And, reflecting the multiplicity of voices within the movement, each collective is structured differently. On one end of the spectrum, Warden and Litwack coproduce the *Stand Up for Choice* project more as a partnership and get volunteers to do the actual shooting. On the other end are the members of ReproVision, who do all their own camerawork and must arrive at consensus decisions for every aspect of a project. Somewhere in the middle is the Media Coalition for Reproductive Rights. This collective shoots its own work, but unlike ReproVision, one or two members of the group supervise and make final decisions on individual videos. When Boston producer Karen Clay wanted to make *Our Bodies/Our Choice*, she approached the already existing Women's Video Collective because she felt that the values of the collective were in synch with those of the project.

Contrary to certain stereotypes, working in a collective isn't composed solely of group hugs and endless support from fellow members. "Since it's a group effort rather than an individual statement, you have to check your ego at the door. Even though it's exhausting, it's worth it," Clay says. ReproVision's Clark agrees that working collectively can at times be extremely demanding. "It's hard as hell when you disagree in the editing studio at 3 a.m.," she says. "But we couldn't have done it by ourselves." Dana Nasrallah, also from ReproVision adds, "I think that working in a collective is analogous to what we're trying to do in the reproductive rights movement. We have a responsibility to our community and a responsibility to the collective, and in both we try to listen to other people and treat them the way we would like to be treated. Also, we're trying to represent a broad base of people, and we're a bunch of different minds out there collecting information. In a collective, that kind of representation becomes possible."

While these collectives are big on energy, they are also, for the most part, short on funding. Most of the tapes are produced on very small budgets, often with collective members financing the projects out of pocket. On the low end, ReproVision made *Access Denied* for \$6,500; on the higher end, the total budget for all five *Stand Up for Choice* videos is just under \$250,000. While many of the groups have asked the mainstream organizations like Planned Parenthood and NARAL for money, they have usually



Mainstream abortion rights supporters such as NOW have commissioned videos only on rare occasions, such as the 1989 pro-choice march in Washington, DC.

Photo: Kathy Davis, courtesy Women's Video Collective

been turned down (although the national organizations have been helpful in providing leads for possible interview subjects, information on anticipated Operation Rescue targets, and even lodging). As with most independent documentary projects, the groups write grants and rely on individual donations to pay for production costs. Foundations that have provided funding to these projects include the Roth Family Foundation, the General Service Foundation, Art Matters, Inc., and the Barbara Demming Memorial Foundation.

Once the project is completed, finding a station to air it becomes an even more difficult task. So far, PBS has proved unhelpful in providing airtime for pro-choice pieces. With the exception of local public affairs programs and the national series *P.O.V.*, which last season aired Julie Gustafson's even-handed *Casting the First Stone*, in which one community's pro-choice and pro-life advocates are profiled and explain their beliefs, PBS has not distributed an independently produced documentary about abortion since 1985.

So, with the exception of Deep Dish's transmissions via public access and a few cable channels like the Learning Channel, which showed *This Is Not a Federal Reserve*, not many projects are getting national viewership. Even high-profile public figures, like *Sassy* magazine editor and independent filmmaker Jane Pratt, have been unable to get their programs to air except on small, rarely-watched channels. Pratt made a public service announcement called *Pro-Choice Is Pro-Life* which was part of Direct Effect, a series of progressive PSAs funded and distributed by the Athens, Georgia-based independent production company Direct Impact. The PSA, shot in black and white, shows women of different ages, including actress Elizabeth McGovern, talking about why they support abortion rights. The spot ends with an older woman saying, "Pro-choice is pro-life."

With television not a real option, collectives have had to develop innovative grassroots distribution strategies. Stand Up for Choice has sold or made their tapes available to reproductive health care providers across the country. Both BACORR and ReproVision believe that keeping the price down and the tapes accessible is an integral aspect of their activist



Puppets enact an encounter between an ad exec and the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, New York, in Barbara Lattanzi's *A Bed-Time Story*, part of a series by the Media Coalition for Reproductive Rights.

Courtesy videomaker

videomaking. For \$15 or less, BACORR sells their tapes in street booths during pro-choice marches and clinic defense group gatherings. Likewise, with the money from fundraisers, ReproVision is sending out free or low-cost copies of *Access Denied* to activist groups across the country.

Finally, the unique respect that each of these groups has for the others is extremely empowering, especially when one takes into account the fact that they must sometimes compete for a limited number of grants and distribution offers. Like their videos, which emphasize how women can educate themselves about their own reproductive healthcare and reproductive rights, these groups encourage video novices to learn how to use the medium for political purposes. Just as Clark realized after that frigid spring day in 1988, "There's nothing like the power of a camcorder in a woman's hand."

*Elizabeth Larsen is assistant editor at the Utne Reader and a freelance writer living in Minneapolis.*

# A HUGE COUNTRY FULL OF FOREIGNERS

## Emiko Omori's *Hot Summer Winds*

LUCILLE RHODES

*Chopstick customs go  
right with me, throughout my life  
in this knife-fork land.*

—HOT SUMMER WINDS

"I totally rejected everything Japanese and didn't want to have anything to do with it," recalls director/cinematographer Emiko Omori of her childhood years in the US. "Of course, the internment camps didn't help. The Japanese language was violently and adamantly suppressed, and we

Yoneko recalls, "Mama was spending more and more time at her writing. She took her writing quite seriously. She even had a pen name—Plum Blossom. It reminded her of spring in Japan. Sometimes I could hear her pen scratching against the paper, late into the night." To Hatsu's amazement, she takes first place in a local haiku contest, winning a delicate Japanese scroll drawing and the publication of her poem.

Hatsu's success as a poet threatens her uneducated husband, Takahashi "Tex" (Sab Shimono), and their traditional Japanese marriage. The film touches on adultery, domestic violence, and abortion. It does so in the manner of Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu, whom Omori much admires, with restraint and through domestic detail. Omori quietly observes the private moments that bring the couple to and then beyond their critical impasse. *Hot Summer Winds* is a profoundly compassionate work which could only be made by a director astutely attuned to Japanese sensibilities.

Omori was born and educated in the United States. One of the parents who raised her is *issei*, or born in Japan; the other is *nisei*, or born in the US of Japanese parents. She never visited Japan and does not know the language. Interested in exploring the source of her Japanese sensibility, I asked her about her origins and interest in Japanese art.

At age one, she and her family were evacuated from their vegetable farm to an internment camp in the Arizona desert. "We were wiped out and had to start from scratch. Before the war we were prospering," remembers Omori. After World War II the family resettled in the same area, 50 miles north of the Mexican border. Her mother died soon after.

Omori's life has been diametrically opposite that of her ancestral female counterparts. Standing just five feet tall, she has admirably succeeded in one of the most macho of technical professions—cinematography. She was the first TV news camerawoman west of the Mississippi, getting a job with KQED's award-winning series *Newsroom* in 1968. Since 1972 she has been cinematographer on such noted independent documentaries as *Rosie the Riveter* (by Connie Field), *La Ofrenda: The Day of the Dead* (by Lourdes Portillo and Susanna Muñoz), *Carved in Silence* (by Felicia Lowe), and *Hopi, Songs of the Fourth World*, and *Hearts and Hands* (by Pat Ferrero). She also worked with ethnographic filmmaker



A Japanese American vegetable farmer (Natsuko Ohama, right) comes in conflict with her husband's traditional values when she pursues her love of writing in Emiko Omori's first fiction film, *Hot Summer Winds*.

Photo: Mitzi Trumbo, courtesy American Playhouse

were 'discouraged from congregating.' So, for a long time, I wanted to be the total opposite." Despite these youthful sentiments, Omori's latest film, *Hot Summer Winds*, is infused with Japanese aesthetics and sensibilities.

*Hot Summer Winds*, aired on *American Playhouse* last May, is an hour-long drama set on a tomato farm in California in 1934. It tells the story of a traditional Japanese immigrant family and the fissures that result when the wife begins to develop her talent as a haiku writer. Omori wrote and directed the film, which was produced by Wendy Balri Slicki and is based on two short stories by the acclaimed Japanese American writer Hisaye Yamamoto. It is told from the perspective of 10-year-old Yoneko (Tricia Joe), who relates how her mother, Hatsu Hosoume (Natsuko Ohama), flowered into a recognized writer of haiku.

John Marshall on a series of health and nutrition videos for and with the bushman of the Kalahari in Africa and with French director Chris Marker on his segment for a 13-part series on Greek culture and philosophy called *The Owl's Legacy*.

In addition to her work with independents and public television stations, Omori has also produced and directed her own films for the past two decades. Prior to *Hot Summer Winds*—which is her fiction feature debut—Omori directed a short dramatic piece, *The Departure* (1984), and the documentary *Tattoo City* (1980), on tattoo artist D.E. Hardy.

"Oddly enough, it was through tattooing that I rediscovered Japanese art," recalls Omori. "My tattooist, D.E. Hardy, was a scholar. He lined the walls of his studio with Japanese prints. We'd look at hundreds of prints and go to exhibitions when I was trying to choose an image." Omori had Hardy cover her entire back with a magnificent tattoo of a female pearl diver fighting fire-spitting sea dragons.

"Also, I think that having grown up in a Japanese-oriented household did influence my aesthetics," Omori reflects, "even though my parents, like those in my film, were peasant truck farmers. No matter what my step-mother served, she would slice it in a particular manner. She peeled the cucumbers decoratively for every meal. People would come over with Japanese tea pastries which they wrapped beautifully. Aesthetics and art are revered in Japan. Even the rice bowls and tea cups of the poorest are attractive."

Japanese woodcuts clearly inspired the framing of many scenes in *Hot Summer Winds*. Omori and her cinematographer, Stephen Lighthill, pay as much attention to what happens at the edge of the frame as in the center. Often the action is staged half-inside and half-outside the frame, constantly reinforcing the existence of the space beyond the visible image. Omori's work also includes more specific references. For instance, in Japanese prints the nape of the neck is often erotically featured. In the bathhouse scene in *Hot Summer Winds*, when Hatsu fantasizes about the new farmworker, wet hair and drops of water cling to the back of her neck as she draws a cotton kimono over her bare shoulders.

Originally entitled *Seventeen Syllables*—in reference to the number that compose a haiku—*Hot Summer Winds* is itself like a poem. The story builds with little dialogue and short, evocative scenes. Like a haiku, the film evokes rather than dramatizes. An earthquake is indicated by crates of tomatoes falling to the bottom of a pond, which then rise slowly to the surface when calm ensues. For the love scene, a hand brushing hair from Hatsu's face suffices to suggest the amorous relations that follow.

"I was brought up with a respect for privacy," says Omori. "We don't need doors. We look away. In Japan, with its overpopulation, privacy was a state of mind. This notion pervaded my sensibilities in designing and directing the vi-

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**Yoneko comforts her husband, Tex (Sab Shimono), after he suffers a minor accident.**

Photo: Mitzi Trumbo, courtesy American Playhouse

gnettes. The girl's little world is the cardboard playbox; the father's his shed. Everyone has their own private place—and the mother's private place is her writing."

This notion of privacy and discrete spaces informed Omori's choices, even when a more television-friendly shot offered itself. Omori recalls how difficult it was to set up the *moxa*, or folk medicine remedy, scene in the bedroom. "Although I had a beautiful close-up which would pick up for television, I chose the distant shot of observation through the curtain," she says. Similarly, the characters often hesitate before entering another's physical or mental space.

The film serves to introduce us not only to Japanese sensibilities and aesthetics, but also to the foods, apparel, and customs which the immigrants successfully integrated into their new lives. Omori's script rarely explains unfamiliar terms or items. "I wanted to make a film where people were just living their lives, without the history lesson." We are simply asked to listen and observe. *Daikans* (Japanese radishes) hang out to dry. Hatsu serves tea pastries and buys tofu. An *ofuro*, or Japanese bathhouse, and *obutsudan*, a Buddhist family altar, fit naturally into the farm's setting.

In a larger sense the film speaks to concerns of men and women today. It is a feminist story of a woman who asserts her right to self-expression against the forces of tradition. Challenged, the husband, Tex, is forced to change radically. At first he prohibits his wife's pursuit of haiku and burns her prized scroll. By the end of *Hot Summer Winds*, he acknowledges and supports her need and love for writing, presenting her with the gift of a haiku pen. He even cooks for his children. This is a profound break with Japanese tradition.

Japanese and American characteristics merge seamlessly in *Hot Summer Winds*. Both Japanese wooden clogs and rugged American workboots suit Hatsu's daily life. The children eat with forks while the parents use chopsticks. The hot, dry, vast American West, always just outside the farm oasis, also has its effect on the family, encouraging resilience, self-reliance, and individuality.

"I tried to put myself in the mind of someone coming here and how America looked to them," Omori explains. "Imagine the sense of freedom. In Japan life is very close and controlled because of overpopulation. Here you could be a little wilder." The poetry in *Hot Summer Winds* reflects an awe at the landscape's expansiveness:



*Shimmering and blue over the Montana  
grass*

*the heat waves tremble.*

*The road which I am to walk stretches  
without end.*

"When I was working on *Home from the Eastern Sea*, I had a revelation," Omori recalls of the documentary history on Asian Pacific Americans, coproduced by KCTS-Seattle and the Washington Centennial Commission. "I realized that our narration talked about how Asians were set apart because they were different. For instance, the Chinese had queues [pigtales]. Well, what about how Americans looked to them? After that, we started talking about point of view...about inside-out or outside-in. Then we changed the narration

to say what it was like for an Asian person coming here at the beginning of the century. What did they see? Unshaven people living in hovels and eating big pieces of meat. Some Japanese left villages with running water and electricity. Japanese eat food in small slices cut for chopsticks."

*Hot Summer Winds* reflects this immigrant vision as well. "Coming from Japan, a small island, and seeing a huge vista of land and fields, sparsely populated, must have been an amazing thing," muses Omori. As a young Japanese poetry editor in the film remarks, "The endless fields out here are amazing. As far as the eye can see, a huge country—full of foreigners."

*Lucille Rhodes is an independent filmmaker and professor of film history at C.W. Post Center, Long Island University.*



**Director Emiko Omori (center) with her "Japanese family" from *Hot Summer Winds*.**

Photo: Mitzi Trumbo, courtesy filmmaker

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## Domestic

**CHARLOTTE FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 28-May 8. Ind. film- & videomakers working in US invited to competitive fest which awards \$3,000 minimum prize money. Features & shorts completed after 1989 accepted. Cats: doc, narrative, experimental & animated. Last yr fest screened 36 films from 300 entries. Sites incl. Mint Museum of Art, Spirit Sq. Ctr for the Arts, Afro-American Cultural Ctr, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County & Manor Theatre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 9. Contact: Robert West, Charlotte Film & Video Festival, Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Rd., Charlotte, NC 28207; (704) 337-2000.

**FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL**, June 5-14, FL. Invitational expo of film at Enzian Theater focuses on film as art. Showcases 20 artists & invites int'l entries in animation (experimental, computer, traditional), doc., children's, avant-garde & experimental cats. Shorts programmed w/features. Incls awards, galas, seminars, showcases. Audience est. at 6,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video (computer animation only); preview on cassette. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Enzian Theater, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland, FL 32751; (407) 629-1088; fax: (407) 629-6870.

**INTERNATIONAL HEALTH & MEDICAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 12-17, CA. Formerly biennial John Muir Medical Film Festival, annual fest has become world's largest competition devoted entirely to medical & health-related audiovisuals, w/screenings throughout SF Bay Area, nat'l satellite conferences & gala awards ceremony to be featured on Lifetime Medical Television & Discovery Network. Catalog is invaluable resource for locating latest health & medical films. Embracing mainstream & alternative approaches, 800 entries expected in 1992 in 40 cats, incl. programs targeting health professionals & consumers. Entry fees: \$75-200. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", interactive laser videodisc (NTSC). Deadline: Mar. 20. Contact: International Health & Medical Film Festival, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94598; (415) 947-5303; fax: (415) 947-5341.

**JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL**, July, CA. Estab. 1981, noncompetitive fest accepts contemp. films w/ Jewish subject matter; filmmaker need not be Jewish. Related fest in Madrid in Oct. also celebrating Sephardic Jewish exp. All genres. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Deborah Kaufman/Janis Plotkin, Jewish Film Fest, 2600 10th St., Berkeley, CA 94710; (510) 548-0556; fax: (510) 548-0536.

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 21-31, CA. This showcase of docs & shorts invites submissions of new releases for regional Bay Area premieres. Seeks socially relevant, artistically innovative works that present personal points of view, particularly works which address this yr's theme, "cultures in collision." Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Artistic Director, NEFVF, 655 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 465-6885.

**NY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN & GAY FILM** (The New Festival), June 4-14, NY. Showcases all film & video genres by, for, or about gay men & lesbians, incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", (super 8 only if transferred to tape). Submit preview entries on 1/2" or 3/4" along w/ \$5 shipping & handling.

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

Deadline: Mar. 20. Contact: New Festival, 80 8th Ave., Suite 902, New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-1820; fax: (212) 807-9843.

**ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR**, Aug. 8-14, NY. Intensive week of screenings & discussions at Wells College in Aurora, exploring all forms of ind. cinema & video w/ participants of all ages, backgrounds & professional concerns. Open to all, incl. film/videomakers, teachers, students, scholars, critics, programmers, activists. This yr seminar explores cultural identities negotiated through film/video. Special interest in work by & w/ members of disenfranchised groups & ethnic, religious & sexual minorities who use film/video to claim identity. Featuring innovative work by indigenous peoples incl. Native Americans, Inuit, Amazonian Indians, Australian Aborigines, Papua New Guineans & other Pacific Islanders. 1992 programmers—Faye Ginsburg & Jay Ruby—are interested in ind. doc, narrative, animation & experimental forms that extend Flaherty tradition of cinematic exploration. Send description or press kit to either programmer (Faye Ginsburg, Dept. of Anthropology, 25 Waverly Pl., NYU, New York, NY 10003; Jay Ruby, Box 128, Mifflintown, PA 17059). Do not send films or tapes. Deadline: Apr. 30. For registration info, contact: Sally Berger, International Film Seminars, 305 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 727-7262; fax: (212) 691-9565.

**SINKING CREEK FILM CELEBRATION**, June 6-13, TN. Leading Southern showcase & competition for ind., noncommercial & student films & videos of all lengths, now in 23rd yr. \$10,000 in cash awards; incl. Hubley Animation Award; \$500 award for features of special merit; 2 Asheville Cinematheque Awards (\$150) for excellence in doc & experimental. Cats: young film/videomaker (to age 18); college film/videomaker (undergrad); ind. film/videomaker, 2 purchase awards from TN Arts Commission. Entry fee: \$15-75, by length. Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Mary Jane Coleman, Sinking Creek Film Celebration, 1250 Shiloh Rd., Greeneville, TN 27743; (615) 638-6524 or Meryl Truett, executive dir., (615) 322-2471.

**SLICE OF LIFE FILM FESTIVAL**, July 10-11, PA. 10th

annual fest held in conjunction w/Central PA Festival of the Arts. Open to observational & doc films & videos depicting "special moments of everyday life." Cash awards, prizes, invitations to screenings, reception & discussion. Narrative works & work over 30 min. not accepted. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Sedgwick Heskett, Slice of Life Film & Video Showcase, c/o Doc. Resource Ctr, 106 Boalsburg Rd., Box 909, Lemont, PA 16851; (814) 234-7886; fax: (814) 234-0939.

**STUDENT ACADEMY AWARDS**, June, CA. 19th yr of competition for works by US college & univ. students supports & encourages filmmakers w/ no previous professional exp. Gold, Silver & Bronze Awards (incl. cash of \$2,000, \$1,500 & \$1,000) for outstanding student filmmaking in animation, doc., dramatic, experimental cats. Entries must be made in student-teacher relationship, in school setting & completed after Apr. 1, 1991. 60-min. max. length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Must submit entries through regional coordinators: ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT to John Gianvito, asst prof., Art Dept, UMass at Boston, Harbor Campus, Dorchester, MA 02125-3393, (617) 287-5730; NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, OH, VA, WV, KY to Warren Bass, Dir., MFA Program, Radio-TV-Film, Temple Univ., Philadelphia 19122, (215) 787-1666; NY, Puerto Rico to Daniel Glick, Brooklyn College Film Dept, Bedford Ave. & Ave. H, Brooklyn, NY 11210, (718) 780-5057; NC, SC, TN, AR, GA, AL, FL, MS, LA, OK, TX, CO, NM, UT, AZ to Stephen Mims, Dept of Radio-TV-Film, CMA 6.118, Univ. of TX, Austin, TX 78712-1091, (512) 471-4071; MI, IN, WI, MN, IL, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS, MO to Dan Ladely, Mary Riepmann, Ross Film Theater, Univ. of NE, Lincoln, NE, (402) 472-5353; MT, WY, ID, NV, AK, WA, OR, N. CA to Bill Foster/Kristy Edmunds, Northwest Film Ctr, Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park, Portland, OR 97205, (503) 221-1156; S. CA, HI to Donald J. Zirpola, Communication Arts Dept, Loyola Marymount Univ., Loyola Blvd. at W. 80th St., Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 338-3033. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Regional Coordinator or Richard Miller, awards administrator, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972; (310) 247-3000; fax: (310) 859-9351.

## Foreign

**EKOFILM**, May 25-29, Czechoslovakia. Accepts films & TV programs addressing environmental issues w/ "nonconventional opinions & nonconventional...solutions & that underline the environmental aspects of all human activities." Competitive & informational screenings, panel discussions, professional meetings. Awards: Great Prize of EKOFILM, 5 main prizes, special prize of Jury & Certification of Honor. Entries for int'l section must be produced after Jan. 1, 1990. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (PAL only). Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: EKOFILM Secretariat, Box 668, 113 57 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia; tel: 42 2 235 8947/42 2 236 0620-3; fax: 42 2 235 9788.

**HAMBURG NO-BUDGET SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, June 4-8, Germany. Int'l competition for short films in 3 cats: No-Budget Competition: for shorts/videos w/ minimal prod. costs & self-financed works; Steppin' Out: for shorts that already received subsidy &/or prod. financing exceeding DM10,000; 3 Minute Quicky: for films/videos shorter than 3 min. w/ particular theme. Total of DM30,000 in awards. Program incl. panorama of Finnish, Brazilian, Portuguese films; retrospective of short films by black filmmakers; first short films by

famous directors; trash works; Visionsbar selected for non-public screenings; performances, installations, symposia. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: LAG FILM Hamburgue.V., NO BUDGET-Buro, Glashuttenstrasse 27, D-2000 Hamburg 36, Germany; tel: 40 43 44 99; fax: 40 430 27 03.

**INTERAMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**, June 17-26, Peru. Held in Lima & Cuzco, Peru, fest showcases recent cinema & video prods made by & about indigenous peoples of the Americas & which are concerned w/human rights, ecology, communications & development. Fest promotes films/videos on cultures & claims of indigenous peoples; encourages exchange among participants; inspires coproduction of fiction & nonfiction genres; promotes training of indigenous peoples & discussions of visual anthropology field w/ special attn to research, prod. & critique of filmic technography. Awards for best visual & anthropological treatments, best testimonial & doc. value; best fiction film; best Latin Amer. prod.; special prizes for human rights; ecology; ethnic identity. Retros, forum, colloquium & exhibitions. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Comision Organizadora IV Festival Americano de Cine de Los Pueblos Indigenas (CLACPI), A. Juan de Aliaga 204, Lima 27, Peru, S. America; tel/fax: (51-14) 617949.

**PARNU INTERNATIONAL VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY FILM FESTIVAL**, July 5-12, Estonia. 6th ed. of scientific & artistic competition event anthropologists & doc. filmmakers of East & West, supporting cultural survival or recording cultures' social, historical, or ecological issues. Entries must be under 60 min. Awards 1st prize (large Estonian handwoven blanket); prizes for best films on survival of indigenous culture & outstanding scientific documentation. All prizes are Finn-Ugric handicrafts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2" (preview cassettes are not returned). Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Parnu International Visual Anthropology Society, Box 150, Parnu 203600, Estonia; tel: 7 014 444 3869.

## FIVE THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations, and organizations: New York State Council on the Arts; National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation; Rockefeller Foundation; Consolidated Edison Company of New York; Beldon Fund; Edelman Family Fund, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and Funding Exchange.

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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Consignment Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to preview work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### National Car Rental

National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

### Mastercard Plan

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### Facets Multimedia Video Rentals

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## MORE TO COME

Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

## Join AIVF Today . . .

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producer — providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

### Individual membership

10 issues of *The Independent*  
Access to all plans and discounts  
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Join AIVF today and get a one-year subscription to *The Independent*.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**CENTER FOR CREATIVE IMAGING** in Maine accepting appls for summer & fall programs. For course descriptions & appl., contact: Center for Creative Imaging, 51 Mechanic St., Camden, ME 04843-1348; (207) 236-7400; fax: (207) 236-7490.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TELEVISION CENTER** offers work-in-progress workshops to screen &/or view works; free refreshments. Dates: Mar. 25, Apr. 22. Reservations requested. Contact: Lori Lerner, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510. Also avail. free video & editing workshops, on-line seminars, doc. workshops in Spanish. Contact: DCTV.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** March workshops: Location Sound Recording; Optical Printing Masterclass w/ Barbara Hammer; Lighting for Film; Apparatus No-Budget Production Workshop; Directing the Ind. Doc. & Prod. Mgmt. Contact: Media Training Dept., F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9371.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** media workshop, Mar. 21 & 28. Intro. to Writing for Media: Part I covers techniques used in writing for film & video; Part II incl. indiv. scriptwriting for analysis by the class. Fee: \$40/members, \$50/nonmembers. Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606; fax: (212) 925-2052.

**YELLOWSTONE MEDIA ARTS SUMMER WORKSHOPS**, May 26-July 17. Advanced Scriptwriting; Animation; Japanese Cinema; From Manager to Mogul. Contact: Paul Monaco, Dept. of Media & Theater Arts, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-2484.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**AXLEGREASE**, Buffalo's wkly public access program, seeks experimental, narrative, animation, doc. & computer imaging films & videos. Send 1/2", 3/4" Beta, 8mm, or hi-8 tapes under 27 min. to: Axlegrease, Squeaky Wheel, 372 Connecticut St., Buffalo, NY 14213; (716) 884-7172.

**CATHODE CAFE**, broadcast on TCI Channel 29, seeks work from video artists. Send 3/4" or VHS to: Cathode Cafe, 27600 Alki Ave., SW #305, Seattle, WA 98116 or call Stan LePard (206) 937-2353.

**CITY TV**, Santa Monica's cable access channel, seeks nontraditional works, particularly programs for seniors, the disabled, children, Spanish-language programming, video art & social docs. Contact: Laura Greenfield, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (213) 458-8590.

**EARTH BEAT**, wkly Turner Broadcasting show, seeks "video dispatches": 2-min. self-contained reports which portray indiv. or group efforts to revitalize planet. Contact: Kim Calebs, dispatch coordinator, Earth Beat, Box 7648, Atlanta, GA 30357-0648; (404) 874-9696.

**FEEDBACK**, Chicago Access CAN TV 19 series, seeks videos promoting dialogue on cultural issues outside mainstream media. VHS, S-VHS, 8mm, hi-8 or 3/4" eligible. For info. call Chris Shudtenover, (312) 819-0213 or submit tapes to: Feed Back, Center for New Television, 1440 N. Dayton St., Chicago, IL 60622.

**FILMWORKS TV**, wkly 1/2-hr TV show featuring work by ind. filmmakers, seeks films under 26 min. Fee for

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., March 8 for the May issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

works. Send 3/4" 2-track tapes to: Jerome Legions, Jr., Omega Media Network, Box 4824, Richmond, VA 23220; (804) 353-4525.

**FLAGSHIP CHANNEL**, Univ. of Maryland's educational access station, seeks doc., animation, experimental & other original prods. No fees. Send VHS or 3/4" tapes. Contact: Dan Kolb, Flagship Channel, 0304 Benjamin Bldg., Univ. of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; (301) 405-3610.

**IMAGE UNION**, program for ind. producers, seeks 3/4" tapes for broadcast in doc., narrative, animation, comedy, or experimental cats. Contact: Jamie Ceaser, WTTW, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-5000.

**ITERATIONS: THE NEW DIGITAL IMAGING** show at ICP seeks works of electronic photography, digital video, computer graphics & animation. Contact: International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10128; (212) 860-1778; fax: (212) 360-6490

**LA PLAZA**, WGBH's wkly doc. series for & about Latino community, seeks original film & video works treating Latino social & cultural issues. Send 3/4" or VHS to: La Plaza/Acquisitions, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777.

**MEDIA AWARDS COMPETITION**, sponsored by the National Council on Family Relations, seeks entries. Cats incl. abuse & neglect, aging, contemporary social issues, parenting issues, sexuality & sex role development, etc. Submissions must be first-time entries to competition & released after Jan. 1990. Deadline: Mar. 15. For appl. contact: National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Ste. 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421; (612) 781-9331.

**NIGHTSHIFT**, student film/video showcase on WCVB-TV Boston. Submit 3/4" & short bio to: Chay Yew, Nightshift, WCVB-TV Boston, 5 TV Place, Needham, MA 02194-2303; (617) 449-0400.

**REEL TIME**, monthly film series at P.S. 122, seeks experimental & doc. films. 16mm & super 8 only. Submit VHS copy to: Jim Brown, c/o Reel Time, Performance Space 122, 150 1st Ave., New York, NY 10009; (212) 477-5288.

**ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR** seeks ind. doc., narrative, animation & experimental works that extend Flaherty tradition of cinematic exploration. Send description of work or press kit to: Faye Ginsburg, Dept. of Anthropology, 25 Waverly Place, NYU, New York, NY 10003 or Jay Ruby, Box 128, Mifflintown, PA 17059. For registration info., contact: Sally Berger, executive director, RFS, 305 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 727-7262; fax: (212) 691-9565.

**TERRI RANDALL FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTIONS** seeks films & videos on Americans exploring their ethnic roots for TV series. Contact: Terri Randall, 310 W. 99th St. #707, New York, NY 10025; (212) 749-9299.

**THE VIDEO PROJECT**, nonprofit distributor of educational films & videos, seeks works on environment, arms race & other global concerns. Contact: Peter Epstein, The Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (415) 655-9050.

**VIDEOSPACE**, TV anthology cablecast nationally, seeks films. Send SASE for guidelines: 3733 28th St. #24, Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 361-2102.

**WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS** invites entries for 1992 Clarion Awards national competition, open to women & men. Winners honored at National Professional Conference in Chicago, Oct. 1-4. Entry fee: \$35/members; \$75/nonmembers. Deadline: Mar. 16. Contact: Laura Rush, WICI Headquarters, 2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 417, Arlington, VA 22201; (703) 528-4200; fax: (703) 528-4205.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**ANIMATOR** sought by Univ. of the Arts for full-time tenure-track position beg. Sept. 1. Salary commensurate w/ exp. Req: MFA or equiv., personal/experimental work in animation. Send resumé, sample of work, statement of teaching philosophy & 3 names by Mar. 16. Contact: Alida Fish, Photo/Film/Animation Dept., Philadelphia College of Art & Design, 33 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

**ARTWAVES**, Buffalo wkly public access cable program, seeks intern w/editing skills to develop programming & manage editing suite. Contact: Andrew Deutsch, Hallwalls, 700 Main St., 4th Fl., Buffalo, NY 14202; (716) 854-5828.

**EAGLE COMMUNICATIONS** seeks writers to work on treatments, scripts or rewrites. Send resumé, resumé & treatment or resumé & completed script to: Script Dept., Eagle Communications, Castle Montone Ltd., 413 Sinclair Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307; (404) 681-2715; fax: (404) 525-6840.

**HALLWALLS** seeks volunteers to serve as house managers or technical director for Buffalo Contemporary Arts Center's spring season. No prior exp. necessary. Contact: Eileen Sullivan, Hallwalls, 700 Main St., 4th fl., Buffalo, NY 14202.

**JANE WALLACE SHOW** seeks student interns. Responsibilities incl. research; assist. producers; bookings; general support. Send resumé to Joe Robinson, *Jane Wallace Show*, 718 Arch St., Suite 501 N., Philadelphia, PA 19106.

**MAINE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP & Intl Film Workshops** seek summer staff. Positions incl. film/video prod. instructors, technical dir. film office mgr, film publicist, technical & admin. interns, course asst/

unit mgrs & work-study. Summer job fair & open house April 4 & 5; to schedule interview, call: (207) 236-8581. For complete list of positions avail., info & appl., call or write: Maine Photographic Workshops, Rockport, ME, 04856.

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL** seeks nominations for 1993 Support for Organizations Program Panels in all arts disciplines. 1-2 yr terms. Appl. deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Sue Neumann, OAC, 727 East Main St., Columbus, OH 43205-1796; (614) 466-2613 or -4541.

**PALENVILLE INTERARTS COLONY** accepts appls for summer residencies. Priority to groups of collaborating artists. Deadline: April 1. For appl. & info, write: Palenville Interarts Colony, BOST, Suite 4R, 2 Bond St., New York, NY 10012.

## Publications

**ACLU BRIEFING PAPER ON ARTISTIC FREEDOM** addresses questions on censorship & provides overview of its history. \$1 each/\$5 for 25. Contact: ACLU Dept. L, Box 794, Medford, NY 11763.

**ART ON SCREEN** directory of films & videos about the visual arts provides detailed info. on more than 900 films & videos released btwn 1976 & 1990. \$65/cloth, \$35/paper. Contact: Annette Emerson, (617) 423-3900 ext. 232.

**ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS** offers the *1991 Environmental Guide*. Guide offers tips & sources to reduce, reuse & recycle in the office, on set & on location. Call (818) 763-2427 for details.

**FOUNDATION CENTER** offers *The Foundation Grants Index* (\$125); *Film, Media & Communications Grant Guide* (\$55); *National Directory of Corporate Giving* (\$195) & *The National Guide to Funding in Arts & Culture* (\$125). Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., Dept. TS, New York, NY 10003-3050.

**INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION ASSOCIATION'S** *Tracking Trends in Corporate Video* surveys salary trends in nonbroadcast video profession by region, yrs of exp. & industry. Discount for ITVA members; \$50/nonmembers. Contact: ITVA, 6311 N. O'Connor Rd., LB 51, Irving, TX 75039; (214) 869-1112; fax: (214) 869-2980.

**LOUIS B. MAYER LIBRARY** is a reading, reference & research library devoted to motion pictures, TV, video & new moving image technologies. Open to visiting scholars, researchers, grad. students & members of the film & TV community. Telephone reference service: (213) 856-7655 or (213) 858-7660, 1-3:30 p.m.

**MADE A FILM IN ASIA?** FIVF's Rockefeller-funded directory of production resources needs reliable contacts in Asia & Pacific. Contact: L. Somi Roy, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., NY, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

**MEDIA NETWORK**, natl info. center for social issue media now distributing latest media guide, *In Her Own Image: Films & Videos Empowering Women for the Future*, listing over 80 films & videos. NTSC video featuring 6 of the films reviewed avail. free to community centers, women's groups, unions & educators. \$7.50/indiv. & grassroots groups; \$11.50/institutions. Add \$3 for postage & handling. Contact: Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 929-2663; fax: (212) 929-2732.

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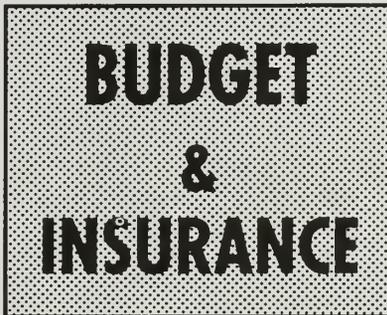
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ROAR! 64-pg. book on media activism (producing, fundraising, pirate radio, low-power TV) from Paper Tiger TV, contains informative articles & nat'l media resource list. \$10/retail; \$7/student & wholesale. Contact: Helen Granger c/o PTTV, 229 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 420-9045.

SOUTH END PRESS' *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Organizing* helps organizers apply politics to media campaigns. \$12/paper; \$30/cloth. 40% discount for 5 or more. Contact: South End Press, Box 741, Monroe, ME 04951; (800) 533-8478.

## Resources ■ Funds

ARTISTS' PROJECT GRANTS avail. from Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. \$38,000 in 6-10 grants to indiv. artists or groups based in S. California or Hawaii. Deadline: Apr. 1. Call (213) 624-5650 for info.

ARTS FORWARD FUND to support beleaguered arts organizations based in New York City has Mar. 15 deadline for proposal submissions. Contact: Arts Forward Fund, c/o Art Matters Inc., 131 W. 24th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 929-7190.

DCTV COMMUNITY PROJECTS PROGRAM provides free or low-cost equipment for community-related projects. Contact: Community Projects, Downtown Community TV Center, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM RESOURCE CENTER assists people in locating existing films or making new ones. Helps identify funding sources, locate experienced technicians & advise on marketing & distribution. Contact: Environmental Film Resource Center, 324 N. Tejon St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903; (800) 736-8345.

FILM IN THE CITIES offers regional film/video grants for independent productions based in MN, ND, SD, WI & IA. New projects eligible for up to \$16,000; grants to \$7,000 avail. for works-in-progress; Encouragement Grants to \$3,000 avail. for promising indiv. w/ limited exp. Deadline: May 1. Free info. workshops to assist applicants in MN (March 18; 612-646-6104); WI (March 30 & 31; 414-229-6971/225-3560 & 608-244-0579); IA (April 1; 319-356-5200/351-7301 for appts.). For appl. contact: Margaret Weinstein or Kevin Winge, Film in the Cities, (612) 646-6104.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE announces its second open call for project proposals of all lengths & genres intended for broadcast on public TV. Guidelines now avail. Deadline: Mar. 16. Contact: ITVS, Box 75455, St. Paul, MN 55175; (612) 225-9035.

KODAK US EDUCATIONAL ALLOWANCE FOR FILM SCHOOL STUDENTS offers schools & students 20% discount on Eastman camera films. Contact any Kodak Motion Picture & Television Products Division sales office for details.

THE MEDIA CENTER offers \$500 grants to media artists & ind. producers in upstate NY. Avail. for video, audio & time-based computer arts. Send 3/4", VHS, Beta, 8mm, audio cassette or Amiga disk, resumé & description of work by Mar. 15. Contact: Upstate Media

Regrant, the Media Center at VSW, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

**NATIONAL BLACK PROGRAM CONSORTIUM's** Program Development Fund offers support to public TV prods from an Afrocentric perspective. Grants range from \$1,000-\$30,000. Deadline: Mar. 16. For guidelines contact: NBPC, 929 Harrison Ave., Suite 104, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355.

**NEA TRAVEL GRANTS PILOT PROGRAM** provides travel support to artists, incl. media artists, for int'l activities. Appls accepted from artists intending to work in Latin America & Caribbean, South & Southeast Asia or Africa. Deadline: May 15. Deadline for support for artists at int'l fests & exhibitions: May 1. Contact: International Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 528, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 682-5422.

**NEW DAY FILMS**, self-distribution cooperative for ind. producers, seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs for US nontheatrical markets. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

**NORTH CAROLINA ART COUNCIL's** Management/Technical Assistance Grant, designed to help organizations improve their management effectiveness & strengthen programming & scholarships for nonprofit visual arts organizations awards btwn \$300 & \$1,000. Scholarship grants of \$500 avail. to staff members in charge of programming & exhibitions. Deadline: 6 wks before funds are needed, no later than Apr. 1. Contact: NC Arts Council, Dept. of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807; (919) 733-2111.

**PIFVA SUBSIDY PROGRAM** announces new grants deadlines: Mar. 16, May 15, Jul. 1. Program helps Philadelphia Independent Film/Video Association members complete works. For guidelines & appl. call: (215) 895-6594.

**SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION** offers multi-cultural grants to indiv. artists & arts organizations related to an ethnic culture, rural, or tribal community. Max. organizational award: \$2,500; max. indiv. award: \$1,500. Deadline: Apr. 15, 1992. Call (803) 734-8696 for appl. & info.

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## DONOR-ADVISED GRANTEES

The two participating FIVF Donor-Advised Fund Foundations have announced grant recipients. The **Beldon Fund** awarded \$10,000 to each of two environmental media productions, *Talking Garbage*, by Jennifer and Leslie Schwerin of the US Public Interest Research Group, and *Choosing Power: A National Energy Tragedy*, by Shannon Fagan and Farzinn Illich of Nuclear Free America. The Edelman Family Fund awarded \$5,000 to *Fatal Sentence: AIDS in Prisons*, by Carlos Ortiz, and *Under Attack*, by David Meieran, both sponsored by Media Network; *The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks*, by Camille Billops and James Hatch, sponsored by Hatch-Billops Collection; and *The Way We Look to a Song*, by Stephanie Black, sponsored by Film News Now.

## MEMBERABILIA

The **National Endowment for the Humanities** has awarded grants to AIVF members Eric Breitbart, Loni Ding, and Alexandra Isles. The **New York State Council on the Arts 1992 Media Production Grants Awards** have been received by AIVF's Tony Avalos, Beth B, Pearl Bowser, Chris Bratton, Amy Chen, Norman Cowie, Ken Feingold, Kathy High, Chris Hill, Philip Mallory Jones, David Meieran, Cara Mertes, Rita Myers, Hye Jung Park, J.T. Takagi, Dan Reeves, David Shulman, Rea Tajiri, Pat Saunders, and Lourdes Portillo. Congratulations!

*Ghost Dance*, by Tim Schwab and Christine Craton, won a Red Ribbon at the **American Film and Video Festival**. Portland animator Rose Bond's *Mallacht Macha* garnered a Blue Ribbon at the **AFVA Festival** and the Charles Samu Award at the **USA Film Festival**. Bond was also honored at the **Chicago International Children's Film Festival**, as was David Fain, whose *Oral Hygiene* was selected as Best Animated Production. Pamela Beere Briggs' feature documentary *Funny Ladies: A Portrait of Women Cartoonists* was also awarded an AFVA Blue Ribbon as well as third prize at the **Athens International Film and Video Festival**. Ellen Meyer's *One Day You Hear....*, a documentary about four people's journeys with AIDS, won a Bronze Plaque at the **Columbus International Film Festival** and screened at the **Fresno Gay and Lesbian Film Festival**.

The **Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund** awarded grants to videomakers Thomas Harris, Meena Nanji, and critic Ernest Larsen. Dena Aronson, recipient of the **Intermedia Arts Diverse Visions Grant**, will commence work on her collaborative video *Subtle Memories and Empty Promises*. The **Jerome Foundation** awarded grants to Zoe Beloff and Ellen Spiro. Beloff, along with Erik Knight, was also the recipient of an **Apparatus Productions' Regrant award**. The **Center for New Television** selected Terrence Doran as a **Regional Fellowship winner** and Dukey Dror, Stefaan Janssen, Joel Katz, Julia LeSage,

Hyeonseok Seo, Luis Valdovino, Zeinabu irene Davis, Van McElwee, and Loretta Smith as television and consulting awards recipients. The **Meadows Foundation** awarded Cynthia Salzman Mondell and Allen Mondell a grant to finish their documentary *Beauty Leaves the Bricks*. Lynn Hershman received a **Finishing Fund Grant from Women in Film**, Los Angeles, and Donna Mungen was awarded a **Lace Artists Projects Grant**. Temple University student Hak-Sook Kim received an **Eastman Scholarship Award** and Rob Yeo garnered a \$10,000 **Milwaukee County Artist Fellowship**.

A **Mid-America Emmy** was awarded to Jill Petzell for the script to her documentary *Critical Stages* by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. A regional Emmy nomination was presented to producer Frank Green and scriptwriter Sharon Wood for *The Forest Through the Trees*, also the recipient of the **Special Jury Award at the National Educational Film Festival**. Also distinguished by the Academy were Louis Massiah, Thomas Ott, Jacqueline Shearer, and Paul Stekler, Emmy-nominated for their work on *Eyes on the Prize II*. At the **First Annual IFP Gotham Awards**, Irwin Young was presented with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** and Jennie Livingston received the **Open Palm Award**. Livingston's *Paris is Burning* was also overwhelmingly voted best documentary by the **National Society of Film Critics**. Calogero Salvo's *Terranova* fetched the award for best actress at the **Festival Internacional de Santa Fe de Bogota**. Documentarian Barry Strongin's video *Gray Rocks* has been awarded the grand prize in the **Visions of US Home Video Contest**.

Congrats to **Video Shorts** competition winners Skip Blumberg, *Living in Flames*; Paul Garrin, *The Home(less) Is Where the Revolution Is*; Ruth Hayes, *Wanda*; and Ron Taylor, *Think about It*. Further kudos are due Verna Huiskamp, whose film *Jiggers* netted second place at the **Suffolk County Film Festival**, and to Jan Andrew, whose feature *Lysistrata*, *Lysistrata: A Mystery in the Making* was selected for the **New York Experimental Film Festival**. Doug Block's *To Heck With Hollywood!* was a winner in the **Creative Documentary** section of the **San Sebastian International Film Festival**.

Elise Fried won a **CINE Golden Eagle** for her documentary *"Do You Take This Man?" Pakistani Arranged Marriages* and a \$5,000 **AFI Regional Fellowship** to complete the editing of a video shot in Czechoslovakia. Eduard Erslovas' *Article XXIV* received the "Mention d'Honneur"

at the **XXIII Festival International du Film Maritime et d'Exploration** in Toulon, France. The **South Carolina Arts Commission** has chosen Peter Friedman, Ralph Arlyck, and Brady Lewis to take part in the **1991/1992 Southern Circuit** tour. Kudos to David Leiner, whose *Time Expired* won in the narrative category at the **New York Expo of Short Film and Video**, and to Freke Vuijst and Tana Ross, whose collaborative work *The Last Dance* won first place in the documentary category. Congrats to all!

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6



13



30

**COVER:** In the seventies public access promised to rejuvenate democracy in America. Twenty years later, Andrew Blau assesses the access record in "The Promise of Public Access." Also in this issue, Nathalie Magnan reports on the other olympics—the international public access olympiad in Albertville, France. Cover illustration: © 1992 Victoria Kann.

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## TALK ON THE CUBA PARTY LINE

To the editor

I am appalled by the uncritical article on filmmaking in Cuba ["Can We Talk?," January/February 1992]. Have your writers forgotten that this is a country from which people still escape on homemade rafts, risking death at sea? Are we next to expect an article on how benevolent the Khmer Rouge regime was, as told by its toadie filmmakers? Or perhaps some neo-Nazi filmmakers can tell us about how Adolph Hitler really liked the Jews and only wished to relocate them to Madagascar?

Ms. Anderson and Ms. Gold do your readers a disservice in not questioning the motives of the party hacks they spoke to. I am disgusted to hear Rebecca Chávez's boast that she shot enough film to circle the equator 10 times. I suppose 30 pieces of silver go a long way in Cuba today. If you were to talk to Cuban exile filmmakers, such as Ivan Acosta and Jorge Ulla (both in New York), as well as myself, you would hear instead how we prefer to scrounge for money to make real films, rather than accept a paycheck to follow government orders on what films the party will allow to be made.

As a final note, you might point out to your readers that Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, the creator of the greatest Latin American film of all time, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, finally had to leave Cuba because he simply had no more artistic freedom. That simple action proves that Castro makes room for hacks, but not for artists.

Joseph M. Rumbaut  
Houston, Texas

The authors reply:

Perhaps Mr. Rumbaut should check his own facts before calling us hack journalists. Santiago Alvarez, not Rebecca Chávez, was quoted as saying his footage would circle the equator 10 times. We used the quote to illustrate the commitment post-revolutionary Cuba has made to a cultural industry which, as Mr. Rumbaut himself admits, has produced some of the world's finest filmmakers.

Our article included comments from many Cubans who are critical of the Cuban government but remain committed to the ideals of the revolution. Cuban socialism has made a firm commitment to a state-supported cultural industry. It is unfortunate that filmmakers like Mr. Rumbaut have to scrounge for money and produce films without public funding in this country.

The purpose of our article was to add the voices of Cubans from the island to a debate from which they have too often been excluded in this country. In this complicated historical moment, nothing will be accomplished if we continue to have only one-sided discussions.

And lastly, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea is living in Cuba. He is starting production on a film that sympathetically portrays a relationship between a gay man and a party militant, based on a recent short story by Senel Paz. How's that for party line?

## GULF WAR GAFF

To the editor:

We were pleased to see Danny Schechter's article "The Gulf War and the Death of TV News" in your January/

February issue. All of us here were similarly discouraged by the Gulf War and its coverage and have thought a lot about the issues that Mr. Schechter so forcefully addressed. But we were surprised and disappointed that Mr. Schechter omitted any reference to *America's Defense Monitor*.

The series airs on more than 90 PBS stations (including Channel 13 in New York) and over 500 cable outlets through the VISN network. We produced eight episodes on the Iraq War, covering the conflict for months before and after the actual combat. The series had a more diverse range of views and was much harder-hitting than the network programming criticized in Mr. Schechter's article. The audience for the eight episodes was probably as large as the combined audience for the programs you mentioned as positive exceptions to the general trend (*Deep Dish TV*, *The 90's*, etc.) What a shame it is when even in the small world of the independent community we fail to call attention to existing quality resources—the very resources Mr. Schechter was decrying the absence of.

Sanford Gottlieb  
Senior producer, America's Defense Monitor  
Washington, D.C.

Schechter replies:

Through an oversight, I neglected to mention the fine work of *America's Defense Monitor* in my article on media coverage of the Gulf War. The always-informative weekly series, produced by the Center for Defense Information, did eight programs on the Gulf War, offering perspectives that were unavailable on the networks, including one report on the media's role.

Readers interested in more discussions of these issues might turn to a new study by John Fialka called *The Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*, and *Second Front*, the new book from John MacArthur, the publisher of *Harper's*.

## KITTEN LAPS IT UP

Dear cat:

Finally, in my five years of reading *The Independent*, I read something that set me on fire. And made me cry. Because finally someone out there who has been fighting long and hard had the gumption to reach out to those of us who are just beginning the fight.

Until your letter [Jill Godmilow's "An Exercise in Gauntlet-Throwing by a Tired Old Indy Cat to All Self-Proclaimed Indy Kittens under 30 Who Will Listen," December 1991], the view from here—ultra-conservative, ultra-suburban, down-home barbecue and shopping mall Charlotte, North Carolina—was right close to hopeless. Yes, we have some media arts organizations and a few small festivals, but *Tongues Untied* was refused broadcast throughout the state, and mindless TV rules the souls of too many people here who can't even read or write.

So last Saturday night I came home after freelancing all week on television commercials (my living), exhausted and pissed off at the wasted money and overblown egos, drank a glass of wine, and read your letter. I had seen your name for years and some of your articles; so I read it, and it woke me up. Not because the government has been persuaded to fund something other than bombs, not because PBS needs a shot in the arm, but because you cared enough about this country and about us to fight like hell to get ITVS in place.

And then you cared enough to challenge us and make us feel as if we were wanted and needed and valued. I'm a baby-buster. I am now inheriting the excesses of many of your and my parent's generation. I see a world ahead full of great struggle and anger. I see my living standards fading away. And I see my rights being whittled away. Like many people my age, I am reluctantly angry, cynical, and pessimistic. Reluctantly, because I constantly want to believe that "things" will get better, that I will make the films I want to make, sell the ones I've already made, maintain a standard of living so that I can continue to make films and videos, and raise hell til I drop. So my cynicism is counter-productive; I submit to it because at times it seems I'm forced to.

But to hear from someone who has fought the battles already, to read such inspired, passionate arguments, to feel such hopeful, selfless feelings coming from a cat like you brought tears to my eyes. I finally felt as if someone was watching over me. Someone cared enough to challenge all of us, because we are out there and we are passionate, but we are also cowed. Your letter gave me, and I'll bet a lot of us out there, much-needed encouragement. So I got up, put on my shoes, and at 9:00 on a Saturday night did what my father did in his struggling days: I worked. I went to my computer and sat down to continue writing my screenplay. You'll get a copy with the ITVS application by or before the deadline, Jill. Thanks.

Dorne Pentec  
Charlotte, North Carolina

To the editor:

I loved Jill Godmilow's open letter. Several years ago I headed an access organization in Columbus, Ohio, and became very dissatisfied with having to justify our existence twice a year before a city council that really wanted to spend those attractive cable dollars fixing potholes. Our motto back then was "Access—We put the Public Back into Public Television." I always tried to stress the point that documentary-makers should not just "do their thing," but should try to be interactive. We encouraged phone-in segments immediately following docs to stimulate discussion. I would have loved to do the same on PBS or even on those magnanimous affiliates, but it was not to be.

The years went by; I'm way past 30 and need to pick my battles carefully, so I switched fields. This is not a recommendation for all indies, but I truly believe in interactive television—videodisc, CD-ROM, and CD-I. I moved to the media side of education to help people more effectively interact with video. I love it. I get reward. And I offer this addendum to Jill's letter: The independent way of life requires sacrifice, so decide soon how much energy you will sacrifice producing (which is work, but fun) and how much energy you will sacrifice (joylessly) writing grant applications, kissing butts, and otherwise trying to move mountains with a teaspoon.

Michael Langthorne  
Notre Dame, Indiana

## EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

To the editor:

Is the art of telling fiction stories with video a thing of the past? I've read scores of articles in *The Independent* about documentaries dealing with environmental activism and all kinds of minorities of varied nationalities, color, and gender; grants and funding; the politics of cable, public programming, and festivals; and, once in a while, an informative piece on hardware—such as hi-8 and S-VHS.

These articles surely belong in *The Independent*. But isn't it equally important to talk about using modern techniques to tell fiction stories? As one who plunged in and used a single consumer VHS to shoot his first 40-minute feature, I know that there must be hundreds of AIVF members who either are or would like to be shooting features as well as documentaries.

There appears to be a great leaning toward documentaries in the festivals Kathryn Bowser pulls together for us each month. Many of those festivals are exclusive in terms of group, color, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or special interest. The great thing about doing fiction, however, is that it crosses all those boundaries.

Isn't there a way to encourage independents to produce innovative, off-beat, and well-done fiction stories using low-end equipment and high-end imagination and skills? And to find new ways for them to show their features to tens of thousands of people, instead of scores of friends? That would help build a reservoir of new, ground-breaking writers, producers, directors, and videographers outside the very narrow commercial field and push back the boundaries of good storytelling in America.

Peter Olwyler  
Gto., Mexico

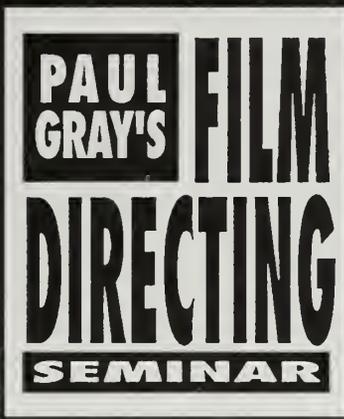
## DID YOU MISS MARCH?

We are in the process of converting our member files to a new program. If you did not receive the March issue of *The Independent*, please write and let us know. Be sure to include your **member number** along with your name and current address. Please bear with us during this transition period.

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## A SCREEN OF ONE'S OWN

### Independents Get Spotlight in Kodak's *First Look*

The Eastman Kodak Company, in partnership with the Tribeca Film Center and the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), has inaugurated a pilot project of screenings designed to give independent films a higher profile in the New York film community. Dubbed *First Look*, the series "gives films that need an extra push, that extra push," says Tribeca president Peter Rosenthal.

The pilot series is scheduled to run from February 1992 to February 1993 and will screen a new independent feature on the second Tuesday of the month at the Tribeca Film Center before an in-



Independents get a new monthly venue at the Tribeca Film Center.

Courtesy Tribeca Film Center

ited film industry audience of theatrical distributors, television buyers, foreign sales agents, talent agents, literary agents, and producers' and festival representatives. Although there is no stipend for exhibited works, press releases and trade paper coverage will accompany each screening.

The series seeks to cover a broad crosssection of themes, ethnicities, and genres. Features in need of completion funds as well as completed features not yet in distribution will be considered for the project. "We have a vested interest in the survival of the filmmaking industry," says Kodak's Charles Wilkinson, "so we want to establish a rapport, a credibility, with filmmakers at all points of the budget spectrum."

"Many of the ideas that went into *First Look* were fostered by the Independent Feature Project

(IFP), who worked with Kodak at the project's beginning," say Rosenthal. An advisory board was chosen in the series' nascent stages by organizers Rosenthal, Wilkinson, Lynda Hansen, director of the NYFA's Artists' New Works Department, and Kodak publicist Donna Daniels. The board recommends films and shorts to series' selection committee. Eventually there will be open calls, though details have not yet been established for independents who wish to submit works for consideration. Composed of members involved in independent film production and related fields, the board and committee "reflect the scope of the independent community," says Daniels. They intend to make an effort to locate directors whose films have been eschewed by acquisitions people because of their supposed lack of marketability.

But Rosenthal makes it clear that *First Look* will not merely try to promote independent features as potentially mainstream products. "Our concern is less to do with the ultimate marketplace for these films and more to do with creating a showcase for works that might otherwise escape the attention of the industry," says Rosenthal.

For more information contact: Peter Rosenthal, Tribeca Film Center, 375 Greenwich St., 11th fl., New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-4000, fax: (212) 941-3997.

TROY SELVARATNAM

## BLACK FILMMAKER FOUNDATION GOES HOLLYWOOD

Over the past decade the New York-based Black Filmmaker Foundation (BFF) has forged strong ties to Hollywood. Now, with the help of a \$100,000 contribution from Warner Brothers, BFF is expanding that relationship by establishing a Los Angeles office. First launched by an in-kind donation of space and equipment from Columbia Pictures, the LA office will aid in BFF's efforts to establish programs and build membership and clout on the West Coast.

The Hollywood BFF opened in February in Columbia-owned offices off the studio lot in Los Angeles. André Robinson, Jr. BFF's new executive director, is supervising both the New York and LA offices. In addition, the new BFF has a programming manager and administrative assistant on staff. The Los Angeles office will provide the same programs and benefits to members as New York's—monthly screenings, workshops,

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The *American Excess* TV spots show how North Americans—just five percent of the world's population—hog one-third of its resources.

Courtesy Canadian Media Foundation

and showcases—but each office will tailor events to its city's industry. "You have a larger base of working film practitioners in Los Angeles," explains Robinson, "so our workshops will need to address not only how to get in, but how to maintain yourself in the business."

Robinson contends that the LA office renews, rather than reneges on, BFF's traditional commitment to independent work and anticipates that its proximity to the studios will enhance rather than constrain independent production. "We will be able to help serve as a conduit between filmmakers and the studios' distribution networks," speculates Robinson. "The current flowering of black filmmaking came out of and was fueled by the independent movement. Hopefully, [the new office] will help independents get money to do those same films. It's really a matter of developing an audience for this sort of thing."

The \$100,000 grant—the largest corporate contribution ever given to BFF—was presented to BFF president and cofounder Warrington Hudlin in September. According to Warner publicist Charlotte Gee, the contribution was in recognition of BFF's unique position as the major proselytizer of black independent filmmaking and BFF's ability to introduce new commercially viable black talent to the industry. The contribution is "an extension of Warner Brothers' involvement with the Black Filmmaker Foundation," according to Gee. Warner Brothers produced Mario Van Peebles' *New Jack City*, Kevin Hooks' *Strictly Business*, and Spike Lee's forthcoming *Malcolm X*. The contributions from the two studios come with no strings attached, according to Lisa Clarke, BFF's program coordinator.

Started 13 years ago by Hudlin, Alric Nemblard, and George Cunningham, BFF has played a pivotal role in developing an awareness of black filmmakers and building audiences for their productions through its efforts as a distributor and exhibitor. Currently BFF has more than 2,000 members to whom it provides a number of services, including screenings and workshops for writers, directors, and actors.

Warner Brothers' contribution followed on the heels of Columbia Pictures' donation of \$100,000 in equipment and office space. These corporate contributions exhibit Hollywood's growing acceptance of blacks, but it remains to be seen what support will be provided to independent black filmmakers whose vision cannot fuel box office receipts.



For more information, contact the West Coast office at 3619 Motor Ave., Suites 310-314, Los Angeles, CA 90034; (310) 559-0070.

PATRICIA SPEARS JONES

*Patricia Spears Jones is an African American poet, arts writer, and dedicated cineast.*

## IF PIGS COULD FLY AND ADS MADE YOU THINK

Television advertisements have introduced us to singing Fruit of the Looms and men encased in blocks of mucus, so you wouldn't think a belching pig or a talking tree would startle commercial station managers. But Boston TV executives balked when the Canadian Media Foundation, a Vancouver-based nonprofit group, tried to buy time this past Christmas to air seven alternative advertisements. The foundation's ads, which are intended to provoke thought instead of purchases, include a 30-second *American Excess* spot featuring a giant pig bursting out of a map of North America and contentedly burping as the narrator urges viewers to cancel wasteful shopping binges. Other foundation ads depict clay animation trees pleading with the audience to save old-growth forests and present zombie-eyed children illuminated by that familiar flickering light while a voiceover warns, "Kathy is eight and she's addicted."

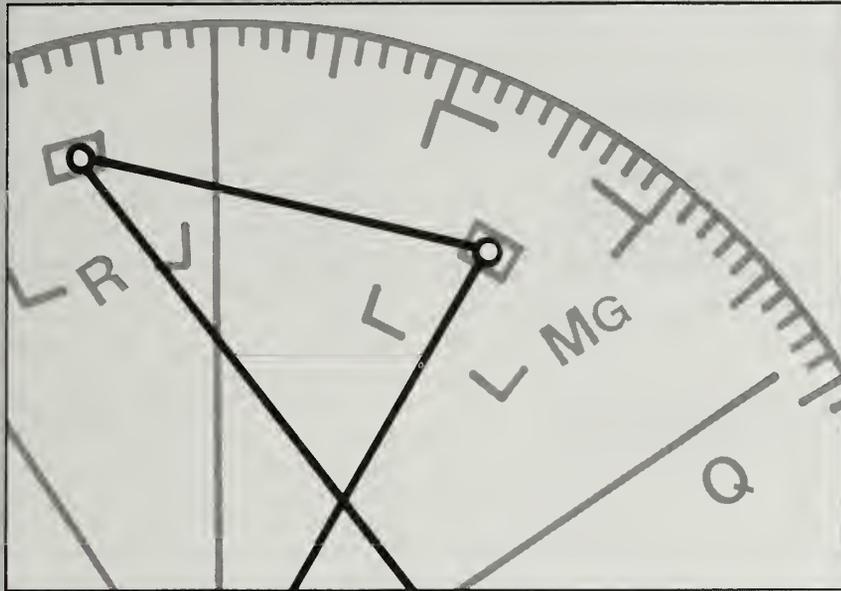
All three network affiliates in Boston refused to air the paid ads because they considered them "too controversial," according to Kalle Lasn, co-editor of *Adbusters*, the Canadian Media Foundation's quarterly magazine. "We would not broadcast a commercial that denigrated television," Matthew Margo, CBS vice president of program practices, told reporters at the time. "We also don't broadcast commercials that take controversial positions on important topics. If we did,

companies with the finances at hand would control the national agenda."

But that's precisely what's happening now, argues Lasn, who contends that North America is currently dominated by product pushers whose ads promote consumerism and a lifestyle that is destroying the planet. Grassroots activists, says Lasn, need to buy time on the public airwaves to encourage dialogue and "sell ideas instead of soap." The foundation itself evolved in the late eighties out of the efforts of Vancouver-based environmentalists to counter TV advocacy ads sponsored by British Columbia logging interests as part of a multimillion-dollar public relations campaign.

The foundation's commercials are available free of charge to anyone willing to raise the funds to buy time on local stations, where airtime is not prohibitively expensive. While a 30-second slot on primetime national TV costs about \$180,000, the same amount of time can be purchased on local late-night TV for as little as \$30, reports *Adbusters*. So far, ads have appeared in the US on a local commercial TV station in Montana and a cable show in Minnesota. And there are plans to introduce foundation ads to network affiliate stations in Los Angeles and New York in 1992. Japanese and German translations of the ads are also in the works with an eye to their distribution abroad.

Lasn and his colleagues hope that up-and-coming alternative admakers will replace "some of the 12-minutes per hour reserved for selling soap and pop" with information about "their passionate causes." Toward that goal, each issue of *Adbusters* includes an installment of "Media Wrenching: A User's Manual," a step-by-step guide to producing ads for under \$2,000 and getting them on the air. Installments even provide advice on how to fight for airtime if a station refuses to accept spots for broadcast—advice the



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foundation may soon have to follow since it is considering taking legal action against the Boston affiliates.

To obtain a free broadcast-quality tape or information on *Adbusters* magazine, contact: The Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6H 1B7, Canada; tel: (604) 736-9401.

HOLLY METZ

*Holly Metz writes regularly on social, legal, and cultural topics for the Progressive and the American Bar Association's Student Lawyer magazine.*

## PLUG PULLED ON OSU MEDIA DEPARTMENT

On May 13, 1991, Donald Harris, dean of the College of the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus, issued a memo proposing to "deactivate" the Department of Photography and Cinema (DPC), which has been in existence for over 60 years. The term "deactivation" was later changed to "termination," which according to OSU Academic Affairs guidelines "is the final step which removes the program from the possibility of future reactivation." The results of a secret ballot conducted in February among the College of the Arts faculty came out strongly in favor of termination, leaving just two steps remaining before the department is closed: a vote by the University Senate, and a vote by the OSU Board of Trustees. The proposed termination is particularly alarming since it is taking place within a large university—more likely to weather political and financial vagaries than smaller colleges—raising questions about whether the action is a harbinger of hard times to come for media departments across the country.

"That a university is closing down the department which does and can study the way the mass media is functioning in today's society...(at) this moment in history is catastrophic," laments Peter Watkins, Oscar-winning filmmaker, media critic, and visiting scholar at OSU. "I think it indicates that there is not an awareness of how extremely urgent the need is for students to be given a proper education in critical visual literacy."

A petition against termination of the department was signed by over 1,500 faculty, students, alumni, and media professionals from the US and Canada, and a letter-writing campaign garnered support from a variety of groups, including the University Film and Video Association and the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, as well as faculty at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Texas Christian University, Stanford, Howard University, and Oklahoma State University.

In a letter sent to an alumnus who raised concerns about the proposal, chairman of the OSU Board of Trustees, Hamilton J. Teaford, cites decreasing student enrollment and faculty attri-

tion as principal reasons for the proposed termination. But the department remains the second largest of the College of the Arts' eight departments judging by enrollment, according to *The Lantern*, OSU's student newspaper. Ardine Nelson, associate professor in the DPC, told *The Lantern* in August that the faculty had been specifically instructed not to search for replacements for the three faculty members whose intended departures put the faculty count at seven, below the minimum of 10 required for department status under university rules.

Harris *The Lantern*, that the proposal "was taken for one reason alone, and that is to better serve the students of this university," but students have had little opportunity to participate in the decision. At two forums held in January and February students and alumni had only a few minutes to speak at the end of each meeting. Undergraduate and graduate students will be allowed to complete their degrees according to the College administration, but scheduling has reportedly been a problem as classes have been cancelled. In August, *The Lantern* reported that the university was offering alternative courses to degree candidates, but Nelson expressed concern about whether such alternatives would provide equivalent information. Animation 557, a required course for cinematography majors, was dropped from the fall curriculum and an art education course offered as an alternative, according to Nelson. Sections of required Photography and Cinema courses were also reportedly cancelled, limiting the number of students who could enroll. Some graduate students were having difficulty finding any courses to take the following quarter, according to *The Lantern*.

For many opponents of the termination, the process has been almost as disturbing as the proposal. Though no official decision has been reached, the department has been all but dismantled. The photography and cinema faculty were transferred on paper into the Art, Art History, and Theater departments as of September 1991. With the exception of three employees, administrative staff were also transferred to other departments in September.

Objections have also been raised about the procedure for polling College of the Arts faculty regarding termination. On the same day that the faculty received ballots to vote on the proposal, they received a personal endorsement of the termination from associate dean of the College of the Arts, Judith Koroscik. Koroscik's memo (which some faculty reportedly received attached to the ballot by paperclip) highlighted the "extreme and longstanding hostility among the department's faculty members," the effect of the "divisiveness" on the students, and urged a vote for termination. Koroscik maintains that the arrival of ballot and memo together was unintentional.

The College of the Arts has raised the possibility of creating a Media Center for the Arts to replace the Department of Photography and Cinema, but

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plans remain sketchy and not everyone welcomes the horse trade. "Media centers primarily address issues of funding and research," DPC associate professor Clayton Lowe told the OSU Council on Academic Affairs last November. "Departments primarily address issues of teaching and learning. The differences are fundamental and critical. These are the kinds of things we should be talking about before the University starts destroying departments—particularly departments that play such a crucial role in the education of students who will be working in the world of information and entertainment."

ELLEN LEVY

## ICAIC AND THE CUBAN MOVIE CRISIS

Julio Garcia Espinosa, the head of the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) for the past nine years, has been replaced by Alfredo Guevara, who served as the institute's director from 1960 to 1982. The change in leadership for the internationally institute came in the wake of a series of politically controversial events which have called into question the role of ICAIC and cinema within Cuba's political process.

Espinosa's firing occurred after the release of *Alicia en el Pueblo de Maravillas* (*Alice in Wondertown*), one of three feature films produced by the institute in 1991. The film, which won a prize in Berlin, is a satiric portrayal of a young woman's adventures in Wondertown—a morally bankrupt and contradictory place which can be read a metaphor for present-day Cuba. Despite its popularity in Cuba, the film had only a four-day run instead of the more usual two weeks for ICAIC films. Press editorials and reviews condemned the film. "[The film] ends up reducing the historical project of the revolution to an insulting caricature," said a review in the official newspaper *Granma*.

The film's director, Daniel Diaz Torres, defends the work by arguing that critical debate is necessary if the revolution is to move forward. "I stand here as a revolutionary filmmaker who understands that we are taking positive steps to resolve our contradictions," Torres says. "There is a serious, calm, and mature debate going on with the leadership of the revolution."

Espinosa's firing coincided with a plan announced by the government—and published as an accomplished fact in the official government newspaper—that ICAIC would merge with the government's Institute of Cuban Radio and Television and the media production units of the Revolutionary Armed Services and Ministry of Education. ICAIC's directors drafted a letter of protest against the merger which is widely believed to have been intended to rein in ICAIC's historical freedom of expression, although press reports that the government acted from a need to cut costs would appear to have some validity considering the current economic crisis.



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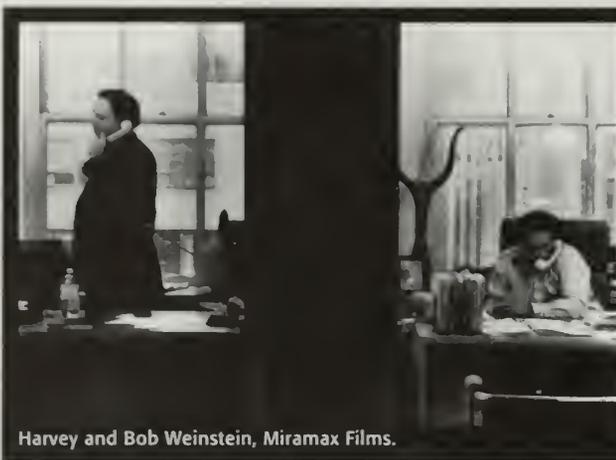
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The change of head and proposed merger raise questions about the future of the Cuban cultural industry. To date, *Alicia en el Pueblo de Maravillas* has not been rereleased for public viewing, and ICAIC remains a discrete entity. According to Guevara, a special commission consisting of filmmakers and government representatives is currently considering the future of both the film and the organization.

KELLY ANDERSON

*Kelly Anderson is an independent producer and writer based in New York City.*

## SEQUELS

**Timothy Gunn**, former director of product marketing for New York City's WNET/Thirteen, has replaced **Gretchen Dykstra** as director of National Video Resources (NVR). Dykstra is currently president of the Times Square Business Improvement District in New York City. **Andrew Blau** has joined the Electronic Frontier Foundation as staff associate for telecommunications policy. Job changes are underway at the Public Broadcasting System. **Glenn Dixon** left his position as director of News and Public Affairs Programming at PBS. Associate director **Karen Watson** is acting head until Dixon's replacement is found. **Sandra Heberer**, former director of PBS' Science and History Programming, has assumed the directorship of PBS' new News and Information Programming division, which will oversee News and Public Affairs. **Pierre-I. Girard**, former director of communications for the influential Quebec newspaper *Le Devoir*, assumed the position of coordinator for the Montreal-based Independent Film and Video Alliance. **Carlos Gutierrez-Solanas**, former director of the New York State Council on the Arts' Visual Artists Program, has become executive director of Artists Space. **Alexander Quinn**, former general manager of Multnomah Community Television in Portland, Oregon, has been named executive director of the Manhattan Community Access Corporation. **Robert Shuman** left the Learning Channel, where he was president, after its purchase by Discovery Communications and assumed the presidency of American Community Service Network Productions. Shuman remains executive director of *The Independents* series, which will continue to air on the Learning Channel.

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## A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS

### A Primer for Documentary Grantwriting

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PETER MILLER

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In theory, independent film- and videomaking provide us freedom to express ourselves however we wish. But if we want to be funded, it helps to have a project that people with money want to see made.

Raising money need not be a miserable obligation which takes you away from filmmaking. Try to think of writing a proposal as part of the creative process of making a movie. Fundraising can provide an opportunity to step back from a film or video and figure out its fundamental strengths and weaknesses. Resentment of the process is likely to show through in your funding proposals, while an enthusiastic proposal may help you get the money you need.

A typical funding appeal consists of three key elements: a written proposal, a sample of your

your film/videomaking technique, and be sure it is reflected in the scenes you've related. Clearly explain why your project is important, how it is different from similar works, and why the world needs it.

2. *Be explicit about the ways in which your film/video will advance the mission of the funder you are approaching.* Find out what the intellectual, artistic, or political goals of your potential funder are, and take these goals very seriously when writing about your project. Mark up foundation annual reports and giving guidelines with a highlighter and draw on these documents as inspiration for your own writing. If the funder you're approaching has formal application procedures, follow them to the letter. Answer every question in the order asked. Remember, the same people who developed the application guidelines may well be deciding whether to fund your project.

3. *Take the issue of distribution very seriously.* It's important to be clear about the audience for your project. What age group is it intended to reach? Is it aimed at a mass audience or a more targeted group? Is it a teaching tool? Will it be used in an organizing context?

Line up real names of potential users of your film or video. Funders want people to see the work they've funded, and the better you explain exactly how this will happen, the more likely it is that you'll be funded. Get letters from community organizations, educators, television stations, film programmers, or anyone else who might be interested in showing your film or video and include them with your application.

4. *Clearly explain who you are and why you're qualified to make the film or video.* If you're not yet a well-known producer, surely you have some attributes to recommend you. It is better to describe yourself in the most positive terms possible than to be humble and not get funded. Consider linking up with other well-qualified people—camera operators, editors, executive producers, codirectors—who might bolster your proposal.

You will need to secure a nonprofit fiscal sponsor to receive money from most foundations [See "Now a Word about Our Sponsor," January/February 1991]. If it will help your cause, consider choosing a thematically appropriate sponsoring organization. For example, while raising money for a documentary on southern labor history, I applied to several foundations as a project of a respected southern studies organization. The organization's good reputation lent our project a

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Rewrite your proposal until it looks like a movie you might want to see. Be sure to relate typical scenes, even if you have to dream them up.

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film/videomaking work, and a budget. These elements should support one another so that your proposal feels united, well thought-out, and persuasive.

#### The Written Proposal

I usually start fundraising by writing a generic proposal. In two to four pages, I try to distill the essence of the film or video, its relevance, importance, artistic approach, and the producer's qualifications. This generic document is then reworked for individual funders to conform to their requirements and philosophy.

A few fundamentals to keep in mind:

1. *Write clearly and precisely about your project.* Sum up what you're trying to do in the first sentence or two. Don't go off the deep end relating the history and background of your subject. Instead, write about your film as if it were a film. This is hard to do if you don't know exactly what your film is about. Take plenty of time to try to explain your project to your friends, and rewrite your proposal until it looks like a movie you might want to see. Be sure to relate typical scenes, even if you have to dream them up. Explicitly discuss

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legitimacy in the eyes of funders it might not have had if we had applied as a New York-based arts project.

5. *Pay attention to appearances.* A neat proposal with large type, clear headings, and even an occasional illustration is much easier to appreciate than one crammed to the margins with tiny text, no matter how brilliant.

## The Sample Tape

The sample you choose is of tremendous importance to the success of your application. A staffer at the Paul Robeson Fund for Film and Video tells of watching 100 work samples in three days. A strong sample will help distinguish your proposal from the run-of-the-mill reels. Conversely, if your tape is confusing, irrelevant, or hard to watch, what's to say your finished work will be any better?

Usually you can either submit a work-in-progress or a completed past work. Whichever you send, be sure that it relates to your written proposal and include with the application a clear, written explanation of exactly how it relates. Describe your approach to technique or subject matter, calling attention to those elements that may set you apart. Do you spend years living with your subject, shoot from a hot-air balloon, or use an unusual approach to lighting, editing, or narration? Explain how these techniques are reflected in the sample.

If sending a completed work, try to choose one that is stylistically or thematically relevant to your proposed project. When submitting a work-in-progress, place it in context. Be sure to describe what's going on in the sample scenes, who the characters are (if they're not identified), and where the scenes might fit into the completed work. If necessary, explain technical problems, like visible time code or scratchy, untimed workprint.

Speak with the funder's staff about their procedure for viewing samples. If they have a time limit, respect it, and be sure to cue your tape properly. Often funders won't look at more than 10 minutes; so keep that in mind before cutting a longer piece.

It is not necessary that the material in your sample actually make it into the finished film or video. At a Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) seminar on fundraising, Stephanie Black told of raising her first money for *H-2 Worker*, a documentary on Jamaican sugar cane harvesters in Florida, with a clip about Mexican migrant farm workers. What is key is that the material be powerful and show the approach you'll use in your project.

## The Budget

It is critical that all the elements of your proposal seem to describe the same project. According to Kevin Duggan of the FIVF Donor Advised Fund, "With all the proposals that come across the transom, the ones that get weeded out are often those where the different parts don't seem to

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Don't try to wow funders with fancy filmmaking jargon when simpler words will do.

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match." Many good proposals falter when the budget is inconsistent with the narrative, he says. Take the time to make your budget as strong as the rest of your proposal, and make sure it looks like it came from the same project.

If your proposal says you'll be travelling to archives in Rio, be sure to put airfare and travel expenses to Brazil in your budget. When going for humanities funding, be sure to adequately compensate your scholars. If the success of your film hinges on the participation of a particular actor or cinematographer, include the person's name and rate in the budget. Be sure to prepare a budget and time-frame that can actually be met.

Always include a convincing fundraising plan. Funders want to know that you are a good risk; you must demonstrate that you *can* get the rest of the money for your film or video. Include in your funding plan only those funders that might plausibly support your project, and try to keep your funding needs as low as possible. No one wants their grant to be a drop in the ocean. By the same token, if your bottom line is unusually low, you should explain how that will be achieved.

Finally, be clear and explain your terminology, especially when approaching a funder that doesn't usually fund media. Don't try to wow funders with fancy filmmaking jargon when simpler words will do.

There are a number of very good reference books on budgets. Among those that producers find particularly helpful are: *Movie Production & Budget Forms*, by Ralph Singleton (Beverly Hills: Lone Eagle Publishing, 1985); Singleton's *Film Scheduling* and companion book *Film Scheduling/Film Budgeting Workbook*, (Beverly Hills: Lone Eagle Publishing, 1989); and *Film & Video Budgets* by Michael Wiese (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 1990).

#### Finding Funders

With government funding scarce, foundations that give to film and video are besieged with applications from independents. Try to find creative alternatives to the most frequently approached sources. Ask your friends and families for contributions. Fundraise at parties and on public transportation. One filmmaker I know recently got a contribution from a passenger who sat next to her on a city bus. Corporations, churches, unions, and community organizations sometimes can be persuaded to give if your subject is near and dear to

them, even if they've never given to a film or video production before.

Still, there *is* money to be gotten from foundations. The best way I know to locate potential funders is in the end credits of films or videos similar to yours. When you finish your production, be assured that others will read your credits and approach your funders. Also, find out about funders that support the kind of work done by the subjects of your film or tape. For example, if you're making a film about modern dance, look for the names of potential funders on programs at dance performances.

Once you find the names of foundations, you can locate their addresses and phone numbers in *The Foundation Directory*, published annually by the Foundation Center. *The Foundation Directory*, which the reference section of your library should have, lists all kinds of foundations, not just those that give to media. It is organized by state and has a series of indices at the end which may help you find your way to a particular foundation.

The descriptions offered in *The Foundation Directory* are too brief to be of any real use; so call or write the foundations themselves and ask for copies of their application guidelines and annual report. You may also visit the Foundation Center itself, at 79 Fifth Avenue in New York City, which has copies of these documents on hand for thousands of foundations. It helps to be familiar with a foundation's priorities and giving guidelines before engaging in an extended conversation with its staff.

Foundation staff are usually very helpful, and you should not apply to a foundation without speaking with them first. They can tell you if it's worth applying (potentially saving you a great deal of time) and can aid you in framing your project in terms that make sense to the foundation's review board.

Finally, remember that fundraising, like mediamaking, is a collaborative process. Share your materials with your friends and colleagues. Let a friend who writes well critique your proposal; have a technically oriented colleague work on your budget and sampler. Take heart! Lots of mediocre projects have been funded, so why shouldn't money pour into your brilliant one?

*Peter Miller is an independent producer and a freelance grantwriter for independent films. He teaches grantwriting at Film/Video Arts in New York City.*



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## CHINESE MENU

## Vancouver's Cinema of the Pacific Rim

## BERENICE REYNAUD

The Vancouver International Film Festival, started 10 years ago by Alan Franey (the festival director), Janine Frasier (its business manager), and Leonard Schein (currently programmer at the Montreal World Film Festival), was invented to bring a worldwide selection of quality films to a population of highly trained technicians and film

screenings and meetings with foreign directors."

The festival is now the third largest in budget and importance in North America, after Toronto and Montreal. This year Vancouver presented almost 200 features in nine diverse sections: Galas and Special Events; Cinema of the Pacific Rim (from Australia to Thailand); Canadian Images (curated by Amnon Buchbinder); the Best of Britain; the New Germany; Cinema of Our Time (from Brazil to the US to Zimbabwe); and three tributes/retrospectives: the films of Seijun Suzuki,

refugees, who are investing heavily in real estate. There are also 50,000 Indians, 30,000 Japanese, and a growing Latino population, including a number of political refugees not allowed into the US. Although Franey insists that Vancouver's large East Asian population is not the only reason for the programming staff's "tremendous enthusiasm" for East Asian cinema, the make-up of the audience certainly plays a role.

This year the Cinema of the Pacific Rim section provided the most exciting and original part of the

Nonrecognition at home troubles Fifth Generation filmmakers such as Zhang Yimou, whose *Raise the Red Lantern* remains banned in mainland China.

Courtesy Orion Classics



buffs. British Columbia has become the third largest film production center in North America after Los Angeles and New York, with numerous US and Canadian features and television series shot here, as well as a few Hong Kong productions. "Many [British Columbians] are employed in the industry," says Franey, "and while everyone aspires to being a 'serious' filmmaker, very few ever get the opportunity. So the festival provides an opening. Some of the films produced here are greatly influenced by festival events—

the Cinema of Dreamland and the Fantastic from the 1930s and 1940s, and an homage to musical comedy screenwriters and lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The overall selection was put together by eight curators from Canada, the US, and Europe, each working in his/her area of expertise.

Vancouver's population, descendent primarily from Northern European immigrants, is rapidly changing. The Pacific exposure and mellow climate has attracted about 200,000 Hong Kong

festival. The section was assembled by British critic Tony Rayns, who selected 29 features from mainland China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. "In 1989 Alan Franey asked me if I wanted to be responsible for the Asian choices of the festival," Rayns recalls. "I said I couldn't do Asia as a whole, just Pacific Asia. But this was what he was specifically interested in; Vancouver wants to define itself as a Pacific city. The other condition that I made was that I wanted space," he

continues. "If [Frane] had wanted 'the best of Asian cinema' in 10 slots, I would have refused. A computer could do it, and you'd show the same films as everybody else. I needed room to take some risks, to show small independent films as well as major features."

Rayns also organized the first North American tribute to Japanese *yakuza* director Seijun Suzuki. The *yakuza* (or gangster) film is the Japanese genre film par excellence, which also means that it has been worked to death. Working for the Nikkatsu film company, Suzuki found an original voice in an hilarious melange of violence, repressed sexuality, and camp, taking the machismo "code of honor" to its logical and inane conclusions. The best example is *Tokyo Drifter* (1966), shot in munificent Cinemascope. In the climactic shoot-out, killers in pastel suits splatter each other's blood in the surrealistic creamy-white decor of a nightclub. "I made this film to annoy the studio," Suzuki confesses with a benevolent smile. Nikkatsu was indeed so annoyed that after his next film, *Branded to Kill* (1967)—the story of an anonymous hitman sexually aroused by the smell of boiled rice—they fired him for making "incomprehensible and unprofitable pictures." Suzuki had to wait 10 years to direct another film, this time as an independent. Most aficionados, however, find him more original as a rebellious studio hack than as an auteur.

Japan is currently experiencing a cinematic revival. Many films, produced independently by younger directors, express the raw energy of its contemporary pop culture and attract Western audiences—as demonstrated by Katsuhiro Otomo's animated feature *Akira* (1988), a huge success in Vancouver two years ago. In England, says Rayns, "distributors had not been interested in Japanese cinema for 20 years; since 1990, six have been released." Rayns' selection for Vancouver included *Boiling Point* (1990), the second feature by Takeshi Kitano (who played the sadistic and sentimental sergeant in Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*). A violent, sharp, unsentimental variation on the *yakuza* theme, it places a shy gas station attendant in opposition to sadistic gangsters, one of them played with gusto by the director himself. Impressive in its black humor and rigorous visual composition, *Boiling Point* is also the first *yakuza* film I have seen in which the latent homoeroticism of the genre becomes physical while remaining bracketed within a strict heterosexual context and a perverse code of honor. Hitasho Yazaki's *March Comes in Like a Lion* (1990) tells a tender, playful story of "mad love" between a boy and girl in the isolation of a run-down apartment—but the boy is amnesic and the girl is his sister. Rokuro Mochizuki's *Skinless Night* (1991) is the hilarious, semi-autobiographical account of the efforts of a porn director to become an auteur. Shunigi Nagasaki's *Stranger* (1991) features a female cab driver who overcomes her troubled past and emotional problems to fight back against an anonymous stalker.

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*Stranger's* lack of theatrical distribution in Japan raises the issue of the viability of Japan's incipient independent movement. Nagasaki's previous feature, *The Enchantment* (1989), won prizes at international festivals but failed at the domestic box office. So *Stranger* was shot in 16mm directly for the video market, in which it enjoyed a modest but significant success. Many independents may choose this paradoxical way of making films.

Nonrecognition at home also troubles mainland China's Fifth Generation filmmakers, the first group of students to graduate from the Beijing Film Academy since it reopened after the Cultural Revolution. The phrase "Fifth Generation" was actually coined by Western critics. The first generation of Chinese filmmakers would be that of the 1930s (silent cinema of the Shanghai studios); the second, that of the forties (militant, oppositional cinema produced by left-wing directors in the capitalistic Republic of China); the third, that of the beginning of the socialist regime (to construct the revolution); the fourth, that during the Cultural Revolution in the sixties (revolutionary operas, etc.); and the fifth marking the end of the Cultural Revolution. Younger filmmakers are currently trying to define themselves as the "sixth generation."

Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984), which put Chinese cinema back on the international map, was virtually ignored by local critics until it was discovered at the Hong Kong Film Festival. Chen now divides his time between China and the US, and his latest film, *Life on a String* (1991), was entirely produced with European and Japanese money. (It was shown at the New York Film Festival and released by Kino International.) Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* (1990), produced by a Japanese company, is still banned in China, as is his latest film, *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), produced by the Hong Kong branch of a Taiwanese company (Taiwan and the People's Republic have no official contacts) and distributed by Orion Classics. And Tian Zhuangzhuang, the most sensitive and visually brilliant of the Fifth Generation directors, accepted a commission from a Hong Kong studio to direct a costume drama after directing several domestic box office failures (including his landmark 1986 film *The Horse Thief*). In *Li Lianying, the Imperial Eunuch* (1990), Tian invested China's better known historical melodrama (the political career of the scheming Empress Dowager Cixi) with an incisive, compassionate, bittersweet reflection on the seduction and horror of power. The plot revolves around Cixi's main confidant, the Chief Eunuch, a man of humble birth who had to undergo castration and endless humiliations to play the game of power in the Forbidden City. It unravels in a nonlinear way, as a series of intimate flashbacks that the dying Li Lianying free-associates—a structure that may be difficult for Western audiences not familiar with Chinese history, but one which presents an exciting challenge to anyone interested in alternative forms of storytelling. The film, shown last year in New York at the

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A slow-burn thriller, Takeshi Kitano's *Boiling Point* physicalizes the latent homoeroticism of the yokuza genre.

Courtesy Vancouver International Film Festival

Asian American Film Festival and in Chinatown, has not been released in the US.

Tian Zhuangzhuang, Zhang Yimou, and Chen Kaige were each given a first chance by veteran director Wu Tianming, then the head of the Xi'an Film Studio. Since June 1989, Wu has lived in the United States, where he teaches Chinese film history at the University of California, Davis, but the last project he initiated before his departure from China was finally realized by He Ping. Unnoticed in the mainland, *The Swordsman in Double-Flag Town* (1990) was shown in Hong Kong theaters, where Rayns saw it. (The Beijing Film Bureau failed to provide a subtitled version, so it was presented in simultaneous translation.) The character of the swordsman is a cute and awkward kid arriving in Double-Flag Town, a small village lost in a spectacular desert, to get married. Swordsmanship being his only talent, he ends up in a climactic duel in the sun with a series of villains looking as if they had escaped from a Sergio Leone film. Wu Tianming (who has yet to see the film) acknowledged that he wanted to pay homage to the Westerns he admires. Unmistakably Chinese yet daringly modern, *The Swordsman* may define a fruitful and highly entertaining direction in Chinese cinema, embodying an aesthetic dialogue between East and West.

This dialogue is also at the heart of Wu Wengueng's 150-minute video documentary *The Last Dreamers*. The tape somehow reached the Hong Kong Film Festival and is now distributed

by Hong Kong publicist/filmmaker Shu Kei. In China, access to video equipment is rare, and there is no real documentary school. In his tape, Wu wages a fascinating struggle against a form he doesn't quite master. He takes his camera into Beijing's dark alleys and small apartments, where a few runaway artists—his friends—are trying to survive "outside the system." After Tiananmen Square (carefully elided in the montage), contradictions and tensions climax. A young woman has a psychotic episode at the opening of her exhibition. Most protagonists find a foreign spouse and relocate abroad. Finding a personal, still hesitant style of cinema verité. Wu paints the moving portrait of a "lost generation."

*The Days of Being Wild* (1990) may be the most

extraordinary "product" of the Hong Kong industry. Wong Kar-Wai's lost generation is that of the sixties, but his approach is intimate, elusive, poetic. The film resulted mostly from a misunderstanding between the director and his producer, who expected an action film. *Days...* was an unmitigated commercial disaster in Hong Kong, but is admired on the international festival circuit—another irony. The film dwells on the sullen rebellion of a small-time hustler, his aborted romances with two women, his half-hearted attempt to find his real mother in the Philippines. A subtle existential malaise is played out through mismatched and missed encounters, moments of fleeting tenderness, unrequited passion, a romantic incapacity to live—all filmed in a glaucous, sensual, subdued atmosphere. In his first film, *As Tears Go By* (1988), Wong skillfully parodied the buddy-gangster genre dear to Hong Kong filmgoers. Here, he posits himself as an heir to the French New Wave and the European art cinema. It remains to be seen if such a position is tenable—before 1997 drops yet another curtain.

*Bérénice Reynaud is the New York correspondent for Cahiers du cinéma, and has published articles on Asian cinema for Libération, Sight and Sound, Screen, the New York Times, and the Village Voice.*



China's first real Western, *Swordsman in Double-Flag Town* reads as a wry commentary on the American genre and a fresh look at Chinese folk-myth.

Courtesy Vancouver International Film Festival

## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

## New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

The persistent right-wing backlash against queer art has focused almost exclusively on sexually explicit or suggestive representations, particularly in photographs, films, videos, and performances. From Marlon Riggs to Holly Hughes to Robert Mapplethorpe, lesbian and gay artists have lost federal (and private) funding and exhibition venues due to the homoeroticism of their work. The National Endowment for the Arts has been called upon to apply "general standards of decency" in assessing grantees work, and local PBS stations have eschewed queer work based on an abstract notion of community values. Ironically, excerpts and reproductions of this "obscene" art are broadly disseminated by the American Family Association and the Christian Coalition to vast mailing lists in the name of what should be censored. This kind of visibility not only skews and stigmatizes such work from the start, but it also thwarts the self-determination of lesbian and gay identity in a violently homophobic world.

With the annual New York Lesbian and Gay

Experimental Film Festival, now in its fifth year, we have a distinct forum in which to experience and analyze images made by and about gay men and lesbians. The festival's cofounders, writer Sarah Schulman and filmmaker Jim Hubbard, demonstrate a studied and historically contextualized approach to avant-garde film and video. Their programming consistently offers a variety of possible answers to such basic questions as: What makes something experimental? What makes it lesbian or gay?

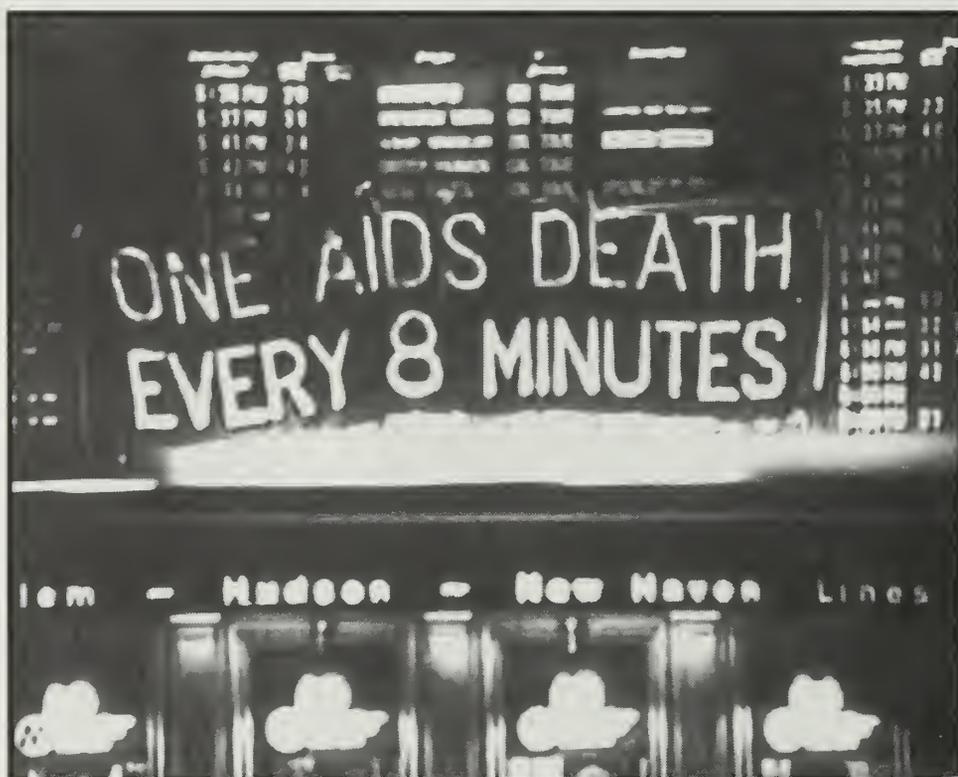
One of the most exciting films in this year's festival, held in September, was Barbara Rubin's *Christmas on Earth*. Created in 1964, when the filmmaker was merely 17, the film is a half-hour examination of the sexual body. Luscious and unpretentious, the piece uses various film processes—double projection, bi-packing, colored filters. The images are combined with an AM radio soundtrack, the station randomly selected by the exhibitors, as per Rubin's intentions. A painted belly and breasts create a face, at once responsive and oblivious to the superimposed image of two polymorphous gay boys having sex. An enormous clit lurks behind, the elegantly abstract fusing with the quirky home movie. For the

finale, everyone gathers, waving their hats to the camera, while the radio at this screening was coincidentally blaring "Ain't Nobody's Business if I Do." Although *Christmas on Earth* was directed by a straight woman, her sensual and nonpornographic understanding of the gendered body is astonishing in comparison to much of the more rote and belabored material emerging today.

This year's program displayed a shift in sensibility about representing sex. For the first time in the festival's history there were fewer works by men than women. Also, the films and tapes by men contained virtually no explicit material, in contrast to previous years. The women, on the other hand, brought a body of work that demonstrated a new eagerness to put lesbian sex on screen. A dyke critic might applaud the refreshing change were it not for the obvious and disproportionate influence of AIDS on gay men and the content of their work.

This year's batch of sexually explicit lesbian films traced the recent tradition of the (homo) cunt on screen and flew in the face of biologically determined lesbianism. Sex(uality) and arousal, although not consciously chosen, are the results of historically circumscribed social motivations and can be analyzed accordingly. Alice Anne Parker's *Near the Big Chakra* (1972) silently parades a gynecologist's-eye view of the clitoris—"a mouth, a map, an animal, a tree," according to the program notes. This ultimately rather boring and entirely white sequence of close-up clits amusingly calls to mind the nineteenth-century photographic studies of lesbian genitalia. But there's a twist: the evidence here was gathered and presented for pleasure, not spurious scientific determinations.

More dynamic and thoroughly modern was *We're Talking Vulva*, a public service announcement from the Canadian National Film Board series *Five Feminist Minutes*. The spot features a female rapper in high tops, shades, and cloaked in



*Voices from the Front* chronicles ACT UP's four-year history, from its early People with Aids empowerment activities to the mobilization for a nationalized health care system.

Courtesy Testing the Limits

a five-foot vulva costume. She breaks it down—Girl Talk 101—on the health care, functions, and maintenance of this precious part. A more ambitious complement was Ela Troyano and Tessa Hughes-Freeland's *Stardust*, which asks, "When you see a beautiful woman masturbating, do you objectify or identify?" Juxtaposing self-conscious full-body shots of the seductive and playful Troyano with suggestive close-ups of her body in action, the double-projection pleases the exhibitionist and voyeur alike and manages to spurn facile distinctions between the two.

The roles of viewer and viewed were further complicated by the festival's inclusion of video and its often intimate reflections. Although last year some privileged tapes (transferred to film) did appear, this time four of the festival's 49 works both originated and were exhibited on video. This long-awaited acknowledgement was important, not only because it challenged the prejudices of film and video separatists, but also because it helped address the dwindling festival circuit for video (think of the underfunded AFI Video Festival).

Cecilia Dougherty's pixelvision epic *Coal Miner's Granddaughter*, shot primarily on a Fisher-Price camera, audaciously tests the limits of the medium. At the beginning, the director's autobiographical character Jane declares, "This is my fucking life"—the underside of shoofly pie. With high-contrast, grainy shots, sharply angled cut-aways, and a combination of cinema verité and improvisation, the video plumbs the scorching depths of family and sexuality. Although the relationship between illness and masochism could be more rigorously explored, an S/M play scene blends right in with the domestic havoc which propels Jane from Lancaster, Pennsylvania to the more promising ramble of San Francisco.

The flower power, anti-Vietnam war affections found in *Coal Miner's Granddaughter* were curiously echoed in a number of anti-Gulf War films. That only one of six thematically programmed works, Carl Michael George's *The Star-Spangled Basher*, manages to integrate a healthy queer agenda with an anti-imperialistic stance is both striking and disappointing. The others intercut missile formations with lefty protests or simply captured civilian dyke antics without any comment on the politics of war. George employs the image of a closeted African-American lesbian patriotically crooning the *Star Spangled Banner* before a frenetic Superbowl crowd. The film probes how and why our lemming-type society drastically twists allegiances and identities to force-feed national solidarity. A filmmaker of Arabic decent, George models a smart critique without exploiting any easy oppositions of "us" versus "them." Although the dykes and fags interviewed are disembodied, usually unidentified, voices, they join with a reprise of beaming faces and bombs bursting in air to elaborate the chaos of complicity.

The most pointed and articulate anti-imperial-



Su Friedrich's *First Comes Love* combines infatuation and disdain in its depiction of the institution of marriage.

Courtesy filmmaker

ist statement was embedded in Jennifer Montgomery's still unfocused but promising *I, a Lamb*. This super 8 work-in-progress takes *Silence of the Lambs* as its springboard and features women as activists, artists, and animals who demonstrate myriad forms of resistance to the passive, wooly icon of the barnyard lamb. "This is making me sad," says one artist as she skins a deer leg, "but it's dignifying a death...and repudiating our culture's definition of waste." As she tenderly fingers the animal remnants, explaining how to make sinew into glue, she continues, "Dismemberment is melancholy once you get past the violence. Usually you only think about the violence." Unless the violence is bigger than one life. Another character responds with a story about her dinner guest on the eve of war. A long-term AIDS survivor, he acknowledged, "I always thought I would die of AIDS. Now I think I might die more collectively." She recalls, "I thought, 'This is what it is like to be living in America tonight.'"

Such connections have not been lost on activists who battle the wars at home. "Fight AIDS, not Arabs" was the chant heard round the world when ACT UP (The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) interrupted Dan Rather's newscast during the Gulf War. This action, together with almost everything else ACT UP has done in the last four years, was included in Testing the Limits' new feature-length video *Voices from the Front*. The video chronicles the original People with AIDS empowerment movement, then moves to the group's early emphasis on treatment and research, and finishes with the mobilization for a nationalized health care system. While *Voices*, which targets a non-activist audience, heroically provides a record of a radical organization's process and success, the videomakers unfortunately bury some of the primary inspirations for this fierce work. The issues of dying, mourning, and grief aren't directly addressed until the end, when the tape is dedicated in memoriam to over half of the interviewees.

There were other works, however, that tackled the pain head-on. Phil Zwickler's final video,

*Needle Nightmare*, trudges the difficult terrain of unruly fantasies and quiet moments after blindness has set in and death is close at hand. Zwickler's testament shows desire and restraint, the sounds and smells of life in the age of AIDS. Another person with AIDS speaks through Nino Rodriguez's short tape *Identities*, although he never actually says anything. Examining the moments between speech, *Identities* pictures thought, preparation, exhaling, tears, visual pleas, and confident communications. The third video in this program, Patrick Wright's *Voices of Life*, also challenges the mainstream media version of truth about AIDS. Deconstructing the conventions of AIDS documentaries by blatantly scripting interviews and panning to gaffers and cue cards, Wright productively shatters the prevailing belief in televised authenticity.

Ultimately what is fascinating about non-traditional forms of media is their potential to be more riveting and revealing than conventional formulas could ever be. Su Friedrich's anthropologically rich *First Comes Love* encapsulates all the contradictory emotions that gays and lesbians bring to the institution of marriage. Friedrich weaves together grainy, black and white images from four remarkably similar wedding ceremonies in a way that belies her simultaneous infatuation and repulsion, her fantasy and disdain. At one point, she lists the countries that prohibit same-sex marriage—all but Denmark. *First Comes Love* is never grotesque or didactic, but opts for a critique through its use of pop tunes, from Janis Joplin's *Get It While You Can* to Marvin Gaye's *Sexual Healing*. And after watching the veils pulled back, the Carolina rice swept off the stairs, and the nuns returning to their domain, I am assured. I'd rather be defined by sex than by marriage.

*Catherine Saalfeld, a writer and videomaker, is currently project coordinator for the Seeing through AIDS media workshops sponsored by Media Network and New York City's Department of Health.*

# The Promise of Public Access

ANDREW BLAU

*This article is third in a series on the long-term systemic changes in the media arts field. The series began with an overview of the state of funding for media arts organizations (August/September 1991) and continued with an analysis of the mounting debt and organizational dysfunction undermining many arts organizations (January/February 1992). The following article reexamines the ideals and goals of public access television after two decades of developments in technology and public policy.*

The utopian vision of communicational abundance...begs most of the important questions about how communication is to be organized within the limits of time, interest and material resources. The "right to receive and impart information" is contained in many modern constitutions and in the European Convention of Human Rights. It is, however, a minimum position, which...offers little help to a world in which the problem is no longer a deficit of information but rather an overabundance.

G. J. MULGAN<sup>1</sup>

Access to portable video technology in no way alters [the socioeconomic power of television] any more than access to pen, paper or typewriter has led to a more participatory or democratically controlled press.

NICHOLAS GARNHAM<sup>2</sup>

IN THE 20 YEARS SINCE PUBLIC ACCESS TO CABLE FIRST APPEARED IN THE 1970s, everything has changed except the rhetoric of access supporters. The idea of giving the public nondiscriminatory access to designated cable channels, together with the equipment and training to make programs, emerged at a time when hopes for cable TV were high. Cable, it was said, would regenerate local communities and increase participatory democracy. Groups as diverse as a Presidential Task Force, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the RAND Corporation all believed that cable would strengthen democratic institutions by enabling those who had traditionally been excluded from the media to speak on television.

Twenty years later, the access community maintains the last remnants of that optimism. There is certainly more speech. Access channels are now found in approximately 2,000 communities and cablecast an estimated 15,000 hours per week of original community programming. That is more than ABC, NBC, CBS, and PBS produce in a year combined. But has access resulted in a truly alternative media that has strengthened democratic institutions, or has it merely yielded alternative entertainment?

Our experience of public access to cable over the past two decades suggests that access may have nothing to do with democracy—nothing, that is, until the people who provide and use access connect the two. We can no longer simply assume that access to media tools and channels is enough. We must actively build the link between our claims for what access can be and what we actually do with the resources we worked so hard to acquire.

## Coming to Terms

If we are to build a connection between access and democracy, we must first

identify what we mean by democracy and why access to communication has anything to do with it. Political theorist Bertram Gross suggests a starting point when he defines "true democracy" as "the opportunity for all persons to take part—directly and indirectly, both in large and small measure—in the decisions that affect themselves, others, and the larger communities of which they are a part."<sup>3</sup>

It takes no great leap to see the importance of free and open communication in this. If people are to take part in the decisions affecting themselves and their communities, they must have information with which to make decisions; they must be able to share their own opinions and hear the opinions of others; and, especially as our culture becomes more aware of its diversity, people must have an understanding of the lives, cultures, priorities, and values of the people with whom they share a community.

James Madison, who wrote the set of amendments to the US Constitution that became the Bill of Rights, used similar reasoning when he argued the importance of the rights of free speech and press. Alexander Meiklejohn, one of this century's preeminent First Amendment scholars, built on that logic when he argued that freedom of speech is "a deduction from the basic American agreement that public issues shall be decided by universal suffrage."<sup>4</sup> But if we take seriously this link between the right to speak with and hear from others and the daily practice of democracy, then we ought to organize our access tools to foster a kind of participation that enables people to take part in the decisions affecting their community. In this sense, simply talking a lot means little.

## The Redemptive Promise of New Technologies

The relation of cable access to democracy must also be viewed in light of the long, almost absurd tradition in which technologies are introduced amid extravagant claims that they will advance democracy or increase political harmony. People believed that electricity would lead to political decentralization, for example, and that the rifle would expand and secure democracy since the state would no longer have a monopoly on physical violence. The historian of technology Lewis Mumford extensively documented "the hopeful notion of the machine as the favored agent of moral and political as well as material good" in Western culture since the eighteenth century, when "mechanical progress and human progress became one."<sup>5</sup>

Erik Barnouw, the preeminent historian of American broadcasting, uncovers this same strain of utopianism throughout the history of electronic media. In a sobering reminder, he notes that "every step in modern media history—telephone, photograph, motion picture, radio, television, satellite—stirred similar euphoric predictions. All were expected to usher in an age of enlightenment. All were seen as fulfilling the promise of democracy."<sup>6</sup>

The claims made in the late sixties for the democratizing power of cable television were particularly strong. In 1968 President Johnson's Task Force on Communications Policy concluded that telecommunications "can play a...fundamental role in achieving understanding and harmonizing conflict among modern societies dominated by diversity, mobility, and the claims of social justice."<sup>7</sup> The task force suggested that cable television could help

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*We should be deeply skeptical about any claims that access is inherently democratizing.*

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Courtesy Arlington Community TV

reduce the social tension and widespread alienation then prevalent, because it would allow those who had been denied access to mass media a means to express themselves. Professor Thomas Streeter, who has analyzed how the policy debate about cable shifted decisively between the late sixties and early seventies, points out how this line of reasoning came to cloud the thinking of many people at the time and in the years since. He notes that against the background provided by blue-ribbon panels such as the Presidential Task Force "a complex set of historical and economic circumstances was thoroughly obscured as CATV [community antenna television] was abstracted in discourse into a simple new technology [cable].... Because of that abstraction, it became possible to speak of cable not as an embodiment of social contradictions and dilemmas but as a *solution* to them."<sup>8</sup>

We should thus be deeply skeptical about any claims that access is inherently democratizing. Such claims are made through the narcotic haze

of technological utopianism that was widespread at the time when access first appeared in cable franchises. Experience demonstrates that it is *how* access channels are used that spells the difference between their being a contribution to democracy or alternative entertainment. So how might access be used to develop democracy in our communities? Any answer must first consider the context in which access exists today and how that is quite different from that in which it first appeared in 1971.

## Surveying the Electronic Frontier

In 1971 the electronic communication tools available to private citizens were the telephone, the telegraph, broadcast television and radio, amateur radio (ham or CB), and cable television. Only the telephone was widely available for personal communication and did not rely on special skills.

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*If we reconceptualize access centers as places where we teach people how video can be a communications tool, rather than simply a television show, then access centers become the seedbed of the future.*

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Since then, electronic communication has been transformed by the fax machine, computer/telephone linkages, the fundamental changes in the telephone network, cellular telephones, fiber optics, and other technology. We can now communicate in many new ways: conference calls, video conferencing, computer bulletin boards, voice mail, broadcast-fax and fax-newspapers, and other options that are erasing the distinction between traditional mass media and person-to-person telecommunications. As a result, access to cable no longer enjoys the privileged position of being the only way for individuals, community groups, and others denied access to the major media to electronically communicate with others. It is now one of many options.

The Benton Foundation, for one, is encouraging wider use of such options by nonprofits and advocacy groups. They have issued a series of guidebooks that indicate how these groups can harness many of the new communications technologies. Two of them discuss e-mail, databases, computer bulletin boards, 900 numbers, and voicemail services as a means by which groups can exchange information, share work and planning, and involve activists and the public. These new kinds of widely distributed telecommunications services are like well-targeted mass media and can be highly efficient means of reaching specific audiences.

At the same time, video equipment, which access centers sought to bring to the public, is now relatively cheap and widely available. Camcorders put video recording equipment into at least 14-million hands in the US so far, which means that there are now more people who own their own video cameras than are likely to use every access center in America this year. New equipment such as the Video Toaster has dropped the price for postproduction effects, and rapid advances in consumer-grade, small-format editing equipment mean that nonprofessionals need not rely on an access center to make videotapes. And with VCRs in more US homes than have cable, there are means for distributing video that did not exist 20 years ago, which more and more groups are exploiting.

## On Hollowed Ground

At the same time that technology has been changing, the role of communications policy has also changed substantially. When Congress created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1934, it directed the agency to regulate broadcasting in the "public interest." The FCC and the courts evolved a broad framework through which communications policy was linked to other social needs and interests.

Beginning in the late seventies, the FCC's orientation began to change: the "public interest" was turned into "what interests the public," as deregulation equated sound policy with simple popularity. By the mid-eighties, the FCC chair claimed that the television was just another appliance, "a toaster with pictures," and if you had something to say, you were free to buy a TV station just like anybody else. The regulatory environment in which access channels were created and originally supported has evaporated.

Similarly, the First Amendment—the principle banner under which the

access movement has marched—has been reinterpreted in recent years. Since the 1940s, First Amendment jurisprudence has been guided by the notion that the goal of the First Amendment, in the Supreme Court's words, is to foster "the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources."<sup>9</sup> This led to a growing body of legal thinking in the late sixties and early seventies that argued that the First Amendment implied a general public right of access to the media.<sup>10</sup> This was precisely the time when public, educational, and government (PEG) access channels first appeared.

This expansive, invigorating view of the First Amendment has since been largely superceded. As communications law expert Monroe Price recently reflected in a provocative short essay, "Something is wrong, very wrong with the current debate over telecommunications policy. The First Amendment, so central to our culture, is being wheeled out not to nourish full and open debate, but as a decisive force in structuring the communications industry."<sup>11</sup>

As many in the access community learned when cable operators challenged the franchise obligations they had earlier agreed to, every entity connected with the communications industries now claims to be a First Amendment speaker. Any effort to craft sound policy by balancing competing interests can be made to appear to be abridging someone's Constitutional rights. International media giants such as Time Inc. argued in towns like Erie, Pennsylvania, and Austin, Texas, that requiring their cable systems to provide one or more public access channels abridges the corporation's First Amendment rights. Other cable operators such as Viacom, Century, and Nor-West have made similar claims, which often drag on for years in the courts.

As a result, "The victory of Tom Paine is being corporatized," says Price, and "in the new First Amendment order, the real Paines of the world may be ill-served. The soapbox is being replaced by the mall. We may be creating a plastic freedom in which the logic of the First Amendment becomes the enemy of the realization of a multitude of speech.... We become flooded with images, but poorer in public debate."<sup>12</sup>

Boxed in by that new logic of the First Amendment, we can no longer build a communications policy that increases public opportunities to speak. At the same time those policies built on an earlier understanding of the First Amendment's goals, such as public access to cable, have come under fierce attack.

## Connecting the Disconnected

If the First Amendment has been colonized by corporate giants seeking to enhance their economic prerogatives; if communications policy has been abandoned to marketplace forces; and if technology has made electronic communication widely available, what are the implications for public access?

I believe it means returning to the fundamental question, "What do access centers do?" We often speak of the First Amendment "mission" of access, but that can sometimes blind us to the real mission. Access is a *vehicle* for speech. If the goal is to foster democracy, the point of speaking cannot simply be the right to talk. Upholding the First Amendment is not

the goal; it is the foundation upon which access operations build their efforts to educate and provide people with tools to use television to meet their own communication needs.

The relationship that religious groups have with the First Amendment is instructive. Religious groups are also protected by the First Amendment, which begins, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...." While this "free exercise" protection is as dear to every religious institution as free speech protection is to every access center, the First Amendment is not the goal of any church or synagogue. If threatened, they will fight tenaciously to maintain their First Amendment rights, but they know their real goals lie elsewhere. Their right to pursue those goals freely is the gift of the First Amendment.

In this context, education at access centers should mean more than just the basics of video production. When access first developed in the early seventies, the aim was to give people access to the equipment so that they could speak for themselves on television. Many believed that access to equipment would promote change for the better. But, with more than 14 million camcorders in the US, some now available for as little as \$600, the opportunity to express oneself electronically has yet to lead to widespread social change (even though the case of Rodney King has shown how one person with a camcorder can provide the raw materials to turn an entire nation's attention to police brutality).

The lesson has been that getting people's hands on equipment means little by itself. When we think about print literacy, we assume that it takes 12 years or more of education to become minimally proficient as a writer or reader. Yet when we offer training in electronic media at many access centers, we normally provide relatively limited training for video "writing," often little or no training in video "reading," and then set people loose to communicate.

Access centers that are moving in the right direction are those that provide opportunities for producers to develop their communications skills—i.e., to become more *effective* communicators. They prompt viewers to consider and think critically about the medium; artists to push the medium; users of other electronic media, such as radio or computer networks, to interact with video-based communicators; and all community members to develop access in whatever manner they choose.

If we think of access centers as places where people can make use of a technology for local communications needs, we will develop a far broader and more comprehensive definition than simply a place to make low-budget versions of television shows as the networks define them. Consider the model of the telephone. While it is clearly a sales tool, an important feature of the economic infrastructure, and a vehicle for information and entertainment, we have no problem recognizing its role as a personal communications tool. Video distributed by cable ought to have a similar diversity of uses. Access centers are the principle areas in which the public can develop those possibilities and free video communication from the narrow constraints of television production based on preexisting TV genres, just as legions of independent computer programmers developed uses for the PC that freed the computer from being only a tool for big business, the government, and the military.



**Chicago Access Network's easy-to-use mini-studio has attracted many nonprofit organizations. The series *New Beginning Hotline* provides substance abuse counseling and assistance to the African American community.**

Photo: Carolyn Glassman, courtesy Chicago Access Network TV

But freedom from the constraints of traditional television needs to be joined to an active outreach and education program that stresses and strengthens the links between access and democracy. As an outreach matter, political theorist Richard Sclove argues that if technology is to strengthen democracy, those who deploy it must first be concerned with actively empowering the least empowered. By contrast, if communications technology facilitates upper-middle-class access to decision-making, or is simply "neutral" or passive and thus preserves the status quo, it is not democratically constructive and may well be detrimental.

The next stage to be concerned with is how access centers teach people to use the technology. Access centers normally educate people to become television producers. People are taught studio production, lighting, sound, postproduction, special effects, etc. There are some access centers, however, that developed an alternative for people who don't particularly want to become proficient in the technology, but who nonetheless want to use the access channels for communication and outreach. The Chicago Access Corporation, for example, built a mini-studio with a fixed camera and lighting as well as a telephone link that enables it to be interactive. The set-up can be a one-person operation, with the on-camera talent controlling the camera with a switch built into the desk. People can be taught to use it in a fraction of the time it takes to learn studio or field production, and the call-in format meets the needs of many Chicago nonprofits. As a result, they are using video tools to get their messages to viewers, provide services, and answer the public's questions much more quickly and just as effectively as when they produce TV shows with crews, postproduction, etc. The technology is being put at the service of the groups in a way that focuses attention on their message and away from the medium.

An additional component of such a program would be to reexamine

what kinds of programs we choose to reward and celebrate. Access organizations from the local to the national normally give awards for the "best" programs in various categories. Instead, we should consider rewarding programs that have most contributed to community communication or have had the deepest impact on their community in the previous year. We should make these our highest awards and thus indicate what we believe are the most highly valued uses of these tools. Such an emphasis would focus on social or political outcomes rather than TV products.

Access centers should also make use of their principle advantage—their distribution capacity—as access to equipment becomes less unique. Access has developed with a strong bias that encourages people to become producers. Many access center guidelines and policies reflect this, and most of the highly visible "model" access centers emphasize it. Indeed, many access centers discourage the use of access channels for anything but individual local production by instituting rules or scheduling priorities that discourage the programming of work from elsewhere. Access centers seem to have traditionally thought of their distribution capacity as ancillary to their production opportunities, yet as the videotape of the police beating of Rodney King suggests, the media's social power lies in the ability to distribute those images and make them available to viewers. The English communications scholar Nicholas Garnham emphatically concludes that "It is cultural distribution, not cultural production, that is the key locus of power.... That is why the stress upon the cultural producers...is so damaging."<sup>13</sup> As access centers consider ways to link their practice to a vision of democratic communications, they might seek a new balance between production and distribution that would revitalize the notion of the individual or nonprofit local cable *programmer*—one who chooses a program for a time slot from either local production or other available material.

When we conceive of access centers living up to this potential, access appears way ahead of its time, not a marginal adjunct to "real TV." Access centers shift the balance of power from mass communications models to locally controlled media. They provide the possibility for and should encourage new uses of video as a communications medium, which includes production, distribution, and exhibition. If we reconceptualize access centers as places where we teach people how video can be a communications tool, rather than simply a television show, then access centers become a seedbed for the future when people will be able to send video to others over a cable network for any variety of purposes.

In that sense, access centers are laboratories where the future of electronic communications is being developed by tens of thousands of unpaid researchers. However, if access centers want to connect access to democracy, this kind of experimentation is not enough. Access centers will have to choose to connect the disconnected in order to bridge the most basic gap between access and democracy. In order for the access movement to make that connection, it will have to move decisively in the years ahead to focus on what makes an access center distinct and valuable as the tools to make and share video become commonplace. For, as Lewis Mumford noted, "Technology exists as an element in human culture and it promises well or ill as the social groups that exploit it promise well or ill. The machine itself makes no demands and holds out no promises; it is the human spirit that makes demands and keeps promises."<sup>14</sup>

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#### NOTES

1 G.J. Mulgan, *Communication and Control: Networks and the New Economies of Communication* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 258.

2 Nicholas Garnham, "The Myths of Video: A Disciplinary Reminder," in *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information* (London: Sage Press, 1990), 65.

3 Bertram Gross, *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America* (Boston: South End Press), 349.

4 Alexander Meikljohn, *Free Speech and Its Relation to Self-Government* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 26-27.

5 Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 207, 197.

6 Erik Barnouw, *The Sponsor: Notes on a Modern Potentate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 176.

7 The President's Task Force on Communications Policy, *Final Report*, Washington D.C.: U. S. GPO (1968), 5.

8 Thomas Streeter, "The Cable Fable Revisited: Discourse, Policy, and the Making of Cable Television," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4 (1987), 174-200; emphasis in the original.

9 *Associated Press v. United States*, 326 U.S. 1, 20 (1945). See also David Kairys, "Freedom of Speech," in *The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 140-171. Kairys provides an illuminating overview of First Amendment jurisprudence which shows that this interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a relatively recent trend, wholly at odds with earlier practice. Importantly, Kairys argues that this trend grew out of citizen activism, not abstract principles.

10 See, for example, Jerome Barron, "Access to the Press—A New First Amendment Right," in *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 80 (1967), 1641; Jerome Barron, "An Emerging First Amendment Right of Access to the Media?" in *George Washington Law Review*, Vol. 37 (1969), 487; Nicholas Johnson and Tracy Weston, "A Twentieth Century Soapbox: The Right to Purchase Radio and Television Time," in *Virginia Law Review*, Vol. 57 (1971), 574; and Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., *Freedom of the Press vs. Public Access* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976).

11 Monroe E. Price, "Congress, Free Speech, and Cable Legislation: An Introduction," in *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1990), 226.

12 Ibid.

13 Garnham, *Capitalism and Communication*, 165. Emphasis in the original.

14 Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1934/1963), 6.

# Albertville's Other Olympics

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NATHALIE MAGNAN

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A steady stream of television images from the 1992 Winter Olympics was beamed up from Albertville, France in February. A month earlier in Albertville, another kind of olympics was held. Les Olympiades de la Création Vidéo TV Locale—the Olympiads of Local Video and TV Creation—was almost as international, but did not represent quite the same world or the same kind of television. This four-day conference, held January 6-9, brought together “citizen TV makers” from all over the world.

Although not the first such conference in France, none before has had this kind of international roster. There were local TV federations, producers, and community videomakers of every conceivable mode: alternative satellite networks (Deep Dish TV, US; Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association), independent producers attempting to gain access to national TV (Video News Services, South Africa), local broadcast programming services (Canal Nord, France; Arrasate Telebista, Basque country, Spain; Városi Televízió Kecskemét, Hungary; Chukyo TV, Japan), public access on cable (Offener Kanal Berlin; the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, US), tape bicycling (Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, Brazil), mobile diffusion units (TV Viva, Brazil), and many more.

The olympiads’ funders were an equally eclectic and international lot: UNESCO, Eureka Audiovisuel (a European Community initiative), various cultural ministries, as well as local groups such as the James Bay Cree Communications Society (Canada), Access Community TV (Columbus, Ohio), TV Sabadell (Catalonia, Spain), and Centro Internazionale Crocevia (Italy).

About 200 people were present at the conference. As usual this meant that friends from the North were reunited and made new friends with the too-few media workers from the South. The North/South imbalance persisted even though a real effort was made by the organizers, Les Vidéo des Pays—the French Federation of Local TV—to help as many southern federations as possible attend. The justification for this imbalance was, as always, economic constraints.

The Global Village announced on the catalog cover materialized in the form of a direct satellite link between the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio—the site of the tenth anniversary of the public access collective Paper Tiger TV—and a small movie theater in the middle of the Alps. What followed was a broadcast from ACTV, the local public access center in Columbus, of a smart tape made especially for the occasion by people from ACTV, the Wexner, and Paper Tiger interpreting the myths and realities of the New World and denouncing the race, sex, and class biases of North American society. This was followed by a teleconference between George Stoney, a founding member of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) who was in the Albertville theater, and members of the Paper Tiger collective. We (the French part) could see them, but they could not see us. In some ways, the structure of this link was the same as that governing hegemonic media politics today: the US produces and disseminates; we (in this case, the French) watch and listen. The only feedback possible was our acknowledging that we received the transmission loud and clear. So, while there is clearly a need to experiment with and

demonstrate the technological possibilities of satellite links between continents by community TV, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to make those exchanges meaningful. As Joan Braderman wrote in Paper Tiger’s guide to media activism, “The technological means alone doesn’t guarantee anything democratic.”

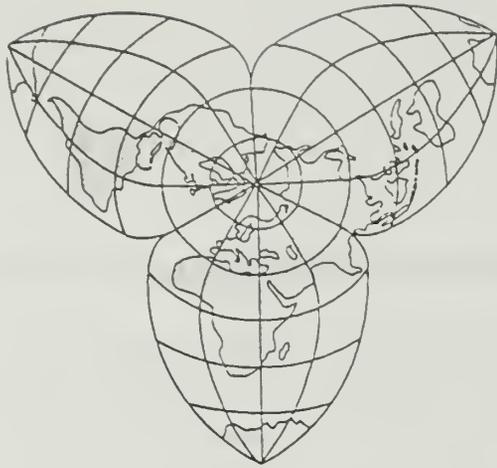
The term “global village,” from past utopian media theory, wasn’t totally rhetorical—it was an international conference, after all—but it was deemed inadequate. Herbert Smith from Appalshop in Kentucky noted that in a village you know everybody and everybody’s dog. This is not the case in the electronic village and may not be desirable either. Instead, certain participants tended to privilege “networks” and “horizontal communication,” where TV experts give ground to people who take charge of their own image. This corresponds to a nonhierarchical organizational structure in which the responsibility is diffuse rather than centralized and structured from the top down.

It is from this standpoint that the worldwide organization of local TV producers and videomakers did not take place. They were literally out to lunch. Instead of congregating for the international meeting, most of the conference participants were networking in a restaurant on the top of the ski slope. In a way, this was a good sign for this antibureaucratic assembly. It also reflected the skepticism of those who too often have seen proposals for global organizations spring from the enthusiasm created by such a conference, only to collapse within a month.

The debates that did manage to take place in Albertville showed the real difficulty of finding common agendas: Was the goal to share technical information? to compile an international database? to have tapes circulate? to have more conferences? The participants were coming from very different uses of local TV. Where is the common ground, for instance, between Arrasate Telebista, whose sole purpose is to produce programs in the Catalan language, even if this simply means translating *Dynasty*, and a collective like Paper Tiger TV, which produces a regular cable series that deconstructs and critically analyzes the mass media—and includes *Dynasty* as a target? The production of “local television” doesn’t always bring media workers to share the same preoccupations.

An equally complicated task was to conceive a workable decentralized structure for these various local television producers and federations. The difficulty of this was clearly evident in Albertville, even though UNESCO, which is supporting the next conference in Norway in 1994, is potentially prepared to contribute support to such an organization. In short, the answers to the basic question of “why a worldwide organization?” didn’t get convincing answers.

However, participants did get a look at a developing, though somewhat problematic, model. Founded in 1990, Vidéazimut is a Canadian-based coalition of nine organizations in the field of communications: Vidéo Tiers-Monde (Canada); Centro Internazionale Crocevia (Italy); Instituto para America Latino (Peru); F&SC Comunicações (Brazil); Asia Monitor Resource Center (Hong Kong); Center for the Development of Instructional Technology (India); Video News Services (South Africa); Instituto de Comunicação Social (Mozambique); and Fédération Panafricaine de Cinéastes (Burkina Faso). The group organizes an annual media and democracy conference; the first world assembly will take place in Delhi in late 1993. The aim of Vidéazimut is to promote “greater access to these



OLYMPIADES DE LA CREATION VIDEO TV LOCALE  
OLYMPIADS OF LOCAL VIDEO AND TV CREATION  
ローカルテレビ局ビデオ作品世界コンペ  
OLIMPIADA DE LA CREACION VIDEO TELE LOCAL

means [of communications] on the part of marginalized communities, liberty of expression in the production of images and messages, greater access to the means of dissemination of voices and images on the national and international level.”

While their rhetoric sounds good—“avoid negotiating for others,” etc.—and some very good people are involved, the group communicated no sense of openness and did not encourage networking. In fact, they clearly left the impression of being uninterested in increasing their membership at present, explaining that they wanted to take the necessary time to develop networks on a regional level and work concretely on medium-range plans.

The conference did leave a byproduct—its catalog—which will undoubtedly be a useful networking tool. The catalog demonstrated the beginning of what horizontal communications could be: the participants’ short descriptions were all simply xeroxed, unedited, resulting in a sort of *carte de visite*, supplemented by a list of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers for all conference participants.

## **The conference**

For many people, the emphasis was more on interpersonal exchange than on theoretical analysis or concrete organizational planning. These olympiads were a show and tell, a sharing of experiences and struggles among those who fight for the right to communicate using television on a local level. The official structure was formed around panels that addressed such broad topics as cultural identity, the democratization of television, and TV alternatives and rebels. There were also a few specific presentations, including that of Vidéazimut and France’s Les Ateliers Varan, which organizes low-budget video production workshops for media workers in Africa.

The best attended panel was on the democratization of television. Zoltan Szombathy, an independent producer from Hungary, described how a few television producers, working against the wishes of local government in the 1980s, managed to create a brand of television that grew to become the most significant representation of local culture. (They are now struggling to remain autonomous of state power.) George Stoney, representing public access in the US, described the principle of the First Amendment—a much-needed presentation for countries like France, which in theory have freedom of speech, but in practice maintain tight control over who can speak. This control is based on economic grounds, but it has possibly more to do with the history of state control in broadcasting. Stoney also insisted on the need to deprofessionalize public access—a position that runs counter to the thinking of many access producers in the US, but which remains true to the original concept. As Stoney put it, “What we must guard against is influencing those users to strive for more and more technical mastery at the expense of widespread democratic use.”

The power and need for insider stories was demonstrated by Video News Services from South Africa. This mixed ethnicity coalition showed footage documenting how apartheid police create a climate of violence by driving Zulus by the truckload into black townships. While much has changed in today’s South Africa, television is still in the hands of the apartheid power. The type of information that this news service produces in the townships with the people is routinely denied access on the national television system, SABC. Only once was a Video News Services program broadcast on SABC. This struggle goes on even after SABC went through a long reevaluation. Video News Services’ mode of distribution now is through video bicycling.

A discovery to many participants was the work done in a “difficult” neighborhood—i.e., urban ghetto—in Amiens, a medium-sized town in France. Here a small local TV station produces a show that directly connects the city official in charge of the housing projects and the projects’ residents, who make their case by showing videotapes of the housing problems. The discussions that take place on live TV have very effective results. This station is barely tolerated by the municipality and is one of the few local TV stations able to broadcast in France.

At the end of the panel, discussion representatives from the former USSR introduced themselves and made a case for the potential for independent production and TV networks in the Commonwealth of Independent States, where local TV stations are multiplying very quickly. Their presentation was welcomed with highly emotional applause.

In addition to the panels was an evening of “the New Worlds,” in which indigenous people presented their work. What became evident were the commonalities among media workers from the First World—the Cree of Canada and the Aborigines of Australia. Both share in the struggle to preserve their language and culture. In so doing, they also fight the stereotyping and sensationalism always present in the representation of their people by mainstream media. Here video was demonstrated to be a tool particularly well adapted to a culture that is mostly oral and based on storytelling. Following on successful experiences with radio, both tribes are now starting up their own TV broadcast channels. These will allow their self-images to be carried outside the limits of their reservations, establishing a two-way relationship with the outside world. What became obvious was the strength of the Aboriginal solidarity movement, pursuing the fight for their cultures on a global level.

## **The competition**

One room at the conference was dedicated to the viewing of tapes selected to be part of a competition judged by officials from UNESCO, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and the US. The competition was organized along such themes as eating, drinking, celebrating, dress, work, love. It seemed somewhat out of place and ideologically inconsistent in an event that should be noncompetitive. Indeed, the competition was turned into a joke during the closing banquet. As gigantic medals were presented on an “Olympic” podium that could hardly hold all the members of the winning federations, the rest of us were busy eating, drinking, and paying tribute to the competition’s themes.

*Nathalie Magnan is an adjunct faculty member of Université de Paris VIII and a freelance writer.*

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## TOAST OF THE TOWN

### NewTek's Video Toaster

BARBARA OSBORN

"The Video Toaster is the most hyped product in video history," says John Dorr, founder of the Los Angeles independent production facility EZTV. Not since the days of the portapak have independent producers heard such an insistent refrain: *Make your own TV!* Although the Toaster, a low-cost switcher and effects device introduced late in 1990, has its grassroots adherents, Toaster hype started at the top with manufacturer NewTek, which has dubbed it "the world's first desktop

music videos or, yes, even creating their own TV shows.

The Video Toaster combines eight graphics tools, most of them previously available only at expensive facility rates. It includes a switcher, a digital effects unit, a color processor, two frame buffers, a still store, a 3-D modelling and animation program, a paint program, and a character generator. It was quite a bargain for its original price of \$1,595 (provided you already owned an Amiga 2000 series computer), and the Toaster has sold very well. Although the privately-held NewTek won't release figures regarding the number of units sold, one knowledgeable source suggested that the figure might be as high as 10,000.

Since the original Toaster release, NewTek has diversified its product line—and raised its prices. A software upgrade available to original Toaster users for \$395 includes 50 percent more effects, while the new Toaster, equipped with the new 2.0 software, lists for \$2,495. Additional forthcoming product developments include PC- and MAC-compatible Toasters, which the company hopes will be available this spring.

Not surprisingly, the Toaster has been of great interest to media arts centers. Film Video Arts (FVA) in New York City bought one. So did Boston Film Video Foundation and Los Angeles' EZTV. "Our clients always wanted an ADO-type effect," explains Dorr, but until the Toaster, EZTV couldn't afford one. FVA bought a Toaster to add to its image processing studio. "Everyone at FVA fell in love with it," says postproduction facilities manager Angie Cohn. The equipment in FVA's processing studio was decidedly unfriendly. The Video Toaster, she says, was the solution. Access rates at both media arts centers are relatively low. Without a technician, FVA charges \$20 per hour, while EZTV adds \$10 to their hourly base rate for editing.

Producers Merrill Aldighieri and Joe Tripician have been working on the Toaster since last summer, and they're impressed with it. For a recently completed promotional spot for choreographer Barry Martin, Aldighieri took one still frame from 8mm footage, added clouds, colored the sky, added two-dimensional squiggles, a dancer, body paint, and keyed in different 3-D backgrounds. She finished the project in a day. Aldighieri is also beginning to use the Toaster as a preliminary design tool, a kind of computer sketchpad, ultimately transferring her work to the Harry, a pricey effects machine, for final touches.

A less likely convert is John Sanborn. A video

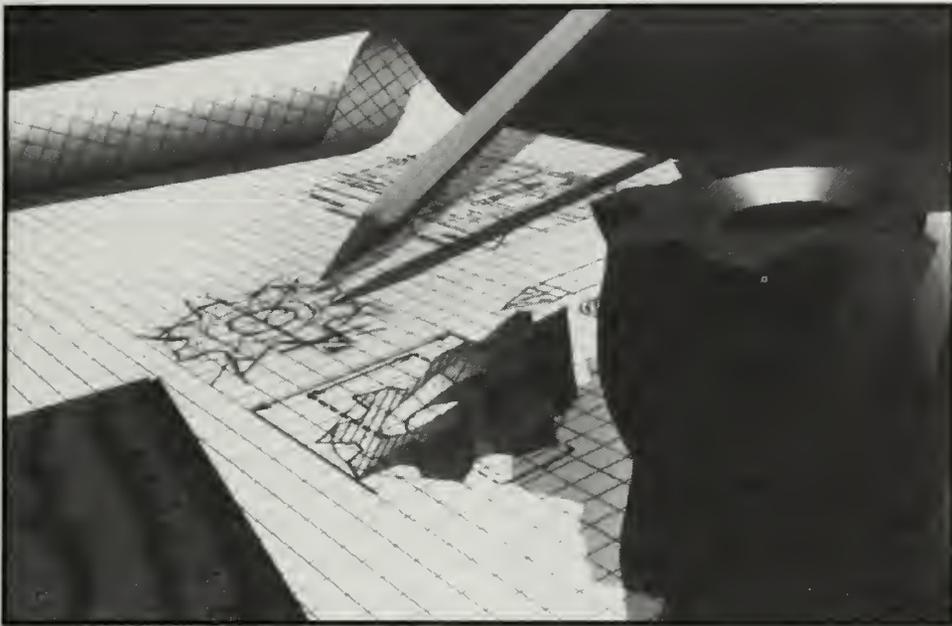
Hailed as the best thing since sliced bread, just how good is the Toaster?

Courtesy NewTek



television studio." Since September 1991, the Topeka, Kansas-based company has distributed 80,000 free demo tapes (modestly entitled *Revolution*) to trade show attendees and anyone else interested enough to call an 800 number.

Video Toaster adherents claim that the Toaster is revolutionizing the economics of video production. Independent producers who lived through portapak euphoria may experience a certain cynical resistance to the celebration, but the rhetoric has ignited a new generation of young producers intent on making their first million on a home video cassette, flexing their creative muscles with



producer known for his use of state-of-the-art effects, Sanborn has also joined the ranks of Toasterphiles. He directs productions for Nutopia, a joint NewTek-Todd Rundgren commercial postproduction facility in Sausalito. (Rundgren's music video *Change Myself*, produced last year with the Toaster, lent the machine legitimacy and gave its capabilities wide exposure.) Nutopia has a dozen networked Toasters. Sanborn reports that they work out computer graphic designs on individual Toaster workstations and then use the network as a kind of "rendering farm" that can do the number crunching 12 times as fast as a single machine.

Toasterphilia has even given rise to a grass-roots newsletter, the *Bread Box*. Burbank-based editors Lee and Kathy Stranahan say the publication is a forum for tips and tricks for beginning and advanced Toaster users. Ten-thousand copies of each issue are printed.

Like most purported breakthroughs, however, the Toaster has drawbacks. Most users have discovered they can't just buy a Toaster. Aldighieri and Tripician had to upgrade their computer for speed and add memory. FVA's Amiga 2500 had to be boosted to 7 megabytes of RAM. Both EZTV and FVA had to buy two new time-base correctors (TBC), because, except for live video input, all video has to be fed through a TBC before it reaches the Toaster.

Another common complaint is that Toaster effects are preset, so there's limited flexibility. The built-in effects, to some aesthetic tastes at least, are a little cheesy. NewTek is working on effects that can be customized, but progress so far is limited. Version 2.0, for instance, allows users to position particular effects on the screen, but FVA's Cohn acknowledges that the effects on their Grass Valley switcher still have better quality and greater range. The Toaster's picture compression also gets low marks. The digitized image gets so pixelated that it's essentially unusable. The animation and 3-D modelling programs, when

**The Video Toaster's LightWave 3D modelling and animation features put things in perspective even on a shoestring budget.**

*Courtesy NewTek*

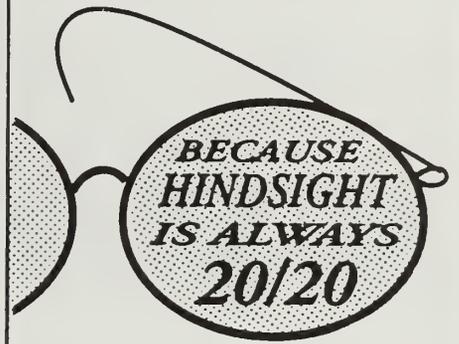
used without benefit of a network like Nutopia's, are very, very slow. Ironically, the 3-D program is so slow that it gets expensive to use, reports FVA's Cohn. Acknowledging this drawback, NewTek now offers various options—accelerator cards, larger hard drives, extra memory, etc.—that can speed up the rendering time considerably.

Some of these effects problems can be solved with experience and ingenuity. The *Bread Box*'s Lee Stranahan reports that still, rather than moving, pictures work best for compressed, over-the-shoulder news graphics. He has also learned to use the luminance key and digital video effects instead of the animation program to build moves.

Of course, for those producers with plum budgets, the compromises entailed in working with the Toaster probably aren't worth the savings. For John Hession, a producer who makes concert films and music videos, the trade-off against renting quality studio time doesn't pay off. Facilities will often throw in extras for next-to-nothing, he notes. "If you've got the money, use a standard facility for the quality and time. Stuff that works faster or better sometimes saves you money in the long run."

But for those producers working with the vestiges of public financing, the Toaster is a welcome piece of equipment. To Sanborn's way of thinking, the Video Toaster is a perfect, low-overhead, creative tool. "For what it is, it's fantastic," he says. For all its limitations, the Video Toaster is giving producers a chance to participate in the full range of TV language without having to pay through the nose.

*Barbara Osborn is an L.A.-based writer on film, television, and technology. Her last article for The Independent was on the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women.*



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Why does society readily accept violence but not love between men? asks **Why Not Love?** a 30-second public service announcement which juxtaposes images of socially condoned male violence, in the form of boxing, with images of intimacy between two men. The spot, produced by New York-based filmmaker Edgar Barends and composer Brian Tobbs, is part of a series of PSAs which deals with homophobia and aims to accustom viewers to same-sex love. Six others, titled **Get Used To It**, put "public displays of queerness" in the spotlight. *Why Not Love/Get Used To It*: VooDoo Peep Productions, 250 East 35th St., Ste 4D, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-0080.

*P.O.V.* opens its season on June 15 with Marlon Riggs' new documentary, **Color Adjustment**. Tracing the evolution of images of blacks on American television, *Color Adjustment* illuminates this subject of crucial importance in an age of compulsive TV-watching. Produced by Vivian Kleiman and Riggs and directed by Riggs, the video covers over 40 years of race relations through the lens of primetime entertainment. From *Amos 'n Andy* to *The Cosby Show*, Riggs revisits some of the most powerful and far-reaching images in entertainment history and points out how America has been lamentably hesitant to approach black representation on TV critically. The video is narrated by Ruby Dee and contains interviews with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., David Wolper, Diahann Carroll, and Norman Lear. *Color Adjustment*: California Newsreel, 149 9th St. #420, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: (415) 621-6522.

Why do men box? What are the ingredients that make up a fighter? Is boxing the product of cultural oppression and racism? Does it help young men deal constructively with the anger they develop from oppression? R. Christopher Speck is looking for collaborators for his one-hour video documentary **The Sweet Science: A Study of Discipline, Anger and Oppression**, about the meaning of fighting—inside and outside the ring. *The Sweet Science*: R. Christopher Speck, 918 W. Markham Ave., Durham, NC 27701; (919) 683-1051.

In the 1970s, one out of every seven Cambodians died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, a communist guerilla army; facing death and de-

struction, 150,000 fled to the US. **Rebuilding the Temple: Cambodians In America** is the first comprehensive documentary to examine the influence of Khmer-Buddhist culture on the refugees' adjustment to American life. Produced by Claudia Levin and Lawrence R. Hott, the one-hour film interweaves on-camera interviews with images of contemporary Cambodian life—such



**Slice of life from a Cambodian wedding in the Bronx, in Claudia Levin and Lawrence R. Hott's *Rebuilding the Temple*.**

Photo: Leah Melnick, courtesy filmmaker

as an ordination parade in which a novice monk stands in a Corvette convertible followed by a procession of Cambodians dressed in sarongs—to form a first-person commentary that links personal stories with the larger history of Cambodia in the twentieth century. *Rebuilding the Temple*: Claudia Levin, (413) 584-5684, or Lawrence Hott, (413) 268-7934.

Combining realistic/fantastic narrative with the graphic fluidity of video, **WAX or the discovery of television among the bees** explores the landscapes, psychic and physical, of continents, time, and characters. Director David Blair used the latest video technologies to create this phantasmagorical work of "electronic cinema." Jacob Maker inherits from his grandfather hives

of Mesopotamian bees. Through his interaction with the bees, the boundaries that divide the past and the present, the synthetic and the real, cease to exist in Jacob's world, propelling him through a grotesque miasma of past and future realities toward the fulfillment of his destiny. *WAX or the discovery of television among the bees*: David Blair, Box 174, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276; (212) 228-1514.

Disrupting conventional filmic and acting techniques, Cecilia Dougherty's **Coal Miner's Granddaughter** is a semi-autobiographical, brutally realistic portrait of a woman's odyssey from her constraining family life in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to an impressionistic world of charged lesbian sexuality. This 80-minute film, shot on a Fisher Price camera and video, stars video artist Leslie Singer as Jane Dobson, the film's protagonist.

Casting an unblinking eye on the incidents of family life that bear deeply felt emotions and on the act of lesbian love-making, Dougherty has created an intensely personal view of a woman's self-fulfillment. *Coal Miner's Granddaughter*: Cecilia Dougherty, 1650 California St., San Francisco, CA 94109; (415) 931-2355.

The Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in Pennsylvania has an important place in American labor history. Despite this, there has never been a comprehensive study of the event, partly due to the lack of first-hand information about the strike. In anticipation of the strike's hundredth anniversary, filmmakers Steffi Domike and Nicole Fauteux have completed

shooting of their film **The River Ran Red**, an hour-long documentary that pieces together the events that led up to the strike and raises questions about its legacy. The film is scheduled for release on July 6, 1992. *The River Ran Red*: Nicole Fauteux, 5724 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217; (412) 421-4789.

"To write a poem after Auschwitz," said Austrian philosopher Theodor Adorno, "is barbaric." Inspired by contemplation of this statement, filmmaker Shalom Gorewitz questions the possibility of making art in the wake of the Holocaust in his video **Damaged Visions**. Gorewitz travels to Sighet, Romania, a city in the Carpathian mountains where his grandparents lived and mother was born; a concentration camp in Poland; and Budapest, Hungary to collect images of the Holocaust. Using specialized computer video visualization systems, Gorewitz juxtaposes archival footage with his recorded images, creating a unique and visually intricate portrait of his family's and

a culture's devastation during WWII. *Damaged Visions*: Shalom Gorewitz, 310 W. 85 St. 7C, New York, NY 10024; (212) 724-2075.

"Well, it's difficult to put into words," says director Bill Knowland of his latest film *The Idea*. On its most basic level, Knowland's 20-minute silent film is the simple tale of a woman and an egg to which she gives birth. The egg is a sort of crystal ball, showing people images of their wishes and desires. Knowland makes extensive use of the latest in special effects technologies and gives his imagination free rein to elaborate this fantastical plot. The film was in postproduction for over a year, and every frame was optically altered—whole sets of mattes and counter-mattes were developed for the images that appear in the egg. The film has original music set to it, and its release prints are in 16mm. *The Idea*: Direct Images, Box 29392, Oakland, CA 94604; (415)769-9527.

The poet as spokesman, social activist, teacher, and historian: this is the portrait Henry Ferrini gives of his uncle, the seminal post-modernist poet Vincent Ferrini, in his video *Poem in Action*. The videomaker portrays the forces that shaped Vincent as a writer: the Great Depression, the Communist Party, the poetics of place, his life as an immigrant's son and factory worker. Shot over a period of eight years on Cape Ann and in San Francisco, the video provides a firsthand look at this 77-year-old artist, known as the "last surviving proletarian poet." *Poem in Action*: Ferrini Productions, 5 Wall St., Gloucester, MA 01930; (508) 281-2355; fax: (508) 283-4551.

Weaving a tapestry of American, Japanese, and Jewish history and culture, Alan Berliner's *Intimate Stranger* takes as its starting point the life of the filmmaker's father, Joseph Cassuto, but eventually encompasses his rich legacy. The film is at once intensely personal and universally resonant. *Intimate Stranger*: Alan Berliner, 62 E. 87th St. #2A, New York, NY 10128; (212) 369-2616.

The rise and fall of Marxism as illustrated by events on Long Island is the premise of Jeff Kahn's "red comedy," *Revolution*. The film, shot in 12 days for \$100,000, tells the story of three hapless Marxist students who temporarily lose their ideals when they wrest control of a mansion on Long Island. Kahn wrote and directed the film, which stars downtown actress Kimberly Flynn. *Revolution*: David Leslie, 604 E. 9th St. #13, New York, NY 10009; (212) 477-6896.

First-time director Ben Model and actor/comedian/scriptwriter Luis Caballeró turn Puerto Rican stereotypes on their heads in *The Puerto Rican Mambo (not a musical)*. Using biting satire as its main weapon, the film deftly exposes the prejudice and condescension with which less fortunate immigrants are treated in New York City. Model juxtaposes footage of Caballeró's stand-up routines with scenes of the harsh realities of Puerto Rican life to create an incisive portrait of an Hispanic-American tragedy. *The Puerto Rican Mambo*: Cabriole Films, Inc., 34 W. 13th St.,



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Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates was born in rural South Carolina in 1907. Despite a disabling injury in a cotton seed gin accident at the age of 12, Bates went on to become a consummate showman and dancer. In 1951 he opened the Peg Leg Bates Country Club, the only resort in segregated America where blacks were welcome. **The Dancing Man: Peg Leg Bates** documents the career of this unlikely figure in black entertainment history. Documentarian Dave Davidson directed and produced this one-hour feature, which includes long-lost kinescopes and archival film dating back to 1939, interviews with personalities such as Gregory Hines, and extensive conversations with Bates himself. *The Dancing Man: Peg Leg Bates*: Dave Davidson, Hudson West Productions, 819 Washington St., Hoboken, NJ 07030; (201) 798-5189.

Exploring the act of revealing that one is HIV positive or has AIDS, Ellen Spiro and Marina Alvarez' *(In)Visible Women* focuses on the responses of three women with AIDS in their respective communities. The second in a series of videos addressing AIDS (the Fear of Disclosure Project, initiated by the late Phil Zwickler), *(In)Visible Women* examines how women refuse to remain invisible victims of the virus and defy notions of female complacency through art, community education, and activism. *(In)Visible Women*: Jonathan Lee, 800 Riverside Drive, Apt. 2E, New York, NY 10032; (212) 923-1289.

Veteran documentarian Frederick Wiseman continues his series about American life as expressed through its institutions with his latest two-and-a-half-hour feature *Aspen*. Trend and tradition intertwine in this city where pleasure seekers come along with searchers for spiritual enlightenment. Wiseman focuses his camera on the disparate eccentrics and the idle rich who make up the resort's population and finds in the city a microcosm of contemporary American culture: steeped in history, though ravaged by commercialism.

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Shorty Jackson with you-know-who at the Copacabana in the 1930s, from Lesley Ellen's *Tender, Slender and Tall*.

Courtesy filmmaker

consumerism, and canned culture. *Aspen*: Denise Crawford, senior publicist, Thirteen-WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-4919.

Barbara Hammer employs images and text to intertwine Western constructions of death in *Vital Signs*. Hammer cuts between her interactions with a skeleton, clips from Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, text from Foucault's *Birth of a Clinic*, and scenes from a hospital intensive care unit to create a multilayered 9-minute study of humans' innate obsession with death. *Vital Signs*: Barbara Hammer, 55 Bethune St. #114G, New York, NY 10014; (212) 645-9077.

Shorty Jackson, Eddie Barefield, and Wesley Landers were semiretired veterans of the early days of jazz when a young trumpet player, Mike Lattimore, brought them together to form the Shorty Jackson Band, a Kansas City-style jazz quintet. *Tender, Slender and Tall*, a 28-minute color film by Lesley Ellen, documents the four-some as they make their way from day jobs to gigs, at home and on the road. From Harlem, nightclubs, and delis to funeral parlors, subways, and senior citizen centers, they tell stories about the old days, each other, their music, and their lives. *Tender, Slender and Tall*: Lesley Ellen, Terrace Films, 52 South 6th St., Apt. 4, Brooklyn, NY 11211-5938; (718) 388-2976.

### ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.

### Show and Tell.

Back issues of *The Independent* are available to professors for classroom distribution free of charge. Contact AIVF: (212) 473-3400.

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## Domestic

**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL.** Oct. 9-18, IL. Deadline: June 1. Sponsored by Facets Multimedia, competitive fest looks for outstanding entertainment films, tapes & TV programs for children, w/high technical/aesthetic merit & content which speaks to culturally diverse audiences, is humanistic, non-exploitative & nonviolent. Entries screened by 2 ind. juries, one of children, the other of filmmakers, critics, educators & parents. Award cats: children's jury; best live action/animation; best feature-length live action/animation; best shorts (30-60 min.; 10-30 min.; under 10 min.); live action/animation; Liv Ullman Peace Prize; festival award for intercultural understanding; audience prize. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Contact: Facets Multimedia, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 281-9075; fax: (312) 929-5437.

**CINEQUEST.** Oct. 8-11, CA. Now in 3rd yr, fest showcases ind. cinema, incl. world, US & Bay Area premieres. Fest is "personal film festival that creates intimate & effective environment for filmmakers, distributors, media & film buffs." Focus on maverick films, features & shorts. Program features Film Events as well as seminars on "ind. vs. Hollywood" & "technology vs. story." Cinequest also has special foundation to aid independent filmmakers in pursuit of distribution & offers Maverick Grants, consisting of 50% of festival profits for films whose makers demonstrate sound exhibition & distribution strategy & need. Entry fee: \$20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4". Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Cinequest, Box 720040, San Jose, CA 95172-0040; (408) 739-6238; fax: (408) 720-8724.

**COLLEGE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL.** May, OH. Animation, live action & doc. accepted for first annual fest. Prize money totalling over \$2,000. Entrants must be at least 18 yrs. No entry fee. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: College Film & Video Festival, Univ. of Cincinnati Film Society, Mail Location #136, Cincinnati, OH 45221; (513) 556-FILM; fax: (513) 556-3313.

**LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL.** July 9-19, CA. Now in 10th yr, fest seeks films & videos by or on gay men & lesbians. Accepts features, shorts, docs & experimental work. No entry fee or form. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2" & 3/4"; preview on 1/2" (incl. \$5 for tape return). Deadline: April 24. Submit bio. w/ contact address, ph. & prior film/video credits; synopsis & data (gauge, credits, length, format); & stills from film/video. Contact: Gay & Lesbian Media Coalition (GLMC), 8228 Sunset Blvd., Ste 308, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

**MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL.** Sept. 29-Oct. 4, NY. Now celebrating 16th yr, all doc/short fest, premiere venue for anthropological & ethnographic film, programs works on family, cultural change, ritual. Incl. work on real people in real situations in US society or cultures throughout world: village & city life, nonwestern & western cultures, indiv. portraits & films on whole societies. Docudramas not accepted. Participating films/videos receive certificate of participation. Audiences number 7,000. Entry fee: \$75 (TV/commercial film/video); \$30 (ind. film/video); \$15 (student). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4". Deadline: May 8. Contact: Elaine Charnov, Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History, Dept. of Education, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: (212) 769-5329.

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

**MOUNTAINFILM.** May 22-25, CO. Films dealing w/ mountains or mountaineering & exploration & interpretation of wild places are eligible for competitive fest; submission of original video programs invited. Fest provides accommodations & some meals. Awards: grand prize for best film of fest; best mountaineering film; best mountain sports film; best mountain spirit film; best tech. climbing film; special jury award. Cats: films of general or historical interest shown by invitation; films entered in competition; works in progress; slide or other multimedia programs; videos; additional programs. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Mountainfilm, Box 1088, 540 W. Galena Ave., Telluride, CO 81435; (303) 728-4123.

**PHILAFILM/PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.** July 22-25, PA. Now in 15th yr, competitive fest programs 150-200 films & videos. Cats: feature, short, animation, experimental, super 8, music video, student. Held at Federal Reserve Bank Auditorium, program incl. seminars on financing (particularly for docs, low-budget features & shorts) & screenwriting. Sponsored by Int'l Producers Assoc. Entry fee: \$20-\$100. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Darryle Henderson/Larry Smallwood, Philadelphia Int'l Film Festival, 121 N. Broad St., #618, Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 977-2831; fax: (215) 977-2856.

**ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR.** Aug. 8-14, NY. Seminar for ind. doc., narrative, & experimental films & videos that extend Flaherty tradition of cinematic exploration. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Sally Berger, RFS, 305 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 727-7262.

**UTAH SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL.** June 15-20, UT. 13th annual competitive fest for ind. films & videos produced in US after July 1990, under 60 min. Cats: narrative, doc., experimental, animation, young media artists. Entry fee: \$30 (\$10 young media artists, 18 yrs & under). Prizes incl. cash awards goods & services. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Utah Film & Video Center, 20 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84101; (801) 534-1158.

## Foreign

**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.** Aug. 15-30, Scotland. Eclectic programming featuring best of new int'l cinema. Showcases incl: features, work by new directors, animation, British premieres, docs & live events. 1992 sections: American Inds; Movies by & for Children; Panorama (int'l feature films); Young Film Makers; Animation; Eyes of the World (contemporary docs). Chaplin Award for best 1st or 2nd feature; Michael Powell Award for best new British feature; Post Office McLaren Award for best new British animation; Young Film Maker of Year Award (int'l); plus Pressburger Award, new award for European scriptwriting. Entry fee: £45 (indivs); £80 (organizations). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" (PAL). Deadline: May 22. Contact: Penny Thomson, director, Edinburgh Int'l Film Festival, 88 Lothian Rd., Edinburgh EH3 9BZ, Scotland, UK; tel: 44 31 228 4051; fax: 44 31 229 5501.

**GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.** July, Spain. Features or shorts made for youth accepted in all fest sections: official (competition & out-of-competition) & info. section (Ourlines, Cycles, Retros). Awards: best feature, short, director, actress, actor; special jury prize; youth jury prize (jury of 200 aged 13-18). Entries must have been completed after Jan 1, 1991 & unawarded in other FIAPF-recognized fests. Format: 35mm; preview on 1/2" (PAL), 3/4" (NTSC), Beta. Deadline: Apr. 26. Contact: Festival Internacional de Cine de Gijon, c/o Emilio Villa, 4, Apartado de Correos 76, 33201 Gijon (Asturias), Spain; tel: 985 343739.

**LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.** August, Switzerland. Now in 45th yr as major Swiss cultural/cinematic event, all-feature competitive fest known as "the smallest of the big festivals & the biggest of the small" w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from ind. directors & recently founded nat'l film industries. Unique open-air screenings in Piazza Grande, which holds 8,000. Special sections & out-of-competition screenings. Competition accepts 1st & 2nd fiction features by new directors, art films, low-budget films, work from Third World countries, indies & cinema d'auteur. Must be over 60 min., only European premieres accepted, completed in previous 12 mo. Educational, advertising & scientific films ineligible. Prizes: Gold Leopard (Grand Prix) & City of Locarno Grand Prix; Silver Leopard (Grand Prix of Jury) & 2nd Prize of City of Locarno; honorable mention & technical prizes. Films should be French-subtitled. Fest provides 5-day hospitality to director plus one rep. of films in competition. More than 100 buyers present at fest. 50 buyers chosen among biggest US, European & Japanese distributors & TVs invited w/ full board accommodation. Fest's new director is Marco Muller, former hd of Pesaro & Rotterdam fests & member of Venice selection board for 11 yrs. Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: May 31. Contact: (East Coast) Sophie Gluck & Norman Wang, 279 Mott St., #5F, New York, NY 10012; (212) 758-8535, fax: (212) 888-2830; (West Coast) Wendy Braitman & Michael Ehrenzweig, EBS Prods., 330 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 495-2327; fax: (415) 495-2381; (Lo-carno) Marco Muller, director, Locarno Internat'l Film Festival, Via della Posta 6, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 93 31 02 32; fax: 93 31 74 65

**FILMFEST MÜNCHEN.** June, Germany. Noncompetitive fest has history of showcasing US ind. films before audiences of 80,000. 90-100 int'l films shown. Considered leading meeting place for film professionals. Sec-

tions: int'l section, perspectives (1st & 2nd works of young directors), ind. film section, special screenings, children's section, short films & docs, lectures, tributes. Film Exchange (for developing contacts) also held. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Contact: Internationale Münchner Filmwochen GmbH, Kaiserstrasse 39 93, D-8000 Munich 40, Germany; tel: 89 38 19 040; fax: 89 38 19 04 26.

TAORMINA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, Italy. Now in 38th yr, fest features American Film Week w/ competitive section devoted to young American cinema (showcase for directors beg. careers). Cash awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Taormina Int'l Film Festival, Via B. Tortolini 36, Rome 00197, Italy; tel: 80 60 18; fax: 80 12 79.

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August, Italy. At 49, Venice is world's longest running fest & one of most prestigious. Attended by several thousand guests & large press contingent. Work shown in & out of competition. Awards: Golden Lion (best film); Grand Special Award; Silver Lion (best direction); Volpi Cup (best actor/actress); 3 Oselle (outstanding professional contributions). Sections: Venezia XLVII (main competition); noncompetitive sections: Venezia Orizzonti (info. section: varied works illuminating current tendencies & aspects of cinema); Venezia Notte (works of "an intelligently spectacular nature," entertaining but w/ style & content, shown at midnight); Venezia RiSguardi (retro. of director, current, or theme); Venezia TV (exhibition of works recently made for TV); Eventi Speciali (screenings of "special & unusual appeal"); Settimana Internazionale della Critica (International Critics' Week—1st & 2nd works; run as ind. part of fest). Films must be subtitled in Italian. Deadline: June 30. Contact: La Biennale di Venezia, Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica, Settore Cinema e Spettacolo Televisivo, Ca Giustinian, 1364A San Marco, 30124 Venice, Italy; tel: 520-0311/520-0228.

### FIVE THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations, and organizations: New York State Council on the Arts; National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation; Rockefeller Foundation; Consolidated Edison Company of New York; Beldon Fund; Edelman Family Fund, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and Funding Exchange.

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**RICHARD CHISOLM**, director of photography, film & video. Int'l doc. work. 11-yrs experience, reel avail. (410) 467-2997.

**CUSTOM MUSIC FOR TV & RADIO:** Creative composer/producer will work w/in tight budget & schedules. Electronic & acoustic music, DAT or analog mixdown. Vocalists, voiceover talent, multitrack prod. avail. Sauna Studio, (718) 229-4864.

## Preproduction

**INDEPENDENT PRODUCER** is looking for an experienced screenwriter to write script based on synopsis

# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Conservation Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### *Production Insurance*

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### *Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT*

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### *Dental Plan*

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### *Service Discounts*

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### *National Car Rental*

National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

### *Mastercard Plan*

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### *Facets Multimedia Video Rentals*

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## MORE TO COME

Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

## Join AIVF Today .....

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers — providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

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### *Library/Institutional membership*

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Join AIVF today and get a one-year subscription to *The Independent*.

- \$45/individual (in U.S. & P.R.)
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**GRANT AND PROPOSAL WRITER.** Need assistance w/ state, federal, corporate, or foundation fundraising proposals? Reasonable fees. Call (212) 262-3523.

## Postproduction

**BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY:** Super 8 & 8mm film-to-video mastering w/ scene-by-scene color correction to 1", Betacam & 3/4". By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372.

**EDIT FACILITIES/REASONABLE RATES.** Betacam SP, Grass Valley 110 w/ Chyron. 3/4" editmaster sys. w/ 9000 VTRs (SMPTE), 3/4" 2 or 3 XTR microlock sys. w/ Eagle cont. Midtown location. Call (212) 221-6310.

**FOR RENT:** Sony 5850 edit sys. in own home or in cozy Greenwich Village office w/ private bathroom, kitchen & garden. \$700/week or negotiable. (212) 727-1732.

**3/4" OFF-LINE VIDEO sys.** w/ time-code reader/generator. Comfortable, economical, convenient downtown location. Call (212) 941-1695.

**DESKTOP VIDEO SYSTEMS.** Complete hi-8/S-VHS pkgs under \$5,000. Incl. Sony hi-8 w/ time code, editing VCR, computer & frame-accurate decision list control-

ler sys. Install, train, support. Cliff (212) 285-1463; Box 668, Peck Slip Sta., New York, NY 10272.

**OFF-LINE 3/4", \$15/hr; w/ editor, \$25/hr.** Sony sys. 5800, 5850, RM440, mixer, black generator. Very comfortable, private room, great for clients. 24-hr access. 30th & 8th. Betacam SP to 3/4" window burns. Production services avail. Tom (212) 279-7003.

**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape. Precision guaranteed. \$30/400' (1000') camera roll. Student rates & pickup/delivery avail. Call NY's only Downtown Dailies service (212) 431-9289.

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**COMFORTABLE & PRIVATE VHS off-line editing suites.** Low hourly or weekly rates. Editor avail., 24-hr access. Soho location. (212) 966-9578.

**OFF-LINE AT HOME:** Will rent 2 Sony 5850s w/ RM440 or RM450 edit controller & monitors. Low monthly rates, \$650/week. Answer your own phone & cut all night if you like! John (212) 245-1364 or 529-1254.

**3/4" OFF-LINE EDITING w/ experienced editor,** Sony SP, \$30/hr. 3rd Avenue/33rd St. location. Call Patrick (212) 873-0265. Also, video conversions NTSC/PAL/SECAM, \$20 for 1st hr. Call Larry (212) 689-4853.

**EDIT IN NEW ENGLAND COUNTRYSIDE.** Two fully equipped 16mm edit rooms—6-plate Steenbeck, KEM, sound transfers. Office/living space in brick Victorian.

Edit help & prod. pkg. avail. Very reasonable rates. GMP Films (413) 863-4754.

**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND film services.** All S-8 prod., postprod., editing, sync sound, mix, multitrack, single & double sys. sound editing, transfers, stills, striping, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE space for rent** in suite of independents. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

**16MM CUTTING ROOMS:** 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

**COZY & CHEAP:** 3/4" off-line editing room w/ new Sony 5850, 5800, RM440. \$500/week for a 5-day week. 24-hr access, midtown location. Call Jane (212) 929-4795 or Deborah (212) 226-2579.

**NEGATIVE MATCHING:** 16 or 35mm. 40 years exp., all work guaranteed. Will beat any competitor's price. Video matchback to the AVID 1 Composer. Northeast Negative Matchers (413) 736-2177 or (800) 370-CUTS. Accept MC, AMEX & Visa.

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**ELECTRIC FILM (212) 925-3429**

## Conferences ■ Seminars

**FILM VIDEO ARTS'** April workshops incl.: intro. to video editing, intermediate video editing; prod. management; essentials of video prod. insurance; Amiga Video Toaster; grantwriting; video postprod.; audio postprod. for video. Contact: Media Training Dept., F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9371.

**INPUT 92** will devote time & space to formation of int'l assoc. of ind. filmmakers at Baltimore convention May 24-29. Goals incl. internationalizing public support & increasing US access to new funding opportunities in Europe. To help prepare draft proposal for convention, contact: Gideon Bachmann, Manor House Loft, Hurley, Maidenhead, Berkshire, England SL6 5NB; (tel) 062-882-4975; (fax): 062-882-2201.

**INTENSIVE SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP** w/ Ana Simo offered by Apparatus Productions & Film News Now starts in May. Send SASE for appl. to: Fran Montane, 84-22 107th St., Richmond Hill, NY 11418.

**MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ARTS AGENCIES** will hold marketing/fundraising workshop w/ Northern Economic Initiatives Center, Marquette, Apr. 10-11. Contact: MACAA, 205 G Waters Building, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; (616) 454-1771.

**NEH RESEARCH CONFERENCE** in Media & Revolution scheduled for Oct. 15-17 at Univ. of Kentucky. Small travel subsidies awarded on competitive basis. Contact: John D. Stempel, Patterson School of Diplomacy, Univ. of Kentucky, Patterson Office Tower, Ste #455, Lexington, KY 40506-0027; (606) 257-4666.

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL** offers one-wk media workshop for educators, Jul. 26 - Aug. 1. Ohio teachers & administrators receive fellowships to participate in workshops on film animation, doc. video, audio/radio, beg. & advanced photography. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Vonnie Sanford, Arts in Education program coordinator, Ohio Arts Council, 727 E. Main St., Columbus, OH 43205-1796; (614) 466-2613 or -4541.

Also, free workshops in artistic development, marketing & touring for artists, administrators & board members of ethnic arts organizations. Day-long workshops to be held in Cincinnati, Toledo, Cleveland & Warren. For info., contact: Barbara Bayless at above address & number.

**TIME-CODE POSTPRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** taught in seminar at Trinity Square Video, Canadian nonprofit artist-run video access center. Apr. 13, 14, 15. Participants learn about creating & using edit decision lists, auto-assembly, building synchronized multitrack soundtracks & on-line & off-line editing. Fee: \$85, non-members: \$65, members. Contact: Trinity Square Video, 172 John St., 4th Fl., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1X5; (416) 593-1332.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**AMIGA ARTISTS ON THE AIR** seeks computer work for new public access series. Send materials on 3.5" Amiga formatted disks, VHS or 3/4" w/ descriptions to: Tobe Carey, Willow Mixed Media, Box 194, Lenox Ave., Glenford, NY 12433; (914) 657-2914.

**ART MAGGOT HYSTERIA**, 30-min. art party on Century Cable, Los Angeles, seeks work from visual artists in all media. Works w/ pol./social/religious subjects encouraged. Submit 3/4" tapes to: Jonathan X. pro-

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., April 8 for the June issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

ducer/technical dir., Box 3898, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 665-0171.

**FILMWORKS TV** seeks films under 26 min. by inds for wkly TV show. Fee for works. Send 3/4" tapes on 2-track to: Jerome Legions, Jr., Omega Media Network, Box 4824, Richmond, VA 23220; (804) 353-4525.

**FORUM GALLERY** seeks works (film, video, installation) from Scandinavian artists living in US or abroad for exhibition. Deadline: Apr. 30. Send work sample, resumé, reviews, articles, catalogs & other appropriate materials w/ SASE to: Scandinavian Exhibition, Forum Gallery, 525 Falconer St., Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 665-9107.

**FUND FOR INNOVATIVE TV**, producer of PBS series *The 90's*, seeks short video works (under 15 min.) w/ political slant for nat'l broadcast on *The 90's Election Specials*. Works-in-progress & excerpted pieces fine. \$150/min. for accepted tapes. Send 3/4", hi-8 or VHS & \$3 return postage to: *The 90's*, 400 N. Michigan Ave., Ste #1608, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 321-9321.

**JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE** seeks works on folklore & trad. culture for review. Send VHS to: Beverly & Daniel Patterson, Curriculum in Folklore, 228 Greenlaw Hall 066A, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

**LESBIAN & GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER** solicits works to found Lesbian Video Data Bank, contact list of lesbians working in film & video. Contact: Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center, 208 W. 13 St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 620-7310.

**OPEN SCREENING:** Image Atlanta invites artists working in film, video, computer animation, multimedia & other media to screen their works on Apr. 21. Call ahead to describe format. (404) 352-4225.

**PROPOSALS FOR '92-'93 EXHIBITION SEASON** sought by nonprofit gallery 1708 East Main. Installations & mixed media welcome. Artists receive small honoraria. Send SASE for proposal form to: Patricia Gardner, Photo-Four Gallery, South Suburban College, 15800 S. State St., South Holland, IL 60473.

**UNQUOTE TELEVISION**, regional program of student film & video, seeks works (experimental, doc., anima-

tion, performance, activist) by students. Send work & related literature to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

**THE VIDEO PROJECT**, nonprofit distributor of educational films & videos, seeks outstanding new productions on environment, war & peace, human rights & other global concerns. Contact: Steve Ladd, exec. dir., Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (510) 655-9050.

**WEST INVESTIGATIONS** seeks any & all of most original innovative work on VHS & 3/4" for West World Video Awards. Any length, any subject groundbreaking video exploration. Awards presented July 4 at Green Lantern Coffeehouse, New Orleans. Send copy (returnable upon request) & \$15 entry fee to: West Investigations, Box 850425, New Orleans, LA 70185.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** seeks submissions to Women of Color in Media Arts Database, detailed listing of women of color film- & videomakers in US. Database incl. video- & filmographies, bibliographical info. & biographical data. For info. or appl., contact: Helen Lee, Women of Color in Media Arts Database, Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette, Ste 207, New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**AMERICAN INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY CONTEST** is recruiting 1st-round judges willing to read & evaluate 15-20 scripts after June 1 submission deadline. Judges will receive honoraria. Contact: Dixon McDowell, assistant professor, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, Radio, Television & Film, Southern Station, Box 5141, Hattiesburg, MS, 39406-5141; (601) 266-4281.

**DEEP DISH TV NETWORK** seeks program dir. Exp. in video prod. & curating w/ strong activist orientation desired. Position requires commitment to creative use of TV in movements for social & economic justice. Salary: \$22-25K + benefits. Send cover letter, resumé & 3 refs to: Program Director Search, Deep Dish TV, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT IN FILM PRODUCTION** beg. fall '92. 2-yr M.A. program incl. \$3,000 stipend & tuition waiver. Req.: knowledge of Super 8 & 16mm prod. Write immediately to: Michael Siporin, Fine Arts Department, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES, NY** seeks PR professionals w/ 1-yr exp. to volunteer time as associate members of publicity committee. Send resumé to: Aaron Shelden, chairman, PR & Publicity Committee, NY/NATAS, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

**POSSIBLE TENURE-TRACK** teaching position in film production beg. '92-'93 academic yr at Humboldt State Univ. Probable deadline: Apr. 30. Send postcard requesting info to: Attn: Department Secretary, Theatre Arts Dept., Humboldt State Univ., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-5496.

## Publications

**DIRECTORY OF BUILDING & EQUIPMENT GRANTS** designed for nonprofit organizations. Profiles grant sources & foundations. \$49.50. Contact: Research Grant Guides, Box 1214, Lozahatchee, FL 33470.

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**Resources ■ Funds**

**ARTISTS LICENSE** helps fund prod. of feature-length screenplays by experienced videomakers. Send screenplay & VHS or 3/4" to: Artists License, 1808 Q St., Sacramento, CA 95819-0407; (916) 446-8044.

**ARTSPACEPROJECTS** has released guidelines & appls for new National Consulting Program. Program subsidizes consulting work for organizations & individuals across US. Contact: Artspace Projects, 400 1st Ave. N., #518, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

**BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS FOR THE ARTS**, program which recruits, trains & places business executives as management consultants on pro-bono basis w/nonprofit arts organizations, seeks volunteers to train as business consultants & accepts appls from organizations in need of business assistance. Contact: Arts & Business Council, 25 W. 45th St., Suite 707, New York, NY 10036; (212) 819-9287.

**FILM ARTS FOUNDATION GRANTS PROGRAM** awards 20 grants totalling \$54,000 to ind. film & videomakers in SF Bay area. Deadline: May 8. For guidelines & appl., send SASE: FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

**FULBRIGHT AWARDS:** In film & television for '93-'94 open to U.S. citizens w/ 3-yrs professional exp. in any area of film & TV. Recipients pursue extended professional work in UK. Candidates encouraged to correspond w/British counterparts; purely academic proposals not appropriate. Grant: £12,000 for 6-9 mo. period. Deadline: Aug. 1. Send project statement & 1 VHS tape of recent work w/ SASE for tape return. For appl. materials, call: (202) 686-7878. Questions, contact: Dr. Karen Adams, (202) 686-6245 or Ms. Betsy Lewis, (202) 686-6242. 2)

Also, Scholar Program for research &/or lecturing in over 120 countries. Terms: 2 mos-full academic yr. Professional artists & indivs outside academe encouraged to apply. Deadline: Jun. 15 for Australia & S. Asia; Aug. 1 for Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East & Canada. Call: (202) 686-7877.

**MEDIA ALLIANCE ON-LINE PROGRAM** assists artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-the-art equipment in New York State postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. For info, contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St, New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

**NATIONAL BLACK PROGRAMMING CONSORTIUM** supports research, development, scripting, prod. & postprod. of TV projects on history, culture & socio-political realities of Africa & African diaspora. Grants range from \$1,000-\$30,000. Send 10 copies of proposal, incl. goal statement, description, treatment/script, expected participants list, personnel list, budget, samples of work, letters of support & description of process to ensure authenticity. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: NBPC, 929 Harrison Ave., Ste #104, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355.

**NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES** announces June 1 major grant deadline. Proposals must be submitted in 20 copies on council appl. forms. Contact: NY Council for the Humanities, 198 Broadway, 10 Fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131

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# AIVF MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

MARTHA GEVER

**AIVF Executive Director**

Last summer AIVF members were asked to participate in a survey to help the organization's staff and board of directors evaluate our programs and services. Almost 750 individuals (about 15% of the entire membership) returned these forms, which we used to compile and analyze our membership composition and interests. Here are some of the results:

Perhaps the most important statistic was obtained from the first question: Are you involved in media production, involved in a related industry, or involved in an unrelated industry? 87% checked the first option: *The vast majority of AIVF members are media producers.* And 11% said they are involved in a related industry.

Many respondents indicated that they work with both film and video (40%), while 24% said they use only film and 34% use only video to make their work. In terms of styles and genres, 56% said they make documentaries, 23% are involved in feature production, 22% make industrials and commercials, 21% make television programs, 17% make experimental videos, 14% make experimental films, and 11% produce live-action shorts. These figures add up to more than 100%, since many media artists work in more than one style or genre.

64% said they own film or video equipment, and, of these, 45% own equipment valued under \$10,000, 14% have equipment worth between \$10,000 and \$40,000, and 9% reported owning equipment worth over \$40,000.

Average budgets for productions ranged from 58% under \$50,000 to 3% over \$1-million. Another 3% said their budgets are between \$500,000 and \$1-million, while 32% average between \$50,000 and \$500,000.

Many of the respondents are teachers—40% of whom teach at the college or university level. 43% said they support themselves exclusively by their work in media production, while 30% indicated income from related sources. 5% of the respondents were students, and 21% support themselves with work unrelated to media production.

48% of those who returned the survey are 30 to 39 years old. This represents the largest age group, although 24% are between 40 and 49, and 18% are

in their twenties. In addition 8% are 50 to 69, and .5% are over 70.

Of the respondents, 60% live in East Coast states, 16% on the West Coast, 10% in the Midwest, 5% in the South, 4% in the Southwest, and only 1% in the Northwest. 2% live outside the U.S.

These demographic figures regarding our membership tell us that our membership base consists largely of active independent media producers and teachers who are in their thirties and forties (with a significant group in their twenties) and who live on the two coasts. Although these numbers confirm what we have surmised from other indicators, they also point toward a need for greater outreach to younger artists and producers based in other areas of the country. Both initiatives are underway as we undertake new membership development strategies.

In addition to gathering information about the AIVF constituency, we also asked our members to give us their views on our existing programs and services. First, we asked them to rank our three primary areas of activity: advocacy, information, and services. *Information was heavily endorsed as the most important function of AIVF*, followed by advocacy; services ranked third.

When asked about members' use of existing programs and services, the listings in *The Independent* received the highest marks—46%—with Festival Bureau information ranking second—43%. Other services that were used in the past two years by over 10% of the respondents were seminars, book sales, health and disability insurance, and the AIVF office bulletin board. Members were also asked to indicate the programs they think would benefit from greater development; the most frequently cited were *The Independent* (44%), consultations on distribution (27%), health insurance (24%), general telephone consultations (22%) and seminars (22%).

This kind of information is invaluable to the AIVF staff and board as we examine our role and activities as a national service organization for independent media producers. It helps us set priorities and plan future directions for the organization. The survey has already served as the basis for charting new directions, such as the outreach efforts mentioned above. If this summary of our findings provokes ideas for realizing these goals, please take time to put your thoughts in writing and send them to me at: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

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## MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

On January 11, 1992, the AIVF Board of Directors convened. In attendance were Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Dee Davis (vice president), Loni Ding (secretary), Skip Blumberg, Christine Choy, Jim Klein, Lourdes Portillo, James Schamus, Bart Weiss, and AIVF/FIVF staff.

Executive director Martha Gever introduced the board to AIVF/FIVF's new staff members: Anne Douglass, membership/program director, and Mei-Ling Poon, bookkeeper, and FIVF's new development consultant, Susan Kennedy. Gever then reviewed the organization's recent activities: the latest round of awards under the Donor Advised Fund, FIVF's proposal submitted to the MacArthur Foundation, and the signing of a fiscal sponsorship agreement between FIVF and the International Media Resource Exchange. She reported on a preliminary meeting with NAMAC cochair Linda Mabalot and conference chair Margaret Caples concerning AIVF's participation in the next NAMAC national conference. Although NAMAC has not yet determined the date of the event, the board provisionally endorsed some form of cooperation. AIVF will also be participating in Arts Wire, a new computer bulletin board service for arts organizations and artists, as soon as it is operative.

Administrative director Kathryn Bowser reported on the progress of FIVF's next two international production guides. The Asian guide, edited by Somi Roy, has a projected completion date of August 1992. To update listings already gathered by Pearl Bowser for the African guide, James Schamus volunteered to take her data to the Rotterdam Film Festival, which many African producers will be attending.

Business manager Mei-Ling Poon reported that much of her time has been spent reorganizing the existing bookkeeping system. She will present more complete financial information at the next board meeting.

Festival bureau/information services director Kathryn Bowser noted the expected arrival of representatives from the Oberhausen and Sydney film festivals and that coordination of entries for the Creteil festival was complete.

The *Independent* editor Patricia Thomson reported that the magazine is operating fully staffed, with a new editorial assistant now in place. Managing editor Ellen Levy noted that an eight percent price increase for display ads went into effect January 1. Ad sales remain strong and newsstand sales are steadily increasing.

Seminars/membership director Anne Douglass enumerated the upcoming seminars—on festivals, legal issues, and foreign sales agents later in the year.

Under old business, the Membership Committee initiated an extended discussion of AIVF's health plans. It was decided that FIVF should host

a seminar on health insurance for independent producers, bringing together representatives of insurance agencies, consultants, and staff of other professional organizations with expertise in health plans.

The committee also discussed the distribution of audiotapes of seminars and the program's failure to break even. Ding and Schamus endorsed the idea that some form of documentation should occur. The committee agreed to bring an alternate proposal for seminar documentation to the next board meeting.

The committee also proposed that AIVF's regional representatives receive a list of members in their areas and be encouraged to establish monthly office hours.

The Advocacy Committee discussed three new projects: an advocacy video that will address issues of public funding and censorship and will be coordinated by Schamus, Davis, and Ding; an op-ed piece; and a phone tree, which will include members in key geographic areas.

Schamus announced the committee's plan to establish a task force on new technologies, which will identify developments affecting independent producers, compile a bibliography on these areas, and convene a series of informal meetings with experts involved in various facets of technological developments and related public policy issues.

Jim Klein announced that the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers elected Gever to its board. Gever then reported that NCIPBP's most urgent concerns are nominating the Independent Television Service (ITVS) board members and defining its responsibilities regarding other aspects of public television.

The board voted in favor of playing a role in facilitating contract negotiations between ITVS and producers who received grants and are dissatisfied with the terms of the Open Call contract.

Under new business, the board formed a committee to develop the FIVF board (Kim-Gibson, Davis, Richter, Portillo, Gever). The board unanimously passed a motion to amend the FIVF bylaws so that FIVF board terms will be two years, commencing at the time of their election.

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## GOT A LINE ON DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES?

A newly formed AIVF committee is collecting information on new technologies—fiber optics, digital image processing, etc.—in order to investigate how these might affect independent production and distribution. If you are interested in participating in our research efforts, or if you have access to R&D labs or personnel within those departments, please contact Patricia Thomson at (212) 473-3400 or James Schamus at (212) 229-1046.

## HAVE YOU BEEN AUDITED LATELY?

Have you gone through an IRS audit in the past couple of years? If you have, we want to hear your story. We want to run an article in *The Independent* on what's happened to film/videomakers in the wake of the recent tax changes. Your anonymity will be assured. Contact: Susan Lee, film tax accountant and writer, 2 Charlton St. New York, NY 10014; (212) 633-1516.

## UPCOMING SEMINARS

### HEALTH INSURANCE FOR INDEPENDENTS

Thursday, May 14th

7-9 p.m. 721 Broadway, NYC, Rm 006

For self-employed independent producers, the rising cost of health insurance is increasingly a source of frustration and alarm. This panel brings together a number of industry experts who will outline the various options available to independents and answer your questions.

### LEGAL AFFAIRS

Thursday, June 18

Time & place to be announced

Attorney Wilder Knight will address a variety of legal issues of concern to producers. Watch your mailbox for details.

## AIVF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, April 24 7:00-9:00 pm

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**What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been**  
**William Greaves' Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One**



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# THE INDEPENDENT

MAY 1992  
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\* FIVF Board of Directors only



18



14



30

**COVER:** The increased visibility of African American cinema has sparked interest in the predecessors of Spike Lee, John Singleton, Julie Dash, and company. One such veteran director is documentarian William Greaves, whose 1968 feature *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* is currently receiving renewed attention. At once a critique of cinema verité, a Cassavetesian improvisation, and an Age of Aquarius time capsule, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* is now assuming its proper place among the self-reflective film experiments of that era. In this issue, Greaves discusses the film and his unorthodox techniques as a director. Photo courtesy filmmaker.

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## FROHNMAYER'S FALL

When Bush Comes to Shove at the NEA

As the survivors of the 1992 presidential campaign stagger toward the primary season's finish line, Patrick Buchanan's negative ad pillorying the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for having "wasted our tax dollars on pornographic and blasphemous art" has long since slipped from the headlines. While Buchanan no longer poses a threat to the President, the damage his campaign inflicted on the endowment remains. On May 1, John Frohnmayer stepped down as chair of the embattled agency, ousted by Bush's men who

conservative columnist George Will, ABC's Sam Donaldson, and public broadcasting's Cokie Roberts—agreed there was no need for a national arts endowment, giving credibility to what had previously been a fringe position. Days later Buchanan aired his anti-NEA polispot in Georgia, a key state in the Junior Tuesday primaries. Significantly, Georgia legislators had previously reprimanded the executive director of the statewide public TV system for airing *Tongues Untied*, Marlon Rigg's documentary on gay blacks, telling him the station's state funding would be in jeopardy if such programs were aired in the future.

It was *Tongues Untied* that Buchanan's team featured in their NEA spot. A blatant appeal to homophobia, the ad shows bare-chested, leather-haltered men dancing in the streets during a gay rights parade while a voice ominously intones, "This so-called art has glorified homosexuality, exploited children, and perverted the image of Jesus Christ. Even after good people protested, Bush continued to fund this kind of art."

Riggs responded with an op-ed in the *New York Times* (March 6), taking Buchanan to task for his attempt to turn black gay men into the new Willie Horton. When asked whether the NEA planned to rebut the ad, an agency spokeswoman said, "No specific response is planned. That's what Bush's campaign is doing. We're trying to keep the campaign issue a campaign issue." (Weeks later Frohnmayer blasted Buchanan in a March 23rd appearance before the National Press Club. He also delivered a withering attack on Congress for backing content restrictions and mainstream religious leaders for standing idly by while fundamentalists pushed to obliterate public arts funding. He warned, "If the National Endowment for the Arts gets picked off, public broadcasting is next, and after that research funds for universities, and after that research funds for science. There will be no end to it.")

The Bush team's reaction was to call the ad "demagoguery" and "a blatant distortion of the truth." But they never spelled out where the distortion lies—whether it's in the claims about the NEA supporting pornography or in linking Bush with the endowment.

Frohnmayer's removal was widely seen as a matter of political expediency undertaken in the heat of the race. Although in the past Bush stood by Frohnmayer when his appointee came under fire, as a vulnerable candidate he sounded a dour, distancing note when announcing the chairman's

feared that Buchanan would turn this friend of the president into a political liability. It remains to be seen whether conservative Republican candidates will pick up their tar and feathers and follow the trail blazed by Buchanan when the congressional races heat up in the fall.

To the public eye, Frohnmayer's fall came swiftly. Within a week's time, Buchanan became a serious contender after sweeping up 37 percent of the Republican vote in the New Hampshire primary on February 19. He introduced the art-as-pornography theme into his stump speech once the contest swung south. Bush's team responded by handing Frohnmayer his hat two days after New Hampshire. That Sunday on *This Week with David Brinkley*, three mainstream journalists—



Patrick Buchanan's negative ad and stump speech attacks on the NEA had a ripple effect that is still being felt.

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# **AIVF**

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## **18 REASONS TO JOIN AIVF TODAY**

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**AINE**

"I leave with the belief that this eclipse of the soul will soon pass and with it the lunacy that sees artists as enemies and ideas as demons."

resignation, noting, "Some of the art funded by the NEA does not have my enthusiastic approval."

But Frohnmayer's ouster was also part of a two-year internecine battle for control over the arts agency that was led by Vice President Dan Quayle's staff and former White House chief of staff John Sununu. What began as a fight over limiting the content of NEA-funded projects culminated in a dispute over the handling of a lawsuit brought by four performance artists (Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller—dubbed the NEA 4) whose panel-approved grants were vetoed by the NEA's supervisory body, the National Council on the Arts. As documented in a series of confidential memos between the Justice Department and the NEA, obtained by investigative reporter Bill Lichtenstein for the *Village Voice* (March 10), the Bush administration wanted to make use of the Supreme Court's controversial gag rule, *Rust v. Sullivan*, in the endowment's defense against the NEA 4. *Rust* prohibits doctors in health clinics that receive federal funding from discussing the option of abortion with their patients. As the Justice Department saw it, the NEA 4 case provided the perfect opportunity for establishing a second beachhead for *Rust* while also hobbling controversial artists.

Frohnmayer stubbornly and successfully resisted. Contrary to his past record as a bend-with-the-wind appointee, the documents show him waging a determined war against the *Rust* defense, according to Lichtenstein. Frohnmayer also promptly fired his second-in-command, White House appointee Alvin Felzenberg, when he was discovered to be the mole who leaked numerous internal documents to the press, including a memo accusing Deep Dish TV of being "Fidel Castro's propaganda arm in the US."

By many accounts, Frohnmayer's two-and-a-half years at the agency turned him into a fervent First Amendment advocate. Although his role in the vetoing of grants to Highways and Franklin Furnace in January calls into question the depth of this conversion [see "Furnace Burned by National Council," p. 7], Frohnmayer's exit was accomplished with grace and dignity. Speaking at an emotional staff meeting when announcing his resignation, the chairman concluded by saying, "I

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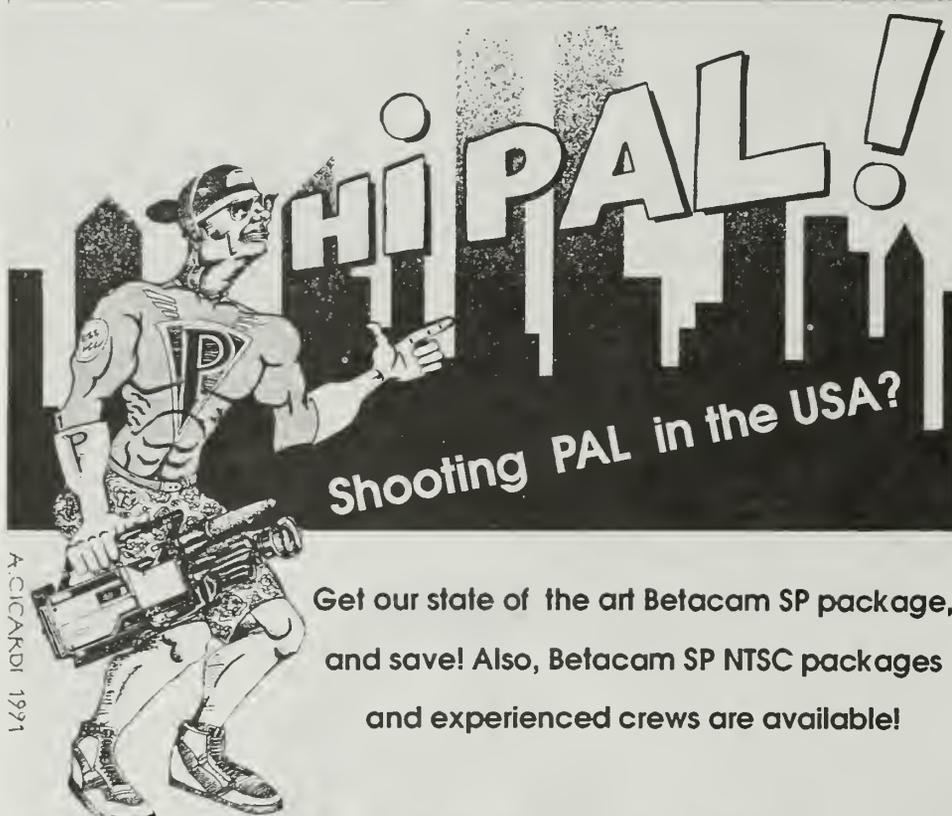
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leave with the belief that this eclipse of the soul will soon pass and with it the lunacy that sees artists as enemies and ideas as demons."

As Frohnmayer was being herded to the exit, there was not a peep from the Democratic candidates about his ouster, Buchanan's attack, or the NEA's place in society. When *The Independent* polled the five Democratic contenders in early March, none had yet formulated a position paper on public arts funding.

Clinton's campaign instead delivered a one-sheet description of the governor's record in Arkansas. Clinton recommended an increase in the Arkansas Arts Council's budget last fiscal year, when most states' arts appropriations took a nose dive. The paper's primary emphasis was on Clinton's educational reform package, which requires that art and music be part of the curriculum in K-12, and Hillary Clinton's role in organizing various agencies to support local craft artists.

Clinton's issues department also provided the following excerpt from an interview in the *Chicago Tribune*:

*Do you support content restrictions on grants made by the NEA?*

While I believe that publicly funded projects should strive to reflect the values that most Americans share, I strongly support and will defend freedom of speech and artistic expression.

*Do you want the NEA funded at current, greater, or lesser levels?*

The NEA has brought access to the arts to Americans everywhere, and thereby enriched us all. I certainly foresee no lessening of federal funding for the arts in a Clinton Administration.

*Do you think the mission of the NEA should be redefined?*

The NEA performs an invaluable service to the nation. After 25 years of growth and change it may be time to rethink its mission and structure. However, this should not be done in the highly politicized atmosphere of an election contest.

Jerry Brown's campaign office did not respond to repeated calls regarding the *The Independent's* questionnaire on the NEA. Brown's national press secretary, Tom Pier, told the *New York Times* that Brown believes in giving the NEA "full support independent of the content of the art it supports."

It appears unlikely that the President will name a successor to Frohnmayer—and risk an acrimonious confirmation hearing—prior to the November election. Given the grim mood inside the beltway, some doubt whether there will even be an agency to run next year. Among those now calling for the abolition of the NEA is Republican National Committee chair Richard N. Bond. Though not in immediate danger, the NEA is not out of the woods. The NEA 4 lawsuit is still pending. The agency is without a permanent chairperson. The reauthorization battle looms in the fall. And the election year still has a long way to go. How these ingredients will blend or combust is anyone's guess.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## FURNACE BURNED BY NATIONAL COUNCIL

On January 31, the National Council on the Arts (NCA) overturned two National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) peer panel grant recommendations because of sexual imagery. The New York performance space Franklin Furnace had its Visual Artists Organization (VAO) grant renewal for the 1992-93 season denied by the council, which simultaneously reversed a VAO panel grant recommendation for Highways, a multicultural performance and exhibition space in Santa Monica headed by Tim Miller, one of the four artists engaged in a lawsuit against the NEA.

Frameline, a nonprofit distributor that sponsors the annual San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, is reworking its NEA grant application in an effort to avoid a similar fate. Frameline was notified earlier this year by NEA staff that its application, which had received a positive peer panel recommendation, would likely be rejected by the council if the festival were part of the grant. Frameline's application is slated for council review in May. Frameline executive director Tom DiMaria was told that "upper management" was involved in the flagging of his organization's grant. DiMaria, who is working with NEA staff to revise the application to exclude festival funding, says his group is petitioning for donations from the public and various sources to fund this year's festival. The festival has received NEA support since 1988.

According to the *Village Voice*, sources close to the endowment contend that it was NEA deputy director Anne-Imelda Radice who flagged the Franklin Furnace and Highways' grants after deputy chair for programs Randy McAusland brought to her attention a Franklin Furnace videotape featuring a sexually explicit performance by Scarlett O. and a Highways slide that included the image of a penis. In a closed session held the day before the council's public meeting, 12 of the council's 19 members viewed the tape and slides in Frohnmayer's office along with Radice, public affairs director Jill Collins. Such closed-session reviews by council members started three National Council meetings earlier "to help the council understand the different programs," according to the National Association of Artists' Organizations newsletter.

The following day—in a highly unusual move—the tape and slides were screened at the request of council member and arts patron Jocelyn Levi Straus for the entire council, which subsequently reversed the peer panel recommendations. Traditionally, the council has provided a rubber stamp for recommendations or returned them for reconsideration to the panel. But at the January meeting, according to the public transcript, Frohnmayer pressed the council to make a decision rather than return the applications to the panel, as urged by council members Harvey Lichtenstein, president of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and poet

Donald Hall. Hall cast the only vote in favor of Franklin Furnace's grant. The vote on Highways' grant split seven to 10.

The Franklin Furnace board of directors maintains that the reversal is based on sexually explicit performances of the 1990-91 season, rather than the merits of this season's 25 performances. In fact, the peer panel that reviewed the application cut Franklin Furnace's funding from \$40,000 to \$25,000 after viewing a portion of the Scarlett O. tape—not because it was sexually explicit, but because of its banality. "The panel felt the tapes did not represent a strong performance program," peer panel chair Renny Pritikin, of San Francisco's New Langton Arts, told the *Village Voice*. Nevertheless, Pritikin maintained, "This is a major institution that should not be judged on the basis of one videotape."

The grant reversals and the process by which they were accomplished represent another ominous fissure in the First Amendment wall intended to protect artistic expression. The public transcript reveals a battle between those council members who would maintain the integrity of panel review and artistic merit as the standard by which grants are judged, and those who would censor works in an effort to preempt criticism. Hall urged the council not to vote down the grants, with a warning:

Hall: Exhibitionist Custerism is not the only way to destroy the Endowment. Too Solomoness is another way to destroy the Endowment, tending to look down as we did a moment ago, as perhaps we're now, on something which we fear that we will be criticized, or fear that we will be denounced. This action of the council will destroy the Endowment if it is continued. I beg and implore you not to do this.

Frohnmayer: Not to do what?

Hall: Not to act out of fear of the bigots.

ELLEN LEVY

## ITVS CONTRACT DISPUTE SETTLED

Marlon Riggs got his first inkling that there might be a problem with the Independent Television Service (ITVS) Open Call contract when he received a message on his phone machine from fellow ITVS grant recipient and Ohio-based independent producer Jim Klein. Among other things, the contract prohibited contact with the press, severely limited nonbroadcast exhibition, and provided for Corporation for Public Broadcasting or ITVS to assume the completion of projects without the producers' approval in the case of a breach of contract. Riggs wrote a detailed response to ITVS expressing his concerns; he was not alone. Other grant recipients were contacting ITVS at the same time with similar complaints and several phoned Martha Gever, executive director of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers. In January, Gever and attorney Wilder Knight met with 11 producers in the AIVF offices in New

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Kathe Sandler (right, in her ITVS-funded film *A Question of Color*) says the ITVS contract's press restrictions also touched on the question of color by limiting producers' ability to reach their targeted communities.

Courtesy filmmaker



York City to discuss the ITVS contract. They formulated a list of 25 specific problems with the agreement's language. The ensuing negotiations with ITVS resulted in a new contract as well as a new understanding of ITVS and its relationship with the independent community.

The decision of ITVS grantees to pursue collective action came after the producers failed to achieve changes through individual discussions with ITVS. "I had the sense that they weren't hearing a lot from producers," says Klein. "It was clear [ITVS] wanted to put together a strong program and didn't know whether this was one producer's problem."

ITVS executive director John Schott contends that the service's initial reticence to alter the contract wasn't the result of a disregard for producers' concerns, but an attempt to maintain equity. "For ITVS, matters of fairness are fundamental. Lack of fairness was an essential part of the critique of public TV in response to which ITVS was developed. We felt it was important to offer a contract that was essentially the same to all producers."

Among producers' principal concerns were the restrictions placed on publicity and exhibition of ITVS-funded works. "The contract, as it was originally written, stipulated that funded producers were not to have any contact with the press without prior ITVS approval," notes Riggs. "That superseded what CPB ever had in their contracts. There was also a blanket prohibition against ticketed community screenings," adds Riggs. "What ITVS didn't seem to realize is that these [exhibitions] are ways in which we get not only feedback but also develop community. The contract overlooked those communal and political aspects, privileging public broadcasting and treating any other value of independent work as marginal." The press restrictions were particularly problematic for people of color, contends producer Kathe Sandler, whose documentary *A Question of Color* received finishing funds from the service. Such producers, Sandler notes, have spent years developing contacts with their communities, which are often not reached by the mainstream press.

"It was never ITVS' intention to restrict independents' access to the press, but to provide a coordinated service," explains ITVS director of communications Ellen Schneider. "ITVS is in its infancy; it has to show it's having an effect. With limited means available for gauging audience response and the ephemeral nature of TV audiences, you're limited as to what kind of demon-

strable responses you have. So press coverage becomes very important."

ITVS was also concerned that prior theatrical or festival screenings might undermine efforts to gain coverage of the TV airing, since papers like the *New York Times* will often not review the television broadcast of a program if it has already received a film review. "It's not an effort to stifle advanced visibility," Schneider explains, "it's an effort to work with it most effectively."

"Their mandate is to innovate and expand possibilities of the television medium," says Riggs, "but it's important to understand that many of these works have another kind of life." Riggs cites his own film, *Tongues Untied*, as an example of how prior exhibition can augment TV airing. Riggs contends that the positive critical reviews and numerous festival awards "made *Tongues Untied* defensible.... Its advance record made a stronger case than could any philosophical defense on the grounds of multiculturalism. I think there will be works coming down the pike on which confrontive interest groups will take a stance where it will be useful to be able to demonstrate that a work has generated a loyal and diverse audience."

Producers objected as well to the fact that the contract appeared to give ITVS and CPB the right to finish a production without the producer's consent in the case of a breach of contract. "The way it was worded it sounded like ITVS could do what they wanted," says Klein.

Schott explains that "We're very aware that we're going to be subject to serious scrutiny in terms of our ability to follow through on projects in which we were investing \$300,000 in public monies. We were merely trying to build in a provision whereby we would have some ability to render a project which was incomplete, complete. We have no concern to take materials over." Adds ITVS senior staff producer Bienvenida Matias, "There's

a distinct difference between a grants contract—what the NEA might do—and what a production house might do. Not that we're a production house, but we have a responsibility to get the programs completed because we really want to get these programs on the air. We need people to see how important this work is."

For the most part producers are satisfied with the negotiations, although limitations on theatrical exhibition remain a concern. "ITVS is head and shoulders and years beyond anyone else in PBS or CPB in terms of responsiveness to the concerns of independents," says Barbara Abrash, a seasoned independent producer who received a grant for a short film about Margaret Sanger. Most of the 25 points raised by the producers have been addressed and incorporated into a revised contract which should be ready by the end of March. The new contract explicitly states that in the event of a contract breach ITVS won't complete a project without the producer's express approval. And although ITVS still wants to coordinate publicity efforts with producers, it will be structured "in a more relaxed way," says associate staff producer Kate Lehmann. "Producers are asked to notify ITVS, and we'll consult with them on activities. But it will be a case of notification and consultation, not approval or disapproval." Festival and noncommercial exhibition prior to broadcast will also be allowed.

The issue of theatrical exhibition is less well resolved. According to the revised contract, a theatrical window of one year will be allowed producers whose work received two-thirds of its funding from sources other than ITVS, according to Lehmann, but all other Open Call projects will be judged individually and allowed theatrical distribution prior to TV airing at ITVS' discretion. ITVS will consider a theatrical window on a case-by-case basis when programs are in a rough cut.

"As with lots of the provisions in the contract,

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[theatrical exhibition] is governed by the CPB-ITVS contract. We have to try to make sure producers' contracts sync up with ITVS-CPB agreements," says Lehmann. "We cannot, in the producer's agreement, approve ahead of time a theatrical release, but we can recognize that when producers have a substantial portion of their production money—two-thirds of the budget—that ITVS' internal policy will be to automatically establish a theatrical window, but this will still be subject to CPB approval."

Although ITVS recognizes that independents' experience and methods can benefit broadcast, "It's really about TV," says Schneider. "We care deeply that these be seen and that they have a cumulative impact on TV. ITVS doesn't give out grants; we write contracts for individual TV programs for independent producers."

Abrash believes the negotiations were an important part of developing a relationship between independents and ITVS. "It wasn't precisely clear to me before that ITVS is a different kind of service, that ITVS is actually contracting to produce work. It's very advantageous to producers, but it isn't in the nature of a grant; it's a contract to produce programming."

The negotiations provided an opportunity to thrash out issues which haven't been discussed before, according to Abrash, such as what makes a TV program successful. "It clarified what ITVS sees as its mission and its job," she says. "The discussions created more parity," adds Sandler, "because clearly the things they're under attack for are the same things we're under attack for."

There are no plans to incorporate the amendments from the Open Call contract into other ITVS initiative contracts, such as that for fiction. "Just as the programs for different initiatives take different forms, I can imagine that each initiative contract will have a different form," explains Schott. "I think we have a good contract for the Open Call, but for the fiction initiative I imagine it's going to be very different."

"We want to rethink public television and in rethinking TV we also have to rethink how we do business," says Matias. "We're doing something substantially different than what has ever been done before," concurs Schott. "We're trying to establish a dramatic new model for television, and that involves establishing a new model for how we and independents relate and a new relationship to the medium."

EL

## CABLE BILL THREATENS PUBLIC ACCESS

For many viewers, cable access television fills the role of the town square, providing a forum for multiple viewpoints on a wide range of subjects. Cable access TV provides citizens a rare opportunity to produce and air grassroots media messages, and those most marginalized can employ it for unification and to disseminate information not carried by the mainstream media. But cable ac-

cess programming could be undercut if several amendments to a new piece of federal cable legislation become law. Sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Wynche Fowler (D-GA), and Trent Lott (D-MS), the amendments would enable cable operators to restrict so-called "indecent," "unlawful," and "sexually explicit" programming on leased and public access cable and to itemize on customer billing the cost of public access.

The amendments, which passed unanimously by voice vote during debate of the bill on the Senate floor, are part of the Cable Television Consumer Protection Act (S. 12), authored by Senator John Danforth (R-MO). The first major piece of cable legislation since 1984, the bill is designed to help regulate the monopolistic cable industry and protect viewers from rate increases and poor customer service. The bill passed by a 73-18 vote in the Senate late January. The House version (HR 1303), authored by Senator Edward Markey (D-MA), is expected to pass sometime in April.

Senator Helms' amendment targets leased cable access. Currently cable franchises are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to lease time on dedicated channels to individuals and nonprofit and consumer groups to ensure that cable operators don't monopolize programming. Aimed at "reducing indecent programming on cable TV," Helms' amendment would authorize the FCC to allow cable operators to refuse programs for leased access "that the cable operator reasonably believes describes or depicts sexual imagery or excretory activities or organs in a patently offensive manner." The amendment also directs the FCC to set regulations requiring cable operators to designate a single leased-access channel for programming judged "indecent" and to scramble the channel unless the subscriber requests the channel in writing.

Jean Carlomusto, an access producer for New York City's Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), is worried that important public service information might be censored as "sexually explicit" or "obscene" under Helms' amendment. "At GMHC, we used leased access to put out a variety of programming which might be considered sexually explicit material, but which is in fact intended to educate the public about AIDS. Because Helm's amendment can be interpreted so broadly, it poses a scary—and dangerous—threat to our work. Should the amendment go into effect, it could tie our hands and in fact nullify what we are trying to do."

Senator Fowler's amendment poses a similar threat to programs on public access—channels set aside for programs produced by community residents. Fowler's amendment would authorize the FCC to allow cable operators to prohibit "obscene" programming as well as material "promoting sexually explicit conduct" or "unlawful conduct" from airing on public access channels.

According to Andrew Blau, chair of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers

(NFLCP), "These channels were not supposed to be censored by the government or the cable operators. Now, for the first time, the government is putting programming set up to be free of censorship under the control of cable operators in the name of public morality."

Under Fowler's amendment, cable operators are presented with dangerously vague standards to decide what can and cannot be aired, says Blau. "Any discussion of civil disobedience, such as not registering for the draft, could be seen as promoting 'unlawful' conduct," contends Blau. "With sodomy laws still on the books in many states, cable access programming dealing with gay issues could be attacked as promoting [unlawful] homosexuality."

Blau warns that the premise of Fowler's amendment—that "cable access is used in many cities to solicit prostitution"—is false and dangerously misleading. Shows advertising phone-sex services air on leased channels in some urban communities, but not on public access channels, explains Blau.

"The vast majority of public access programming has nothing to do with unlawful conduct or sexually explicit material," agrees Alex Quinn, director of the newly formed Manhattan Cable Access, a nonprofit organization that administers New York City public access channels. "But Fowler's amendment might lead people to believe that it does."

Quinn is worried about what might happen if the control of public access shifts away from local communities into the hands of government. "By giving the FCC the authority to oversee the censorship of cable access by the cable operators, this bill represents an attempt to centralize authority at the federal level," argues Quinn. "Clearly [this] is not an isolated incident, but just one in a progression of steps made by the government towards the restriction of freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment."

An amendment sponsored by Senator Lott has cable access supporters troubled about the future availability of cable access facilities for public use. Generally access production facilities are paid for by a portion of the cable company's franchise fee to the city. Under Lott's amendment, the FCC is urged to set standards by which cable operators can itemize the percentage of consumers' cable bills allocated to franchise fees and cable access. "This legislation is an attempt to generate resentment toward public access," says Blau. "This is a time-honored tactic already used by some cable operators to make cable-access channels unpopular among consumers," which the FCC's endorsement will only make worse. Blau notes that while costs generated by cable access production would be itemized, the cost of other channels and the enormous amount of money the cable industry spends lobbying politicians and the FCC would not.

The bill continues to uphold "must-carry" protection despite heavy lobbying against such a provision by the cable industry. Must carry man-

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dates that broadcast channels, including all local nonduplicative public television stations, must be carried on the basic tier by cable systems with more than 36 channels.

To prevent the House from passing the restrictive amendments, the NFLCP is urging cable access supporters to contact subcommittee members as well as their state representatives. Even if the amendments are defeated in the House, Carlomusto, whose AIDS-related material has been subject to censorship by cable operators in the past, warns that independents should be prepared for further attacks against cable access: "Helms [and his right-wing cohorts] might be shot down this time, but cable access is sure to be on his back burner. They will bring it up again and again until they can make a scandal out of something and bring it to the forefront."

LAURIE OUELLETTE

*Laurie Ouellette, formerly of the Utne Reader, is a graduate student at the New School for Social Research in New York. She writes frequently about media and censorship issues.*

## SETTING FILMFREE

The Rotterdam Film Festival has distinguished itself by not merely screening films, but addressing relevant aesthetic and political issues through conferences and special programs. In his first year as its director, Emile Fallaux has assumed the responsibility of continuing this festival tradition. Fallaux has pledged to "combine a long-time commitment to the individualist approach to filmmaking with a strong social concern. The value of uncompromisingly personal art will be stressed. At the same time, the defense of freedom of expression requires political action..."

To this end, Fallaux, actor and critic Paul McIsaac, and Patricia Pisters organized the Limits of Liberty conference at the Rotterdam Film Festival in February in order to establish an international filmmakers' organization to fight censorship and repression of filmmakers worldwide. Dubbed FilmFree, the organization will function in a manner similar to PEN International, exposing the arrest, violence, intimidation, censorship, and politically motivated defunding faced by filmmakers worldwide and will work toward lifting restrictions on their civil liberties. The organization will also identify specific film projects which have been denied funding in their countries of origin and are in need of international support.

Conference participant Robert Hilferty, whose documentary about a 1989 demonstration by AIDS activists at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, *Stop the Church*, was pulled from PBS' *P.O.V.* series last August, says, "It's hard to predict just how powerful and effective FilmFree will become, but all in all the conference was very positive, and it was good to have an outline for responding to dangers in other parts of the world."

The Limits of Liberty conference comprised

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several days of screenings of works by filmmakers who have experienced censorship and political suppression firsthand and two intensive days of discussions in which the embryonic plans for FilmFree were drafted. Among the 49 participants were filmmakers Jill Godmilow (USA), Jon Jost (USA), Trinh T. Minh-ha (Vietnam/USA), Eli Suleiman (Palestine/USA), critic Derek Malcolm (UK), and Hungarian writer and PEN International acting president György Konrad.

"It was an extraordinary experience," relates McIsaac, "especially when it became clear that we weren't about to agree on every issue. For instance, the Russian representatives motioned to allow only 150 foreign films a year to enter their country so as to protect Russian filmmakers from impossible competition. And while we could agree with their position, the question we asked was, 'Which 150 films are you going to let in?'"

There were two major steps in creating FilmFree upon which every participant agreed, acknowledges McIsaac. The first was to establish a committee to lay out a step-by-step development scheme, including how to fund the organization. The second step was to devise a response strategy. The system decided upon is similar to the campaigns of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, in which members of the film community are informed about repression suffered by a filmmaker and asked to embark on a letter-writing campaign. Argentine filmmaker Fernando Solanas, critic of President Carlos Menem's government, has advocated the utility of such efforts, as he himself benefitted from letter-writing campaigns during his periods of artistic silencing. Letter campaigns might address defunding of the arts in the US, protest the imprisonment of filmmakers in the Third World, or challenge the announcement by the Georgian republic's new president that artists are enemies of the people (and the consequent imprisonment of filmmaker Georg Haindrava for attempting to film a political demonstration). FilmFree will be more akin to PEN International, however, in that a variety of tactics will be employed, such as directly corresponding with artists in jail and taking care of their families. To assist the program, the Rotterdam Film Festival has donated desk space and access to computers in their Rotterdam offices and has provided funding for a part-time acting administrator, Patricia Pister.

If all goes according to plan, FilmFree will have a long life and far-reaching influence. Already some of the participants of the Limits of Liberty conference have been asked to present their proposals at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York this month.

For more information, or to notify FilmFree of abuses, contact: Patricia Pisters, acting administrator, FilmFree c/o Rotterdam Film Festival, PO Box 21696, 3001 Rotterdam, The Netherlands; tel: 31-10-41-18-080; fax: 31-10-41-35-132.

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## FOR THE PRICE OF A SONG

### Music Rights Clearance

ROBERT L. SEIGEL

The marriage of music and media is obvious to even the most casual film-goer and television viewer. However, securing the rights to compositions and recordings can be a prolonged and confusing task, particularly for independents who are frequently lacking in two essential assets: sufficient time and money.

If an independent producer plans to use pre-existing music, the earlier the choice is made the better. The best time to select songs is during the development and preproduction stages. This way a producer can prepare both creatively and financially by formulating a realistic music budget.

#### *The Basic Licenses*

The process of securing or "clearing" appropriate rights to a composition usually involves obtaining several licenses. One key license is the synchronization or **sync license**. This gives you the right to reproduce a composition in tandem or synchronization with your film or video's visual images. You will need a separate sync license for virtually any piece of music that wasn't commissioned specifically for your project. It's a requisite for using both recordings and new renditions of an existing piece of music. If, for instance, you want to use Nirvana's recording of *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, you'll need to start with a sync license. But even if your own garage band is going to perform the piece for your film, you'll still need a sync license to use the composition.

Distinct from a sync right, a song's **performance right** concerns the right to perform a song publicly. It is generally required for a work to be exhibited in a movie theater or on television and is usually included in a sync license. One would never clear performance rights without also getting sync rights.

Sync rights generally are controlled by a song's publisher. The publisher may either own or co-own a copyright, or it may represent the person who does—often the composer or lyricist. One can find out a song's copyright owner or publisher by looking on an album or by contacting the music performance rights societies—the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), and the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers (SESAC). These groups generally administer

a song's performance rights on behalf of the copyright owner. They can assist in securing music rights by directing you to whomever owns or administers the publishing and performance rights to a song so that a sync license can be secured. However, they are legally prohibited from issuing performance rights licenses for US theatrical exhibition. Outside the US these performance rights societies (and foreign rights societies) can collect monies on behalf of songwriters and publishers from non-US theatrical exhibitors.

You will need to negotiate the amount of the sync license fee and which rights are to be granted—theatrical, television, home video, etc. The cost of a sync license ranges from \$1,000 to \$50,000 and may occasionally run higher. The price-tag depends on such factors as the popularity of the song (often reflected by its position on the *Billboard* or *Cash Box* magazine charts), when it was popular, and the song's sales record. In addition, the budget of the film/video project is taken into consideration, plus whether the project has a distributor in place, and the length and use of the song in the project—whether, for instance, it's background music from a radio or featured in a prominent dance scene.

Film- and videomakers should obtain a general license covering the performance rights to a song from the appropriate rights society, or from the publisher or songwriter if they haven't entered into an agreement with a rights society. Any airing of a film/video on any television outlet—whether free, pay, basic cable, pay-per-view, or satellite—should be covered by a general license to use a particular song. This would be secured by the film/videomaker, although the broadcaster is responsible for paying a performance rights society for the right to publicly perform a given song in a specific medium. The broadcaster generally pays a **blanket license** for the use of a performance rights society's catalog of songs.

#### *Negotiating for the Afterlife*

Given the growing afterlife of film/video projects in today's technologically developing markets, an independent producer should try to secure a sync license in perpetuity, or at least for the lifetime of the film/video's copyright or the song's copyright. (When a song's copyright expires, the song falls into the public domain, where anyone can use it without paying the songwriters or publishers.) Otherwise, you may be forced to pay a significantly higher price for a song when the license

needs to be renewed. Some publishers and songwriters will license a song's use in a film or video for 10 or 20 years, with the need to renegotiate after that term. In a worst-case scenario, if you and the copyright owner can't agree on the renewal terms of a sync license, which generally include higher licensing fees, that particular song must be removed. Such was the case with John Sayles' *Baby, It's You*, in which some of the music in the theatrical version had to be replaced with new cleared music when the film went to home video.

A producer who is mindful of the multiple outlets for a film or video will want to obtain a very broad grant of rights to use a song in such media as television (free, pay, basic, syndication, satellite, pay-per-view), home video, laser disc, soundtrack, and "by any and all methods and media, whether now known or hereafter devised." Such contractual language prevents a producer from omitting any new technological breakthrough that was not contemplated when the agreement was signed. The licensing agreement should also permit "incidental" use of a song—i.e., in ads, trailers, and other promotional material. (It is permissible to take a song used in one specific sequence in the film and incorporate it into a different sequence for promotional purposes.)

Knowing the profit potential of the home video market, music publishers and copyright owners will attempt to demand a separate fee in this area on a continuing royalty basis, based on the number of videogram units (videocassettes and laser discs sold). The formulas will vary. Some are for X-cents royalty per song per unit sold, others for Y-percent of the unit's wholesale price with the royalties pro-rated among the various songs on the soundtrack.

Film/videomakers should resist such royalty payments when negotiating a sync license. Producers who agree to pay a continuing home video royalty may encounter problems when dealing with financing end users, such as distributors, video software companies, cable TV, etc. who contribute production funds. Since they are footing the bill, they may balk at the cost of continuing royalties, especially if they control the home video rights through their own or affiliated home video company. Such end users may well urge the producer to delete the song prior to its release. An additional problem, notes Barbara Zimmerman of the New York-based BZ/Rights, a rights clearance service, is that royalties can raise unneces-

**RIGHT:** Having a friend or performer play a public domain piece may still entail certain costs, such as fees and residuals collected by AFTRA and AFofM.

**BELOW:** To use a cut from the Red Hot Chili Peppers' CD in a film, you'll need a sync license, performance rights, and a master use license. Having your own garage band perform the song eliminates the need to clear some, but not all, rights.

Courtesy Warner Bros. Records, Inc.

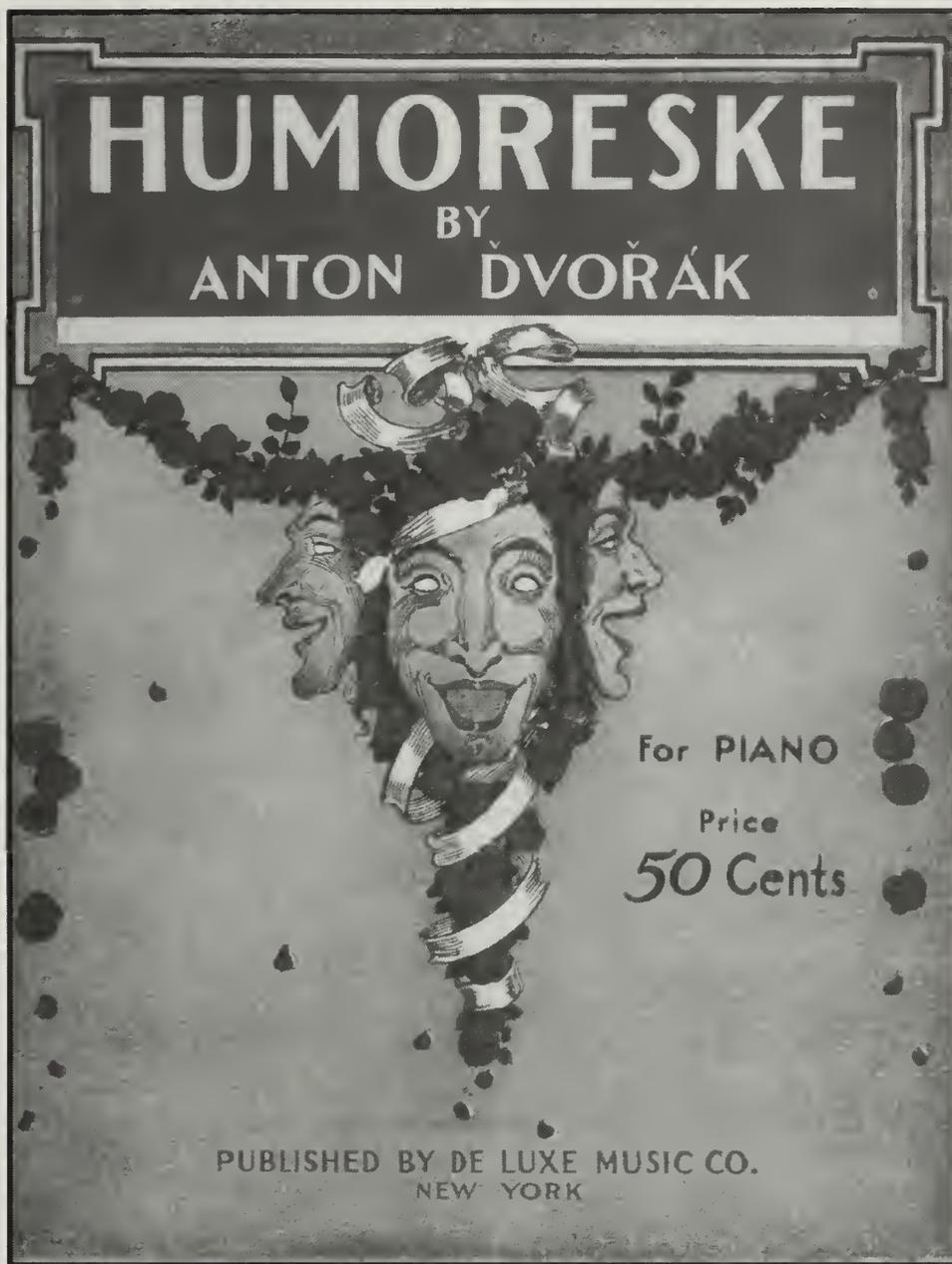
**BOTTOM:** Although Bach's music falls in the public domain, don't expect to use Glen Gould's 1955 recording of the *Goldberg Variations* unless you get a master use license from copyright holder Sony Classical.

Cover design Henrietta Canka, courtesy Sony Classical



sary accounting problems and be too costly for a producer. It's best to offer a one-time payable flat fee—a video "buyout" payment for all media and markets. Such fees can range from \$1,000 to \$25,000 per song and often higher.

"Licenses should be perpetual, especially with features," adds Zimmerman. "With educational films, limits perhaps can be placed regarding a license's term." Generally, educational films have a shorter marketing afterlife than features, with



fewer videocassettes sold. This makes the payment of a continuing royalty for music rights in a nontheatrical project less cost-prohibitive than with feature projects.

Independent producers should attempt to negotiate all these sync rights as early as possible in the production process. If publishers are aware of the importance of a song to your project, they will try to charge a higher fee than was initially discussed. If you're not sure whether or to what extent the home video market will be exploited, you can negotiate an option to purchase these rights within a stated period of time for an agreed upon price. Optioning sync rights to such secondary media is less expensive than purchasing them upfront.

### Using Recorded Music

If you want to use a recorded performance of a song—the Red Hot Chili Pepper's rendition of

*Fire*, Frank Sinatra's *New York, New York*, or John Adams' *Nixon in China*—you will need a **master use license** in addition to a sync license. This grants the right to use the actual recorded performance of a song. Master use licenses are generally obtained from the record company owning the copyright to the recording of a song, as opposed to the song itself. It is somewhat similar to a sync license in that a master use license must be negotiated by the film/video producer and a record company for the right to use a recording in different markets and media "whether now known or hereafter devised" or on a separate media basis (theatrical, free, basic, pay, satellite, pay-per-view, home video, nontheatrical, etc.). The debate between flat fees versus continuing royalty payments that exists with sync licenses is applicable here as well.

So, too, are the issues of license term and territory. In both the sync and master use licensing

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areas, film/videomakers should be aware that publishers, copyright owners, and record companies may offer licenses for dissimilar terms for different songs and recordings. Producers should request licenses "in perpetuity" or, at least, "for the lifetime of the copyright of the film/video" or "for the lifetime of the song or recording's copyright." Otherwise you must attempt to reconcile the varied, overlapping licensing terms.

A master use license should also cover a territory that is worldwide or "throughout the universe." However, producers may encounter problems and be forced to negotiate with more than one party if different music publishers hold or administer separate rights in separate territories. For instance, a song's sync rights and a recorded performance master use rights may be held by different publishers and record companies, with some representing North American rights and others representing foreign territories. A producer's problems are aggravated if the parties are contractually obligated to concur on the terms of a given license. This kind of situation may come up when a songwriter or recording artist objects to having their music used in certain types of projects—e.g., films that may be considered too violent or sexually explicit.

In addition, producers should be certain that music publishers and record companies have the right to license a song. Most do have the authority to negotiate on behalf of a songwriter or an artist. In the case of a master use license, an artist's rights to publicity and privacy may have to be addressed during negotiations, since some state laws prevent the use of another person's "likeness, signature, or voice" without permission from that person or his or her estate.

Furthermore, the cost of master use licenses can fall within the same range (\$1,000 to \$25,000 or higher) as the cost of a sync license. Even with a one-time fee for a master use license a producer can be held responsible for making payments to third parties—e.g., musicians and unions, including the American Federation of Musicians (AFofM) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA).

### *Cutting Costs*

Independents often try to avoid paying expensive master use licenses by obtaining just the sync license and commissioning a new recording. This tactic can be problematic. A producer must not only pay the musicians and performers for their services and all recording costs. You may also be exposed to charges of presenting "sound-alikes" meant to deceive the public and "voice appropriation" claims reminiscent of the *Bette Midler v. Ford Motor Co.* case, in which the singer prevailed.

Another troublesome area is when producers use a composition that has fallen out of copyright and into the public domain. While there is no copyright owner to be paid, you must still secure a master use license in order to use a particular recording. If you want to use Glen Gould's his-

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toric 1955 recording of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, for instance, the eighteenth century piece itself does not require copyright clearance, but you would have to go to Sony Classical for a master use license. If, on the other hand, you find someone else to play the Bach variations, that person (if professional) could be entitled to fees and residuals collected by AFofM and AFTRA.

### The Searchers

There are several means by which music rights may be cleared. Film/videomakers can assume the task themselves, or they can hire an attorney, music supervisor/coordinator, or a rights clearance service. Music supervisors are generally engaged to select compositions and recordings. Some also negotiate and secure music rights, but many do not. Often they work in conjunction with a production counsel, focusing their efforts on selecting music for the film/video project and also for any soundtrack album that may serve as a tie-in. Securing rights for a soundtrack album usually involves separate negotiations with copyright owners, music publishers, and record companies—and should be the basis of a separate article. Independent films without a major distributor generally do not have a soundtrack album tie-in, although there are exceptions, such as *Sidewalk Stories*, *Queens Logic*, and *True Love*.

Music clearance services are another avenue for independents to secure rights. These services range in price and size from the Hollywood-based Clearing House, Ltd. to smaller, independent services, such as Rights Chasers and BZ/Rights, which has a client list including Spike Lee and *Slacker*'s Richard Linklater.

As BZ/Rights' Zimmerman explains, music clearance services are beneficial to a producer "since fast work is needed" most times to meet production and postproduction deadlines. These services have on-going relationships with music publishers and record companies, which can facilitate the securing of music rights. In addition, says Zimmerman, clearance services have resources to locate many seemingly unfindable copyright owners. She cites the case of a song in *Slacker* that was released on a now-defunct label and wasn't included in any professional music reference guide or index. Nevertheless, Zimmerman's company eventually located the song's composer—a South African living in Germany.

Clearance services charge on an hourly, per song, or flat-fee basis, and discounts are sometimes available to producers for volume music clearance work. One suggestion Zimmerman offers producers with small music budgets is to select music and secure rights using a single source—a publisher's catalog or a record company's music library, where thousands of songs and recordings are available. She also recommends that low-budget producers offer flat fees and deferments, or "bumps," which increase the price of a licensing fee based on a film/video's performance in the marketplace. "Sometimes you get a chance to get a low price for a song in a good

art film," Zimmerman explains. "If so, producers can save thousands of dollars upfront. If the film doesn't do well, the producers have paid just the original fee." Deferments can be based on such factors as a film's box office performance as stated in such entertainment trade publications as *Variety* or *The Hollywood Reporter*.

### Odds and Ends

There are a number of other general deal points to be addressed when negotiating sync and master use licensing agreements:

- Producers should obtain the right to use an artist's name in a film/video's credits and in all publicity and promotional materials.
- Producers should try to prevent a composition or a recording from being used without your consent in potentially competitive projects for a specific period of time—e.g., six months from securing the license or six months from the project's initial release or broadcast. A caveat: this provision is very difficult to obtain from rights owners who wish to maximize the profit potential of their assets.
- A producer or music supervisor should attempt to ensure that licensing fees are not payable until a project's initial release. Most rights holders, however, will insist upon payment of fees regardless of a project's release or exhibition due to the precarious nature of the entertainment industry, where projects may stay on the shelf for years.
- The clearance and licensing of music rights should occur before a recording or composition is incorporated into the soundtrack. (Such clearance is essential for Errors and Omissions insurance.)
- A producer should obtain a warranty indicating that a copyright owner possesses the rights in issue, or that a music publisher or recording company has the right and authority to administer and negotiate such rights.
- Producers should be aware that, unlike the case of sync licenses, performing rights societies are not involved with master use licenses, since there is currently no public performance right to sound recordings under US copyright law. Copyright laws outside the US, however, can differ.

Music can be as important an element in a project as set design and lighting. But producers should retain some perspective when dealing with potential licensors and reconcile the cost of music clearance with the importance of a song in a film or video. As Zimmerman advises, "Check the price of a song. If it's too high, bump the song. For every song that could cost \$20,000 or more to license, there are thousands of songs that can be licensed for \$5,000." Similar to most creative endeavors, the battle between art and commerce continues.

*Robert L. Seigel is a New York City entertainment attorney who writes widely about business and legal issues affecting independent film- and videomakers and is a principle in the Cinema Film Consulting company.*

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## SHORT SHRIFT

## In Search of Short Film Venues

EILEEN WILKINSON

During the period from 1863 to 1910, there were 17,600 short films released in the USA. In 1992, the professional short film is nearly nonexistent, and the number of companies producing or acquiring shorts for commercial release can be counted on a few fingers.

The theatrical market has withered as trailers, screen advertising, and tighter daily screening schedules have edged out pre-feature shorts. Ever since the mid-eighties, the television market has

Sanger and attorney-agent Jana Sue Memel in 1987 to allow film professionals the opportunity to direct 35mm shorts for their resumé reels. Ironically, the Discovery Program, which produces six shorts a year after combing through 600 proposals, is only open to first-time directors.

Of the three films nominated by the Academy for a live action short this year, two (*Birch Street Gym* and *Session Man*) are Chanticleer Films and the third (*Last Breeze of Summer*) is an American Film Institute thesis film.

When asked about the viability of short films in the marketplace, executive producer Memel says flatly, "There is no market for short films. The Discovery shorts are calling cards. The program was designed as a springboard for new directors and has been successful to that end."

Yet the Discovery Program has found a pretty spectacular niche in a market that doesn't exist. Showtime and the Movie Channel offer agreeable domestic outlets, and Fox/Lorber, an outfit that acts as a foreign sales agent for American television series, has worked up a variable title package of Discovery shorts for theatrical release. In the variable title scheme, a buyer can select which shorts will be marketed as a compilation for theatrical release in a given territory. Fox/Lorber is currently tying up deals for the compilation package in Japan, France, Spain, Germany, and the US.

"There's really no market for shorts, of course," says Good Machine executive producer James Schamus. "Our interest in shorts is 'production as development.' The short gives us an opportunity to see what the working relationship with a director will be like, and then we know whether or not we want to continue that relationship."

Schamus' scheme is to take leftover film stock and offer it to directors whose feature projects he's considering for production. He is currently working on a feature with Nicole Holofcener, whose five-minute *Angry* was 'produced in development' from film stock left over from Hal Hartley's *Surviving Desire* and played at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Holofcener was able to use this short to demonstrate her directing abilities to the LA-based HBO Independent Productions, which optioned her feature-length screenplay *Everything Matters* and plans to allow her to direct it.

Despite the downbeat prognosis for shorts' life in the marketplace, there will always be a steady stream of such work coming from students, aspir-



Dean Parisot's weirdly comic *Tom Goes to the Bar* is one of the shorts circulating in the new theatrical package called the Festival of Short Films.

Courtesy 1st International Festival of Short Films

also been shrinking. The cable channels HBO, Lifetime, and Arts & Entertainment regularly programmed shorts in their earlier years, but have since cut back.

The good news in the world of television and cable broadcast is that Bravo, Showtime, and the Movie Channel are still airing shorts, and PBS stations nationwide have slots for filler. Bravo picks up shorts of up to 30 minutes for interstitial programming and even accepts submissions. (They prefer an inquiry letter be sent before forwarding a tape.)

Both Showtime and the Movie Channel air shorts produced by Chanticleer Films under the aegis of the much lauded Discovery Program. This program was set up by producer Jonathan

ing directors, and those filmmakers who simply prefer the genre. And every so often some venturesome soul will try to create a new venue for shorts. The most recent attempt is the Festival of Short Films (FoSF). This travelling package of nine films was organized by filmmaker Jeffrey Hamblin together with Shane Peterson and Sean Reilly, who have 13 years experience promoting specialty film programs. The 105-minute package has so far had successful runs in San Diego, Santa Barbara, Long Beach, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. The bookings vary; in San Francisco it ran just two weekends, while in Los Angeles, the festival was originally scheduled for two weeks and was held over for a third. The national tour is still taking shape, but FoSF has confirmed bookings in Minneapolis, Madison, Boston, and Vancouver. The organizers are still seeking a theater in New York City. The venues are generally art houses, though in Minneapolis the festival will unspool at Suburban World, a first-run theater.

FoSF's selection of films includes two from New Zealand (where there are government programs supporting the production of shorts) and one narrative from Canadian documentarian Barry Greenwald. The balance is composed of American student films, except for *Tom's Bar*, directed by Academy-award winner Dean Parisot.

Hamblin, Peterson, and Reilly intend to repeat the project annually and are looking for submissions for their next festival. The freshest part of the enterprise is that the filmmakers actually receive a percentage of the gross. Information on submitting material can be obtained by calling (800) 925-CINE.

An earlier semi-theatrical venue was created along different lines by filmmaker Matthew Harrison in New York City. In 1985 Harrison founded Film Crash to get his short films out to an audience beyond friends or family and as a way of seeing other people's films. Film Crash started out with hot-out-of-the-camera screenings once a month at a rented storefront on the Lower East Side and attracted films, filmmakers, and audiences.

"The value of it is that you see that there are a number of films that everyone seems compelled to make, like the clichéd films of suicide and rebellion. So you just learn from them, and you don't have to go and make it yourself," explains Harrison. "About half the Film Crash directors are students, but most are making shorts to make films, not resumés for directing jobs. The resumé films really scream out at you."

The East Village's performance art space P.S. 122 picked up on the wave of interest and offered to screen the films to a larger audience every three months. Then in 1990 Film Crash screened six hours of shorts at the Angelika Film Center and expanded into tape distribution. But Film Crash has been winding down a bit since Harrison started shooting his first feature, *Spare Me*. Will he continue to make shorts? "Probably not. I started Film Crash thinking that if I could learn everything

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Director Robert Castle put together an industry screening of his short *The Water Man* and even managed to find an executive willing to cover the cost of advertising, mailing, and catering.

Courtesy filmmaker

there is about making short films, I would be ready to make a feature. Now I'm doing that. I've exhausted the value of the short for myself. I think I've learned everything I can learn."

At the same time that filmmakers lament the lack of outlets for shorts, programmers and buyers often complain there is no good product. FoSF's Hamblin says that one of the greatest difficulties the San Diego-based festival has had is finding films. Lisa Honing, director of acquisitions at Tapestry International, solicits films through festival and trade shows. "About half are student films and the other half are professional, but the professional work is much harder to find," she says.

At *American Playhouse*, manager of program development Nicholas Gottlieb is aggressively looking for short films and new filmmakers but will not accept submissions. *American Playhouse*, the only regular outlet on PBS for dramatic work by independents, picks up shorts to complement its feature presentations. He agrees that quality shorts are hard to find, but not just for *American Playhouse*. Sometimes when a short film airs on *American Playhouse*, the phones ring from public television stations across the country, all desperate for quality fillers.

Filmmakers, of course, view things a little differently. But in order to get their shorts noticed by the gatekeepers, they must utilize tried and true methods, like the film festival circuit, and devise new strategies. And even if their shorts produce little financial return, the films can often result in contacts, exposure, and future gigs. As a result, most feel that they haven't been short-changed by directing short films.

Rick Hayes got his short *Happy Birthday, Bobby Dietz* onto the domestic and international festival circuit. A Loyola Marymount student thesis film about a sweet boy's bully brother terrorizing his birthday party, *Happy Birthday, Bobby Dietz* received awards at festivals in Chicago, Houston, and Sydney and generally enthusiastic notices. It is now in the FoSF package. The film eventually helped Hayes get an agent, a Directors Guild of America screening, some strong

contacts, and his current editing job on an independent feature.

John Starr and Roger Teich's 10-minute black and white documentary *Stealing Altitude*, about illegal base jumpers (urban parachutists who leap from tall buildings in the wee hours), was a University of Southern California thesis film. Starr got it into 30 to 40 festivals, including this year's Sundance. It, too, is included in FoSF. Starr is currently working on a feature-length color documentary on the same subject. "I don't expect to make any more shorts," he says. "I believe in reaching a larger audience with feature-length films."

*The Water Man*, an allegorical tale of the earth and its regeneration based in part on a Greek myth, won the jury award at the New York Expo of Short Film and Video in 1990 and awards at several other international festivals. It had pretty much run its course on the festival circuit by the fall of 1991, according to director Robert Castle. So Castle and two other University of California-Los Angeles filmmakers put together an industry screening in Los Angeles. Having tried unsuccessfully to get the screening subsidized by some major studios, Castle and his colleagues finally found one executive who wrote a personal check to cover the advertising, mailings, and catering for the two screenings. Castle says that all the effort and the awards have allowed him to develop professional relationships at various studios, and several of his scripts are under consideration.

Los Angeles artist Denise Prince devised a direct-to-the-consumer private screening room for her seven-minute film *Lick*, described by the director as a "dead girl's anxiety dream" about a girl, a dog, and music. She took a coin-operated instant photo booth and transformed it into a one-person film theater. *Lick* debuted in the photo booth at a Hollywood tattoo parlor, where the owner agreed to park it for 50 percent of the profit. It's now at an espresso bar, Pick Me Up, in Los Angeles. There's no word yet on whether Prince got any meetings out of either deal.

Eileen Wilkinson is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles.

## EIGHT IS ENOUGH

## United States Super 8 Film and Video Festival

J. CRAIG SHEARMAN

Filled with colorized, solarized, and reversed-polarity images, *Soma Sema* looks like a demo piece for the popular Video Toaster system. But the experimental film by Bradley Eros and Jeanne Liotta of Brooklyn, New York, is no high-tech marvel featuring the latest video gizmos. It was shot on a budget of a few hundred dollars and in a film format all but forgotten by most independents today—super 8. “That was the amazing thing,” Eros says. “People would say, ‘That was super 8?’”



Walter Van Egidy's homage to B-movie horror, *Indian Summer*, took second place at the Rutgers festival. On shooting on super 8, Von Egidy explains, "It's the only way I can own all my equipment and operate truly independently."

Courtesy filmmaker

*Soma Sema* was the grand-prize winner at the 1992 United States Super 8 Film and Video Festival, held February 7 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Sponsored by the Rutgers Film Co-op, the festival proclaims itself the last national, competitive film festival that accepts only works shot on super 8.

A total of 75 entries, ranging from a 30-second PSA to a handful of full-length features, were submitted this year—the festival's fourth—and a dozen were selected for screening before a standing-room-only audience of more than 200. The number of entries was up from 55 in 1991 and 40 in 1990. Festival director Al Nigrin says that proves that super 8—while far from its popularity of the late 1970s—is not a dead medium. Nigrin acknowledges, though, that super 8 has been largely forgotten in the past decade's rush to video and needs help to stay alive.

“The idea is to make sure the little guy doesn't get forgotten,” he says of the festival. “I like to use the metaphor of finding homes for stray cats. It's a lot like finding a home for these films to make sure they get screened, because they're the ones that are the least diluted by committees and perhaps the most personal of all film gauges.”

Dozens of festivals once catered to super 8, but the last major festival to remain exclusively super 8, the Ann Arbor Film Festival, opened its doors to video in 1989. Super 8 is still shown at a variety of locations—the annual invitational festival called Old and New Masters of Super 8 was held for its fourth year at Anthology Film Archives in New York City in March—but Nigrin says his is the only juried, competitive festival for films from across the country.

Once embraced by documentary and narrative filmmakers as a low-cost alternative to 16mm, super 8 had its heyday in the late 1970s. Manufacturers offered super 8 filmmakers crystal sync, fullcoat, upright and flatbed editing tables, and a variety of filmstocks, while labs offered A and B roll printing, liquid-gate optical printing, and virtually all the services available in 16mm. Television networks and local stations experimented with super 8—many PBS affiliates used it regularly for documentaries—and numerous universities adopted it as a training medium for film students.

The low costs that encouraged filmmakers to choose super 8 over 16mm were made possible, however, by the mass production of equipment and film stock for the home movie market. With the explosion of video in the early 1980s, super 8 was dealt its death blow just as it was beginning to follow the transition to professional acceptance that 16mm had found after World War II.

Toni Treadway, codirector of the International Center for 8mm Film and Video in Rowley, Massachusetts, estimates that serious filmmakers make up 20 percent or more of the users of super 8 today, compared with about 2 percent in the mid-seventies. Home movie makers still account for the remaining 80 percent of users, but serious filmmakers appear to now equal or exceed home movie buffs in terms of the number of rolls of stock sold. A Kodak survey conducted about two years ago had similar findings, but actual sales figures have not been released.

Super 8 has seen a recent resurgence in popularity in a number of MTV music videos, including at least one by Paula Abdul, the Prince movie

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*Purple Rain*, and Coors beer commercials recalling the 1970s.

Nigrin says the format has largely become the domain of visual artists, however. Of the 12 films at this year's festival, there were two straight narrative works, two documentaries, one MTV-style music video, and an anti-war PSA. The remainder were clearly experimental.

"Artists have now turned to super 8 as another viable means of visual communications so they can get a really high resolution image and better quality than any small-gauge video format," Nigrin says. The same economy of film and equipment costs that made super 8 popular in the 1970s continues to make it attractive, he notes. Ten minutes of super 8 costs \$60 to \$80, compared with \$300 for an 11-minute roll of 16mm processed, workprinted, and transferred to fullcoat. A top-of-the-line Beaulieu camera package sells for \$5,000, but countless cameras can be found at flea markets and rummage sales for \$100 or less.

"You can shoot your own, and you can cut your own, and that's important," Nigrin says. "Usually with video, if you shoot on Betacam you have to go to an on-line facility and spend countless thousands of dollars editing in a place where you're not comfortable. With super 8, you can take the stuff home and do it yourself."

Eros and Liotta agree. "We've always had super 8, and it's something where we could afford to make films for one- or two-hundred dollars." Eros says. "We have the equipment to do that at home, where with 16mm, that was another whole level of involvement."

The small size of super 8 equipment and the physical and visual properties of film over videotape are also important factors in choosing the medium, the filmmaking team say. "There's an intimacy that's a historical part of super 8 that's as intimate as one's home, one's bedroom, one's lovers, and one's closest friends," Eros says, noting that he and Liotta shot each other, without a crew, for the nude scenes in *Soma Sema*.

"For us, it has a draw in that it's something an individual can handle," he adds. "That's what makes it a material in a way that video is not a material," Liotta says. "It's not something tangible like film is."

The 13-minute *Soma Sema* begins with a mummy in a field—Liotta—with only its hands free to beckon the viewer nearer. Scenes of a naked woman, a burning doorway, and a knife cutting away at the mummy's shroud follow, along with scenes of hieroglyphics and a burning skull. While the experimental work has no discernible plot, Eros says it shows "a way of thinking about the body as a divine vessel."

The film includes a variety of visual effects most often associated with high-tech video gear or complicated optical printing. Instead, Eros and Liotta did the effects at home, some by transferring the original super 8 footage to video using a home-video camera with a simple negative-positive switch. The signal was then fed to a monitor, where ordinary hue and tint controls were used to



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For their experimental short *Soma Sema*, grand-prize winners Bradley Eras and Jeanne Liotta employed a range of special effects while limiting their budget to a few hundred dollars.

Courtesy filmmakers

*Indian Summer* copies the style of B horror movies of the 1950s. Mad scientist Dave Keller works in a university laboratory where the brain of his former lover and colleague Evelyn Sorak is suspended in a green fluid inside an aquarium, connected to a hodgepodge of electronic equipment. As Keller pores through Sorak's journals and talks to her portrait in an attempt to find a way to restore her to life, student Tinka is sent to be his assistant in a desperate attempt by the dean to save her from the evils of peace-sign-waving hippies. Needless to say, she soon becomes the subject of a brain transplant operation.

"I like the concept of how super 8 is an accessible film to work with," says Laura Clemmons, a former Seattle resident now living in New York who made *A Dream about War*. "Even though it's so simple and looked down upon by so many people in the industry, I look beyond that," she says. "There is still so much of an art to it. I get very excited about the graininess and transfer a lot of it in slow motion. I play a lot with the movement of the film and the camera in a certain space. The graininess of the film achieves a sort of painterly effect at times. It also allows you to have a lot of freedom and play in that it's not as expensive as 16mm or 35mm, where you always have to think, 'Oh, my God, I have to work within the budget.'"

*A Dream about War* is based on found footage shot in Vietnam around 1968. An American soldier posing at the door of a Huey helicopter with a Vietnamese woman is intercut with home movies of a baby, current footage of an airplane overhead, and period stills, ranging from combat scenes to Lyndon Johnson looking out the windows of the Oval Office. The audio consists largely of sound bites of people talking about the war, many of them taken from the Larry King radio talk show.

While Clemmons has found some paying work shooting music videos for Seattle bands in super 8, and Eras and Liotta combine super 8 with their work as performance artists, few filmmakers appear to be making a full-time living in super 8. Von Egidy and others say they hope the festival will help change that. Nigrin would eventually like to expand the one-night festival into a weekend-long event that would attempt to pair up filmmakers with distributors.

"Our goal is to become an international festival," he says. "What is the future of super 8? How long will we continue to do this? I plan on continuing until we see a real drop-off in entries, and we haven't seen that. You don't stop a good thing."

*J. Craig Shearman, a former reporter for United Press International, is a filmmaker who has sometimes worked in super 8.*

alter the image while the screen was rephotographed with a super 8 camera.

Nigrin says he considers works that are shot on super 8 but manipulated or even completely edited on video to still be super 8. Some super 8 purists disagree, but Nigrin points out that video has opened up a new world for super 8, particularly in the ease of distribution on VHS videocassette. "You can use the advantages of both mediums so that there's a kind of hybrid art created," he says. "It's not limited to just production/post-production, but even distribution. You don't have to make 10 print copies of a 10-minute super 8 film that will cost you \$2,000 anymore. You can make the same 10 copies of your super 8 film on half-inch video for less than \$100. You're talking a 2,000 percent savings, and it means you can get your work out there that much more readily."

About 80 percent of the 75 entries in this year's festival were submitted as video copies, and nine of the 12 finalists were projected from three-quarter-inch videocassettes. Two films, including *Soma Sema*, were shown from 16mm blowups. Only one, an 11-minute abstract trip across a covered bridge called *Light Rhythms*, by James Harrar of Pipersville, Pennsylvania, was projected directly from super 8. It won third place.

Other filmmakers whose works were shown at the festival agreed that both economy and aesthetics led to their choice of super 8 over video or larger film formats. "It's definitely the affordability," says Walter Von Egidy of New Milford, Connecticut, whose 18-minute *Indian Summer* took second place. "It's the only way I can own all my own equipment and operate truly independently," explains Von Egidy, a sign painter who finances his films out of his own pocket. "As far as film versus video goes, the editing system for video would be pretty expensive, and video is a medium that has its own set of aesthetics that are really completely different from film."

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## William Greaves' *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*

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SCOTT MACDONALD

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PERHAPS THE MOST NOTABLE EVENT IN AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FILM DURING 1991 was the reemergence of William Greaves' 1968 feature, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*, which premiered at the Brooklyn Museum in April as part of a Greaves retrospective. Greaves' fascinating and amusing critique of cinema verité is noteworthy not only in itself, but as still another accomplishment from a man whose name should be a household word, at least for those who consider themselves savvy about modern film history. (I say "should be" because currently Greaves is not profiled in any of the major popular film encyclopedias, including Donald Bogle's *Blacks in American Film and Television*).

Originally a distinguished stage actor and acting teacher (in 1980, he shared the Actors Studio's first Dusa Award with Robert De Niro, Jane Fonda, Marlon Brando, Sally Field, Rod Steiger, Dustin Hoffman, and others), Greaves had major roles in several black-directed/black-cast films of the late forties, including Herald Pictures' *Miracle in Harlem* (1948, directed by Jack Kemp, with Greaves and Sheila Guyse as romantic leads and Stepin Fetchit as comic relief) and as co-star in Powell Lindsay's *Souls of Sin* (1949), and he was effective in a featured role in Louis de Rochemont's *Lost Boundaries* (1949) starring Mel Ferrer, one of the "problem pictures" that focused on the struggles of African Americans in the US after World War II (others were *Home of the Brave*, *Pinky*, and *Intruder in the Dust*, all released the same year).

Partially as a result of his contact with de Rochemont, Greaves became interested in documentary and feature filmmaking. From 1952 until 1960, he worked at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in a variety of capacities on roughly 80 films, and he was part of NFB's Unit B, which launched the first cinema verité productions in North America. Greaves then returned to the US where he began to produce and direct what was to become an immense body of documentary film, primarily for the US government and public television. Titles include *In the Company of Men* (1969), *From These Roots* (1974), *Booker T. Washington: The Life and the Legacy* (1982), *Frederick Douglas: An American Life* (1984), *That's Black Entertainment* (1989), and *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice* (1989). From 1968 to 1970 Greaves was executive producer and co-host of NET's pioneering, Emmy-winning public affairs series *Black Journal*. And he has produced several theatrical features. He directed *Ali, the Fighter* (1971), a "docutainment" feature on the first Ali-Frazier fight; he co-wrote, directed, and executive produced *The Marijuana Affair* (1973) and was executive producer for Universal Pictures' hit *Bustin' Loose* (1981), with Cicely Tyson and Richard Pryor.

Probably none of Greaves' films equals *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*'s inventiveness or has more successfully integrated his skills as actor, teacher of actors, and director. *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* uses a screen test involving an argument between a married couple—she complains about his pressuring her to have "abortion after abortion" and charges that he's

become a homosexual; he temporizes and denies—as a pretext for an exploration of the filmmaking process. Greaves had the crew filming not only the actors doing the scene, but themselves filming it, as well as the larger context that surrounded the shoot in Central Park. In the finished film, Greaves moves viewers back and forth from level to level of the production. Each level has its own dramatic interest. At times, we're drawn into the scene by the skill of the actors (Patricia Ree Gilbert, Don Fellows); in other instances, attention is focused on the work of the crew; and periodically, Greaves uses a double or triple image so that we see various levels of the production simultaneously. The crew becomes so frustrated by what they consider Greaves' inept direction that, unknown to the director, they meet to discuss the situation and film their discussion. And the entire shoot is regularly interrupted by the police, by onlookers, and, at the end, by a funny, eloquent, loony homeless alcoholic who is instinctively as in tune with the production as are most of the crew.

*Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* was filmed on the assumption that, ultimately, five separate features—*Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take Two*, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take Three*, etc.—would result from the shoot, each with a different couple enacting the same scene. But because of funding problems, only *Take One* was completed, and money ran out before the 35mm blowup with special optical effects could be struck. Finally, in 1971 there was a film to show, but after a few screenings for befuddled distributors—none to the public—the film was shelved. During the past few months, it has been widely seen at festivals and museums.

The following interview has an unusual form. It began with my transcribing and editing the audience discussion with Greaves that followed the presentation of *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* at the 1991 Robert Flaherty Seminar. This was supplemented by a second discussion between Greaves and me at his New York apartment in November. In the interview, the two discussions are treated as one.



**Bill Sloan** (chief, circulating film and video library, Museum of Modern Art): I've probably known Bill Greaves longer than anyone in this room. In fact, I saw the film when it was still in a rough cut back in the sixties, and I've seen it several times since. Bill has been making films longer than any other contemporary African American filmmaker. He couldn't get anything started in this country because of the racism that was so rampant in the fifties, but he was able to get a job at the National Film Board of Canada and in 1957 shot *Emergency Ward*, one of the first cinema verité films ever made—years before Leacock, the Maysles, and Pennebaker were doing that sort of thing. But to stop mid-career and make a film like *this* was really quite astounding. Bill, what possessed you?

**William Greaves:** There were several different factors. I'd been a member of the Actors Studio since 1949. As a result, the Stanislavski System, the Method, Strasberg, that whole approach to theater and acting, translated into my film work. After awhile, I began teaching actors in Canada. One of my actors, Manny Melamed, was extremely adroit at business ventures and became very wealthy. He wanted me to make a feature and said, "Anything

you want to make, just tell me." I began to think about a way I could put together a feature using some of the actors from the Actors Studio and my own acting studio.

A whole range of other interests were involved too. The term "sybiopsychotaxiplasm" is a take-off on "sybiotaxiplasm," a concept developed by philosopher/social scientist Arthur Bentley—a contemporary of John Dewey—in his terrific book *An Inquiry into Inquiries*. Bentley explored how various social scientists went about the business of conceiv-

ing and perceiving "civilization" and "society." The term "sybiotaxiplasm" referred to all those objects and events that transpire in any given environment on which human beings impact and which in turn impact on human beings in any way. Of course, the most elaborate example of such a cosmic

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**Bill Greaves (seated) in Central Park filming**  
***Sybiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One.***

All photos courtesy filmmaker



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*I was insisting that this scene would be done by the cast and crew, even though it was making them very unhappy. The question was, "When will they revolt?"*

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dialogue or symbiotaxiplasm would be a city like New York. I had the audacity to put the word "psycho" into the middle of Bentley's term. I felt the longer term was more appropriate to my idea, which was to focus more acutely on the role that psychology and creativity play when a group of people come together and function as a creative entity charged with the responsibility of making a film.

I added the phrase "take one" because the plan was to make a cycle of five symbiopsychotaxiplasms out of the original 70 hours of shooting. But we couldn't even get the first one off the ground and into distribution, so we never developed the others.

**Scott MacDonald:** Did you shoot all the material you had planned to shoot for all five "takes" and edit just one?

**WG:** Yes.

**SM:** If you had the money, would you finish the other four takes?

**WG:** Oh yes. I'd love to. We've got great stuff, including, by the way, some wonderful material with Susan Anspach. Susan and Johnny Diamond were directed to sing some of their lines semi-operatically. The interracial couple dealt with the scene as a psychodrama. We drew on the works of Dr. J.L. Moreno, a student of Freud, who created psychodrama and brought it to this country. He conceived of psychodrama as a psychotherapeutic tool, as a way of accessing and expressing the subconscious through dramatic action on a stage. We had a psychodramatist, Marcia Karp, who had been trained by Moreno, come onto the location and work with the actors. Then there are two other straight-ahead efforts by actors not as experienced as Pat and Don were. The movie has this curious variation on the theme of marital discord, in addition to the other continuing drama of the crew critiquing what was going on.

**SM:** Is there much more material of the crew meeting among themselves and responding to the project?

**WG:** Oh yes, plenty of the "closet revolt," but not as much as I originally thought I would get on the actual set. I had thought the crew would challenge me on camera, and that conflict would be central to the drama of the film. My thinking was that if I made the crew sufficiently angry by resorting to certain types of redundancies and other irritants, they would begin saying, "What the hell's going on? Why are you doing this? What's this all about?" They'd rebel. But they didn't do that, and it was a source of frustration and depression for me during the shooting.

Similarly, I thought that the actors would periodically have trouble with their roles, their lines, or with me, and that we'd get into these debates over a particular psychological adjustment or motivation. But the actors and the crew were much too professional. They felt they couldn't cross that boundary; they couldn't openly confront the director, who is usually thought of as God on the set.

**SM:** There's a difference though, in that the crew sneaks away to have their own discussion about you and then presents you with it, while the actors seem to assume that whatever is going wrong is because *they're* not good enough.

**WG:** Well, actors tend to be like that. They are such an oppressed, desperate

community. They have so few opportunities to work that the last thing an actor wants to do is get a reputation for being difficult. Brando had that problem years ago. He became a persona non grata throughout Broadway, and the only director who protected him was Kazan.

So I didn't get what I wanted, except for that moment towards the end where I say, "Cut it!" and Pat says, "This is not working out," and I say, "Yes, it is," and she yells, "It's not and you *know* it!" I thought, "Oh boy, here it comes." Pat had this radar going. She intuited when something was truthful and when it wasn't. I figured that once she decided to confront me, she'd pull out all the stops. And I assumed that the crew would catch the whole encounter on film. Well, by that time the crew was so pissed off with me that they'd become sloppy; so, wouldn't you know, just at that moment they hadn't loaded any extra magazines for the film in the fucking cameras. So when I walked across the bridge after Pat, they didn't follow. And once they *were* loaded, they felt it was too private a moment to interrupt! They fell back into the social convention of not invading our privacy.

**Michelle Materre** (associate director, *Women Make Movies*): You must have had your ego in such a great place to be able to allow the crew to think about you the way they must have.

**WG:** It was a calculated risk. It's true, my livelihood depends on my being perceived as a good director, and yet, for this particular film to work, a flawed, vulnerable persona was essential. I must say I feel very good about my relationship with the crew. Even when they spoke about me at their meeting, it wasn't in anger. They were somewhat like Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, or like the characters in *Outward Bound*, a play I had a role in when I first started acting, where everybody is on a ship but no one knows why or where they're going (actually, they've just died and are being carted away). It was so wonderful of the crew to come on board this project and work so hard even though they didn't know where the film was going.

**Richard Herskowitz** (director, Cornell Cinema): *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* is a missing link in sixties film history, and I think articles and books written about that period, like David James' *Allegories of Cinema*, ought to be recalled for repairs. I do wonder about the film in the context of your career. What led up to it, and how did it inform things you made after it?

**WG:** Bill Sloan mentioned my relationship with the National Film Board. I was in the unit that pioneered cinema verité on the North American continent. Terry Filgate (the English cameraman with dark glasses in *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*) and I were together at the NFB in what was called Unit B. The unit did films like *Lonely Boy* (1961), *Blood and Fire* (1958), and, as Bill Sloan said, I did *Emergency Ward*. The process of learning to do that kind of shooting made me very attuned to the capturing of spontaneous reality. That laid the groundwork for this film, of course, coupled with my work at the Actors Studio.

But I should tell you some of the other thinking that I had in mind while making *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*. I went to Stuyvesant, a science high school in New York City, and was pointed in the direction of a career in science. I broke off from that path in college, but I continued to be interested in various scientific theories. The Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty, in particular, fascinated me. Heisenberg asserts that we'll never really know

**Don Fellows and Patricia Ree Gilbert play a married couple whose argument serves as the pretext for a brash display of Cassavetesian improvisation.**



the true basis of the cosmos, because the means of perception—the electron microscope—alters the reality it observes. It sends out a beam of electrons that knocks the electrons of the atoms being observed out of their orbits. I began to think of the movie camera as an analog to the microscope. The reality to be observed is the human soul, the mind, the psyche. Of course, as the camera investigates that part of the cosmos, the individual soul or psyche being observed recoils from the intrusion. On-camera behavior becomes structured in a way other than it would have been had it been unperceived—a psychological version of the Heisenberg Principle. In this sense, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* was—in my mind, at least—an environment in which movie cameras were set up in an attempt to catch, unperceived by the subjects, the process of human spontaneous response and action.

Another scientific theory that interested me was the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which describes the flow and distribution of energy in any given system. In *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*, the cameras track the flow of energy in the social system I had devised. If the cameras focused on one person and the energy level of spontaneous reality began to decline as a result of their being under observation, that energy would shift and show up somewhere else—behind the cameras or among the bystanders, for example.

**Alan Rosenthal** (writer, director): Did you look at the rushes in between the filming, or did you just continue shooting?

**WG:** Well, we had to look at the rushes to see whether we were getting things on film, but I didn't see the rushes of the crew at their meeting until after the shooting was over, and Bob Rosen said, "Bill, we have a little present for you" (audience laughs).

**Patricia Zimmermann** (professor of film, Ithaca College): There's a long history of self-reflexive filming as a political intervention to disengage the traditional power of the director and to make way for more utopian ways of working—Vertov, Godard, Makavejev.... One scene in your film seems to encapsulate this: the scene where you're sitting on the grass with your multiracial, mixed-gender crew. And you're an African American director. Could you situate your method within the politics of the time?

**WG:** Well, clearly we were working in a context of the urban disorders of the sixties and the rage of the African American community against the tyranny and the racism of the American body politic. There was that general social background, plus the more specific struggles: the civil rights marches, the whole Vietnam War problem, police repression and the growing dissent over it. There was the emerging feminist movement. The 1968 Chicago convention would soon explode. And Woodstock. Among young adults, there was an unhappiness of massive dimensions over the way in which society had been run and the covert authoritarianism that was becoming everywhere evident.

This film was an attempt to look at the impulses, the inspirations of a

group of creative people who, during the making of the film, were being pushed to the wall by the process I, as director, had instigated. The scene that I had written was fixed, and I was in charge. I was insisting that this scene would be done by the cast and crew, even though it was making them very unhappy. The questions were, "When will they revolt? When would they question the validity, the wisdom, of doing the scene in the first place?" In this sense, it was a metaphor of the politics of the time.

**John Columbus** (director, Black Maria Film Festival): Did you expect a counterculture audience for the film? Or did you hope for distribution through commercial theaters?

**WG:** When we first had a blowup, we showed it to a couple of small commercial distributors, and their eyeballs just went around in their sockets. They just couldn't figure out how to categorize and package it. That may still be a problem. One of the critics from *Time* had come by my studio in the sixties and said, "Gee, this thing is not going to be acceptable for 20 years." I think the film will now make its way at least into art theaters and through the college circuit and to whatever film societies are out there. Hopefully it will get wider consumption in the twenty-first century because of its revolutionary aesthetic and its increasing archival value; there were few films made in the sixties that so effectively tracked the psychological and emotional mechanisms of young people.

**SM:** Nowadays, the scene you wrote is a little shocking because abortion is rarely dealt with so directly. I don't remember ever seeing characters debate the issue in a film. And I don't remember such scenes in the sixties, either. How did you decide on the topics of abortion and homosexuality?

**WG:** Well, it was complicated. Abortion as an issue was just emerging because the women's movement was fledgling. For me, abortion also had a kind of political significance—it was a metaphor for the Vietnam War, for the problems it created, the napalming of villages and all of that. Of course, it also related to the more local, conventional concerns of women to have the right to control their bodies. It's interesting because she wants the life, he does not, whereas, in *Roe v. Wade*, it's more an issue of a woman having the right to say she doesn't want this life. What I like about the scene today is that it prevents the film from seeming like advocacy; it doesn't take sides in a particular issue. It creates an interesting tension.

**SM:** At one point, I thought you were indirectly using homosexuality and abortion as metaphors for the idea that this particular film is not what

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# The film had to be chaos, but chaos of a very special character: intelligible chaos.

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Hollywood would consider a creation, that the industry would consider *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* an “abortion,” a “perversion.”

**WG:** That’s interesting, but for me the homosexuality was more involved with the simple fact that people change, people become homosexual and people become heterosexual. People have the right to go in whatever direction they want.

**SM:** One of the things I noticed when I looked really carefully at *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* is that while it has this feeling of informality and spontaneity, it’s very rigorously composed.

**WG:** Well, the finished film did not develop overnight. There was a lot of agony in the editing room—a *lot*. I had 60 or 70 hours of film. I can’t tell you how many assistant editors I burned out. The film had to be chaos, but chaos of a very special character: *intelligible* chaos. It had to have a classic flow of some kind. It had to hold your attention, even though it was supposed to be a lousy film.

**SM:** From the opening minutes, it’s evident that the film is precise in what it does. During the preface, we no sooner start to get engaged in this argument about abortion, then you flip to a split-screen image of two simultaneous angles on the characters. And the minute we’re starting to become accustomed to the split-screen, you flip to candid shots of bystanders observing the shoot. The switch from one level to another in the preface sets up the overall rhythm of the film.

And the following credit sequence confirms the film’s precision. You move through a whole cycle of life—first we see lovers, then babies, then growing children, then adults—while a sound that was identified as an error during the preface gets louder and louder, so we know that if it *was* an error then, it sure as hell is conscious now. The first time we see you in the film, you’re listening to the sound and saying, “This is terrible, this is terrible,” but you don’t look like you feel it’s terrible—you look amused. It’s a kind of foreshadowing, as is your statement a moment later, “Don’t take me seriously.”

**WG:** I *was* very happy with the fact that there was error and confusion. If you notice me with Victor, the homeless guy at the end, I have the same kind of private smile. That feeling comes out of the fact that the thing was going my way: There was confusion, or conflict, or some new unpremeditated development that was important for the life and success of the film.

On a second level, I wanted to harness the paradox of creating out of failure, of *using* failure and error and confusion and chaos and unhappiness and conflict. You are drawn inexorably through this cosmic flux. At the end you say, “Wait a minute, what was *that* all about, and why was I so transfixed by it?” Well, life is like that, it keeps you totally absorbed from moment to moment, yet often you can’t tell what it’s about. I like that paradox.

**SM:** In the sixties there were a number of different attempts to critique cinema verité: Shirley Clarke’s *The Connection* (1961), Peter Watkins’ *The War Game* (1965) and *Punishment Park* (1970), and Jonas Mekas’ *The Brig* (1964) are distinguished instances. The one that strikes me as closest to this film is Jim McBride’s *David Holzman’s Diary* (1967), which itself was inspired by the work of Andrew Noren. Did you have any contact with McBride or Noren, or know if they had contact with your work?

**WG:** I’ve heard of *David Holzman’s Diary*, but I’ve not seen it. I’ve been involved in making films, and, you know, you stay in the editing room until you’re exhausted, then you go home and collapse and get up and do it again. There was a period in my life when I used to go to the theater a great deal, and to the movies. But that stopped after I left Canada in 1960.

**Maria Aqui Carter** (associate producer, WGBH, Boston): The issue this film raises for me is individual versus collective power. I find that when I’m directing a mixed crew, particularly a gender-mixed crew, I have power relationship problems because of my race. When you as an African American director said in the film, “I represent the establishment,” how did your crew relate to you?

**WG:** I had an excellent relationship with the people on the crew. Again, you have to think in terms of the sixties, when there was a breaking out of a whole lot of ossified thinking. The people who worked on *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* were Age of Aquarius people who were in many respects shorn of the racist encumbrances that many white Americans are burdened with. They had a very collaborationist approach.

**Steve Gallagher** (programmer, producer, distributor): What was the reaction of the cast and crew when they saw the film?

**WG:** Only three or four of them have seen it. Bob Rosen saw it, and he reacted the same way Muhammad Ali did to the film I made about him. That film was shot *cinema verité*, too, and while we were filming, Ali wouldn’t cooperate at first, for legal and other reasons, I suppose. He forgot that he had signed a contract for me to shoot the film (this was the period of the first Joe Frazier fight). So we used telephoto lenses, hidden mikes, and so on. About a year later, after the fight was over and the film was finished, I got a call from Ali saying, “Listen, I want to see that film you did.” So we set up a screening for him, and he sat in the theater saying, “How did you get this shot? How did you do *that*?” Rosen’s reaction was similar; I don’t think he anticipated the film that he saw. I think (I hope) he was surprised in a pleasant way.

**John Columbus:** Today some people might be a little troubled by the way the homeless man who walks into the shoot near the end is handled. Did you have mixed feelings then or do you now about that scene?

**WG:** We were confronted with that individual, and we said, “Do we want to let this survive as a sequence or not?” We made the determination on the set that we were going to go with this thing because, though it was spontaneously intrusive, it was reality—and reality was what the film was all about. We decided to stay open to it, and I’m so glad we did. As you saw, we did take the precaution of getting the guy to sign a release. We certainly recognized that he was drunk and homeless, but in his confrontational nature, he articulated what I was trying to get at in the film. That’s what I meant earlier when I said there was a mystical element to the film. Over the years, this drunken character has been in different sections of the film, but he works best at the very end: You can’t go beyond *that* level of truth.

**Barbara Abrash** (independent producer): I was so thrilled with this film that I was filled with regret that you weren’t able to continue making feature films.



With camera rolling, the crew secretly meets to debate Greaves' perceived ineptitude versus his hidden strategy.

**WG:** Me too!

**Abrash:** But now a time may be coming when you'll have an opportunity. Could you talk about what we might expect if you were to make an independent feature now? Would there be a continuity with *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*?

**WG:** To make a film like this one today would cost a lot of money. And I wouldn't be as free in using the kinds of approaches that we used then. I wouldn't say I was young and foolish, but my thinking now would be structured by the need for the production to be both artistically and commercially valid. When I made *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*, I didn't care whether it was commercial. I had carte blanche from Manny Melamed, my backer. But today, I would have to consider whether this thing would work in a commercial context. One has to pay the bills, the rent, and one's debts.

**Lise Yasui (filmmaker):** You've got such a long track record now, and in documentary/nonfiction funding, a track record is everything. Do you really think that if you wanted to do a film that was innovative in form, you wouldn't have the opportunity?

**WG:** Well, I do experiment up to the limitations of the economics and the subject matter of the film. You see that experimentation in most of my documentary films.

**SM:** Which of your other films do you see as particularly experimental?

**WG:** The film I did in Africa called *The First World Festival of Negro Arts* (1966) is experimental in the sense that it uses poetry in conjunction with cinema vérité in an unusual formulation. We also used a lot of Eisensteinian montage.

*From These Roots* (1974) is all still photographs. To make a documentary that was dramatic in its impact with only still photographs and sound was experimental then. Today you have *The Civil War* and so on. *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice* (1989), which also came out before *The Civil War*, combined sound effects, still photographs, and interviews overlaid with graphics. I think that film was innovative.

And the film about Ali was experimental in the sense that it was shot all cinema vérité, but has a progressive, dramatic story line. Certainly the chronology of the event itself was helpful—the events leading up to and including the fight between Ali and Frazier. But apart from that there was character delineation and a development of dramatic themes. Up to that point in American filmmaking I don't know if there were any films that used

cinema vérité in such a dramatic way. I could be wrong, of course; I'm looking at this through my own tunnel vision.

You know, that film became the basis for *Rocky*. If you analyze *Rocky*, you'll realize that Rocky is a white Joe Frazier; as a matter of fact, Joe actually worked in a Philadelphia meat factory. Joe Frazier was in my apartment about four months ago, and he wondered if they ripped him off, because they seemed to use his public persona as the basis for the Rocky character and Muhammad Ali as the basis for Apollo Creed. They even purchased sequences from our film to put into the first *Rocky*. Some of the crowd scenes in *Rocky* are our footage. The *Raging Bull* people also studied our film. There are echoes of our way of shooting in both films. *Ali, the Fighter* was an experiment that went on to become conventional.

**SM:** Somebody told me you worked with Oscar Micheaux.

**WG:** No, no (laughs). But I love the mystique that goes with that. I did see Micheaux when I was a small boy on the streets of Harlem. I'd see him carrying equipment or a film can. I worked for William Alexander. He gave me my first major role in a feature film, starring Joe Louis as a matter of fact. And as a black filmmaker, he was a role model for me. Alexander was the last of that legendary cycle of black producers and directors. He made the last black-cast, black-directed film of that historical period, *Souls of Sin* (1949), which I had one of the leads in.

**SM:** You're well known as a chronicler of the black experience, both on television and in film. *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* used four white couples and one interracial couple. Were you consciously stepping out of your role?

**WG:** No. This Chronicler of the Black Experience thing is of recent vintage. Obviously, I've always been interested in the black experience. It's one of the major reasons why I went into film production in the first place. But I'm not a captive of it or neurotically obsessed by it. At the National Film Board of Canada I worked on some 80 films, and only one or two that I can recall had any black people in them. And I've done a lot of films in this country that have nothing to do with the black experience. In the last 20 or so years I've been more involved. I was executive producer and co-host of *Black Journal* and worked on a number of films for the show. And some of the films I've done for the government have been on the black experience.

I really don't want to be ghettoized as a black filmmaker. As important as it is, and as much as I want to continue to do films on the black experience, I also want to be free to do other films. I was talking to a guy yesterday and he said, "You know, you should go out to Hollywood and take a black script and do this and that...." In a sense, America is trying to force me to be a black filmmaker as opposed to a filmmaker who is black. I think it's unfortunate that the nature of our society is such that you are constantly being shunted into some specialized area or other, rather than being free to let your spirit and consciousness roam the cosmos and do whatever the hell you really want to do at that particular moment of your inspiration.

*Scott MacDonald has been conducting interviews with independent filmmakers since 1978. His A Critical Cinema appeared in 1988. A Critical Cinema 2 will be published in August.*

## ORDER AND OBSESSION

Alan Berliner on the Making of *Intimate Stranger*

GABRIELLA OLDHAM

July 3, 1986, 3:11 a.m. I lived the process of making the film—I was that process....

Editors hired to cut directors' visions admit to living with the film daily and obsessively, as if it were their own. For an editor who is also a filmmaker, the obsession is complete. Alan Berliner's life is inseparable from his films and vice versa.

The project became *Intimate Stranger*, a feature-length documentary that premiered at the New York Film Festival last September and went on to Sundance and festivals in Rotterdam, Dallas, and San Francisco, and garnered a special jury citation at the Cinema du Réel in Paris. *Intimate Stranger* will air June 22 on *P.O.V.* and travel to Honolulu in July. The film will be paired up with *The Family Album* at the Biograph Theater in Washington, DC, in June—a complementary billing, as *The Family Album* takes a sweeping look at the American family through anonymous home

maker. He reflects that in his education at State University of New York/Binghamton (B.A.) and the University of Oklahoma (M.F.A.), "We [the students] did everything." On each independent film, Berliner is his own researcher, director, cinematographer, and, he continues with only a hint of exhaustion, "narrator, writer, consultant, courier, intern, apprentice. Oh yes, and editor."

Berliner's environment is vital to his work. "I need my process to have a certain elegance, inside and out." His New York studio is part cutting room, part museum/archive. His collection of sounds and images is stored in spectral-colored boxes spanning one wall like a rainbow, each box painstakingly identified in bold, black handwriting. Shelves hold files of clippings, correspondence, and photographs, cross-referenced to the envy of any librarian. Berliner's two Emmy awards for sound editing on ABC television sports programs sit tucked away on high shelves. His Steenbeck is surrounded with projects past, present, and future: discarded film reels, thousands of photographs from the *New York Times*, boxes of 1920s and 1930s home movies. Cabinets hold his notebooks, where Berliner records technical details of filmmaking, and his journals, which chart his emotions during the process. The journal "is kept just before I go to sleep each night," Berliner remarks, "which can often be as late as 5:30 in the morning. It's a release of tension and energy. In this journal I celebrate the fact that, ultimately, editing is really very mysterious."

May 2, 1985, 2:10 a.m. Each day I will attempt to absorb a little bit more.... Imagine a bird building its nest twigdust by twigdust.

Berliner uses poetic metaphors to define editing. He likens it to chemistry, nutrition, friendship, stamp-collecting, evolution, mountain-climbing, and even surgery (June 23, 1986, 3:56 a.m. *I opened the patient. I touched the film*). Because of the voluminous, detailed materials he uses, order and organization are imperative. His obsession with systematically controlling every step of his progress is obvious: "With *The Family Album*, I lost sleep after I locked and mixed the film because I felt that one shot was two frames too long. And one audio line I felt went on four words too long," he says.

*The Family Album* consists of "found" material—audio recordings and home movies of anonymous families—which explores the range of emotion and experience in everyone's life, from birth to death. Berliner feels that home movies can be



The filmmaker's grandfather Joseph Cassuto (standing) and Japanese friends on a beach in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1931, from *Intimate Stranger*.

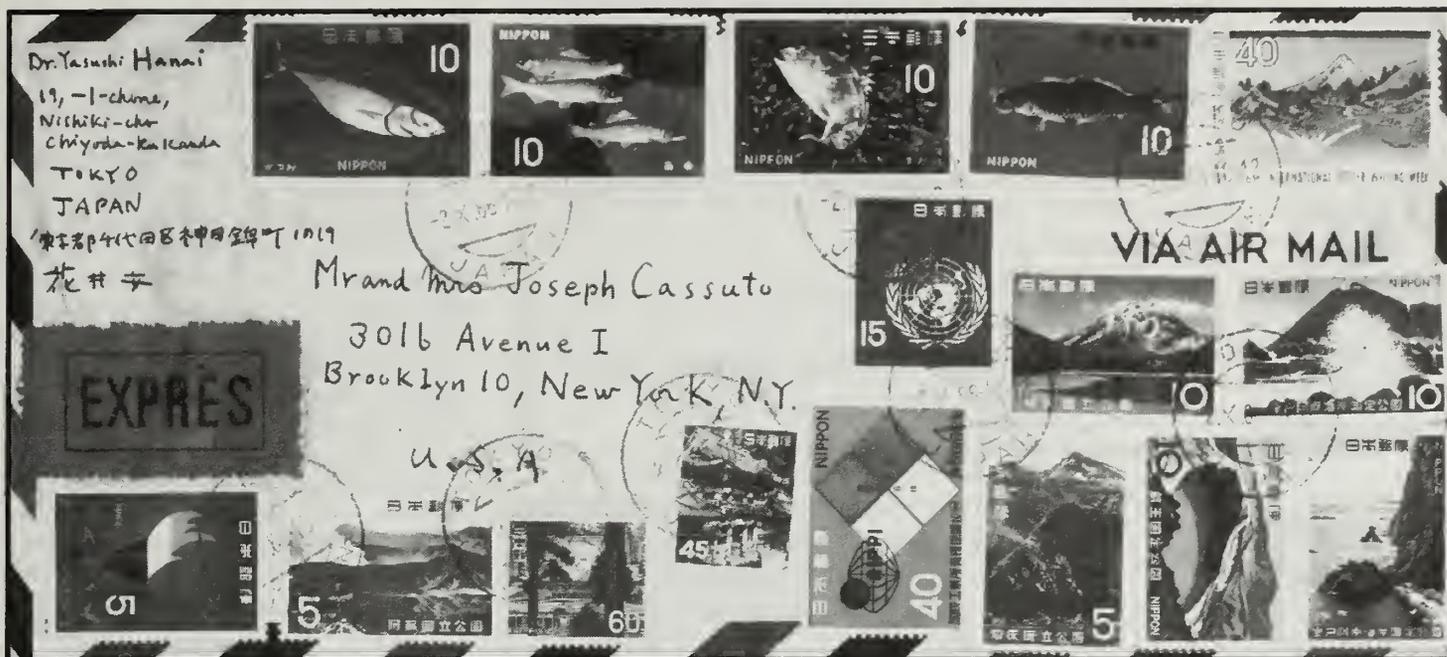
All illustrations courtesy filmmaker

I met Berliner in 1989 when interviewing editors for my book *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors*. He had completed *The Family Album* three years earlier and was wrestling with the concept for a project tentatively titled *Unfinished Business*. At the time, he thought it would be "an unusual documentary describing my journey in pursuit of why the impact of the hit-and-run car accident that killed my grandfather still echoes 16 years later. What about family connectedness makes me want to dig so deeply?"

movies from the 1920s to 1940s, while *Intimate Stranger* focuses on one particular family, Berliner's own.

To make *Intimate Stranger*, Berliner sifted through hundreds of letters and photographs of his maternal grandfather, Joseph Cassuto, a Palestinian Jew raised and educated in Egypt until he settled in—but never really adapted to—New York City in 1945. Cassuto longed for Japan, with which he developed an intimate association as a result of his cotton-exchange business. The emotional impact of his divided allegiances between work and family are captured in numerous voiceovers of family reminiscences, which Berliner sets against the visual fragments left by his grandfather—snapshots, receipts, and letters.

To recreate the life of this extraordinary "ordinary man," Berliner assumed many roles as film-



misleading because they often depict an idealized family life; audio seems more honest to him. "In front of a camera, one thinks, 'How do I look? Smile for the camera.' People have different attitudes about speaking into microphones and revealing their inner thoughts." Berliner's juxtapositions of audio to video create ironic counterpoints between what is heard and seen, revealing what these home documents seem to avoid.

In one representative juxtaposition, a woman in a car smiles for the camera while someone else's voiceover says, "I always looked like I was happy in public, but it was never like that in the home." Berliner comments, "Often the tension between image and sound can create the warm shock of recognition that if a happy picture is worth a thousand words, then some must be tinged with dried tears."

May 4, 1990. Words. Lots of words. That's what I have so far. A film of voiceovers and black leader.

I met Berliner again in January of this year to talk about his latest film. *Unfinished Business* had become *Intimate Stranger*. The rainbow-wall held more boxes, with many new identifications relating to things Japanese. I recalled Berliner's feelings about the project three years earlier when faced with 19 boxes of letters and photographs—his grandfather's legacy and the film's foundation. Berliner did not hesitate to describe his frustration in unearthing a structure: "*Intimate Stranger* was a piece of shit for a very long time. Ironically, that was as good as it could be at any point along the way. It just kept evolving toward its final form."

On the heels of *The Family Album*, which celebrates the American family from birth to death, *Intimate Stranger* measures the sum of one person's existence. Cassuto was writing his autobiography when he was killed. The ties between him and Berliner were intense: As a child, Ber-

liner helped his grandfather sort papers, never realizing the significance this activity would have in later years. His grandfather also introduced him to stamp-collecting; Berliner remembers relishing the hours assembling these exotic images side by side. When he acquired his grandfather's "boxes" after his death, Berliner became driven to order these visual vestiges, juxtapose them with taped interviews of his living relatives, and resurrect an interrupted life. But he needed a device to structure this accumulating mountain of material.

"With *Intimate Stranger* I had home movies, archival footage, still photographs, letters, freeze frames, slow motion, pixillation, graphic fragments from academy leaders, footage I shot. Sound elements included bells, gongs, beeps, music, camera clicks, sound effects, spoken voice. *The Family Album* was simple by comparison. To portray my grandfather's obsession with preserving this voluminous paper trail, I came upon what would later seem obvious—the typewriter. The tool of business, the tool of his autobiographical quest."

Berliner's 1981 15-minute collage film, *Myth in the Electric Age*, had explored the typewriter sound effect. Concocting the typewriter motif for *Intimate Stranger* was a crucial breakthrough: It became a bridge between seeing and feeling, between what an audience perceives and what they experience and think as a result. It was also as if Berliner were continuing to write his grandfather's autobiography in film.

*The Family Album* was filled with Berliner's often bittersweet image-sound combinations culled from anonymous material. With *Intimate Stranger* he was creating juxtapositions from scratch, ever conscious of his conflict between being objective biographer and grandson. Some relatives, who participated in lengthy one-on-one interviews, were initially dubious of Berliner's mission. An uncle (later in voiceover) remarked,

Berliner's film on his grandfather—an international merchant whose greatest loyalties were toward his business associates on distant continents—was constructed from the thousands of photos, receipts, letters, and other documents saved and sorted by Cassuto and the filmmaker.



"He led an interesting life, but a lot of people lead interesting lives. He was just an ordinary man." Of course, Cassuto was beyond ordinary in the eyes of his international business and political colleagues. For Berliner, the tension between these

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different opinions would become the film.

Once he completed nine months of reading and cataloging letters and entered what would total 17 months of editing, Berliner could sever the invisible ties. Joe Cassuto became a subject in a biographical portrait; his story would resonate for an audience beyond his family. The film would reveal what any family shares, and through editing Berliner could manipulate the delicate, archetypal interplay of people's lives. "Film was my distance," Berliner says, "and also my immunity."

*Intimate Stranger* evolved into a film of a man torn between family and business. The film overflows with images portraying the participants in this life-long struggle. Berliner introduces and removes images with the thudding sound of an old manual typewriter. Each still image is connected to a specific audio cue—a bell, a gong, the popping sound of a space bar. Berliner describes how he operates his "picto-typewriter" in one typical sequence: "Over a freeze frame of my grandmother about to walk down the front steps, my uncle is heard commenting on her emotional vulnerability, having to keep order in an 'emotionally violent' home while my grandfather was in Japan. Suddenly her first step—freeze frame. Another step—freeze frame. Each step is articulated by the distinct sound of a typewriter key hitting. At the final frozen step, my mother says in voiceover, 'She had a nervous breakdown because of that, Alan.' The still image remains on the screen for two more seconds, allowing this revelation to sink in."

For contrast, Berliner created dizzying rhythms by editing with machine-gun rapidity images of parcel post receipts and stamped envelopes. This visual flurry mirrors the zeal with which Berliner's grandfather sent relief packages to Japan during World War II. The accompanying clack of keys and bells signals the end of another line of biography, another sequence in the film. As the filmmaker recorded in his journal.

*I see shots that could be shorter.*

*I see sounds that could be louder.*

*I hear music that could be different.*

*There will be other films.*

For over three years Berliner refined *Intimate Stranger* until the vision originally buried in his paper mountain became manifest. For this filmmaker, editing is listening to the material which dictates the structure it will take. Whether it's thousands of photographs from the *New York Times*, relatives, or perhaps even himself, Berliner reshapes his material, returning it to the viewer in a new, more meaningful form. "What I'm doing now is something I've done my whole life," he says. "My work is reminiscent of my childhood, except now the toys are more complicated, the stakes a lot higher, and it's so much more expensive!"

*Gabriella Oldham is completing a book on Buster Keaton's short films. She lives in New York City.*

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Set in San Francisco's legendary North Beach, **Steal America** chronicles the dissolute lifestyles of three foreigners in search of the American dream. Neo-Bohemians Christophe, Stella, and Maria are not your typical immigrants of the Horatio-Alger sort; rather, they spend their time joyriding, getting inconsequential jobs, and exploring the terrain, sexual and spatial, of their adopted homeland. Co-written and edited by Glen Scantlebury, the film has been likened to the French and Czech new wave films of the sixties. More than a road movie, *Steal America* is a poetic monochromatic portrait of self-discovery in America's subculture. *Steal America*: Karen Larsen, Larsen Associates, 330 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 957-1205.

**Mending Hearts** is a 90-minute documentary produced by Scott Auerbach tracing the lives of several people with AIDS. Through direct, in-depth involvement in the lives of their subjects, including a white heterosexual woman, a single gay man, and a black heterosexual man, the filmmakers present the day-to-day acts of grace, courage, and conviction that have largely escaped media attention. Weaving together a narrative from these lives, the program offers a vision of a compassionate and intelligent response to the AIDS epidemic. NAACP National Director Julian Bond and Task Force on AIDS Chair Richard P. Keeling, MD, served on the film's advisory board. *Mending Hearts*: Scott Auerbach, 200 King George St., Annapolis, MD 21401; (301) 268-5587.

Exploring the life of the late-Victorian writer and poet Isabelle Eberhardt, **The Great Invisible** adopts a nonconventional approach to biographical filmmaking. Eberhardt left Geneva for North Africa, converted to Islam, adopted the disguise of a man, pushed herself to the borders of annihilation, indulging in drink and sex, and died at the age of twenty-seven in a flash-flood in the desert. Four different women play the role of Eberhardt, illustrating her multifarious personality, and director Leslie Thornton intercuts archival segments that reveal Europeans' exoticizing gaze at the Orient. The film functions as a portrait of the complexities of character and the blindnesses that preside when one culture comes into contact with another. *The Great Invisible* will be released in the spring of 1993 as a 90-minute 16mm feature. *The Great Invisible*: David Barker, Box 650 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276; (212) 645-8902.

Emerging from a past as rich and bewitching as the blues, Zydeco music is arguably the most pervasive aspect of southwest Louisiana culture. Joining preteens and oldsters in electric dance halls, and black cowboys and accordion-players, the music spearheads a cultural renaissance that embraces the multifaceted people of the Bayou. **Zydecountry!** is a half-hour documentary that

takes a look at Zydeco music and the lifestyles of the Creole people who created it. The film is now seeking finishing funds, and a 15-minute first-edit is available. *Zydecountry!*: Ethan Prochnik, Teluride Productions, 216 W. 99th St. #4, New York, NY 10025; (212) 865-7914.

Sisters Jennifer and Leslie Schwerin have begun production of their first collaborative work,



From *The Great Invisible*, about Victorian poet Isabelle Eberhardt, who moved to North Africa, converted to Islam, and disguised herself as a man.

Courtesy filmmaker

**Talking Trash**, an hour-long documentary that looks at garbage in a cultural context: How did Americans' attitudes and values lead to the profusion of waste in this country? How are those values changing now that garbage has become such a problem? Using old sitcoms, commercials, and conversations with garbage historians and garbage haulers, the Schwerins will trace America's romance with disposability. Interviews with "garbage police," dedicated recyclers, and advertisers of ecologically sensitive products will reveal the business-oriented and ideological sides of trash reduction. *Talking Trash*: Nomad Productions, 619 South 2nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19147; tel./fax: (215) 627-4399.

Suburban youth, faced with futures of joblessness or minimum-wage slavery, understandably rebel, drop out, hang out, and listen to music characterized by palpable rage. In America, a large number of the children of the disenfranchised white middle class find their voice in heavy metal music. **Bodywork**, a 90-minute comic explora-

tion of this phenomenon, is currently in pre-production and promises an intense look at what makes this country tick. *Bodywork: 1 Love Movies*, 19 W. 73rd St. #4A, New York, NY 10023; (212) 787-4056.

A sci-fi film which blends elements of horror, comedy, politics, and erotica in time-honored fifties style, **The Age of Insects** begins with an instructional quote from Robert Graves and ends with a grasshopper poised to dominate the world. The protagonist is Dr. Richard Benedict, an amalgam of doctors Goebbels, Leary, and Hellstrom, who intends to save the world from human corruption by unleashing the psychological resources of insects. His prime instrument is his lab assistant Sehra, a humble immigrant whom Benedict envisions as She-Mantis Supreme. Shot on super 8, *The Age of Insects* is a forboding, dark, and comic vision of the world's destiny. *The Age of Insects*: Eric Marano, Box 1042, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011; (212) 674-6260; fax: (212) 935-1829.

Using the black-and-white photography and haunting environs of *noir* and German Expressionism, **All the Love in the World** is a unique portrait of a man driven to violence in his search for a pure love. Eddy Wluicki falls in love with the idea of being in love, travelling through the depths of despair before finally meeting the woman of his dreams. Tormented by the violence in the world, Eddy strikes back in anger, leaving a trail of innocent victims whom he blames for the death of "love." Entirely shot in Chicago, this 90-minute film paints a lyrical portrait of love and murder at the end of this century. *All the Love in the World*: Nadjafil Productions, 1411 W. Arthur, Chicago, IL 60626; (312) 743-7436.

An omnibus film portrait of the demise of Times Square, **Late City Final** makes use of interviews, oral histories, and archival footage to chronicle the deterioration of one of our culture's outstanding icons. Due for massive redevelopment and homogenization, the historic theater district is on the verge of eradication. Old buildings have already been supplanted throughout the area, and evictions on "The Deuce" are paving the way for extensive demolition. *Late City Final*: Fred Riedel, Koninck USA, 176 E. 3rd St. #4G, New York, NY 10009; tel./fax: (212) 674-6860.

Taking an amusing look at European and American stereotypes of each other, **Innocents Abroad** focuses on 40 American tourists visiting 10 European cities in two weeks on Escorted Motorcoach Tours. This documentary portrays a diverse group experiencing Europe for the first time, struggling with and laughing about cultural differences, and examines the implications of high speed, high traffic twentieth-century tourism. Veteran documentarian Les Blank casts his camera on this rag-tag bunch and comes up with an effective combination of high comedy and acute social observation. *Innocents Abroad*: Laura Schultz, Flower Films, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530; (510) 525-0942; fax: (510) 525-1204.

## Domestic

**AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE VIDEO FESTIVAL.** November, CA. Ind. video artists featured in variety of programs in fest's 12th yr. Curated by group of ind. video professionals & activists. Last yr 80 hrs of video & TV programs shown. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Ken Wlaschin, AFI Video Festival, 2021 North Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7771; fax: (213) 462-4049.

**ASPEN FILMFEST.** Sept 23-27, CO. About 30 films shown annually in invitational showcase for ind. shorts, docs & features. Entry fee: \$25. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Amy Egertson, Aspen Filmfest, Box 8910, Aspen, CO 81612; (303) 925-6882; fax: (303) 925-9570.

**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL,** Oct. 9-25, IL. Now in 28th yr, fest is one of largest US int'l competitive fests, programming films & videos produced in preceding 2 yrs. Cats: feature (Midwest premieres); doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography); short subject (drama, humor/satire, films for children, experimental); student (comedy, drama, experimental, nonfiction, animation); ind. video (short, educational, animation, feature, experimental, music video); ind. video doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography); mixed film/video (short, doc, educational, animation, feature, experimental); educational (performing/visual arts, natural sciences/math, social sciences, humanities, recreation/sports); animation; TV prod.; TV commercial. Awards: Gold Hugo (Grand Prix); Silver Hugo; Gold & Silver Plaques; Certificates of Merit; Getz World Peace Award. Each yr features over 125 films from several countries, tributes, retros & special programs. Entry fees: \$25-\$225. Deadline: June 30. Contact: entry coordinator, Chicago Int'l Film Festival, 415 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610-9990; (312) 644-3400; fax: (312) 644-0784.

**HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL,** Dec., HI. "When Strangers Meet" is perennial theme of non-competitive fest showcasing works from or about Asian Pacific region that promote understanding among peoples of Asia, Pacific & US. Free public screenings & crowds of over 50,000 annually attend. Fest held at 10 locations on Oahu & travels to neighbor islands Molokai, Maui, Kauai & Big Island. About 50-80 films shown: features, docs & shorts accepted. Format: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: July 1. Contact: Hawaii Int'l Film Festival, 1777 East-West Rd, Honolulu, HI 96848; (808) 944-7666; fax: (808) 949-5578.

**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL.** Oct. 1-8, CA. Now celebrating 15th edition, noncompetitive fest showcases new US ind. work & is venue for int'l films. Last yr 100 films shown in 60 separate programs, many W. Coast premieres avail. for distribution. Features, shorts & docs accepted; program also incl. 3-day Videofest. Audiences over 22,000. Fest interested in works demonstrating commitment & dealing w/ social issues. Entry fee: \$12 (\$20 int'l). Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: June 30. Contact: Mark Fishkin/Zoe Elton, Mill Valley Film Festival, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Ave., Ste. 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-6256; fax: (415) 383-8606.

**NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL,** Sept. 25-Oct. 11, NY. As major int'l fest & uniquely NY film event, 30 yr-old prestigious noncompetitive fest programs approx. 25 film programs from around world, primarily narrative features but also docs & experimental films of all

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & video-makers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

lengths. Shorts programmed w/ features. Audiences usually sell out in advance & incl. major NY film critics & distributors. Press conferences after each screening w/ directors, producers & actors. Must be NY premieres. Fest also planning week-long video sidebar at new Walter Reade Theatre; all lengths considered, no film-to-video transfers or video installations eligible. Presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & held at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. No entry fee; filmmakers responsible for round-trip shipping fees for preview. Deadline: early July. Contact: Marian Masone, New York Film Festival, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**VISIONS OF US,** Sept., CA. 8th annual competition for nonprofessional videomakers, sponsored by Sony & American Film Institute. Works should express vision of the world. Cats: fiction, nonfiction, experimental, music video; special Young People's Merit Award (under 17 yrs). Grand Prize awarded; all prizes are equip. awards provided by Sony. Grand Prize, 1st Place & Young People Merit Award winners flown to awards ceremony in LA. Last yr 800 entries received. Judges: Corin Nemece, Tim Allen, Carole King, Francis Ford Coppola, Ron Underwood, Mario Van Peebles, Kathleen Kennedy, Levar Burton, Shelley Duvall. Entries should preferably be under 20 min. Format: 1/2", Beta, 8mm video. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Visions of US, Box 200, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 856-7743; fax: (213) 467-4578.

## Foreign

**FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM,** Nov. 27-Dec. 5, Italy. As one of longest-running all-doc film fests in world, Festival dei Popoli celebrates 32nd edition in 1992. Program incl. Competition Section & sections on Film & Art, Film & History, Cinema on Cinema, New Trends, Ethno-Anthropology, Current Events & Screen of Sounds. Fest also presents retros & special sections. This yr's retro on Europe during Cold War & special section dedicated to Indians of Latin America. Fest

accepts docs completed after Sept. 1st of preceding yr which cover social, political & anthropological issues. Awards: Best Doc (lire 20,000,000); Best Research (lire 10,000,000); Best Ethnographic Doc. (GianPaoli award); Best Doc. nominated by Student Jury (Silver Award from Ministry of Education). Award money paid to directors after awarded film or video formally deposited in fest archive. Fest also retains some free use non-theatrical rights for college & univ. exhibition. Entrants pay round-trip shipping for preselection; for selected prints, entrants pay shipping to Italy; fest covers customs expenses & return shipping costs. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Contact: Mario Simondi, secretary general, Festival dei Popoli, Via dei Castellani 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: 055 294 353; fax: 055 213 698.

**FIFARC INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF FILM ON ARCHITECTURE, CITY PLANNING, AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT,** Dec. 3-6, France. 5th edition of biennial competitive fest, which began in 1981, will be held in December in Bordeaux. In previous edition, over 300 entries from 37 countries participated in competition. Fest themes are architecture, city planning, urban environment, heritage & design. Themes can encompass wide range of films & videos, incl. social issue docs which deal w/ urban experience; fest looks for entries that permit "a greater knowledge of the architectures of different cities & of those who conceive them, propose a reflection on the civilization of the city & bring concrete solutions to the problems they pose." All styles & topics considered for competition, out of competition & audio-visual forum presenting films "a la carte." Cats incl. features, shorts, TV magazines & student work. Int'l jury awards following prizes: Grand Prix of the Biennial Festival & 1st & 2nd honorable nominations; Ministry for Housing Prize; Regional Council Grand Prix; City of Bordeaux Grand Prix; Critics' Prize; Viewers Prize; special UNESCO Prize; Local Community Prize; add'l awards totalling over FF200,000. Fest program also incl. exhibitions, meetings & conferences. In case of films selected for competition, fest may assume cost of subtitling or dubbing. Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; for preselection submit 1/2" or 3/4".

FIVF will work w/ FIFARC in preselection of entries for 1992 edition, collecting tapes for pre-screening & preparing consolidated shipment of selected films & tapes to fest. For further info & appl. forms, send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Entry fee: \$25 AIVF members, \$30 non-members. Fest format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview will be on 3/4" or 1/2" cassette only. Deadline: June 15. In France: FIFARC Biennale Internationale du Film D'Architecture, D'Urbanisme et D'Environnement Urbain de Bordeaux, 17, Quai de la Monnaie, 33800 Bordeaux, France; tel: 33 56 94 79 05; fax: 33 56 91 48 04.

**TAMTAM VIDEO INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION,** Nov. 16-22, Italy. Now in 3rd edition, int'l competition for television programs, held in Rome, intended to "gather & analyze wide range of television & video programs made in South of world or focusing on social reality in region." Cats incl. doc, docudrama, fiction, video art, music clip, animation. Cash awards presented. TV broadcasting companies, ind. producers & NGOs invited to participate. Programs should be under 45 min. & broadcast or produced after Jan. 1, 1990. Format: 3/4". Deadline: May 31. Contact: Tam Tam Video.

Giornalismo Televisivo e Terzo Mondo, Via Palermo, 36, 00184 Rome, Italy; tel: 06 4746246; fax: 06 486419.

**TURIN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL/ CINEMA GIOVANI**, Nov. 13-21, Italy. Now in 10th yr, fest is excellent competitive showcase for new, young ind. directors & filmmaking trends; held in Torino in northern Italy's Piedmont region. US liaison Michael Solomon preselects entries for several sections. Int'l Competition for Feature Films; 35mm & 16mm Italian premieres by young filmmakers completed after Aug. 1, 1991. Short Film Competition: films up to 30 min. Noncompetitive section: medium-length films (30-60 min.), important premieres & works by jury members. Turin Space: films, videos & super 8 films by directors born or living in Piedmont region. Retro: American Ind. Cinema of the '60s. Special Events: short retros, screenings of up & coming directors' works, reviews of significant moments in ind. filmmaking. Awards: Best feature film (lire 20,000,000); 3 prizes for short films (lire 3,000,000, lire 2,000,000, lire 1,500,000). Add'l awards may incl. special jury awards & special mentions. Local & foreign audiences approach 35,000 w/22 nations represented & over 165 journalists accredited to fest. About 300 films shown during event. Entry fee: \$10, payable to Cross Productions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm only; preview on 3/4" or 1/2". Deadline: July 15. Contact: Michael Solomon, Cross Prods, 625 Broadway, 12th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-0557; fax: (212) 777-0738.

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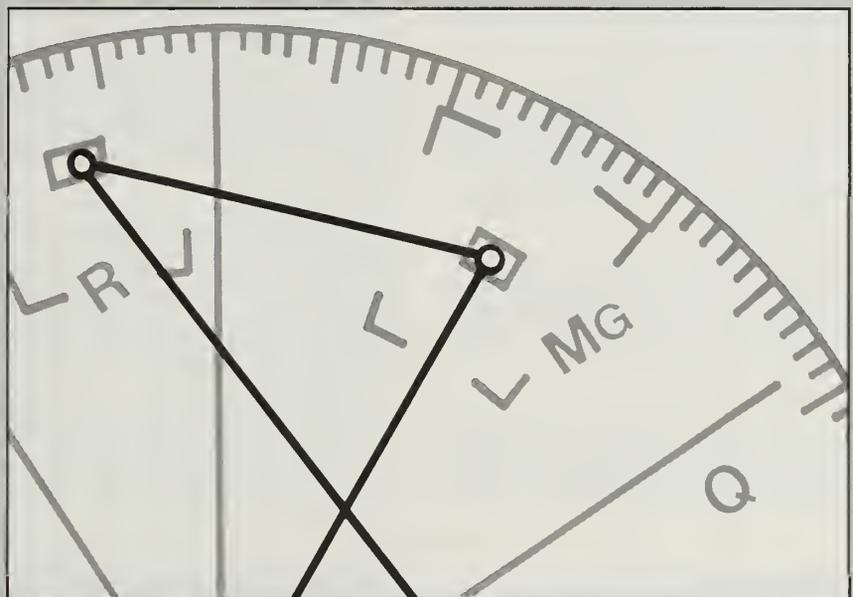
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**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS,** feature-length pkg of live-action shorts, seeks films for compilations. For submission form, write: Andalusian Pictures, 1081 Camino del Rio So. #119, San Diego, CA 92108; (800) 925-CINE; fax: (619) 497-0811.

**SEEKING NEW WORKS** for educational & health care markets. Fanlight Productions distributes films/videos in areas of health, sociology, psychology, etc. Brenda Shanley. Fanlight Prods, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130; (617) 524-0980.

**SEEKING NEW WORKS** for educational mkts. Educational Productions distributes videos in early childhood, special & parent education. Linda Freeman. Educational Prods, 7412 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy, Portland, OR 97225; (800) 950-4949.

**VARIED DIRECTIONS INT'L.** distributors of socially important, award-winning programs on child abuse, health & women's issues, seeks select films/videos. Call Joyce at (800) 888-5236 or write: 69 Elm Street, Camden, ME 04843; fax: (207) 236-4512.

## Preproduction

**CHECK IT OUT BEFORE YOU SEND IT IN.** Script editor w/ 15 yrs experience & numerous broadcast & nonbroadcast credits will evaluate, edit &/or rework your script quickly & at a fair price. Call (201) 333-3914.

## Freelancers

**FILM SCORING:** Original music by professional composer. Sensitive & creative. Acoustic & synthesized

**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250-character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date (e.g. May 8 for the July issue). Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

music. Computer/MIDI studio. Russ Lossing Productions (914) 968-8476.

**BETACAM SP** field prod. w/ Sony broadcast BVW 400 camcorder, best & most light-sensitive camera avail. Complete sound, lighting, grip equip. incl. stabilizer for steadicam-style shots. Exp. DP & crew. Color correction & full editing avail. (212) 529-1254.

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**I AM A CAMERA.** From hi-8 to Betacam, from super 8 to 35mm. Call Ronny (718) 720-9383.

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**WF RISD MFA '92 GRAPHICS/VIDEO MJR** seeks F/T employment/internship in doc./ethno. film & video prod. design/crew pos. Skills: edit, photog., Mac, fluent French & Rus., exp. travel. Avail. 6/92. Nadia (401) 351-5738.

**BETACAM SP.** \$450/day. Cameraman w/ Ikegami HL79E/BVW-35SP looking for interesting short-term projects. Corp., industrial, doc. Incl. tripod, mics, monitor, lighting. 5-passenger van incl. 3/4" Sony off-line

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**ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY** avail. at affordable rates to organize prod. co.; handle film financing; prepare/negotiate options & various agreements; copyright disputes or registration. Free phone consult. Gary Kauffman, Esq. (212) 721-1621.

**AWARD-WINNING VIDEOGRAPHER & producer/director** avail. for freelance projects (many PBS & indust. credits). High-quality Sony camera & sound pkg. (incl. wireless). Special rates for interesting projects. Julie Gustafson (212) 966-9578.

**JACK OF ALL TRADES** for rent. I'm a prod. coordinator w/ doc. & industrial exp., a sound editor & recordist w/ feature credits, a DP w/ an Eclair NPR pkg. Familiar w/ numerous off-line systems. No, I don't do windows. Reel avail. Doug (212) 982-9609.

**BETACAM SP:** Award-winning cameraman w/ BVW 507 field pkg. will work w/in your budget. Equip. pkg. incl. Vinten tripod, DP kit, wide-angle lens, Neuman KMR81, Lavs & Toyota 4-Runner. BVP7/BVW 35 pkg avail. & full postprod. services. Hal (201) 662-7526.

**THE SCREENPLAY DOCTOR & the Movie Mechanic—** Prof. story analysts/postprod. specialists will analyze your screenplay or treatment & evaluate your film-in-progress. Major studio & ind. background. Reasonable rates. (212) 219-9224.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** avail. for dramatic 16 or 35mm prods of any length. Credits incl. *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

**GERMAN CINEMATOGRAPHER,** award-winning, avail. in New York area. Owner of 16mm Aaton pkg. Will travel. Wolfgang Held (212) 620-0029.

**PARIS IS BURNING-DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY.** Documentaries, features, commercials, rock videos. Ask for my reel—I think you will like what you see. Owner of super 16-capable Aaton pkg. Paul (212) 475-1947.

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**TOP FLIGHT COMPOSER** w/ extensive prod. experience, fluent in all styles, avail. for dramatic, doc., or commercial projects. Well-equipped Midi Studio. Call/write for demo. Phil Rubin Music, 157 W. 57th St. #500, New York, NY 10019; (212) 956-0800.

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**RICHARD CHISOLM,** director of photography, film & video. Int'l doc. work. 11-yr experience, reel avail. (410) 467-2997.

## Postproduction

**BRODSKY & TREADWAY:** Super 8 & regular 8mm film-to-video transfers, scene-by-scene to 1" & Betacam.

# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

In person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### Equipment Insurance

Equipment coverage for all of your equipment worldwide whether owned or leased.

### Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### Nationwide Car Rentals

AIVF membership provides discounts on car rentals from major national rental agencies.

### Mastercard Plan

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### Facets Multimedia Video Rentals

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## Join AIVF Today

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers—providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

### Individual membership

10 issues of *The Independent*  
Access to all plans and discounts  
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Join AIVF today and get a one-year subscription to *The Independent*.

### Rates

(Canada, Mexico, US, PR)

- \$25/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$45/individual
- \$75/library
- \$100/nonprofit organization
- \$150/business & industry
- Add \$18 for 1st class mailing

### Foreign Rates

(Outside North America)

- \$40/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$60/individual
- \$90/library
- \$115/nonprofit organization
- \$165/business & industry
- Add \$55 for foreign air mail

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**DESKTOP VIDEO SYSTEMS:** Complete hi-8/S-VHS pkgs under \$5,000. Incl. Sony hi-8 w/ time code, editing VCR, computer & frame-accurate decision list controller sys. Install, train, support. Cliff (212) 285-1463; Box 668, Peck Slip Sta., New York, NY 10272.

**OFF-LINE 3/4"**, \$15/hr; w/ editor, \$25/hr. Sony sys. 5800, 5850, RM440, mixer, black generator. Very comfortable, private room, great for clients. 24-hr access. 30th & 8th. Betacam SP to 3/4" window burns. Prod. services avail. Tom (212) 279-7003.

**SONY HI-8 TO HI-8 EDITING.** \$12/hr w/out editor. \$22/hr w/ editor. Call Burt Barr (212) 226-7188.

**CHEAP, PLEASANT S-VHS:** State-of-art sys.: Panasonic 7750, 7650 w/on-board TBCs, hi-fi & normal audio. Cuts-only for off-line or simple finished prods. Nice suite in Flatiron Dist. 24-hr access. \$495 for 5-day wk. Also avail. w/ editor. Manhattan Media (212) 645-4321.

**3/4" OFF-LINE EDIT.** Sony 5850 recorder & player, Sony RM 440 controller, Laird 7000 EX CG & audio mixer at \$35/hr or \$20 w/out editor. Also avail.: duplications, sys. transfers & prod. facilities at reasonable price. Call Nadia (212) 980-0157.

**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape. Precision guaranteed. \$30/400' (1000') camera roll. Student rates & pick up/delivery avail. Call NY's only Downtown Dailies Service (212) 431-9289.

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**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND** film services. All S-8 prod., postprod., editing, sync sound, mix, multitrack, single & double sys. sound editing, transfers, stills, striping, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of independents. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**FILM VIDEO ARTS** May workshops: audio postprod. (5/2); intro. to 3/4" editing (5/9); 3D animation on Amiga (5/18); video prod. (5/30); prod. management for film & TV (5/12). Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9371.

**FILM VIDEO ONE: OREGON STATEWIDE CONFERENCE**, May 22 & 23, Medford, OR. Conference will offer 14 workshops in prod., incl. writing, directing, lighting, editing & postprod. Taught by prod. professionals from L.A., Seattle & Oregon. Call: Peggy Joyce (503) 779-0808.

**MANAGING THE ISSUES**, May 15, Grand Rapids, MI. Seminars on legal, human resource, liability, tax & financial management issues for nonprofit orgs. Fee: \$35, MACAA members; \$45, nonmembers. Contact: Michigan League for Human Services, Lansing; (517) 487-5436.

**MEDIA LITERACY CONFERENCE** on Media Education, May 13-15, Univ. of Guelph (outside Toronto). Contact: Constructing Culture, #500-10 Saint Mary St., Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1P9; (416) 923-7271.

**SUPPORT CENTER OF NEW YORK** offers workshop in developing grant proposals, May 13, 9:30-4:30. Proposal components covered incl. intro., problems/needs statement, objectives, methods, budget, future funding & evaluation. Location: T.B.A. Fee: based on your org's budget. Contact: Support Center of New York, 56 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10036; (212) 302-6940.

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP SUMMER INSTITUTE** offers 31 one-wk workshops, June 29-Aug. 7. Electronic media & film workshops: small format video; digital animation & audio using Amiga computers; filmmaking w/ found footage & doc. planning. Grad. or undergrad. credit through SUNY College at Brockport. Contact: Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**FIFTEEN MINUTES**: Washington, DC nightclub seeks videos & films for screening & performance events. Fees to artists. Accepts 16mm, VHS, S-VHS & hi-8. Also looking for ambient video. Contact: Eric Gravley, 15 Minutes, 1030 15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 667-5643.

**FILMFORUM**, S. California's only venue for presentation of ind. video & film, seeks work (super 8, 8mm, 16mm, or VHS preview tapes) by area artists for *First Sight Scene* series. Send work, film description, bio. & SASE to: First Sight Scene, Filmforum, Box 26A31, Los Angeles, CA 90026; (213) 663-9568.

**L.A. FREEWAVES**, regional video festival, seeks experimental tapes of narrative, doc., art, or animation genres by CA artists & videomakers to be considered for PBS show, video drive-in, regional cablecasts & exhibitions at 44 participating media centers in September-October. Honoraria for selected works. No entry fee. Deadline: May 6. Send 3/4" or VHS, resumé & return postage to: Freewaves, c/o EZTV, 8547 Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90069. For more info., call: Anne Bray, (213) 687-8583.

**LESBIANS IN THE CREATIVE ARTS** invites submissions for An Evening with LICA: Video Cabaret. Presentation group seeks original video works for public shows & possible distribution. Artists must own all

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., May 8 for the July issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

rights. Contact: Video, Suite 443, 496A Hudson St., New York, NY 10014.

**MINORITY TELEVISION PROJECT**, Bay Area's multicultural public TV station, seeks programming from ind. dirs, producers & writers that have persons of color in creative positions &/or present crosscultural perspectives. Children, entertainment, animation, feature, health, education & lifestyles sought. Send 3/4" or 1/2" tapes to: Roger Gordon, 71 Stevenson St., Suite 1900, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 882-5566.

**MNTV III, KCTA-TV** series, seeks works by MN independents. All lengths & genres. Fee: \$100/1st 5 min. & \$20/min. after that. Deadline: May 29. Submit appl. & 3/4", VHS, 16mm or S-8 tape to: MNTV, KCTA-TV, 172 E. 4th St., St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 229-1419.

**NEW TELEVISION, WGBH/WNET** joint series, seeks works under 30 min. using medium &/or new tech. in artistic ways. Range of genres accepted. Fee: \$110/min. Send 3/4" or 1/2" finished or in-progress works to: Susan Dowling, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777; or Lois Bianchi, WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-3137.

**NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION** solicits proposals from ind. producers for docs on issues of public concern. Contact: Newton Television Foundation, 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168.

**REEL TIME**, monthly film series at PS 122, seeks new experimental, docs & narrative films. Super 8 & 16mm only. Contact: Jim Browne, c/o Reel Time, PS 122, 150 1st Ave., New York, NY 10009; (212) 477-5288.

**USED EQUIPMENT WANTED** by small univ. film & video program. Univ. of Toledo Dept. of Theatre, Film & Dance needs your tax deductible 16mm, audio, video equip. donation. Contact: Bob Arnold, Dept. of Theatre, Film & Dance, Univ. of Toledo, Toledo, OH 43606; (419) 537-2202

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**CENTRAL AMERICAN NEWS PROJECT** seeks indivs to produce news & public affairs pieces for new monthly public access show on Central America. People who can contribute footage of Central America, or who know of people in Central America w/ film or video equip. also encouraged. Contact: Carol Yourman, 362 Washington St., Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 492-8719.

**COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO** seeks full-time faculty beg. Fall '92 for film/video prod. & history/aesthetics. Rapid growth opp. into advanced undergrad. & grad. thesis-advising responsibilities. Req.: MFA or equiv. exp. Also, full-time faculty sought for grad & undergrad. producing & screenwriting. Req.: extensive teaching exp.; producer w/ screenwriting background preferred. Excellent benefits. Women & minorities encouraged to apply. Send vita, prod. reel & statement of teaching philosophy by May 15 to: (for film/video prod.) Doreen Bartoni, acting co-chairperson; (for producing & screenwriting) Chap Freeman, acting co-chairperson, Dept. of Film & Video, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR MEDIA ARTS CENTER** sought by Film in the Cities. Administer center for film/video/photography/audio education, exhibition, prod. access, regrants. Req.: previous background in media arts w/ emphasis on education, degree or commensurate exp. in media arts. Salary: \$40-\$48,000. Send resumé to: Search Committee, FITC, 2388 Univ. Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER** accepting appls for residency program. Program offers artists opp. to study techniques of video image processing during 5-day intensive residency & to create new works. Equip. incl. imaging sys., Amiga computers & Toaster. Deadline: July 15. Send resumé; project description, explaining how video imaging is integrated into work; 3/4" or VHS tapes of recent work w/ SASE to: Experimental Television Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS INTERNSHIPS**, 6-mo. minimum, 15 hrs/wk. Incl. free media classes, equip./facility access. Exp. helpful but not required. Minorities strongly encouraged to apply. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**FILM AND VIDEO CENTER DIRECTOR** sought by the South Carolina Arts Commission. Base salary: \$28,118. Serves as fundraiser, grants writer, administrator for Media Arts Center. B.A. degree in film or video & four yrs exp. in media arts field. Position open until filled. Send resumé or write for position description to: Media Center Position, SC Arts Commission, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

**VIDEO BUDDIES**: Scribe Video Center, Philadelphia seeks exp. mediamakers to volunteer to work w/ emerging videomakers to help them complete projects. If you have expertise in fundraising, scripting, prod. &/or editing, call Margie Strosser (215) 735-3785.

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP** accepts appls for artist-in-residence program at its media center. Term beg. Sept. 1992. Program offers 1-mo. residences to allow artists time & facilities to pursue work. \$1,000 honorarium. Open to artists living in US. Media artists invited to submit proposals for new audio work. Deadline: June 12. Send sample of work-in-progress (on audio cassette, Amiga disk, 8mm, VHS or 3/4"), SASE, description of sample, resumé & description of residency project to: Artist-In-Residence Program, Media Center at Visual Studies, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607.

**WYES-TV, NEW ORLEANS** seeks ind. producer for nat'l series *Parenting Your Aging Parents*. Producer w/ track record of projects on elderly & also has nat'l prod. exp preferred. Send resumé & tape to: Beth Utterback, WYES TV, 916 Navarre Ave., New Orleans, LA 70124; (504) 486-5511.

## Resources ■ Funds

**AMERICAN DIALOGUE GRANTS PROGRAM** to assist arts communities to explore in own communities issues raised in *An American Dialogue*. Indivs & orgs eligible for awards, \$250-\$5,000. Deadline: July 1. To request copy of report or for appl., call: Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Washington DC, (202) 833-2787.

**CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND** seeks proposals from minority producers to develop & produce programs for national public TV broadcast. Submissions for Multicultural Programming Solicitation must have minority participation in four of six positions: exec. prod., prod., dir., writer, subject & talent. All subjects eligible. Deadline: June 4, 1992. For appl., contact: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, (202) 879-9600.

**FILM ARTS FOUNDATION** Grants Program awards 20 grants totalling \$54,000 to ind. film- & videomakers in 10-county San Francisco Bay Area. Cats: short personal works, project development & completion/distribution. For guidelines & appl., contact: FAF, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

**FILMMAKERS' COOPERATIVE** offers grants to subsidize rentals of experimental, avant-garde film & video. Max. 50% subsidies for teachers, librarians, other indivs. Contact: Filmmakers' Cooperative, 175 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 889-3820.

**FULBRIGHT PROGRAM WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM** offers '93-'94 fellowships in film & television to pursue professional work in UK; open to US citizens w/ 3-yrs professional exp. in any area of film & TV. Candidates encouraged to correspond w/ British coun-

terparts; purely academic proposals not appropriate. Grant: £12,000 for 6-9 mo. period. Deadline: Aug. 1. Send project statement & VHS tape of recent work w/ SASE. For appl., call: (202) 686-7878. Questions, contact: Dr. Karen Adams, (202) 686-6245 or Ms. Betsy Lewis, (202) 686-6242.

**F/V/A GRANTS AVAILABLE** for film exhibition by non-profit orgs in NY. Matching funds of max. \$300/ film rentals; max. \$200/ speaking engagement by filmmakers, prods, dirs, technicians, scholars. Priority given to orgs showing ind./rarely avail. films. Deadlines: June 15 & Aug. 15. Contact: Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**ITVS' INDEPENDENT FICTION FOR TV:** Independent Television Service (ITVS), funder of ind. prods for public TV, invites proposals for original, low-budget dramas, up to 60 min. in length, for series created to challenge conventions of TV. Deadline: July 15. For guidelines, contact: ITVS, Box 75455, St. Paul, MN 55175; (612) 225-9035

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**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES** Fellowships support 6 to 12 months of fulltime work on humanities projects through Fellowships for University Teachers & Fellowships for College Teachers & Independent Scholars. Max. stipend: \$30,000. Deadline: June 1. Summer stipends for 2 mos; academic faculty nominated by institution, unaffiliated indivs apply directly. Stipend: \$4,000 plus travel allowance. Deadline:

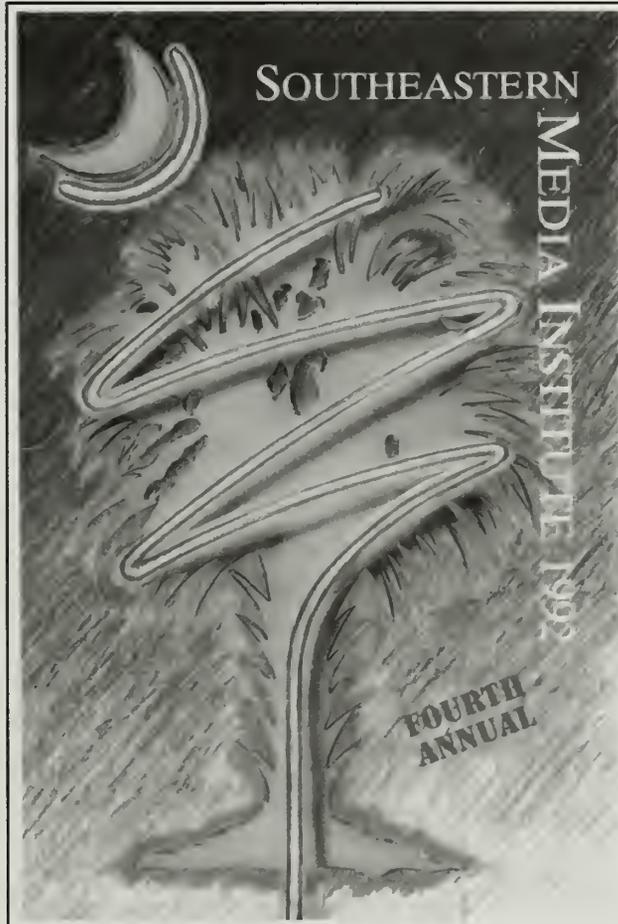
Oct. 1, 1992. For info. & appls, write: Division of Fellowships & Seminars, Rm 316, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0466.

**NATIONAL LATINO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER** seeks proposals for dramas written by Latinas—original programs or adaptations of literature. Proposals must incl. treatment for 60-120 min. drama suitable for broadcast on nat'l public TV; appl.; resumé; personnel bios & 3/4" or VHS sample. Industrials, videos & other nonbroadcast cats ineligible. Deadline: May 7. For appl. & further info., contact: NLCC, (213) 669-3450.

**NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS,** Artist-in-Residence Programs awards matching grants to create residency opps in NY ed., cultural & community orgs. For info. on Technical Assistance Programs (appls reviewed yr-round) & Residency Implementation Grant & Development Opp. Grant (appls reviewed 3 times annually), contact: Greg McCaslin, Artists in Residence, NYFA, 5 Beekman St., Ste 600, New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

**SOUTHWEST ALTERNATE MEDIA PROJECT** offers independent production fund. Provides up to \$5,000 to media artists in TX, OK, AK, MI, KS, NE, PR & US Virgin Islands for doc., fiction & experimental film & video in all prod. stages. Deadline: May 15. For appl., contact: (713) 522-8592.

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## GRANT GRATITUDE

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) has received a \$30,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation program of assistance to Media Arts Centers. The grant will be used for the publication of *The Apparatus Guide to No-Budget Filmmaking* as well as for the promotion and distribution of the third edition of *The AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals* and *Doing It Yourself: Self-Distribution for Independent Film and Video Makers*. The grant will also be used to embark on the Next Generation Project, a concentrated effort to design and disseminate information that addresses the needs of beginning and emerging film- and videomakers in the US.

## MEMBERABILIA

Kudos to the recipients of the CPB Fund for Multicultural Programming: Paul Espinoza, *Tierra*; Stanley Nelson, *Methadone: Curse or Cure*; J.T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park, *G.I. Brides*; Raquel Ortiz, *The Nacionalistas*; Juanita Anderson, *Of Land and Liberty*; Louis Massiah, *The W.E.B. Dubois Film Project*; Moctesuma Esparza, *A Bowl of Beings*; Michelle Parkerson and Ada Gay Griffin, *The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*; Hector Galan, *Songs of the Homeland*; and Loni Ding, *Ancestors in America*.

At the College Television Program Awards ceremony Hunter College student Cynthia Meyers won the award for best documentary for her video *Workers without a Voice*. Marta Bautis, also at Hunter College, received the First Work Award for best student first production at the San Antonio Cine Festival for her video *Home Is Struggle*. The Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships winners include AIVF members Jan Andrews, Rose Bond, Kathryn Brew, John Cambell, Charles Davis, Jeanne C. Finley, Elise Irene Fried, Philip Malory Jones, Karen Kennedy, Alexis Krasilovsky, Edward T. Lewis, Emily Y-Ming Liu, Sava Malachowski, David Mayne, Laurie Meeker, and Joanna Priestly. Frameline's 1991 Completion Fund awarded Pam Walton, Mark Christopher, and Barbara Hammer grants for their respective projects *Gay Youth*, *The Dead Boys' Club*, and *Making Her Visible*. George Kuchar, Marlon T. Riggs, and Steina and Woody Vasulka were honored by the American Film Institute at the 1992 Maya Deren Awards for Independent Film and Video Artists. Dorna Pentec, Joseph Murphy, and Callie Warner received individual artist grants from the North Carolina Arts Council.

Renee Kayon's short film *Nowhereville* recently won an award at the Aspen Film Festival. *Poem in Action*, by Henry Ferrini, won second prize in documentary at the Baltimore Independent Film and Video Makers Competition. Lynn Hershman's *Seeing Is Believing* won the

second prize at the International Video Festival at Vigo. Barry Strongin's *Gray Rocks* netted the grand prize at the Sony/A.F.I. Visions of U.S. Video Competition. Congratulations to all!

## BETTER THAN BULK

Through rain, sleet, and snow, the postal service delivers—provided mail is postmarked at the first, second, or third class rate. But if your mail is fourth class or nonprofit bulk—the post office's lowest priority—you may have a longer wait. This is the way *The Independent* is sent to all US members, unless an extra \$18 is paid for first class delivery (\$55 for foreign air mail). As many AIVF members know, bulk mail can be delivered late or sometimes not at all, which creates problems for producers seeking timely information.

*The Independent* reaches its first stop, the New York General Post Office, by no later than the 25th of each month. This means that by June 25, for example, the July issue is out of AIVF's hands.

If your copy of *The Independent* arrives sporadically or not at all, and you've made sure we have your correct name and address in our computer database, please consider upgrading your mailing service to first class delivery. Call AIVF at (212) 473-3400 to find out what the pro-rated cost of your upgrade would be.

## GOT A LINE ON DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES?

A newly formed AIVF committee is collecting information on new technologies—fiber optics, digital image processing, etc.—in order to investigate how these might affect independent production and distribution. If you are interested in participating in our research efforts, or have access to R&D labs or personnel within those departments, contact Patricia Thomson at (212) 473-3400 or James Schamus at (212) 229-1046.

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## HAVE YOU BEEN AUDITED LATELY?

Have you gone through an IRS audit in the past couple of years? If you have, we want to hear your story. We want to run an article in *The Independent* on what's happened to film/videomakers in the wake of the recent tax changes. Your anonymity will be assured. Contact: Susan Lee, film tax accountant and writer, 2 Charlton St. New York, NY 10014; (212) 633-1516.

## UPCOMING SEMINARS

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### LEGAL AFFAIRS

Thursday, June 18

Time & place to be announced

Attorney Wilder Knight will address a variety of legal issues of concern to producers. Watch your mailbox for details.

## Calling all arts advocates Our phone tree needs you!

AIVF is setting up a phone tree that can be activated during arts funding and other political battles. We need your help—especially members from rural and sparsely populated states. To sign on, write: AIVF Advocacy Committee, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012.



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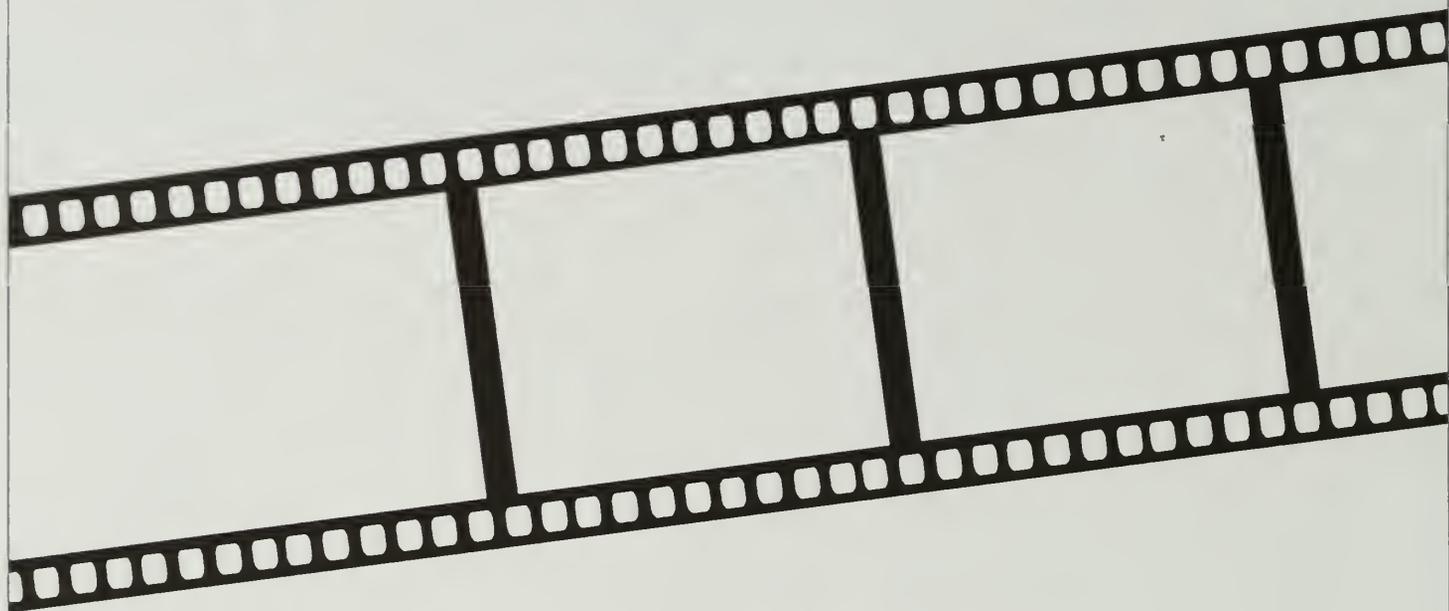
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## The AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals

by Kathryn Bowser

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COVER: Video correspondent Skip Blumberg, hi-8 camera in hand, provides an up-close look at Gov. Bill Clinton celebrating his victory in the Illinois primary for the PBS series *The 90's*. In this issue, James McBride looks at the format's increasing popularity and what producers are saying about its strengths and drawbacks. Photo courtesy *The 90's*

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## ALL ABOUT OSCAR

### Documentarians Confront Academy over Nomination Process

Over the past few years, feature-length documentary films overlooked by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' nominating committee have received more press than those that received the nod. Two years ago, reportage focused on Michael Moore's *Roger & Me* not receiving an Academy nomination and, before that, Errol Morris' *The Thin Blue Line*. This year the list has grown to include Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper's *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning*, Michael Apted's *35 Up*, Alek Keshishian's *Truth or Dare*, and Morris' *A Brief History of Time*. Critic Gene Siskel recently chastised the Academy on the nationally syndicated program *Siskel and Ebert* for "its continuing failure to nominate the best documentaries year after year." And some of the slighted documentarians and their concerned colleagues have called for a re-examination of a process they say precludes the nomination of a whole new wave of critically acclaimed, financially successful documentaries.

This year's five nominees were: Vince Di Persio

and William Guttentag's *Death on the Job*, Hava Kohav Beller's *The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler within Germany, 1933-1944*, Lawrence Hott and Diane Garey's *Wild by Law* (about conservationists), Susan and Alan Raymond's *Doing Time: Life Inside the Big House*, and Allie Light and Irving Saraf's *In the Shadow of the Stars* (this year's Oscar winner, about San Francisco Opera choristers).

In the past, "It's been one film a year that's been ignored, all of which achieved some notoriety," complains Apted. "This year, they've ignored every single film that's achieved any popularity whatsoever." Apted, along with 11 other prominent documentarians, signed an open letter to the Academy board of governors criticizing current nominating procedures. The February 24 letter raises a long-standing grievance: that an insufficient number of documentarians' peers are on the selection committee. The Academy currently has 13 branches (for actors, directors, etc.), the members of which nominate their counterparts for awards. Costume designers, for example "look at the craft of their own," explains Apted. "They nominate who they think has done the best work of that year." But documentary filmmakers have no membership branch, so the documentary selection committee comprises volunteers from the general membership.

Two years ago, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers' (AIVF) board of directors wrote a letter to the Academy, "suggesting reforms so that the process could be fairer," says AIVF board president and documentary filmmaker Robert Richter. "At least the initial nominating process could be by the peers, so it would be a more professional selection." But, laments Richter, "nothing was done." This year's letter-writers also want the selection committee's membership to change. Active documentary directors, producers, and writers alone should "select the nominees," they argue, "just as all nominees in the other craft categories are selected by members of those crafts."

Restricting the committee membership to documentary filmmakers would significantly change its make-up. Mitch Block, president of the documentary distribution company Direct Cinema and a member of the Academy's documentary screening committee for over a decade, claims that "over half" the participants are documentary filmmakers. Nevertheless, an all-peer committee would displace actors, for example, who now help select

Nazi-resister Hans-Bernd van Haefen on trial in a Nazi court in Hava Kahav Beller's Academy Award-nominated documentary *The Restless Conscience*.

Courtesy Direct Cinema



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# **AIVF**

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documentaries. It could even bring some of the field's young documentarians on board as nominators—if they're Academy members. "I think the Academy is a very conservative organization," opines George Zaloom, coproducer of *Hearts of Darkness* and a signatory to the protest letter, who believes that the committee has a generational bias. (At 41, Block is reportedly the committee's youngest member.) "I mean, I'm 30 years old," Zaloom says. "A lot of people in that committee are...It's a very different group. We need to shake things up."

The neglected films represent "a major shift in the documentary field," noted critic Amy Taubin in the *Village Voice*—a shift that helps draw crowds. "Films like *Truth or Dare* or *Roger & Me* have a tone of irony—they play with the medium a little bit," Jennie Livingston told the *Los Angeles Times*. Livingston charges the Academy nomination committee with a "sort of tonal bias toward documentaries that are earnest in character."

In a written response to *The Independent*, Bob Werden, a representative of the Academy's public relations counsel and a member of this year's documentary committee, refutes the assertion that nominators are biased against box-office or critical hits. Werden dismisses the criticism as "stupid," citing last year's critically celebrated Oscar-winner, Barbara Kopple's *American Dream*. Block accuses the excluded filmmakers of "sour grapes" and publicity mongering. "If well-funded movies with publicists and resources don't get nominated, what they do to sell more videocassettes...is they make controversy."

The excluded documentaries' newfound audience and unusual monetary success (\$15-million for *Truth or Dare*, \$3.7-million for *Paris Is Burning*) have certainly contributed to the newsworthiness of their complaints. And Zaloom doesn't deny "there's a kind of back end advantage. Press is good, whatever you can get."

At this writing, none of the filmmakers interviewed, including Academy member Apted, had heard from the Academy. But Apted says he "would be astonished if they don't respond to us, if they don't want to sit down with us and discuss this." But Block predicts that little will change. "The Academy will probably respond the way it historically responds: 'We run our awards the way we choose to, and if you'd like to create another award competition, feel free.'" Like the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and the Directors Guild, he says, the Academy "is a club. Why shouldn't these clubs run their thing the way they want to run them?"

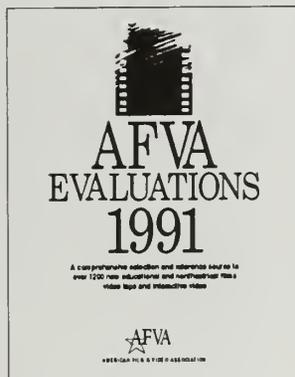
ELLEN LEVY

Research assistance provided by Holly Metz.

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ization has given greater resonance to the parting words of former National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chair John Frohnmayer, who told the National Press Club in March, "If the National Endowment for the Arts gets picked off, public broadcasting is next...." Having successfully laid siege to the NEA, conservative senators on Capitol Hill have tied up federal support for the CPB by blocking its reauthorization bill (S. 1504). The legislation, which would provide \$1.1-billion to CPB for 1994-96, compared to \$746-million authorized for 1991-93, was passed by the House last November.

Independent producers' toe-hold in public television is particularly vulnerable, as the debate over CPB's alleged "liberal bias" has brought the Independent Television Service (ITVS) under attack. ITVS, which provides \$6-million annually to develop, produce, and package works by independent producers for public television, was created by Congress with bipartisan support in 1988 to "address the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities."

On March 3 the Senate voted to override the hold placed on CPB reauthorization last November by seven anonymous Senators. The 87-7 vote provided for 30 hours of debate on whether to vote on the bill and flushed out those Republican Senators apparently responsible for the hold: Trent Lott (MS), Robert Dole (KS), Malcolm Wallop (WY), Jesse Helms (NC), Larry Craid (ID), Robert Smith (NH), and Don Nickles (OK). During the debate, Republicans fiercely criticized public broadcasting and repeatedly interrupted discussion with mention of President Bush's crime bill, which they threatened to attach as an amendment to S.1504—a tactic that effectively derailed the legislation. At press time, the Senate expected to resume consideration of S. 1504 in mid-May.

During the debate and in the weeks that followed the bill's withdrawal, several conservative Senators signaled their intention to offer amendments reflecting their dissatisfaction with public broadcasting. Senator Helms' proposal to abolish ITVS is among the principal amendments that are likely to be raised when the bill comes back to the floor, according to Andrea Smith, a lobbyist with People for the American Way (PAW). Helms is also expected to put forth an amendment restricting program content. Although Helms' office has not yet released specific language, PAW anticipates that these content restrictions will mimic those on indecency, blasphemy, and depictions of sexual activity that Helms included in his amendment to the NEA's appropriation for FY 1990.

In addition, Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) is expected to propose an amendment to restrict "indecent" programming to a midnight-to-6 a.m. safe harbor or ban it altogether. Other possible amendments include changing CPB's reauthorization period to one year from the current three; reviving the fairness doctrine (a cornerstone principle of broadcasting regulation, drafted into legislation in 1987 and subsequently vetoed by Presi-

dent Reagan, which requires broadcast licensees to provide balanced coverage of controversial issues of public importance); and requiring public disclosure of executive salaries.

Adding fuel to the fire, the reauthorization debate coincided with the release of two studies critical of public broadcasting and its perceived liberal bias. The first of these, by social scientists S. Robert Lichter and Linda S. Lichter of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, was made public the day debate on reauthorization resumed. In 1986 the Lichters, known for their book *The Media Elite*, were invited by CPB board member and conservative *National Review* editor Richard Brookhiser to conduct a study of the political content of documentaries on public television. The plan was subsequently blocked by members of Congress and public television officials.

The Lichter's current study concludes that there was a liberal tilt in the 225 documentaries aired by PBS in the year ending March 1988. Their study has been sharply criticized, however, for its narrow focus on documentaries, which constitute only a small segment of public television's news and public affairs programming, and for its methodology. Rather than evaluate the overall leanings of the programs, Lichters' researchers divided them into segments—"every time the camera changed"—and attempted to classify the views expressed in each. They found liberal bias in the fact that "92 percent of statements on gender relations affirmed that society discriminates against women," as well as in the finding that, in *Eyes on the Prize*, "racial discrimination was described as a condition of American society 50 times without a single dissenting opinion."

In February, the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank based in Washington, released a 12-page report that is also critical of the perceived liberal bias in public broadcasting. The paper was authored by Heritage Foundation resident scholar Laurence Jarvik, who argues that public broadcasting should be privatized since, he contends, cable stations have demonstrated the commercial viability of such programming.

In an apparent effort to create controversy around ITVS, Jarvik referred to the "ITVS scandal" in a recent exchange of letters with ITVS board of directors chair Lawrence Sapadin in the public broadcasting trade magazine *Current*. He charged ITVS executive director John Schott with mismanagement, citing delays in funding and granting.

In fact, ITVS did not receive start-up monies until June 1990 and was not fully funded until June 1991. Since then it has granted a first round of awards to 25 programs, the first of which will be ready for broadcast this fall. In defense of public TV's program balance, PBS executive vice president Robert Ottenhoff cites a 1990 survey by Statistical Research Inc. that found that 79 percent of Americans find PBS programming neither liberal nor conservative.

After the Senate tabled the CPB legislation,

public broadcasting representatives and conservative senators' staff held a series of meetings to resolve some issues before the reauthorization bill reaches the floor. On March 16, according to *Current*, representatives of CPB, the lobbying organization America's Public Television Stations (APTS), National Public Radio (NPR), and PBS met with staff from the offices of Senators Dole, Helms, Ted Stevens (R-AK), and others to negotiate an agreement that would bring S. 1504 to the floor minus the crime bill. In the weeks before Congress adjourned for April recess, the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcast Producers, People for the American Way, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, NPR, and APTS rallied support from media arts activists and public broadcasting supporters to counter the assault.

A compromise was reportedly near when the Senate recessed on April 10. It appeared that a principal Republican concern—accountability—might be addressed with a compromise amendment requiring CPB to report public TV and radio production investments. "That's not something that isn't already available," an unnamed public TV official told the telecommunications trade paper *Communications Daily*, "although currently from multiple sources." Such a compromise, it is hoped, could avert an amendment to extend the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to CPB and ITVS.

The application of FOIA to CPB could put CPB on a "slippery slope" toward government regulation, according to Gerald Hogan, vice president of government relations at CPB. Currently, as a private nonprofit corporation, CPB is not required to provide information to the public, although it routinely does, affirms Hogan. In fact, CPB often fills requests it would not be required to meet under FOIA, which allows exemptions when, for example, requests are too vague or require undue effort. The extension of FOIA to CPB would open up the corporation to, among other things, lawsuits and attendant expenses from any information-seeker—even when FOIA would not require CPB to supply the information.

Republicans are also said to have pressed for restrictions that would provide CPB's board with greater control to insure "balance" in programming. They claim this is justified by the original Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which enjoined "strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of a controversial nature." Ironically, public TV officials resist such meddling by citing the Public Broadcasting Act as well, which bans political interference.

Public TV representatives are reportedly optimistic about passage of the reauthorization bill because of the strong audience support for public programming, measured in viewer memberships. As NPR president Douglas Bennet told the *Public Broadcasting Report*, "This is no National Endowment for the Arts."

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## AUTOMATIC COPYRIGHTS OR WRONGS

Legislation that would automatically extend the copyright term on US registered works, including film and video, was approved by the House and Senate in different versions last November and is now awaiting passage in its final version. Known as the Copyright Amendments Act of 1991, the bill would automatically extend the copyright on works registered between 1964 and 1977 to 75-years from the current 28, thereby limiting their passage into the public domain. (Public domain materials are those which, lacking copyright protection, are available for use without a license.) Originally passed without dissension, the bill has recently awakened debate among filmmakers, historians, archivists, and stock footage librarians.

Unlike most other countries, US copyright law prior to 1978 prescribed a limited, 28-year copyright term, which the copyright holder could renew by application only in the twenty-eighth year. In 1978, the law was revised to provide for a single 75-year term for most media works. For works registered prior to 1978, though, copyright owners still have to submit renewal applications. Many do not, and, thus, hundreds of thousands of films have entered the public domain. The proposed legislation will not affect works copyrighted before 1964—whose copyright renewal or lapse will already have occurred by the time the legislation is passed—or those registered after the 1978 revision.

Although this situation has been a boon both for stock footage libraries that provide access to public domain materials and for some makers, many creators, not understanding the peculiar formalities required by US law, have unintentionally lost their copyrights by failure to renew. Once a work enters the public domain, it can never be recopyrighted.

According to Eric Schwartz, policy planning advisor to the Register of Copyrights, the Copyright Amendments Act was designed to "weigh the balance between authors who inadvertently lose out [by failure to renew their copyrights] and those who distribute otherwise abandoned works." Schwartz, noting that only the US and Philippines require registration as a condition for copyright, contends that foreign authors and filmmakers have been disproportionately affected by the situation because they are confused by the formalities required by US law.

"As someone who made films in the sixties, some of which are not copyrighted, I have mixed feelings [about the bill]," says Eric Breitbart, a producer and former member of Third World Newsreel. "On the one hand, it would limit my access to certain kinds of archival material. On the other, it would offer some protection to people like myself." Schwartz adds that for copyright holders, "It's a question of being out of business.... You have one hit song in your career, you

fail to file a renewal, you've lost income for yourself, your spouse, and whoever else for 47 years."

According to Larry Urbanski, chair of a group called Film and Image Preservationists against Automatic Copyright Renewal (FAIPAACR), the legislation "will have devastating effects on businesses, filmmakers, historians, and archives." Urbanski, whose company Moviecraft, in Orland Park, Illinois, sells stock footage largely derived from public domain works, argues that there will no longer be an economic incentive to collect and preserve films dating from 1964-77 if the flow of work into public domain is halted. Members of FAIPAACR include J. Fred MacDonald, author, historian and collector; John Allen, preservationist and operator of a large stock footage library; Ken Burns, filmmaker; Larry A. Viskochil, a curator at the Chicago Historical Society; Jan Christopher Horak, senior film curator at George Eastman House; and Sharon Pucker Rivo, executive director of the National Center for Jewish Film.

"The fact is there's a whole body of films which, if we didn't buy and make use of them, would be lost," argues Patrick Montgomery, president of Archive Films footage library in New York City. According to Montgomery, it can sometimes be very difficult to find a copyright holder to grant permission to abandoned footage. "The reason film libraries are in business is because there are lots of films out there whose owners no longer care. What happens with archives is that films with no commercial viability—certain kinds of business and industrial films—that would ordinarily be lost, are preserved and made available to the public. This legislation means that for films within a 10 year period, if no one has an economic interest in them and no one's going to renew the copyright, then no one can use them."

Compromise language to address both sides' concerns has been suggested, and the likelihood is that one version or another will pass this year, affecting independents and others who rely on copyright protection and the continual flow of works into public domain.

RICK PRELINGER

*Rick Prelinger owns an archive of advertising, educational, and industrial films, and frequently consults with independent mediamakers and archives.*

## SHOOTING FROM THE HIP

As feature film budgets continue to spiral upwards to unprecedented levels, some entertainment companies are contemplating methods by which to reduce costs and encourage more independent-minded film projects. Home Box Office's relatively new division HBO Independent Productions (HIP) is one of the more unusual attempts by the industry to nurture modestly-bud-



Nicole Holofcener (left) in *Angry*, a short about a young woman who wants to break up with her mother. Holofcener's dark comedy script *Everything Matters* was optioned by HBO Independent Productions.

Courtesy Good Machine

ally positive ones," says Holofcener, who is now residing in Los Angeles. "It's really too early to tell how much control I'm going to have. The responses they had to the first draft were amazingly intelligent. They were saying, 'Maybe the couple shouldn't end up together at the end.'"

Holofcener's screenplay was originally optioned by Mark Lipson, producer of *The Thin Blue Line*, and Lipson met with considerable rejection before receiv-

ged motion pictures.

HIP's objective is to develop and produce movies in a budget range of \$4- to 5-million, dramatically lower than current Hollywood standards. Primarily in the market for comedy scripts, the Los Angeles-based production division has a first-look cofinancing deal with the Samuel Goldwyn Company for theatrical release of its productions. In addition to features, the division is actively involved in supplying comedy and "comedy/reality" programming to the networks. The HIP series *Roc* is entering its second season on the Fox network, and another, *Down the Shore*, is scheduled for future Fox airing. HIP has also produced two pilots for Fox (*Martin Lawrence* and *The Ben Stiller Show*) and ABC (*True Blue* and *The Road Warriors*).

Although no feature films have been released by HIP, early reports from filmmakers associated with the division are refreshingly upbeat and encouraging to those leery of subjecting cherished and highly personal screenplays to the humiliation of studio development. Independent producer Nicole Holofcener, a Columbia film school graduate whose five-minute short, *Angry*, premiered this past January at the Sundance Film Festival, recently had her dark comedy script *Everything Matters* optioned by HIP. What makes the occasion so unique is that HIP also wants Holofcener to direct.

"My overall impressions so far have been re-

ceiving a positive response from HIP creative affairs director, Alexandria Booke. Lipson is now attached as producer to Holofcener's film and is satisfied with the way things have been progressing. "I like working with them a great deal. *Everything Matters* was a very difficult project to set up. It's not the thing that's going to fit the bill of a lot of high-concept needs. It's a character-driven piece."

At HIP, Lipson was thankful to avoid the common script conference "name game" where executives suggest names of actors whose salaries fall within proper budget constrictions or meet the needs of certain foreign territories for sales consideration. "To date, their input in terms of development has not been about 'Oh, let's make this character more sympathetic.' It's not about the whitewash of all characters and all plot points that is a kind of standard development thing at more of a studio level."

Chris Albrecht is president of HIP and is joined by vice president of creative affairs Lowell Mate and vice president of business affairs Russell Schwartz. The HIP submission policy is in keeping with most studios and networks: All projects must go through agents or attorneys, and unsolicited scripts will not be accepted.

MAX ALVAREZ

*Max Alvarez is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.*

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In February a new distributor, Sony Pictures Classics (SPC) was born. Designed to be autonomous of its parent, Sony Pictures Entertainment, SPC will concentrate on US distribution of low-budget US independent titles and foreign films. Its top three executives, copresidents Marcie Bloom, Michael Barker, and Tom Bernard, served as vice presidents at Orion Classics until Orion Pictures Corporation filed for bankruptcy on December 11, 1991. "We'll be able to do what we [at Orion] have done in the past, but bigger and better and with more stability," reports Bloom. "We have an enormous amount of autonomy [at SPC]."

At Orion Classics, Bloom and her two partners successfully distributed such films as *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Ran*, and *Babette's Feast*, as well as the low-budget independent film *Slacker*. Bloom points out that although Orion Pictures went bankrupt, "Orion Classics was in profit for its entire nine-and-a-half years."

Eventually, SPC hopes to release eight to 10 pictures annually. Because SPC falls under the umbrella of Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE), as do Columbia Tri-Star Home Video and Columbia Pictures, Bloom expects there to be "a conduit of talent flowing," that is, all areas of SPE are eager to share information about talent and potential projects. Bloom and her colleagues "will continue to be willing and able to commit to the distribution of projects on the basis of the script, director, and key casting crew," adds Bloom. SPC will offer "negative pickup" in such cases, meaning that it will agree to pay the producer a certain amount for distribution rights upon delivery of the completed and cut negative.

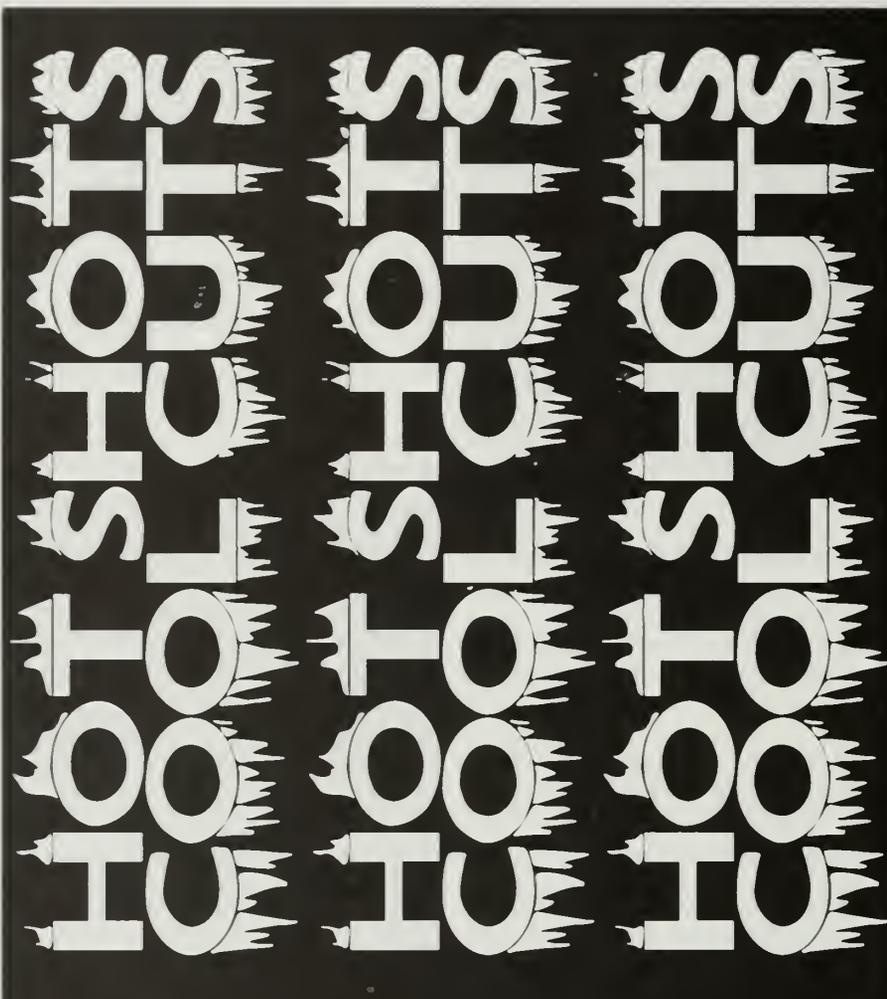
In the few months since it has come into existence, SPC has distributed *Howards End*, the \$8-million cinematic adaptation of the E.M. Forster novel by Merchant Ivory Productions, and acquired all media rights in the US and English-speaking Canada to Régis Wargnier's *Indochine*, with Catherine Deneuve, and *Olivier, Olivier*, the latest feature from Agnieszka Holland, the director of *Europa, Europa*. *Olivier, Olivier* is scheduled to open in France in September. Several directors from Orion Classics (Wim Wenders, Stephen Frears, Louis Malle) have also expressed interest in working with SPC.

Although these medium-budget films might seem to overshadow small-budget independents' chances, Bloom assures that SPC is firmly "committed to American independents and English-language films" and that the budget of a film has no relevance to acquisition decisions. She points out that *Slacker* was a \$23,000 film. "Everything depends on the picture," she says.

For further information, contact: Marcie Bloom, Sony Pictures Classics, 711 5th Ave., New York, New York 10022; (212) 702-6666.

WENDY LEAVENS

Wendy Leavens is a writer living in New York.



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## QUEER MEDIA DATABASE TO GET WORD OUT

In an effort to facilitate access to lesbian and gay video and film, the San Francisco-based, non-profit media arts organization Frameline has set to work building a queer media database—the Frameline Lesbian and Gay Filmography/Data-base Project. Coordinated by Jenni Olson, the project seeks to centralize bibliographic information and distribution contacts about work available for rental. The project plans to publish its first guide next summer, though the long-term goal of the database is to provide computer modem access to users at universities and libraries. The initial version will comprise “major or significant works,” says Olson, with annual updates to address new works and older material not covered in the first edition. According to Frameline executive director Tom DiMaria, “It seems like a simple concept but it could revolutionize the way lesbian and gay media is accessed.”

“Up to now, the kind of information [the database] will offer has been extremely privileged information,” explains Sande Zeig, codirector of programming for New York’s NewFestival. “Each year, gay and lesbian film festivals print out their source lists, but it’s only been available to a small group of programmers around the world who ask for it. Now, that material will be available to everyone.”

Currently there are few signposts for those seeking queer media productions. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) publishes *Gay and Lesbian Films on Campus*, a 30-page xeroxed directory of films and distribution information, “but it’s really very limited,” says Olson. Frameline will incorporate NGLTF’s data to make the filmography a more thorough and widely distributed resource. In addition to a printed catalog of annotated listings (describing the nature and amount of queer content) and a distributors

index, the database will include a number of valuable appendices. The gay/lesbian film festival appendix will offer contacts and deadline dates worldwide for film- and videomakers. For people looking to exhibit and promote works, there will be an introductory essay on how to produce a festival of any length and size. And for curators, a film/videomaker index will indicate gay and lesbian directors who distribute their own work. Finally, a bibliography will provide further resources for critical analysis and historical context for queer representations.

In order to cover all North American lesbian and gay production, Frameline is working in collaboration with Paul Lee, the programmer of the Toronto and Ottawa gay and lesbian film festivals, and Anne Golden, co-programmer of the Montreal Gay and Lesbian International Festival of Film and Video, who will organize a Canadian database. This information will be cross-referenced, given that many producers have separate distributors in the US and in Canada. Frameline will distribute the published data with NGLTF, drawing on both groups’ extensive national lists to get the word out to media and art centers, campus groups, and “all different levels of exhibition,” says Olson, who hopes to distribute the database free, contingent upon receiving funding.

The material in the filmography will be broken down into numerous categories, including work by and about gays and lesbians, that by gays and lesbians about sexually non-specific topics, AIDS media, and historical material not necessarily produced by queers, that will function as a guide for programmers. DiMaria confirms, “Our hope is to offer programmers the largest menu possible from which they can select material of interest to any particular audience.” For a preview of the lesbian section of filmography, an excerpt will be published in the Spring, 1992 issue of *Matrices*, a lesbian/feminist research and resource network newsletter.

Though Sony Picture Classics seems geared towards bigger-budget speciality films such as *Howards End*, the new distributor promises to maintain a firm commitment to US independents.

Courtesy Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.

Although Frameline recently received news that their annual San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival will not be funded by the National Endowment for the Arts for the first time since 1988, the database project will not be affected. The filmography has secured grants from the Morgan Pinney Trust, the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program at the University of Minnesota, and the Stanley Confield Fund, among others. The project promises to be an invaluable resource for researching, programming, exhibiting, and promoting lesbian and gay media. And it’s high time for tangible circulation of this information. As DiMaria points out, “It can’t stay an oral history forever.”

For further information, contact Jenni Olson at Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-5245; fax: (415) 861-1404.

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

*Catherine Saalfeld is a writer and film/videomaker. Her most recent video, coproduced with Melanie Nelson, is Bird in the Hand.*

## RICHARD PROTOVIN: 1945-1991

Richard Protovin, an animator, painter, and film professor, died of AIDS-related illnesses on December 6, 1991 at his mother’s home in Florida. Protovin was associate professor at New York University from 1979 to 1988 where he founded and headed the prestigious animation program at the university’s Tisch School of the Arts.

A native of the Bronx, New York, Protovin’s career as an animator spanned 20 years. His films have been screened at the Museum of Modern Art, Cannes, Venice, Tokyo, and Moscow. His paintings and drawings have been in solo exhibitions at the Flannagan Gallery, the Animator’s Gallery, and Raimundo Gallery in New York, and the Griffith Gallery in Miami. His work has also been shown at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida, and the Museum of Art and Science in Daytona.

On March 15 a benefit animation screening and animation artwork auction for the newly established Richard Protovin Memorial Animation Scholarship Fund was held at the Tribeca Film Center in New York.

For more information on the fund, contact: Mary Schmidt-Campbell, New York University, 721 Broadway, 12th fl., New York, NY 10003.

## POW(D)ER CONDITIONS EXCELLENT

### The Sundance Film Festival

PATRICIA THOMSON

When Steven Soderbergh arrived at the Sundance Film Festival in 1989 clutching a wet print of *sex, lies, and videotape* for its first public showing, he was a complete unknown. By the time he left, his fortune had dramatically changed. Soderbergh won the Dramatic Competition Audience Award, garnered a rave review in *Variety*, and came away with a Rolodex full of contacts and all the major distributors paying court. The all-important buzz generated at Sundance, held in January in Park City, Utah, propelled *sex, lies, and videotape* to Cannes, where it won the top prize, and on to a \$24-million gross at the box office.



Fresh from a successful run at Sundance, Allison Anders' *Gas, Food, and Lodging* went on to Berlin, where it was the first low-budget independent feature in the prestigious Competition in over a decade.

Courtesy IRS Releasing

If Sundance marked a turning point for Soderbergh, so too did the stunning performance of *sex, lies, and videotape* transform the festival. By all accounts, after 1989 Sundance became a much more intense, miss-at-your-own-risk vortex of deal making, publicity, and contact building for anyone involved in the independent side of the film business.

"See you in Park City," says the producer played by Tim Robbins in *The Player*, Robert Altman's new lampoon of Hollywood. Indeed, the growing presence of Hollywood players is key to Sundance's transformation. Lured by the phe-

nominal gross of *sex, lies, and videotape*, and the price inflation of the film after it won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, "[Hollywood] began to see Sundance as a potential pond to fish in easily for new talent," says producer Jim Stark, who brought three films this year: Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*, Alexandre Rockwell's *In the Soup*, and Gregg Araki's *The Living End*. "The Hollywood people are here in droves—agents, potential producers, studios, talent scouts," says Stark. They in turn attract another group, "people who feel this is a good place to network and make contacts to take the next step up in their career or try to find a job in the Los Angeles movie business. And there's a third group," Stark adds, "the press, which decided it wasn't a backwater, private, independent affair anymore, but a place where there was enough going on in terms of films, presence of stars, Hollywood names, so they could interview people, sell magazines, and make money."

Still outnumbering the stars, agents, and press, however, are active and aspiring filmmakers. For most, the goal is not a Hollywood contract, but getting their own independent productions off the ground. Many festival-goers this year were hustling film treatments, such as filmmakers Pola Rappaport, Mark Gasper, and one of Charles Burnett's producers, Thomas Byrnes. Joe Davis, a former reader for Orion, was shopping a script and "visiting people he never has time to see [at home] in LA." Karen Thomas, who described herself as "a scriptwriter with no connections and no idea of who to connect with," was typical of many Sundance attendees who came with hopes fortified by past success stories—in her case, two friends who brought a script the preceding year, met a producer at one of the festival's Breakfast Clubs, and eventually signed an option agreement as a result.

The core of the festival is the competition. Since over half the selected films do not have distributors lined up when they arrive in Park City, many filmmakers set out to use the festival as an opportunity to drum up interest. But even high profile directors whose films already have distributors attached find they can benefit from the exposure. Soderbergh was back this year with *Kafka*, along with Mira Nair (*Mississippi Masala*), Errol Morris (*A Brief History of Time*), Jim Jarmusch, Paul Schrader (*Light Sleeper*), and Les Blank (*Innocents Abroad*), among others. In Stark's view, a special screening at Sundance is still useful for a film like Jarmusch's *Night on*

Tom Kalin's *Swoon*, an account of the 1924 Leopold-Loeb murder case in Chicago, was one of a crop of gay-themed films prominent at Sundance.

Courtesy Fine Line Features

*Earth*, which already premiered at the New York Film Festival, has a distributor (Fine Line), and opened theatrically in Europe. "It's an opportunity for the distributor to connect with major national and regional film press in preparation for the May opening [in the US]." For smaller films like *The Living End* and *In the Soup*, Stark's primary purpose is "to obtain domestic distribution and begin to do some publicity in preparation for their eventual theatrical release. Sundance has become the perfect vehicle for us to connect with potential theatrical distributors and persons with ancillary rights in the US, and to some extent foreign buyers."

This year people flocked to Sundance in record numbers. When Robert Redford's Sundance Institute took over the festival in 1985 (formerly called the United States Film Festival), less than 16,000 people attended. By 1989, the year of *sex, lies, and videotape*, attendance had more than doubled to about 32,500. This year it jumped by another third to 41,500. Says competition director Alberto Garcia, "It's growing much more than anyone here had anticipated. We were predicting two years ago that we'd kind of maxed out. But obviously we're still growing. It's like the Blob."

Although business activity has also increased exponentially, it is difficult to calculate the number of deals that are a direct result of the festival. More often, conversations begun at Sundance in January might be concluded the next month at the Berlin Film Festival or at Cannes in May. Or the exposure at Sundance can result in positive word of mouth, additional festival invitations, favorable press notices, a foreign sales rep—all of which can lead to sales further down the road.

This year almost half of the films in Sundance's dramatic competition and a third of the documentaries had distributors lined up prior to the festival. Sometimes just getting into the competition helps nudge a deal forward, according to Garcia. "[Distributors] are all over my back the day after the deadline, wanting to know what's in the festival."

Festival staff traditionally track the competition films after they have gone through the Sundance-to-Europe cycle, calling filmmakers after Cannes. As this goes to press, it is still too early to tell if 1992's selections will have the same degree of success as last year's crop. "Most of the [dramatic competition] films got picked up in 1991," says Garcia, noting that was "an unusual year. A lot of films everyone thought would never get released did, and did extremely well." These



included *Paris Is Burning* (Prestige), *Slacker* (Orion Classics), *Poison* (Zeitgeist), *Straight Out of Brooklyn* (Samuel Goldwyn), and *American Dream* (Miramax).

As of late April, at least eight competition films have signed on with distributors since Sundance: Morris' *A Brief History of Time* (Triton Pictures), which split the documentary Grand Jury Prize with Camille Billop's *Finding Christa* and won the documentary division Filmmakers Trophy; Lucille Carra's *Inland Sea* (Films, Inc.); Christopher Munch's *The Hours and Times* (Good Machine); Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (Miramax); Alexander Cassini's *StarTime* (Northern Arts and, for home video, Fox/Lorber); Lech Kowalski's *Rock Soup* (First Run Features); Bill Plympton's *The Tune* (October Films); and Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg's *Waterdance* (Samuel Goldwyn), which took the Audience Award for best dramatic feature.

In addition, filmmaker Eileen Gregory is currently in negotiation with Tara Releasing for theatrical distribution of her documentary *Deep Blues*. Other film pick-ups still in the middle of negotiations are Britta Sjogren's *Jo-Jo at the Gate of Lions*; Anthony Drazan's *Zebrahead*, which won the Filmmakers Trophy in the dramatic division; *The Living End*; and *In the Soup*, which received the Grand Jury Prize for best dramatic feature. Numerous other filmmakers have gotten calls from distributors following Sundance, but no solid offers.

Sundance films that went on to receive invitations to Cannes were *Reservoir Dogs* and two shorts: *Through an Open Window*, by Eric Mendelson, and *The Room*, by Jeff Balsmeyer. A number also went on to Berlin: *A Brief History of*

*Time*; *Brother's Keeper*, by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky; *The Hours and Times*; *In Search of Our Fathers*, by Marco Williams; *The Living End*; *Swoon*, by Tom Kalin; and *Gas, Food, and Lodging*, by Allison Anders. *Gas, Food, and Lodging* is the first low-budget independent feature to be included in the prestigious Competition section in over a decade.

Even though Sundance has become increasingly attractive as a place to do business, its structure remains that of a festival, not a film market—nor do the festival organizers care to make it one. "A lot happens organically," says Garcia, "because the atmosphere of the festival is somewhat low key and informal, so people can slip away and talk without all the pressure and craziness." Unlike festivals with markets attached, or those like Toronto's Festival of Festivals, with 250-plus entries, the total number of feature-length films at Sundance is a manageable 75, with only 33 in the dramatic and documentary competitions combined (plus dozens of shorts). Many of these works are innovative in form and subject and are clearly labors of love, not cash cows; relatively few films at Sundance come across as Hollywood wannabes. Similarly, while the festival schedules some nuts-and-bolts seminars, like this year's excellent What's the Deal? Buying and Selling the Independent Film, the majority of panels deal with questions of aesthetics, ethics, and trends—from the current explosion of gay and lesbian cinema to the advisability of creating a definition of "black documentary."

Like the festival, Park City is small and quite manageable. A former silver mining town a half-hour's drive from Salt Lake City, the resort has few distractions beyond skiing and power shop-

ping. Complementary shuttle buses carry festival-goers from theater to theater and to the reception area, located above the bowling alley on Main Street, where people easily mix, comparing notes and trading business cards over beer. Hiking further up the steep slope—beyond the main theater, rebuilt in the late 1920s in the popular Egyptian Revival Style, the pricey shops, and the strands of Christmas lights—the buildings thin out, giving way to pines, rock outcroppings, and glistening snowdrifts. Rock music drifts from ski-bum cottages, town dogs trot by with apparent destinations, and the brisk air smells of snow and burning firewood. It feels more like camp than work.

Until week two. Dubbed by some festival staff the Attack of the Killer Bs, the second week, or Package B, includes the competition awards ceremony, which attracts distributors and Hollywood reps eager to cut to the chase. The energy level takes off as filmmakers and buyers begin their courting dance in earnest.

Although Sundance does not provide the same services as a market—there are no color-coded badges, for instance, nor advance lists of registered buyers and contact information—the festival does make an effort to bring filmmakers and buyers together. In addition to a hospitality suite, which acts as the central meeting place and hang-out, the festival offers Breakfast Clubs, afternoon receptions, and nightly parties. The invitational breakfast meetings range from unstructured gatherings, where people are left to mingle and make their own introductions, to arranged private meetings between a filmmaker and distributor. “We’ll act as a middleman to get two people together,” says Garcia, “and pass information to X that Y wants to meet them.” At the afternoon receptions as well, he notes, “reps from the festival are there to matchmake.”

But Sundance’s self-definition as a festival causes some filmmakers to arrive less prepared than they ultimately wish. Says Marlon Riggs, whose documentary *Color Adjustment: Blacks in Prime Time* already had distribution lined up with California Newsreel, “The informality creates some confusion. Is it a market or not? No one told us about bringing posters. Also, there were no advance materials like the Independent Feature Film Market—lists of buyers, and so on. As a result, it can be difficult to do business, if that’s what you’re looking for. In the second week, when filmmakers were pushing their press kits, I felt pressure that I should be doing something. The films that sold out were those that treated the festival like a market, using press materials, posters, etc.”

Such was the case with *Brother’s Keeper*, a feature-length verité documentary about the trial of a dairy farmer in upstate New York on charges of fratricide. Codirector Joe Berlinger was formerly the marketing director at Maysles Films, where partner Bruce Sinofsky worked as film editor until the two formed their own company last year. Having also been at the advertising

agency Ogilvy and Mather, Berlinger put what he knew about promotion to good use on *Brother’s Keeper*. All its screenings sold out in advance—two of them a week before the festival even started.

The film’s marketing campaign—perhaps the most ambitious and effective of all the films at Sundance this year—consisted of a three-part strategy. Prior to the festival, Berlinger sent mailings to key industry executives, agents, and press in New York and Los Angeles, following up with phone calls to 20 key people at distribution companies. Early contact with the Sundance press office also led to advance radio interviews and newspaper stories in Utah. “That helped sell tickets,” says Berlinger, who notes that generally, “It was frustrating getting press [as a documentary filmmaker]. The festival seemed more star and fiction-feature oriented. So my answer was to befriend the press desk.”

The second phase, at the festival itself, was “a networking orgy,” aided by slick press kits and give-aways: 300 buttons, which Berlinger distributed to “every volunteer” working the festival and registration desk, and 30 baseball hats. (After music group REM’s Michael Stipe appeared wearing a *Brother’s Keeper* hat, notes Berlinger, his supply was quickly snatched up.) In addition, “I got here early to put up posters in key locations,” taking care to ship them out in advance, he recalls, “but I chose not to slather stickers everywhere; the festival seemed too dignified.” The third part, following the festival, was “basic Sales 101 follow-up,” says Berlinger.

What were the results of this \$5,000 marketing campaign? (*Brother’s Keeper*’s production budget was \$375,000, which *American Playhouse* covered.) A sale to the UK’s Channel 4 was clinched as a direct result of Sundance, reports Berlinger. In addition, the film went to Berlin with an “incredibly positive review” in *Variety*, as well as two other mentions in the trade paper’s special Berlin issue. Because it won the documentary Audience Award at Sundance, the film was also



included in numerous festival wrap-ups. “All the positive press has a cumulative effect,” Berlinger believes. At Berlin, *Brother’s Keeper* sold to television in Germany (ARD), the Netherlands (NOS), and France (Le Sept), and signed on with foreign sales agent Jane Balfour. Subsequently at MIP, the international television market, there were sales to the Swedes, Finns, and Australians. In the US, several theatrical distributors have expressed interest.

Beyond the obvious benefits of publicity, distribution, and development possibilities, Sundance can also result in unanticipated contacts and pleasures. For director Tom Kalin, it was seeing his film *Swoon* projected for the first time. “It was thrilling,” says Kalin, a video artist whose first foray into film, photographed by Ellen Kuras, netted an award for excellence in cinematography, “the experience of being in a theater with a packed audience, versus 10 people watching a videotape.”

For Jon Geramus, whose company Strand Re-

Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's *Brother's Keeper* chronicles the conviction and trial of Delbert Ward, a dairy farmer in upstate New York who was accused of smothering his sick brother.

Courtesy Creative Thinking International

leasing acquired four films last year, there was the discovery of the young actress Fairuza Blak in *Gas, Food, and Lodging*, Anders' film about a single mother and her two teenage daughters living near a highway stop in the Southwest. Geramus was not only looking for pick-ups at Sundance but also production financing, so this was precisely the kind of contact he'll keep in mind for future film projects. "She was fantastic. If we have a hole [in a production] for someone who's 16 or 17, I'd love to meet her."

Anders, in turn, was delighted to run across Jean Pierre Gorin's *My Crazy Life*, an intriguing and controversial documentary which played out of competition but was given special recognition by the documentary competition jury. The film is about a Samoan street gang in Long Beach—"charming killers," as Gorin called them—that was 80 percent scripted in collaboration with the gang members. Since Anders' next project, tentatively called *La Loca*, is about female gang members in LA—"their love lives, their babies; romantic but not romanticized"—she asked Gorin if they could set up a screening of *My Crazy Life* for her girls "to give them confidence." Anders says, "They don't like most gang films. They'll go, 'Yeah, I saw *Boyz n the Hood*. That was fake. So was *New Jack City*.'" She continues, "I like that [*My Crazy Life*] didn't moralize; it didn't judge, which is what I'm trying not to do with mine."

The other attraction of Sundance, says Anders, is the great number of independent filmmakers who attend, giving her the chance to meet and trade stories with people who are fighting the same professional battles. "The place is filled with peers—not mentors," she says approvingly. Sundance is also distinguished by being "the coldest" festival, director Les Blank notes dryly. "It's the healthiest," quips *Swoon* associate producer James Schamus. And it's now one of the most prestigious. Schamus continues, "At Sundance is the top 10 percent of independent films in a given year. It's a great success just to get in the festival. Then the challenge is to find distribution."

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## WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU

### Protocol at Postproduction Studios

RICK FEIST

*This article is twelfth in a series written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. The previous chapters of this editing guide reviewed video recording formats, time code, off-line editing, switchers, digital video effects, titling methods, video painting systems, audio for video, audio processing, and film tape conversion.*



**When booking studio time, reserve all the equipment you'll need or it might not be available, leaving you short of a crucial piece of the studio puzzle.**

Courtesy Rick Feist

No article can fully prepare a producer for an undertaking as intuitive as working at a postproduction studio. But there are certain practical guidelines and rules of professional etiquette that it helps to know. These can allow your production to remain on track inside the editing suite and can help keep your business relations with the studio smooth as well.

Preparation before an edit is key. It keeps a project within budget. When your production organization fails, costs and tempers escalate to the detriment of your work. If you are an independent producer without a full production staff, there's a lot to do, so plan accordingly. This article discusses the use of a video facility at a major studio for professional projects. If you are using a nonprofit studio access program, such as Media Alliance's On-Line program or Standby, conditions and procedures are different, and there are significant limitations imposed.

Video studios come in a variety of sizes and standards, with a range of capabilities, quality, and prices. A large and expensive "full service" studio offers everything under one roof, including studio or location production, film-to-tape transfers, graphics, editing, and duplication. A major studio may appear vast and imposing, yet have difficulty editing with 3/4" U-matic tapes or bumping up 8mm or VHS tape for broadcast-stable editing. Smaller "houses" or "boutiques" usually specialize in one kind of service, with limited support equipment but more personalized attention.

Usually a studio rents its facilities and services by the hour. The lowest hourly rate may not provide the best deal. A small operation with a large discount may be fine—or may not. Does the price include an assistant or tape operator? You must also consider an edit suite's efficiency in performing the work required. One edit room may be better designed and engineered than another, or outfitted with a variety of support equipment that expedites the work. A more sophisticated edit controller may have significant time-saving capabilities. If there is complex layering to perform, a larger switcher or multiple channels of digital video effects can cut edit time by more than half, avoiding time-consuming lay-offs and generation loss.

Under certain conditions, an otherwise undistinguished piece of supporting equipment can shave hours off an edit session. Time-base-corrector (TBC) remotes provide the editor at the console with level controls (brightness, hue, saturation) for the videotape tape recorder (VTR) when there are no playback operators and the videotape machines are not situated directly in the edit room. A routing switcher patches cables electronically. A video source is selected by number and can be sent to any destination on the network (switcher crosspoints, dubbing machines, effects devices, etc.). Audio follow video allows frame-accurate computer control of audio fades and dissolves for complex soundtrack editing. A costlier brand of DVE may be necessary to preserve image quality or perform certain kinds of effects.

The capital cost of video equipment is a basic factor in the high price of studio time. Purchase costs must be amortized within a few years, as machinery is soon obsolete and must be replaced. Equipment maintenance is critical. Thousands of things can go wrong with these complex machines—and do, requiring highly skilled mainte-

nance engineers to keep them working. A lower-priced studio may be saving costs on maintenance. Machinery that breaks down constantly or adds technical quirks to your work will test your patience. Furthermore, working with malfunctioning equipment runs up more time on the money meter—not to mention the devastating effect of breaking concentration on the work.

Another reason for the high hourly costs of editing studios is the salaries of a large staff. Personnel includes receptionists, sales people, schedulers, tape librarians, shippers, client reps, maintenance engineers, editors, tape operators, colorists (transfer film-to-tape), graphic artists, character generator operators, and various management people who are usually vice presidents. In a bargain-price facility, one person may wear too many of these hats for a comfortable fit.

For the producer, knowing whom to contact and what to ask is vital to getting anything accomplished. Usually producers are assigned a client service representative, the nexus of their every wish, who will make labels, carry out shipping instructions, or order out for anything they want, from limos to pizza. Charges will be added to the bill. If there is no credit arrangement with the studio, you'll be asked to pay C.O.D. before you leave or take away a copy of your completed tape.

Studio rental is a major expense. You must shop around, knowing what you want before you order. A producer who cannot clearly articulate a project's technical requirements when booking is on the wrong course. The studio will feel that it's up to you. You can't expect a training course from studio sales people. Use the rate card as a menu. When booking, you should be ready with a list of specific questions about the equipment to be used in session.

Be honest with yourself about what you need and plan accordingly. A sudden craving for a page-turn in a cuts-only edit can trigger a technical and conceptual nightmare. You'll be haunted by the need to return to the page-turn motif for consistency's sake. If you vacillate indecisively over your formal conceptions in an expensive edit suite, you will pay for it.

The edit room is full of arcane boxes of blinking lights, but if you failed to book a given piece of equipment, you can be sure that it is not connected. If you do not know which devices you will need, you are in trouble. There are many standards and systems, and a single incompatible audio- or videotape can terminate your session. Nothing can replace thorough off-line preparation and planning for the most efficient use of the edit time.

### ■ Price Negotiations

When you call to book studio time, the salesperson will quote a price. Sometimes he or she will strike a deal or match another studio's bid. Other times the salesperson will demand the full price listed on the facility's rate card or even act completely disinterested in doing business. Studios survive by attracting larger, higher paying jobs. Rates are determined by the size of the order.

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Billing may be based on hourly charges for the edit suite, with additional charges for effects devices or extra VTRs. Fixed bids, or lump sums paid for the entire job, can be arranged for larger projects. Usually even fixed bids are limited to a certain number of hours to prevent the producer from wasting time with changes and additions. Sometimes a deal can be worked out that includes effects devices in the basic price. A night discount may also be available, but you may not have the full support operation of the daytime staff.

When negotiating with a salesperson, you must clearly define what you will need to do. The salesperson will tell you what kind of equipment the studio uses to accomplish a given task. You are far better off if you rely on a salesperson for information, not advice. If the salesperson cannot provide specific information relating to technical questions, a telephone conversation with an editor or technician may follow or the salesperson will call you back with an answer. Just remember, an answer can only be as specific as the question, and you should never expect studio personnel to be available for personal tutorials.

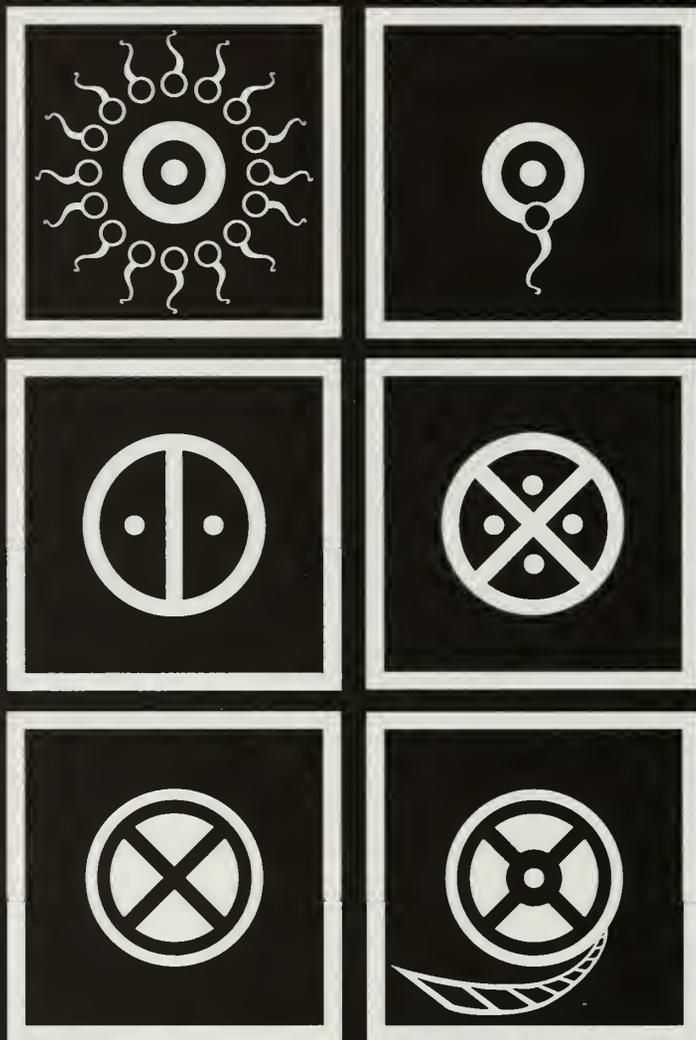
### ■ Scheduling

The array of options available in an edit suite varies from facility to facility. Few producers possess the arcane knowledge of all of the intricacies involved in the various pieces of equipment and how they function with each other. For each session, you must book with the scheduling department each individual piece of equipment needed. Just because something rents for an exorbitant price doesn't mean that it is awaiting your beck and call. Equipment not reserved will probably be in use in another edit suite.

Type out any work order, from chyron titles to dubbing instructions. If you forget to include a work order with a tape delivery, fax it to your contact at the studio. Verbal orders might get twisted in the rumor mill. Preparing a written order avoids misunderstandings and will serve you in case of a later dispute. It will also remind you of the details in your reservation.

More difficult is how to assess the amount of time to book. It is possible to put time on hold and firm up the booking at a later date. But if you constantly switch the time around, you will not be taken seriously. Don't wear out the patience of the scheduler, who may feel less obligated to take care of someone who has been playing games. Don't overbook. A studio will often bill for all the time you reserve, whether you use it or not. Many studios will charge full price for late cancella-

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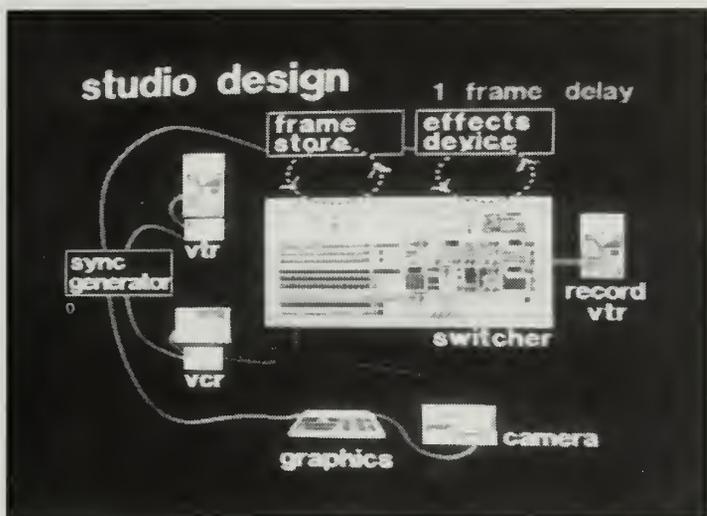
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tions, made less than 24 to 48 hours before the session. If you forget a tape and work must be halted, you will be charged for the time. Nor will the clock be stopped for your personal needs, such as moving a car.

Underbook, however, and you may be asked to leave when your time is up or be charged overtime penalties for the extra hours. You may book "bump" time, a buffer of an extra hour or so. Open-ended sessions do take place, most often for large projects or tight deadlines, but don't take them for granted. Studios frequently run into scheduling conflicts; usually the producer spending more money will be given precedence. A discount rate may lead to delays in the start of your edit if a higher paying job wishes to continue their session in your room.

### ■ The Editor

The editor operates the edit controller, the switcher, the effects devices, the sound mixing board, and the VTRs. An editing assistant (aka tape operator or playback person) often assumes the last two assignments. Everyone is aware that this time is your money. Producers often assume that the technical craft will be conducted immaculately by the editor, for they must rely on the editor's experienced advice in formatting and designing the master tape. Many videomakers also expect the editor's creative input to benefit the project.

But don't expect too much. The video editor is basically a harried air-traffic controller. Sharp turns and impulsive changes will impede your project's progress. Your own nervous energy or indecisiveness may undermine concentration on the work at hand. Disorganization or incomplete off-line preparation increases the pressure of on-line rates, but you will gain nothing by passing the buck to the editor, no matter how miserable you feel. You can expect suggestions on a cut or the timing of an effect, but it is not the editor's role to organize the concept or content of your work.

It is unwise to alienate a collaborator as important as the editor. Your adrenalin will allow you to keep working indefinitely, but the editor is human and must be fed every four hours or so. If you order food, include the editor. Generally the meal

will be charged to your account. Remember that eight hours is a normal working day; the intense concentration of editing induces fatigue in a marathon edit.

Don't overreact to an inexperienced or even incompetent editor. Scrutinizing audio meters over the editor's shoulder or alleging that the editor changed the colors of your video will not help. You can always request a different editor the next time you work. The usual source of problems is miscommunication; producers have to learn how to articulate what they need. Any billing problems can be discussed with the salesperson, who will make accommodations if you have legitimate complaints. Keep bad feelings out of the edit session proper.

"Downtime" refers to time not charged to your bill because of technical malfunctions, when the session stops while the equipment is repaired. If a piece of equipment breaks down but you continue working on something else, you will still be charged. A more difficult situation occurs when a malfunction persists through the edit, allowing work to continue but at a slower pace. Often the editor will itemize downtime on the job card that reflects the estimated time difference. Articulate any complaint carefully at the time it happens, discuss it with the editor, and note it on the job card. Do not expect every little hitch or set-up change to be considered "down." Downtime occurs only when work is stopped due to large-scale equipment breakdown.

### ■ Storage, Pick-ups, and Deliveries of Tapes

A large studio will handle dozens of tape deliveries every day involving hundreds or even thousands of tapes. Make sure that your delivery is prearranged with the studio and that it is addressed to the person in charge of your project. You must keep track of your own materials; the studio will not manage the production for you. Dropping off unmarked packages or unlabeled tapes at the studio is as safe as leaving them unsupervised on a New York City street.

Specify your shipping instructions (on paper!) during your edit session or when you place an

order for work. If materials are to be shipped, you must indicate how this should be done (air freight, overnight, second day, etc.). Tapes can be held by the studio for later pick-up, but you must indicate the day and time. Don't expect fast service if you show up at the studio unannounced.

Do not plan to store your tapes or masters at the studio. During the postproduction process, your work materials can be left at the studio, but you must arrange to remove these tapes once work is completed. Some studios charge exorbitant monthly storage charges to discourage absent-minded producers.

Few studios sell archival imagery. If you require such material, you must purchase it from stock footage houses or archives. Nor are sound effects libraries available at most studios. Some have a set of tapes or CDs with sound effects, but you may not like their selection. If you are already mixing, you may wind up with a poor effect or no effect at all.

Studios do sell tape stock, though often at a price significantly higher than through a tape dealer. You can always bring your own stock. Check to see which brands are compatible with a studio's machines. The studio will replace any defective tape bought from them, but assumes no other liability. A defective master tape will not be reassembled. A copy will be made and the master will be down one generation. If you provided the stock, you'll have to pay for this. Don't use unknown degaussed tapes or any tape that may be worn or defective. You could wind up paying double. Always mark a defective tape (one that makes unusual sounds during the winding of the leader at the beginning of the tape).

### ■ Dubs Done Wrong

The amount of technology in a video studio is massive. The people who operate it are human. They make mistakes and can easily flip the wrong switch or change the wrong cable. The chain of complex and sensitive machines are vulnerable to Mrs. O'Leary's cow.

If things go wrong, try not to panic. If the studio is at fault and you can clarify the problem, the studio will usually correct it free of charge. Experienced engineers will make a technical assessment if they know what to look for. If dubs are bad, is it all the dubs or just one of them? If there's a glitch you've never noticed before, is it in the source tapes or is it an edit artifact? Drop-outs that were minor in the original tape may look larger several generations later.

Excessive drop-outs or edge damage are usually isolated incidents. (When a 3/4" U-matic tape has edge damage, the motors will seem to whirl loudly as the damaged segment passes over the drum.) If you provided the tape stock, it's your problem. Check other dubs, or play the tape on another VCR. Most of all, keep your head. Rational conduct is the best way to motivate the people who are working for you.

*Rick Feist works for the Standby Program.*

# Hi-8

## Videomakers Take the Plunge

JAMES MCBRIDE

**I**N THIS ERA OF DECREASING BUDGETS, THE NEED TO CAPTURE AND manipulate images with convenient and cost-effective production techniques has taken on increased significance. From electronic news gathering to low-budget narratives, the demand for high-quality, low-cost formats has become an imperative for a growing number of independents.

At the center of this rush to find faster, lighter, cheaper, and better ways of producing visual images is the emerging technology of high-band, or hi-8, video. Originally introduced as a consumer format in the late 1980s, hi-8 has quickly been coopted by the professional community due to its portability, low cost, and superior image quality. "Three batteries and one tape, and I'm set all day," says independent videographer Michael Rosenblum. "If you are a print freelancer, you can sit down at your word processor and crank out stories for many different magazines. With this technology you can whip out your video camera and do television stories on the same level."

Rosenblum, a former CBS news producer, regularly contributes to the *MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour*, *Nightline*, and other news programs on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and British Broadcasting Corporation. He sees hi-8 as the prime acquisition format for the much touted "desktop video" revolution. "I simply couldn't afford Betacam," he says. "And until recently you couldn't get anything accepted on these shows unless it was Beta. My main pitch to clients is a high-quality news product for a fraction of the price. A year ago, nobody wanted to talk to me about hi-8. Now, they're breaking down my door trying to learn about this format. A lot of these network dinosaurs only know how to spend money. The problem is they're spending themselves out of business. They realize they've got to do something fast, and low-cost video is the answer."

Rosenblum currently has a proposal under consideration with the Rockefeller Foundation to build television bureaus throughout the Third World which would be designed to gather news in a very cost-efficient manner. "I figure we can field one-person bureaus for about \$60,000 each per year," he says. "Just one guy in a region with a camera sending back stories can do what used to take a whole television crew. The networks have traditionally spent millions for these types of operations in places such as Hong Kong, Beijing, Delhi, and South Africa, but I know it can be done for a lot less with hi-8."

Because of the technical improvements and versatility built into hi-8 cameras, users can shoot with much more frequency and abandon. "Instead of being very choosy about what you shoot, you can simply gather video information," says David Meieran, project coordinator for Media Network in New York and a member of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power's video collective, *Testing the Limits*, which documents AIDS activism. "Altogether we [Media Network] have upwards of 140 projects underway right now, and many of them are using hi-8. Much of the material we gather is shot

by untrained people. We can do that economically and still have usable footage. With film technology, that is simply not possible."

Meieran concedes the biggest question for him and many other professional video users is whether hi-8 is good enough for broadcast purposes. "With Beta you will have better color and resolution," he says, "but are people really going to notice? Marlon Riggs shot most of *Tongues Untied* on Betacam and transferred everything to film. People who see his film have no idea he shot most of it on video."

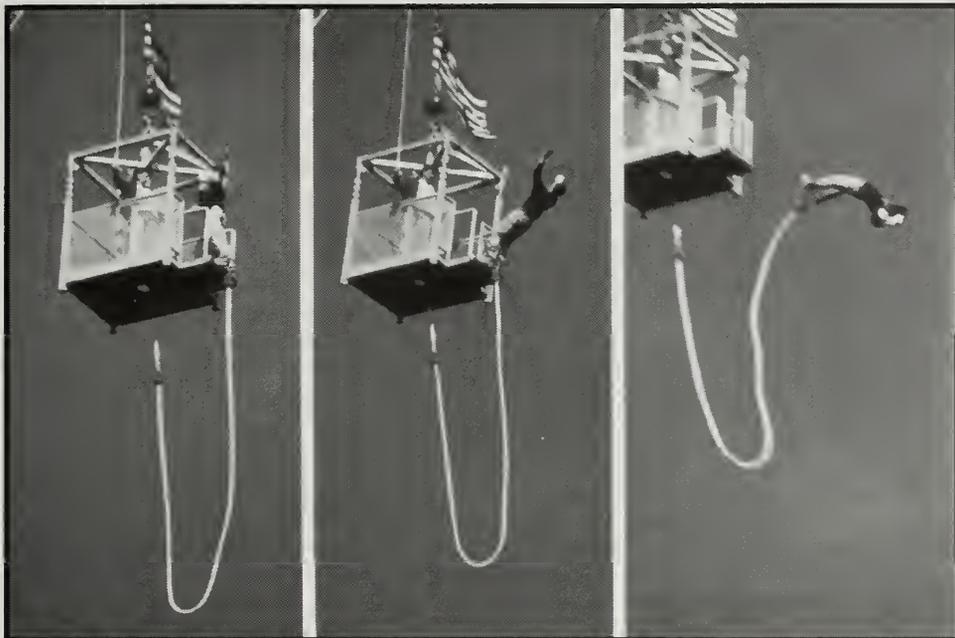
Since 1987, *Testing the Limits* has used a variety of formats, including Beta, 16mm film, VHS camcorders, and low-8. Their first hi-8 camera was the Sony EM 9100. "The two biggest drawbacks to hi-8 are the size of the tape (they look like audio tapes) and the dropout problems," he says. "Most people bump up to another format, and we use a three-quarter-inch SP system. But we are also looking at some of the hi-8 dockable cameras for Beta."

**T**HE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO USE HI-8 REALLY DEPENDS ON how fancy you get and what you want the end product to look like. "Video always looks like video, and to some extent it changes the prestige of your project," says Jennifer Fox, a New York-based filmmaker and creator of *Beirut: The Last Home Movie*. "You can shoot hi-8 for practically no money. But once you get into doing your dubs on Beta SP, it can add up. Prices range from \$35 per hour to \$150 per hour, and there's a big difference in quality."

Fox says her latest project (a long-term portrait of different interracial couples) was originally budgeted at \$500,000 in 16mm film. "In hi-8 it will run about \$300,000," she projects. "There are a lot of costs for archival footage, so the difference is about 40 percent, but the savings would be greater without the archival footage."

Fox thinks that in today's economy documentary makers simply need to figure out different ways of going about production. "There just aren't the budgets available now that there used to be, so documentarians must get realistic about how they do their work," she says. "I don't think documentary filmmakers have as much of a choice as feature filmmakers because of the limited distribution opportunities. We have to search out new, cheaper ways of getting our projects produced. As much as I hate the look of video, you must sometimes swallow your aesthetic pride and just get the job done. What am I going to do? I have a film that is a great idea. I can write grants for the rest of my life and totally lose my passion for the subject, or start shooting and still keep writing grants. Writing grants and not shooting will kill me psychologically. So I have to use hi-8 video to keep me going."

The ability to do stylized and unusual videography is another important attribute of some of the lower-end hi-8 cameras, such as the Canon A1 and the L1. Because of their construction and portability, producers are starting to incorporate them into work that used to be the sole domain of still photography. "I'm taking still photographs [with the L1] that last six or



Would you take your Betacam on this ride? A \$1,500 hi-8 camera reduces the stress level considerably.

Courtesy The 90's

Hi-8 cameras, such as the Handicam used here by *The 90's* video correspondent Nancy Cain, allow camera operators to be an active participant in the events recorded

Courtesy The 90's

seven seconds," says Mark Ledzian, a New York-based fashion photographer who has been experimenting with the L1 for the past year. "I slow down the tape, using the processor and watching the color temperature. As an editorial fashion photographer, magazines and advertisers will say, 'Go out and give us your look.' Increasingly, that is what agencies are saying to me with my video." With the L1, which looks and handles like a 35mm still camera, he can work the same way. "The style is very zen-like. There are just moments that are captured. It's all anticipation, and you can't do that if you have a cumbersome camera strapped to your shoulder."

Ledzian has also done work with a number of smaller ad agencies who have little or no television experience. He has convinced some of them that hi-8 is particularly suitable for clients who want to save money on TV production but still want film-like results in their ads. Last summer he shot a Capezio ad for the New York agency DeFrancesco & DeLuca in hi-8 which ran nationally on ESPN. He also did six Gitano spots for \$120,000. "You could never do that with film," he says. "I distress the tape in-camera by lighting, filtering, gelling, and changing the direction of light to get specific effects. I like a very hazy, gauzy look that, to the untrained eye, looks like film."

Ledzian says smaller agencies and clients who have never done television are now seeing it come within their reach. Larger agencies and production houses, however, tend to see hi-8 as a threat. "People don't want to hear that I can shoot video that approximates the look of film for one-fifth the cost of film," he complains. "They make a lot of money off of film production, and anything that cuts into that process makes them angry. For clients, however, it is great. They are now able to do a number of ads instead of one, or they can take what they save and put it into their media budget."

In order to save his own money and work at his own pace, Ledzian has fashioned an off-line system in his studio made of components specific to his needs. "I use the Sony 9700 edit deck [\$5000]. It has a player, record deck, slow-motion, and program mode so you can do video and audio inserts with 99 different ins and outs. You can also do rough edits and program the machine so it runs inserts without manual interference." In addition, he has



hooked up a Mitsubishi video printer [\$400] for storyboards and has a Videonics video equalizer [\$179]. "This system is simply a sketch pad, but a creative one," he says. "So much of what is shot on 35mm for TV can be

# Hi-8



done in hi-8 and made to look just as good. This is causing a revolution, and I believe it is creating a whole new form of narrative."

**F**OR MOST PROFESSIONALS, THE PREFERRED EDITING PLATFORM FOR hi-8 is Beta SP. However, many experienced hi-8 users caution that great care must be taken when bumping to different formats. "You must take advantage of the interface capabilities of hi-8," says Eric Solstein, a New York-based film and video producer. "It records at such a high frequency and contains such fine particles that you can lose a tremendous amount of information, perhaps an entire frame or two if you're not on top of it."

Only recently has Sony improved hi-8 tape quality to what most would consider an acceptable level. But the inherent instability of hi-8 mandates keeping generational loss down to get the best image quality. "It doesn't do very well generation to generation," Solstein continues. "The ideal situation for editing hi-8 would be a hi-8 source machine with tape stock that didn't have big problems with dropout. I recommend going through some type of component switcher and using a high-quality encoder."

Good quality hi-8 is very difficult to distinguish from Beta for the average viewer. But a skilled editor looking at a waveform monitor will notice the difference. Hi-8 renders colors very noisily, just like three-quarter-inch, and has a lower color and luminance resolution than Beta. Hi-8 engineers have recently been developing all sorts of compression schemes to get more information on a tape, but the sacrifice is a lag in the chrominance, which can cause problems such as trailing edges. Sony recommends turning down the chroma noise reduction when transferring. But the best way, according to hi-8 pros, is to tinker with a variety of different transcoding systems and find what's best for you.

"I'm constantly searching for the right way to do this," says Solstein. "Right now, I use an Intel video NTSC color decoder with cone filter capabilities which allows me to take a Y/C output from the hi-8 deck and transcode it to Betacam." For higher-end users, For-A has just introduced a new image-processing device with dropout compensation, complete multiformat transcoding capability to digital formats, and sophisticated noise reduction and motion interpolation—all for about \$39,000. This allows hi-8 source material to run directly onto Beta—with what For-A claims is the quality of Beta SP.

Indeed, how hi-8 is handled in postproduction is a prime consideration

**Filmmaker Jennifer Fox chose hi-8 for her documentary portrait of Tibetan Buddhist master Namkhai Norbu, now in postproduction.**

*Courtesy videomaker*

for producers seeking quality images. "Beta, three-quarter-inch U-matic, M2, D1, and hi-8 are all component formats," says Tom Emmeneggar, president of Framrunner, a Manhattan post house specializing in hi-8. "All of the signal processing we do here is done without encoding and decoding cycles by taking S-video out and pumping it into a time-base corrector. We use a color corrector and noise reduction and then convert it into a Beta component via a transcoding cycle. It comes out Beta SP; there's no NTSC involved."

Emmeneggar says it is important to keep hi-8 editing within a component format because it will give a much cleaner image during the on-line edit. "NTSC composite signals have always been a compromise because engineers didn't want to make obsolete all the black and white TV sets when color came along. There's a lot of electronic garbage in that signal. If you want to go from hi-8 to film, you are much better off having a component master. When you blow up an image, you blow up all the garbage." Because hi-8 tapes are packed with so much information, they are susceptible to timing problems. Digital error correction work can conceal some of those problems once it's transferred to a more stable format such as Beta, but it won't help things that are recorded with dropouts. If you've got a composite system, you have to use a DVE to decode and encode on the other side.

All that can cost money. Framrunner charges \$150 per hour for transfer time, and they're considered one of the better deals in the country for the level of work they do. In fact, hi-8 users can actually spend more money in transfer fees than they would if they'd originally shot on a different format. "If you go to a sophisticated post house, you are going to spend money transferring to Beta," says Doug Block, director of *The Heck with Hollywood*, a documentary about independent filmmakers. He is currently shooting two projects on hi-8, one on a gay man's reunion with his estranged Midwestern family, and the other a humorous profile of media hoaxter Alan Abel. "Hi-8 is so flexible it seems amateurish. You tend to get lazy and not light where you should. But that sort of thing looks bad as it goes down generations. In fact, video is much harder to light than film. You really have to watch out for the contrasts. I'm real aware of the limitations of the [Canon A1] camera and I try to play with them in a stylized fashion."

**N**OT EVERYONE IS CONVINCED THAT VIDEO SHOULD BE THE WAVE OF the future. "Why do documentaries have to be relegated to video?" asks Lucille Carra, coproducer of *The Inland Sea*, an award-winning documentary film about Japan being quickly and irreversibly overrun by progress. "Why does it have to look bad? You can shoot on film and finish on video. I think it's bad that the television distributors get the idea that they can keep the cost down because video is available. It's good that people can now afford to go out and shoot cheaply, but let's remember the documentary can also be an art form and a craft, and I don't want to lose that."

Carra acknowledges that more documentaries and movies are seen on video or TV than in a theater, but she maintains that they always look better when shot on film. "It is a step forward to be able to shoot, rather than not shoot," she concurs. "But I want my films to look a certain way. Video looks

temporary, film is timeless. If I were covering a war I would use hi-8. For other things where you have the time, film is great. You always have to think about how you're going to sell what you make. And how you shoot something makes a big difference."

Many hi-8 enthusiasts are aware of the quality differences between film and video and even admit their preference for film. Several, however, point out the necessity of using hi-8 in order to get work off the ground. "Video will surely limit the distribution possibilities of a project," admits Block. "But documentary filmmakers are supposed to be realists, and if the look of the piece isn't crucial, then hi-8 becomes the most viable way of doing the thing." He continues, "I don't think fiction projects can get away with being in video because distributors and audiences have come to expect the look of film. Unless video is incorporated into the subject, like it was in *sex, lies, and videotape*, it just doesn't have that three-dimensional look."

The real advantages of hi-8, Block says, are its low cost as an acquisition format and the ability to blend in with a crowd. "I could never shoot some of my projects in film, because I could never get into the flow of a scene the way I can with hi-8," he explains. "Sure it's a step back compared to film, maybe. But the start-up costs are profoundly less expensive than film or other video formats. I had to sink almost \$20,000 of my own money into *Heck* before I got additional funding. With my new project, done entirely on hi-8, I'll be able to do a show reel for under \$5,000."

Other producers have had trouble with the inherent technical problems endemic to hi-8. "I can't get beyond the fact that hi-8 cameras are not up to Beta standards," says David Leitner of Big Noise Films. "Hi-8 has opened up a whole new world for a lot of people. Unfortunately, for professionals there are as many drawbacks as there are pluses. Sony was lending me hi-8 cameras to cover marches in Leipzig when the wall was coming down in Berlin. I had trouble controlling the exposure, and it was very difficult to mount the camera on a tripod." Leitner complains that hi-8 is more closely related to consumer camcorders than professional formats. "The biggest problem is the noisiness and lack of adequate post equipment," he says. "It outperforms S-VHS, but the time code isn't transcodable and it's not frame accurate."

Despite present technical snafus, other producers think the hi-8 bugs will get worked out and provide a professional platform for many different kinds of projects. Although

hi-8 is primarily being used by independents right now, larger media entities are also beginning to explore the format. "We are interested in the possibility of editorial breakthroughs using hi-8," says John Santos, director of program development for public television station WNET-New York. "We are doing a late-night, upbeat program on Saturday night called *Late City*, and we will use hi-8 as sort of a producer's notebook. We have found that it opens the way to integrate video and computer interface editing. It adds an openness to image manipulation that doesn't exist in regular ENG work right now."

Santos says the station has been using Sony 7000s and 9000s for location work but also plans on trying the Canon palmcoders which have the same digital features as the A1. WNET has also applied to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for support in creating a Proto-Production Lab which will develop new production techniques for television. "It is a three-part training project bringing people from PBS stations all around the country, three times a year, to expose them to hi-8, computer-based editing, and field production," he explains. "We are also interested in multimedia, publishing software on discs, and integrating hi-8 into that technology."

Even if networks and large corporate concerns have been slow to embrace hi-8, upstarts such as MTV and dozens of music video producers have been using it for years. "On low-to-no budget projects, film would take so long to edit that we would never get done," says Ruth Kahn, co-owner of the Outpost, a music video production company in Brooklyn. "16mm is just too much of a hassle and costs so much that it is prohibitive to use."

"Hi-8 is very affordable for bands that don't have a lot of money," adds her partner, Al Arthur. "We used to shoot with all sorts of different formats and cameras. And one day it just dawned on us—why don't we shoot on hi-



After successfully using low-format video in two scenes in *The Heck with Hollywood*, director Doug Block decided to shoot his next two projects on hi-8.

Courtesy filmmaker



8? So we got some long cables, figured out how to get the cameras synced up, and started shooting.”

Arthur says the company uses a Sony 9800 hi-8 edit deck hooked to an Amiga switcher/controller. They perform live effects with a Video Toaster and master the entire production on M2. “Most of our clients are non-mainstream artists such as Elliot Sharp, Diane Black, Ken Butler, and David Linton, who have large enough followings that they are able to generate profits from the sale of their tapes at concerts. We are acting a little bit like an independent record label for video, except we are only doing live concerts, not studio work.”

The Outpost's editor, Carlton Bright, says the company uses M2 because it has the same technical specs as Beta SP and is a whole lot cheaper. “You have to do your own thing,” he says. “We wanted to be producing in-house, and M2 allows us to do this. If you wait around for the record companies, agencies, or corporations to call you and give you money, you'll never get any work.”

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**For *Frontline's* October Surprise investigation, senior producer Martin Smith employed a team of reporters and shooters fluent in hi-8 guerilla video techniques.**

Courtesy UPI/Bettmann

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**When creating an ad for Capezio, the reduced production costs made possible by hi-8 were a blessing not only to producer Mark Ledzion but to the ad agency as well.**

Courtesy DeFrancesco & DeLuca, Inc.

But that situation seems to be changing for reporters and shooters who have proven themselves in the art of guerilla video. “We used hi-8 extensively in our October Surprise investigation,” says Martin Smith, senior producer for *Frontline* at WGBH in Boston. “Often we'll team up producers and reporters who are familiar with our objectives and the technology available. In investigative reporting, it isn't really practical to go out and set up interviews and say you'll be back in a month. Those types of subjects tend to not speak once they've had a chance to think about it. Our reporters talk to and record subjects as they would if they were doing research. And with hi-8, we can have that footage ‘in the can.’”

Tom Weinberg, executive producer of PBS's *The 90's*, agrees and says there is a real advantage to keeping interview subjects from behaving like they are on TV. “Hi-8 lets you be more immediate. We try to be part of situations rather than creating them. We've put on probably more hi-8 than any other television show in the world, and this is the best tool available to realize the vision we saw 22 years ago when the portapaks first came out. You've got lightness, portability, broadcast quality, and good audio.” Martin Smith adds, “There are advantages and disadvantages inherent in any production process, but if the content is strong, I don't think format is all that important.”

*James McBride is a New York-based freelance writer for Variety, Hollywood Reporter, MultiChannel News, and a film and video producer.*



## ON BANKS, BUDGETS AND BONDS

### Film and Video Financing

by Michael Wiese

Stoneham, MA: Focal Press, 1991; 307 pp.; \$22.95

Making any movie is hard. Financing independent movies is next to impossible. You've got to have the determination of Moses and the business head of H. Ross Perot. In his new book, *Film & Video Financing*, Michael Wiese tries to encourage diehards and demolish delusions.

As a compendium of business strategies, Wiese's book is sound. He introduces us in textbook fashion to the resources an independent needs to mount a financing drive. Nothing earth-shattering is offered here, but it's a good introductory discussion of the basics: banks, budgets, bonds, etc. Wiese introduces a range of strategies for investment, from limited partnerships (which he acknowledges are getting more difficult each year) to the current favorite, pre-sales.

Risk capital can come from a multitude of sources, and Wiese advises the producer to be as creative as possible in uncovering them. He works his way systematically through each potential font of wealth: domestic distributors, coproductions, tax-driven deals, etc. While his discussions are generally clear and insightful, in some cases they may confuse the newcomer. When he writes about financial deals—like the various models available for limited partnerships or the role of banks—he assumes you already know what he's talking about.

Wiese wisely understands that producers, like all salesmen, are selling themselves as well as selling their product. So in addition to providing a guidebook to financing, Wiese has attempted to offer various psychological nostrums for the "personal power" that you'll need to survive.

Tenacity is the name of the game. Wiese challenges, "How much do you really care about this project? Does it have enough depth for you to be able to work on it passionately every day? For years? Or will you run out of steam in six months? If your interest is depleted, who will bring it across the finish line?"

If, after wrestling with your commitment, you still come out like a gladiator primed for battle, Wiese says you must proceed with total, overpowering conviction. He proclaims, "The producer believes. Everyone else believes." And he admonishes us to "think about Kevin Costner or

Michael Douglas or Jane Fonda. Whether what I'm about to say is true or not I don't know (because I've never met these folks), but I suspect it is. They naturally exude the kind of confidence that I'm talking about."

Sounds great. Unfortunately Wiese makes no attempt to make his Pollyannish pep talk jibe with the sobering picture presented elsewhere in the book. Incongruously, Wiese quotes independent producer Sam Grogg later in the book on raising money from private investors. Grogg says, "I think it's too hard. It's just a waste of time."

The book is plumped up with five lengthy interviews with experts in the field. Richard Lorber, a pre-sales specialist who is cofounder of Fox/Lorber, is the best. He's blunt, practical, and interesting on what makes independent films sell in the international market. Less fresh are Grogg, talking about the brave and halcyon days of FilmDallas, a financing, producing, and distribution company that invested in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Trip to Bountiful*, among other films, and Robert Newmyer doing yet another interview about the miraculous and anomalous *sex, lies, and videotape*, on which he was executive producer.

At the back of the book is a surprising bonus—13 pages of hard questions to ask yourself about your project. Designed to get you to put the book to use, the list includes questions like: "Do I have the abilities, resources, contacts to produce this project myself?" "What does my project offer that attracts a distributor?" "Do I know the value of a pre-sale for my particular genre?"

For the newcomer, Wiese's book should be a valuable primer. For the more savvy, the advice may be familiar, but the book is likely to provide even veterans with a new trick or two in the battle up the steep and slippery celluloid hill.

JOHN DRIMMER

*John Drimmer is a director/writer. His most recent film is Battle in the Erogenous Zone, which Fox/Lorber distributes.*

## IN SEARCH OF ASIAN AMERICA

**Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts**

Edited by Russell Leong

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992; 312 pp.; \$19.95

As befitting its subject, *Moving the Image: Inde-*

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The Independent Feature Film Market is THE market for breakthrough independent films. It is attended by over 2500 filmmakers, distributors, television and home video buyers, agents, development executives and festival programmers from the U.S. and abroad.

The Market will be held this year from September 20 - 27 at the Angelika Film Center. As always, we need volunteers who are eager to be involved with this exciting event. Volunteers are the backbone of the IFFM operations every year. It is an excellent introduction to the independent film scene and to the film industry. We need volunteers to process film entries, work with filmmakers and buyers, register entrants, staff the hospitality suite and much more. You can even earn an IFP membership while working at the IFFM. *Market volunteer meetings are held throughout the summer, contact the IFP office for details: (212) 243-7777.*

pendent Asian Pacific American Media Arts is a kinetic collection of essays, interviews, poems—and everything else in between—by Asian Americans involved in the rough and tumble of independent film and video. This report from the front has flashbacks, monologues, reflections, talking heads, and even the occasional musical number. A project of Visual Communications and University of California/Los Angeles Asian American Studies Center, the book provides an overview of the exciting developments in Asian American film and video, especially in the last 30-odd years. The historical analyses, critical insights, artist's statements, contentions and contradictions, and it's-what's-happening-now energy result in a book that should be of lasting interest to filmmakers, scholars, and programmers.

The book's essays can pretty much be approached at random. Be prepared to come across some challenging notions of what it means to be American, both in the sober academic think-pieces and in some of the wittiest gonzo writing this side of Hunter Thompson. Start with Renee Tajima's informative and historically astute survey of Asian American filmmaking since the 1960s. Then flip over to Gregg Araki on the complacency of independent filmmaking. Or to Trinh T. Minh-ha's reflections on approaching the "Other," or Richard Fung's insights on the imaging of gay Asians. The book provides a good idea of what the issues are and what's being done, or not done, about them. It tackles such questions as the existence of an Asian American voice or aesthetic (always a tricky one), assimilation and acculturation, and the intersection of feminism, Third World colonialism, and Western domination.

There is one nagging question that arises from the selection of contributors and their subjects: Just who is an Asian American? Asia is a geographical term referring to the land mass east of the Suez in Egypt and the Bosphorus strait in Turkey. The filmmakers covered in the book demonstrate the community's difficulty in including Asians of non-Mongolian ethnicity under the Asian American umbrella. The overwhelming number of contributions come from Japanese, Chinese, and, to a lesser extent, Southeast Asian filmmakers and critics. This reflects in part their dominance in the Asian American community. However, there are no contributions from Indian Americans or Arab Americans. The works of important filmmakers like Mira Nair and Kavery Dutta, for instance, are discussed, but their voices are not heard. The question is more than academic and nitpicky: Just ask any Indian American filmmaker whose Asian American identity is questioned by a potential funder.

But the question of how we define Asian Americans has deeper political implications. Using an admittedly broad practical framework, Tajima posits that Asian American cinema is, among other things, work created by "a people bound by...race." Daryl Chin tells of how Asian Cine-Vision's Asian American Film Festival "annexed"

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the Near East by including films from Turkey and Iran. Do these not reflect the racial definitions of Asian as handed down by white Americans—the majority of whom we hold responsible for the marginalization of Asians in this country—and mirror the degrees of marginalization within the Asian American community itself? On the other hand, the use of the geographical concept of Asia (a European convention) as the basis of a community demands a multiracial, multicultural view of Asian Americans. The inadequate representation of non-Mongolian Asian Americans in this book may perpetuate the racial divisions of American society and takes insufficient account of the increasing diversity of Asian immigration in recent years. Obviously, the struggle is not over.

The question of who can be called Asian American is more American than Asian, as shown in Luis Francia's analysis of the differences between the concerns of Asian American and Asian filmmakers—e.g., issues stemming from the minority status of Asian Americans versus Third World issues of social change. *Moving the Image* assumes a broad purview, including contributions by Americans of Asian ancestry as well as Asians living in the US. In pushing the boundaries of

The play of personal history in media production is a central consideration in *Moving the Image* and in filmmaker Cheng-sim Lim's essay, *Rojak*, which uses her grandmother's (above) gastronomy as metaphor.

Courtesy Visual Communications

identity, this timely volume raises issues that are as American as, well, a California roll.

L. SOMI ROY

*L. Somi Roy is an independent film programmer based in New York City.*

**POLISPOTS ON PARADE**

**Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising**  
by Kathleen Hall Jamieson  
Cary, North Carolina: Oxford University Press,  
2d ed., 1992 ; 546 pp. \$15.95 (paper)

Pseudo-events and image management have been with us for generations, reports Kathleen Hall Jamieson in *Packaging the Presidency*, a dense but engaging history of campaign advertising.

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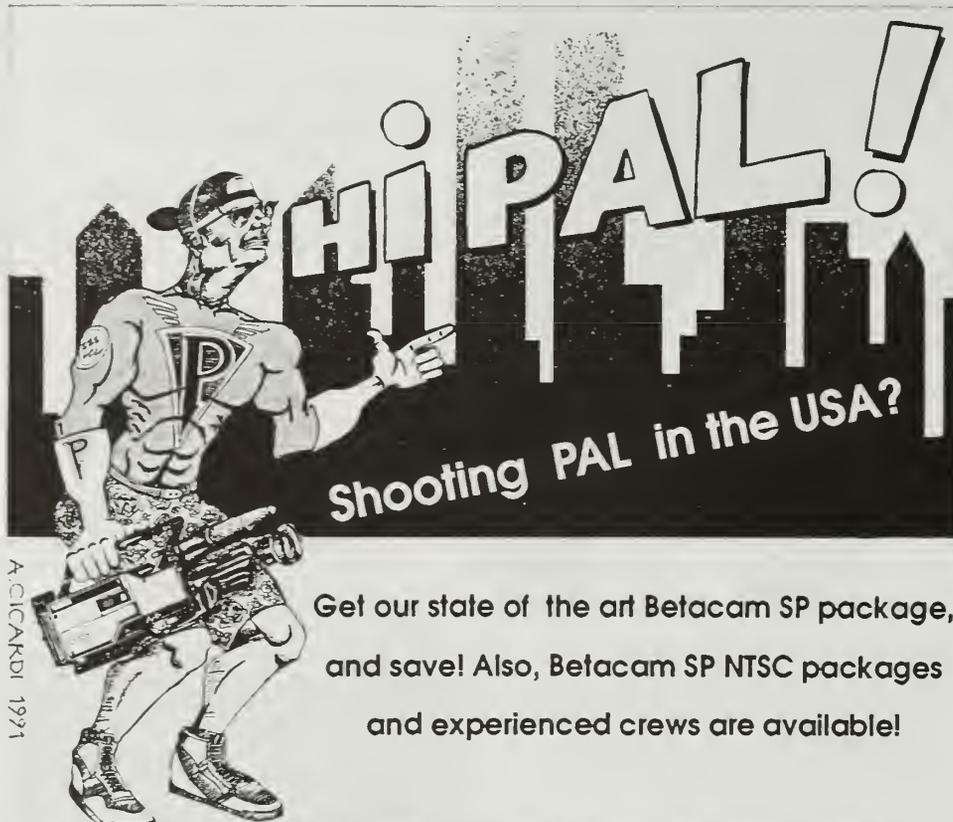
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This survey tempts readers to compare frequently sly, sometimes shocking ads and handbills of the past with their syncopated contemporary counterparts. The story of William Henry Harrison's 1840 campaign, which transformed the wealthy landowner into a rustic log-cabin farmer, calls up the image of Connecticut-raised Yalie George Bush, remade with pork rinds and horseshoes. The book's second edition, released just in time for this year's primaries, has been updated to include a chapter on the last presidential campaign.

Bush's 1988 flag festooned photo-op sessions and his campaign's repeated references to the notorious PAC-sponsored Willie Horton ad, "Weekend Passes," which spotlighted the black Massachusetts furlough-jumper and rapist, also recall the use of sentimental and reactionary images by twentieth-century compatriots. The controversial 1964 campaign film *Choices*, by a division of Citizens for Goldwater-Miller called Mothers for a Moral America, juxtaposed "presumed symbols of [Democratic candidate Lyndon] Johnson's America"—black rioters, "pornographic" books, strippers, and "close-ups of [the] gyrating buttocks" of dancing teenagers—with the right wing Republican's national view, symbolized by the American flag and white school children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. (Such demonizing was updated in Patrick Buchanan's 1992 Georgia television spot excoriating the National Endowment for the Arts under Bush's tenure. The script claims Bush allowed the funding of "pornographic and blasphemous art too shocking to show" while flashing video excerpts of leather-harnessed gay men on the screen.)

Although Goldwater ultimately refused to air the fear-mongering *Choices* production, Jamieson shows that Bush simply denied control over commercials produced by third parties. Even so, he condoned the spot's racism by using Willie Horton as a synonym for crime in numerous speeches. Indeed, Jamieson, Dean of University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, declares that the presidential contenders in 1988 distinguished themselves in the history of presidential campaign advertising by their ignobility. In the book's new introduction, the author observes, "Never before...have televised ads sponsored by a major party candidate lied so blatantly as in the campaign of 1988."

In her study of Bush's "Boston Harbor" ad, the author concludes the featured sign, warning swimmers about radiation hazards, does not refer to the harbor, but to another body of water located near a nuclear facility. Nor does the ad actually reflect Michael Dukakis' record on the environment, which was better than Bush's. While truth in advertising laws are on the books for commercial products, there is no way to block false claims about a candidate through legal action against broadcasters: A section of the amended Communications Act of 1934 prohibits broadcasters from censoring or refusing to air authorized campaign

spots based on content; the Supreme Court has therefore held stations immune from libel suits. False inferences will stick, Jamieson warns, without sufficient counterinformation from the opposing team or investigation by a watchdog press—both of which were lacking in 1988, when Republican strategists controlled and synchronized the candidate's speeches, staged news events, advertising, and debates "better than any previous presidential campaign."

*Packaging the Presidency*, though occasionally marred by choppy editing, provides readers with a complete overview of presidential campaigns as well as pointed observations and warnings. The propagation of false claims that characterized the 1988 campaign will continue, "leaving the electorate disillusioned and confused," cautions Jamieson, "unless this country can discover among the ranks of its politicians a pair of candidates self-assured enough to campaign on the facts."

HOLLY METZ

Holly Metz writes regularly on social, legal, and cultural topics for *The Progressive* and the *American Bar Association's Student Lawyer* magazine.

## PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST IN MOTION

**Doris Chase, Artist in Motion: From Painting to Sculpture to Video Art**

by Patricia Failing

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992; 136 pp., \$35. Accompanied by a 30-minute videotape with the same title, \$45

A couple of years ago at the American Film Institute (AFI) theater in Washington, DC, Doris Chase was scheduled to screen several videos from her *By Herself* series. Although the AFI theater might be filled to capacity for a showing of *The Thin Man* or *Top Hat*, programs of half-hour independent works were known to draw as few as 20 paying customers.

Chase was determined to overcome the problem. Because the videos are collaborations with such actresses as Geraldine Page, Joan Plowright, Anne Jackson, and Louise Rainer, it was suggested by a friend that each could be paired on a double bill with one of its stars' feature films. The idea was well-received by the AFI, and the result was a greater audience for Chase.

There's a lesson here, one that is evident in Patricia Failing's literate, thorough biography, *Doris Chase, Artist in Motion*. Chase has single-mindedly strived to do what all artists must if they work independently and are not independently wealthy: Constantly seek feedback from others. Maximize one's potential audience. Always be thinking of future projects, not just their content but the manner in which they might be funded and marketed.

Chase has exhibited the same tenacious, probing nature in her artistic vision. The author lucidly documents Chase's career, which started in the 1950s when Chase was a Seattle-based painter. She eventually became intrigued by the possibilities inherent in kinetic sculpture, which led to her work with choreographers as she created art works used as dancers' props.

A key to Chase's artistic development, stresses Failing, is the manner in which her output in one medium influences her entry into another. In 1968 she designed a multimedia event for the Seattle Opera, creating kinetic sculptures powered by dancers. Chase then began experimenting with outtakes of a filmed record of the performance. Writes Failing, "She was beginning to consider how film technology might be used to elaborate and amplify the dancers' movements."

Having moved to New York in the 1970s, Chase became intrigued by video and began employing synthesizers, computers, and other emerging technology to create imagery inspired by the movements of dancers. This led in the 1980s to video projects with writers like Thulani Davis, Jessica Hagedorn, and Lee Breuer, in which the visuals were enhanced by the spoken word. Finally, there is Chase's *By Herself* series, the least abstract of all her video work, which focuses on the lives and perspectives of older women.

Failing, an assistant professor of art history at the University of Washington, places her subject within a historical context. She notes, "Beginning with *Circles II* (Chase's first and most famous 'filmdance'), her films and tapes bridge the formalist orientation of the early twentieth century and the broader vantage point of the post-1960s avant garde. This personal synthesis...provides the backdrop for Chase's distinctive profile as an artist of her time."

Chase is without doubt an innovator in the use of video as art. Notes video historian Ann-Sargent Wooster in the book's forward, "Chase will be remembered for her role as a first generation video artist." It is fitting, then, that the book is accompanied by a video of the same title, written by Failing and Chase and narrated by the latter, which contains excerpts from Chase's work. The tape is as thorough as the tome and is invaluable as it allows the reader to visually experience her videos.

There also is another, more personal side to Chase's story. She managed to work steadily on her art at a time—the post-World War II period—when most working artists were male. Hers is a tale of self-realization: of how a 20-year-old war bride, living in a tiny apartment and caring for the first of her two children, came to understand and fulfill her need to paint, to create. *Doris Chase, Artist in Motion* is flattering to its subject, but that is how it should be.

ROB EDELMAN

Rob Edelman is programming director of Home Film Festival, a rent-by-mail home video club for hard to find titles.

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## RAMBLING MARTHA COOLIDGE

### From New York Independent to Hollywood Player

ELLEN LEVY

*The transition from independent filmmaking in New York to directing Hollywood movies has rarely been easy. It is all the harder for women—though directors such as Lizzie Borden, Susan Seidelman, Martha Coolidge have successfully made the move in recent years. Coolidge, a founding member of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, garnered both critical*

*ous features, including Valley Girl (1983), Real Genius (1985), Plain Clothes, and most recently, Rambling Rose, which chronicles a young woman's sexual explorations in the Depression. Rambling Rose received Academy Award nominations for best actress and supporting actress, and won the Independent Feature Project's Independent Spirit Awards for best director, best picture, and best supporting actress. In January 1992, Coolidge's 1975 film Not a Pretty Picture—which intertwines the story of a date rape with discussions between the director and actors—*

rate, but it does accurately reflect two things: one, the image a young person starting out has of their potential in the business. That's very important. None of us would ever do what we try to do if we were aware of the obstacles that exist. The second thing is how younger women will talk about the obstacles they are facing and will deny they're there. There are many, many women in the business who say that there is no discrimination. I think that's completely ridiculous.

**Q:** What are the obstacles?

**A:** Primarily preconceptions and discrimination. It's very hard for most people, still, to imagine a woman in a position of control and power. Certainly in terms of the film industry as it is run in Hollywood, the people I'm working with, the people they know, and the people they knew, particularly then, were men. That's who they all grew up with. It's an old boys club bonded not just by masculinity but by their familiarity. Once you've made a successful picture with someone, they tend to want to make another with you. So the more successful women are, the more likely there'll be repeats, and they will bond, too, having brought mutual benefit to each other. That's how it works. But in the end in Hollywood, it comes down to what makes money. You're seeing this with women and with black filmmakers. Money can overcome prejudice. Maybe not on a personal basis, but definitely studios will act against a prejudice if they think they can make money.

**Q:** Does that put more pressure on women to compromise their vision in order to show that they can "do it as good as the boys," that they can make a "boy's film" that will sell?

**A:** First of all, Hollywood is not nearly as concerned with vision as we are. However, I feel that deep in their souls Hollywood does know that vision is a critical part of being a good filmmaker. The success of black filmmakers points this up in a very interesting way. Black filmmakers' vision is not as alien to the male establishment—it's just black—as is the female vision. Women directors resent terribly being all lumped together in "You are women directors and women see things in a different way," but when it comes to women bringing their different visions, there's a very interesting point. You see women doing strictly Hollywood movies. But that's what everybody's offered. The movies that are made are movies the studios want to make. This is an industry, and it



**Daddy (Robert Duvall) and Mother (Dianne Ladd) fear Rose (Laura Dern) may be pregnant in *Rambling Rose*, a film that Coolidge says is the "closest thing to an independent film that I've made in Hollywood."**

Courtesy Carolca

*attention and awards for her early work as an independent. She received the National Film Board of Canada's John Grierson award in 1972 for best young director for David: Off and On (1973), about her brother's coming of age in the sixties, and two Blue Ribbons from the American Film Festival for More than a School and an Old Fashioned Woman, a documentary about her grandmother, which opened the 1973 New York Film Festival. Since making the transition from New York to Hollywood, she has directed numer-*

*ous features, including Valley Girl (1983), Real Genius (1985), Plain Clothes, and most recently, Rambling Rose, which chronicles a young woman's sexual explorations in the Depression. Rambling Rose received Academy Award nominations for best actress and supporting actress, and won the Independent Feature Project's Independent Spirit Awards for best director, best picture, and best supporting actress. In January 1992, Coolidge's 1975 film Not a Pretty Picture—which intertwines the story of a date rape with discussions between the director and actors—*

**Q:** In an early write up after you received the Grierson Award, you were quoted as saying you saw no real obstacles to women in the field. Was that an accurate representation of how you felt as an independent in New York, and do you still feel that way?

**A:** I must say that I have no memory at all of saying this. I am shocked that I did (laugh). But it's nice to know that I, too, lived in the illusion of "you can do anything you want." It's very inaccur-

follows its own fads and vagaries. You try to find something in the material they want to make that has themes and subjects you're interested in. That's why everybody's always saying there are no good scripts. It's not that there are no good scripts, it's just very hard for each individual to find a script they love, that has really deep stuff they want to do—and that the other guys want to do.

Q: Did you find fewer obstacles working as an independent in New York or are the obstacles pretty much the same?

A: It depends what your character is, what you enjoy, and what is your bread and butter. In terms of following your own vision, there are many fewer obstacles in being an independent in New York. I enjoyed much more freedom. I mean, nobody sat there and discussed the content of the films I was making. They either decided to invest in them or not. Every single thing in Hollywood is a discussion and a compromise of some kind, to say nothing of the fact that they are usually giving you the story, modifying your story, or asking you to. Raising money as an independent is a very tough obstacle. The truth is, getting a movie set up in Hollywood is also a very tough obstacle, and in a certain sense you can't even say which is harder.

Q: How and why did you make that transition from New York to LA?

A: I just couldn't figure out how to raise more money. Being a producer is not my real gift, and I did it out of necessity mostly. I wanted to make storyline, accessible movies. I'm not really an avant-gardist. I wanted bigger budgets. I wanted sets and costumes and people and actors, and you simply need a certain amount of money. I didn't know how to do it by myself. So I thought 'I'll go to Hollywood where they do it.' But the fact is, they may do it, but it's just as difficult to get the movie.

Q: Did you have an invitation from a studio to go out there?

A: No, no. It's always good to go out with something, so I applied for the American Film Institute Academy intern program and went out as an AFI-Academy intern with Robert Wise on *Audrey Rose*. It was good; I had something to do every day. At the same time, I made my calls to agents. I had movies to show, and I was talked about, even though they weren't hiring women at that time. But there was some buzz, some talk about women. And I did get an agent after three months. It was a lot of work, but I did. You can spend two years trying to get an agent.

Q: By that time you had made three films?

A: No, I had more than three, but *Not a Pretty Picture* was really the one I showed the most.

Q: What's it like working with a bigger budget?

A: I have yet to work with a big budget. The

biggest I worked with was on *Real Genius*. That was the only movie I've made that wasn't totally squeezed budgetarily. *Rambling Rose* was a really low-budget picture.

Q: What was the budget on that?

A: They don't want me to say.

Q: On *Real Genius*?

A: Thirteen million. *Rambling Rose* was way below that and was made much later when money was worthless. *Real Genius* was a special effects picture, and we shot it in 64 days. That's a long time. *Rambling Rose* was shot in 42 days. But what's interesting, and what's important about coming out of independent film, is that you learn where to put your money. *Valley Girl* cost \$325,000. Granted \$325,000 was worth more then than it is now, but the company that made it told the studios it cost three or four million. And the studios believed it. The point is you've got to figure out how to make the movie you want with the money you have.

Q: Has the content of your films been influenced by being in Hollywood?

A: Oh, of course.

Q: How?

A: This is where the concept of "your films" becomes problematic. *Valley Girl* was offered to me. I never would have written *Valley Girl*, developed *Valley Girl*, or said I wanted to do *Valley Girl* if I were left on my own. If I were a filmmaker in New York, it never would've crossed my mind. Put me in the atmosphere of Hollywood, deny me work for a very long time, and then show me *Valley Girl*, and it looked very good, y'know? (laughs) I'm not disowning *Valley Girl*. I stayed very true to myself and made a movie I believed in. It didn't have anything in it that offended me. But there's a difference there.

*Rambling Rose* is the closest thing to an independent film that I've made in Hollywood. I said six years ago, "I have to make this picture," just like I said about my independent pictures. No American would touch that [project] for 17 years. Critically, it was extremely well received, but we know from testing the audience that there's always that little tiny section of the audience who is really offended at the idea of a 13-year-old boy being sexually interested in a woman. In England it was censored—their fear of children and sex is so great.

Q: It may have been an odd pairing to screen *Not a Pretty Picture* and *Rambling Rose* at the same time, but one of the things that struck me was...

A: There are similar themes.

Q: Yes, but you said you self-consciously interrupted the narrative in *Not a Pretty Picture*—in what might be termed a Godardian or Brechtian way—in order to distance the audience from the film and not allow them to escape into fantasy, to

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Director Martha Coolidge in 1975, when she intercut footage of herself working with actors with fictional scenes of a date rape in *Nat a Pretty Picture*.

Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art

force them to think about what they were seeing. I think you said it was to "avoid titillation." But in *Rambling Rose* the camera has an expressly voyeuristic gaze that is titillating. We see Rose having sex through a crack in the door, we see her on the street as a girlwatcher would see her—a shot of ass, a shot of legs. Does this reflect a change in your sensibility and response to the material or a change in the conditions under which you were working?

A: I'm sure my sensibility hasn't changed. It's definitely my response to the material. It's very different trying to understand a girl's own sexuality and forcing an audience to participate in a rape. One of the things that I loved about Laura Dern, and one of the reasons that I thought of her for this part, was her performance in *Smooth Talk*. She so beautifully embodied the female girl standing on the brink of sexuality, a girl who wants sex desperately and of course has no clue how dangerous the situation is that she's getting into—which I completely identified with. There's a touch of that desire in *Not a Pretty Picture*, but I was more frightened of the sexuality because of having been raped.

What's interesting about *Rambling Rose* is that a female sexuality is the subject of the movie, not an object in the movie. She may be shot occasionally as if she were an object, okay; although, I must say that in terms of Hollywood's perception peeping through a door is the most reserved and realistic presentation of that scene. This is not a scene about the audience looking at a girl naked. It's about a specific boy looking through the door at his father. The boy is going to be not only interested and curious but horrified. I feel it's the least exploitative way I could've done the scene and still have one which I felt was really important.

Q: Your early films came out of extremely personal experiences. What inspires your choices now, such as *Rambling Rose*?

A: All work, if it's good work, is personal and autobiographical; it doesn't matter who wrote it. You pick material because it has themes that echo with your own. Of course some movies are more jobs than others, but even in a job you try to find something you can really care about. Sometimes you'll take a movie just for one scene. Even in your own films, you're not going to feel the same way about every aspect of the picture. There are certain things you have to do because you're telling a story, and other things that are really what it's all about for you. I would say that the themes

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in *Rambling Rose* are as close to me as the themes in anything I've ever done.

Q: Do you think it's important for filmmakers to be political?

A: It's important for filmmakers to know who they are and what they believe in. It is death to think you can talk about things that are meaningless to you and to other people. Whatever it is, you've got to be trying to say something—and trying to learn something. Now some people aren't going to be really political in what they care about, some are going to be exploring a parent's lying to a child—though that could be political. But the fact is, it's human, and if it's important to them, then it's going to be important to somebody. I really believe that from the specific and from passion comes the universal.

Q: So you haven't felt your work has been depoliticized by going to Hollywood?

A: Oh no, not at all. *Plain Clothes* is a little movie I made for Paramount which is very political in its heart and soul. The idea of *Plain Clothes* is that education is just going down the tubes, that there's no money. It's a nice city like Seattle, it's an urban school, but everything has changed. The teachers are barely surviving; they're getting paid terribly. You look at the student parking lot: the kids have new cars. You look at the teacher parking lot: the cars barely drive. The teachers are dressed in horrible, shabby clothes, and they're stealing from their pension fund. It's a murder mystery. The teachers are stealing from their own futures because they can't live today.

Paramount sensed there was a storyline in there, that there was something being said. And they just cut it all out of there. But what's really interesting is that if you do it completely, so that it's in every frame, it's still there. It's just never stated. All the stuff that's talked about is gone, but it's in every frame of the movie.

Q: You were schooled at New York University in

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filmmaking and learned production on the streets. What was the best experience for you, and what would you recommend to aspiring directors?

A: The world is changing, and it's hard to go by my experience. First of all, it's much easier for women now. I won't say you don't have to work harder and be better, still. You do. But the fact is that the kind of endless struggle I went through—having to make films 18 years before I got to make *Valley Girl*—I just don't hear stories like that. Two years can seem endless. But 18 years is ridiculously endless.

If you can afford school, it's great because you can go to school, make a movie, live a protected life in a world that is frankly not very protective once you get out. But for those who don't have that kind of extra money, it's ridiculous to spend \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year on school when you can make a movie for that. God knows, there are endless great professional classes available: continuing education courses, the two best writing teachers that teach in LA—John Truby and Robert McKee—come and teach in New York. There are great technical courses you can take without paying \$20,000 tuition. And acting—which I think all directors should take—is a major resource in New York. Acting class has never been expensive because actors don't have money. And when you do your movie—because you can't become a director without having a movie to show—you make sure you're going to do a good job. It can be five minutes or 15 minutes or 30 minutes; it doesn't matter. It should be good for what it is. That's what you have to do, whether it's in a school or not.

And if you want to be an independent filmmaker, which I think has many desirable and admirable aspects to it, then you have to figure out how you're going to survive. I knew Gregory Nava and Anna Thomas, who did *El Norte*. They went to film school, and she wrote *The Vegetarian Epicure* cookbook in order to pay for their first film. And I'm telling you, for years they made movies on her cookbook because cookbooks sell.

It's tough to survive, but the positive side to being an independent, which I've always loved and still do envy, is that you don't have people telling you what to do. You may think that you have things controlling your life—like, I can't get money, and it's hard to get a grant. At the same time, from the perspective of a New York independent, it's hard to imagine what it's like to have 40 extremely powerful people telling you what to do. It is agony. It's one of those things where, if they'd told me how tough it was before I went, I probably wouldn't have gone. At the same time, I wasn't wrong having the hunch that maybe this was something I could handle. I'm out there and I'm doing it. It's great, and it's terrible.

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## Domestic

**ALFRED I. DUPONT-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AWARDS FOR BROADCAST JOURNALISM**, Sept., NY. News & public affairs programming eligible. Award cats: network TV, major market TV, medium market TV, small market TV, radio, ind. prods & cable. Entries must originally air btwn July 1, 1991 & June 30, 1992. Formats: 1/2". Entry fee: \$40-\$75. Contact: Bill Leonard, Alfred I. duPont Center for Broadcast Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism, 701 Journalism, Columbia Univ., New York, NY 10027; (212) 854-5047; fax: (212) 854-7837.

**ASBURY FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 3-6, NY. Fest for ind. short films entering 11th yr at Fashion Institute of Technology, NY. All cats considered: animation, comedy, doc, drama & experimental. Films must be 25 min. or less. Last yr over 100 people attended two-evening event. Fest also presents selection of short films from around world, under theme "Int'l Award Winners." Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 11. Contact: Rachel Elkind/Peter Ramos, Asbury Film Festival, 147 W. 25 St., 8th fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 366-1337, fax: (212) 696-5848.

**BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM**, Sept., CO. New ind. prods programmed in noncompetitive fest, which attracts audience of avid moviegoers & entered 12th yr in 1992. Breckenridge is multi-seasonal resort located 90 miles west of Denver in Rocky Mountains. About 30 features, shorts, docs, experimental, animated & educational films selected; premieres & retros part of fest. Critics Choice Award (chosen by audience) to best film in 3 cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Entry fee: \$25. Contact: Jan E. Desrosier, exec. director, Breckenridge Festival of Film, Box 718, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (303) 453-6200.

**DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov. 5-8, TX. Presented by Video Association of Dallas & Dallas Museum of Art, fest one of larger diversified video fests in US. It "even-handedly shows the state of the medium—as art, as entertainment, as document, as archive & as commerce." Fest offers programs such as KIDVID (children's programs & workshops), broad look at current works by nat'l & int'l ind. producers & Texas Show, featuring new work by Texas artists. Contact: Dallas Video Festival, Video Assoc. of Dallas, 215A Henry St., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 651-8888; fax: (214) 651-8896.

**FILM ARTS FESTIVAL**, Nov., CA. Noncompetitive regional showcase in 8th yr for ind. works of any length on any subject by N. CA film & video artists. Sponsored by media arts center Film Arts Foundation, fest is thematic, w/ themes evolving from works submitted. Honoraria for works shown other than those which have received FAF grants. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Nicole Barends, Film Arts Festival, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

**GREAT PLAINS FILM FESTIVAL**, July, NE. Ind. film- & videomakers invited to compete for approximately \$10,000 in prize money. Fest estab. to provide showcase for film & video artists in Great Plains & surrounding area to present work to public & to potential distributors & exhibitors from region & nation. Special emphasis on works that encourage understanding of country's diverse ethnic heritage, particularly works by Native American film & video artists. Awards: Grand Prize (to work that best reflects area's ethnic heritage); special award to best work by Native American artist; best

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

dramatic feature; best doc feature & best short film/video. Program incl. tribute, retro & special award to estab. film/video artist whose roots & heritage/artistic concerns firmly grounded in Great Plains region & culture. Entries must be completed since January, 1990 by students or independents from AR, CO, IA, KS, MN, MO, MT, NE, ND, OK, SD, TX & WY. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Great Plains Film Festival, Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, NE 68588-0302; (402) 472-5353.

**INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET**, Sept 20-27, NY. Major market for ind. films celebrates 14th edition this yr. Annually attracts over 300 domestic & foreign companies to view latest crop of ind. prods at Angelika Film Center in New York City. Over 250 films participated in last market. Participants must be IFP members (there are 6 IFP orgs throughout country & entrants may be member of any to qualify). Features, works in progress, short films, movies for TV & scripts for recently estab. script directory accepted. Program incl. wide range of special events, such as Breakfast Club seminars, Meet the Distributor series, Independents Day Seminar, receptions & parties, days devoted to various state film commissions. Market volunteers welcome; contact IFP office for details. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: July 2 (early deadline for substantial discount); July 20 (final deadline). Entry fee: \$275-\$425. Contact: Jane Wright, market director, IFP, 132 W. 21st St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 243-7777; fax: (212) 243-3882.

**LOOKOUT LESBIAN & GAY VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov., NY. Fest, now in 4th yr, sees video as "one of most accessible & inexpensive tools for creating imagery that directly challenges homophobic representations of lesbian & gay community...a way to say 'in your face' to heterosexist commentary...." Fest highlights works by young adults, women of color & "makers who dare to question the structure of male & female gender roles." Any style, narrative, animation, experimental, PSAs, music videos acceptable if NTSC playable (works originating on film also accepted). Formats accepted: 8mm, hi-8, 3/4", 1/2". Pixel Fisher Price. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Festival director, Downtown

Community Int'l Center, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-1298.

**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL & VIDEOFEST**, Oct. 1-11, CA. Now celebrating 15th yr, fest screens narrative, doc, animated, shorts (up to 15 min.) & experimental films & videos. Emphasis on new work that has not been widely seen, particularly in northern CA. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$12. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Zoe Elton, Mill Valley Film Festival & Videofest, 38 Miller Ave., Ste. 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: (415) 383-8606.

**NEW ENGLAND CHILDREN'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov. 7-15, MA. Newly estab. 2-yr-old competitive fest accepts "diverse selection of outstanding int'l films & videos that will both entertain children & challenge their creative & intellectual abilities." Selected live-action & animated works featured in fest's public screening program & doc award made as part of fest's education program. Films seen primarily by children, educators, parents, children's advocates, filmmakers, press & distributors. Awards: Best of Fest; Live Action Feature Narrative; Live Action Short Narrative; Animation Feature; Animation Short; Doc (doc theme is "rights of children"). Entries must be aimed at children ages 3-14, not distributed theatrically in US & not broadcast on TV in eastern US. Entries may have been screened at other fests. Works about children aimed at adult audiences may not be appropriate. Deadline: July 1. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on 1/2". No entry fee. Contact: Cheryl Hirshman, director, New England Children's Film & Video Festival, 28 Woods Road, Medford, MA 02155; (617) 391-4260.

**NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO**, Nov. 6-7, NY. Held at NY's New School, fest accepts ind. works of all genres, incl. animation, doc, experimental & narrative, under 60 min. which are "conceptually challenging & innovative." Industrial, educational or promotional works not accepted unless reflective of significant innovation/artistic achievement. Selected entries receive Award Certificate along w/\$5 per minute exhibition fee. Highlights of fest go on nat'l tour. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1990. Entry fee: \$30. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; prescreening on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 15. Contact: NY Expo, 532 LaGuardia Pl., Ste. 330, New York, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742.

**NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept. 25-Oct. 11, NY. Deadline: July 1 (tapes 20 min. or longer); July 8 (tapes under 20 min.). Contact: Marian Masone, New York Film Festival, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL**, August, CO. Important selective fest in 19th yr, held over Labor Day wkend, programs new US & foreign features & docs, attracting large amount of media & cross-section of professional community. Features & shorts accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: \$35. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Bill Pence/Stella Pence, Telluride Film Festival, Nat'l Film Preserve, Box 1156, Hanover, NH 03755; (603) 643-1255; fax: (603) 643-5938.

## Foreign

**LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., UK. Fest director, Sheila Whitaker & deputy director Rosa Bosch will again work w/ FIVF to collect & ship films & videos for selection in 4th yr of Europe's largest forum of US ind. prods. Last yr large number

of US entries shown in context of program of 175 int'l features. Fest, in 36th yr, is invitational, non-competitive & particularly interested in children's films for program prior to fest. Sections: Electronic Image; Art & Experiment (which may incl. US inds); British, French & Italian Panoramas; Africa, Asia & Latin America; LFF on Square (mainstream films) & children's films. Screening venues: National Film Theatre, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon West End, Empire, ICA, Lumiere & Curzon West End. Europe's major noncompetitive film event, attended by large audiences & over 700 buyers & British & int'l media. Entries must be UK premieres. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Fest formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4"; preview on cassette only. For info & appl., send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Deadline: July 10, through FIVF; Aug. 10, if directly to LFF. Fest address: London Int'l Film Festival, South Bank, London SE1 8XT, England; tel: 071 815 1322/1323; fax: 071 633 0786; tlx: 929220 NATFIL G.

**MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA & VIDEO**, Oct. 15-25, Canada. Now in 21st yr this noncompetitive, important showcase for innovative ind. prods looks for alternative works that creatively depict human exp. Special awards, sponsored by Laurentian Bank: \$5,000 for best feature; \$1,000 for best short; \$2,000 for best video. Also Critics Association award. Feature length & short drama, fiction videos & films & docs accepted. Entries must be produced 21 mo. prior to fest & unscreened in Quebec. Entry fee: \$40 (film & video). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Beta. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Claude

Chamberlan, Festival Int'l du Nouveau Cinema & de la Video de Montreal, 3726 Boul. St.-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V8; tel: (514) 843-4725; fax: (514) 843-4631.

**MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug., Canada. Only competitive fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF, now in 16th yr. Fest boasts annual audiences over 280,000 & programs over 250 films. Sections: Official Competition; Hors Concours (out of competition); Latin American Cinema; Cinema of Today & Tomorrow (new trends); Panorama Canada; TV films. Also Int'l Film, TV & Video Market. Awards: CS\$50,000 Prix des Montrealais for 1st feature. Features & shorts accepted. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: July 8. Contact: Serge Losique, Montreal World Film Festival, 1455 Boul. de Maisonneuve W., Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8, Canada; tel: (514) 848-3883/933-9699; fax: (514) 848-3886; tlx: 05-25472.

**SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept., Spain. Described in *Variety* as queen of Spanish fests, this fest, now in 40th yr & held in Basque region, is largest film event in Spain. Int'l competition & several sidebars & tributes. Sections: Official Competitive Section; Zabaltegui Open Zone. Last yr, for 1st time, competition open to docs. Awards: Golden Conch, Silver Conch, best actor/actress & Special Jury awards (Competition); \$100,000 to best film by new director (Zabaltegui); Grand prize \$80,000 grant toward winner's next film (doc). Dramatic shorts accepted for exhibition but not official competition. Fest formats: 35mm (Competition); 35mm & 16mm (Zabaltegui). Deadline: July 1. Contact: San Sebastian Film Festival, Box 397, 20080 San Sebastian, Spain; tel: 34 43 48 1212; fax: 34 43 285979; tlx: 38145 FCSS E.

**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS**, Sept., Canada. Noncompetitive celebration of film w/ wide-ranging program playing to enthusiastic int'l audiences (incl. large press contingent), fest is major event on circuit, w/ many films receiving world & N. American premieres. Over 200 features from over 40 countries annually participate, incl. over 75 shorts & docs. Cats: Galas (premieres of major new prods); Contemporary World Cinema ("most recent & engaging films" from several countries); Perspective Canada; Edge; Special Presentations; Midnight Madness; Nat'l Cinema & Spotlight. 2-day Trade Forum industry sidebar held during fest. Fest renowned for programming innovative, alternative, experimental films. Entries must be completed after Sept. 1., 1991. Short films must be by Canadian producers. No entry fee. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 10. Contact: Piers Handling, Festival of Festivals, 70 Carlton St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L7, Canada; tel: (416) 967-7371; fax: (416) 967-9477; tlx: 06 219724.

**VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 2-18, Canada. Founded in 1982, event has become one of N. America's larger int'l film fests. Only feature length films (70 min. & over) which have not been screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia eligible. Sections: Canadian Images; Cinema of East Asia; Cinema of Our Time; Young Americans; Archival Series; After Midnight. About 150 films representing 40 countries shown. Awards: Air Canada Award for Most Popular Film, decided by audience ballot. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Alan Franey, Vancouver Int'l Film Festival, 788 Beatty St., Suite 303, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 2M1, Canada; tel: (604) 685-0260; fax: (604) 688-8221; tlx: 045-08354 FILMFEST VCR.

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Conservation Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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9th floor  
New York, NY  
10012

**ADVOCACY**

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

**INSURANCE**

**Production Insurance**

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

**Equipment Insurance**

Equipment coverage for all of your equipment worldwide whether owned or leased.

**Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT**

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

**Dental Plan**

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

**DEALS AND DISCOUNTS**

**Service Discounts**

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

**Nationwide Car Rentals**

AIVF membership provides discounts on car rentals from major national rental agencies.

**Mastercard Plan**

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

**Facets Multimedia Video Rentals**

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

*Join AIVF Today*

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers—providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

**Individual membership**

10 issues of *The Independent*  
 Access to all plans and discounts  
 Festival/Distribution/Library services  
 Information services  
 Discounted admission to seminars  
 Tape and publication discounts  
 Advocacy campaign participation  
 Free *Motion Picture Enterprises Guide*  
 Vote and run for office on board of directors

**Student membership**

All the benefits of individual membership except to vote and run for board of directors

**Library membership**

10 issues of *The Independent*  
 Festival/Distribution/Library services  
 Information services  
 Free *MPE Guide*  
 PLUS: Special notice of upcoming publications

**Nonprofit Organizational membership**

All the benefits of individual membership except to vote and run for board of directors  
 PLUS: Includes up to 3 individuals

**Business/Industry membership**

All the benefits of individual membership except to vote and run for board of directors  
 PLUS: Special mention in *The Independent*  
 Includes up to 3 individuals

Join AIVF today and get a one-year subscription to *The Independent*.

**Rates**

(Canada, Mexico, US, PR)

- \$25/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$45/individual
- \$75/library
- \$100/nonprofit organization
- \$150/business & industry
- Add \$18 for 1st class mailing

**Foreign Rates**

(Outside North America)

- \$40/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$60/individual
- \$90/library
- \$115/nonprofit organization
- \$165/business & industry
- Add \$55 for foreign air mail

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Buy ■ Rent ■ Sell

**COMPLETE 3/4" EDIT SYSTEM** for sale. Sony Umatic VO5850 edit recorder & VO5800 recorder, convergence ECS 90 edit controller w/ fader, 13" videotek color monitor w/ underscan, b+w status monitor, color corrector, cables, stands. \$3,500. (212) 772-2674.

**COMPLETE BROADCAST PACKAGE** for sale. Incl. Sony DXC-3000 CCD camera w/ Fujinon lens, tripod & A/C. BVU-110 w/ batts & A/C. Sennheiser lavalier mic. Lowell light kit w/ gels & accessories. Stands, arms & C-lamps. Asking \$6,000 or best offer. (718) 392-6058.

**FOR SALE:** AST 386 SX/16 desktop computer w/ 4MB RAM & 80 MB HD, \$500. New copies of Lotus 1-2-3 & Ami Pro for Windows. Best offer. Call 691-0871.

**PRODUCTION OFFICE SPACE:** Low rates on short- & mid-term rentals. 24-hr access. Support services optional. Great downtown location in an artistic production environment. Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway at 12th Street. Call Rodger Larson at (212) 673-9361.

**CAMERA REPAIR:** Lens collimation, all makes: 8, 16 & 35mm. Freelance technician (Arri-trained), 1/2 going rates. Batteries re-celled. Battery chargers made to order. Cameras bought & sold. Camera check-out, house calls, low-cost estimates, work guaranteed. (914) 674-0636.

**STEADICAM** for film & video. Special rates for inds. Call Sergei Franklin at (212) 228-4254.

**LEADING WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTOR** offers private space w/ panoramic views in bright south-midtown office. Conference room, video screening facilities & all office amenities. \$1,200 to \$1,500/mo. subject to services. Call (212) 686-6777.

**WORDSCRIPT** turns MS Word (Mac) into professional scriptwriting tool. Automatic screenplay formatting & editing. Outlining, scene numbers, character glossary, etc. \$49.95 ea. to: R. Arnold, 2550 Greenway St. #9, Toledo, OH 43607; (419) 536-6313.

## Distribution Opportunities

**ATA TRADING CORP.** is looking for shorts, features, docs, TV series, etc. for foreign distribution into all markets worldwide. Call Hal or Susan Lewis at (212) 594-6460.

**DISTRIBUTOR SPECIALIZING IN INT'L SALES** seeks films/shorts for worldwide marketing. Contact: Art Skopinsky, Monarch Films, 1 Austin Avenue, Iselin, NJ 08830; (908) 283-4646.

**VARIED DIRECTIONS INT'L**, distributors of socially important, award-winning programs on child abuse, health & women's issues, seeks select films/videos. Call Joyce at (800) 888-5236 or write: 69 Elm Street, Camden, ME 04843; fax: (207) 236-4512.

**INT'L TELEVISION NETWORK (ITN)** seeks doc., dramatic, childrens & educational programs for overseas distr. Send info. & 1/2" sample tape. Contact: Jonathan Rosebani, ITN, 2180 Garnet Ave., # 3G-3, San Diego, CA 92109; (619) 483-8400; fax: (619) 483-1180.

**VIDEO PROJECT**, nonprofit distributor of educational films & videos, seeks works on environmental issues, arms race & other global concerns. Contact: The Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (510) 655-9050.

**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250-character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date (e.g. June 8 for the August/September issue). Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

## Freelancers

**SEEKING DIRECTORS** for already partially financed low-budget features. Prior feature, commercial or music video directing exp. a must. Screenwriting exp. helpful, not essential. Send resumé to: Brown, #10, 32 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001.

**HI-8 CAM PKG** w/ exp. cameraperson: 3-chip Sony DXC-325/EVV-9000, full accessories incl. light, mics, mixer & LCD monitor. \$550/day, shorter & longer rates negotiable. Call Robbie at (718) 783-8432.

**ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY** will handle acquisition of options, financing for film & TV prod., incorporations, wills, tax, copyright & landlord-tenant matters. Steven Kopsick, Esq., 1053 Admont Ave., Franklin Square, NY; (212) 967-7711 ext. 4622.

**SOUND MIXER** available for location work on features, shorts, documentaries & music videos. Have own equipment & rates are reasonable. Call Rob Taz (212) 995-9523.

**CAMERA WOMAN W/ BETACAM SP PACKAGE:** 5yrs exp. shooting & editing news & features stories in English & Spanish for NY TV market. Good rates, great eye. Call Newman at (212) 277-0321, beeper; (914) 478-5716, machine.

**BETACAM PKG** (reg. or SP) w/ tripod, lights, mics, shotgun & van avail. Award-winning cameraman & crew avail. Fast & reliable. Broadcast quality. Call Eric (718) 389-7104.

**CAMERAMAN** w/ equip. Credits incl. 4 features (35 & 16mm), news & doc (CBS, BBC, PBS), ads, industrials & music vids. 16mm & Betacam pkgs w/ lights, mics, crew & van. Strong visual sense. Personable & reasonable rates. Call for demo. Eric (718) 389-7104.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ 35mm Ariflex BL, Zeiss Superspeeds, zoom, video tap plus lighting/grip

pkg. & video editing. Feature, commercial & music video credits plus producing exp. Call to see my reel. Blain (212) 279-0162.

**VIDEO DP:** Exp'd cameraman (broadcast, cable & corporate) will light & shoot on Betacam or format of your choice. Top notch equip. & crew. Int'l exp. 4 x 4 truck w/ cellular phone. We get it right! Call Tony, A.G. Video Prod. (201) 461-8722.

**BETACAM SP** field prod. w/ Sony Broadcast BVW 400 camcorder, best & most light-sensitive camera avail. Complete sound, lighting, grip equip. incl. stabilizer for steadicam-style shots. Exp. DP & crew. Color correction & full editing avail. (212) 529-1254.

**HI-QUALITY, LO-HYPE IN VA:** Cinematographer, sound recordist, more. Exp., good attitude, reasonable rates. 16mm, 35mm, video. Eclair NPR 16mm camera, Nagra, lights. Will travel. Reel avail. Neil Means (804) 296-8955.

**FILM SCORING:** Original music by professional composer. Sensitive & creative. Acoustic & synthesized music. Computer/MIDI studio. Russ Lossing Prods (914) 968-8476.

**BETACAM SP.** \$450/day. Cameraman w/ Ikegami HL79E/BVW-35SP looking for interesting short-term projects. Corp., industrial, doc. Incl. tripod, mics, monitor, lighting. 5-passenger van incl. 3/4" Sony off-line editing suite, \$15/hr. Tom (212) 279-7003.

**BETACAM SP:** Award-winning cameraman w/ BVW 507 field pkg. will work w/in your budget. Equip. pkg. incl. Vinten tripod, DP kit, wide-angle lens, Neuman KMR81, Lavs & Toyota 4-Runner. BVP7/BVW 35 pkg. avail. & full postprod. services. Hal (201) 662-7526.

**THE SCREENPLAY DOCTOR** & the Movie Mechanic—Professional story analysts/postprod. specialists will analyze your screenplay or treatment & evaluate your film-in-progress. Major studio & ind. background. Reasonable rates. (212) 219-9224.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** avail. for dramatic 16 or 35mm prods of any length. Credits incl. *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

**GERMAN CINEMATOGRAPHER**, award-winning, avail. in New York area. Owner of 16mm Aaton pkg. Will travel. Wolfgang Held (212) 620-0029.

**PARIS IS BURNING-DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY.** Documentaries, features, commercials, rock videos. Ask for my reel—I think you will like what you see. Owner of super 16-capable Aaton pkg. Paul (212) 475-1947.

**AWARD-WINNING CAMERAMAN** w/ 16mm ACL II & Betacam looking for challenging projects. Partial client list: ABC Sports, IBM, LIRR, Pitney Bowes, Wilderness Society. Complete crews avail., incl. sound & grip pkgs. Reasonable rates. Mike Carmine (718) 224-3355.

**STEADICAM** for film & video. Special rates for inds. Call Sergei Franklin (212) 228-4254.

**BETACAM SP & HI-8** pkg. avail. w/ or w/out well-travelled doc. & network cameraman & crew. Ed Fabry (212) 387-9340.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ 8 feature films exp. Credits incl. *Straight Out of Brooklyn*. Self-owned 35/16 camera systems, lights/electrical pkg., sync-sound recording system. Lowest rates! Call John Rosnell (212) 366-5030.

## Postproduction

**CHEAP, PLEASANT S-VHS:** New state-of-the-art system: Panasonic 7750, 7650 w/ on-board TBCs, hi-fi & normal audio. Cuts-only for off-line or simple finished prods. Flatiron dist. 24-hr access. \$495/ 5-day wk. Avail. w/ ed. Manhattan Media, (212) 645-4321.

**COME TO WESTHO** to edit your video. Off-line on 3/4" ECS-90 w/ TC & EDL. Convenient location on Spring St. & Hudson. Also, hi-8 camera system available. Call Garth Stein at (212) 255-8755.

**BARGAIN VHS OFF-LINE & HI-8 DUBBING:** \$10/hr. editing sys., hi-8 TC striping & VHS window dubs extra. Private comfortable space in accessible Park Slope, Brooklyn. Exp. editor also avail. Call Robbie (718) 783-8432.

**3/4" OFF-LINE SYSTEM** for rent. Cut at your location. Sony 9800/9850 decks (SP w/ Dolby & XLR output), RM 450 controller, Tascam 6-channel mixer w/ amp & speakers, 13" monitors w/ blue & underscan, TC reader. Long/short-term rental. (718) 392-6058.

**BRODSKY & TREADWAY:** Super 8 & regular 8mm film-to-video masters, scene-by-scene to 1" & Betacam. By appointment only. New tel.: (508) 948-7985.

**FOR RENT:** Sony 5850 edit system in own home or in cozy Greenwich Village office w/ private bathroom, kitchen & garden. \$700/week or negotiable. (212) 727-1732.

**3/4" OFF-LINE VIDEO** system w/ time-code reader/generator. Comfortable, economical, convenient downtown location. Call (212) 941-1695.

**DESKTOP VIDEO SYSTEMS.** Complete hi-8/S-VHS pkgs under \$5,000. Incl. Sony hi-8 w/ time code, editing VCR, computer & frame-accurate decision list controller system. Install, train, support. Cliff, Box 668, Peck Slip Sta., New York, NY 10272; (212) 285-1463.

**OFF-LINE 3/4", \$15/hr;** w/ editor, \$25/hr. Sony system 5800, 5850, RM440, mixer, black generator. Very comfortable, private room, great for clients. 24-hr access. 30th & 8th. Betacam SP to 3/4" window burns. Prod. services avail. Tom (212) 279-7003.

**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape. Precision guaranteed. \$30/400' (1000') camera roll. Student rates & pick up/delivery avail. Call NY's only Downtown Dailies Service (212) 431-9289.

**OFF-LINE AT HOME!** Will rent 2 Sony 5850s w/ RM440 or RM450 edit controller & monitors. Low monthly rates, \$650/week. Answer your own phone & cut all night if you like! John (212) 245-1364 or 529-1254.

**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND** film services. All S-8 prod., postprod., editing, sync sound, mix, multitrack, single & double system sound editing, transfers, stills, striping, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of inds. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

**16MM CUTTING ROOMS:** 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access.

Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

**STILL COZY & CHEAP,** but great, new 57th St. location. Rent our Sony 3/4" off-line system for only \$500/wk. Call Jane (212) 929-4795 or Deborah (212) 226-2579.

**NEGATIVE MATCHING:** 16 or 35mm. 40 years exp., all work guaranteed! Will beat any competitor's price. Video matchback to the AVID 1 Composer. Northeast Negative Matchers (413) 736-2177 or (800) 370-CUTS. Now accepting AMEX, VISA & MC.

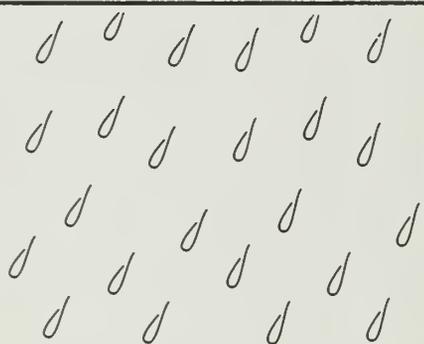
**SUPER 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO** transfer. To 1", Beta, hi-8, 3/4", VHS. Slo-mo, freeze, toaster EFX also. Standard 8, slides, 16mm also. Broadcast quality, low rates, personal service. Super 8 camera rental & music cinematography. Landyvision (914) 679-7046.

## Classifieds Sale

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10x 20% off =	\$160.00	vs \$200

Send your ad (250 characters max.) and a check (payable to FIVF) before August 8 to: Classifieds, The Independent, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012.



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One Copy	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$5.00	\$9.00	\$8.00	\$11.00	\$14.00
2-4 Copies	3.50	3.00	5.50	4.50	8.00	6.00	8.00	9.00
5-9 Copies	3.00	2.50	4.50	3.50	7.00	5.00	7.00	8.00
10-19 Copies	2.50	2.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	4.50	6.00	7.00
1-4 RUSH Dubs.	\$8.00		\$11.00		\$17.00	\$22.00	\$28.00	
TC Burn In	\$10.00		\$14.00		\$26.00	Inquire for LABELING		
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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**ARTS EXTENSION SERVICE (AES)** will hold annual summer program in arts management, "Manage Creatively," at U. Mass., Amherst, July 8-10. Tuition: \$270. Contact: AES, Division of Continuing Education, 604 Goodell Building, U. Mass., Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

**FILM IN THE CITIES** offers summer media arts workshops in MN for educators. June 15-20, Kelliher School, Kelliher; (218) 647-8286. June 22-27, Rocori High School, Cold Spring; (612) 685-8683. Workshops limited to 15 participants & \$35 (nonrefundable). Contact: Kristine Sorensen, Youth & Teacher Education, Film in the Cities, 2388 Univ. Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114; (612) 546-6104.

**LATINO COLLABORATIVE AT DCTV** offers ongoing series of bimonthly screenings. Showcases attempt to establish forum for discussion of challenging discourses presented by latino film- & videomakers. At DCTV, 71 Lafayette St., New York City; (212) 941-1298.

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP** offers courses in digital & video moving images (July 6-10); doc. planning (July 13-17); found footage filmmaking (July 20-24) & small-format video (July 27-31). Tuition per course: \$285; lab fee: \$35. Contact: Visual Studies Workshop Summer Institute, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**CITY TV**, Santa Monica's cable access channel, seeks works, especially nontraditional programs for seniors, children & disabled & Spanish-language programming. Contact: Laura Greenfield, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-8590.

**IMAGE UNION** seeks ind. prods on 3/4" tape for broadcast. Narrative, comedy, animation or experimental works accepted. Contact: Jamie Caeser, WTTW, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-5000.

**LA PLAZA**, wkly doc. series on WGBH, Boston, seeks original works by ind. film- & videomakers w/ themes relevant to Latinos. Contact: La Plaza/Acquisitions, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

**LESBIANS IN THE CREATIVE ARTS** seeks videos w/ lesbian content for public show & possible distribution. Any length, genre, style or cassette format. Contact: Video, Suite 443, 496A Hudson St., New York, NY 10014.

**QUICK FLICKS** seeks short subject drama, doc. & animation works for possible airing on nat'l cable access network TV show. Send S-VHS or 3/4" tapes to: Quick Flicks c/o Eugene Haynes, 782 Amsterdam Ave., #2A, New York, NY 10025.

**SENSORY LAB** seeks video art imagery for alternative screening/showcase in Los Angeles. Contact: Magdalena, Sensory Lab, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd., Box 420, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 661-3903.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**OREGON ARTS COMMISSION**'s artist residency program introduces practicing professional artists into community settings as resource to engage students, teachers & citizens in arts. Short-term residencies focus on project in classrooms or designated workspace. Minimum of 2

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., June 8 for the Aug./Sept. issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

wks & max. of 8 wks. Long-term residencies provide studio facility w/in educational or community setting. Artist devotes half of time to students or citizens & half to own project. Range from 2-9 mos. Deadline: July 15. Submit artist appl., resumé, 2 refs, 1 rec., SASE, sample 16mm film or 1/2" VHS tape to: NW Film Center, Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park, Portland, OR 97205.

**VIDEO MAKER SOUGHT** by Univ. of Calif. at Irvine at rank of Assistant/Associate Professor for teaching duties beg. Sept. 1993. MFA or equivalent, knowledge of computer imaging, & broad understanding of contemporary visual arts desirable. Women & minorities encouraged to apply. Preference given to appls filed by Nov. 1, 1992. Send curriculum vitae, statement of teaching philosophy, adequate representation of prod., 4 refs, any supplementary material & SASE to: Catherine Lord, chair, Dept. of Studio Art, Univ. of Calif., Irvine, CA 92717.

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP** offers 1-mo. artist-in-residence program to allow artists facilities & time to pursue work. \$1,000 honorarium provided. Program open to US residents. Term beg. Sept. Media artists invited to submit proposals for creation of new audio work. Send sample of work-in-progress or finished work that demonstrates innovative audio use on audio cassette, Amiga disks, 8mm, VHS, or 3/4" video; SASE; brief statement about work sample; description of project to be worked on during residency & current resumé. Deadline: June 12. Contact: Mona Jimenez, Artist-In-Residence Program, Media Center at Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

**WIDE ANGLE** seeks manuscripts for special issue on complexity of viewer responses to film & television to be guest edited by Janis Butler Holm. Essays that test current theories of spectator behavior or focus on nonacademic viewers welcomed. Possible topics: publicity & other commercial preparation for viewer response; diversity of interpretation w/in specific populations; gut response; political correctness & response revision. Deadline: Sept. 15. Send 2 copies of manuscript, concise abstract of argument & brief author bio. to: Editor, *Wide Angle*, School of Film, 378 Lindley Hall, Ohio Univ., Athens, OH 45701.

## Publications

**ARTS EXTENSION SERVICE** offers *Intersections: Community Arts & Education Collaborations*, \$6 + shipping & handling. Reports on six city-wide & 3 multi-state institutes & examines factors that contribute to successful community/school partnerships to improve arts in education. Contact: Arts Extension Service, Division of Continuing Education, 604 Goodell Building, U. Mass., Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

**FOUNDATION CENTER** offers *The Foundation Grants Index*, fundraising tool used by nonprofit organizations & foundations to discover grantmaking priorities of nation's largest foundations. 57,000 + grants analyzed. \$125 + \$4.50 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3076; (212) 620-4230.

**INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA ANALYSIS (IMA)**, nonprofit educational corporation, offers books, journals, tapes & monographs on media & domestic & foreign policy issues. IMA examines government media institutions & counters misinformation & disinformation. Contact: IMA, 145 W. 4th St., New York, NY 10012-1052; (212) 254-1061.

## Resources ■ Funds

**MEXICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS** awards grants in broad range of fine, performing, literary & media arts cats to US & Mexican citizens who design exchanges of cultural scholarship. Program provides opportunity for local arts agencies to promote cultural acceptance & appreciation. Contact: Dr. Carlos Ornelas, executive director of US-Mexico Commission for Educational & Cultural Exchange, Londres 16, Col. Juarez, 06600 Mexico, D.F.; (525) 535-4298.

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL** offers long-term consultancies to minority arts organizations. Consultants help strategize on marketing, problem-solving, planning & development. Deadline: July 15. Draft application deadline: June 15. For appl., contact: Barbara Bayless, Minority Arts Program coordinator, OAC, 727 East Main St., Columbus, OH 43205; (614) 466-2613.

**STOP ART CENSORSHIP:** Call People For the American Way Action Fund's "SAVE THE NEA HOTLINE" & Western Union will send customized letters to your Representative & 2 Senators urging support for NEA. \$6.50 billed to credit card or phone number. (800) 892-2121.

**WOMEN'S PROJECT FUND FOR FILM & VIDEO** requests projects for upcoming funding cycle. Only women film- & videomakers w/ editorial & budgetary control over project eligible. Codirectorships w/men & projects where woman is producing w/man directing ineligible. Works in preprod., prod., postprod. & distr. accepted. Deadline: June 29. Contact: Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, Rm. 500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

**Distributors are looking for you!**

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*The Independent Classifieds.*  
See page 37



## NATIONAL COALITION STEPS UP ACTIVITY

In the past few months, the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcast Producers (NCIPBP)—of which the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers is a member—has been actively reasserting its presence in a number of areas. By recently expanding its board of directors from six elected members to nine, the NCIPBP has created greater regional and gender diversity. Current board members are: Linda Blackaby of Philadelphia; Janet Cole of San Francisco; Moctezuma Esparza of Los Angeles; Cheryl Fabio-Bradford of Oakland (secretary); Martha Gever of New York City; Linda Gibson of San Francisco; Lillian Jiménez of New York City (chair); Fred Johnson of Covington, Kentucky (vice chair); and Gary Robinson of Santa Fe (treasurer).

The newly expanded board held a meeting on March 14 to review a wide array of critical issues, including the nominating process for replacement of Independent Television Service (ITVS) board members whose terms expire this year. Fabio-Bradford and Gever were named co-chairs of the Nominating Committee. Because of concerns with conflict of interest, the NCIPBP board decided that any board member consulting with ITVS is exempt from voting on ITVS board nominations and NCIPBP board members are not eligible to be nominated to the ITVS board of directors.

As part of our effort to reestablish contact with the principle players in public television, the NCIPBP board met with Jennifer Lawson, the Public Broadcasting Service's (PBS) executive vice president of national programming and promotion services, on March 13 to establish dialogue on a wide range of issues pertinent to independent representation within public television. This marked a new step in discussing a number of our concerns—including the role of series producer versus PBS' role as programmer; application of PBS General Principles for National Programming Funding Guidelines; the integration of independent film and video into the National Program Service; the National Program Policy Committee oversight function; step-up funds and payment; PBS' relationship to ITVS; attacks by the right wing on PBS and PBS' treatment and handling of controversial programming; and how we can work together to increase independent voices on public television. During the course of our discussions on the National Program Service, Lawson made an important distinction about the nature of television. She was careful to differentiate between independent film/video and television, as if the two were mutually exclusive. It appears that "television" might be the next code word with which we will be grappling.

John Schott, executive director of ITVS, happened to be in New York City after a grueling period in Washington, DC, when he met with legislative personnel involved in the reauthorization bill for the Corporation for Public Broad-

casting (CPB). He was able to join our PBS meeting with Lawson and brief us on the status of the bill. At the end of the meeting, we agreed that NCIPBP would meet again with Lawson at the PBS Annual Conference in June and attend relevant conference sessions. At that time we hope to meet with representatives from CPB and ITVS.

As part of the coalition's mandate to establish a dialogue with the field, we have initiated contacts with representatives of ITVS and the Minority Consortia and will begin exchanges with our membership and independent producers to insure that we are representing the interests of the field. With limited resources, we will rely on the resources of our members to support this network, as well as contacts with other print media, public interest, and constituency-based organizations.

LILLIAN JIMENEZ

*Lillian Jiménez is chair of the NCIPBP.*

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to AIVF nominees in the best achievement in documentary features category of the **64th Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Awards**: Alan and Susan Raymond, *Doing Time: Life Inside the Big House*; Irving Saraf, *In the Shadow of the Stars* (winner); and Diane Garey, *Wild by Law*. Debra Chasnoff's *Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment* won for best achievement in documentary short subjects, a category for which David McGowan's *The Mark of the Maker* was also nominated. Gowan also received a CINE Golden Eagle Award. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art awarded its **Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art Video Arts Awards** to: Barbara Hammer, *Vital Signs*; Marlon Riggs, *Affirmations*; Jonathan Robinson, *Sight Unseen: A Travelog*; and Michael Zaccheo, *Vidiom #1: Lullaby*. Recipients of the **New York State Council on the Arts** film and media grants include AIVF members Edith Becker, Alan Berliner, Abigail Child, Michael Dwass, Leslie Harris, Jim Hubbard, Roland Legiardi-Laura, Herman Lew, Jackie Ochs, Liz Leshin, Noel Shaw, Marina Zurkow, Tony Avalos, Pearl Bowser, Chris Bratton, Amy Chen, Norman Cowie, Ken Feingold, Julianna (Coco) Fusco, Kathy High, Philip Mallory Jones, Cara Mertes, Rita Myers, J.T. Takagi, Rea Tajira, and Lourdes Portillo. The **North Carolina Arts Council** has awarded grants to Joseph Murphy and Callie Warner for work on their respective video

documentaries *Art Saves Lives* and *Wandering in My Soul*. And congratulations to our members in the West awarded grants by the **Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowship**: Jan Andrews, Rose Bond, Kathryn Brew, John Campbell, Charles Davis, Jeanne C. Finley, Elise Irene Fried, Philip Malory Jones, Karen Kennedy, Alexis Krasilovsky, Edward Lewis, Sava Malachowski, David Mayne, Laura Meeker, and Joanna Priestly. Congrats to all!

## UPCOMING SEMINARS

### LEGAL AFFAIRS SEMINAR

Thursday, June 18, 7 pm  
Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave. (at 2nd St.), New York City  
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Also, discounts available to AIVF members for the Independent Feature Project seminar:

### FILM/TV CROSSOVER: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENTS IN TELEVISION.

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## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Cir., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

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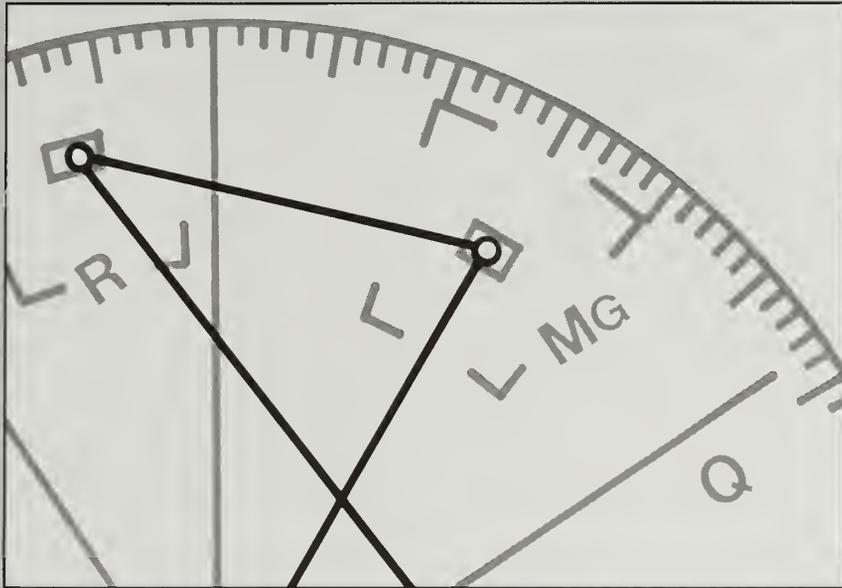
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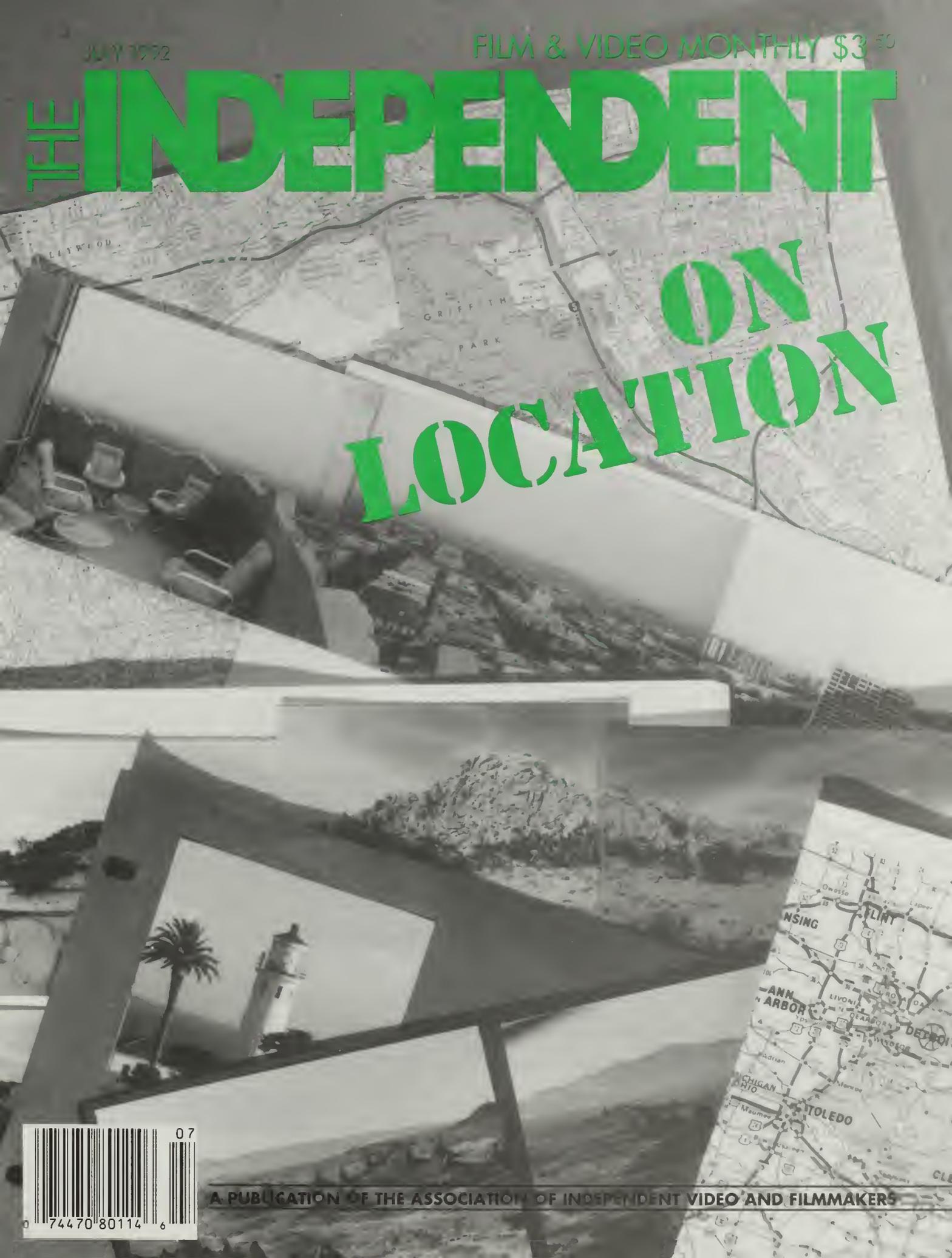
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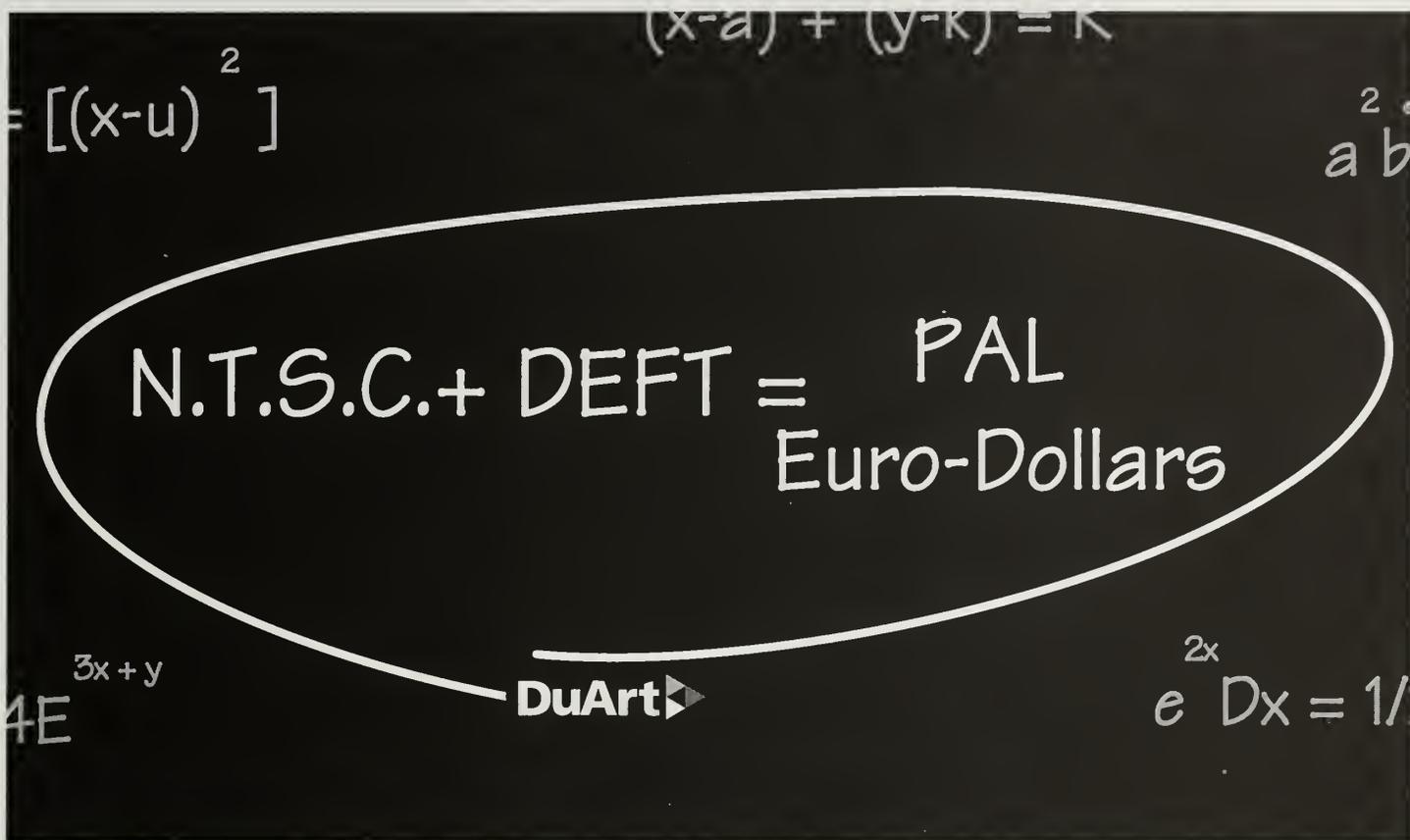


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SYMBIOPSYCHOTAXIPLASM:  
TAKE TWO

To the editor

I'd like to comment on Scott MacDonald's article on Bill Greaves and his film *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* ["Sunday in the Park with Bill," May 1992].

As Bill mentions in the interview, I was indeed surprised—amazed even—but not by the film. I finally saw it many years after it was made at a screening at Joe Papp's Public Theater. Afterwards Bill got up from the audience and made some remarks. What amazed me was to hear Bill talking about what had happened during the shooting as something he'd somehow had in mind from the start. As I wasn't privy to what went on in Bill's head, I have no way of gainsaying this, but the fact remains that if we (the crew) hadn't gone off and filmed ourselves—quite unbeknownst to the director until after the final wrap—there'd hardly have been any film to put together at all. It's to Bill's credit that, once in the editing room, he certainly made the most of the footage, but to claim after all these years that he had deliberately adopted "a flawed, vulnerable persona" in order to provoke the crew and the cast to rebel on camera....

*Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* was a product of its times. What if it was made by a flawed, vulnerable director, who was struggling to do something new and different without perhaps knowing what he was really doing? Aren't we all flawed and vulnerable? Does any of us really know what we're doing? Bill had a lot of courage to undertake the project in the first place. I only wish he had the courage now not to claim he had just been pretending. It's precisely this quality of openness and vulnerability that made the film so funny—and so touching.

Bob Rosen  
New York, New York

William Greaves responds:

I do hope my reply to Bob Rosen's letter can already be found on the screen in *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*. However, as the movie's director, I should point out that after having worked on scores of films before *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*, I was consciously violating many of the basic conventions of filmmaking. These violations in scripting, shooting strategy, and directing of the two actors were often new and disturbing to the crew. They provoked discussion behind my back and, eventually, the crew's open rebellion.

No doubt my "flawed, vulnerable persona" also helped trigger the crew's reactions, as did my periodic inscrutability. Indeed, all of these elements contributed to the tension, chaos, humor, and, I hope, magic of the film. However, I did not "deliberately adopt a vulnerable persona to provoke the crew's on-camera revolt." Rather than "pretending" vulnerability, I was consciously allowing myself to be vulnerable in order to increase my

credibility as a person on the screen. For a director to allow him- or herself to be vulnerable on camera in this competitive world of filmmaking takes some courage, I think. We directors routinely require and often demand vulnerability in the actors' work but seldom of ourselves. This vulnerability did not end on the shooting location, but carried over into my work as the film's editor. To put into the film the often unflattering discussions and critiques of me, personally and as a director, which the crew filmed (unbeknownst to me) also took courage, I believe.

Needless to say, the crew's revolt was critical to the film. It contributed mightily to the dramatic tension and humor. However, also extremely critical was the superb acting of our two leads, Patricia Ree Gilbert and Don Fellows. Without their outstanding artistry and craft, this film would have fallen apart.

In other words, I would like to think that *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* achieved a number of important objectives. Major among them was the attempt to tap the collective genius of the crew, cast, and director.

## BURNED OVER TOASTER

To the editor:

Having become a Toaster user over the last year, I read with interest Barbara Osborn's article in the April issue ["Toast of the Town: NewTek's Video Toaster"]. The article reflected my alternating feelings of disappointment with the hype and pleasant surprise with some of the capabilities of the Toaster, but it omitted discussion of one item that ought not be overlooked. Perhaps Ms. Osborn hadn't viewed the 2.0 version of the Toaster—it was probably being released just as she was writing the article—but those "Kiki" wipes truly demand comment.

One finds Kiki in the Toaster demo tape and in the framstore upon installation of version 1.0: she is easy to delete, if desired. In 2.0, however, Kiki is here to stay. Five dedicated wipes (using a great deal of that expensive memory, I would imagine) have a silhouette of Kiki cartwheeling, thrusting her torso, twirling across the screen, jumping up and pulling down the "shade," and kicking her high-heeled legs. She appears nude, other than the spike heels in the kick wipe.

There are some boy wipes as well, but the guys are dressed, and at least they're doing something, even if it is just throwing their balls around and lifting weights (sports wipes). While Kiki seems to exist for the gaze, the guys are comin' right at you. Either way, the place created for the viewer is a male place.

I've got to admit that they've put a lot of creativity into the software, and they've developed features that you can hardly find in high-end facilities. I especially like the way the sheep wipe wiggles its little feet as it floats off the screen; other features, such as soft wipes, add to Toaster use. I can imagine the programmer coming up with some of these wipes as a joke, but who made the decision to build in offensive, stereotypical,

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25

COVER: Finding the right location for a shoot is a task every producer has to face. Film commissions can blaze the trail to little-known locales, help cut costs, and make a shoot run more smoothly, contends Max Alvarez in this issue's feature story "Scenic Overlook: Working with Film Commissions." Also, Lorri Shundich offers advice on shooting in national parks. Cover design: Lorri Shundich

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**Minutes of the AIVF Annual Membership and Board of Directors Meetings**

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and sexist imagery? I guess it was some guy.

In developing technology such as the Toaster, one would hope there might be some responsibility taken regarding the value system that gets built into the equipment. I hope they come up with some replacement software soon for those of us who are working in video and mass communication in the first place in an effort to dispel stereotypes, rank objectification of people, and other injustices of our society.

Carla Leshne  
San Francisco

## OSU LIVES

To the editor:

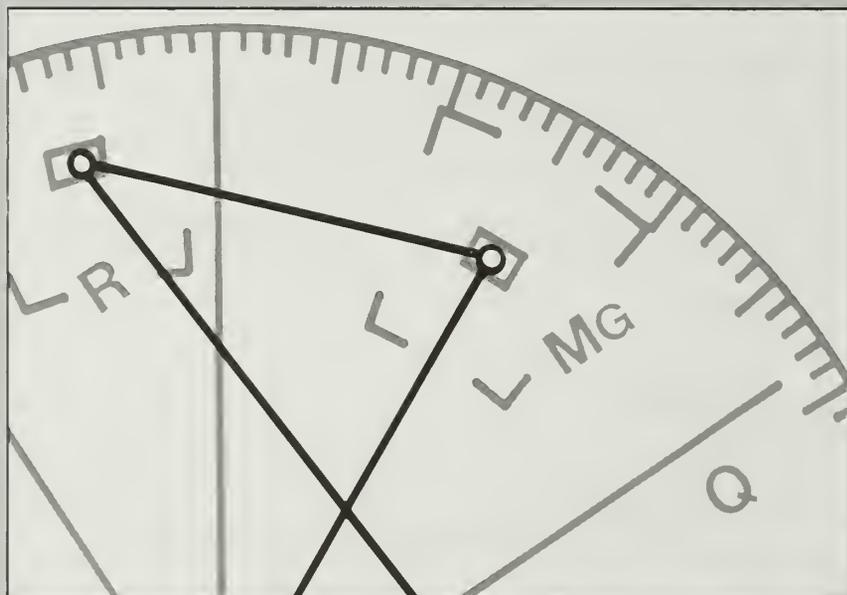
After reading Ellen Levy's "Plug Pulled on OSU Media Department," [April 1992], we felt *Independent* readers might like a clarification and update on cinema/video education at Ohio State University. As was reported, the cinema/video faculty have joined the Department of Theatre, but the article may have left the impression that this was only a paper transfer and that there would be no further university commitment to the field.

The cinema/video faculty and other theater faculty are developing a new Master of Fine Arts degree program where students in cinema/video, acting, and directing will work together in an ensemble setting for film and video production. The focus of this program is on innovation in independent film/video making and the development of regional talent.

The combined resources of the Theatre Department, the cinema/video areas, the significant film and video program at OSU's Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, and regional resources, such as the Library of Congress Film Collection in Dayton, Ohio, and the National Black Programming Consortium, provide a fortuitous environment for graduate study.

The new Center for Media Arts, mentioned in Levy's article, will serve as a resource base of the College of the Arts faculty and graduate students for creative research—in other words, equipment and facilities to produce film and video work, including film/video work in the performing and visual arts.

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## HELL TO PAY

### *Damned in the USA* Countersues Wildmon over Exhibition Rights

In an ironic testimony to the film's timeliness, *Damned in the USA*, an Emmy-winning documentary about artistic censorship in the United States, is in effect being censored by one of its subjects. The Reverend Donald Wildmon, head of the Christian media watchdog organization American Family Association and an interviewee in the film, has filed an \$8-million lawsuit against its producers in an attempt to bar US distribution of the film. In response, the producers, along with a coalition of over 20 film and television associations, churches, and civil liberties groups, filed a countersuit against Wildmon in April. "We've decided to turn the tables on Wildmon by suing him for...the right to show the film," says Russ Smith, a lawyer for the countersuit plaintiffs, who include Britain's Channel Four, the Arts Censorship Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, among others.

Originally commissioned by Channel Four, *Damned in the USA* is a 68-minute examination of the ongoing battle between religious fundamentalists and artists and musicians, such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Andres Serrano, and 2 Live Crew, whose controversial use of profanity, nudity, and religious symbols have incited a storm of debate in the United States over the limits of artistic expression. Cited by the *Village Voice* as the rare documentary that gives balance a good name, the film looks at both sides of the contentious debate over censorship. Footage of Senators Jesse Helms and Alfonse D'Amato's 1989 Congressional attacks on public funding for an exhibition of Mapplethorpe's photographs and Serrano's photograph *Piss Christ* is intercut with images of the artwork and interviews with Serrano, Playboy Enterprises chair and chief executive officer Christie Hefner, Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center director Dennis Barrie (who was acquitted on obscenity charges for exhibiting a Mapplethorpe retrospective), and others who contend that free expression ought not be abridged.

At the heart of the dispute are two contracts that coproducers Paul Yule and Jonathan Stack signed with Channel Four's approval before Wildmon would agree to an interview. According to Stack, the first contract was basically a release form which placed restrictions on where the interview could be used outside the film. This Mendenhall contract, as it is known, is standard Wildmon equipment for print interviews. Named after the journalist with whom it was first used, the

Mendenhall contract specifies that an author cannot resell an interview with Wildmon to any pornographic outlet. "He wanted to make sure that we wouldn't make the interview available to *Playboy* or *Hustler*," explains Stack. "We weren't thinking of selling the interview to anyone. We just wanted it for the film." When the filmmakers went to Wildmon's hometown of Tupelo, Mississippi in December to begin shooting, however, Wildmon brought out a second contract with slightly different wording that required the filmmakers to "agree specifically to refrain from mak-

September, when it was scheduled to premiere at the Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York City, Wildmon wrote the producers a letter threatening to sue if they showed *Damned in the USA*. The screening took place as scheduled. After learning about it from a *Variety* review, Wildmon filed a \$2-million lawsuit in Mississippi in October, seeking an injunction and \$500,000 in damages from each producer for each US showing, which by that time also included one at Webster University in Missouri. Wildmon subpoenaed both exhibitors but has not filed suit against either. In



Examining the censorship of artists like Robert Mapplethorpe by right-wing fundamentalists, *Damned in the USA* now faces an \$8-million lawsuit by the American Family Association.

Courtesy/Mapplethorpe Foundation

ing the interview available to any other media outlet." The coproducers interpreted the new wording to mean that Wildmon's interview was to be used only within the context of *Damned in the USA*. "They thought this was Mendenhall reworded for film," Smith says. Although Wildmon admits that his views are "fairly and accurately presented" in *Damned in the USA*, he maintains that US exhibition of the film constitutes unauthorized use of the interview and that the contract allows screening only on Channel Four.

The film was initially broadcast in April 1991 on Channel Four and was subsequently shown without dispute on TV in Spain and Sweden and in festivals in Germany and Edinburgh. But last

May, Wildmon added punitive damages to his claim, bringing the total to \$8-million.

In an attempt to resolve the dispute, Channel Four and the producers offered to run a disclaimer at the beginning of the film which would state that Wildmon does not endorse the documentary or any portion of it, but Wildmon refused. So Yule and Stack filed a preemptive countersuit in New York Federal District Court on April 9, hoping to clear the film before its scheduled May screenings at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York City.

Loews Theaters, which hosts the New York run of the festival's national tour, refused to show *Damned in the USA* without a judicial declaration

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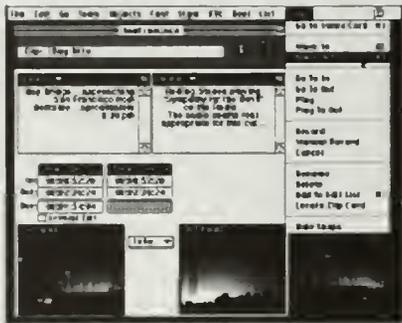
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or a signed statement by Wildmon confirming that he wouldn't sue an exhibitor. A New York federal judge heard preliminary arguments on May 1. The judge found that the scheduled screening could proceed but declined to issue a ruling on the merits of the countersuit. In a set-back to the producers, the judge ruled that the original suit should be heard first and conceded, as Wildmon's lawyer had argued, that the Mississippi court has jurisdiction over any counterclaims. On May 13, the producers brought a new defendants' countersuit against Wildmon in Mississippi.

"This lawsuit is necessitated by a campaign of interference and intimidation," argues an attorney for the plaintiffs, Martin Garbus, who has previously represented such civil rights luminaries as Czech president Vaclav Havel, Russian dissident Andrei Sacharov, and comedian Lenny Bruce. "Wildmon is attempting, with considerable success, to prevent this film about censorship in America from being seen by the American public." As Garbus stated at the May 1 hearing, "Films have a certain permanency, like anything else. Some have a shelf life of yogurt. *This* film deals with pressing political issues of our time."

Garbus and Smith contend that the threat of legal action has scared off a number of potential exhibitors, including PBS' *Alive TV* (formerly *Alive from Off Center*) and Landmark Theaters, and has essentially hamstrung distribution of the film in the United States. To address this issue, Garbus and Smith say that an additional suit claiming damages may be brought in the future.

If the producers win, Wildmon's strategy may backfire, since the publicity generated by the litigation has raised interest in the documentary. Loews, for example, which has over 870 theaters, has expressed a desire to nationally exhibit *Damned in the USA*. Smith is confident that both Wildmon's suit and the countersuit will be decided in favor of the filmmakers and opines that in the future if a person wants "to use a piece of paper to stop a film, it has to be a lot clearer than the [one used by Wildmon]."

ELIZABETH LARSEN

*Elizabeth Larsen is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer and associate editor at the Utne Reader.*

## TVC TRAPS NEGATIVES

What if you left your baby with a sitter and couldn't get it back? Some independent filmmakers who stored negatives with TVC Precision Film and Video in New York City are learning how it feels. One of the city's few remaining developing laboratories, TVC shut its doors this spring, trapping negatives it has held for years. Although TVC had not declared bankruptcy at press time, its 43rd Street offices in New York City closed on May 14 after more than a year of financial travails which culminated in a union walkout in late March. TVC's offices were padlocked by a marshal the following day at the

landlord's request because of back rent owed, according to independent filmmaker Josh Karan. Karan, whose account was paid, was able to get his negatives out of the 43rd Street vault and is now in the process of trying to find them a new home other than his living room.

"They seem to be developing an ad hoc situation [for film retrieval]," says Karan of the remaining TVC staff. "Whether TVC will reopen is doubtful, but they're seemingly being responsible." The landlord is sympathetic to filmmakers' concerns and is allowing access to the vault to retrieve negatives if no balance is due, but how long the situation will hold is uncertain.

Not everyone has been as lucky as Karan. One independent with a number of films at the lab contacted TVC in March when he heard about the company's financial problems but was unable to retrieve his negatives, which TVC had deposited at Rapid Box Storage in Long Island City. TVC provided the filmmaker with his box numbers at the storage facility but could offer no access. Rapid Box Storage, which is owed "a substantial amount" by TVC, according to its vicepresident, Sam Borodinsky, refuses to release negatives in its possession without payment from either TVC or individual filmmakers. "We don't want to hold onto materials people need," explains Borodinsky, "but we have to receive payment." Borodinsky and operations manager Kathy Weiss will release negatives to filmmakers for a \$500 fee. Requests should go through TVC, which will issue a release letter which can then be brought to Rapid Box Storage. To obtain a release, a filmmaker must fax a formal request for the negative's release to TVC (212-459-9431) along with a copy of appropriate identification (individual or corporate depending on how the film is registered with the lab). Borodinsky assures that there is "no danger of materials being destroyed or removed [from storage]."

Those with negatives in the 43rd Street vault can retrieve them by phoning TVC (212-397-8600) to arrange a pick-up time. A formal faxed request with identification is also required. Once a written request is made, TVC will attempt to turnaround negatives within 72 hours. All balances owed must be paid before negatives will be released.

A union walkout precipitated TVC's closure. On March 20, 52 members of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 702 left their jobs at TVC after going without pay for three weeks, according to *Backstage/SHOOT*, a commercial production newsweekly. Workers had been without insurance coverage since July 1991. At the time, Local 702 president Gerald Salvio told *Backstage/SHOOT* that the dispute was far from resolved.

And for filmmakers it is far from over. The closing of TVC promises still fewer options for independent filmmakers who would develop and store their negatives in New York City. "TVC was my lab for 15 years," says independent animator



John Canemaker. "It was a wonderful place. Now we have, what, three labs in this city? It's terrible what's happening."

ELLEN LEVY

## LIVING ROOM FESTIVITIES

A cooperative effort between San Francisco media arts organizations and public television station KQED to launch a 13-week series featuring the work of independent film- and videomakers has created wary optimism among media artists, long critical of what they consider to be the station's lackluster record of serving underrepresented communities in the Bay Area. The *Living Room Festival*, tentatively scheduled to debut Friday nights on KQED in January, 1993, will feature 60 to 90 minutes of independent works of varying lengths, programmed each week by one of 14 media arts organizations representing people of color, gay men and lesbians, people with disabilities, experimental film and video producers, documentary makers, and others.

For the first program, which has no specific theme, organizers have chosen festival award-winning works and productions by up-and-coming makers, regardless of where the works originated, using criteria specific to their organizations, explains series' advisory board chair Michael Jeung, sales manager for nonbroadcast distribution at the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA). In future years, other groups may be selected to program the series, Jeung says. The budget for the series' initial 13-week run is \$150,000, including \$20/minute for acquisitions. Although sluggish fundraising efforts delayed the series' scheduled fall '92 start, Jeung says he now has firm commitments of \$50,000 from both the San Francisco Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation and

an offer from KQED for \$62,000 in in-kind services—including opens, closes, remotes, and editing time.

The seeds of the idea for an independent festival on public TV were sown nearly two years ago, according to Film Arts Foundation director Gail Silva, during confrontations between KQED and the Association of California Independent Public Television Producers (ACIPTP), representing media groups and activists in the Bay Area, over the station's "lack of involvement" with certain segments of the community. "It should have been an instant sell, [but] it took quite a while," admits Cheryl Fabio-Bradford of the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame and the woman most often credited with founding the *Living Room Festival*. Steve Anker, artistic director of San Francisco Cinematheque, admits that most glitches in the negotiation process concerned artistic freedom. In the end, Anker says, programmers were given "pretty much carte blanche in terms of artistic control," with KQED retaining final right of refusal. Disputes will be arbitrated by an advisory board made

*Flames of Passion*, a reworking of Noel Coward's classic British tearjerker *Brief Encounter*, is one of the films proposed to be featured on KQED's independent showcase the *Living Room Festival*.

Courtesy Fromeline

up of representatives from broadcasting, programming, production, distribution, public relations, media arts administration, and business and community relations.

Many on the media arts side complain that the project has been labor intensive, with KQED offering little in the way of funding or administrative support. But Anker, who with Fabio-Bradford hammered out the details of the series with KQED, maintains that the public TV station's "new regime," represented by manager of Broadcast Projects and Acquisitions Pamela Porter, director of Cultural Programming Louise Lo, and general manager David Hosley, "really did seem sincere about opening doors and building bridges" to the independent community.

The project's 11 p.m. timeslot remains a sore point for many festival organizers. "The 11 o'clock slot is the art ghetto slot," laments Silva. "That's not where you start something that is supposed to be this new, cooperative venture, this model, this pilot." But KQED's Porter defends the station's decision. "It's a good slot," she says. "Look at the numbers. There's almost no difference between Friday at 10 p.m. and at 11 p.m. in terms of audience." And Porter stresses that the station is "committed to [the series] having a second or third year or maybe longer."

Even half a year away from broadcast, the organizers say they are reaping benefits from the project. The series has created "great cross-pollination" opportunities by bringing otherwise disparate arts groups together, notes Jeung. In addition, he has received inquiries about the series from other West Coast PBS stations, including KCET in Los Angeles. "This is a good opportu-

## THE COUCHMEISTERS

The 14 programmers of the Living Room Festival listed below were chosen from more than 20 media arts groups representing people of color, gay men and lesbians, people with disabilities, experimental film and video producers, and documentary makers, and others:

Michael Smith, *American Indian Film Festival*  
 Cheryl Fabio-Bradford, *Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame*  
 Shelly Cook, *Bay Area Video Coalition*  
 Cornelius Moore, *California Newsreel*

Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, *Cine Acción*  
 David DeWeerd, *Corporation on Disabilities and Telecommunications*  
 Bob Hawk, *Film Arts Foundation*  
 Mark Finch, *Frameline*  
 Ron Light, *National Educational Film & TV*  
 Bob Uyeki, *National Asian American Telecommunications Association*  
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nity for makers to begin to build an audience for their work," Jeung observes, "and possibly trigger future broadcasts outside of the Bay Area."

Organizers say the *Living Room Festival* represents an important first step toward healing strained relations between KQED and the second largest independent film and video community in the nation, while helping the public television station begin to fulfill its mandate to provide diversity in programming. "I see media at Black Filmmakers that nobody knows exists," says Fabio-Bradford, "and I hear voices that push and shove everybody's concept of what blacks are doing in film or video. That's why the *Living Room Festival* is important. It takes you to the furthest reach possible. It is what media ought to be about in '92."

Although programming has already been proposed for the first *Living Room Festival*, independents may contact the listed media arts organizations for future submission information. For festival information, write: NAATA, 3469th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, Attn: *Living Room Festival*.

JANICE DRICKEY

*Janice Drickey is a freelance writer and reporter in Northern California.*

## US-MEXICO MEDIA IN THE MONEY

This past September the US-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange joined forces with the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bancroft Cultural Foundation, and the National Council for Culture and Arts of Mexico to create a five-year \$5-million Fund for Culture, a binational enterprise designed specifically to promote cultural exchanges between the two neighboring countries. Grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$25,000, totalling \$1-million each year, will be made available to enhance non-academic projects in several categories of the arts and humanities, including media arts. Priority will be given to works in which participants from both countries collaborate to explore "aspects of their respective cultures."

For media artists, the fund will underwrite "the development of cultural programming for radio, television, film, and video on topics reflecting the culture, history, and society of the two nations," according to grant application guidelines. "Support will also be directed toward translations of scripts, participation of theatrical talent, and collaborative projects to expose the fiction, plays, poetry or other creative expression produced by artists of one country to the public of the other." Sponsorship of symposia, conferences or workshops on media will also be considered. The other sponsorship categories are: Performing Arts (including dance, theater, music, performance art, workshops, and master classes); Museums and Visual Arts (including painting, sculpture, and photography); Libraries; Publishing and Transla-

tion; and Cultural Studies (including seminars in history, popular culture, and philosophy).

Grant proposals are evaluated by a committee of Mexican professionals in each discipline appointed by the fund's managing committee, which has final jurisdiction over awards. The managing committee comprises one representative from each major participating private donor organization. The US-Mexico Commission will review the activities and general focus of the fund each year. The first round of awards will be announced this summer. It was undetermined at press time whether the fund would solicit a second round of proposals in the fall or if the second deadline will remain as scheduled for March 1993.

Candidates must be US or Mexican citizens who, according to application materials, "have demonstrated substantive professional accomplishment or promise in their fields." Institutions from both countries may also apply. All applications must be accompanied by a budget (a form is provided with application materials) as well as a description and statement of purpose. Comprehensive funding for any one project may not be available and applicants should, where possible, investigate other cofinancers.

According to officials involved, the Fund for Culture is an attempt to address and promote some of the more independent forms of cultural expression on both sides of the border, those elements in each society that are not a part of the official culture and therefore not represented in diplomatic exchanges. Though not linked to the North American Free Trade Agreement, the fund is certainly an outgrowth of a new climate of cooperation between the two countries which has helped foster a desire for deeper mutual understanding and respect. It provides a unique opportunity for US and Mexican artists interested in working together, and for, one another.

For more information about procedures and deadlines, contact: Fund for Culture, Biblioteca Benjamín Franklin, Londres 16, P.B., Col. Juárez, 06600 México, D.F., Attn: Arturo Acuña, program coordinator; tel: (525) 211-0042, exts. 3473 and 3474; fax: (525) 208-8943.

JENNY APOSTOL

*Jenny Apostol is a producer and writer based in New York City.*

## ARCHIVES OFFER BARGAIN ON HOME VIDEO RATES

Until recently, such highly acclaimed documentaries as *Eyes on the Prize* had little incentive to explore the home video market. Because archival footage rates are assigned for each market in which a film will play, producers of nontheatrical works that use extensive historical footage have been caught in a bind when trying to develop markets outside PBS and educational institutions. Unlike the affordable rates for those venues, home video rights have been priced with Hollywood

blockbusters in mind, making their purchase prohibitively expensive. Though discounts are often available if home video rights are purchased with others before the film's release, producers may not want to risk the expense before they know how their production will fare. Now a new project, initiated by National Video Resources (NVR), a New York City-based project of the Rockefeller Foundation, and 11 major archival houses, has cut the cost of home video rates for nontheatrical productions, providing producers with significant savings and the consumer with a wider selection of films to purchase or rent.

The NVR Rights Project provides discounts on up-front home video rates for documentary, educational, and informational works. Under the arrangement, when an independent producer concludes a project, he or she can negotiate home video rights at rates far below those for Hollywood productions. Most archives will grant the rights in perpetuity, and though each house has its own rates, all are sharply discounted. Participating archives include Atlanta's CNN Library Tapes Sales, Illinois' WPA Film Library, and New York City's Archive Films, Bettmann Archives, CBS News Film Archive, Fox Movietone, Sherman Grinberg Film Libraries (also in Hollywood), NBC News Video Archive, Petrified Films, Prelinger Associates, and Worldwide Television News Corporation. Kenn Rabin, a producer and specialist in the use of historical footage who led the negotiations for NVR, said that six or seven other archives are also interested in developing reasonable rates for independent documentary producers.

Rabin convinced the archives that increased revenue from home video rights sales would offset any loss of profit sustained by charging the lower rates. *Eyes on the Prize* is already using this tool to insure wider distribution. Under the new arrangement, *Eyes on the Prize* was able to return to the archival houses and renegotiate more favorable rates; however, in most cases rights will have to be negotiated up front, at the time of the film's completion, to obtain the discount.

The new initiative has a number of technical requirements and restrictions which apply to virtually all participating archives, according to NVR: archives reserve the right to terminate their participation in this program at their own discretion; archives are final arbiters of whether a project qualifies, though most documentary productions will probably be given the special rate; producers must purchase home video rights when their program is initially completed and a footage report submitted; and the special home video rate is offered as an add-on part of a package that must include at least one other market, such as PBS, foreign broadcast, Audio Visual (AV) or cable. Independent producers of educational and informational films should check with the archival houses during production to see if their films are eligible for these discount rates.

For more information, contact: Timothy Gunn,

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PATRICIA SPEARS JONES

*Patricia Spears Jones is a poet and arts writer who works down in the basement at the New Museum of Contemporary Art requesting dollars for more art.*

### WILLIAM ALEXANDER: 1916-1991

William Alexander, the most prolific producer in the black motion picture industry, died of cancer on November 19 at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. He was the first African American film producer to work in a variety of cinematic forms. Besides documentaries, musical features, and scores of theatrical musical shorts with top-named talent, he produced the groundbreaking black newsreel series *All American Newsreel*, which highlighted black achievements in American contemporary life. The newsreels played regularly in the 800-plus black theaters across the country after World War II.

In 1947, after a year of producing musical shorts with Dizzy Gillespie and Billy Eckstine, he produced his first feature, *The Fight Never Ends*, with the boxer Joe Louis. He went on to produce *Love in Syncopation*, *That Man of Mine*, with Ruby Dee, and *Souls of Sin*, a portrait of Harlem life in the forties.

When African countries gained their independence in the fifties and sixties, Alexander left America to form a documentary film company, Blue Nile Productions, in England. His company produced films on life in many of these countries, including Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, and he subsequently held the posts of Liberia's and Ethiopia's official film producer. In 1964 he won an award at the Cannes Film Festival for *Village of Hope*, a short about a leper colony in Liberia, and he was cited at the 1965 Venice Film Festival for the documentary *Portrait of Ethiopia*.

His last feature, *The Klansmen* (1974), starring Richard Burton, Lee Marvin, and O.J. Simpson, put Alexander in considerable debt, forcing him to become a business entrepreneur on an international scale. He was one of the first African Americans to enter the field of foreign trade.

In addition to his work in the entertainment industry, Alexander was an Information Specialist for the Office of Civilian Defense under Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, a Member of the Office of Facts and Figures under Archibald Macleish, a Specialist Assistant to Elmer Davies in the Office of War Information, and liaison between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his advisors on Negro Affairs.

### NESTOR ALMENDROS: 1930-1992

Nestor Almendros, an Academy Award-winning cinematographer, died of lymphoma at his home

in Manhattan on March 4, 1992. A distinguished and renowned cinematographer, Almendros was known for his masterly use of lighting and color. His credits include François Truffaut's *Bed and Board* and *The Last Metro*, Eric Rohmer's *My Night at Maud's* and *Claire's Knee*, Robert Benton's *Kramer vs. Kramer*, and Terrence Mallick's *Days of Heaven*, for which he won an Academy Award in 1979.

Almendros was born in Barcelona in 1930. After World War II, he moved to Cuba to be with his father, a Republican Loyalist, who had gone to Havana at the end of the Spanish Civil War. Almendros attended Havana University for a short time and then wandered to Rome, where he enrolled in the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. In the late fifties, he moved to the US where he taught Spanish at Vassar. When Castro came in to power, he returned to Cuba and made several documentaries there in praise of the Cuban revolution. Later, in such films as *Improper Conduct* (1984), his first full-length documentary, and *Nobody Listened* (1988), in which Cuban political prisoners are interviewed, Almendros would attack the Cuban government.

Shortly after his stay in Cuba, he relocated to Paris, drawn to the city by the work of the New Wave directors. His skill was soon recognized by these directors, including Truffaut and Rohmer. On his craft, Almendros has said, "After you've learned some of the basic mechanics, being a cameraman is not all that complicated, especially when you have an assistant to worry about focus and distance and that sort of thing. The contribution of a good cameraman begins long before production, in the selection of sets, locations, costumes."

### PARE LORENTZ: 1905-1992

Pare Lorentz, a writer and director whose socially conscious documentary films included *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*, died of heart failure at his home in Armonk, New York, on March 4.

Throughout his career, Lorentz distinguished himself by his unshakeable commitment to socially responsible filmmaking, continually exposing to the public matters of pressing concern. His 1936 film *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, documented the plight of farmers in the dust bowl for the US Resettlement Administration, a New Deal agency. It was the first Government-sponsored film for general release. Following the release of his 1938 film *The River*, about flooding on the Mississippi, Lorentz was named filmmaker head of the United States Film Service. In 1940 he directed *The Fight for Life*, dramatizing what he described as "the shockingly bad record for infant and maternal mortality" in the US.

Born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, Lorentz worked in New York as a film critic for the magazines *Judge*, *The New York American*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Town and Country*. He made more than 200 briefing films for pilots during World War II,

after which he oversaw production of film, music, and theater for the occupied areas of Germany, Austria, Japan, and Korea. In 1948 he formed his own film production company. His last film, *The Nuremberg Trials*, was made in 1946. During the last three decades, he was a film consultant and gave lectures on documentary film at colleges and universities.

## SEQUELS

In the latest skirmish over public arts funding, two NEA peer panels suspended consideration of grant applications in protest of the arbitrary actions of **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** acting chair Anne-Imelda Radice ["Frohnmayr's Fall: When Bush Comes to Shove at the NEA," May 1992]. The two panels were to consider fellowships for Solo Theater Artists and Artists Collaborations in May. The panel walkouts came in response to Radice's veto of two grants for exhibitions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Virginia Commonwealth University which had received strong recommendations from the NEA peer panels and the advisory National Council on the Arts. Applicants' materials were returned to them and the funds applied elsewhere. Solo theater grants, which are offered only in alternate years, will not be available again until fiscal year 1994.

In an effort to cover the behind-the-scenes politicking that increasingly characterizes NEA grant-making procedures, the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer* filed suit in federal court on April 21 seeking access to all grant application meetings. The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that such meetings be open to the public, alleges the newspapers' suit.



The New York State budget passed in April with a 19 percent cut to the **New York State Council on the Arts'** budget for FY1992-93. Because of the cuts, NYSCA is offering Individual Artists Program grants for film and video only in alternate years (media production will be considered in FY93, film production in FY94). Film and video categories have been suspended from the Architecture, Planning, and Design Program. Organizations are limited to submitting three separate project proposals annually (this does not apply to fiscal sponsorship of individual artists).

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## OF TWO MINDS

## Collaborations Between Filmmakers and Art Historians

CAROLE LAZIO

Should films that are used to teach the humanities be produced specifically for classroom use? Or can entertainment films be effective? If films are designed for teaching, how much input should academics have? How much do they want? Should they learn to make their own films or should they collaborate with professional filmmakers?



*The Fayum Portraits'* austere visual style garnered mixed reviews from the art historical crowd.

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art. Left: Rogers Fund, 1909 (09.181.6); Right: Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1918 (18.9.2).

These provocative questions, originally raised at a Rockefeller Foundation symposium on Film and the Humanities held in 1976, were reconsidered in Boston last November. The occasion was a whirlwind two-and-a-half-day conference entitled Art History and Film, which was sponsored by the Program for Art on Film (a joint venture of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Trust), Tufts University, and the Boston Institute for Fine Arts.

Nearly half of the 150 people gathered in Boston were video- or filmmakers, their numbers evenly divided between those affiliated with public television stations, museums or universities and those working as independents. This repre-

sents a substantial increase from the five filmmakers present in 1976. But the most significant development since then, and a sign of things to come, was announced by art historian/filmmaker Judith Wechsler, chair of the Department of Art and Art History at Tufts. Having tried the idea experimentally with graduate students for a year, Tufts will inaugurate a formal program in art history and film this fall in conjunction with the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' Film Department and in cooperation with Boston Film/Video Foundation.

If this conference is any indication, however, until a new generation of filmmakers who are also art specialists has a chance to develop and internalize the debate, many of the issues raised in 1976 and again last winter will continue to be the subject of what independent producer Bob Rosen describes as "a delicate process of negotiation" between the "different discourses" and "different intellectual priorities" of art historians and mediamakers.

*Beyond biography*

Any concern that the conference might result in a rigid canon of acceptable films was dispelled in the introductory talks by Wechsler and Nadine Covert, special consultant in charge of the Program for Art on Film's Critical Inventory project, who both pointed out gaps in the material currently available and advocated more diversity.

Since 1984 the Critical Inventory has documented close to 17,000 films on the visual arts and related areas from 71 countries but primarily from the US and Europe. When it began, a group of art, film, and programming experts was asked to provide examples of "outstanding" films about art. Only 34 titles out of the 475 films nominated were mentioned more than three times—an indication of heterogeneous tastes in this field, borne out by subsequent research. The project has identified a number of recurrent pitfalls in films about art. Evaluators pleaded for a departure from one cliché in particular: the on-camera host. Covert observed that the project has found "the best films on art exhibit two essential characteristics: respect for the art and effective use of the film/video medium."

In terms of content, Wechsler emphasized the need to catch up with the broadening scope of modern art history, which now deals with civilizations outside Europe and North America and has also begun to look within those boundaries at

**Filming *Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-Ji*, composed around a text of poetic reflections on the concept of "ma" embodied in the Japanese garden.**

Courtesy Program for Art on Film



previously neglected traditions. There was general agreement with her call for movement beyond traditional "biography, iconography, and connoisseurship" to include art's social and political context. But her observation that this would inevitably lead to more politicized films generated little reaction.

***Who's in charge?***

At the 1976 conference, when film had recently emerged as an academic discipline, it was suggested that some of the suspicion and disdain for the medium found in the academic world might be due to a prevailing lack of visual literacy. So it is striking 15 years later to find that, by all accounts, more questions arise when filmmakers work with art historians, a group of academics with highly developed visual sensibilities, than when filmmakers work with artists. In fact, film portraits of twentieth-century artists and their creative processes account for 65 percent of all material inventoried and most US work to date. Filmmakers agree that the main hurdle with artists is the initial one: establishing trust in the producer's ability to convey the artist's ideas.

When working with art historians, the potential for friction increases when the art historian steps outside familiar roles—as interviewer, interview subject, or technical consultant—and has more to say about other phases of production. However, the Program for Art on Film's Production Laboratory sought to challenge this dynamic and stimulate fresh approaches by fostering more intimate collaboration between media and art specialists. Until 1990, when it suspended commissions, this risky experiment was directed by Joan Shigekawa, who shepherded 15 projects through completion. Their mandate was to produce short films using techniques appropriate to the artwork chosen but unusual in films about art. The final product didn't have to conform to any educational, broadcast or other market imperatives; it didn't even have to be a finished work.

As Shigekawa explained, a central issue in these collaborations was working out concerns about whose vision would dominate—the formally-focused filmmaker's or the content-focused art historian's. Nearly a third of the 20-odd talks in Boston concerned these projects. Production Lab veterans' frank, good-humored discussions of their experiences and the critiques of their work (exclusively by art historians) provided examples of a range of perspectives that produced an animated

exchange between what British art critic/filmmaker David Thompson called "the two kinds of minds."

The discussion suggested that it was the art historians, usually unaccustomed to the filmmaking process and the unpredictability of audience reactions, who may have been in for the more painful surprises. Art historian Jerrilynn Dodds of the City University of New York spoke warmly of the balanced entente she shared with video artist Edin Velez when working on *A Mosque in Time*, about Islamic and Christian themes in the Great Mosque of Cordoba. But she went on to describe eloquently the disorientation she felt once the editing process began, as text and images that had already been carefully pruned had to be eliminated. Dodds also shared the disappointment she felt upon discovering that her students didn't understand the final, visually layered work without recourse to the lecture the project had been carefully designed to avoid.

Richard Brilliant, an art historian at Columbia University who had worked with filmmaker Bob Rosen before, seemed more amused than dismayed by the controversy *The Fayum Portraits*, codirected by Rosen and Andrea Simon, provoked among art historians and archaeologists at a professional conference in 1989. The film's stark visual content is limited to 54 images of compelling funerary portraits produced in Egypt under Roman rule between 100-300 AD. Its soundtrack is a collage of vivid excerpts read from contemporary documents, a tour guide's information about place and period, Brilliant's art historical commentary, and an original score by Meredith Monk. Audiences at the 1989 conference complained bitterly about the nonlinear exposition and unfamiliar music. Reactions in Boston were favorable.

But filmmakers were not exempt from awkward surprises—countering the pervasive assumption, particularly in the US, that filmmakers who work with a subject specialist are virtually ensured of a piece's positive reception by other specialists. A glimmer of Wechsler's observation about politicization surfaced when Irene Winter of Harvard critiqued *Painted Earth*, filmmaker Anita Thacher's graceful, more traditionally didactic work on the Mimbres style pottery of an ancient American people, produced in collaboration with J.J. Brody of the University of New Mexico. Pointing out that the film concerned artifacts pillaged from sites modern Native Americans consider sacred, Winter roundly criticized the film for its insufficiently defined position on that and other crosscultural issues. Winter held the art historian responsible. This still left Thacher, who was present in Boston, face-to-face with the risk such collaborations entail—that her skills as a director may have little bearing on how the film ultimately fares.

A more direct exchange arose when Andrew McClellan, art historian at Columbia University, levelled a biting string of objections to *Trevi*, produced by scholar/filmmaker Richard Rogers of the State University of New York/Purchase and Harvard in collaboration with John Pinto of Princeton. Objecting above all to the film's emphasis on the fountain's modern iconographic and social role, but also finding its handling of the fountain's aesthetic qualities insensitive, McClellan complained that Pinto had "let the filmmaker run away with the production." Rogers acknowledged that many viewers were antagonistic to the mix of styles which he intentionally used to disorient viewers' expectations of a standard art history film.

By the end of the conference it was clear that

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Ken McMullen's *1867* explores Manet's  
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Courtesy Program for Art on Film

most art historians, even those with significant exposure to film, are reluctant to abandon the standard Kenneth Clark or John Berger-style illustrated lecture, as long as the talking head is an expert, not someone reading another's script. Academics are plainly uneasy about films that are demanding formally and concerned about allusive, nonlinear approaches that run the greatest risk of distorting or distracting from the artwork.

Still, the generally positive reactions to some of the Production Lab's most adventurous collaborations bear out what Critical Inventory studies have shown: There's plenty of room for technical virtuosity as long as it's coupled with an enlightened perspective on content. Apart from *The Fayum Portraits*, other Production Lab projects well received at the conference included: *Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-Ji*, a "film poem" directed by Taka Iimura in collaboration with architect Arata Isozaki, who composed a text of poetic reflections for the film on the Japanese spiritual concept of "ma," embodied in the Zen garden. *De Artificiali Perspectiva or Anamorphosis* is a charming visual essay by the British animation team the Brothers Quay and art historian Roger Cardinal of the University of Kent/Canterbury, on which Sir Ernst Gombrich, Professor Emeritus of the University of London, served as project advisor. This film uses straightforward narration and an animated master of ceremonies to elucidate quirky sixteenth- and seventeenth-century anamorphic images—those that appear distorted until seen from the proper angle or in a curved mirror. A favorite film among conference participants was *1867*, a dramatic short directed by Ken McMullen in collaboration with Michael Wilson, Deputy Keeper of the National Gallery in London, about a series of four canvases by Manet depicting the execution of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico. The film combines narration from a fictitious journal supposedly composed by Manet with long panoramic shots intended to reproduce the creative process through the eyes of the painter.

### Funding matters

Although funding was pointedly not intended to be a focus of the conference, the subject kept resurfacing. With it came intimations of a second factor that will have a profound effect on the future: the intensified interaction between US and European media communities, whose current discourse and concerns sometimes seem diametrically opposed.

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Even if conference participants like NET producer/director Perry Miller Adato and German art critic/filmmaker Heinz Peter Schwerfel agreed that there is no difference between European and American work, only between "good" and "bad" films, it is obvious that different assumptions about how culture is to be nurtured, transmitted, and preserved have led to distinctions in the nature of funding that have had an impact on the work produced. European countries like England and Germany have traditionally provided opportunities to do complex, personal work, even though it may initially appeal to a small audience. The American emphasis on production for an amorphous mass audience has narrowed the spectrum of topics treated and inhibited experimentation.

A lively sequence of exchanges dramatizing these differences was set off by Harvard professor/filmmaker James Ackerman's moderate criticism of the Public Broadcasting Service's *Art of the Western World*. As executive producer Perry Miller Adato explained, the series, largely funded by the Annenberg/Corporation for Public Broadcasting Project, was made on the understanding that it would serve as both "the ultimate introductory art course," spanning art history from Classical Greece to the present, and be acceptable general interest public television fare. Criticism from all sides centered on problems raised by the program structure which, in an effort to fulfill this mandate, wound up being a grotesque extreme of the increasingly clumsy American norm for cultural fare—with a recognizable (but nonspecialist) on-screen host, on-screen specialists, and an expert advisory panel.

Ackerman, who served as art historical advisor on both *Art of the Western World* and Wechsler's PBS/UK Channel Four *The Painter's World* series, acknowledged the program structure of the *Western World* series was unwieldy, but he be-

lieved it was the best that could be expected, given the demands the series was meant to fill. The Europeans present were unequivocally opposed to the idea of filmmaking by committee; even when curators or other subject specialists are involved in a project, they believed, making the film is the filmmaker's responsibility. In 1988 Schwerfel worked with a committee plan for a series commissioned by the Parisian Centre Pompidou, and concluded "the soup always tastes lousy when too many cooks spit in it." He felt the discussions and the clips shown at the conference suggested that "too many cooks" on *Art of the Western World* had compromised the kind of close relationship necessary to do good work. Echoing a prevalent opinion, he added that the American preoccupation with making films "easy" is a superfluous and counterproductive underestimation of the audience since film, by its nature, simplifies anyway.

Schwerfel remarked that with the introduction of the new private channels European TV gets more like American TV every day and that securing funding in Europe is as difficult lately as it has been in the US. "The golden age for the art film is gone," he intoned darkly at one point. But in Europe there is still regular TV programming on art subjects. And though things are changing and funds may be limited lately, local and communal provisions for documentary production existing in Europe still look utopian to US film- and videomakers.

Both Covert and Wechsler referred to stimulating work initiated by nationally-funded European museums and broadcasting entities as examples of the broader perspectives they advocate. And while US art and media specialists fervently recommended the highest technical standards for reproducing and projecting films about art at every conference session, in Europe this issue

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already has a measure of official support. By last November funding for several HDTV arts series was granted by national and pan-European governmental agencies like the European Community's Eureka Audiovisual and France's Centre National de la Cinématographie. Meanwhile, this past spring WNET New York canceled production of a more modest arts show called *Edge*, reportedly because ratings weren't high enough.

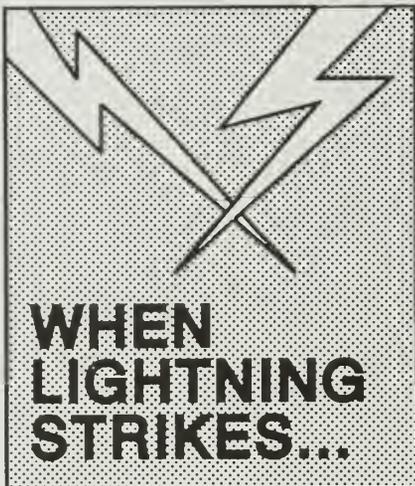
In addition, New York's Metropolitan Museum had to eliminate its Office of Film and Television. Previously slated projects have been assumed by MUSE Film and Television, an independent organization founded by Karl Katz, former director of the department and executive director of the Program for Art of Film since its inception. The new organization will act as an executive production agency that will centralize, manage, and subcontract production for cultural organizations.

Some details from an outline of the Louvre Museum's current media program provide an example of how a European museum is coping with the funding dilemma. The Louvre provides only 30 percent of the budget for most of its production, with the rest financed by television coproduction (currently with Antenne 2-FR3, La Sept, and the new Franco-German cultural network) and distribution agreements (notably with the French producer/distributor Les Films d'Ici and the American Encyclopedia Britannica Corp.).

One of the Louvre's main concerns is to educate the public prior to the typical two-and-a-half-hour visit to the museum, so time is spent looking at the collections, not at films about them. *100 Seconds for a Work of Art* is a noncommercial series produced in association with Les Films d'Ici that gives new directors free reign in their approach to the collections. (Audiovisual and Cinematographic Department head Pierre Coural was in Boston to review proposals for this series from Wechsler's graduate students.) Another Louvre program that has been remarkably successful is its *Palette* series, produced in association with FR3 and La Sept and made with the participation of the Louvre's curators and the nationally-funded Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Each 26-minute segment analyzes the aesthetic, historical, and technical aspects of a single work in the museum's collection. Designed for leisure viewing but acceptable to many for the classroom, the series has been one of the biggest commercial successes on the French video market: 40,000 cassettes were sold by November 1991 and the figures were expected to mount to 60,000-80,000 by the end of the Christmas season.

***Start from the art***

A final set of exchanges in Boston epitomized the chasms that can widen unexpectedly between the "two minds" and between cultures that are closely related but have long worked from different premises. Wechsler made the point that theoretical



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issues in art history make more problematic film material than the examination of cultural and social contexts. She used Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's experimental *Cézanne: Dialogue with Joachim Gasquet*—a meditation on questions of representation and reality—as an example of new art theory translating poorly on film. The piece is partially based on Gasquet's memoir of Cézanne, a painter whose classicism French filmmaker Jacques Rivette has said Straub/Huillet's work brings to mind. In addition to tolerating formal devices like the long static shots of landscapes, paintings, and photos these filmmakers characteristically use to distance the viewer and provoke intellectual participation, the audience for this film must also be prepared to consider references to Jean Renoir's *Madame Bovary* and Straub/Huillet's previous films based on works by German lyric poet Friedrich Hölderlin. Acknowledging that she found the film tedious and frustrating, Wechsler complained it "sacrifices camera moves, aesthetic framing, and dynamic editing" to theory and drags in strained and personal, if not false, comparisons.

Straub and Huillet stand at the opposite extreme from filmmakers like Thompson, who intended to introduce audiences to "presences and emotions." Yet, in the course of the conference, all European participants, including Thompson, referred to film as "manipulative," "parasitic," and "trivializing," expressing concern about film's seductive but potentially misleading qualities in ways that Americans usually reserve for commercials and the evening news.

Later in the conference German independent Schwerfel thanked US director Andrea Simon for her objection to Wechsler's characterization of the film, saying until that point he had "felt very European." Challenging Wechsler, Simon had called for more respect for the filmmakers' aesthetic and for an unpolarized discourse flexible enough to accommodate the different aesthetic principles both filmmakers and art historians bring to their interpretation of art. Returning to the deceptively simple principle advanced by Covert at the beginning of the conference, she suggested that the "holy delight" in the artwork that Straub and Huillet speak of was an admirable starting point for both filmmakers and art historians. Ultimately, this idea of "starting from the art," which became the subtitle of the conference's published summary, emerged as the central point of the two-and-a-half-day gathering.

*Carole Lazio is coeditor of the catalog Archaeology on Film and European research correspondent for Baseline in New York.*

The Program for Art on Film is located at 980 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021; (212) 988-4876; fax: (212) 628-8963. A five videocassette anthology, including 14 of the Production Lab commissions and discussions by interdisciplinary focus groups, will be available in the fall. MUSE Film and Television is located at 1 East 53rd St., 10th fl., New York, New York 10022; (212) 688-8280; fax: (212) 688-0409.

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## WORKING WITH FILM COMMISSIONS

MAX J. ALVAREZ

A FILM CREW IS ON LOCATION IN A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT OF LOS ANGELES preparing the final shot of a grueling 18-hour day. As the camera starts to roll, a cacophony of car horns, chainsaw motors, and decibel-shattering rock music fills the night air. The take is ruined, but for a sizable cash payment the neighborhood dwellers will allow the crew to resume undisrupted.

A different film crew is shooting a scene at a downtown intersection in a large Eastern city. Whenever they attempt to begin filming the shot is interrupted by an inquisitive motorcycle cop who asks to see their permit. The cop departs after inspecting the permit but is succeeded 20 minutes later by another confused policeman. A seemingly uncomplicated sequence has now become a logistical nightmare for both director and crew.

These are samplings of problems that can occur when independent film- and videomakers attempt location shooting without help from a state or local film commission. In both instances the independents made the erroneous assumption that the film office was not going to accord their low-budget productions the same respect they would a major Hollywood feature. The skeptical filmmakers assumed they would have nothing to gain by telephoning a film commissioner who they presumed was out sailboating with visiting studio executives.

Such spirited imaginings do not reflect the actual duties of a film commissioner or the responsibilities of a film office. In actuality, commissions are sensitive to the needs of the independent and are not prone to be obstructive to low-budget projects in quest of location guidance. If properly utilized, commissions can save independents considerable time and expense, regardless of film format and budget. Members of the independent film and video community who have yet to enlist the aid of film agencies might benefit from learning more about why they exist and how they can work.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, A FILM COMMISSION PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO OUT-of-state producers unfamiliar with the local territory. In addition to being fully apprised of potential locations within designated areas, the staff of a city, state, or county film office is well acquainted with the issuance of permits, local regulations and ordinances, availability of production freelancers, and in-state film- and video-related vendors.

The concept of a city and state film office is not altogether new. New York, New Mexico, Oregon, and Colorado inaugurated offices in the late 1960s, and by the end of the seventies at least half the states in the union were represented by film commissions. The expansion continued in the eighties as a result of the "runaway production" boom that occurred when Hollywood studio projects headed for "right-to-work" (anti-union) states and localities with less constrictive filming conditions as viable alternatives to New York and Los Angeles.

According to the Association of Film Commissioners International

(AFCI), revenue generated in 1991 from films shooting outside California amounted to \$7.088-billion. Of this total, Western states accounted for \$5.5-billion, Southeast states \$941-million, Northeast states \$517-million, and Central states \$116-million. At present, says the AFCI, 50 states, 74 cities, and 31 counties operate film offices in the US. Each state office employs an average of four persons, while city and county offices each employ an average of 1.4. Operational funding for these offices varies; many depend on appropriations from the state or city government, others on hotel tax or allocations from a tourist board. Biannual listings of all AFCI members are available in *Locations*, the AFCI's official magazine/directory (c/o Wyoming Film Office, Interstate 25 @ College Drive, Cheyenne, WY 82002-0240; 307/777-7777).

When working with film commissions, the general rule of thumb is the earlier a commission becomes involved in a production, the more money they can save you. A relationship often begins when a screenplay or script synopsis is submitted to the office by the producer or production company. Office staff peruse the script and prepare a location breakdown, selecting viable locales and pulling existing file photographs or commissioning new photos to be taken for the producer to consider. If a commission is contacted during the research stage, the office may help producers find locations that are relatively affordable, so they can be written into the script. These services, like all commission and film office services, are provided free of charge. In unusual circumstances a commission will furnish free roundtrip airfare to producers scouting locations.

A film commission primarily assists the filmmaker in obtaining shooting permits expeditiously and painlessly through local municipalities. Most state commissions do not issue permits or regulate permit fees in cities where such fees exist, but some offices are able to negotiate reduced rates for independent productions. Because film offices are not legally allowed to refer producers to specific individuals or businesses, they annually publish bluebooks which list all available freelancers and vendors in the vicinity. Twenty-four-hour job hotlines and updated resumé files are prominent features at many offices.

Business in the film world is based on relationships as much as in any other profession, so producers who become friendly with commission staff early on are likely to benefit. If a commissioner knows of a steadicam that's not in use, or a good cinematographer who's anxious to move from commercials to fiction films—and knows that's exactly what your project requires—they may well pass this information along. Commission staff may also be willing to help talk down location fees, locate seldomly used (and cheaper) locations, or point a producer to a local lab that is looking for business and willing to cut deals. Raising production capital or financing features is not part of a commission's function, yet a certain number have been influential in referring filmmakers to potential investors and financial institutions and assisting with local promotion at the time of release.

The size of a commission's operating budget will determine the type of services it provides. Well-financed commissions with plenty of staff to do the legwork can attend to the needs of both studios and independents equitably, while those at the mercy of fiscally conservative local govern-



Filmed in New York City with a full union crew on a budget of only \$350,000, Alexandre Rockwell's *In the Soup* marks a successful use of the Mayor's Office for Film and TV.

Courtesy Good Machine

ments could be limited in the amount of attention they can dedicate to producers with paltry budgets. One critical point of information a commission will want to know is how much money a production will leave behind in their state or city. Independents should remember that films with smaller budgets often end up hiring more actors, crew, and equipment from that area than a studio film that flies in everything and everyone. When seeking a commission's assistance, it helps to draw up a tally sheet (without inflating figures) of the revenues you anticipate leaving behind.

**W**HEN IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR AN INDEPENDENT TO SEEK COUNSEL FROM a film commission? "There's just as much advantage on a \$400,000 picture as there is on a \$10-million picture," says Gwen Field, a board member of the Independent Feature Project/West who produced *Mortal Thoughts* and *Patti Rocks*. Joe O'Kane, executive director of the San Jose Film and Video Commission, concurs. "We've worked with people with budgets of less than \$100,000. We've worked with people with budgets over \$40-million. The size of a budget really doesn't matter. All it takes for us to work with a production company is if they're willing to act in a responsible and professional manner."

Suzu Kellett of the Chicago-based Illinois Film Office fears many independents are mistakenly under the impression that big city commissions are going to clamp down on their operations. "[I]f they're thinking about shooting nonunion, there is a misinterpretation on occasion that some of the bigger commissions are kind of a mainline right into [organized] labor. That is something that we never do," says Kellett. "We don't call

[union] people up and say, 'Guess who's coming into town?' That's the [production] company's job, that's not our job."

However, if the production company fails to notify the union and the union contacts the film office for a local production update, the office will be obliged to inform the union of any nonunion shoots, says San Francisco-based producer Susan O'Connell (*Steal America*). "You [a producer] would have been foolhardy to not have talked to the unions. That's really asking for it."

In Irving, Texas, film office representative Ellen Sandoloski has surprised local independent producers with the willingness of her office to offer consultation on projects. "We don't care what your budget is as long as you have some money and you pay your bills before you leave," she declares. The office recently accommodated local filmmaker John Carstarphen on *Weekend of Our Discontent*, a \$20,000 project financed by a grant from Irving Cable Community Television Network. Carstarphen's film premiered on cable access and later screened at the Dallas Museum of Art. Another Irving beneficiary was New York University film student Lance Stickel, whose student work *Bingo City* filmed locally. Stickel received location referrals from the film office, a volunteer film crew, and donated equipment from the local Panavision distributor, as well as assistance from various Irving businesses.

A film commission concentrating more on big-budget movies coming in from out-of-state than on low-budget indigenous projects might be doing so out of budgetary constraints. An office with one or two staffpersons is naturally limited in terms of the quality and quantity of personal service it can provide dozens of filmmakers making simultaneous inquiries. "You have to understand that film commissions are in business primarily to increase the economic benefit of the areas they represent," comments O'Kane. "But at the same time we're realistic and know that if we can get a project done in our area, that's just as important as counting up the dollars in the bank." Filmmakers who have positive experiences may come back with bigger-budget projects in the future, or may simply spread good word-of-mouth to other producers and location managers.

A negative experience with an independent producer can take a toll on a

After shooting half of *The Arc* in his home state of Maryland, Rob Tregenza found the New Mexico film commission much more receptive to his needs when filming there. Tregenza attributes this to his visitor status, a phenomenon experienced by many filmmakers who shoot out of state.

Courtesy filmmaker

commission's willingness to assist those outside the Hollywood spectrum. One small east coast film office became extremely leery of working with local independents after a flamboyant producer and rental lot owner burned film investors in the state, laundering money by making low-grade action movies which never received any type of distribution. The film office became less receptive to other local independents whose credentials and aspirations were respectable. Locals working to win back the confidence of the film office have reported gradual progress being made.

O'Connell, whose Pacific Film Fund produces and executive produces independent features, has worked both with and without film commissions and believes such involvements depend upon a producer's budget. "I think the basic question you ask before you start dealing with a commissioner is: 'Can I afford to pay permits? Can I afford to carry a million dollars' worth of insurance in order to get city permits and to shoot on city property?' That's really the bottom line. If you've got an extremely low-budget film you may not be able to handle that insurance factor and that cuts you out of the advantages of working with a film commission."

Christine Lewis of the Washington State Film and Video Office—advisers to Alan Rudolph's *Trouble in Mind* and offbeat Hollywood productions such as David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* and David Mamet's *House of Games*—says it is not mandatory to contact the commission and admits local producers frequently bypass it altogether. "But we've told the people in-state: 'Use our files, use us if you want.' It's all the same. What we're trying to do is create a good working atmosphere for filmmaking here."

Videographers are less likely to require film commission assistance due to small crews and compact equipment, explains Mark Tang, education and facilities manager at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis. Tang finds commissions useful for local freelancers seeking work in film production but believes video people seldom have to concern themselves with location permits and certain types of insurance. "You can deal with the freelance [video] community on the phone or work by referral or word-of-mouth, and you don't need the film board," comments Tang.

In New Mexico, film commissioner Linda Taylor Hutchison expresses a feeling of camaraderie with those working outside the mainstream. "The majority of us come from a documentary, independent film background and we all know what it's like to try to do things on a very small budget, particularly if you're looking at a documentary project."

Even though film- and videomakers are under no obligation to work through the New Mexico commission, Hutchison requests that she be provided with location and hiring information to present the state legislature for future funding purposes. Among independent productions made with film office participation have been Jonathan Wacks' *Powwow Highway*,



Robert Tregenza's *Talking to Strangers* and *The Arc* (a Berlin festival entry in 1991), and Allison Anders' *Gas, Food, and Lodging* (shown at this year's Sundance and Berlin film festivals).

INDEPENDENTS DESIROUS OF SHOOTING IN EITHER LOS ANGELES OR NEW YORK CITY will be familiar with the numerous expenses and pressures involved and may welcome the assistance of a film office. "We do whatever we can to enable somebody to film. It doesn't matter whether they're an independent or Universal [studios]," says Stephanie Liner of the L.A. film office. Her office, she reports, is reachable seven days a week through a 24-hour beeper in the event of any crisis which may arise during shooting. And the crises in L.A. can be considerable when compared with other parts of the country.

The most notorious problem is the increasing trend of residents and communities demanding payoffs from film crews in exchange for silence and cooperation. Last year producer Field encountered such a situation while filming in the Hollywood Hills after having obtained necessary permits, licenses, and homeowners' association waivers. When discussing the extortion controversy at a seminar at last year's Independent Feature Film Market, Field was told by an L.A. film office representative that the matter should have been immediately brought to the attention of the film commission.

"I didn't even think to call the L.A. film office about this," admitted Field months later. "They would have been willing to help us out and prevent these people from getting all this extra baksheesh money, hush money, whatever it's called." She estimates a phone call to the film office might have saved her production five to ten thousand dollars. "I think you really have to learn to use these agencies even in situations where it wouldn't occur to you to do it," adds Field. "They want to keep the filmmaking enterprises within their jurisdiction. They don't want runaway production."

O'Kane, of the San Jose office, believes the payoff issue is common primarily in areas of the city where large numbers of film permits are required. "You have to realize there are over 5,000 permits the city of L.A. is issuing." Most of these shoots occur within a 30-mile radius of the city, O'Kane explains, and the Pacific Ocean encompasses half that area. Consequently, film crews are reduced to scrambling for whatever locations of the studio zone are available, much to the displeasure of some property owners.

“[I]f you had a film company on your street—not just one film company but 10 film companies in a year—you might want to be compensated for that, too,” remarks O’Kane. “That is not to say it’s correct, copacetic, or kosher, but you just have to realize where some people are coming from.”

Liner, of the L.A. film office, believes payoffs stem from lack of communication between local residents and film crews, when certain residents are overlooked by production companies during the location negotiation stage. “I have a [district] right now where I’m working with a neighborhood that causes problems. I will step in and put together a community meeting to [attempt to] solve the problem.”

Although considered a tough location in its own right, New York City continues to serve as a magnet for independent feature films. In 1991, the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting issued more permits to independents (about 100 out of 124) than any previous year—largely because of the studio production boycott. “The services of this office can be utilized incredibly well by independents,” says acting director Ninna Streich, who cites recent examples such as Matty Rich’s *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, Joseph Vasquez’ *Hangin’ with the Homeboys*, and Alexandre Rockwell’s Sundance audience award-winner *In the Soup*.

The Mayor’s office touts a laserdisc system which contains a photo catalog of every building in the city and neighborhood information for location managers. The office also maintains photo files of hundreds of building interiors. As is the case with all film commissions, there are no charges for these services.

City permits are free in New York but can only be obtained through the film office and cannot be issued unless the filmmaker has purchased a minimum of \$1-million in comprehensive and liability insurance. The office assists hundreds of student films every year, whose insurance policies are paid for by the schools themselves. An out-of-state film school could experience hardships in trying to obtain insurance coverage for a student film shooting in Manhattan. The Mayor’s film office does not broker insurance deals but will provide filmmakers with information regarding insurance companies and insurance requirements for equipment and rental purposes.

“Sometimes low-budget films choose not to insure themselves because they don’t have the money,” admits Streich, whose office is presently providing consultation to a \$20,000 feature. As an alternative to costly location fees and insurance premiums, filmmakers may choose to shoot their picture guerrilla-style, with hand-held cameras and small crews. Documentarians and video-

graphers have limited involvement with the Mayor’s office because of tiny, mobile crews and relatively quick shooting schedules.

Independents have historically been intimidated by New York’s strict union regulations, but the establishment of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)’s East Coast Council now makes it easier for low-budget productions to film in Manhattan with union personnel. Rockwell’s *In the Soup*, Streich says, was filmed in its entirety in New York with a full union crew on a budget of only \$350,000.

San Francisco, another highly desirable location for film production, has experienced intense disputes within the city’s infrastructure over the past two months. Conflicts arose after conservative mayor Frank Jordan (the city’s former chief of police) fired the head of the city’s film office, Robin Eickman, after she had served for 12 years. Eickman’s replacement was SportsChannel producer Lorrae Rominger, a close friend of the mayor’s fiancée, who is without any previous film office experience. Eickman’s firing elicited outraged responses from local filmmakers and outside producers who had come to depend on her ability to cut through insurmountable red tape.

“The problem with our local film commission is it hasn’t had any funding,” says producer O’Connell. “[T]he funding for the film commissioner was a very modest salary, and she had a desk in the Mayor’s office and no staff; therefore, when she left she took with her all of the knowledge of how it works.” Making the permit process function easily for filmmakers was one of Eickman’s strengths, says O’Connell. “She streamlined somewhat the system within the city, but there’s still a lot of subsets of permits that you have to get. Robin was the only person who could walk a production manager through that process.”

The firing of Eickman may result in production boycotting from the National Association of Independent Commercial Producers. Even the \$40-million feature *Ghost Rider* threatened to take its business elsewhere. “I

**For *Summer’s End* director Jeff Leighton scouted numerous locations on his own, such as this Atlantic Beach pier. But when it came to getting access to the historic Fort Macon, the cooperation of the North Carolina Film Commission was absolutely critical.**

Courtesy filmmaker



## On Location in Canyon Country

LORRI SHUNDICH

In 1939 an Arizona homesteader named Harry Goulding flung several photographs across the desk of director John Ford in Hollywood. They showed an amazing landscape of monumental buttes and sandstone spires in a seemingly endless expanse of unpopulated territory. Duly impressed, Ford agreed to film his next picture, *Stagecoach*, in Monument Valley and hire Goulding and local Navajos to supply, feed, and guide his crew. Between 1939 and 1964 Ford made nine westerns there, popularizing a landscape that became synonymous with the American West.

This corner of the country, from Monument Valley in Arizona up into southeastern Utah, has some of the most remote wilderness left in the lower 48 states. For this reason it continues to draw a steady stream of filmmakers as well as tourists. But a film shoot can take a heavy toll on the fragile environment, and its protection has become a priority for such groups as the Southeastern Utah Wilderness Association. Since Ford's heyday, numerous restrictions and guidelines have been put in place, which producers considering such locales should take into account.

A producer will need to go through a film commission, the National Park Service, and/or the Navajo Nation, depending on where one shoots. One of the more popular film spots is the town of Moab, population 5,000. Moab has accommodated filmmakers for decades. The nearby Professor Valley was a favorite location for John Ford. John Wayne used to stay at the town's Apache Motel. Yakima Canutt, one of the toughest stuntmen of all time, is memorialized in Moab's Hollywood Stuntman Hall of Fame. More recently, Jon Bon Jovi taped a music video on a nearby hoodoo, or natural pinnacle of rock, and two independent films released on video—*Sundown Vampire in Retreat* and *The Survivalist*—were shot in the area. And almost every car, truck, and motorcycle company in the world has parked, raced, cruised, or four-wheeled its vehicles in front of this scenery for the camera.

When working in Moab, one goes through the town's film commission, which boasts being the oldest in the world. The commission oversees 100,000 square miles of desert mesas, canyons, and mountains and offers services particular to that rugged area: wranglers, rock climbers, backcountry guides, and boatmen. The commission also works closely with local land management agencies such as the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

To shoot inside a national park, a producer should contact the individual park directly, as policies and restrictions vary. There are no fees for filming within national parks, but contributions are encouraged. Usually, this voluntary fee system enables filmmakers to come away

with almost scandalous deals. Ridley Scott's *Thelma and Louise*, for instance, entailed 170 crew members and truckloads of equipment in Arches National Park, another popular location for filmmakers located a couple miles west of Moab, for almost three weeks. An appropriate area of the park was set aside for a commissary and star trailers, movie equipment was stored in several parking areas, and several identical versions of *Thelma and Louise's* dusty green Thunderbird convertible were scattered throughout the park. With a budget of \$17-million, the film donated a mere \$2,500 to the park.

The National Park Service requests that all filming be made under permit conditions established by the superintendent or chief ranger of the appropriate park. At Arches National Park, for instance, a performance bond in the form of a certified check or cash deposit may be required as part of the permit process to insure that the park area is left in its original condition. The filmmaker may also be required to obtain general liability insurance that will protect the US Government from claims or litigation associated with injuries or damages resulting from the actions of the filmmaker and crew.

Any filming activity that is potentially harmful to the resources of Arches National Park is not permitted. This includes off-road vehicle use, illegal use of aircraft, and disruption or removal of artifacts. "They used to let them do a lot more than they do now in the park," remembers Eve Stocks, an administrative technician at Arches who herself was once an extra in Burt Reynolds's movie *Fade In*, filmed locally in 1967. "In one of the movies they had Indians fighting on a narrow path near Landscape Arch, and they were climbing all over the rocks and then falling off. They'd never allow that today."

The types of natural resources to be protected vary from park to park, and each park's permit requirements reflect this. Although some restrictions may seem to reflect common sense, there are others that city-slickers may not anticipate. For instance, filming is not permitted in Arches if resident or free-roaming wildlife are harassed, disturbed or manipulated. Since some wildlife are sensitive to aircraft intrusions, you may have to send in a ranger to check for the presence of bighorn sheep, an endangered species protected by Federal law, before proceeding with any aerial filming. On one recent shoot, no sheep activity was sighted and the filmmaker was allowed to proceed. But this can be a long process in desolate areas and a filmmaker must be prepared for the priorities of the park service and sometimes being thwarted by the whims of grazing sheep.

Similarly, filming activities are not permitted in the park when they conflict with visitors' experience of Arches. If a filmmaker needs to stop traffic on a park road, they may be permitted to do so for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time and must hire appropriate manpower—park rangers or local law enforcement—to supervise traffic flow. If a popular tourist attraction, such as Delicate Arch, is requested for a filming location, the permit, if granted, may include severe time limits.



In canyon country with Geena Davis (center) during the shoot for Ridley Scott's *Thelma and Louise*.

Photo: Lorri Shundich

Arches, however, she or he must be prepared to add certain items to the regular equipment list—such as water, which is heavy. One gallon, the strongly recommended daily allotment per person, weighs eight pounds. One must also learn to recognize the fragile living cryptogamic soil that is a necessary stabilizer of desert ground and know how to avoid destroying it by walking on slickrock and along dry washes.

The Navajo Nation has organized since the days of John Ford. In 1974 the Navajo Tribal Council set up the office of Navajo Broadcast Services at tribal headquarters in Shiprock, Arizona. Anyone wishing to do professional filming in Monument Valley, which is part of the Navajo Reservation, must contact Kee Long, media specialist at this office, to apply for a permit. Today the use of Monument Valley costs a filmmaker an average of \$1,500-2,500 a day plus a one-time processing fee of up to \$500. The permit fee, determined by Navajo Broadcast Services, is based on factors such as the size of the company filming, how many locations are requested, and whether tribal members are used as technicians, guides, interpreters, or extras. "If the requested land is used for grazing or home use, people living there may require an additional fee," Long explains. "We also have environmental concerns and wish to preserve our traditional culture. So we will request a script and storyboard. We have a traditional society of Navajo chanters and a Navajo justice department to guide filmmakers in depicting our culture."

Fred Cly, a Navajo guide in Monument Valley, describes the services he offers to filmmakers: "I scout locations, recruit extras and horses; I study the sun and moon, study the sand-dune ripples to know the best time for the best results." He continues, "It is important that the Navajo people are compensated for the use of their land and that, when filming is done, everything is removed, the land is reclaimed and put back in order." Cly can be contacted through the Moab Film Commission, the Monument Valley National Monument Visitor Center, or Fred's Adventure Tours in Mexican Hat, Utah. He will arrange to meet a filmmaker at the Visitor Center and works closely with Navajo Broadcast Services to follow permit requirements.

John Ford, who recognized and effectively used the desolate, powerful beauty of the American West, would today find himself faced with a host of unfamiliar restrictions by government agencies, the Navajo tribe, and environmental watchdogs. But these are different times that call for filmmakers to work creatively with local communities, commissions, and environmentalists while remaining open to the land that will speak to them if they listen.

*Lorri Shundich is a writer based in New York who recently worked as a ranger in Utah's canyon country.*

The Park Service at Arches may require supervision of filming activities by their personnel. Rangers are only available during their off hours, and the filmmaker is billed for their time. A permit may be denied when the requirements for supervising the filming project exceed the park's staffing capacity. A large filmmaking operation will require the presence of a ranger at all times to enforce minimal impact on the natural resources. Steven Spielberg received high environmental marks from the Arches National Park rangers when he filmed his opening sequence to *Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade* at several park locations. Unfortunately, it is the smaller filmmaker who has been known to ignore park procedures. "We had one independent low-budget crew run the gate at Arches at the same time Steven Spielberg was up there filming," says Betty Stanton of the Moab Film Commission. "We work with and support independents as much as possible but there are those renegades who book, film, and run [without paying]."

The less equipment and crew a filmmaker brings into a park, the more flexibility and access he or she will have to the scenery. If a lone auteur with a single camera wishes to tackle the backcountry of a desert park such as



New York University film student Lance Sticksel was treated to hospitality Texas-style as he received location referrals from the Irving film office, a volunteer film crew, donated equipment from the local Panavision distributor, and assistance from various local businesses when shooting his short *Bingo City*.

Courtesy filmmaker

hope [Rominger] realizes she'll be spending a lot more time filling out forms and talking to cops than doing lunch with Marty Scorsese," wrote *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Jesse Hamlin within days of Eickman's departure. Perhaps in response to this reaction, the Mayor's office rehired Eickman in May to share the commissioner's position with Rominger.

**I**NDPENDENT FILM AND VIDEOMAKERS WHO WISH TO AVOID THE GRISLY politics of big city location shooting might well consider the advantages and bountiful offerings of states situated between the coasts. The state of Minnesota is relatively new to filmmaking but, nonetheless, fervidly embraces independents. During the 1980s, 20 movies were shot in-state, 17 of which were locally produced. To date, the 1990s has delivered 12 films, nine originating from Los Angeles.

"We need features, period," says executive director Randy Adamsick of the Minnesota Film Commission. "I add up all the dollars to get our appropriation from the state, but basically it's a lot better for me to say that we had six pictures last year, even if four of them were low-budget 16mm. It's much to my advantage to have as many independent productions as possible."

With its reputation for having a well-funded arts community and various financing options, Minnesota has attracted a number of feature films, including Sam Shepherd's *Far North* and David Burton Morris' *Patti Rocks*. "We are the only film commission in the country that's a nonprofit, so we're very much tied to that world in a way, because we have to raise money outside of what the state gives us," Adamsick reports. "Therefore I think we're a little better at helping filmmakers get to some [financial] sources."

Minnesota filmmakers Morris, Victoria Wozniak, Greg Cummins, and Sandra Schulberg were also responsible for the formation of Independent Feature Project/North, thus giving the state a closer link to the independent community. Adamsick believes Minnesota is also beneficial to videographers because of numerous funding institutions and a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) affiliate (KTCA) which frequently airs independent video projects.

Despite a poor standing with pro-choice activists, Utah has also done its share to bolster independent production and has the advantage of hosting the Sundance Film Festival every January in Park City. In addition to films developed by Robert Redford's Sundance Institute (Michael Hoffman's *Promised Land* being among the most notable), the commission has consulted with PBS and Japanese-produced documentaries.

O'Connell had a positive experience with the Utah commission for

preproduction on a low-budget feature, *Born with a Trunk*. O'Connell's group was met at the airport by a production manager and provided with a helicopter for location scouting. "We do script breakdowns and have a 48-hour turn-around rule in our office," advises Leigh Von der Esch of the Utah office. "From the time a script hits our desk to the time a producer in Los Angeles or wherever has pictures shot specifically [by hired photographers] or pulled from our files for that script, it will be 48 hours or less."

Permit fees differ dramatically from state to state and are frequently changing. In Los Angeles filmmakers pay a county license fee of \$400 and a city permit fee of \$160, not to mention whatever hourly rates are required for fire safety employees, deputies and highway patrol officers, engineers, and municipal workers. (Student or nonprofit projects are exempt from paying permit fees there.) According to *Backstage/SHOOT* (August 9, 1991), in Hawaii, a guard officer costs \$25 an hour. In San Francisco, commercial shooting costs \$200 per day with a police charge of \$45 per hour and a four-hour minimum. San Diego gives verbal permits. New York City and Utah do not have permit fees. San Jose features a \$54 fee for road closures, and so on. Some states charge fees for shooting in government-owned parks and institutions; others merely require permits. Film- and videomakers will want to contact film offices directly for updated rate information on potential locations.

In states where filmmakers are not obligated to go through a film office, those choosing to do the work themselves risk multiplying the pressures. Residents are more apt to grant permission to an independent recommended by a film commission than to a filmmaker approaching them directly. Contacting a commission at the last minute with unforeseen problems can lead to costly delays and also reflect poorly on the commission itself, states Kellett of the Illinois Film Office.

"In a guerrilla situation you are always on the lookout for the [municipal] agencies that are patrolling to try to regulate things," reminds O'Connell. "You do have to watch and you do have to camouflage your activities and keep them very minimal, which means that you can't set up your exterior shooting in a way that will allow you to take many, many takes. You have to be much more mobile than that." Not all filmmakers want these kinds of restrictions, nor do they care to confront police and park commissioners or coordinate traffic and crowd control. These makers would do well to contact a film commission, regardless of the size of their budget, as a good relationship with commission staff can ease the logistics of production in unforeseen ways.

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## NOIR HEROES REASSESSED

**In a Lonely Street:**  
*Film noir, Genre, Masculinity*

by Frank Krutnik

New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991;  
268 pp.; \$49.95 (cloth), \$15.95 (paper)

A playground for theorists and moviegoers alike, *film noir* has generously afforded film culture one of its most dynamic and viable genres. While never forsaking their promise of superior entertainment, these films bear all the elements that beg

Krutnik's book is not the first work of film scholarship to reconcile history and theory in treating *film noir*. David Bordwell's "The Case of *Film Noir*" (*The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1985), Paul Schrader's "Notes on *Film Noir*" (*Film Comment*, Spring 1972), and Paul Kerr's "Out of What Past? Notes on the B *film noir*" (*Screen Education*, Autumn/Winter 1979-1980) all outline elements such as post-war disillusionment, German emigré directors, and B-movie production codes which had a formative influence on the genre's themes. Krutnik's efforts mark a significant step

its vogue in America during the 1940s. Aware that both screenwriters and directors of the period were consciously applying popularized versions of Freud's ideas to their films, Krutnik uses these theories in analyzing and appraising their work, produced during a period when, "in the new civilian order, the sense of any natural supremacy of the masculine had been challenged." The chaos allowed for impaired states of manhood to be displayed on the screen, and the battle-wearied spectator could, to borrow Krutnik and Freud's jargon, displace his anxiety onto the masochistic hero of *noir*. He is a hero, Krutnik argues, who beneath the hard-boiled exterior resigns himself to the workings of fate and is willingly manipulated by a femme fatale. This degraded form of manhood, Krutnik continues, is by no means a subversion of an existing code of male screen representation, but mirrors a general condition of the American male's defection from his "phallic" responsibility during the forties.

The erudition and ingenuity of Krutnik's work is to be credited, and *In a Lonely Street* will surely be referred to by film students and scholars to come. His analysis of the schisms in male identity and the Hollywood and America that engineered them, is insightful and provocative. Surprisingly, he achieves this with a tone of such stodginess and rigor that would frighten off all but the most sober readers. Never does he reveal his personal preference in film, nor does he offer any critique of Freudian theory. Nevertheless, this is all within his scheme, which is to uncover and understand the influences on and thinking of *film noir*'s creators. Scholars must hold back from being too quickly seduced by the charms of the genre, he maintains; the snares of *film noir*, like a femme fatale, can blur objectivity and vigorous historical analysis, leaving us in a muddled, intoxicated stupor.

TROY SELVARATNAM



to be assessed by academia—the assimilation of female traits by male characters, dialogue that crackles with sexual perversity, multiple layers of psychopathology. But *film noir* scholarship has gotten out of hand, lecturer at University of Aberdeen and film theorist Frank Krutnik asserts, and film theoreticians have become prodigal cinephiliacs, lauding the genre's subversive qualities and neglecting to recognize the historical factors to which it was subject. It seems Krutnik's book *In a Lonely Street: Film noir, Genre, Masculinity* is less an interaction between critic and subject than a rallying call directed to his colleagues to set a new standard in interpreting the phenomenon and allure of *film noir*.

**Noir's portrayal of not-so-tough-guys at the mercy of a woman, as in Joseph H. Lewis' *Gun Crazy*, was the result of a post-war gender crisis, argues Frank Krutnik in *In a Lonely Street*.**

forward as he seizes upon the wealth of feminist appraisals of tough-sensitive heroes from the last 15 years or so (Laura Mulvey, Mary Anne Doane, Carol Flinn) and builds upon their insights when addressing the post-war gender crisis.

To this end, Krutnik meticulously examines archetypal *noir* films, such as *Double Indemnity*, *Gun Crazy*, *Out of the Past*, and *Dead Reckoning*, in the context of the Freudian theory which found

## TROPES AND TRAMPS

**Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis**

by Mary Ann Doane

New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1991;  
312 pp.; \$15.95 (paper), \$49.95 (cloth)

Whether it is the vamp of American and Scandinavian silent films, the diva of Italian cinema, or the femme fatale of forties *film noir*, the figure of

The dangerously desirable Louise Brooks in *Pandora's Box* is dissected by Mary Ann Doane in *Femmes Fatales*.



the dangerously desirable woman has been an insistent reminder of men's anxiety regarding female sexuality. For feminist film theorist Mary Ann Doane, however, the femme fatale's "most striking characteristic...is the fact that she never really is what she seems to be." In the image of femme fatale, Doane opines in her introduction to *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, "Sexuality becomes the site of questions about what can and cannot be known." The cinematic vamp is thus an apt emblem, if not the express subject, of this collection of 12 essays in which Doane explores questions of epistemology and women's place in cinema.

Doane's writings in *Femmes Fatales* range over a variety of subjects, films, genres, and periods. The unifying element is the author's reliance on psychoanalysis as articulated by Freud and Lacan, whose theories of femininity and the image Doane reiterates in what she describes as an effort to dissect "the episteme which assigns to woman a specific place in cinematic representation while denying her access to that system." The essays are organized thematically, rather than chronologically, in four sections: "Theoretical Excursions," which addresses questions of female spectatorship and the philosophical and cinematic "troping" of women; "Femmes Fatales," comprising close textual readings of Charles Vidor's *Gilda* (1946), Max Ophüls' *La Signora di tutti* (1934), and G.W.Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929); "The Body of the Avant-Garde," which explores the potential for feminist revisions of cinematic language; and "At the Edges of Psychoanalysis," which treats the potential limits of psychoanalytic applications, including the theory's colonialist and racist underpinnings.

Because these essays were composed over the course of the last decade, some of the material (such as Doane's extended rumination on the dangerous subjectivity signalled by women wearing glasses in Hollywood films) will seem obvious to the reader with even a passing acquaintance with feminist philosophy or film theory. Other references, given Doane's erudition, may seem obscure. Doane quotes broadly from a range of critics and theorists, from Derrida to Nietzsche, Luce Irigaray to Roland Barthes, providing the reader at alternate turns with relevant insights and delightful superfluities—such as Nietzsche's praise for the Greeks, who knew how to "stop courageously at the surface...to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—out of profundity."

Doane's application of psychoanalysis is used to best effect in her close textual analyses, such as "*Gilda*: Epistemology as Striptease," in which she

traces the *noir* film's reinscription of bourgeois order through its resolution of a paternally schizophrenic text (in which the hero's loyalties are divided between his boss and a detective). Her assessment of feminist avant-garde films is also engaging, as in her analysis of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce-1080 Bruxelles* (1975), which Doane claims, speaks "the female body differently, even haltingly or inarticulately from the perspective of a classical syntax" by linking together domestic scenes usually repressed in traditional narrative.

But Doane's refusal to root her analysis in women's experience, rather than male theories of that experience, is *Femmes Fatales*' fatal flaw. These essays reinscribe rather than subvert masculine cant about women. Instead of challenging Freudian constructions of female experience, Doane navigates a feminist position within the shallow waters of patriarchal epistemes. She accepts, for example, Freud's absurd assertion that women lack the capacity for pleasurable spectatorship because they lack the masculine ability to fetishize and thereby separate themselves from an object—though such facile notions of a discrete subject-object relation have long since been trounced by feminist philosophers, not to mention Wittgenstein.

Doane is not oblivious of the potential pitfalls of her practice. She allows that feminist film theory risks mimicking "the cinematic construction of the Woman, reinscribing her abstraction," but stops short of making a connection between theory and what she skeptically refers to as the "real of women's lives." In her extended reading of Max Ophüls' *La Signora di tutti*, Doane mentions the director's ambivalence toward the technology on which his art depends. Ophüls, she tells us, was aware of the gap between what technology could represent and its subject. It is an awareness Doane would do well to heed in regard to the limits of theory, her medium. The shortcomings

of *Femmes Fatales* can be summed up in an adaptation of Ophüls' words: "The [theory]—which I have to keep reminding myself in my profession is the guarantee, the material side of its existence—it does leave so much out of account."

ELLEN LEVY

## SPACE INVADERS

### Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction

edited by Constance Penley, Elisabeth Lyon, Lynn Spigel, and Janet Bergstrom  
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991;  
298 pp.; \$39.95 (cloth), \$13.95 (paper)

Feminism and speculative fiction—whether gothic, fantasy, or science fiction—have been entwined ever since Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Speculative fiction frees up cultural constraints, changes gender roles, and creates utopian visions. Therefore, the anthology *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction* promises a look at the liberating force science fiction has on feminism, and vice versa. Unfortunately, the collection does not deliver all that it promises. In her introduction, Constance Penley claims that "Much that has been written previously on science fiction and sexual difference and on gender, representation, and technology has remained within the confines of sociology or traditional literary criticism. We hope that this volume will demonstrate the contribution of semiology, psychoanalysis, and audience studies by feminist media-theorists." What follows, however, is not nearly as ground-breaking as its editors hope.

To begin with, the works discussed in *Close Encounters* are almost exclusively mainstream movies and television series, ranging from *Alien* to *Terminator* to *I Dream of Jeannie*. Vivian Sobchack's opening essay, "Child/Alien/Father: Patriarchal Crisis and Generic Exchange," takes a solid look at the new family images of science fiction, ranging from *Rosemary's Baby* to the star child floating in space in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The essay is essentially standard feminist literary criticism, evaluating images of women in film. The same is true of Janet Bergstrom's "Androids and Androgyny." Bergstrom covers such turf as fashion, costume, and the independent film *Liquid Sky*. The analysis is solid, but does not move beyond the early critical methods of the women's movement, which was to examine how women are treated as characters and symbols.

"From Domestic Space to Outer Space," by Lynn Spigel, also follows the standard method of examining women and families, but takes the familiar and amusing turf of the 1960s fantastic family sit-com. Here science fiction can be seen as a response to the tension of the space race and also a harbinger of how the women's liberation movement was to change the face of the family. "In the fantastic sit-coms, families were often formed in new ways. The genre was populated by unmarried

couples such as Jeannie and Tony in *I Dream of Jeannie*, extended families such as the *Addams Family*, and childless couples such as Wilbur and Carol in *Mr. Ed*."

The promised psychoanalytic perspective is by Harvey Greenberg, M.D., in "Reimagining the Gargoyle: Psychoanalytic Notes on *Alien*." Feminist and psychoanalytic theory are the proverbial bedfellows; they influence and contradict each other, and merge in part in deconstructionist theory. Greenberg moves into the Marxist with his final analysis: "In sum, films like *Alien* cannot legitimately be recommended as polemics against capitalism....With rare exceptions, their means of production and inevitably their ideologies are dictated by corporate parameters...They dimly apprehend the primordial selfishness infecting late twentieth-century capitalism." The entire essay seems to avoid what struck most viewers: Ripley, the heroine in *Alien*, is a powerful female figure—gutsy, strong, original. The message of woman as warrior and survivor seems lost on Greenberg, who calls her simply an "avatar of Kali."

Roger Dadoun's analysis of *Metropolis* is also heavily influenced by psychoanalytic language. His uneasy point is that Hitler was enthusiastic about the film and an admirer of Fritz Lang, apparently willing to overlook Lang's Jewish background. Whether or not Nazi admiration makes a work fascist is a point that Dadoun backs off from in the essay, contenting himself with such statements as: "Auschwitz, anus of the world, enjoys the dubious honor of symbolizing the extremity of horror. In *Metropolis* these images are fused in a layer of destructive and sadistic anality." It is difficult to see what makes this analysis feminist, unless seeing the city of *Metropolis* as essentially female, the Mother City, is enough to give the essay credence.

There are some innovative inclusions in the anthology: a screenplay of Peter Wollen's *Friendship's Death* and the "missing" scene 103 from *Metropolis*. The most innovative essay is *Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching*, by Henry Jenkins III. Jenkins explores the largely female fanzine culture, for "just as women's gossip about soap operas assumes a place within a preexisting feminine oral culture, fan writing adopts forms and functions traditional to women's literary culture." By taking an apparently marginal form of writing and applying it back to the status of women in science fiction, Jenkins has done the genre a service.

*Close Encounters* is a solid collection, but hardly groundbreaking. It goes over familiar turf in a conscientious fashion, but in general avoids the cutting edge of both film and feminism.

*Miriam Sagan is a novelist and poet living in Santa Fe. Her reviews have appeared in Ms, American Book Review, San Francisco Review of Books, and The Albuquerque Journal.*

MIRIAM SAGAN



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**CHICAGO LESBIAN & GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov. 6-15, IL. Second-oldest fest of its kind in country screens over 120 films & videos annually before audiences of about 10,000. For first time, fest awards minimum of \$1,000 in total cash awards. Programs held at Music Box Theatre & Chicago Filmmakers Theatre. Sponsor Chicago Filmmakers is 19-yr-old nonprofit media arts center w/yr-round exhibition program of ind. film/video. Cats: animation, doc, narrative, experimental. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: July 15. Contact: Chicago Filmmakers, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-8788; fax: (312) 281-0389.

**DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., CO. Now in 15th yr, noncompetitive, invitational fest selects new int'l features & shorts, docs, animation, experimental & children's programs. More than 100 film programs shown. Annual John Cassavetes award for outstanding contribution to US ind. filmmaking. No entry fee. Send detailed descriptive info, incl. credits, reviews & preview cassette w/return postage. Fest will advise about sending preview cassette. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" or 1/2". Deadline: July 17. Contact: Ron Henderson, dir., Denver Int'l Film Festival, 999 18th St., Ste. 1820, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 298-8223; fax: (303) 298-0209.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV LOOKOUT FESTIVAL**, Nov. 10-15, NY. 6-day event celebrates lesbian & gay video & performance. Send work in any style—narrative, animation, experimental, PSAs, music videos—shot on VHS, hi-8, 3/4", or Fisher Price Pixel. Must be NTSC playable. Deadline: Aug. 1. Incl. SASE, brief description of work(s) & any supporting materials, such as photos for press. Contact: Lookout Festival, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-1298.

**FILM ARTS FOUNDATION FILM ARTS FESTIVAL**, Nov. 4-8, CA. Annual noncompetitive showcase for ind. media in Bay Area accepts film & videos of any length & genre, in 35mm, 16mm, super-8 or 3/4", by Northern California artists. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Robert Hawk or Nicole Barends, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 1-11, CA. The May issue of *The Independent* listed an incorrect telephone number for this festival. The correct number is (415) 383-5256.

**VIRGINIA FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILM**, Oct., VA. Fest, which debuted in 1988, accepts films by ind. producers for possible inclusion. Hosted annually by Univ. of Virginia in Charlottesville, fest brings filmmakers, scholars, students, stars & public to "celebrate & explore American film." Over 80 screenings during fest incl. premieres, major studio releases, ind. films, docs, shorts & children's matinees followed by open discussions. Awards: Distinguished Filmmaker, Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking & winner of Governor's Screenwriting Competition. All ind. entries must be US films, completed no earlier than Nov. 1, 1991. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Virginia Festival of American Film, Box 3697, Charlottesville, VA 22903; (800) UVA-FEST; (804) 982-5277; fax: (804) 9982-5270.

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability & make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- & videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive & negative.**

## Foreign

**CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS**, Jan. 29-Feb. 6, France. FIVF will act as liaison to this major int'l competition for short films, collecting & organizing films for prescreening by Roger Gonin, fest dir. who will visit NYC in early fall to organize retro (of last 5 yrs) & program of US ind. short films. Program will incl. school films, fiction, doc, experimental & animated works. Fest celebrates 5th edition in 1993, held in heart of France. Films from over 45 countries represented in int'l competition, w/ more than 200 fiction, animation, doc & experimental works shown to audience of over 62,000 in 1992. Fest has open access market which provides meeting place for producers, dirs, TV buyers & short film programmers; last yr over 800 professionals (incl. buyers for 15 European channels & short film programmers) viewed participating works & utilized catalog, which lists nearly 1,000 titles, incl. 125 ind. films from US. Fest held in conjunction w/ larger Clermont-Ferrand National Festival (in 15th year in 1993). Awards: Grand Prix (FF20,000 to dir. & Vercingétorix trophy); Special Jury Prize (FF20,000 to dir. & Vercingétorix); Public Prize (FF20,000 to dir. & Vercingétorix); add'l donations & prizes may be awarded. Entries must be under 40 min. & completed after Jan. 1, 1991. Fest pays return shipping of selected prints. Dirs whose films have been selected for int'l competition will be invited to fest w/hotel accommodations, food allowance & FF450 toward travel between Paris and Clermont-Ferrand. Entry fee: \$20 AIVF members; \$25 nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" or 3/4" only. Deadline: Sept. 4. For info. & appls, send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. In France, contact: Roger Gonin, festival dir., Festival Nat'l & Int'l du Court Mètrage de Clermont-Ferrand, 26 rue des Jacobins, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France; tel: 33 73 91 65 73; fax: 33 73 92 11 93.

**CORK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 4-11, Ireland. Organized in 1956, fest estab. to introduce Irish audiences to "best in world cinema" & as showcase for Irish film art. Program incl. int'l features; short film section, which in 1991 screened over 100 shorts; & program of doc films. Other sections incl. Irish showcase; Focus On section devoted to indiv. filmmakers whose work "excites" festival programmers; seminars, exhibitions & schools program. In 1990, new section celebrating art of contemporary black & white filmmaking estab. Screenings take place in Cork Opera House & Triskel Arts Center. Cats: feature films for cinema; feature films & 1-off programs for TV; docs; shorts & black & white films. Entries must be recent prods completed w/in previous 2 yrs, unscreened & unbroadcast in Ireland. Awards: European Short Film Competition for films under 30 min. that originate in European countries (ECU10,000); Healy Award for best Irish short (IR£1,000); trophies for best feature, best short & best cinematography for black & white films. All participants receive certificate of merit. No entry fee. Deadline: July 17. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Contact: Michael Hannigan, dir., Cork Int'l Film Festival, Hatfield House, Tobin Street, Cork, Ireland; tel: 353 21 27 17 11; fax: 353 21 27 59 45.

**DEAUVILLE FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept. 4-14, France. Feature-length films not released in Europe & produced in preceding yr eligible for selection in noncompetitive fest for US films, held at French seaside resort. Fest shows both ind. & major studio features (many top Hollywood figures attend) & often serves as launching pad for European release. Program also incl. tributes & retros. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 10. US dir. is Ruda Dauphin, (212) 737-5040. In France, contact: Lionel Chouchan, Festival de Dauville, 33, Ave. MacMahon, 75017 Paris, France; tel: 42 67 71 40; fax: 46 22 88 51.

**GHENT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLANDERS**, Oct., Belgium. Audiences of over 48,000 annually attend fest, now in 19th yr, which focuses on music in film & shows about 100 films. Films w/out Belgian distributor welcome. Awards given to best Belgian films & best foreign movie. Sections: Official Section incl. Competition (Impact of Music on Film), which awards best film, best original music & best appl. of music & Out of Competition; Music & Film (incl. docs, musicals & musical features, special events); country focus; Film Spectrum (int'l films receiving Belgian premieres). Concurrent film market. Fest organized by same parent body as Antwerp Film Festival. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Jacques Dubrulle, Int'l Flanders Film Festival-Ghent, Kortryksesteenweg 1104, 9051 Ghent, Belgium, tel: 32 91 218946; fax: 32 91 219074.

**NYON INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., Switzerland. Noncompetitive fest devoted to doc films & videos of social, political, historical, or artistic value. Must be completed in preceding yr & deal w/ contemporary issues or show formal & thematic innovation. Awards: Gold & Silver Sesterce, SF5000 from Swiss TV, certificates of participation. Accepted films eligible for Oscar consideration. Invited dirs receive 4 nights accommodation. Entries must be Swiss premieres. No docudramas or publicity films accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Erika de Hadeln, Nyon Int'l Doc. Film Festival, Case Postale 98, CH-1260, Nyon, Switzerland; tel: 41 22 616060; fax: 41 22 617071.

**ROTTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan., Netherlands. Fest

prods. Program consists of long & short features & docs. Int'l guests & press invited. Concurrent Cinemart allows filmmakers & producers to present unfinished projects to get final or additional cofinancing. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Aug. 1. US contact: Bill Oliver, 265 Lafayette St., #A3, New York, NY 10012; (212) 274-8939. In Netherlands, contact: Emile Fallaux, artistic dir., Film Festival Rotterdam, Postbus 21696, 3001 AR Rotterdam, Netherlands; tel: 31 010 4118080; fax: 31 010 4135132.

UPPSALA FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., Sweden. Located north of Stockholm in univ. town, Uppsala programs int'l selection of features (around 20), int'l docs & shorts (around 100) & children & youth films. Fest seeks new, unconventional, young cinema. Competition cats: feature, short fiction, animation, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 21. Contact: Uppsala Film Festival, Box 1746, 75147 Uppsala, Sweden; tel: 46 18 16 22 70.

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The FIVE Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.

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**FOR RENT:** worldwide distributor offers private space w/ panoramic views in bright south midtown office. Conference room, video screening facilities & all office amenities. \$1,200 to \$1,500/mo. subject to services. Call (212) 686-6777.

**BATTERIES/CHARGERS,** all cameras. 4-Amp pack/charger, \$250; 7-Amp, \$300, blocks up to 40 Amps. Crystal-sync units. AC tools (gages, collimators, synchroscopes, battery checkers). mag tension adjust. lens collimation. Camera repair/overhaul. (914) 674-0636.

**MINT:** SR1 PKGs, 2 mags, Ang. 10-150, 2 onboards/charger, handgrip, speedcontrol, shade, cases, \$19,500; SR2 pkg, Zeiss 10-100 T2. 3 mags, \$33,000; Bolex pkgs, SR mag, \$2,500; Cooke 9-50, \$6,000; 16BL pkg, \$4,500. (212) 226-5658; fax: (212) 431-1471.

## Distribution

**INT'L FEST OF SHORT FILMS'** 1st feature-length pkg of live-action shorts now touring N. America. Seeks films for future pkgs. Contact: Andalusian Pictures, 1081 Camino del Rio S. #119, San Diego, CA 92108; (800) 925-CINE; fax: (619) 497-0811.

**LEADING FILM/VIDEO DISTRIBUTOR** seeks doc. & narrative programs for nontheatrical, educational, TV & home video markets. Send description &/or VHS cassette to: Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; fax: (212) 246-5525.

**SEEKING NEW WORKS** for educational & health care markets. Fanlight Productions distributes films/videos in areas of health, sociology, psychology, etc. Brenda Shanley, Fanlight Prods, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130; (617) 524-0980.

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**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250-character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date (e.g. August 8 for the October issue). Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

657-4988.

**VARIED DIRECTIONS INT'L,** distributors of socially important, award-winning programs on child abuse, health & women's issues, seeks select films/videos. Call Joyce at (800) 888-5236 or write: 69 Elm Street, Camden, ME 04843; fax: (207) 236-4512.

**VIDEO PROJECT,** nonprofit distributor of educational films & videos, seeks works on environmental issues, the arms race & other global concerns. Contact: Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Ste. 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (510) 655-9050.

## Preproduction

**AFRICAN AMERICAN SCREENWRITER WANTED** for ind. feature drama. Send brief script/scene sample to find out more. Talent, sincerity, commitment & market sense taken over exp. Brian White, 1 W. Columbia Ave. #7, Palisades Park, NJ 07650.

**COPRODUCER(S) WANTED** to team w/ writer-director on low-budget feature (from prospectus to pre to post). Professional exp. (though not necessarily in film) is essential. Send resumé to Ray Orama, 2402 Hanover Blvd., Browns Mills, NJ 08015.

**LOOKING FOR MY COEN BROTHER:** Determined writer/dir. seeks producer or assoc. producer w/ vision, ind. spirit & market sense. Let's talk. Talent, commitment taken over exp. Send letter, resumé: Brian White, 1 W. Columbia Ave. #7, Palisades Park, NJ 07650.

**FILMMAKER LOOKING** for others interested in collaborating to develop an ind. film company/cooperative, both creatively & financially. Must be willing to take on a variety of roles. Call Debbie (215) 974-9356.

**INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER** looking for serious partner(s) for upcoming projects. Need editor, co-writer & producer. Do one thing or do it all. Maybe we can even make some bucks. Call Loch at Off Ramp Films, (718) 384-3555 (eve.); (212) 326-7729 (days).

**SEEKING DIRECTORS** for already partially financed low-budget features. Prior feature, commercial or music video directing exp. a must. Screenwriting exp. helpful, not essential. Send resumé to: Brown, #10, 32 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001.

## Freelancers

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**ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY** will handle acquisition of options, financing for film & TV production, incorporations, wills, tax, copyright & landlord-tenant matters. Steven Kopsick, Esq., 1053 Admont Ave., Franklin Square, NY; (212) 967-7711 ext. 4622.

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**HI-8 CAM PKG** w/ experienced cameraperson: 3-chip Sony DXC-325/EVV-9000, full accessories incl. lights, mics, mixer & LCD monitor. \$550/day, shorter & longer rates negotiable. Call Robbie (718) 783-8432.

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**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of independents. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**AVAILABLE VISIONS:** Improving Distribution of African American Independent Film & Video, CA, July 24-26. Historic, invitation-only working conference to expand nontheatrical dist. of ind. black media. For info. or copy of proceedings, contact: Spencer Moon, Realize Your Energy, 766 1/2 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 864-2941.

**FILM AND VIDEO SUMMER INSTITUTE**, Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa, July 11-Aug. 8. Intensive workshops in film criticism (J. Hoberman), doc. prod. (Merata Mita), editing (Walt Louie), choreography, directing, set design, screenwriting, animation, fundraising & others. Contact: Susan Horowitz, FAVSI, UHM Summer, 101 Krauss, 2500 Dole St., Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-3422; fax: (808) 956-3421.

**FILM IN THE CITIES** conducts Media Arts Workshop for Students in S. Central Minnesota, July 6-17, Kiester Middle School. Participants make video project supervised by distinguished Minnesota artist. Registration recommended. Contact: Kristine Sorensen (612) 646-6104; or Julie Forrerer (507) 462-3820.

**INTERNATIONAL FILM & TELEVISION WORKSHOPS** offers over 100 workshops running from Memorial Day weekend through mid-Oct. Programs in directing, writing, camera operating, sound, animation, editing & TV offered. For catalog, contact: Int'l Film & Television Workshops, Rockport, ME, 04856; (207) 236-8581.

**SOUTHEASTERN MEDIA INSTITUTE**, July 25-Aug. 7, Columbia, SC. Intensive week-long professional media workshops in cinematography, video prod., video editing, radio prod., video in classroom & video prod. by students. Weekend seminars w/ leading industry artists in scriptwriting, film criticism, music composition for film/video, low-budget narratives, grants for film/video & personal doc. Screenings, receptions & premieres. Reduced rate registration by July 3. Contact: Southeastern Media Institute, S. Carolina Arts Commission Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8996; fax: (803) 734-8526.

**SUNDANCE INSTITUTE'S INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS CONFERENCE**, July 23-26. For registration info., contact: Sundance Institute Producer's Conference, Box 16540, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116; (803) 328-3456.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE**, MD, Sept. 12-14. Sessions incl. First Amendment issues, Privatization of Telecommunications Carriers, Ownership Issues in Mass Media & Regulation of Telecommunications Services. Contact: TPRC, Box 19203, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 452-9033.

**38TH ANNUAL ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR**, Aug. 8-14, Wells College, Aurora, NY. Explores rich & varied expressions of ind. filmmakers who, in employing diverse strategies, create films & videos which defy easy or static categorization. Past guests incl. Satyajit Ray, Susan Sontag, Marlon Riggs, Agnes Varda & Marcel Ophuls. \$650 for screenings, discussions, room & meals. Contact: Robert Flaherty Seminar, Int'l Film Seminars, 305 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ALTERNATIVE MUSIC TELEVISION** seeks submissions of art- or music-related videos by ind. producers. 1/2" preferred, but 3/4" possible for broadcast. Contact: Rick Sheridan, 140 W. Gilman St., Madison, WI 53703;

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., August 8 for the Oct. issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

(608) 258-0548 or (608) 258-9644.

**EN CAMINO (KRCB)** seeks works of 30-60 min. interesting to Latino community, in Spanish & English. Formats: 3/4" & 16mm. Contact: Luis Nong, Box 2638, Rohnert Park, CA 94928.

**LATINO COLLABORATIVE & Downtown Community TV Center** seek tapes for bi-monthly screening/forum to present new works by latino film- & videomakers. Send 3/4" or VHS to: Euride Arratia, Latino Collaborative, 280 Broadway, Rm. 412, New York, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

**KNITTING FACTORY-KNOT ROOM**, 47 E. Houston St., NY, calls video artists for "Sunday Nite Series." Open screenings 1st & 3rd Sunday each mo; bring tapes on 3/4" or VHS. Featured artists 2nd & 4th Sunday each mo.; media groups & ind. producers—call to screen works. Performance/Video—call w/ your proposals. Contact: Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 219-3006.

**LIVE OAK MEDIA** seeks variety of works for possible exhibition & presentation. Computer graphics, narrative, doc., experimental video accepted. Contact: Bob Doyle, Live Oak Media, 847 S. Goodman St., Rochester, NY 14620; (716) 442-8060.

**MINORITY TELEVISION PROJECT**, Bay area's new multicultural public television station 32, invites submissions of works that have person of color in key creative position &/or present crosscultural perspectives. Contact: Spencer Moon or Roger Gordon, 71 Stevenson St., Ste. 1900, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 882-5566.

**911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER** solicits proposals from local Seattle/Northwest-area artists interested in presenting window installations for 5 storefront windows at center. Installations can be in any medium which can make an aesthetic/cultural/political statement & can represent the work of more than 1 artist. Exhibit will be up for at least 3 mos. Add'l funding can be sought for larger projects. Windows measure 56"(h) x 5'(w) x 9"(d). Budget for 5-window installation: honorarium, \$200; supplies, \$100. Deadline: Oct. 1. Send resumé, letter of interest describing qualifications, concept, sketches to: 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave., Seattle, WA 98109.

**THE 90'S** accepts short video works for nat'l broadcast. Doc., music video & experimental works accepted, w/ emphasis on hi-8 format. Works should be no longer than 15 min. Works-in-progress & excerpted pieces fine. \$150/min. paid for tapes that air. 3/4", hi-8 & VHS acceptable for screening; all formats acceptable for broadcast. Send tapes + \$3 return postage to: *The 90's*, 400 N. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1608, Chicago, IL 60611.

**TOXIC CITY VIDEO DISPATCH**, experimental video-zine, seeks artist- & activist-produced films & videos for upcoming dispatches. Current focuses incl. toxic waste scams, personal encounters w/ pollution & waste & corporate cooptation of Earth Day. Contact: Bill Daniel, Box 421857, San Francisco, CA 94142; (415) 441-1915.

**UNQUOTE TV**, program dedicated to student-produced work, seeks submissions—experimental, doc., animation, performance, media & social criticisms. Tapes cannot be returned. Formats: 3/4" or 1/2". Contact: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, IMS 9B 4026, 33rd Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY** offers 2 faculty vacancies in journalism for '92-'93. Temporary 1-yr position at rank of assistant professor in School of Communication to teach journalism courses for undergrad. & grad. students & temporary 1-yr position at rank of assistant professor in School of Communication teaching courses for undergrad. students from around country participating in Washington Journalism Semester Program. Record of publication & significant professional exp. required; previous college-level teaching preferred; M.A. desired. Send curriculum vitae & 3 recs to: Search Committee, School of Communication, American Univ., 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016-8017.

**CUMMINGTON COMMUNITY OF THE ARTS**, artist colony set in Berkshires, offers space for retreats, workshops & residencies. Community interested in new ideas & innovative programming. For info. & residency apps, contact: Cummington Community of the Arts, RR 1, Box 145, Cummington, MA 01026; (413) 634-2172.

**DEUTSCHE HYGIENE-MUSEUM DRESDEN** invites contributions to Int'l Congress on Environmental Consciousness & Mass Media, Apr. 1-5, '93. Congress seeks producers, editors, advertising agencies, design firms, etc. who work w/ environmental issues. Participants may have opp. to place themselves in "media market" or participate as indivs or firms in formal proceedings. Congress attended by members of environmental organizations, industry, gov't & administration & media professionals. Contact: Patrick Wilkinson, conference coordinator, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, Lingnerplatz 1, DO 8010 Dresden, Germany; tel: 0037-51-4846 206; fax: 495 5162.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** seeks indiv. to fill film & video instructor position. Courses range from basic filmmaking & video prod. to non-linear editing & line producing. Instructors should be working professionals w/ teaching exp. Send resumé &/or proposals to: Media Training dir., Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**MEDIA PRODUCTION GROUP**, nonprofit educational doc. film & video prod. & dist. co., seeks volunteer intern to assist dir., train & assist prod., gen. office duties

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& fundraising research. Req. gen. office & word processing skills. 20-25 hrs/wk. Contact: Peter Walsh, dir., (212) 941-9620.

## Publications

ANGLES, quarterly newsletter devoted to bringing news of women working in film & video, incl. interviews w/ artists, historical profiles, essays on current issues, media clippings & lists of works-in-progress. \$15/yr (US), \$17/yr (Canada), \$19/yr (elsewhere). Contact: Angles, Box 11916, Milwaukee, WI 53211; (414) 963-8951.

ANIMATION JOURNAL publishes scholarly writing on all aspects of animation. Fall '92 issue contains research on animation in Nazi Germany, TV advertising in the '40s & Disney & Postmodernism. Subscriptions: \$20/indiv., \$40/institution. Contact: Maureen Furniss, editor, *Animation Journal*, Critical Studies, Cinema-TV, Univ. of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2211; (310) 838-6181.

CINE CENTRAL, CALCUTTA has reissued illustrated script of Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*. Volume contains complete script, articles on making of film & over 200 illustrations. \$10. Contact: Cine Central Calcutta, 2, Chowringhee Rd., Calcutta-700 013, India; tel: (91-33) 28-7911; fax: (91-33) 286604.

FOUNDATION CENTER offers 3 publications to aid grantseekers & nonprofit organization managers. *The User-Friendly Guide* (\$12.95, \$4.50 shipping & handling) provides intro. to tools & methods used by successful grantseekers across country. *Succeeding with Consultants: Self-Assessment for the Changing Nonprofit* (\$19.95, \$4.50 shipping & handling) explains how consultants can generate positive results that can forward a nonprofit's goals. *Foundation Grants Index* (\$125, \$4.50 shipping & handling) incl. 57,443 grant descriptions & ways to access funders. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 5th Ave., New York, NY 10003-3076; (800) 424-9836.

INDEPENDENT VIDEO, new journal dedicated to the needs of ind. videomakers, provides reviews of ind. prods, profiles of videomakers & articles about various aspects of video prod. 6 issues/yr for \$10. Make check payable to Segway Productions & send to: Independent Video, c/o Segway Productions, Box 219, West Islip, NY 11795-0219.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES has published *State of Arts Agencies 1992*, which demonstrates success of public sector support in making arts more widely avail. Contact: NASAA, 1010 Vermont Ave., NW, Ste. 920, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 347-6352; fax: (202) 737-0526.

ROCK & ROLL CONFIDENTIAL provides info on how music fans across country are able & willing to join w/ other opponents of censorship. Edited by Dave Marsh, monthly newsletter incl. articles by some of the nation's foremost media critics. \$27/yr. Contact: Rock & Roll Confidential, Box 341305, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

## Resources ■ Funds

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV CENTER offers \$500 worth of tech. assistance to 5 emerging video artists & ind. producers in New York State. Postprod. & prod. facilities will be provided for accepted projects. Deadline: Aug 31. Also, Community Projects Program provides members free or low-cost equip. for projects

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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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Equipment coverage for all of your equipment worldwide whether owned or leased.

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In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

**Nationwide Car Rentals**

AIVF membership provides discounts on car rentals from major national rental agencies.

**Mastercard Plan**

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

**Facets Multimedia Video Rentals**

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

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FILM ARTS FOUNDATION's Phelan Awards offer prizes of \$2,500 to 3 filmmakers. Filmmakers born in CA, regardless of current residency, eligible. Deadline: Aug. 31. For guidelines, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

ITVS INDEPENDENT FICTION FOR TV: ITVS, funder of ind. productions for public TV, invites proposals for original, low-budget dramas, up to 60 min., for series created to challenge conventions of television. Deadline: July 15. Contact: ITVS, Box 75455, St. Paul, MN 55175; (612) 225-9035.

MEDIA ALLIANCE will award 3 fellowships of \$5,000 to emerging artists working in media. Money may be used for expenses such as advanced professional training, equip. & facilities rental, supplies, travel & living expenses. Fellows will have opp. to receive consultation from professional media artist mentors. Must be under 30, have completed college or formal training & be economically disadvantaged residents of New York State. Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o Thirteen/WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES announces creation of new doc. film prod. fund following success of Ken Burns' *The Civil War*. Up to \$2.5-million awarded for 1 outstanding doc. film series per yr. Deadline: Sept. 11. For info., contact: NEH Division of Public Programs, Humanities Projects in Media, Rm. 420, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

OHIO ARTS COUNCIL announces professional development assistance fund for artists w/ disabilities. Candidate must have participated in artists w/ disabilities survey conducted by Ohio Arts Council in Jan. '91 & exhibited, performed or published work w/in past 3 yrs. Grants up to \$300 may be used for art supplies, documentation of work & other relevant expenses. Contact: Phyllis Hairston, Ohio Arts Council, 727 E. Main St., Columbus, OH 43205-1796; (614) 466-2613.

CENTER FOR ARTS CRITICISM announces Critics' Travel Grant Program for Twin Cities arts critics. Grants up to \$3,000 will be used to support travel projects which may have demonstrable impact on critic's development & serve to enrich critics as professionals in their field. Deadline: Oct. 30. For guidelines, contact: Center for Arts Criticism, Critics' Travel Grant Program, 2402 Univ. Ave. West, Ste. 208, St. Paul, MN 55114; (612) 644-5501.

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## seeks Executive Director

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- Ability to design & implement public relations, lobbying, and fundraising campaigns
- Ability to work effectively with a broad variety of people, including elected and appointed officials, foundations, the media, and the general public
- Broad understanding of and sensitivity to the changing nature of American society, particularly with regard to multiculturalism.

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Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York NY, 10012; no phone calls, please.

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## MINUTES OF THE 1992 AIVF MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual membership meeting of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers was held at Anthology Film Archives in New York City on the evening of April 24. After a brief welcome by AIVF president Robert Richter, executive director Martha Gever reported on AIVF's advocacy activities during the last year. Most recently, AIVF joined a lawsuit brought by the producers of the film *Damned in the USA* against American Family Association director Donald Wildmon, who claims the right to prohibit exhibition of the film [see "Hell to Pay: *Damned in the USA* Countersues Wildmon over Exhibition Rights" p. 5]. Gever also detailed AIVF's advocacy work on pending legislation on the reauthorization of the Independent Television Service and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, as well as the reorganization of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers.

Administrative director and festival bureau director Kathryn Bowser announced that the long-awaited *FIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals* is due out at the end of June. She also reminded members of the liaison services offered by the festival bureau to a number of festivals, including Oberhausen, Sydney, London, and Creteil, and the ongoing consultation program for producers seeking information on festival and distribution strategies.

Bookkeeper Mei-Ling Poon, who joined the AIVF staff in November 1991, reported on her efforts to reorganize the business office. Administrative assistant Stephanie Richardson reported on her assistance to all members who call or visit the AIVF office seeking help with their projects and on her continued efforts to update information available to members.

*Independent* editor Patricia Thomson noted personnel changes on the magazine during the past year and gave an overview of upcoming articles. She reminded members that the broad editorial focus of the magazine is designed to reflect the diversity of AIVF members, covering all formats, genres, regions, and aspects of production. Managing editor Ellen Levy reported on the magazine's business activities, including increased newsstand distribution and the introduction of bar codes, which will allow the magazine to be sold in bookstore chains. She encouraged members to continue sending information about their work to the In and Out of Production and Memberabilia columns.

Anne Douglass, who came aboard as AIVF membership and seminars director last December, reported that membership has reached 5,000 after several recent direct mail campaigns. She reviewed this year's seminars and announced upcoming events, including a May seminar on health insurance options that resulted from members' requests for information on this topic.

Development director Susan Kennedy, who joined AIVF's staff in January, handed out the newly designed membership brochure and reviewed AIVF's current fundraising projects and efforts to improve long-term stability.

Following the staff presentation, members responded with questions and proposals. The latter included recommendations that AIVF sponsor an electronic bulletin board service, hold local gatherings on a regular basis so independents can meet their peers and discuss common concerns, encourage volunteer work by AIVF members on behalf of the organization, and consider the possibility of publishing a new membership directory or resurrecting the members' skills card file.

The meeting then took up the nominations of candidates for the AIVF Board of Directors. Nominees who decide to run for the board will be contacted by AIVF and asked to submit short statements outlining their qualifications. These statements will be sent to all individual (non-student) AIVF members with a ballot in June, and a new board of directors will be in place by the fall.

## MINUTES FROM THE AIVF / FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film met in New York City on April 25. In attendance were: Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Dee Davis (vicepresident), Loni Ding (secretary), Debra Zimmerman (treasurer), Eugene Aleinikoff, Charles Burnett, Jim Klein, Lourdes Portillo, James Schamus, Bart Weiss, and Martha Gever (ex officio).

Executive director Martha Gever announced that AIVF has been invited to participate in the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers conference, which is postponed until 1993. It will be held in Chicago and organized around themes of Preservation and Production.

In the reports from staff, Festival/Distribution Bureau and Information Services director Kathryn Bowser reported continual progress with her work on the FIVF festival guide. Her work with representatives from Sydney and Oberhausen is complete. Work with Locarno and London will begin soon. *Independent* editor Pat Thomson noted the conclusion of Rick Feist's popular series on video postproduction. Managing editor Ellen Levy reported success with collections and restructuring advertising billing. Seminars/Membership direc-

tor Anne Douglass reported a strong turn-out at the seminar on film festivals. Upcoming seminars this year will address health insurance, legal issues, no-budget filmmaking and coproduction, and the future of television. Development director Susan Kennedy introduced the new AIVF brochure and reviewed current fundraising efforts. Since AIVF will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 1994, she suggested that planning for this begin shortly. Bookkeeper Mei-Ling Poon reported the completion of financial statements.

Committee reports followed, with Advocacy Committee chair Klein recapping the successful changes to the ITVS contract brought about by AIVF's efforts. Klein proposed drafting a letter to ITVS to request further communication with AIVF and producers in order to address remaining issues. A meeting between the two boards was also suggested.

An AIVF advocacy video was discussed, as was the possibility of organizing a panel or producer's roundtable to address independent perspectives on new technologies. A bibliography of articles on developments in communications technology and related policy issues is near completion, Schamus reported.

Kim-Gibson authorized Zimmerman to compose a letter to the Sundance Film Festival concerning the underrepresentation of works by women at the festival.

Zimmerman reviewed financial matters, and Board Development Committee head Davis noted the committee's effort to identify potential FIVF board members.

The next board meeting will be held July 18, with committee meetings on Friday July 17.

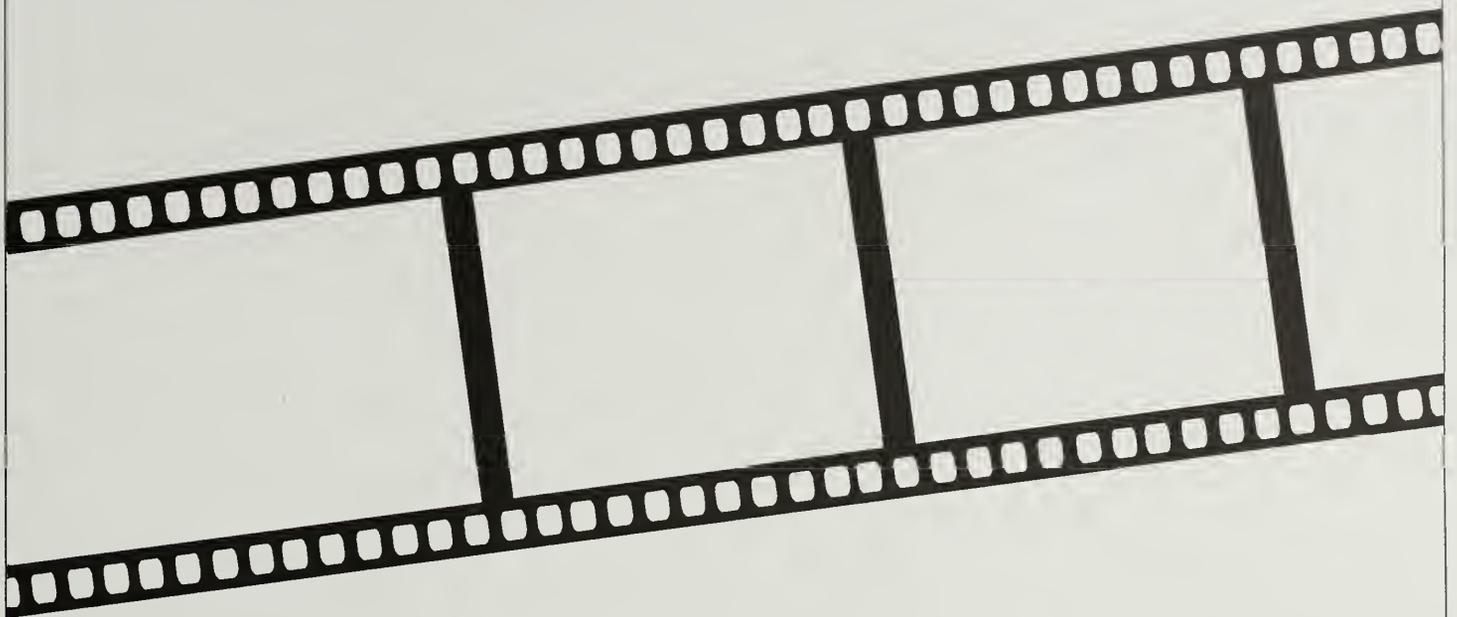
## MEMBERABILIA

Kudos to Aviva Kempner, recipient of a grant from the **District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities** for the documentary *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*. Robert Score's documentary *God on St. Mark's Place* garnered the Grand Jury Award in the **Videomaker Magazine** annual video competition. Score's music video entries *Spirit Sensing Danger* and *Man on a Bicycle* placed first and third respectively in the music video category of the same competition. Eric Wyse's music video *Veterans of the USA* has received a nomination in the **Annual Dove Awards**. Gary Moss has been awarded a Certificate of Commendation for educational historical filmmaking by the **American Association for State and Local History**.

### BE SURE TO VOTE

Ballots for the AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors will be mailed to all members (students excluded). Please vote and return your ballot. This is your opportunity to make sure AIVF's policies and programs reflect the diversity of our members.

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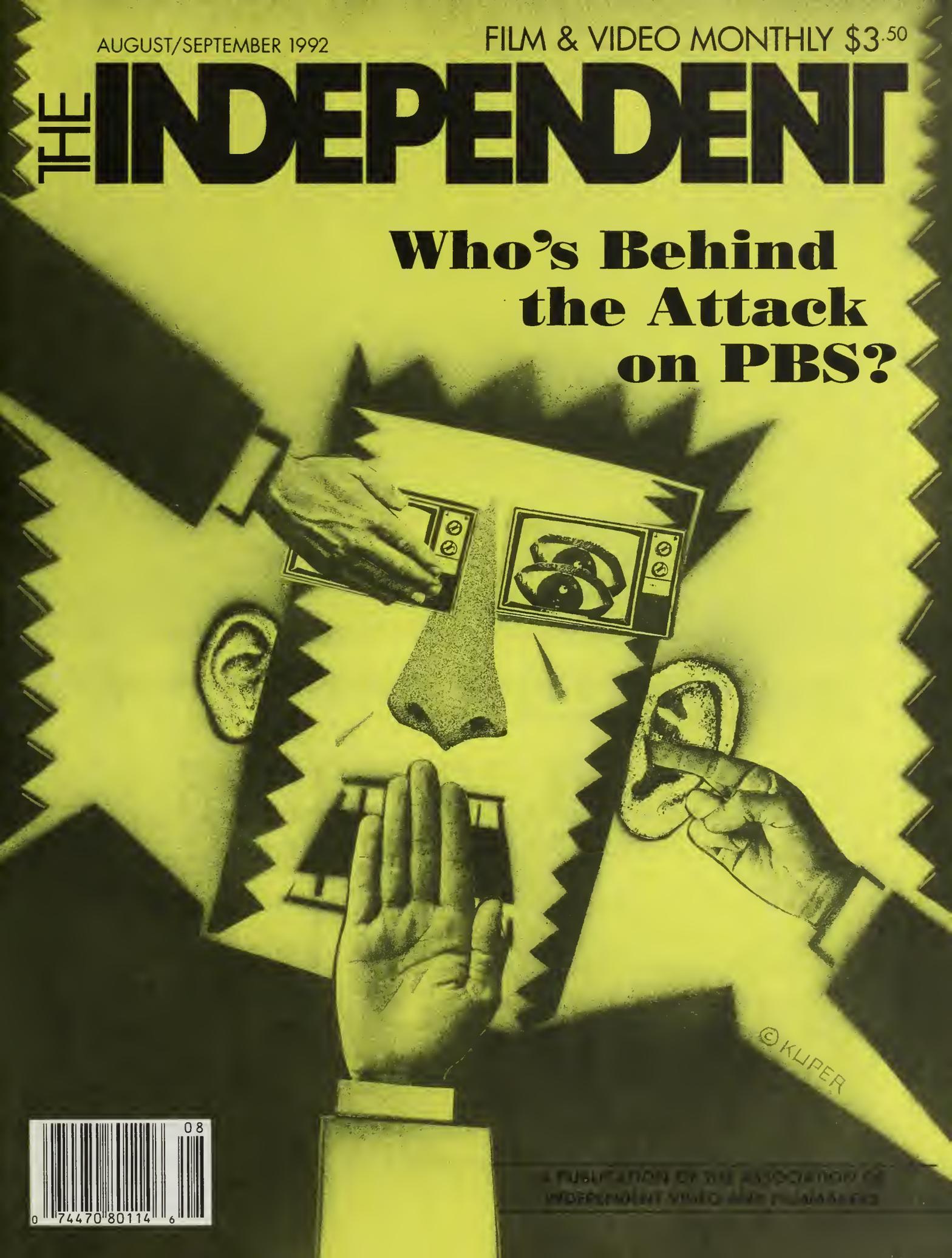
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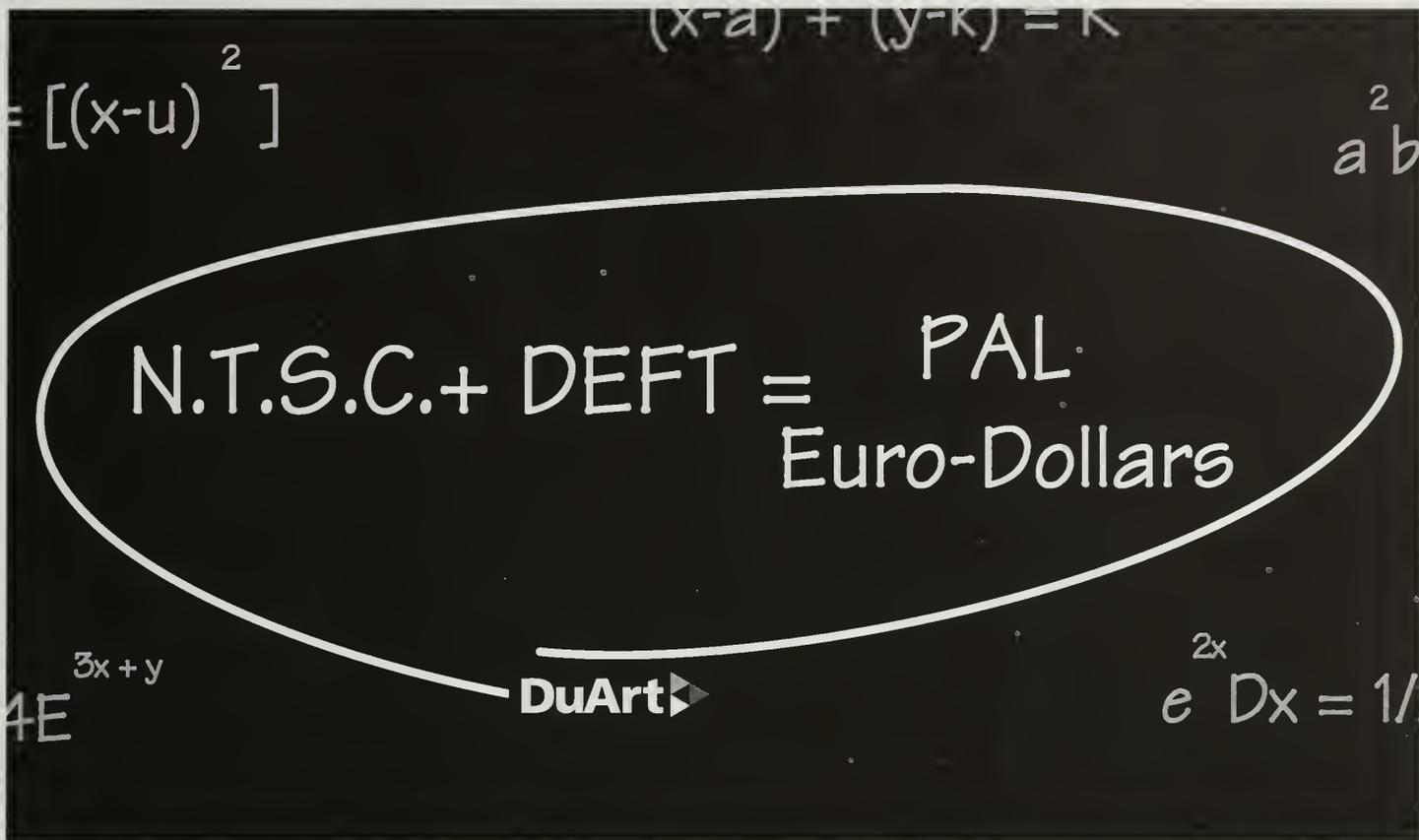
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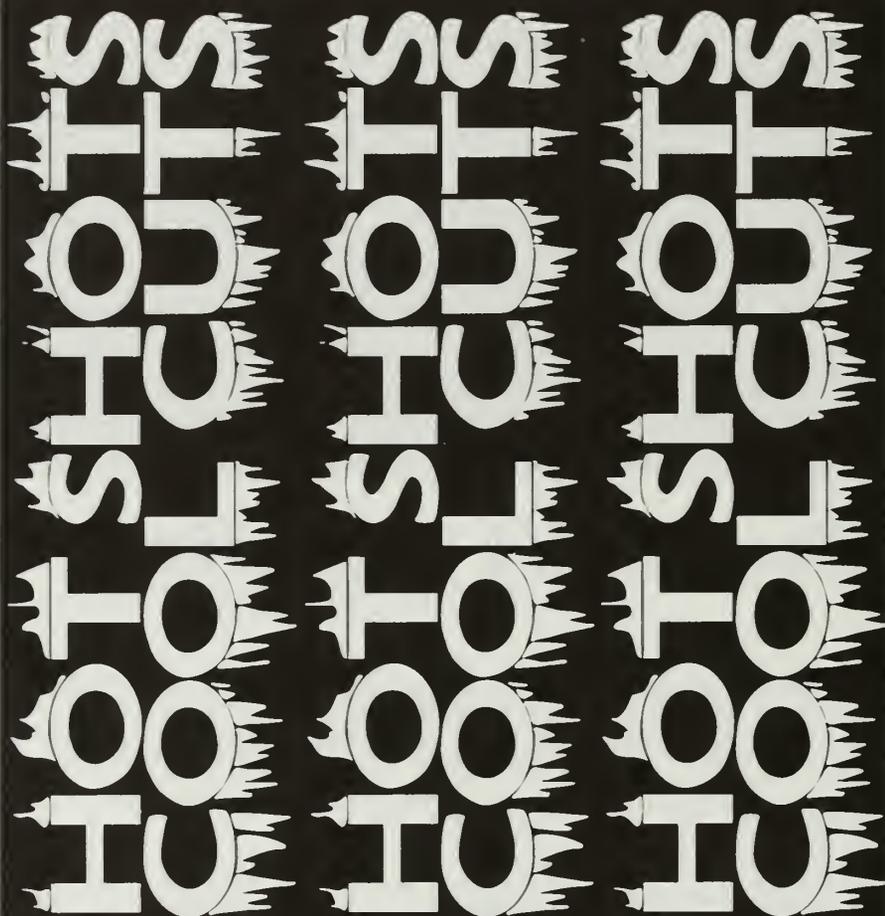
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COVER: Public TV survived a pounding by critics from the right this spring, but the fight is far from over. In "Inside the Conservative Assault on Public Broadcasting," Josh Daniels gives an overview of the key groups leading the attack and examines their tactics, influence, and funders. Also in this issue, Patricia Thomson looks at how the Supreme Court's interpretation and application of the First Amendment has evolved this century, as discussed in four recent books. Cover illustration: © Peter Kuper, 1992.

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## MORE PBS THAN THOU? WYBE Sues to Join Pennsylvania PTV Network

WYBE-TV, an alternative public television station in Philadelphia, would love to join a club that won't accept it. It wants to be included in the Pennsylvania Public Television Network (PPTN), a state-funded network created in 1968 to interconnect "all noncommercial television stations serving Pennsylvania."

The network currently provides millions of dollars in state funding each year and a microwave link-up to all of Pennsylvania's public television stations—except WYBE. After unsuccessfully seeking admission for two years, WYBE filed suit last January in US District Court against the Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission (PPTNC), which oversees PPTN, and its seven member stations. In June, a judge directed the commission to set admissions standards for network membership and a 90-day response time for evaluating applications. The decision, which opens the way for WYBE to join PPTN, is an important step toward extending public TV support to encompass alternative stations, even beyond the borders of the Keystone state. As a recent article in the public television trade magazine *Current* notes, "the federal case is the latest

manifestation of a wider debate throughout public television: should mainstream public TV help or hinder creation of an upstart generation of secondary PTV stations that offers alternative programming?"

According to Bob Dietz, interim general manager of WYBE, the suit involves three issues: equal access to microwave interconnection, access to state funding, and constitutional questions about who controls funding for public television

in Pennsylvania. WYBE, which began broadcasting in June of 1990, was created to meet the demands of communities not always addressed by public broadcasting: women, so-called "minorities," the disabled, labor, etc. Although Dietz acknowledges a number of reasons for PPTNC's reticence to embrace a new member, he contends that one unspoken reason may be that "we don't look like a regular PBS station. We run a lot of independent productions. We don't duplicate the PBS feed. I think they don't trust that. I think it's a question of 'you're not one of us.' And we are."

It is no secret that PPTN member stations are loathe to share dwindling state funding with a newcomer. PPTN general manager Sheldon Parker notes that in the last two years, state funding for public stations has shrunk from eight million in fiscal year 1991 to six million in 1992. PPTNC's lawyers, in a brief to the court, assert that "there is concern that dividing the grants for public television stations among eight or nine stations rather than the seven...could undermine the quality of public broadcasting in Pennsylvania."

In addition to state funding, the benefits of participating in the network include opportunities for live and interactive programming and teleconferences, such as *Labor Live!*, a show WYBE had planned to air jointly with WQEX if WYBE had been interconnected; facilitating exchanges of programming, such as WYBE's *Gulf Crisis TV Project* which aired on US stations and abroad but not on a single PPTN station; satellite uplinks which enable stations to put programs on the national satellite system; and two-way feeds between stations, satellites, and the Eastern Education Television Network. Microwave interconnection is also crucial to garnering federal funds since its in-kind value counts toward the Non-Federal Financial Support required for receipt of federal funds.

WYBE argues that representatives from the other public stations are unconstitutionally monopolizing state public broadcasting support. Of the 22 seats on the commission, eight are held by representatives of Pennsylvania's public stations, and seven of the nine members of the Network Operations Committee, which is responsible for funding and policy decisions, are station representatives. "The seven public television corporations comprise not only a significant portion of commission membership," asserts a WYBE brief filed in May, "but also almost the entire membership of all PPTN operating and policy committees."



Airing ethnically diverse programs like *Sun Ra: A Joyful Noise*, WYBE doesn't look like a regular PBS station, which may be one reason it's been excluded from Pennsylvania's public TV network.

Courtesy WYBE

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The end of PBS funding for *The 90's* may cut short conversations such as this one between author Studs Terkel (left) and columnist Mike Royko about neighborhood taverns, which aired on the series.

Photo: Matthew Gilson, courtesy *The 90's*

PPTNC's lawyers contend that the commission was created to include only the original seven stations and that it never refused WYBE membership but merely requested that the station complete an application process and provide the commission with documentation for evaluation—documentation WYBE maintains it supplied two years ago when the station first applied to participate in the network. WYBE insists that the commission has devised numerous policies and procedures, including bottomless information requests, to forestall a decision on WYBE's application and block its participation. For example, after WYBE received its broadcast permit, PPTNC adopted a "Policy on New Broadcast Facilities," which prohibits new stations access to the network unless they offer "totally unduplicative geographic broadcast service"—a requirement viewed as disingenuous by WYBE since PPTNC was aware at the time that all available public channels, including WYBE's Channel 35, would duplicate another signal to some extent.

Parker professes puzzlement at WYBE's interest in the network. "If this really is an alternative service, what do they really need us for?" he asks. "We have one satellite, and that brings down PBS." Parker, who contends that two-way programming exchanges can happen without the expensive microwave link-up simply by sending programs "through the mail," questions whether enhanced accessibility to WYBE's programming is really necessary. "It's been infrequent that there's been programming [on WYBE] of interest to PBS or other stations," argues Parker. "It's a regional programming service, as far as I've seen. You have to ask, is it really worth the hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money [to add WYBE to the network]?"

WYBE estimates that a fiber-optics linkup to the existing WHY-Philadelphia feed would actually cost only \$14,000 to install and \$11,000 to

operate annually, in contrast to the commission's \$1-million estimate. Parker admits that PPTNC's assessment is based on the installation cost of a network link, and that a feed from an existing line would be considerably less expensive, but he questions whether such a scheme is feasible.

In the end, the outcome of the suit will depend less on logistics than legal interpretation. "The law says the commission was created to fund all Pennsylvania public television stations," says Dietz. "And we're a down and dirty, 100 percent PBS station. We've taken the mandate of PBS and tried to do something more with this."

ELLEN LEVY

## NO NO 90'S

Last May, Tom Weinberg, executive producer of the innovative independent video series *The 90's*, received a call from Mitch Semel, vice president for programming at the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Semel told Weinberg that *The 90's*, which has aired in primetime on PBS for two seasons, would not be refunded for the season beginning October 1, 1993. Although no one was unhappy with *The 90's*, Semel explained, it was just not a funding priority. PBS chief program executive Jennifer Lawson offered to continue to carry *The 90's* on the national PBS feed, but the series' producers doubt they can cover that cost without PBS backing. The series requested \$400,000 from PBS—about half its budget—and Weinberg is uncertain whether the program will be able to continue without it.

The funding cut signals a priority shift at PBS that could have significant consequences for alternative programming on the public airwaves. In late April, Lawson proposed at the National Program Policy Committee meeting that rather than allocate the \$92-million it would cost to renew all current series in fiscal year 1994, only \$81-mil-

lion should be allotted "to preserve a presence of the most essential series." The final figure reduced overall support for continuing series by nine percent, or \$6.85-million.

Only two programs were completely cut in the latest round of primetime series funding: *The 90's* and a show for preschoolers, *Barney and Friends*. Of the 20 funded programs, ranging from *P.O.V.* to *MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*, not one received an increase in funding, according to Semel. Some got level funding, and others received cuts in support and/or number of episodes. According to Semel, given the finite amount of money available to PBS from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and member stations, the only way to fund new programs, special presentations, and limited series is to make less money available to existing programs.

Melinda Ward, director of Drama, Performance, and Cultural Programming at PBS, notes that the funding for *The 90's* was earmarked for primetime hours from 7 to 11 p.m., and that *The 90's* was not succeeding in that slot. "Stations either weren't carrying it or weren't carrying it in the primetime for which it was intended," says Ward.

Since 1989, *The 90's* has shown the works of 400 to 600 independents from around the world and has developed a network of nearly 1,200 producers. Its first show, which aired June 1989, was a one-hour special offered on satellite through KBDI-Denver. About a dozen PBS stations and even more access channels picked up that first show. By the end of 1990, *The 90's* had produced 32 programs and was being carried by at least 150 PBS stations. That was when KBDI and *The 90's* producers first applied for and received \$300,000 from the CPB/PBS Challenge Fund to make *The 90's* a national, primetime show. The hitch was that if the program accepted the money, only PBS stations could air *The 90's*, forcing the producers to choose between their goal of accessibility to everyone and the opportunity to receive national exposure. *The 90's* accepted the Challenge Fund money. Even though "PBS was never paying more than half" of the costs of the *The 90's*, says Weinberg, the loss of funding is a significant blow. Weinberg points out that PBS funding "allowed us to double the amount we could pay producers" (producers currently receive \$150/minute), and that is one area where Weinberg does not want to cut back.

What lies ahead? "We're building on the opportunities that came from this national exposure," Weinberg says. "We will work to be on the

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air more frequently and more regularly with as much coverage as possible, and to build on the relationships that grew out of *The 90's*. There's a need for this [programming] to be on TV, and that need is not being met adequately."

WENDY LEAVENS

Wendy Leavens is a writer living in New York.

### MINORITY INVESTMENT FUND FORMED

The paucity of programming by producers of color on national primetime public television is often lamented but not so often addressed. While independent public stations like Philadelphia's WYBE have carved out a place on the public airwaves for the diverse visions of labor, queers, and people of color, the national feed remains dominated by a middle-class malaise typified by *Masterpiece Theater*.

In June, a ray of hope broke over this monochromatic landscape when representatives of public television's five minority consortia and the public TV series *P.O.V.* announced the formation of a Minority Investment Fund to encourage the production and distribution of programming by producers of color. The fund, which begins operation this fall, will offer up to \$80,000 per project to support the completion of four to five high-quality, nonfiction films and videos by producers of color and make them available for national, primetime broadcast on *P.O.V.*

The fund represents the first time the minority consortia have joined with a national series to foster racially diverse programming. The five consortia are the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium (NAPBC), and Pacific Islanders in Communication.

Plans for the new project were announced in June at the national Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) meeting in San Francisco where representatives of *P.O.V.* and the minority consortia met to finalize details. At press time the fund had received \$150,000 of its proposed \$300,000 annual budget from the Rockefeller Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, according to *P.O.V.* managing director Lawrence Sapadin. The enhanced funds will allow *P.O.V.* to consider projects at an earlier production stage than usual for the program, though submissions must be far enough along to be judged by a panel.

*P.O.V.* and the consortia will prescreen submissions and select a seven-person review panel composed of independent producers and public TV representatives. This panel, along with *P.O.V.* executive director Marc Weiss, will make grant recommendations, with Weiss retaining final say over grants. All completed works will have to pass *P.O.V.*'s standard editorial committee before being included in the series.

"Some of the most exciting and innovative nonfiction work is being done today by producers of color exploring their role in American society and giving a voice to communities that are not heard frequently enough on television," says Weiss. "This new investment fund will help these filmmakers get their work done and present it to a wide, national audience."

The submission deadline is September 1. For information, contact: *P.O.V.* (212) 397-0970.

ELLEN LEVY

### NEH DOLES OUT FOR DOC SERIES

Following the successes of Ken Burns' *The Civil War* and Zvi Dor-Ner's *Columbus and the Age of Discovery*, the National Endowment for the Humanities has announced a special funding opportunity to encourage the creation of new documentary productions. An annual grant of up to \$2.5-million will be awarded to a nonprofit institution or public television station for the production of an outstanding documentary series.

According to NEH chair Lynne Cheney, "Documentary film series help millions of Americans and people around the world learn about the ideas, events, and people that have contributed to the humanities. We are very pleased with the past successes of documentaries funded through the NEH, and look forward to supporting more outstanding projects resulting from this new funding opportunity." Grants will cover the planning, writing, and production of programs which, like all NEH-supported projects, must be on a subject "central to the humanities" and whose "quality and depth of scholarship" must be evident.

Deadline for submissions is September 11. For more information, contact: NEH Division of Public Programs, Humanities Projects in Media, Rm. 420, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 20506; (202) 786-0278.

TROY SELVARATNAM

### ARTISTS GET CREDIT IN THE TWIN CITIES

When it comes to getting money, independent film- and videomakers—like all artists—are caught in a vicious double bind. Grants, for those lucky enough to get them, can help ease financial burdens but often come with restrictions on how the money can be spent. Bank loans might seem like a solution because they come without content-related strings attached, but they are often an impractical alternative for artists who may lack traditional forms of collateral or have a less than perfect credit rating. If Minnesota's Dayton Hudson Artists Loan Fund (ALF) is any indicator, however, it may soon become a little easier for mediamakers and other artists to get their financial needs met.

The brainchild of Twin Cities art consultant Mariann Johnson and Dayton Hudson Founda-

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tion president Cynthia Mayeda, ALF is a community-based revolving loan program designed for Minneapolis/St. Paul artists who are having difficulty securing funds from traditional lending sources. Funded entirely by the Dayton Hudson Foundation, which provided \$100,000 in seed capital, the fund began operation in July 1992 and is open to any individual artist living in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area who is able to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to her or his artistic career. Conceived of as a community project, the program's ultimate success will depend on local artists' participation. Monthly peer-group support meetings are planned to help loan recipients cope with the travails associated with loan repayment. Organizers anticipate that loan repayments will continually replenish the fund, thereby making new monies available to other artists in the future.

Loan sizes will range anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000 with fixed interest rates at two points over the prime rate (currently 6.5 percent). This fixed rate is lower than that at most commercial banks, which need to charge higher interest rates (19 percent for a personal loan under \$2,500) in order to make their businesses profitable. Applications will be evaluated every two months and loans determined by an all-volunteer group composed of three artists and two representatives from the Twin Cities banking community. After receiving a loan, an artist will have between 12 and 36 months to pay it back.

In addition to the monetary advantages that a fund of this nature provides, ALF hopes to be an artist-friendly source of business and financial skills development. Administered collaboratively with Resources and Counseling for the Arts and the Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund, ALF will actively seek to improve applicants' financial management skills through workshops and individual consultations. They will teach applicants how to prepare loan applications as well as how to manage their business finances. In addition, the loan program offers a way for artists to establish credit or repair a bad credit rating.

For more information, contact: Resources and Counseling for the Arts at (612) 292-4381.

ELIZABETH LARSEN

*Elizabeth Larsen is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer and associate editor at the Utne Reader.*

## ESTATE PROJECT LAUNCHED FOR ARTISTS WITH AIDS

Some good news with the bad: the New York-based Alliance for the Arts has initiated the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, the first national effort to provide basic information about preserving art by artists with AIDS. As the devastation to the arts community continues undeterred, the project addresses the choices artists have to protect their work—during illness and after death.

In May, the first phase of the project was completed with the release of two publications

which address artists' estate planning. Presented as an act of empowerment, estate planning is a way to ensure a safe home for artwork and applies to all media—including video and film, choreography, dance, painting, sculpture, theater design, plays, and manuscripts. A second phase of the project is already in motion, in which the Alliance for the Arts will serve as an information clearing-house and catalyst for a national response to artists' needs.

The first of the two publications is a study of the plight of artists and the problems of preserving their artistic achievement. Prepared by project director Patrick Moore, *Report* addresses the "multiple publics" who have a stake in the crisis—from museums to art historians to artists and activists—with the aim of precipitating "dynamic responses." Because "abundant anecdotal evidence indicates that work by artists with AIDS is being discarded, lost or made inaccessible after their deaths," according to the report, it focuses on response strategies rather than loss statistics. Based on conversations with AIDS service providers, artists, lawyers, and arts professionals who provided an estimate of the damage done and resources available, the study concludes that it would be unfeasible to create a single national organization to respond to artists' needs and proposes instead a national strategy based on a "patchwork quilt" of local services linked by shared information services. A companion handbook, *Future Safe: Estate Planning for Artists in a Time of AIDS*, directly engages artists in the process of estate planning, providing basic information about making bequests, wills, etc.

These well-designed and straightforward publications are a call to action, confronting what the report terms "the loss within a loss." Because the problems confronted by artists in each discipline differ, both the report and manual are subdivided into sections addressing issues and strategies specific to film and video, the visual arts, literature, music, and dance. In each section, artists' profiles tell the stories of artists working through the details and emotions surrounding estate planning for their art. Both list resources for storage, preservation, and distribution of artists' work specific to each medium. And though neither recommends working without a lawyer's guidance, both outline exactly what is needed and why. Making an inventory, deciding on an executor and appointing someone knowledgeable in one's medium to implement one's wishes, making charitable gifts, and setting up a trust to distribute films are only some of what's covered. The need for developing collaborative programs between existing local arts and AIDS service organizations is emphasized throughout. The main strategy is to combine the tremendous knowledge and commitment of AIDS care providers, activists, and AIDS organizations with the growing concern in the arts community.

The work of video artists and filmmakers is particularly vulnerable to loss, according to the report, given the fragility and costliness of their

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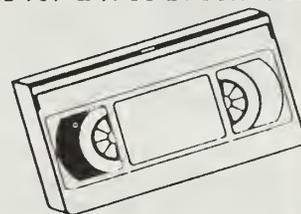
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materials, special storage requirements, and greater commercial marginalization (since medi makers lack the support of the gallery system available to visual artists and the ability to sell works as commodities). Because many kinds of performers rely on video to document their work, the paucity of archival facilities endangers other art forms as well. Creating a comprehensive collection of film and video by artists with AIDS is at the top of the proposed agenda—both to preserve work and to create a mechanism for its passage to the viewing public. The project has begun discussions with several arts institutions about the feasibility of creating a comprehensive collection of media-work by artists with AIDS. Resources for film and video preservation and exhibition, ranging from the Kitchen to the Museum of Modern Art, are presented not as ends in themselves but as part of what must become a collaborative effort in which the choices initiated by artists are supported by existing institutions.

The project has already initiated an innovative resource exchange between Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) and the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA), an organization dedicated to *pro bono* assistance to artists, to create a model program of legal counsel to artists with HIV and AIDS. Able to draw on the already established resources of GMHC's legal department, the VLA will introduce issues specific to HIV-positive artists and artists with AIDS in its lawyers' training. VLA will thus be able to reach artists beyond the scope of GMHC, whose mandate extends only to serve people with full-blown AIDS who have an income below \$30,000. The hope is that the GMHC/VLA model will stimulate alliances between legal and arts service organizations to broaden the scope of services available and help safeguard against the loss of important work by lesser-known artists.

For information, contact: Alliance for the Arts,  
330 West 42nd St., Ste 1701, New York, NY  
10036; (212) 947-6340.

BEATRIX GATES

*Beatrix Gates is a poet living in New York City. She is currently collaborating on an opera with the Carrying Place Theatre.*

## JIM POMEROY: 1945-1992

Jim Pomeroy, an outspoken artist, arts activist, and media arts professor, died suddenly on April 3, 1992, at his home in Arlington, Texas. The cause of death was a hematoma, probably brought on by a concussion he suffered after being knocked down by an Irish setter in a park in Philadelphia on St. Patrick's Day. Those who knew Jim, or his work, will not be surprised to hear that he relished telling friends about the accident, finishing the story off with his usual groan-inducing pun, "If I got run over by a dog, why'd they give me a CAT scan?"

Jim touched the lives of an extraordinary number of people through his teaching at the San

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**Jim Pomeroy**

Photo: Jeffrey Hoone,  
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San Francisco Art Institute, Cal Arts, and the University of Texas at Arlington. He was rare in his ability to combine artmaking, teaching, criticism, curating, and arts activism. He was a founding member and on the board of directors of 80 Langston Street (now New Langston Arts), active on National Endowment for the Arts panels and in the Society for Photographic Education, where he was often a vocal critic of discriminatory practices, and curated well-received shows on digital photography and the art and ideology of Mount Rushmore.

His work is shot through with the belief that art and artmaking should be popular. When teaching an introductory photography class, he would tell his students to lock up their expensive, technologically fetishized cameras because, for the rest of the semester, they were going to be using \$6 plastic cameras from Woolworths he sent them off to buy. In the same vein, Jim's sculptural pieces, musical instruments, and performance props were made out of toys, broken home appliances, cheap hardware store parts, and recycled nineteenth-century technology like music boxes, zoetropes, and stereopticons. These were mobilized, literally, in performance pieces like *Celestial Mechanix*, *Listen to the Rhythm of the Reign*, and *IKONIKIRONIK*.

Jim understood that an artist needs to entertain and instruct. Behind his Mr. Wizard gee-whiz demonstrations of technology was an ironic, Brechtian lesson on the technology's source (often military) and the deadly uses to which it could be put. His trenchant criticism of the military and the capitalist economy that requires foreign wars was most powerfully presented in *Apollo Jest*, his stereoscopic slide show (later made into a bubble-gum card set) whose taped narration suggests that the moon landing was a fake, staged by the military industrial complex—not a giant step for mankind but a giant publicity stunt.

Several of Jim's friends have tried to deal with his death by imagining that we still have him, only now he's on CD-ROM. Although the idea that virtual Jim is right here and can be called up at any time soothes in some ways, there is no substitute for the embodied version, the one who entertained and instructed us so well.

A fund to preserve Jim Pomeroy's work and to

establish an archive has been created. To make a tax-deductible contribution, contact: Pomeroy Archive, San Francisco

Camerawork, 70 12th St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

CONSTANCE PENLEY

*Constance Penley teaches film studies and women's studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. With Andrew Ross, she coedited Technoculture, in which Jim Pomeroy's essay Black Box S-Thetix appears.*

## SEQUELS

A federal judge in Los Angeles struck down a law requiring the National Endowment for the Arts to "take into consideration general standards of decency" when determining grants ["Dirty Dancing: *Lewitsky v. NEA*," June 1991]. The ruling resulted from a lawsuit brought by the NEA 4, the four performance artists whose grants were vetoed by the NEA chair two years ago. This ruling now clears the way for a trial to begin as early as next fall in which the artists will seek restitution of their grants. Endowment chair Anne-Imelda Radice had no comment on the ruling.



The National Archives and Research Administration has reversed a policy barring mediamakers from bringing their own equipment into the archives to dub tapes free of charge ["No Free Dub at National Archives," March 1992]. The new ruling, announced May 28 in the Federal Register, provides a room in the current archives in which public domain works will be made available for dubbing.



Former Corporation for Public Broadcasting president Donald Ledwig has been named executive director of the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), an international educational and training organization dedicated to improving living standards through increased productivity and competitiveness. Richard W. Carlson, a diplomat and former director of the Voice of America (where he challenged US government efforts to censor an interview with Chinese dissident Fang Li Zhu), assumed Ledwig's position as CPB president and CEO in July.

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## PUTTING MEDIA ON THE MAP

### The Media Alternatives Project

LAURA U. MARKS

Independent media is an invaluable but hard-to-tap resource for college-level teachers. Some, especially in more conservative departments, are still suspicious of the usefulness of media in education, regarding it as a visual aid inferior to the written word. Others may be convinced of the



From Jackie Shearer's *The Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry*.

Photo: John A. Hess, courtesy filmmaker

importance of media literacy but do not discriminate between commercial or high-profile productions and works by independents. And those few who are aware of the rich variety of independent productions rarely have the time or resources to keep informed about this work or the budget to program it.

As it is, educators often rely on suppliers of convenient teaching packages, such as PBS Video, which bundle tapes and teaching guides and offer

bulletins on new releases. It's easy to project a scenario in which independent work is preempted by Channel One, Whittle Communications' controversial advertising-supported news program now seen in 11,000 public and private high schools, if cash-starved universities buy into Whittle's pact: free video equipment in exchange for required viewing of the program (and ads) by students, a highly desirable demographic group.

A new project sponsored by National Video Resources called the Media Alternatives Project (MAP) attempts to bring independent work to the attention of teachers at all levels of media sophistication and show how this work can be integrated in their curricula. MAP's goal is twofold: to introduce multicultural perspectives into college-level American history departments, and to foster the use of independent media as a teaching tool that supports those perspectives. American history is still overwhelmingly dominated by Anglo-European perspectives. Groups that have been marginalized from the writing of history have a powerful interest in challenging unitary notions of history. The alternative perspectives of independent work can best suggest fresh ways of interpreting events. MAP hopes to show that media, far from being "support material," is a powerful form of historiography.

The project's most concrete product to date is a 148-page book called *Mediating History: The MAP Guide to Independent Video by and about African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American People*, edited by Barbara Abrash and Catherine Egan (New York: New York University Press, 1992; \$30 hard cover, \$12.95 paper). MAP has also generated workshops and a network of producers and educators in the process of assembling the book, and the editors are planning an interdisciplinary and multimedia expansion.

National Video Resources (NVR) is a program that the Rockefeller Foundation developed to find alternative means of distributing independent film and video. In 1990 Gretchen Dykstra, then director of NVR, invited Catherine Egan, director of the Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media at New York University, to submit a proposal for a project that would help distributors and independents reach new audiences. As president of the Consortium of College and University Media Centers, Egan had noticed a lack of communication between university media centers and faculty. Media centers were often wasted resources, and teachers were not even aware, for instance,

that they could suggest additions to the media collection. Getting academic departments in better touch with university media centers that served them would create more vital media collections that were better integrated into curricula, Egan believed, and she generated her plan for MAP out of this assumption. Receiving the go-ahead from NVR, she then invited independent producer and teacher Barbara Abrash to administer the project.

Egan geared her proposal to American History curricula because "it provides a wonderful umbrella for anything from labor history to women's issues"—issues that many independent works address. She modified the proposal at NVR's request to focus on a multicultural constituency, which it defines as African American, Asian American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Native American. This division of minority perspectives among five slots, reflected in the book's sections, is rather unfortunate for obvious reasons: It atomizes some groups and creates unwilling coalitions of others, and it may discourage teachers from pursuing issues that cross categories. However, the editors of *Mediating History* point out that this grouping reflects the way many contemporary film- and videomakers identify themselves. The book includes a sixth category in the chapter "Crossing Boundaries," which describes work that does not fit within a single cultural category.

MAP's original goal was simply to publish an annotated list of titles of multicultural independent works that were available on video and, as much as possible, produced by people from the groups represented. The interest in the project was so great at workshops and conferences that the project directors expanded it into a book. *Mediating History*, which includes eight essays, an annotated list of works, and a resource guide to independent media, is designed to introduce teachers, media selectors, and programmers both to multicultural issues and to independent media, but it also allows them to pursue a particular topic in depth. Thus it should appeal to a broad range of users, from occasional programmers to those who would like to explore a particular issue, such as Japanese American internment camps during World War II, in depth.

To come up with the final list of 126 works in *Mediating History*, the editors sent out calls for work and contacted distributors, teachers, and others. They came up with a list of about 300. Advisors trimmed the list down, honing in on works that had to do with history, were of suffi-

cient quality, and preferably were made independently and not specifically for television, although some works made for broadcast, such as *Eyes on the Prize*, remained on the list. Abrash is passionate in her belief that independent film and video is "generative," that it produces perspectives that no other work can. "If Jackie Shearer didn't make her piece [*The Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry*, 1991] nobody else would have. Independents come up with images and ways of looking that nobody else does," she says. The films and videos are quite varied, ranging from historically significant documents such as Carlos de Jesus's *The Devil Is a Condition* (1972), about the housing crisis for Puerto Ricans and blacks in New York in the early 1970s, to contemporary experimental work like Janice Tanaka's *Memories from the Department of Amnesia* (1989).

There is a danger, of course, that this list and the accompanying essays will become canonical—the 126 works you need to know about. However, the project directors have made considerable efforts to prevent *Mediating History* from being regarded as the last word, rather than the first word, in teaching with multicultural independent media. The book is open-ended in many ways. It obviously springs from a collaborative effort, not least because of the lengthy list of advisors. The essays vary in purpose, suggesting that there are many needs that neither can nor should be met in one volume. Some, like Elizabeth Weatherford's "Running at the Edge: Native American Independent Film and Video," assume nothing about their reader and begin with a capsule history of the ethnic group in question. Some, such as Chon Noriega's "Concrete Experience: Chicano Video and American History," provide a history of the medium as used by minorities. Others, like Cheryl Chisholm's "Voice of the Griot: African-American Independent Film and Video," function primarily as critical essays. Essays by Patricia Aufderheide and Deirdre Boyle are full of practical suggestions for using video as a teaching tool as well as insights about the critical potential of these works in history classrooms. Boyle emphasizes what rich understandings students can come up with when encouraged to take visual texts as seriously as written ones. Aufderheide points out that students can efficiently pick up viewing skills that will enable them to perceive all filmed reality as constructed. Throughout, *Mediating History* stresses the idea that these films and tapes are not supplements to a unified view of history, but are active rewritings of history that question definitive narratives.

Crucial to the open-ended approach is the resource list provided at the end. It names dozens of festivals, organizations, publications, and distributors of multicultural work. While many educators will be tempted to stick with the original list of 126, this resource insists that they are only the tip of the iceberg. Abrash was struck by the enthusiasm and pleasure of "people who don't necessarily know about *The Independent* or about Asian

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CineVision....They didn't realize this field has been here for 20 years, and that there are people, such as Loni Ding and Claire Andrade-Watkins, who have honed their expertise" over this period of time. The resource list tells teachers that there is a vast and well-connected network available to them for advice, speakers, and information about new work and that multicultural media education is far from a fledgling field.

Although MAP was designed for history curricula, it is eminently useful to other disciplines. Egan and Abrash are quick to point out the relevance of MAP to comparative literature, art history, education, and anthropology—disciplines that do not as a rule integrate media, let alone independent media, into their teaching practices.

Another way the project may stay open-ended is through a national video conference directed at teachers and other potential users of multicultural independent media. Egan is applying for funding for such a conference, which would include presentations, sample videos, and a satellite uplink that would allow groups in different cities to participate. For the less plugged-in, the conference would be circulated after the fact on videotape. The proposal is based on the NewView satellite conference sponsored by the South Carolina Arts Commission in 1990 and a commercial multicultural project launched by the company Modern Talking Pictures.

Finally, Egan and Abrash hope to expand MAP to include a CD-ROM version of the book. Working with software designer Michael Marcinelli, MAP has developed a prototype for Macintosh computers using Hypercard and a video compression program called QuickTime. This will allow users to screen clips from the videos on the Mac, and have access to all the videos and supplementary information on laserdisk. For instance, a student could read Daryl Chin's essay on Asian American media from the computer, preview Lise Yasui and Ann Tegnell's *Family Gathering* using QuickTime, then turn to an interview with Yasui on laserdisk.

Egan is hopeful that MAP will get funding to expand the project into these multimedia applications. In a field such as history, that is so dependent on interpretation and so dominated by mainstream apologists, independent and intercultural media provide footholds for intervention. And as a tool that passes the power of interpretation to individuals, interactive media makes a lot of sense.

*Laura U. Marks is a writer, curator and artist living in Rochester, New York.*

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## BEYOND SIMI VALLEY

### ITVS and the Future of Alternative TV

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DEEDEE HALLECK

---

For camcorder activists, the judgement in Simi Valley contained a potent lesson: The camcorder caught Rodney King's beating, but it's clear that video by itself is not enough. Context is what counts. There is a need for new visions that confront problems head-on and provide fresh and lively solutions for the future.

Independent media in this country needs a space in the public sphere that is not defined in eight-second soundbites nor ghettoized into a potpourri series. Independent work should be contextualized in regularly scheduled strands of programming. We need to create our own context.

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*State of the Union* would cost \$300,000—equivalent to the amount of a single grant from ITVS—and provide \$30,000 to 10 media centers from different parts of the country.

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At this point ITVS has virtually no constituency, not even among the independent producing community, which includes a few "sweepstakes" winners and a huge majority of people holding losing tickets. The political right is attacking, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is waiting for the end of ITVS or perhaps itself, and Congress wants to see something from ITVS on TV.

ITVS needs support—from the independent community, from media centers, from Congress, and from the many adventurous and innovative program directors at public television stations (who are out there in surprising numbers, though conspicuously absent from the big five, status quo PBS stations).

ITVS has the potential to create an alternative programming service that is fed via satellite to public TV stations on a nightly basis. Through such a service, independents could join with those supportive television programmers in a bold experiment to create a true context for alternative views on public television.

In public radio there are two programming entities: National Public Radio (NPR) and American Public Radio (APR). APR started in St. Paul, where ITVS is now housed, in order to distribute Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* and other programs to public radio stations around the country. There is no inherent reason why public television could not have a second national programming source. At the present time there are regional networks, such as Pacific Mountain Network, which covers the Western states, and the Eastern Education Network in the East and some individual producing stations that act as program sources. There is no network for alternative primetime programs, although interest in such work exists, as demonstrated by those programmers at the 80-plus stations throughout the system who have scheduled such independent series as *Deep Dish TV*, *The 90's*, *The Gulf Crisis TV Project*, the Satellite University Network's shows, *Iraq Aftermath Show*, and *America's Defense Monitor*, all of which were distributed through maverick feeds on the public TV satellites. Many public TV stations will run hard-hitting independent programming if given a chance.

By providing these stations with a regular identifiable independent feed, ITVS could help them connect with the large audiences of younger and multicultural viewers who have already demonstrated a loyalty and enthusiasm for programs like *The 90's* and *Edge* (which were both precipitously

For almost 15 years, independent producers and media organizations have fought to gain funding and space on public television. We have lobbied, we have organized, we have written letters and manifestos. We actually have been successful in these efforts. The Independent Television Service (ITVS) is a product of that work. But the legislation creating ITVS is just half the battle. This victory will mean nothing unless we are willing to be creative and visionary in its implementation. Many producers will remember what happened after our first legislative victory in 1978, when Congress responded to an aggressive lobbying effort by independents with a bill directing CPB to promote innovative programming and reserve a "substantial" portion of program dollars, meaning at least 50 percent, for independent producers. But these funds were subsequently whittled away by the "independentization" of such stalwart station cronies as Robert McNeil/Jim Lehrer and Bill Moyers, who created their own production companies to qualify for Program Fund awards.

We must make sure this pattern does not repeat itself with ITVS. It is time for us to fully utilize the potential that ITVS represents and take the leadership in defining a new context within public television. This effort must be proactive, not reactive.



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eliminated from the PBS schedule after one to two seasons of national distribution). Though never properly promoted and poorly scheduled, the shows were connecting with new, more diverse crowds than watch *Masterpiece Theatre*.

In addition, there are the secondary market stations in many cities, such as WNYC in New York and WYBE in Philadelphia. The old boys of the PBS system have been trying to squeeze these stations out by making them pay high penalties for not taking the primetime feeds whole hog. If smaller stations don't program exactly what the bigger stations do, they have to ante up higher prices for the PBS shows they do want. Because a substantial rebellion is going on about these programming and fee structure policies, there is the potential to form an alliance between the secondary stations and independents. ITVS could take the initiative to directly work with these entities.

In the early days of ITVS's formation, Britain's Channel Four was the subject of much study, with US researchers combing Channel Four's programming schedules and interviewing its administrators. But the US is not the UK. We cannot and should not replicate Channel Four here. Channel Four has commissioning producers who develop programming ideas and award production monies for series and individual programs. ITVS instead decided to create a democratic peer review process, in contrast to the autocratic and hierarchical structure in London. However, the current setup at ITVS has retained the notion of commissioning producers by calling the peer panel administrators "producers," although they select neither programs nor series. Continuing the notion of production executives with the peer review process does not fit. When grafted onto the peer system, it results in an intervening bureaucratic layer that is viewed with suspicion by grantees. The ITVS administrator/producers have taken it upon themselves to negotiate coproduction deals and have added restrictive clauses to already cumbersome contracts. Producers who have received grants complained that ITVS can be more prohibitive and bureaucratically cumbersome than PBS itself.

Instead of going with the strengths of either system, ITVS seems to be burdened with the problems of both. We have to realize the strengths of the independent community in the United States and understand our substantial resources. ITVS should be utilizing the democratic and grassroots infrastructures that already exist. What do we have that Britain doesn't?

Media centers. This is one national infrastructure Channel Four never had to begin with, though they tried to create them through their franchised workshops, with varying degrees of success. Media centers in the US have been dealing with their constituencies for years. People like Edith Kramer from Pacific Film Archive, Robin Reidy at 911 in Seattle, and Chris Hill from Hallwalls in Buffalo, among many others, have years of successful programming experience. They know how to put

programs together, which is what ITVS needs to do and hasn't done yet. Working with media centers would give these facilities and their constituents a real stake in ITVS. It would also be a way for ITVS to be democratic beyond its centrally administered peer panels.



Here, for example, is one idea about how ITVS could work in partnership with media centers: Let's call it *The State of the Union: A Month of Images and Ideas from the Grassroots*. In the wake of the widespread insurrections of April surrounding the Rodney King trial, this program could serve as a 30-day forum for individuals and communities who are on the frontlines of the conflict and concerns of American life. This series would be multicultural, multidimensional, and multitudinous, and offer a hard look at the US. The state of our union, from the grassroots' view.

The series would provide 30 programs in January—30 messages to the new (same old?) president, one a night. It could be offered to PBS with a two-week decision time. The system would have to commit and schedule the series on the regular feed. If they don't want it, however, it would still be possible for individual public stations to run the shows, which could be fed via WYBE, KBDI, or KTCI (three small, courageous PBS stations) on the satellite every night for the month.

The programs would be compilations made at 10 media centers chosen by the National Alliance of Media Art Centers (NAMAC). Each center would provide a three-part mini-series reflective of the programming people in that area are producing.

A local curator or programmer, possibly one who works for the media center or for a public access center, would be chosen to select and package the material. Each three-part series would have an overriding theme based on what producers and programmers were already doing or wanted to do—it would be up to them. The section from Buffalo, for example, could be about women's health and law, gender and choice. The three from Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco could be about jobs and justice in the inner cities. The mini-series from Chicago could be about labor and free-trade. The Appalshop series could be on toxic wastes in rural settings. Each media center would be free to choose the subjects, the curators, and the producers, and would be free to change mid-stream should current issues surface. Many media centers are already packaging such programs for local cable or local public TV stations.

This accomplishes two things. First, it helps ITVS satisfy Congress' mandate to expand its geographic diversity, a requirement included in CPB's reauthorization bill passed by the Senate in June. Second, it is a way to decentralize the decision-making process—first to NAMAC, which chooses the media centers; then to the centers, which pick the curators; then to the cura-

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## ITVS should be utilizing the democratic and grassroots infrastructures that already exist.

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tors, who select the shows; then to the producers, who choose the topics in the first place. It takes the heat off ITVS and places it in a community so broad and diverse that, like the blocks of Los Angeles, no one can put out the fires.

The entire budget for the series would be \$300,000—equivalent to the maximum amount for a single grant from ITVS. This would provide \$30,000 to 10 media centers from 10 different parts of the country. There is not a media center in the US that couldn't do this in less than a month. And there is not a media center that doesn't need \$30,000 to do what it's already doing. This sum could be broken down as follows: \$3,000 for the curatorial fee; \$5,000 for postproduction; \$3,000 for overhead and outreach; \$6,000 per show for producers' fees at \$100 per minute; and \$1,000 for miscellaneous administrative and promotional costs.

In addition, ITVS could put up some money to hire a liaison person, produce a dynamite logo and wrap-around for the entire series with composed music (something that's fresh and beautiful), and promote the series to both public TV stations and the news media. The series might also provide some introductory information about independent media and media centers. At the programs' end would be toll-free numbers for purchasing tapes and information on local media centers.

Most media centers have either postproduction centers or on-going relationships with postproduction houses. Most have major resources within their communities that can be mobilized for this sort of project. These would include contacts with producers, newsletters, and local press, as well as relationships with local public television stations. It is assumed that these stations would feel obligated to run a series in which their local media arts center is featured.

The current timeline at ITVS is too slow. As now configured, it may be several years before any programs get on TV and an identity is created. The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be to secure funding for the next cycle.

*The State of the Union* could be pulled together in a few months. Each curator would be expected to deliver three 57-minute, postproduced, master programs by November 15, complete with promotional copy, program notes, and photographs. ITVS would make a sample reel and offer it to PBS with a December 1 deadline for acceptance (and assurance of January scheduling). Shows would be fed to public TV stations nightly from January 1st with or without a PBS prime feed

imprimatur. Should fewer than 100 stations take the series, it would be made available to public access, local origination, and university stations.

This series could amount to a research and development project for ITVS. Not all of the mini-series will be great; organizing programs for exhibition is not the same as putting together TV programs. However, more and more media centers *are* making TV series. This project will enable ITVS to identify some of the people and resources it could work with in the future, and it will be taking chances—visionary, exciting media always does. Isn't this supposed to be the difference between PBS and ITVS?

The goals of ITVS and the status quo at PBS are not necessarily compatible. The larger producing stations have solid reasons for wanting independent series to fail. They see ITVS as reducing the amount of funds CPB might make available for their in-house productions. Waiting for them to approve our projects is a futile exercise. We should not let PBS call the shots. We should take the initiative and reach out to those within the local stations who want help. This will be a good way to build a constituency within the public television system. It will quickly identify those who are willing not only to schedule independent work, but to do so in good time slots.

We need to create a strong identity, one that is open-ended and fearless. For this, ITVS needs:

- to build a working relationship with independents and their organizations
- to build a constituency with audiences and community organizations
- to connect with new, fresh, hip work from producers across the country
- to utilize the years of experience and expertise from distributors and knowledgeable programmers at independent exhibition spaces
- to take advantage of the wisdom and street smarts of veteran media center administrators, many of whom are now making television series in their local communities
- to work with *Deep Dish*, *The 90's*, and other television entities that have already seized the transponders and airwaves
- to initiate and create a truly exciting programming service in a bold new television experiment.

It's time to go with what we've got and get it out there.

*DeeDee Halleck was president of the board of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers during the 1978-79 advocacy campaign for public TV legislation. She is a media activist, cofounder of Paper Tiger TV and Deep Dish TV, and an associate professor at University of California, San Diego.*

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# Uncivil Wars: The Conservative

JOSH DANIEL

LAST JUNE, WHEN THE SENATE REAUTHORIZED FUNDS FOR THE CORPORATION for Public Broadcasting (CPB), independent producers around the country heaved a sigh of relief. We'd won. A broad coalition of independent medi makers, anti-censorship groups, and a supportive public television audience successfully fought off conservatives' efforts to defund public television. After hard rounds of lobbying by both sides, the Senate passed legislation authorizing \$1.1-billion for CPB in FY 1994-96—a 50 percent increase. The legislation also reconfirmed the existence of the Independent Television Service (ITVS), increasing its funding levels from the current \$6-million per year to \$9-million in 1994, \$10-million in '95, and \$11-million in '96. According to Melanne Verveer, executive vice president of the civil liberties organization People for the American Way, "We worked very hard to demonstrate that the objections raised by [public broadcasting's] critics were unfounded, and that indeed these critics represented a very small, albeit vocal, minority whose purpose it was to censor certain kinds of programming under the guise of 'balance.'"

But public TV's advocates won't be able to relax for long. Round two is just around the corner. The recent fight was over the reauthorization bill, which sets funding ceilings for a three-year period. This doesn't mean CPB will necessarily receive its allocated millions. Each year Congress has to determine the precise dollar-amount in an appropriations bill. This year's appropriations debate should hit the floor in early fall. Expect a bloody fight. "One thing is certain," warns Verveer, "Our opponents will return, and they have two messages: One is, 'Only the kind of programming we support ought to be supported.' Or the free marketers among them will say, 'The public ought not to be supporting these kinds of cultural endeavors.'" To prepare for the next round, public television's advocates need to take a hard look at who these opponents are, who's funding them, and how they function.

PUBLIC TELEVISION HAS BEEN A FAVORITE TARGET OF CONSERVATIVES since it was created 25 years ago. President Nixon tried to veto CPB's entire budget after his Vietnam policies came under scrutiny by such programs as *Washington Week in Review* and *Thirty Minutes With*. Likewise, the newly-elected President Reagan unsuccessfully attempted to eliminate all funding for public TV in his 1981 budget.

The most recent attack gathered steam last winter, following the House's uneventful passage by voice vote of their version of the CPB reauthorization bill. Although public television's opponents are small in numbers, they're enormously vocal, prolific in their propaganda, well organized, and extremely well funded. These right-wing public policy groups and media watchdogs challenged CPB's bureaucracy in a way no dissatisfied independent has ever been able to do. They took CPB and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) to task for overblown salaries and for spending more on the bureaucracy than on production. But their loudest and most damaging accusation was against public TV's supposed "liberal bias." Their solutions ranged from content restrictions to privatizing public TV to abolishing it altogether. In an introduction to "Attack on Public Broadcasting," a recent report released by People for the American Way, Verveer raises a critical point: "Perhaps the most common charge by these organizations is that PBS and NPR are biased against conservatives. The reality is that these organi-

zations believe that *all* media outlets are biased against them. We've heard these same charges levelled against all the major television networks, as well. What distinguishes public broadcasting from these other outlets is that the right-wingers can get at their funding."

In the Senate a small cadre of conservatives, led by minority leader Robert Dole, successfully held up CPB's reauthorization from November until June. Dole stated, "I have never been more turned off and more fed up with the increasing lack of balance and the unrelenting liberal cheerleading I see and hear on the public airwaves.... Can anybody stand on this floor and claim that public broadcasting is not liberal?" Senator Jesse Helms followed with attacks on Children's Television Workshop's (*Sesame Street*) successful licensing operations and Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*, a personal documentary exploring the double prejudices black gay men face. "Now this program," bellowed Helms, "blatantly promoted homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle. It showed, what should I call it? I will be kind. It shows homosexual men dancing around naked. And they put that out on public television." Meanwhile in the press, columnist George Will was calling PBS an upper-middle-class entitlement program and asking, "Does Big Bird need a subsidy?"

The impetus and ammunition for such attacks was provided by a handful of conservative media watchdogs who papered Capitol Hill and the press with position papers: David Horowitz of the Committee for Media Integrity (COMINT), Laurence Jarvik of the Heritage Foundation, and S. Robert and Linda S. Lichter from the Center for Media and Public Affairs.

In a recent interview John Schott, executive director of ITVS, reluctantly admired these conservative activists for their aggressive organizing tactics, even though he vehemently disagreed with their message. "One of the lessons from the right," said Schott, "is to see how two guys like Jarvik and Horowitz, one or two voices, can have a role in public television. They demonstrate how two deeply committed people can make a change. The challenge is, how can *we* do the same?"

But it's not just energy and commitment fueling Horowitz, Jarvik, et al., it's a massive amount of money. This comes primarily from a handful of conservative foundations that support all the key critics of public TV: the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Adolph Coors Foundation, and the J.M. Foundation.

These foundations also support numerous public television programs that are hosted by prominent conservatives or address topics dear to their hearts—a point neither the watchdogs nor the press note. They have funded *American Interests*, PBS's only weekly series on foreign affairs, which is hosted by foreign policy hawk Morton Kondracke. Also funded is arch-conservative William F. Buckley Jr.'s long-running series *Firing Line*. In addition, they have sponsored such PBS specials as *America's Political Parties*, a two-part series examining the Republicans through the sympathetic eyes of host David Gergen, former communications director at the Reagan White House, while allowing neoconservative Ben Wattenberg of the American Enterprise Institute to assess the Democrats. Other programs funded by one or more of these foundations include *The Conservatives*, a tribute to the history of the right-wing movement featuring Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, and Buckley, *Richard Nixon Reflects, On Trial: The Bork Nomination*, and *The Three-Letter Word: Tax*.

As Jeff Cohen, executive director of the liberal media-watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), observes, "The current attack

# Assault on Public Broadcasting

on public TV, made by some people who just don't seem to watch the programming, turns reality upside-down." As Cohen points out, many PBS stations air three weekly series hosted by editors from the conservative magazine the *National Review*: In addition to Buckley's *Firing Line* there are John McLaughlin's *One on One* and *The McLaughlin Group*. These programs— plus *American Interests*, and *Tony Brown's Journal*, PBS's only series hosted by an African American, who happens to be a Republican—add up to a significant programming block. "Against these five series," says Cohen, "PBS does not offer one weekly show hosted by an advocate of the left."

A financial survey entitled "The Right-Wing Agenda: Buying Media Clout," conducted by this writer for FAIR, uncovered a pattern: "Conservative foundations and corporations use their financial clout to buy access to public TV, while simultaneously funding media-watch groups that work to deny PBS access to those with opposing views."

## ❖ David Horowitz and COMINT

David Horowitz is codirector with Peter Collier of the Los Angeles-based Committee for Media Integrity (COMINT), a project of Horowitz's Center for Popular Culture. Horowitz and Collier are both former sixties radicals and were editors of the New Left magazine *Ramparts*. Both subsequently underwent a conversion to the right and by the late eighties were writing speeches for Senator Dole. In a recent interview with *The Independent*, Horowitz defined COMINT's goal: "Our mission is to do battle with our former comrades in those institutions where they have gained a hold: universities, Hollywood, and PBS."

In public appearances, Horowitz can project an aura of reasonableness in his assertions that he doesn't want to abolish public TV, only correct its bias. But in the quarterly newsletter *Comint*, his tone becomes much more strident and his antipathy toward documentaries that are critical of the Reagan-Bush Administrations' policies is plainly evident. The first issue of *Comint* in early 1991 set the editorial tone with the cover-story "Missing Balance in PBS History," which accuses PBS of a history of programming that glorifies Communism. The article chastises the documentary *Imperial Masquerade* for not celebrating "America's leadership in a struggle that liberated two continents from a nightmare of oppression" and for portraying "America—not the Soviet Union—as the expansionist empire, a militaristic predator prowling the Third World from Guatemala to Vietnam." *Frontline*'s profile of former President Reagan is criticized for not highlighting "the remarkable results of Reagan's Cold War policies." *Comint* has continued to pound home the themes of anti-Americanism and liberal bias in its attacks on Bill Moyers' Iran-contra investigations, *High Crimes and Misdemeanors* and *The Secret Government*, Nina Totenberg's coverage of the Clarence Thomas sexual harassment story, numerous *Frontline* documentaries, the series *Making Sense of the Sixties*, and—on the basis of titles and one-line descriptions alone—ITVS's first round of production grants.

As a result of the high profile he gained during CPB's reauthorization, Horowitz now has another outlet—ironically, on public radio. KCRW in Santa Monica offered Horowitz his own talk show, *Second Thoughts*, which premiered May 15. Here Horowitz plans to widen his attack, pointing fingers at the supposed influence of leftists on US culture in general.

Although Horowitz told *The Independent* he does not do any direct lobbying, on WNET's roundtable discussion *Public Television: A Public*

*Debate* he boasted, "Probably Senator Dole and I are the two individuals that had the most to do with the present hold [on reauthorization]." Saying one thing while doing another is typical behavior for Horowitz. According to Cohen, "Horowitz is one of the biggest liars in public life. He's reminiscent of Joe McCarthy in his unwillingness to stick with the facts."

Until this year, Horowitz was best known to independent producers for his role in the demise of the news program *South Africa Now*. In October 1990 he launched a successful letter-writing campaign and threatened legal action to pressure public station KCET in Los Angeles to cancel the series because of an alleged bias toward the African National Congress. A counteroffensive by a supportive audience, the L.A. city council, the *Los Angeles Times*, and KCET staff reversed the station's decision, but only after a disclaimer was added to the show. Although widely said to be at the heart of the attack, Horowitz told *The Independent*, "I was not responsible for taking *South Africa Now* off the air." Technically, this may be true; Globalvision's series ceased production in 1991 when it ran out of money. But Horowitz "claimed victory" to the *Los Angeles Times* when KCET cancelled the series. According to Globalvision's Rory O'Connor, Horowitz plans to target their forthcoming human rights series *Rights and Wrongs* sight unseen.

COMINT's annual budget in 1990 was \$120,000. Its funding comes in part from the Bradley Foundation (\$40,000 in 1989); the Olin Foundation (\$20,000 in 1989 and \$20,000 in 1990), whose money derives from agricultural chemicals, military sales, and "sporting ammunition"; the J.M. Foundation (\$20,000 in 1990); and the Scaife Foundation, which contributed \$125,000 in start-up money in 1988.

Each of these foundations has also supported conservatively-oriented public television programs. Bradley gave *American Interests* \$150,000 in 1990 and provided funding for *Richard Nixon Reflects*, *America's Political Parties*, and *Candle in the Wind*, a documentary on religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Olin has supported the same PBS shows that Bradley does, plus *Firing Line* (\$300,000 in the 1992 season) and specials like *The Second Revolution: Communism in Crisis, Angola, and Hollywood's Favorite Heavy*, a program protesting the negative depiction of corporate executives. J.M. Foundation funded *The Conservatives and Hollywood's Favorite Heavy*, and Scaife helped underwrite *Candle in the Wind*.

## ❖ Laurence Jarvik and the Heritage Foundation

The leading critic calling for public TV's privatization is Laurence Jarvik, Bradley resident scholar at the Heritage Foundation, one of the leading and most aggressive conservative think tanks in Washington, DC. Jarvik maintains that "the growth of the multichannel marketplace in the 1980s makes today's public broadcasting system unnecessary and wasteful." In his view, Arts & Entertainment, Bravo, and other cable channels do all that PBS is supposed to do. However, Jarvik ducks the fact that 40 percent of US households do not have cable TV. Many live in areas not wired by a cable company, and many more cannot afford the monthly basic cable fee, let alone the additional costs of pay services like Bravo.

In his position paper for the Heritage Foundation entitled "Making Public Television Public," issued last January and timed to coincide with the reauthorization debate, Jarvik claims, "The current public broadcasting system is obsolete, overly expensive, and doomed to political controversy." Selling it to private investors would not only reduce the federal deficit, he

argues, but "free" the system "to serve the broad range of tastes found in the American public."

Jarvik's real interest does not appear to be broadening the range of views on television. Behind his quasi-libertarian stance is a conservative ideology that seeks to restrict the range of voices on television, as is reflected most clearly in his continuing attacks on ITVS. "It's not interesting to me to see yet another America-bashing documentary" Jarvik told the *Village Voice* last February, shortly after the list of Open Call grant winners was announced. "The ITVS list looks extremely politically correct," he said, basing his opinion on the titles of unproduced projects. "It's a left-wing agenda from the 1960s. Is that what you want to spend tax dollars on?"

Like Horowitz, Jarvik is a former leftist, and he seems to share his passion to "write" the wrongs of his past. "I'm someone who spent 10 years knocking around in the documentary community and saw what a bunch of dishonest, self-serving, hypocritical, greedy folks they are," he told *The Independent*. "I'm somebody who wants to clean up public broadcasting. I'm a free market conservative, towards libertarian—not complete—because I think markets have to have certain rules to operate."

Who funds Jarvik? The Bradley resident scholar post at Heritage is funded by a \$583,800 grant from the Bradley Foundation. Heritage also receives money from Olin (\$357,000 in 1990), Scaife (\$800,000 in 1989), and the Smith Richardson Foundation (\$75,000 in 1988). Heritage's annual budget for 1990 was just over \$16-million dollars. Their liberal opponent, People for the American Way, gets by on \$8-million.

### ❖ *The Lichters and the Center for Media and Public Affairs*

Two other key players in the current fight are Robert and Linda Lichter, codirectors of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. Coauthors of *The Media Elite* (1986), a book which asserts that most journalists are politically liberal, these two prolific activists-cum-social scientists have made a name for themselves by documenting "leftist bias" in the news media while stressing their claim to nonpartisanship. "It's not in a scholar's blood to have an ideology," Robert Lichter told the *Washington Post*.

But the Lichters' political history and sponsorship discredits their claims of neutrality. From 1986 to 1988, Robert Lichter was a fellow at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. When raising start-up money for the Center for Media and Public Affairs, the Lichters garnished endorsements from leading right-wing figures like Ronald Reagan, Pat Buchanan, Ed Meese, and Pat Robertson. An unpaid director of the center is former Reagan staffer David Gergen, now an editor at large for *US News and World Report* and a commentator on *McNeill/Lehrer Newshour*.

The Lichters' recent study "Balance and Diversity of PBS Documentaries" was released immediately before debate on CPB's reauthorization was scheduled to begin in the Senate. To long-time observers of public television's struggles with right-wing critics, the study will have a familiar ring. In 1986, conservative members of the CPB board of directors, led by *National Review* editor Richard Brookhiser, raised the "liberal bias" charge and pressed for a content analysis of PBS's documentaries to prove the point. They planned to have the Lichters undertake this study. The plan was blocked by Congress and public television officials, who spotted the partisan politics motivating this maneuver.

Presented as a nonpartisan analysis of PBS programming, the Lichters'

new study, widely circulated on Capitol Hill and to the press, fulfills the original aim of Brookhiser and company. Though clothed in the language of social science, the study is problematic. PBS is judged on the basis of its public affairs documentaries only. None of the weekly conservative talk shows are included—certainly none funded by the Lichters' sponsors. And there are significant methodological flaws.

The Lichters do not look at the overall leanings of the documentaries studied. Rather, their approach is to break programs into units of information. A unit, Lichter explained to *Current*, a public broadcasting trade magazine, is "every time the camera changed." The views expressed in each unit are analyzed and classified. On the surface this methodology seems exhaustive, but the statistical conclusions often distort the programs' content. For instance, "liberal bias" is found in the series *Eyes on the Prize* because "racial discrimination was described as a condition of American society 50 times without a single dissenting opinion." But these 50 speakers do not necessarily oppose segregation; they merely cite instances of discrimination in our society. Some even favor segregation or criticize efforts to increase integration—a dubious "liberal" stance.

Not surprisingly, conservative activists like Jarvik and Horowitz have found a gold mine in the Lichter study. "Of course I use it, why shouldn't I?" Horowitz told *The Independent*. But as Michael Tracey, director of the Center for Mass Media Research at the University of Colorado, observes in *Current*, "Sophisticated is not the first word that springs to mind when reading this report." Tracey continues, "This is not so much an academic report as a weapon in the jihad being waged against public broadcasting, here, there, and everywhere." According to Tracey, the study "doesn't begin to examine the real philosophical problems that cling to any debate about balance, diversity, objectivity, and impartiality in programming.... [N]owhere do the authors examine what liberalism and conservatism mean, even though we discover towards the end of the report that their prime purpose has been to define the documentary output of PBS as too 'liberal.'"

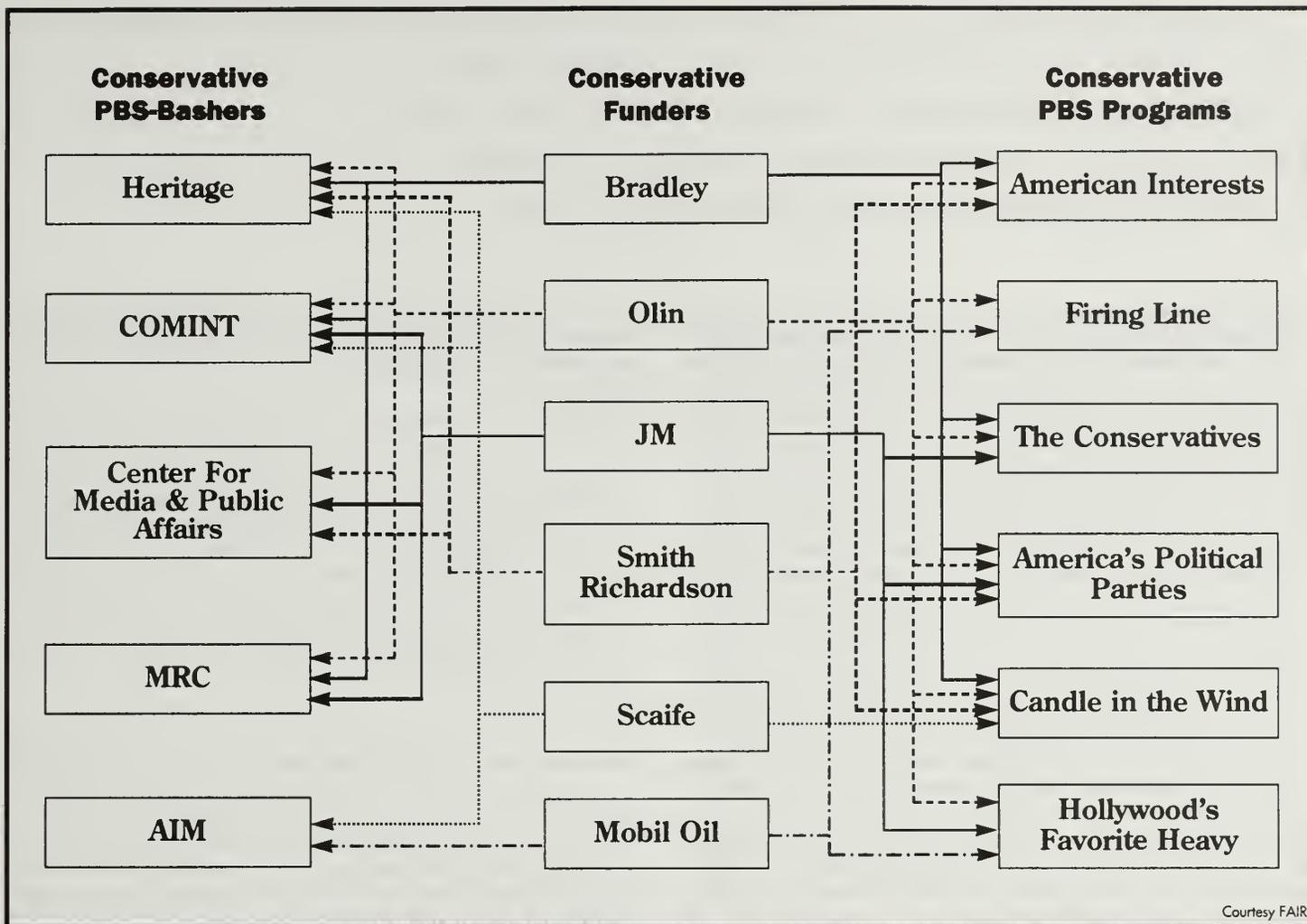
The Lichters' study was funded in part by a \$40,000 grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation, which gave the center \$196,000 over the past few years. The center has also received \$180,000 from Olin and \$100,000 from the J.M. Foundation. Their annual budget for 1989 was a healthy \$518,617.

### ❖ *Other players*

Brent Bozell III is director of the **Media Research Center**, which regularly issues conservative critiques of the media and publishes the newsletter *Media Watch*, and *TV etc.*, an entertainment journal that targets liberals in Hollywood. Past issues have included such articles as "Ladies of the Left," an attack on the Women's Political Caucus in Hollywood, and "The Big Green Hysteria Machine," on Hollywood's backing of an anti-pollution bill. Like Jarvik, Bozell claims "There's no longer any need for PBS."

Media Research Center receives support from the Donner Foundation, which recently gave nearly \$80,000. Donner has also funded its share of PBS programs, including *American Interests* and *Technopolitics*, a program about controversies in science and technology. The Bradley, Olin, and J.M. Foundations are also supporters of the Media Research Center, with recent donations totalling \$65,000. Media Research Center's 1990 annual budget was a whopping \$1.7-million.





Reed Irvine, director of **Accuracy in Media** (AIM) and editor of its monthly journal, *The AIM Report*, has a long history of attacking both the commercial networks and PBS for airing what he considers pro-communist propaganda. Less a force than he used to be, Irvine nonetheless continues to hold forth at the network stockholders' meetings and in his newsletter. He recently joined the fray in attacking "the trash and propagandistic nonsense aired this summer on the PBS *P.O.V.* series," singling out *Tongues Untied* and Robert Hilferty's *Stop the Church*. AIM receives funds from the Coors Foundation (\$20,000 in 1989,) and the Scaife Foundation (\$100,000 in 1988). Its annual budget was nearly \$1.4-million in FY 1990/91.



**The Media Institute** is another conservative think tank that also issues media critiques on a regular basis. In the mid-eighties it published a position paper about liberal control of the media by former *New York Times* critic John Corry, who specifically denounced PBS's left-wing bias and questioned its funding. While at the *New York Times* Corry regularly criticized PBS documentaries that questioned the Reagan Administration's foreign policy. His wife, Sonia Landau, headed Women for Reagan/Bush in '84. She also sat on the CPB board of directors; her term and agenda overlapped with Brookheiser's.

The Media Institute's funding comes from the Scaife Foundation (\$220,000 for 1985-88) and Olin (\$123,250 for 1984-87, including \$25,000 for Corry's monograph on news coverage). It has received small grants (\$5,000-\$6,250) from the Gannett Foundation (1985), the New York Times Company Foundation (1985 and '86), and General Electric (1990 and '91). Their annual budget was \$685,000 in 1990.



On the extreme right are the religious fundamentalist groups. Best known is the Reverend Donald Wildmon's **American Family Association**, which triggered the campaign against the National Endowment for the Arts in 1989 and actively opposes federal funds for CPB. Consistent with his opposition to anything homosexual, Wildmon joined attacks against *Tongues Untied* (although he admitted to never having seen the entire program) and, most recently, *Great Performances'* dramatic feature *The Lost Language of Cranes*, the story of a father and son coming to terms with their homosexuality. Senator Dole entered Wildmon's attack on *Cranes* into the *Congressional Record* during the reauthorization debate.

Pat Robertson's **Christian Coalition** also used *Tongues Untied* to lobby against arts funding and, more recently, public television. Risking a copyright infringement suit, the Christian Coalition circulated a seven-minute tape of the more provocative bits from the hour-long *Tongues Untied* to members of the House of Representatives along with a letter demanding legislative action to clean up the NEA. (Many legislators thought the excerpts were the entire program.) A recent report on the Christian Broadcasting Network's *700 Club* on Marlon Riggs and *Tongues Untied* proclaimed: "He's black, he's homosexual, he's got AIDS, and he could be this summer's version of the Mapplethorpe controversy."

### ❖ *The foundations*

The above players aren't in agreement on all the issues and resent being lumped together. Nonetheless, collectively they have threatened the future of public TV, and they do work together in unofficial ways. Jarvik is Washington editor of Horowitz' *Comint*. The Heritage Foundation's annual guide to public policy experts lists Horowitz, Collier, Bozell, Irvine, Media Institute president Patrick Maines, Neal Freeman chair of the Blackwell

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The Senate wants CPB to evaluate the system's balance and objectivity "after soliciting the views of the public"—which leaves the door open to continued pressure from right-wing groups.

Corporation (which produces *American Interests* and other conservative programs), Eagle Forum head Phyllis Schlafly, Olin Foundation executive director James Pierson, and Bradley Foundation president Michael Joyce.

It is important to examine the agendas of the foundations behind these key players. As the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Milwaukee Magazine* have all documented, the Bradley, Olin, and Scaife Foundations are committed to spreading the conservative message throughout the nation as quickly as possible. In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Liz McMillen assesses the Olin Foundation's massive contributions to universities and think tanks across the country. She writes that critics have charged Olin with using "millions of dollars to support activities that directly challenge the spread of diversity and multiculturalism on campus. Far from promoting objective, dispassionate scholarship, as it claims, the Olin Foundation has an explicit political agenda, with ties to officials in the Republican party." The foundation has assets of nearly \$70-million and has donated millions to the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the National Forum Foundation (which gave \$250,000 to Horowitz and Collier's Second Thoughts at Home and Abroad Projects), and Schlafly's Eagle Forum. Olin funds have also gone to conservative academic organizations like the National Association of Scholars, Smith College's Center for the Study of Social and Political Change, and Stanford University's Center for Media Quality. Over the past few years the foundation has been giving away ever larger portions of its assets. Executive director Pierson says Olin plans to spend itself out of existence.

Bradley Foundation director Michael Joyce was cited by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1986 as one of the three people most responsible for the triumph of the conservative movement. Prior to heading Bradley, Joyce was the executive director of the Olin Foundation. When he moved from Olin to Bradley, the latter adopted Olin's emphasis on conservative causes and policy-making. Joyce now funds many of the same programs, media watchdogs, and conservative projects he supported while at Olin. In 1988 the Bradley Foundation's board of directors included Reagan's Director of Education William Bennett. Earlier, Bennett had assisted Joyce when he wrote a chapter on the National Endowments for the Humanities and the Arts for the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration* (1981), which served as a blueprint for the Reagan Administration. This chapter criticized the endowments for their "tendency to emphasize politically inspired social policies." Mediamakers will remember Bennett's role in 1984 as the first chair of the NEH to veto peer-panel approved grants, all involving social policy topics. Yet as NEH chair, Bennett bypassed the panel process and awarded \$30,000 to AIM for a documentary countering "distortions" in the PBS series *Vietnam: A Television History*. PBS, under pressure, aired AIM's program.

Critics charge that Olin and Bradley have had a distorting effect on the intellectual debate on campuses and in the media. Others say they're doing what the left is doing—trying to influence public discourse—only financing it better. But as Donald Lazare, professor of English at California Polytechnic State University, noted in the *Journal of Higher Education*, "Foundations that fund liberal causes, none of them have party affiliations, and none have political agendas or mandates as do Olin, Scaife, and the Heritage Foundation." Although Horowitz and Jarvik claim there is "no master plan," it appears their funders do have a larger agenda, which their work supports.

Horowitz and Jarvik flatly deny this theory. Says Horowitz, "The

intellectual input producing stimulus for the reforms came spontaneously from two guys: me and Jarvik. Nobody came to us and said, 'We want to shape the future of PBS and here's the money to do it.' That's not the way things work."

Jarvik was more vehement. "I work alone," he told *The Independent*. "While there is no conspiracy, there are people who have shared interests who do not work together. The way the left works, there's party discipline; the way the right works, there's shared principles: freedom, liberty, patriotism, limited government." Jarvik continued, "We're not Leninists, we don't have central committees. We're American, out of an American tradition of individual liberty." The left, he went on to say, is "Leninism following party discipline, central committees, front groups, party lines which people have to follow." When asked who specifically he was referring to, Jarvik retorted, "I'm a former Trotskyite, so I can speak from my own experience."

**T**O MANY INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS, JARVIK'S ACCUSATIONS ARE GROUNDLESS. But neither Jarvik nor the more measured Horowitz and Lichters can be blithely dismissed. All have been enormously effective where it counts—in the press and on Capitol Hill. "The Heritage paper really has reinforced our ideas," says Pat Shortridge, press representative for Rep. Dick Armey, who pushed to eliminate funding for CPB. "I think Larry Jarvik and David Horowitz, Jarvik in particular, have been very helpful and influential in shedding light on the debate." Although Shortridge claims Armey's ideas were developed on his own, he agrees that Jarvik's work is "complimentary of work we're trying to do." Shortridge acknowledges that his office receives weekly position papers from Heritage: "I think every office does."

Walt Riker, press secretary to Senator Dole, had equally glowing things to say: "Jarvik's probably the number one watchdog on PBS.... He's one of the few who can understand the [PBS] system... Obviously someone like that is helpful, but Senator Dole will make up his own mind... I don't want to give the impression Jarvik is on our staff; we're talking to everybody."

Other congressional staffers were less open about contact with Jarvik, Horowitz, et al. Carey Garvin, press assistant for the Minority Staff Senate Commerce Committee, says, "Traditionally, our staff will not comment on lobbying issues." But Lynley Ogilvie, press representative for Senator John D. Rockefeller, who sits on the Commerce Committee and fought against content restrictions, confirms their influence. "Gauging from the degree they've been able to upset CPB authorization, they've been very effective," she said while the floor fight was still underway. "I don't know if they're directly responsible for the hold [placed on the reauthorization bill] and the amendments on content restrictions and reorganizing the board, but I think any Senator who is actively advocating changes in CPB uses their material."

How they've communicated their positions through the press and set the terms of the debate may be even more important than their actions on Capitol Hill. A dozen television writers for major papers around the country were queried by *The Independent*. All concurred that they receive regular material from Horowitz and Jarvik. How it influences their columns ranges from the direct to the subliminal. "I get information from everyone," says Walter Goodman, culture and TV critic for the *New York Times*, "I don't think I'm much influenced, but information all comes into your head. Who knows?" Verne Gay, entertainment editor at *New York Newsday*, notes, "Larry [Jarvik] is bright, aggressive. He seems to have some sort of pipeline into the staff of conservative Republicans who opposed CPB's reauthor-

ization." Gay adds, "Whether he's a crackpot is another thing, [but] he's as articulate and aggressive as Horowitz is. My sense is their game is to get the media to use them for quotes and soundbites and see them as representative of an anti-PBS campaign." Gay concludes, "The question is, are they representative of a broad-scale grassroots anti-PBS campaign? I think not. I don't think there's a movement out there at all.... I think they're a little strange."

Strange, inaccurate—but highly effective. Like Operation Rescue, these conservative media activists are successfully raising the profile of their agendas. "It's a tempest in a teapot, done very well," says Pat Aufderheide, assistant professor in the school of communications at American University. "No one on the left is doing this as well."

Why not? First, many defenders of public TV found themselves agreeing with certain criticisms of the system. In his *Village Voice* article "Why Public TV Sucks," James Ledbetter observed, "What's remarkable about this conservative assault is that it's half right: public television is seriously off course." It can be disconcerting to discover you agree with Jesse Helms as he critiques the overblown salaries of PBS executives and the amount spent on management versus production.

Second, independents have their own long-standing grievances with CPB and PBS: difficult and limited access to the public airwaves, paltry or no payment for acquired programs, scant promotion of stand-alone shows, and placement in the late-night scheduling ghetto. So when confronted with the task of trying to save PBS, some independents shrug and say, "PBS may die? Maybe it should." But ultimately, most producers and viewers believe the system is worth fighting for. "Is this an institution that's worth saving?" Aufderheide wonders. "It's a concept that's worth saving."

If independent producers want not only to save but to strengthen the concept of public television, they must confront both the effectiveness of their organizing tactics and the relevancy of their work. The strategy must be two-pronged. Larry Daressa, ITVS board member and director of California Newsreel, sees the present situation as "an opportunity for the field to make a major paradigm shift in terms of how it identifies itself, its mission, and its audience. In part the field really has to take over the responsibility for reimagining what public television would look like...to think of how public television could function much more importantly in the lives of both underserved and badly-served audiences—which would serve the entire American viewing public" says Daressa. "We have to find a better self-identity than as 'independents,' because if we continue to define ourselves this way, we will remain independent of any political support."

On Capitol Hill, it's questionable how much support public television really has. Although producers and PBS supporters were thrilled when the Senate finally approved CPB's reauthorization at \$1.1-billion, a look at the bill's amendments explains why conservatives were cheering as well. Most problematic is a compromise amendment addressing the issue of balance, which was necessary to garner the vote of 19 Republicans. Broadcasting law already requires a "strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of a controversial nature." Under the new amendment, CPB's board of directors must evaluate the system's efforts to satisfy this requirement and establish a comprehensive policy "[a]fter soliciting the views of the public"—which leaves the door open to continued pressure from right-wing groups. "They'll be there lobbying every day," predicts Jeff Chester of the Center for Media Education, who is working with other liberal groups to make sure the board hears their views as well.

Further, the board must set procedures to "provide reasonable opportunity for members of the public to present comments to the Board regarding the quality, diversity, creativity, excellence, innovation, objectivity, and balance of public broadcasting services...."

The bill also contains an extension of the ban on "indecent" programming from 8 p.m. to midnight. This amendment passed 93 to 3. According to Washington insiders, PBS's advocates in the Senate felt they couldn't afford to vote against it in an election year and trusted the courts would step in and kill it as an unconstitutionally vague proscription.

These amendments present a very real danger that CPB will censor controversial material more than they already do. Indeed, CPB's new chair, Sheila Tate, told public television executives shortly after the Senate vote that she would keep a close watch on how taxpayers' money is being used. "If there is one lesson to be learned," said Tate, "it is that a perceived imbalance is as important to address as a real imbalance."

The make-up of the CPB board of directors, which will evaluate CPB's balance and objectivity, has become increasingly conservative with President Bush's recent nominees. Victor Gold, who joined the board last November, is a former speechwriter for Bush, coauthor of the President's biography, and former press secretary to Barry Goldwater and Spiro Agnew. Soon after Gold joined the CPB board, he created a stir with his vociferous condemnation of two PBS documentaries that take a critical look at the state of the union: Bill Moyers' *Listening to America*, and *Frontline: The Betrayal of Democracy*, with reporter William Greider. A more recent nominee is Ritajeau Butterworth, special projects director for the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank funded by the Olin and Bradley Foundations. She is currently project research director for the Discovery Institute, which advocates for a free market approach to telecommunications policy (and receives funding from US Telephone Association, GTE Northwest, and US West, all of which are engaged in lobbying Congress for permission to enter the cable TV business). Butterworth worked as Washington state director for Senator Slade Gorton, who during the debate over the National Endowment for the Arts, was highly critical of using tax dollars for controversial artworks.

Before the CPB board moves on its internal assessment, a final version of the reauthorization bill has to be agreed upon by both houses of Congress and signed by the President. It is likely that Congress will meanwhile revisit the issues during its hearings on appropriations for CPB's 1994 budget, which are expected to resume in the fall. Activists who attended preliminary hearings in late spring report that many legislators were repeating the themes sounded by Horowitz and Jarvik.

When the appropriations hearings get underway, independent producers and public television supporters will have to strengthen the broad network mobilized during last spring's battle and don their boxing gloves once again. But producers will face a creative battle as well. From now on they will be confronting a more cautious CPB and PBS, which will be much more likely to head toward the middle-of-the-road than to fund and schedule hard-hitting public affairs programs. Instead of self-censoring in reaction, independents must work to convince the public TV system, as well as the press, the public, and Congress, of the need to support controversial programming and free expression and to keep public television operating in the public interest.

*Josh Daniel, president of Utopia Parkway Pictures, is an independent producer/director and media critic.*

# From Seditious Libel to Sex

## THE FORGING OF FIRST AMENDMENT LAW

PATRICIA THOMSON

**B**ACK IN 1902, WHEN IDA CRADDOCK WAS PROSECUTED ON OBSCENITY charges for publishing advice to naive Victorian brides-to-be and their fiances in *The Wedding Night* and *Advice to a Bridegroom*, it was common practice not to allow an offending text to be read before the jury or entered into the court record. Craddock's jury had to rely on the judge's characterization of the evidence, which he said was "indescribably obscene." The jury found the author guilty without leaving their seats.

In a 1915 case involving *Birth of a Nation*, the Supreme Court lumped moving pictures together with circuses, theaters, and other "spectacles." Films were "a business, pure and simple," "not to be regarded...as part of the press of the country or as organs of public opinion." This decision effectively barred motion pictures from First Amendment protection for almost 40 more years.

In 1964, after the *New York Times* ran an advertorial by Martin Luther King's supporters accusing the Montgomery, Alabama, police of brutality, city commissioner L.B. Sullivan sued the paper for \$500,000—the largest libel settlement ever granted by an Alabama court. Additional suits against the *Times*, CBS, and other news organizations followed in an effort to suppress reporting on the civil rights movement in the South. Nearly \$300-million in libel actions piled up before the Supreme Court brought libel law in line with the First Amendment in *Sullivan v. New York Times*.

**N**O MATTER HOW BAD THE CLIMATE FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS seems today, these instances remind us that it has been much worse. The First Amendment says, simply and commandingly, "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." Its protection, however, has been far from absolute. Largely dormant until the turn of this century, the First Amendment fared poorly in its early cases before the Supreme Court. No Supreme Court Justice said anyone's freedom of speech had been abridged until *Abrams v. United States*, a 1919 case involving four refugees from Czarist Russia who criticized President Wilson. No one won a First Amendment case until 1927. And it wasn't until 1957-1966 that the question of a work's literary or artistic value was allowed in court.

But the First Amendment's progress has not been unbroken, nor is it guaranteed. After President Nixon's appointment of Chief Justice Warren Burger, the Supreme Court began its slide toward conservatism. By 1973 the liberal First Amendment doctrine of Justice William Brennan was supplanted by Burger's more restrictive language in *Miller v. California*. In more recent years, revisionists like Judge Robert Bork, who was denied a seat on the high bench in 1987, have argued that the Founding Fathers did not intend the arts to be a protected form of speech (ignoring the Continental Congress' explicit statement in 1774 that freedom of the press includes "the advancement of truth, science, morality, and arts in general").

Nowadays, when the First Amendment is unfurled at every turn by art

advocates, it is useful to understand precisely what this constitutional guarantee has meant in the eyes of the law and how its application and interpretation have evolved over the decades.

Several new books address the issue of free speech and press from complementary vantage points. They cover the landmark *Sullivan v. New York Times* case, 90 years of literary censorship cases, four decades of film censorship by the Hays Office, and the recent debate over federal arts funding, culminating in the Contemporary Art Center's obscenity trial in Cincinnati. Taken collectively, these books bring home two points: One is that, despite the guarantee of free speech and press, public officials never tire of using various laws to suppress speech that is critical of government or the status quo it seeks to preserve. There was the Sedition Act in Jefferson's day, the Espionage Act during World War I, the Comstock Act and subsequent obscenity laws throughout this century, libel law, and so on.

The other point, as First Amendment attorney Edward de Grazia writes, is that "the Law is what policemen, prosecutors, and, of course, judges in particular cases say it is." The law can fail; justice can be improperly served, as the convictions of individuals like Ida Craddock and Lenny Bruce demonstrate. But equally important and clearly evident in these books is how individuals on the bench and before it have profoundly affected and advanced the course of the First Amendment—from Justice Brennan, who is largely responsible for shaping its application to individual expression, to those principled and stubborn writers, publishers, directors, and artists who fiercely pushed their way through the legal system, sometimes at great personal loss, to defend their constitutional rights—and ours.

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### MAKE NO LAW: THE SULLIVAN CASE AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

by Anthony Lewis

New York: Random House, 1991; 352 pp.; \$25

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Anthony Lewis' *Make No Law: The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment* provides a gripping narrative of the landmark *Sullivan* case and interweaves this story with an illuminating history of First Amendment jurisprudence. Currently a *New York Times* columnist and lecturer on law, Lewis was a *Times* reporter assigned the Supreme Court when *Sullivan* came before the bench. The case originated when the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King placed an advertorial in the *New York Times* on March 29, 1960, that spoke of the "unprecedented wave of terror" unleashed on nonviolent demonstrators in the South. It said, "In Montgomery, Alabama, after students sang 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee' on the State Capitol steps, their leaders were expelled from school, and truckloads of police armed with shotguns and tear-gas ringed the Alabama State College Campus. When the entire student body protested to state authorities by refusing to re-register, their dining hall was padlocked in an attempt to starve them into submission."

Though no names were mentioned, commissioner Sullivan, who oversaw the police force, sued for libel. Thus began a concerted attempt to



Southern officials tried to discourage press coverage of the civil rights movement by transforming libel law into a weapon of press intimidation with *Sullivan v. New York Times*.

transform “libel action, designed to repair the reputation of a private party, into a state political weapon to intimidate the press,” writes Lewis. After the *Times* lost and five other officials filed similar suits, the *New York Times* knew it was facing disaster. As the newspaper’s general counsel later said, “Without a reversal of those verdicts there was a reasonable question of whether the *Times*, then wracked by strikes and small profits, could survive.” They appealed—and lost. The Alabama Supreme Court dismissed the First Amendment argument in a sentence: “The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution does not protect libelous publications.” At that point in time, this was true.

In trying to convince the Supreme Court to hear an appeal, the *Times*’ insightful attorney Herbert Wechsler drew a parallel between the use of libel suits by public officials and the Sedition Act of 1798, which made criticism of the federal government a crime. The plan worked; when Brennan drafted the opinion in favor of the *Times*, he relied heavily on Wechsler’s arguments.

As Lewis relates, the Sedition Act was the first major challenge to the First Amendment. The act made it a crime to “write, print, utter or publish...any false, scandalous, and malicious writing” against the President and Congress “with intent to defame” or that would cause the “contempt,” or “hatred” of the people. The accused bore the burden of proof. “If any editor wrote that government policy was headed for disaster,” observes Lewis, “he had to prove the prediction true—which of course he could not.”

The Sedition Act was a blatantly partisan bill. The Presidency and Congress were both in Federalists’ hands. Conspicuously absent from the Sedition Act’s protection was the Vice President, Thomas Jefferson, a member of the rising Democratic Republican party (ancestor to the modern-day Democrats), who would run against President John Adams in 1800. Most of the prosecutions under the Sedition Act occurred that year. A member of the House of Representatives was among the four dozen Republicans convicted and jailed. His crime: a letter to the editor saying Adams was engaged in “a continual grasp for power, in an unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation, and selfish avarice....”

The Federalists’ plan backfired. Such prosecutions outraged the public, as did the stacked courts. The Sedition Act became an election-year issue which helped Jefferson defeat Adams and the Republicans take Congress. It also uncovered fundamentally different views of government’s relation to its citizens. Echoes of these differences are heard in today’s debates over government support of disparate views through its public broadcasting and arts funding. This lineage is worth examining.

As Lewis explains, it was James Madison’s view that “the censorial power is in the people over Government, and not in the Government over

the people.” Madison fought mightily against the Sedition Act because of this belief in the sovereignty of “citizen-critics” and their responsibility to “freely examine public characters and measures” (which, as Justice Brennan would later write, “is the essence of self-government”).

The opposing view, expressed by Chief Justice John Marshall when he was a Federalist representative, held that without a seditious libel law, the government would not be able to protect itself from “wicked citizens” who “disturb the public repose” and deprive government “of the confidence and affection of the people.” As Lewis astutely notes, “There could hardly be a sharper contrast to Jefferson’s belief that democratic government requires the acceptance of risk and change. Or to Madison’s view that the people are sovereign and hence entitled to say what they choose about those whom they appoint temporarily to govern. To Marshall, the government was sovereign, and entitled to preserve itself. It was a very English view.”

Very British, very paternalistic, and exceedingly hostile to a free press. The Sedition Act derived from a view of government that accorded the King, and by extension his public officers, special status. Today in Britain, as Lewis observes, newspapers lose virtually every libel case that goes to court because they still have to prove their stories true in every detail. Had US law continued to shield public officials in the same way from all but the “absolutely confirmable,” neither the *Pentagon Papers*, nor Woodward and Bernstein’s Watergate investigation, nor investigative reporting of any kind would be possible.

*Sullivan* not only represented a significant break from British common law, it reordered the whole area of libel law as it applies to public officials. There is no such thing as “libel on government,” Brennan wrote. With *Sullivan*, the burden of proof shifted to the plaintiff. Second, the plaintiff had to show the defendant published a falsehood with “actual malice,” knowing it to be untrue or with reckless disregard to its truth. (The *New York Times* advertorial contained several factual errors.)

One of the more fascinating aspects of *Make No Law* is the rare view Lewis provides into the private inner workings of the Supreme Court, described as “nine separate small law offices” that convene once a week. Lewis reveals the very human side of the court. He shows Brennan laboring patiently to gain a unanimous majority in *Sullivan*, drafting eight opinions in the process and refining various arguments to persuade the different justices.

Lewis also devotes several chapters to Justices Holmes and Brandeis, whose dissents from the conservative majority in the 1920s became the foundation of First Amendment law. Lewis allows us to watch how Holmes underwent a complete turnaround in his thinking about free expression during the eight months separating the infamous 1919 *Debs* case, in which

a socialist and five-time Presidential candidate was convicted under the Espionage Act for making a speech opposing the war, and Holmes' powerful dissent in *Abrams*, in which he was the first Justice to argue that the First Amendment superseded seditious libel. The shift, Lewis shows, was based on Holmes' diligent summer reading of books and law journals that touched on issues of free speech and his correspondence with Judge Learned Hand, who questioned whether it was just to punish words that had a "tendency" to bring about harm or violation of law, or whether they should present "a clear and present danger." Holmes came to agree.

One wonders how many of today's Justices are equally open-minded and willing to scrutinize their interpretations of legal doctrine. When writing *Make No Law* in 1990, Lewis seemed sanguine about *Sullivan*'s continuation in the Rehnquist court. He appears less so after the *Rust v. Sullivan* ruling last fall, in which the court upheld a prohibition on doctors in federally-funded health clinics advising patients on abortion. In an article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* last December, Lewis describes *Rust* as "the one menacing exception" to recent decisions protecting free speech and the press. "The precedent is worrying," Lewis warns, "because so many private institutions in this country now rely on Federal funds: universities, public libraries, scientific laboratories, museums, and other arts institutions. May officials in Washington now tell all of them what subjects may be discussed in their halls?"

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## **GIRLS LEAN BACK EVERYWHERE: THE LAW OF OBSCENITY AND THE ASSAULT ON GENIUS**

by Edward de Grazia

New York: Random House, 1992; 815 pp., \$30

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In 1919 and 1920 the United States Post Office seized and burned three issues of the literary magazine *The Little Review* containing chapters from James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The spirited publisher, Jane Heap, wrote in defense of Joyce, "Girls lean back everywhere, showing lace and silk stockings; wear low-cut sleeveless blouses, breathless bathing suits; men think thoughts and have emotions about these things everywhere—seldom as delicately and imaginatively as Mr. Bloom—and no one is corrupted."

Witnesses were put on the stand to testify on behalf of *Ulysses*' literary merits, but to no avail. The test for obscenity, explains Edward de Grazia, "was whether a writing tended to deprave and corrupt the morals of young or immature persons." This approach lasted well into this century. "Some judges maintained that literary merit merely compounded the crime of obscenity," de Grazia adds, "by enhancing a book's capacity to deprave and corrupt." Heap was convicted and the serialized publication of *Ulysses* ceased. A work's literary or artistic value didn't become a legitimate defense until Justice Brennan revolutionized obscenity law in a series of landmark cases from 1957 to 1966, doing to obscenity law what he did to libel law.

*Girls Lean Back Everywhere* is dedicated to Brennan. A First Amendment crusader himself, author Edward de Grazia helped free Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, and the Swedish film *I Am Curious—Yellow*. He also coauthored the 1982 book *Banned Films: Movies, Censors, and the First Amendment*. His latest opus—a weighty 815 pages—shows time and again how the police,

post office, and courts suppressed serious novels as often as commercial pornography. Beginning with Ida Craddock, *Girls Lean Back* tracks a century of censorship involving such authors as Theodore Dreiser, Vladimir Nabokov, Virginia Woolf, Allen Ginsberg, and performance artist Karen Finley.

The First Amendment has always been held to protect the communication of ideas, particularly political and religious ideas. But until the 1950s, art remained unprotected. Films and plays were considered "entertainments," not transmitters of ideas.

A case in 1959 changed this. Overturning a New York State censorship board's ban on the movie version of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, Justice Stewart Potter said the film was banned because "it advocates an idea—that adultery under certain circumstances may be proper behavior." But, he asserted, the First Amendment "protects advocacy of the opinion that adultery may sometimes be proper, no less than advocacy of socialism or the single tax." With this, nonpolitical expression in cultural forms was brought under the mantle of the First Amendment.

But the pivotal case for artistic expression occurred five years earlier. *Roth v. United States*, the centerpiece of de Grazia's book, challenged the 80-year-old Comstock Act, which made it a crime to send or advertise obscene publications through the mail. Under this law, the United States Post Office destroyed works ranging from French nudist postcards to novels by Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Salinger, to scientific works by Margaret Mead and Sigmund Freud, to nonfiction writings on contraception and sexual techniques. No distinction was made between sex and obscenity. For lack of any precise guidelines, post office censors developed their own: "Breasts, yes; nipples, no; buttocks, yes; cracks, no."

Samuel Roth was a somewhat unscrupulous publisher, whose pirated editions of Joyce and D. H. Lawrence cost him the support of the literary community and landed him in jail several times. The case that came before the Supreme Court involved an edition of Roth's literary quarterly *American Aphrodite* that included an erotic prose fantasy, *Venus and Tannhäuser*, by artist Aubrey Beardsley.

Few of the Justices even looked at the magazine, as they were ruling on whether the Comstock law was constitutionally valid, not whether Roth warranted conviction under it. In order to show what kind of material would circulate through the mail if the law was struck down, government prosecutors hauled in a box of sex magazines—what they newly coined "hard-core" pornography. (These apparently *were* read by the clerks, if not the Justices, as half of this evidence mysteriously disappeared.)

Roth lost and spent the last part of his life behind bars. Some have criticized Brennan, then a new Justice, for joining the 6-3 majority and sending the 62-year-old publisher to prison. De Grazia, however, considers Brennan's move particularly astute. If he had dissented, Roth still would have lost. In joining the majority, he was able to write the court's opinion and thus "make law."

Brennan in fact transformed the law. The high court held (as they still do) that obscenity falls outside the protection afforded speech and press. But Brennan was careful to note that "Sex and obscenity are not synonymous." Most important was Brennan's definition of obscenity as being "utterly without redeeming social value." By implication, works that have any kind of social value *are* protected—a point Brennan made much more explicitly in the *Tropic of Cancer* case several years later.



It wasn't until the 1964 cases involving Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and Louis Malle's film *The Lovers* (pictured) that First Amendment protection was extended to the arts.

In 1964—the same year as *Sullivan*—the Supreme Court ruled on *Tropic of Cancer* and *Jacobellis*, a related case involving the theatrical exhibition of Louis Malle's film *The Lovers*, overturning both convictions. Here the Brennan doctrine is fully laid out. First, the freedom of a work does not depend on “weighing” its artistic or social value against its appeal to “prurient interest” or its “patent offensiveness,” as it once did. Second, Brennan reiterated that “material dealing with sex in a manner that advocates ideas, or that has literary or scientific or artistic value or any other form of social importance, may not be branded as obscenity and denied constitutional protection.” Thus, the courts must free all material that is not “utterly” without value—despite the level of prurient interest or offensiveness.

Third, addressing the crazy-quilt of local court rulings on *Tropic of Cancer*, Brennan clarified the meaning of “contemporary community standards,” which he first expressed in *Roth*. “Community” equals “society at large” or “people in general,” Brennan declared, not local standards, which he knew would open the way to a “lowest common freedom denominator” effect. “The constitutional basis of an allegedly obscene work,” wrote Brennan, “must be determined on the basis of a national standard. It is, after all, a national Constitution we are expounding.” As a result, the 60 lower court cases against *Cancer* were dropped.

Religious and moral vigilante groups were furious and called on President Johnson to review the decision. He created the National Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, which then further infuriated conservatives with its 1970 report, which found no connection between pornography and sex crimes or delinquency. The report called for the repeal of all obscenity laws applicable to consenting adults and for the country to “get serious about sex education.” President Nixon dismissed the report out of hand.

With Nixon's appointment of Chief Justice Warren Burger in 1969, the court began its conservative slide. In *Miller v. California* (1973), Burger considerably narrowed free speech protections. *Miller* reverted to local, versus national, standards of decency. Second, whereas under Brennan art and entertainment were protected unless “utterly” without artistic or social value, *Miller* revised it to say such speech was unprotected unless it possesses “serious” literary, artistic, scientific, or political (narrowed from “social”) value. As de Grazia notes, “serious value” is a legally “flabby notion.” And as First Amendment attorney Harry Kalven observes in de Grazia's book, “It is of course unlikely that *Ulysses* will again be banned, but there is danger under the new test that a second-rate *Ulysses* which the court does not regard as sufficiently ‘serious’ will be.”

Brennan retired in July 1990 at age 84, shortly after pulling together

majority votes in the flag desecration and flag burning cases. With Brennan gone, de Grazia is more cautious than Lewis about the future prospects for free expression. “The central meaning of the Brennan doctrine—forged during the sixties to protect literature and art from the heightened repression of the fifties—was weakened by the Burger Court and further eroded by the Rehnquist Court,” says de Grazia, concluding, “Whether [the Brennan doctrine]—and the First Amendment freedom more generally—will hold fast under renewed tensions generated by the collision of works created by morally defiant artists and writers with values held by reactionary politicians and judges is today anything but a settled question.”

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#### CULTURE WARS: DOCUMENTS FROM THE RECENT CONTROVERSIES IN THE ARTS

edited by Richard Bolton

New York: New Press, 1992; 432 pp.; \$27.95 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

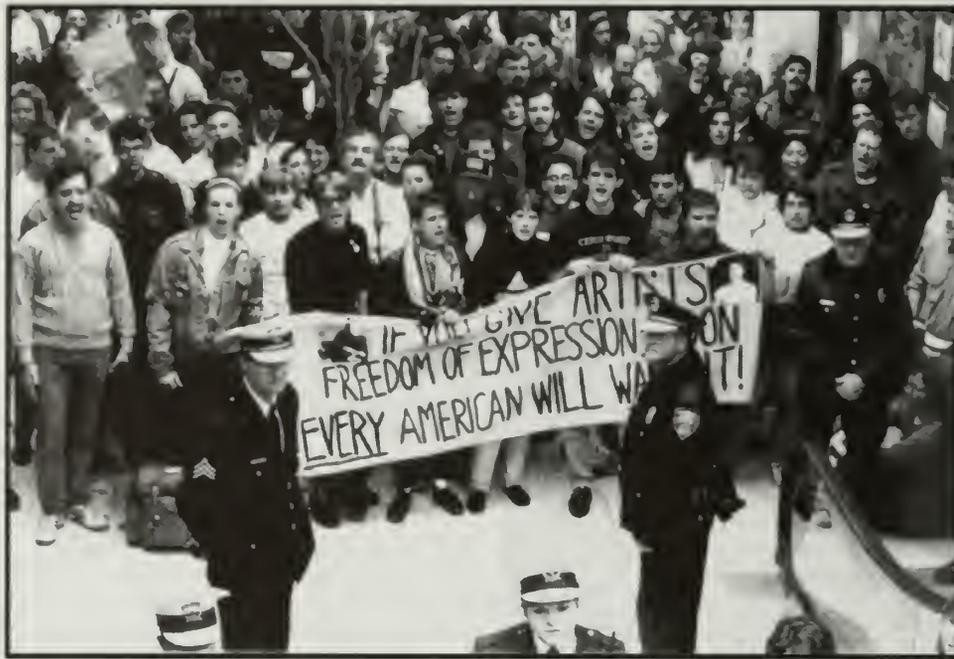
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The publishers of *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Arts* have had their fair share of experience with censorship, economic and otherwise. The New Press' director and editor-in-chief, Andre Schiffrin, was ousted from Pantheon Books a few years ago in a bitter struggle with Pantheon's owner, Random House, over principles and profit margins. Today the nonprofit New Press identifies itself as “an independent publisher in the public interest” which “represents an attempt, as did public broadcasting some decades ago, to create a significant alternative cultural organization.” Already, the New Press has run into problems familiar to alternative culture. Four printers turned down *Culture Wars* presumably because of the half-dozen reproductions of Robert Mapplethorpe's sadomasochistic photographs.

*Culture Wars* covers the years 1989 to 1990, when the attack on the arts was launched in earnest. It begins with Donald Wildmon's letter to Congress protesting Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, moves through the cancellation of the Mapplethorpe exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the controversies surrounding Karen Finley and the Artists Space exhibition “Against Our Vanishing,” and culminates in the trial and acquittal of the Contemporary Arts Center and director Dennis Barrie on obscenity and child pornography charges.

The story is told using primary documentation: fundraising letters from fundamentalist groups and advocacy letters from arts supporters; articles of legislation; transcripts of congressional debates and talk-shows; art reviews; law journal articles, etc. This adds up to a cacophony of voices, from sober to histrionic, arguing over the turf where art and politics intersect.

In a cogent 24-page introduction, artist and writer Richard Bolton



Arts supporters chant outside Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center as a grand jury examines the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition.

Photo: David Starnstad

with First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams to discuss the pending obscenity trial in Cincinnati. A fox in sheep's clothing, Lipman appropriates the language of democracy to push for culture-by-consensus:

identifies and traces the various threads that run through the book. One is the question: Should the government and public have any say over artwork that receives federal support? As Bolton summarizes, "Those on the Left want to join the issues of censorship and sponsorship, and those on the Right want to separate them." The debate often boils down to buzzwords: "free expression" versus "taxpayers' rights." *Culture Wars* includes many samples of such reductive rhetoric. But the book also manages to allow the basic and more subtle legal issues to be heard above the hubbub.

Here, as in *Make No Law* and *Girls Lean Back*, there is a central premise of the First Amendment at work: Government must remain neutral in the realm of ideas. Restrictions on the sexual content of NEA grants fly in the face of this concept. Constitutional law professor Kathleen Sullivan cites Chief Justice Rehnquist's unanimous opinion that "neither by penalty nor subsidy may the Government 'aim at the suppression of dangerous ideas.'" As Sullivan explains, "The First Amendment applies whether the Government is wielding its checkbook or its badge. It is easy to see why. It would obviously be intolerable to make it a crime to vote Republican. But it would be just as unconstitutional to offer cash bounties to those who vote Democratic." She continues, "Likewise, bribing Warhol to copy Wyeth would have had the same effect as outlawing Pop art. Either way, the world would be made safe only for landscapes."

In this and other essays, additional constitutional objections to the NEA's content restrictions are hammered out: The Helms Amendment is shown to be an unconstitutional expansion of the *Miller* standard; its restrictions against "depictions of 'sodomasochism,' 'homoeroticism,' or 'individuals engaged in sex acts'" ignore the Supreme Court's ruling that sex and obscenity are not synonymous; the NEA is an inappropriate tribunal for the legal determination of obscenity, etc.

The book heats up when legal questions permute into more colloquial debates about law, democracy, and the people's will. A populist stance was taken by many NEA opponents, who condemned the artworld as being arrogant, distanced, and elite. But, as Bolton observes, this stance "seemed nothing more than a convenient strategy to tap popular resentment of wealth and privilege, while directing this resentment toward an entirely different agenda."

Bolton characterizes a second set of NEA opponents as "elitists," best represented by Samuel Lipman and Hilton Kramer, editors of the *New Criterion*. In their view, federal dollars should only be used to preserve "great art." Multiculturalism is a dirty word, and the NEA is criticized for its "unwise expansion" of art to an "unsophisticated mass public." The debate becomes particularly intriguing when the elitist critics assume a populist disguise, as when Lipman appears on the *McNeill/Lehrer Newshour*

**Lipman:** The citizens of the United States have a right to be a part of the process, not only by which art is judged, but by which they make their own lives. People have the right to know that they can send their child to the corner store for a loaf of bread and that the child will come back without damage to his body, or mind, or his soul...

**Abrams:** But the decision they have to make is where to send their child. The decision that they cannot make is whether I can view a work of art [or]...whether a library ought to contain a book or not. What you're advocating is a sort of continuing plebiscite by which the public decides whether or not I or you or any of us can see work which we may be in a minority in liking. Why would you say that?

**Lipman:** But my dear Mr. Abrams, democracy is the continuing plebiscite....

**Abrams:** That's why we have the Bill of Rights, to protect us against the majority telling us what we can see and what we can think...

**Lipman:** The Bill of Rights is not a suicide pact...there are some things which governments must do to survive and societies must do to protect themselves... [W]e have to decide whether we will allow the same normal formation of policy to take place in the area of art and its relation to the public as we allow in every other area of American life. Let us talk about it. Let us fight it out in the polling place.

**Abrams:** And vote?

**Lipman:** And vote.

**Abrams:** Vote on books?

**Lipman:** Well, I guess I can't imagine anything that's forbidden to the American people to vote on.

**Abrams:** I can. Anything that violates the Bill of Rights.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of *Culture Wars* is watching how abstract legal concepts play out in real-life court. This is vividly on display in C. Carr and Elizabeth Hess' coverage of the trial of Dennis Barrie and the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC). The scenario in Cincinnati was not a pretty one—more Kafka than Capra. The judge assigned the case, David Albanese, was a crony of county sheriff and anti-porn crusader Simon Leis and ruled against the defense at every turn. *Miller* requires that a work be judged "as a whole," but Albanese allowed only seven of the retrospective's 175 photos to be considered—a decision Barrie compared to "pulling sentences out of a book." During jury selection, the judge would not disqualify a member of Citizens for Community Values (CCV), which orchestrated the entire attack against the CAC. Most of the empaneled jury was from the conservative suburbs, few had been to an art museum, and none had seen the Mapplethorpe show. When the prosecution failed to prove the work's obscenity, the judge would not dismiss the case. "The only thing the museum and its director had going for them was the law," writes *New York Times* law page editor David Margolick in *Girls Lean Back*.

In the end, the jury followed *Miller* and acquitted Barrie and the CAC. It's

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To the Hays Office, Mae West's upfront sexuality spelled trouble with a capital T.

a euphoric moment. But the last word in *Culture Wars* is given to Jesse Helms. In a letter to Jerry Falwell, Helms asks for his help in alerting the country's "Christian leaders" to the activities and danger of the NEA. And thus the fight continues.

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**THE DAME IN THE KIMONO: HOLLYWOOD, CENSORSHIP AND THE PRODUCTION CODE FROM THE 1920s TO THE 1960s**

by Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons

New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990; 351 pp.; \$22.50

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An appropriate coda to a discussion of free expression is a look at the hazards of self-censorship. These are amply illustrated in *The Dame in the Kimono*, a history of Hollywood's Motion Picture Production Code, which prohibited the depiction of anything that might "lower the moral standards" of film audiences, from sex outside marriage to suggestive dancing.

The code came about after a series of scandals involving sex, drugs, and murder rocked Hollywood in the early 1920s. Legislators responded with a flurry of censorship bills. These often conflicted: women could be shown smoking cigarettes in Ohio, but not in Kansas, making film distribution a difficult matter. This patchwork of prohibitions prompted the studio chiefs to form an industry trade association, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, led by Postmaster General Will Hays. The Hays Office, as it became known, was initially meant to act as a PR agent for the industry, warding off bad press, boycotts, and legislative bans. But it soon became a producer's nightmare.

As the Depression deepened, Hollywood turned to sex to solve its financial woes. Between 1929 and 1932, box office receipts dropped 40 percent. Paramount Pictures, on the brink of receivership, signed Broadway star Mae West. Despite Hays' efforts to rein in the libidinous *She Done Him Wrong*, the West vehicle was produced, and Paramount made back 10-times its production costs, thus encouraging other studios to follow suit.

Martin Quigley, a leading Catholic power broker, soon made enforcement of the Production Code his cause. Quigley got word out through his influential newspaper, the *Motion Picture Herald*. "Hollywood producers made pictures and read *Variety*, bankers and film company presidents made money and read the *Motion Picture Herald*," write the authors. As Quigley well knew, the money men could force compliance with the code.

The day after President Roosevelt was inaugurated, Hays held an emergency all-night meeting with the association's board. Anti-smut zealots were making waves with a study on the relation between film content, morality, and juveniles. Although the study was inconclusive ("That the movies exert an influence there can be no doubt. But...this influence is specific for a given child and a given movie"), reformers took what meaning they wanted. As a result, 100 state censorship proposals were introduced.



The studio moguls, and subsequently the West Coast producers, were told to abide by the code or Hays said he would be forced to lobby for federal censorship legislation to prevent state-by-state control.

Still, it wasn't until the Catholic Legion of Decency was formed in 1934 and began rating and blacklisting films and organizing boycotts that Hays got the leverage needed to make the code stick. The Production Code Administration (PCA) was formed, headed by Joe Breen. From then on, all scripts and treatments had to be submitted for approval. Unless Breen offered the promise of a certificate, banks would not approve production loans. Studios in violation of the code were subject to fines of \$25,000, and films without a PCA certificate were barred from association theaters.

*Dame in the Kimono*, named after a line excised from *The Maltese Falcon*, tracks the shifting power struggles and outright battles between the PCA, Hollywood's creative talent, the studio moguls, and Catholic pressure groups over the next three decades. Authors Leonard Leff and Jerold Simmons include a dozen case studies, from *Gone with the Wind* and *The Bicycle Thief* to *Lolita* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

The code's *raison d'etre* and power were greatly weakened after the Supreme Court's decisions in *Paramount v. US*, the antitrust ruling in 1948 that forced the studios to sell their theaters, *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which undermined state censorship boards, and *Jacobellis (The Lovers)*, which extended First Amendment protection to artistic expression. During the 1960s the PCA evolved into the present-day Motion Picture Association of American (MPAA) with its voluntary ratings system. As the authors observe, "Had the ratings system been legal rather than voluntary, it would not have passed the *Dallas* test" (in which the Supreme Court declared Dallas' censorship ordinance too vague to enforce).

The same might be said of NEA chair Anne-Imelda Radice's habit of vetoing grants on the basis of sexual content. But in her case, there isn't even a written code. Without pushing the PCA-NEA analogy too far, the art agency's censorship in response to outside pressure holds discomfiting intimations of history repeating itself. The difference between the PCA in the 1930s and 1940s and the NEA now, however, is the law. *Roth*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and *Lady Chatterly's Lover* have brought film and the arts under full protection of the First Amendment, as the Contemporary Arts Center trial reminds us. To voluntarily yield the ground won in the courts is madness. But for arts advocates to turn their backs on this country's only federal arts funding agency is just as hazardous, playing directly into the hands of right-wing opponents and handing them a victory they don't need.

## IT'S A SMALL WORLD MARKET AFTER ALL

### US-Foreign Cofinancing Ventures

ROBERT L. SEIGEL

An independent producer must be both pragmatic and creative when developing and producing television and film for the global marketplace. Given the rise in production costs and financing shortfalls, independent producers as well as major studios and production companies are increasingly considering international coproductions and cofinancing ventures. The rationale for these col-

sure in each partner's territory, often with a marketing campaign especially tailored to fit the different markets.

#### *The coproduction basics*

Because an independent producer often raises only part of the financing for a project domestically—through theatrical distribution guarantees, private financing, and North American presales—she or he must turn to foreign sales agents to presell overseas theatrical, home video, and tele-

Foreign producers have their own reasons for seeking coproductions. They reluctantly acknowledge the limited market for indigenous films outside their own country—and often within it. The top 10 grossing theatrical films during any given week in a foreign market can include as many as nine US-produced films. Foreign producers view collaboration with an American partner as a means of tapping into the lucrative US market, which can lead to successes in the broader international theatrical, home video, and television markets.

Although the term "coproduction" is frequently used, especially by US producers, to indicate a joint effort between two or more parties from different countries, there is a distinction between "coproduction" and "cofinance." Countries throughout Western Europe (such as those in the European Community, or EC), Eastern Europe (such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Hungary), and other parts of the world (including Canada, Australia, and Israel) have coproduction treaties or agreements with other nations in which access to subsidies, support systems, and financial benefits are available to producers from the signatory countries. However, the US is not a party to any of these agreements. Therefore, US producers do not technically "coproduce," as defined by these international treaties. They can, however, enter into cofinancing arrangements (agreements between two or more parties from different countries for the financing, production, and distribution of a single TV/film project) and co-ventures (an agreement for the financing, production, and distribution of more than one TV/film project).

US independent producers often seek foreign financiers by offering equity participation in the proceeds from designated markets—e.g., foreign theatrical, home video, or television sales either in the financier's territory or in some or all worldwide markets. The division of proceeds depends on what resources each party brings to the deal, the ability of a party to exploit a given market effectively, and who develops and actually produces the project.

In addition to funding, a US producer can reap numerous benefits from these international collaborations. These include: foreign tax breaks that permit the deduction of an investment in a "national" TV/film project (such tax shelters are available under certain circumstances in Ireland, Canada, Japan, Luxembourg, Australia, and Israel); low-cost production and postproduction

**Julie Taynor's *Fool's Fire* wouldn't have happened without financing from German production company WMG and US HDTV innovator Rebo Studios, says executive producer Lindsay Law.**

Photo: Mary Bloom, courtesy American Playhouse



laborations is simple: different parties can provide resources to augment a project's budget while spreading the costs and risks among several participants. By coproducing with a foreign partner, US producers can better afford the enhanced production values that are often necessary if a film is to compete in the global market. Other benefits include guaranteed theatrical or television expo-

vision rights. Overseas territories often can guarantee 40 to 60 percent of a project's financing, but such arrangements can be difficult to take advantage of, since foreign sources often seek projects with high production values and "name" casts to differentiate them from indigenous fare. Another alternative is for a producer to seek a foreign production or financing partner.

facilities and crews (especially in Eastern Europe, which offers facilities, services, and crews in exchange for hard currency); collateral-free loans from foreign state banks based on distribution estimates; and foreign government production subsidies.

### The subsidies

To understand the nature of subsidies in foreign countries, particularly in Europe, Canada or Australia, US independents must recognize that these countries' media initiatives are based on specific goals: fostering the growth of a national TV/film industry and promoting a country's films and television programs as a national art form that reflects the country's culture. This philosophy is quite different from that of the US entertainment industry, which regards theatrical and television productions as commercial products whose value is judged by economic indicators such as ticket sales, ratings, and profits. To further these goals, European, Canadian, and Australian governments have legislated content and broadcast quotas for national or, in some cases, European projects. Qualifying TV/film projects are also favored with public funding and production subsidies.

France, for instance, provides grants based on a film's box office performance to assist the producer with his or her next film. Under the EC's multiple initiative MEDIA Program, which was established to promote pan-European TV/film finance, development, production, and distribution, producers from EC or EC-affiliated countries (such as Switzerland and Austria) can receive a variety of benefits: Interest-free loans for video distribution are available through Espace Vidéo Européen, the European Script Fund provides loans for script development, and partial financing of coproductions is offered through Euro Media Guarantees. However, several of these MEDIA programs require the involvement of a minimum of three partners from different EC countries.

Eligibility for subsidies and other funding is generally based on a "national content" test. Under this system, a government may require the use of a nation's director, screenwriter, actors, crew, source material, and occasionally language, as well as a minimum expenditure of funds within the country. To be classified a coproduction, a TV/film project must qualify as a "national" production in the participating countries. Since the US is not a signatory to any coproduction agreements, an American producer need only ascertain whether a joint venture meets the criteria of a partner country's "national content" requirements.

With the unification of the European Community, an American producer must meet not only these criteria but, in some cases, European criteria as well. For a project to qualify as European, it must originate in an EC member state, be created mainly by authors and workers residing in Europe, be produced by a European-based producer

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or result from the contribution of coproducers from a European state whose contribution, relative to the total budget, is greater than that from any non-European party. Projects cannot be controlled by parties outside the European states. Under an EC initiative to promote European produced and distributed projects, quotas have been established to limit non-EC partners and projects in Europe.

US producers may contend with these measures by establishing overseas subsidiaries or separate business entities such as corporations in a given territory, but this strategy can be costly. Instead, a US production company may align itself with foreign partners who can fulfill the national criteria. To circumvent provisions requiring national acting talent in a project, a US producer may rely on an exemption from such rules that permits the use of actors and actresses from non-European or non-signatory nations when it is "essential to the success of the project." The definition of what is "essential" is subject to debate and negotiation; exemption is at the discretion of national agencies which are often part of the countries' cultural ministries.

The basis for determining whether a project falls within a nation's criteria is often ambiguous. To provide more definite guidelines, countries such as Canada and Australia use a point system. Points are assigned when a nation's director, actor/actress, screenwriter, cinematographer, composer, editor, etc. are used in a production. If a production has a sufficient number of national creative elements, then it would be eligible for a country's subsidies and/or tax advantages. A European point system is in the process of being created within the EC.

## The agreement

A coproduction agreement is generally filed with and approved by each non-US party's government to ensure that the production meets "national content" requirements. Only then is a project eligible for tax benefits, subsidies or other preferential financial treatment.

The coproduction or cofinancing agreement should address the artistic or creative elements of the project, the budget, schedule, national content requirements, and percentage of contributions (in funding and/or facilities or services) from each partner. The value of these services and contributions, as well as the timing and currency of cash payments, should be included in the agreement. Issues of where the funding will be spent, who assumes the cost overruns, credits, and ownership of the copyright should also be addressed. (A project's copyright, at least in each territory of a coproduction, generally will be held by the coproducer or cofinancier for a definite term or in perpetuity.) Whenever feasible, there should be mutual approval over such issues as final script, lead cast, director, locations, and key facilities not only before commencement of production but

also before any partner advances significant development and production funding.

Foreign and US producers must also determine how the revenues will be shared: whether the parties will equally split all media or certain media, in all territories or certain territories (e.g., the producer's own territory). How profits and distribution rights should be split varies with each project, depending on such factors as who initiated and developed the production and what funds, talent, and other resources a party brought to the table.

US producers should check with a foreign country to clarify how their contribution to a joint project will be designated—whether as production monies, which may weaken a project's cultural integrity and jeopardize the chance of receiving national benefits, or as distribution funding, such as presales. In certain countries, a US producer may only be able to receive a production credit in prints circulated outside the country and occasionally a limited credit within it. In Canada, for example, the Canadian producer must be accorded the producer's credit within Canada but may share the credit with a foreign partner under certain circumstances.

In any coproduction or cofinancing agreement, partners in a foreign venture should provide for the possibility that the agreement may not receive the required approval by a partner's government, resulting in a loss of national or European financial benefits. Both parties must be prepared to cover such a loss from alternative financing sources.

Producers should include a provision addressing creative and business disputes in any coproduction or co-venture agreement (e.g., arbitration for business issues and the requirement of unanimous consent or a "tie-breaking" mechanism regarding creative decisions). One coproduction method, called "twinning," takes potential disputes into account by allowing the partners to separately produce two projects of similar subject matter, production quality, and budget that fulfill each partner's national requirements. Each partner maintains creative control over one of the projects and may produce in different countries.

## Potential pitfalls

An American producer should recognize that national content rules may require the employment of additional technical personnel who are not as experienced as their US counterparts and are sometimes unnecessary to the production or incompatible with the US producer or director. There is also the problem of less than state-of-the-art production and postproduction facilities and equipment, which can increase a project's cost.

Another pitfall is the lengthy time periods involved in applying for and processing a country's coproduction applications (often a prerequisite for securing funding from private and state sources), obtaining visas and labor approval for



Alexandre Rockwell's low-budget feature *In the Soup* found support from a patchwork of international financiers.

Courtesy Good Machine

non-local crew and talent, and negotiating with producers of different nationalities and experience. All these factors can lengthen the preproduction period and add further costs to a project's budget.

US producers should develop a sense of how different nations contend with creative contributions from foreign partners. Australia, France, Canada, and New Zealand, for instance, are among the best endowed with media funds, but they also adhere more strictly to national content and quota regulations to promote national labor and indigenous cultural content. For instance, France's quota for television broadcasts is 60 percent national programming, and its national content legislation is more arduous than any EC directive or member state legislation. A "French" television production would have to be shot in French or based on a French writer's work in order to qualify. On the other hand, territories such as the UK and Germany are less parochial in their national requirements. These nations are therefore more amenable to non-national elements in their television and film industries and projects.

### Theory into practice

Many producers interested in international coproductions are wary of creating so-called "Europudding," in which the casting and creative elements take a back seat to national content requirements, and the result is a cinematic succotash that baffles or bores its audience. But there have been successful collaborations. Britain's Palace Pictures and Miramax Films joined forces to produce *Scandal*, a film directed by Michael Caton-Jones about the political downfall of British Cabinet Minister John Profumo. Miramax provided approximately 50 percent of the film's funding in exchange for the North American dis-

tribution rights and equity in the worldwide profits. As with many coproductions, Miramax's role was more than financial; the distributor maintained certain creative rights, such as approval of cast and screenplay. In addition, they used their marketing expertise to ascertain the film's key audiences and tailor specific versions for different markets. (The American version of *Scandal* contained an explanatory prologue and additional dialogue that would help audiences understand the British class structure, intelligence community, and the scandal itself.)

Different versions of a film or television project may be necessary due to language, scheduling, pacing, and cultural differences, as well as varying censorship standards. HBO Showcase executive producer Colin Callender, a pioneer in the international television coproduction area (which, as many producers are learning, is a fruitful avenue for feature film financing), recalls the scheduling difficulties when he produced *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* for Britain's Channel Four, Germany's R.M. Productions, and America's Mobil Oil. The different parties wanted the program broadcast over as few as two nights and as many as eight, resulting in a mammoth meeting with the partners. Eventually, a consensus was reached that fit each partner's programming needs.

*American Playhouse* has been another successful partner in international coproductions. According to executive producer Lindsay Law, *American Playhouse* has been a partner in such coproductions as Hal Hartley's *Simple Men* with UK producer Zenith; Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* with the British television company Harlick; and Julie Taymor's *Fool's Fire*, which was coproduced with the German production company WMG and US high definition television innovator Rebo Studios. As Law observes, "Ameri-

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To finance Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*, producer Jim Stark turned to Japan's JVC Electronics.

Photo: Mark Higashino, courtesy Fine Line Features

can independent films are often more appreciated overseas than in the US. In fact, many of these projects wouldn't happen without these co-ventures, especially with some of the smaller European companies that can't afford to produce or distribute *Bugsy*."

In terms of financing projects, Law notes the importance of selling the larger territories first, with advances to cover a substantial part of the project's cost, as well as the need for flexibility in allocating profits among the partners. A case of combining direct financing and territorial sales is Marcus deLeon's *Roosters*, produced by *American Playhouse* and a German production company. The production partners together will provide 50 percent of the funding and receive 50 percent of all worldwide profits. The remaining half of funding will come from a British sales company in exchange for the other 50 percent of worldwide profits.

Law maintains that *American Playhouse* does not seek projects with foreign subsidies and financial benefits in mind. However, subsidies and benefits can affect a project's location, cost, and manner of production in a number of ways. Callender notes that the producers of *Disaster at Valdez*, an upcoming HBO/BBC coproduction on the 1989 Alaskan oil spill, examined the benefits of Canadian subsidies but declined to make use of such funds. "It was felt the coproduction terms [which were prerequisites for the subsidies] were too onerous to make the film the way we wanted to make the film," he says. Instead, the film will be shot in Canada without benefit of subsidies, but with the advantages of an experienced Canadian crew and lower production costs, due to the somewhat favorable US-Canadian exchange rate.

Concerning potential creative disputes, Callender observes that parties entering into a coproduction arrangement should determine whether their respective philosophies and creative aspirations are compatible prior to commencing such a venture. "We concentrate more on whether we can produce the film, rather than whether we can produce the deal." But he also notes the importance of a well-tuned business partnership. "The actual business of putting together the right sort of finance is as creative a process as casting the right actor.... Matching the programming, subject matter, and budget to the right financing is crucial. If the right money is not matched to a project, then it will show on the screen."



Although many cofinancing and coproduction arrangements involve larger, more established entities such as *American Playhouse* and HBO, individual US producers and directors have been able to make use of these measures. Hal Hartley directed *Trust* using financing from the UK television production company Zenith, and Jim Stark has been quite skillful in securing funding from Japan's JVC electronics company to produce Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train* and *Night on Earth*. Alexandre Rockwell's low-budget feature *In the Soup* was a patchwork of international financing.

### Other issues

The international coproduction/co-venture arrangement is quite similar to any coproduction agreement between two or more parties, regardless of nationality. However, specific issues can arise, including:

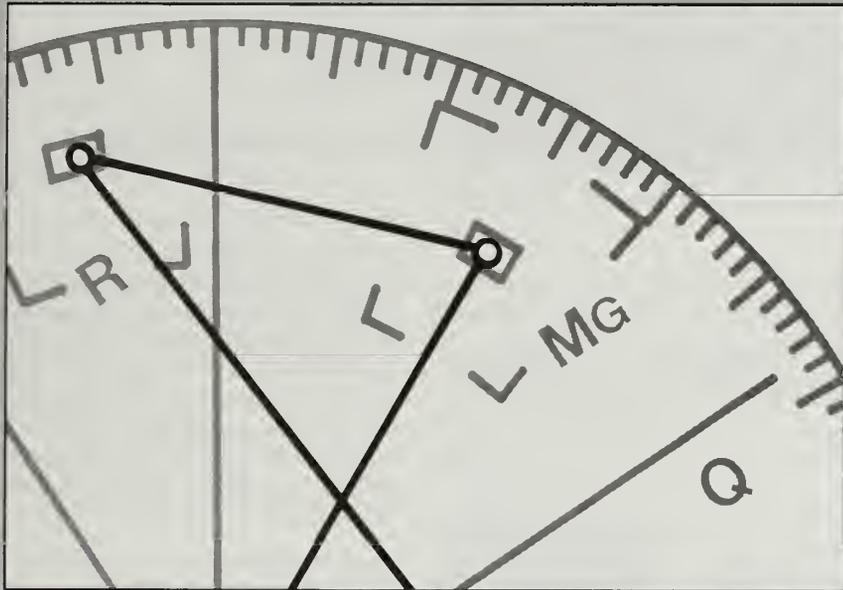
- immigration and visa issues
- moral rights and copyright
- payment of residuals in each territory
- hiring cast and crew on a fixed or "favored nations" basis—i.e., setting a maximum payment for all key cast, producers, directors, and writers, or agreeing that one person won't receive more compensation than another similarly situated person. (This approach is used by *American Playhouse* and HBO Showcase.)
- tax policies of a particular country, which have an impact on investments and on the taxation of talent and crew
- determining the value of facilities and crew provided by a foreign partner in formulating a project's budget
- drafting "out clauses" in the agreement, in case a party wishes to leave the project, specifying the financial and legal consequences of such a withdrawal
- determining a project's language and whether different versions should be dubbed or subtitled.

Joint efforts by any producing partners require a meeting of the minds early in the development stage on such key issues as subject matter, script, director, cast, shooting locations, production, and postproduction facilities. The partners must also address their respective roles: Which party will be responsible for the nuts and bolts of production? Does a partner want to limit its involvement to being solely a financing source or does it want more creative input? What are the goals and philosophies of the partners and are they compatible? Is the relationship for one project or a slate of projects in which line-producing duties can be alternated?

Potential producing partners can be found wherever producers and directors meet: at seminars, film festivals, and markets within the US and throughout the world. One possible avenue for meeting potential partners is through the Media Exchange, a New York- and London-based organization that brings overseas producers to the US to learn about our entertainment industry and sends US producers to different European and Asian countries to learn about their markets.

As the world's media become more diversified and complex, a producer must learn about media and markets throughout the world. The unification of the EC, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the development of HDTV, satellites, and fiber optics preclude any complete and definitive discussion of international coproduction and co-ventures. At this point in time, one can only suggest opportunities and raise questions for the producer to consider as these markets and media continue to change.

*Robert L. Seigel is a New York City entertainment attorney who writes about business and legal issues affecting independent film- and videomakers and is a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting company.*



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## KEEPING UP WITH THE HAVELS

Richard Peña on the New York Film Festival and Video Sidebar

PATRICIA THOMSON

*This year marks Richard Peña's fifth as program director of the New York Film Festival. It has been a particularly busy time for Peña and the Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents the festival. December saw the opening of a new repertory cinema, the Walter Reade Theater, located in the Lincoln Center complex. And 1992 is the first time video will be introduced into the New York Film Festival. In the following interview, conducted May 29, 1992, Peña lays out his hopes and plans for the video sidebar and discusses the particular benefits which the New York Film Festival offers independent producers.*



For filmmakers, the New York Film Festival presents an opportunity for press coverage from such key papers as the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, and *Variety*.

Courtesy Film Society of Lincoln Center

**The Independent:** What models did you have in mind when you were developing the video sidebar? Did you consider it simply a video extension of the film festival, or were you thinking of prior or current video festivals? And do you intend to treat it any differently from the film festival—in terms of solicitation, the selection process, or how you publicize?

**Peña:** First of all I have to say that video's not really my field; I come to it as an outsider. The last couple of years at the Berlin Film Festival, I've had the chance to attend part of the simultaneous video festival [the MedienOperative Berlin Vi-

deo Festival] that's been going on in what was East Berlin. I enjoyed that and liked the model they used, which was a mix of genres, of countries. I'd say the real model, though, is probably the New York Film Festival. I hope that eventually the video festival might be just as international, just as mixed in genres, approaches, and styles in a given year as ideally the New York Film Festival is.

**The Independent:** This is a pilot project?

**Peña:** Certainly the hope of all of us is that it will become a regular feature. There doesn't seem to be anything like it in New York just now. And hopefully we can give some of these video artists a good deal of publicity and visibility, and some new audiences—audiences that don't make it downtown to places that are now regularly showing and curating really good video shows.

**The Independent:** In terms of press coverage, do you see any difficulties? Do you think the critics are going to review this work?

**Peña:** Oh, sure. Part of the reason to do it is to throw down a gauntlet to the press. The *Village Voice* has people who regularly cover video, but I don't think the *New York Times* has anyone—certainly television, but not video. My hope is that, in the future, dailies will do serious coverage. I don't think at this point we could begin to count on the kind of film-by-film coverage we get at the New York Film Festival for the video sidebar, but I imagine there will be a lot of curiosity. The few people I've mentioned it to in the press all seem very interested.

**The Independent:** We'll see if they say, "That's not my beat."

**Peña:** Quite a few of them will. But they're going to have to find someone whose beat it is, or make it part of their beat.

**The Independent:** In selecting work, how broad a net are you going to cast? When one looks at video, there are so many more diverse forms and uses than with film—including community-based video, activist projects, public access, and so on. Are these areas you're going to be looking at?

**Peña:** Again, in our naiveté we're hoping to see everything. I myself, for example, have a real interest in that sort of community, activist video. Some of the more interesting work I've seen, especially in recent years, has, say, come out of the ACT UP movement. So yes, I'm looking

forward to including work like that. It will, of course, depend on the final mix of things.

We've had, thus far, a very good response internationally. We've had quite a few international video organizations write to us, tell us they're interested, ask us for applications. So that's been very encouraging.

**The Independent:** Who, specifically?

**Peña:** Oh, different groups—in Denmark, New Zealand, a couple of French groups, a place in Brazil. Also I have to say New York and US-based organizations have been amazingly encouraging—Video Data Bank, Electronic Arts Intermix, and so on. When we've mentioned the sidebar, all have greeted us with open arms and said, "We can help you in these following ways." It's been very gratifying. Sometimes one is a little scared that people are going to say, "Oh, turf war." It's been the exact opposite. So far people have been very helpful.

**The Independent:** What led to the video sidebar? Were there certain tapes you had seen that stimulated your interest and acted as a catalyst, that you wanted to show and therefore had to create a special video component to do that?

**Peña:** A couple of different reasons. What you said is true. When I began seeing work from people like Bill Viola, for example, it clearly seemed to me like major work. Someone like this should have greater access. So, yes, the discovery of individual artists was exciting and interesting to me.

Beyond that, as I began looking for films for the New York Film Festival from places like Hungary, Brazil, Argentina, and other places, I found that a lot of the younger talent was not making films. Often it had to do with simple economic reality. Major filmmakers in places like Brazil are wandering around Europe looking for financing. So young people are turning to video, and there is a very active video scene. While the Brazilian film industry has practically died, the video groups are spreading everywhere. So it seems to me that if we're going to keep up with media work from a place like Brazil, most of Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world, we have to simply open our doors to video. That's my theory—that this is really where a lot of the energy and talent is right now.

**The Independent:** How large a sidebar do you anticipate?

**Peña:** We're thinking about eight days with about 10 programs. Each would run about 90-100 minutes, so there would be several short works, one long work, or two medium-sized works. Probably over the course of that week everything will be repeated three times.

**The Independent:** What about your rules requiring New York premieres? It gets a little more complicated with video.

**Peña:** Right. That is a rule we adhere to quite

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strictly for the film festival. All of us feel and know that we can't possibly have that rule for at least this year in the sidebar. If the sidebar grows and thrives and becomes a real institution in itself, then a few years down the road we might say, "Okay, from now on only New York premieres." But, for example, the video work by Peter Greenaway, which has been seen in New York—not that widely, certainly not widely enough—personally I'd like to see it included, though I can't now tell what the final mix will be. We would be cutting off our nose to spite our face if we decided we were only going to do premieres when in fact quite a lot of good work has been shown at places like the Kitchen.

**The Independent:** Walk me through the selection process for video. Will there be the same committee as for the film festival?

**Peña:** No, it'll be in-house. My partner in this is Marian Masone, who's associate programmer here at the Film Society, and she's really been handling much of the work, the relations, contacts, and whatever. During this first year, for convenience sake, it will probably be Marian and myself who will be putting together the program. A few other people around here will also have some input.

**The Independent:** Will there be a call for tapes?

**Peña:** We have been doing that. We have an application...

**The Independent:** That's separate from the film application?

**Peña:** Completely. Around early May we had this long list of video organizations that we got out of the Berlin video fest catalog, and we sent out letters to people saying this was happening. We've gotten back many responses. Also word has filtered around, so we've gotten calls and letters from people saying, "Is this happening? When can I submit? How do I submit?" We're doing the best we can to just beat the bushes and get people to send in stuff.

**The Independent:** The selection committee I assume will evolve, or will it remain in-house?

**Peña:** We'll have to see. The New York Film Festival selection process is certainly very wonderful and challenging, but it's also quite expensive. We have honoraria and fly people in from different parts of the country. All of that can be done because the festival has a certain financial stability. Eventually we might want to do something like we do at the film festival—have one or two people from the Film Society with one or two outside people. This is all in the future. Certainly for this year we just want to get it done, and we're looking for ways to make it as simple as possible.

**The Independent:** But again, because video is so much more multifaceted than film, it's that much more complicated doing outreach to the various kinds of videomakers around the country. With



The festival's new video sidebar will be held in the recently opened Walter Reade Theater.

Photo: Sandor Acs, courtesy Film Society of Lincoln Center

film, you have a clear set of film festivals you'd want to attend to find out what's new this year, whereas with video, it's a lot more work.

**Peña:** You're absolutely right. But while I do want this program to be useful to curators, critics, whatever, in terms of finding out what's new in video—and I'm sure there will be at least a certain component of work that will be brand new—my intention is to use this to help create new audiences, to bridge what I see as a gap between the people who frequent the New York Film Festival and art cinemas in this neck of the woods, and those downtown people who go to video places. I would really like to see people feel that video art's another one of their viewing options.

And to make it a more regular feature at the Walter Reade Theater. This program we have coming up next week, *Cold Wind and Glacier Voices*, is Native American film and video. I'm very happy with that integration. Here's a community whose media work has grown up largely in the last 15 years. Of course any community like that is going to be heavily influenced by video. You're going to have a lot of the most interesting people—Victor Masayeva and others—who work exclusively in video, or Zacharias Kunuck from Canada.

**The Independent:** Why do you think more film festivals haven't added video to their mix?

**Peña:** First of all, it's a whole new operation. It requires more time, more money, more energy. Most film festivals are not as solid as the New York Film Festival—and I don't want to say financially, because like any nonprofit, we've got our problems with funding, but as an institution the New York Film Festival is fairly strong. We have generally good audiences, attention of the press, willingness of producers to let us show their films. Because we are in this "privileged" position we can afford to branch out a little more. We can experiment, whereas other places are too busy looking over their shoulder. The other thing is, a lot of European festivals are tied very much into

the overall interaction between film culture and film commerce. And while we are, too—an festival is—I think we are less so. In Cannes, it really is a meeting of big film producers and the art of film.

**The Independent:** The market's there, too.

**Peña:** Exactly. Video hasn't fit into that yet. Because of that, there's been less interest in pioneering video, looking at it, or in any way encouraging it.



**The Independent:** The New York Film Festival is primarily a festival for filmgoers in the city. So the main benefit is the New York press coverage. You've said, "The good thing about the New York Film Festival is you get a lot of press. And the bad thing about it is you get a lot of press." Please elaborate. And could you name a couple of cases in which the festival has made a difference for US independent work?

**Peña:** With the festival you do get a lot of press, and press of a big name variety—the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, the other New York papers. This is especially critical with foreign films, because so much of the business of a foreign film is done in New York. A bad reaction on the part of the New York press can in fact end the chances of distribution or severely limit them. Likewise, when a film does very well here, suddenly the deals happen a little faster. Also it's the reaction of the public. Every year we have quite a few distributors who come and sit in the audience to see what they sense the audience is getting out of a film.

It's bad because you come out with major, heavy-duty reviews which you'll never shake off. You can cut 10 minutes after Sundance. It's hard to cut 10 minutes after the New York Film Festival. You've gotten the press. You've had the reaction and the word of mouth is out.

For American independents, probably the most dramatic case in recent years was *Roger and Me*. Here is a film that had a triple header—it was in

Telluride, Toronto, and New York. I like to think it was all those Warner executives flying in from the West Coast for our Saturday show of the film that convinced Warner Brothers to go with the deal.

**The Independent:** How do documentaries and shorts do at the New York Film Festival? How is the press coverage and interest from buyers and programmers?

**Peña:** I'd be obviously lying if I said they got as much interest as the big features. However, a film like Alan Berliner's *Intimate Stranger*, which had its world premiere with us last year, certainly did go on to other festivals, received a lot of good notices, a lot of interest generally, as a result of its participation in the New York Film Festival. The Susan Meiselas, Dick Rogers, Alfred Guzzetti film *Pictures from a Revolution* also was picked up after it was shown here.

Often the features come to us with distributors, so in a certain way there's a little less work we have to do with them. It's very rare that these documentaries come to us with distributors, so we wind up becoming the film's agent in some weird way. Not that we conduct sales, but we certainly try to make marriages where we can.

**The Independent:** You do that? Pair up filmmakers and distributors?

**Peña:** As much as we can, if there's a certain film that I think will really interest a festival director or a distributor.

**The Independent:** You'll get on the phone and call them up?

**Peña:** Sure, absolutely. I know some people personally, I know something about their tastes. When I can make a marriage or a match, I'm only too pleased.

**The Independent:** Do US independents have as tough a time after getting a scathing review as do foreign filmmakers?

**Peña:** Well, it's always a bit different. Americans know the field a little better. There's a kind of outreach they can do, which foreign filmmakers—because they're foreign and not based here—have less chance to do.



**The Independent:** If a filmmaker gets an invitation from a foreign festival they've never heard of, what are the kinds of questions they should be asking when deciding whether or not to go.

**Peña:** The thing I always tell a filmmaker is to be very defensive about your film with regard to festivals. Ask not what you can do for your film festival, but what your film festival can do for you. The vast majority of festivals, unhappily, aren't going to do anything for your film. Some people will see it, some people will appreciate it, you'll make some friends, you might have a critic who'll remember your name next time around—but

they're not really going to do anything. So once that's understood, if you want to go, fine. I just would be very cautious.

If it's a foreign film festival, the first question would be, "Can I travel at this point in my life to X festival in Italy with my film? Are they willing to pay for it?" Next, do you want to go? Is there a reason you really want to be in Italy at this time? Is your life open enough that you can go there for a week to 10 days? If the answer is yes, and they seem to be paying your way, you just might want to try it. It might be very pleasant.

Most independents have very few copies of their film. If you send a film off to a festival and it comes back with 300 feet damaged, who pays? Try calling their offices a few days later: They're gone. It's not that they've absconded somewhere, it's just that the festival's not a full-time, year-round organization. People leave, and you're in the hole. And they say, "Well, gee, we didn't do that. No, it arrived that way." You have to be very defensive. I've just heard too many bad stories from people about their participation in small festivals, sometimes large festivals, that didn't treat them or their film very well. There are obviously a few where the invitation speaks for itself: Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Locarno, Rotterdam—these are all very serious, well-established festivals that do their job.

**The Independent:** Don't most of them require premieres?

**Peña:** They all have different rules, and they seem to bend and shape their rules according to their will.

**The Independent:** That's the down side of going to a small festival—you can lose your chance of attending a more significant festival that shows only premieres.

**Peña:** Yes. I wouldn't want to go to X festival in Spain or Italy unless I was pretty damn sure that my film had no chance of being shown at any of those major festivals.

**The Independent:** Do you have any words of wisdom or encouragement for all those filmmakers who have submitted works to the New York Film Festival and been refused?

**Peña:** Just realize that, if we look at 1,000 films, we probably wind up liking, to some degree, 150. But we're only going to take 25 or 28, which means that there are a lot of films which we really do like. I try, when I can, to scribble a note saying "Keep up the good work. We're looking forward to seeing your work in the future," to let them know there was a real person who actually saw it. Don't take it as a judgement on your talents. Because of the way this festival is set up—making it small, making it somewhat exclusive—there are many films that just simply won't be shown. And filmmakers should say that, "Well, we're just one of those they just couldn't fit into the schedule."



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**AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL & VIDEO EXPOSITION.** Nov., CA. Now entering 17th yr, oldest int'l competitive fest of films & videos by or about Native Americans in US accepts works produced in previous 2 yrs. Sponsored by American Indian Film Institute, founded in 1979 to address negative stereotyping & recognize positive portrayals of Native Americans, fest provides showcase for films that might not receive cinematic recognition in theatrical & non-theatrical release. Cats: doc feature, doc short, commercial feature, docudrama, live short subject, animated short subject & industrial. Awards: American Indian Motion Picture Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$50. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Michael Smith, director, American Indian Film Festival & Video Exposition, American Indian Film Institute, 333 Valencia St, Ste 322, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 554-0525.

**ASBURY FILM FESTIVAL.** NY. In last issue of *The Independent*, attendance at Asbury was stated at 100; it is actually 1,000.

**BALTIMORE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MAKERS COMPETITION.** Jan., MD. Entering 24th yr, fest accepts films & videos by ind. artists. Cats: animation, experimental, dramatic & doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fees: \$25-\$35. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: Helen W. Cyr, president, Baltimore Film Forum, Baltimore Museum of Art, 10 Art Museum Dr., Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 889-1993; fax: (410) 889-2657.

**BLACK FILMMAKERS HALL OF FAME BLACK INDEPENDENT FILM, VIDEO & SCREENPLAY COMPETITION.** Apr., CA. BFHF, nonprofit organization that acknowledges "often overlooked presence of blacks in cinema, honoring their significant contributions & participation in American & world cinema," sponsors annual competition of local, nat'l & int'l film, screenplay & video art. Judged by community volunteers & professional panel, entries must have black producer, writer or director &/or subject that provides crosscultural perspectives on ethnic issues. Cats: features, animation, music, foreign & TV. Awards: grand prize for best film/video (\$1,000), second (\$500) & third prizes (\$250); best feature-length screenplay (\$500) & best short screenplay (\$250). Honorable mention & cat. winners receive certificate. Winning entries screened on Awards Night in Feb. w/ winning artists invited to attend. Most entries also screened at Black Filmworks Festival of Film & Video in Apr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: Cheryl Fabio-Bradford, Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, 405 14th St., Ste 515, Oakland, CA 94612 or Box 28055, Oakland, CA 94604-8055; (510) 465-0804; fax: (510) 839-9858.

**BUCKS COUNTY INDEPENDENT FILM TOUR.** Oct., PA. Sponsored by Film Five, nonprofit filmmakers cooperative, competitive event celebrates 9th anniversary in 1992. Entries must be under 20 min. & completed in previous 2 yrs. No estab. cats; selection balances experimental, doc, animated & narrative works. Awards: \$5,000 in prizes & rental fees to range of entries. Winning films tour 10 sites, primarily in PA, although in past tour incl. St. Louis, Houston, IA, CA, Honolulu & Vancouver. Formats: 16mm. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: Sept. 25. Contact: John Toner, Bucks County Ind. Film Tour, c/o Smith & Toner, 91 E. Court St, Doylestown,

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

PA 18901; (215) 345-5663 (evenings); fax: (215) 348-3569.

**CINDY COMPETITION.** Feb., CA. Sponsored by Assoc. of Visual Communicators (formerly Industry Film Producers Assoc.), competition awards film, video, multi-image, filmstrip, slide, audio, desktop & interactive media at banquet held in conjunction w/ INFOCOMM Int'l Conference & Trade Show. Cats: technical/artistic crafts; business/industry/gov't; educational; environment/ecology; fundraising; medical; public relations; public service & information; doc; essay/short personal statement; safety; sales/marketing; religion; sports/recreation; travel; student; music/fashion video; interactive video/multimedia. Awards: best of show (special CINDY award), first (Gold Plaque), second (Silver Plaque), third (Bronze Plaque), w/ certificates for honorable mentions & special achievements. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", videodisk, interactive video; submit on 1/2". Entry fees: \$40-\$150. Deadline: mid-Oct. Contact: competition director, Cindy Competition, Association of Visual Communicators, 16105-8H Victory Blvd., Ste 299, Van Nuys, CA 91406; (818) 787-6800.

**DARK FICTION FILM FESTIVAL.** Oct. 27-31, CA. Fest accepts "macabre & dark fiction" features & shorts: crime drama, mystery, erotic horror, thriller, spy-espionage, sci-fi-fantasy, action-adventure, psychological horror, splatter, horror fiction. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Vampires Inc., Waide Aaron, 7095 Hollywood Blvd., #104-464, Hollywood, CA 90028; (310) 657-4988.

**DORE SCHARY AWARDS.** Jan., NY. Entering 9th yr in 1992, competition accepts work completed after Jan. 1, 1992 by college & university students majoring in film & TV whose prods address human relations themes such as ethnic & minority portraits, problems & achievements, prejudice & discrimination, interreligious understanding, cultural pluralism & safeguarding democratic ideals. Student must have completed all prod. phases. Prods based on published works of fiction ineligible. Cats in film & video: narrative & doc (live action, animation,

experimental). Awards: best film narrative (\$1,000), best film doc (\$1,000), best video narrative (\$1,000) & best video doc (\$1,000). Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Zirel Handler, Dore Schary Awards, TV Radio Film Dept, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; (212) 490-2525.

**PRIZED PIECES VIDEO & FILM COMPETITION.** Sept. 11-13, OH. Inaugurated in 1981, competition honors excellence in TV & film prods affirming universality of African world community experience & depicting black people & cultures throughout world in non-stereotypical ways. Entries judged on importance & significance of program in black people's lives; creative use of prod. techniques & skills; clarity & originality of program content & creative thematic development; quality of performances; aesthetic appeal & total effectiveness in communicating w/ audience & utilization of people of color in key positions. Cats: public affairs news; youth/teens (programs designed specifically for youth); drama (in which black people are cast in primary & subordinate roles in stories which affirm universality of black experience); doc; music videos; promotional shorts & content category shorts (programs btwn 3-20 min. in any genre excluding music videos). Awards: best African/Diaspora ind. producer (open to any producer of African descent w/ full creative control over project); Oscar Micheaux Award (which honors African American media professionals whose works & spirit most closely embody Micheaux's dedication, creativity, competence, persistence & strength of character); best student filmmaker/videographer (entry must have been produced in preceding 5 yrs while entrant was student). Winners receive plaque & \$600 cash. Entries must conform to broadcast standards & have aired, been exhibited or produced for broadcast btwn Sept. 1 1991 & Aug. 1 1992. Previous entries ineligible. Int'l entries by ind. producers from African countries eligible if produced for exhibition or broadcast in preceding 3 yrs. NBPC is clearinghouse for best in black film & TV programming worldwide & distributor to public TV system. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fees: \$35 ind. producers; \$60 all others; incl. return postage. Deadline: Sept. 2. Contact: Jackie Tshaka, Prized Pieces Video & Film Competition, Nat'l Black Programming Consortium, 929 Harrison Ave., Ste 104, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355; fax: (614) 299-4761.

**SAN JOSE STATE STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL.** Oct., CA. Sponsored by Visual Artists, student collective, fest accepts work from across country w/ special emphasis on Bay Area artists. All subjects & styles invited. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: San Jose State Student Film & Video Festival, Associated Students Program Board, San Jose State Univ., Student Union Rm. 350, San Jose, CA 95192; (408) 924-6260; fax: (408) 924-6220.

**UNITED STATES TV & RADIO COMMERCIALS FESTIVAL/MOBIUS AWARDS.** Competition devoted to recognition of TV & radio commercials produced or aired anywhere in world since Oct. 1991 has expanded to incl. print or package design entries. Over 100 commercials, culled from over 3,000 entries from 25 countries, honored. Cats: 75 subject cats & 13 prod. technique cats. Entries further divided on basis of prod. cost. Awards: Best of Fest. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fees: \$60-80. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: J.W. Anderson, US Festivals Association, 841 N. Addison

Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126-1291; (708) 834-7773; fax: (708) 834-5565.

**VIDEO-TUSCULUM**, Nov. 6-7, TN. Nat'l competition for small format video prods. Program also incl. special program of 16mm award-winning films from Sinking Creek collection & all-day video prod. workshops. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, VHS-C, hi-8. Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: Tom Saunders, Video-Tusculum, Tusculum College, Box 5683, Greeneville, TN 37743-9997; (615) 636-7300 ext. 304.

**WOMEN IN THE DIRECTORS CHAIR FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, March, IL. Now in 12th yr, showcase for works by women directors from many cultures continues "to provide arena for lives & visions of women so often rendered invisible or ignored; women who build understanding through creating alternative images & necessary stories; women who raise important questions concerning mainstream media's representations of world." Only fest of women's work in Midwest, WIDC receives nearly 300 entries yrly & selects about 70 to screen. Program incl. Chicago & US premieres & "gives local artists & public forum to meet ind. media-makers & discuss issues of importance to women, artists & world." WIDC is not-for-profit, media arts organization based in Chicago dedicated to giving women filmmakers support & encouragement to pursue ind. work. Cats: narrative, doc, computer graphics, experimental & animation. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: \$15/WIDC members; \$25/nonmembers. Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: Festival director, Women in Directors Chair Film & Video Festival, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., #3, Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-4988.

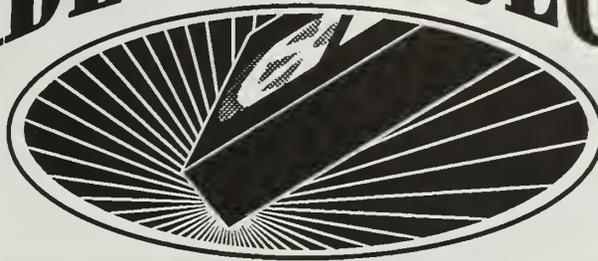
## Foreign

**ABITIBI-TIMISKAMING FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL CINEMA**, Oct., Canada. 1992 marks 11th yr for this competitive fest of features & shorts in north-western Quebec. Awards: Grand Prix Hydro-Quebec, audience award; Prix Télébec for best short or medium-length feature, jury selected (\$1,000) & Prix Animé, audience award to favorite animated film. Entries must have been produced since May 1991 & not shown commercially in Canada & preferably subtitled in French. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Jacques Matte, Int'l Film Festival in Abitibi-Téiscamingue, 215 Ave. Mercier, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec J9X-5W8, Canada; tel: (819) 762-6212; fax: (819) 762-6762.

**AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & MARKET**, Nov., France. Now in 12th yr, competitive showcase begun in 1970s as Amiens Film Days Against Racism & For Friendship Among Peoples, continues to focus on films which explore cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues, w/ particular emphasis on little known cinemas & multicultural film prod. from throughout world. Feature-length, short, fiction or doc films that address identity of people or ethnic minority, racism or issues of representation & differences eligible. In past yrs, fest has presented retros, panoramas & tributes to cinema of Africa, Caribbean, Latin America, Native America, African America & Asia. Some themes have been "Images of Racism," "Cinema of Apartheid," "Figure of the Other in War Films," "American Black Inds," "Road to the South" & "Native Americans in Hollywood Films"; 1992 focus is on Vietnam war. Audiences of over 30,000 view about 20 films in competition. Awards: grand prize, special jury prize &

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acting awards. Fest incl. market & screens over 150 ind. & multicultural films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, Festival Int'l du Film d'Amiens, Association pour les Journées Cinématographiques d'Amiens, 36 rue de Noyan, 8000 Amiens, France; tel: 22 91 01 44; fax: 22 92 51 82.

**AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL DOC FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec., Netherlands. This competitive fest, celebrating 5th birthday in 1992, is among fastest-growing int'l doc fests. About 40 docs programmed in competition & nearly 100 in retros & series. In 1993, fest inaugurates video section. Last yr special programs incl. retro on European identities, retrospective on Israel & Palestine; fest also features Top 10 program, for which famous filmmaker chooses her/his favorite docs; plus seminars, workshops & talks. Work must be completed in previous yr. Awards: Joris Ivens Award to competition winner (\$6,000). About 25,000 visit fest, held in center of Amsterdam. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: Adriek van Nieuwenhuizen, Int'l Doc Filmfestival Amsterdam, Festival Office, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017RR Amsterdam, Netherlands; tel: 31 20 627 3329; fax: 31 20 638 5388.

**AUDIOVISUAL LISBOA**, Nov., Portugal. Noncompetitive fest incl. all types of audiovisual expression, such as performance exhibits, video installations, video dance, video art, multimedia choreography & mixed media shows. All subjects & genres invited. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. No entry fee. Deadline: late Sept. Contact: Antonio Cunha, Audiovisual Lisboa, R.D. Domingos Jardo, 4B, 1900 Lisbon, Portugal; tel: 351 1 820 678; fax: 351 1 815 0638.

**BANFF FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN FILMS**, Nov., Canada. Competitive fest, estab. in 1976, is oldest & largest in N. America w/ mountain theme; more than 5,000 attend 3-day event. Films & videos that deal w/ mountains, incl. sports, history, environment, culture & mountaineering, eligible. Incl. seminars on environmental & mountain topics such as mountain lit., adventure tourism & sport climbing & trade show featuring environmental groups, outdoor outfitters, guides & retailers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Bemadette McDonald, fest director, Banff Festival of Mountain Films, Banff Center, P.O. Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; tel: (403) 762-6351; fax: (403) 762-6422.

**BELFORT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW DIRECTORS**, Nov., France. Competitive fest, designed to discover new talent, accepts 1st, 2nd & 3rd int'l features. In 1989, competition featured 17 long features & 22 short films; other sections incl. out of competition section, Film Making Pleasure & African Cinema, for total of 58 features & 30 shorts screened over 9 days. Awards: Public Prizes & Jury Prizes for long feature, short film, French film & foreign film (total awards: 120,000FF); French long feature (400,000FF); French long feature (20,000FF), French short film (25,000FF). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: Janine Bazin, Festival du Film "Entrevues" de Belfort, Cinémas d'Aujourd'hui, Mairie de Belfort, Direction des Affaires Culturelles, Hotel de Ville, Place d'Ames, 90020 Belfort cedex, France; tel: 16 84 54 24 43; fax: 16 84 21 71 71.

**BILBAO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOC & SHORT FILMS**, Nov., Spain. Now in 34th yr, competitive FIAPF-recognized fest specializes in shorts & docs.

Motto is "images for understanding btwn peoples." Films in competition must be under 30 min. & have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Films that have won prizes in other European FIAPF-recognized fests ineligible for competition, but may screen in info section. Awards: Grand Award of the Festival (400,000 Ptas); Grand Award of Spanish Filmmaking (350,000 Ptas); Grand Award of Basque Filmmaking (350,000 Ptas); Gold Mikeldi for Best Animated Film (250,000 Ptas); Silver Mikeldi for Animation (150,000 Ptas); Gold Mikeldi for Best Fiction Film (250,000 Ptas); Silver Mikeldi for Fiction (150,000 Ptas); Silver Caravel for Best Latin American Prod. (200,000 Ptas); Telenorte Prize for Best Spanish-produced Film (200,000 Ptas); Euskal Telebista Prize to Best Documentary (200,000 Ptas); Ind. Association of Basque Producers Prize to Best Prod. (150,000 Ptas). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Luis Iturri, Certamen Intemacional de Cine Documental y Cortometraje de Bilbao, Colón de Larreátequi, 37-4 Dcha, 48009 Bilbao, Spain; tel: 34 4 24 86 98; fax: 34 4 42 45 624.

**BIRMINGHAM FILM & TV FESTIVAL**, Oct., UK. Fest program incl. Fest Fortnight of Int'l Cinema, TV conference, nat'l cinema section & Third Cinema Focus w/ films from Third World. Retros & seminars also part of program. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Roger Shannon, Birmingham Film & TV Festival, Dept of Recreation & Community Services, Auchinleck House, Five Ways, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1DS, England; tel: 44 21 766 6707; fax: 44 21 766 7038.

**CADIZ INTERNATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov. 24-28, Spain. Ind. prods programmed in 8th edition of this competitive all-video fest, comprising 20 different programs incl. video art, video fiction, computer art works, video doc, video installations, video music & dance. Awards: best director, videoplay, intemat'l artistic contribution, TV information program/doc, totalling 2,600,000 Ptas (\$25,000). Formats: 1", 3/4", 1/2", hi-8. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Muestra Intemacional Video Cádiz, Pl. España, Edf. Roma, 11071 Cádiz, Spain; tel: 56 24 01 03; fax: 56 22 98 13.

**CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec., Egypt. Celebrating 16th yr, Cairo is competitive FIAPF-recognized fest which selects works produced in previous 2 yrs for Competition, Info & Fest of Fests sections. Special sections pay tribute to cinematographers & filmmakers. Hospitality (accommodations & meals) provided for invited filmmakers. Entries must not have participated in competitive sections of other int'l fests. Awards: Golden Nile Prize for best long feature film; Nile Prizes to best actress/actor, best director & best first work; Special Prize to film proclaiming human virtues. Participating films receive certificate; fest pays return shipping for selected films. Nearly 200 films shown yrly (about 20 in competition), incl. large line-up from US. Fest is geared toward local audiences & provides rare opportunity to see uncensored films. Venues incl. renovated vintage movie houses Miami, Diana & Cairo Palace, as well as Cairo Marriott Hotel & 7 other screens. Parallel market for features & TV prods, on film & video, attended by about 70 companies. Format: 35mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Saad El Din Wahba, Cairo Int'l Film Festival, 17 Kasr El-Nil Street, Cairo, Egypt; tel: 202 392 3562; fax: 202 393 8979.

**CARACAS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW**

**SUPER 8 CINEMA**, Oct., Venezuela. Competitive fest, open to all film- & videomakers working w/ super 8 or video, aims to "show different forms of expression in films & videos as art." 16mm films shown out of competition; video & super 8 compete separately. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 16mm, super 8, video. Deadline: early Oct. Contact: Carlos Castillo, Caracas Int'l Festival of New Super 8 Cinema, Apartado 61482, Chacao 1060, Caracas, Venezuela; tel: 58 2 771367.

**CINESANJUAN FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., Puerto Rico. Fest welcomes Caribbean video & filmmakers at work abroad & non-Caribbean producers & dirs who have made works about Caribbean & its people. Cats: dramatic feature film, doc film, doc video, dramatic video, film/video animation & film/video or animation based on Caribbean theme by non-Caribbean artist. Awards: Pitrre Award & \$400 cash to each cat. winner. Entries must be completed in previous 2 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Ana Maria Garcia, CineSanJuan Film Festival, P.O. Box 4543, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00905; tel: (809) 721-5676; fax: (809) 722-8590.

**FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL DOC FILM**, Nov., Italy. One of longest-running all-doc film fests in world, fest celebrates 32nd edition in 1992. Program incl. Competition section, as well as sections on Film & Art, Film & History, Cinema on Cinema, New Trends, Ethno-Anthropology, Current Events & Screen of Sounds. Fest presents retros & special sections (last yr's retro on Europe during yrs of Cold War & special section dedicated to Indians of Latin America). Fest accepts doc films completed after Sept. 1, 1991 that cover social, political & anthropological issues. Awards: Best Doc (L20,000,000); Best Research (L10,000,000); Best Ethnographic Doc (Gian Paoli award); Best Doc nominated by Student Jury (Silver Award from Ministry of Education). Award money paid to directors after film or video is formally deposited in fest archive. Fest retains some free-use nontheatrical rights for college & university exhibition. Entrants pay round-trip shipping for preselection; for selected prints, entrants pay shipping to Italy & fest covers customs expenses & return shipping costs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Mario Simondi, Fest dei Popoli Int'l Review of Social Doc Film, Via dei Castellani 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: 055 294 353; fax: 055 213 698

**GOLDEN KNIGHT INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov., Malta. Estab. in 1962, fest is open to all film & video prods on any subject. Cats: amateur prods; prods made by film school students; other prods. Awards: Golden Knight & Certificate of Merit (best entry); Silver Knight & Certificate of Merit (second place); Bronze Knight & Certificate of Merit (third place); Malta Amateur Cine Circle Trophy & Miniature Shield for best entries by Malta residents. All classes eligible for Sultana Cup & Certificate of Merit for entry which best extols merits of Malta; additionally, Highly Commended Certificates awarded to entries of outstanding merit & Nation's Prize awarded to country best represented in fest. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 1/2". Entry fee: \$15-60. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Raymond A. Grech, Malta Amateur Cine Circle, P.O. Box 450, Valletta, Malta; tel: 356 442 803; fax: 356 225 047.

**GRANADA (MOTRIL) INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL FILM & HEALTH EDUCATION WEEK**, Oct., Spain. Competition, now in 18th yr, open to films on medicine,

surgery, research, higher education, public health & ecology. Entries must be under 30 min. Int'l jury awards films based on scientific content, informational & educational value & cinematographic quality. Commercial or publicity films not considered for prizes but may be awarded diplomas for best research film, information, education & advertising. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Dr. D. Manuel Felipe Hidalgo, Semana Internacional de Cine Medico y de Educacion Sanitaria, Sacramento 1, 18142 Motril, Granada, Spain; tel: 958 601855

**HAVANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA**, Dec., Cuba. Havana Film Fest, sponsored by Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC), is world's largest showcase of Latin American & Caribbean film, video & TV, as well as African cinema, African American film & docs on Third World topics. Fest annually celebrates over 100 features & 500 doc, video & TV prods from around world; entries may be made by non-Latin American filmmakers on Latin American & Caribbean issues. Program incl. screenings at 17 cinema & video venues, retros & seminars. Fest well attended by local audiences (1.5-million viewers) & attracts nearly 1,500 foreign delegates. Cats: best fiction, doc, animation, children's, editing, acting, script, photography, sound & design. Coral Awards given to best films, film scripts, film posters, TV programs & video prods, based on works' artistic contribution to affirming & enriching Latin American & Caribbean cultural identity. Fest incl. retros & seminars covering wide range of cultural topics. Fest market, MECLA, hosts 225 buyers & sellers. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: mid-Oct. Contact: Havana Int'l Festival of New Latin American Cinema, ICAIC Int'l Film Distributors, Calle 23, No. 1155, Plaza de la Revolucion, Havana 4, Cuba; tel: 34400/305041; tlx: 511419 ICAIC CU. For info on travelling to fest, contact: Research Trips, c/o Center for Cuban Studies, 124 West 23rd St, New York, NY 10011; (212) 242-0559.

**HOF INTERNATIONAL FILM DAYS**, Oct., Germany. Founded in 1967 by Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Alexander Kluge & R.W. Fassbinder, this noncompetitive fest is considered prime showcase for new German prods & ind. films from Europe, US, New Zealand & Australia. Many W. German distributors attend. On Bavarian border near Czechoslovakia, fest programs over 80 films annually, incl. features, shorts & animated works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Heinz Badewitz, fest dir, Hof Int'l Film Days, Lothstrasse 29, D8000 Munich 2, Germany; tel: 49 89 297 422; fax: 49 89 236 868

**INTERNATIONAL SNOW & ICE FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., France. Competitive fest accepts films which "contribute positively to knowledge of snow & ice world & to developing & exalting human resources in adventure & evasion." Snow & ice films; sporting & sports teaching films; social life & ethnology films; adventure & exploration films; expedition doc films made in previous 4 yrs eligible. Awards: Grand Prix d'Autrans (15,000FF); best sporting or sports teaching film; best social life & ethnology film; best adventure & exploration film; best expedition doc film; best snow & ice film; best film by young dir. Each award incl. prizes w/ in-kind value of 5,000FF; all entries receive diploma of participation. Formats: 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Chiocca Mireille, general secretary, Festival Int'l du Film d'Autrans Neige et Glace Aventure Eva-

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**LA PLAGNE REAL LIFE ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec., France. Competitive fest accepts docs completed in previous 2 yrs on any kind of adventure, such as mountain expeditions, arctic travels, sailing races around world, ballooning, underwater diving, speleology, sport performances & dramatic events that are milestones in adventuring. Awards: Grand prix du fest, Prix spécial du jury, Prix de la presse, Prix des enfants & mentions spéciales du jury. Awards: certificate & medal. Entries must be completed in 2 yrs preceding fest & selection committee gives priority to films not previously shown in other French film fests or broadcast on French TV. Fest held at La Plagne, Olympic French Alps ski resort. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Patrick Edel, managing dir, Festival int'l du film d'aventure vecue, Guilde Europeene du Raid, 11 Rue de Vaugirard, 75006 Paris, France; tel: 1 326 97 52.

**LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR DOC & ANIMATION FILMS**, Nov. 27-Dec. 3, Germany. Under theme "Films of World-For Human Dignity" & approaching 35th anniversary, fest is one of older int'l events focusing on doc form. Program consists of Int'l Competition, special programs, video workshop & retros. Competition incl. cinema or TV docs of all genres, prods on videocassette (doc & animation) & animation films. Special programs incl. doc & animation films on "interesting subjects & of remarkable artistic quality;" prizewinning films of other fests & film & video market. Last yr, 46 films & videos screened in competition & another 180 films & videos screened in sections. Other programs incl. roundtable talks on European media politics & ind. filmmaking industry in Africa, Asia & Latin America, which led to decision to adopt motto of "500 yrs resistance," emphasizing nat'l cultural autonomy, as well as focusing on films that reflect on injustice & indifference & topics concerning disabled, social, ethnic & political minorities & environmental pollution & preservation. Awards: film & TV over 45 min. (Golden Dove & DM6,000/Silver Dove & DM3,500); film & TV under 45 min. (Golden Dove & DM6,000/Silver Dove & DM3,500); video prods (Golden Dove & DM6,000/Silver Dove & DM3,500); animation films for cinema & TV (Golden Dove & DM4,000/Silver Dove & DM2,000); best journalistic prod. (Egon-Erwin-Kisch-Prize & DM3,500); City of Leipzig special audience award (DM5,000); Federal Minister for Environment, Preservation of Natural Beauty & Reactor Security Prize (DM5,000). Entries for competition or info programs must not have been shown in public prior to June 1 1991. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Betacam SP. No entry fee. The Kitchen is assisting this yr w/ preselection for fest. Send 1/2" tapes only, together w/ brief synopsis & SASE to The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., New York, NY 10011, attn: Leipzig Festival. Festival contact: Jurgen Bruning, Leipziger Dok-Woche, Box 904, 07010 Leipzig, Germany; tel: 49 30 782 9740.

**MADRID INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS BY WOMEN**, Nov., Spain. Held at Nat'l Film Institute, fest is 8-yr-old & open to films directed by women. In 1991, special sections incl. Ultima Hora (premieres produced during previous 2 yrs); films directed by black women; homage to Spanish dirs 1935-present; Liliana Cavani retro & selection of Spanish, French & Canadian videos. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Debra Perez, Festival Internacional de Cine Realizado por Mujeres, c/o Ateneo Feminista de



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**MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL**, Nov. 9-14, Germany. At 41-yrs-old, fest is one of oldest German film fests, w/ historical emphasis on art of cinema. Fest incl. competition of new ind. dramatic & doc feature films & short films from all over world, incl. Eastern Europe, US, Latin America, Asia & Africa. Redesigned in 1992 w/ new dir, fest features single concentrated competition program. Twenty films shown in 4-5 programs daily. Cinema-Symposium "SchauPlatz" is pointed debate & discussion btwn dirs; fest incl. 1 theme day. Awards: Grand Prize for best full-length feature film (DM25000 & inclusion in fest's "Winner's Archive"; Josef von Sternberg Prize for most indiv. film in narrative structure (DM5000); Doc Prize of South German Broadcasting Company (DM10000 in connection w/ offer for broadcast rights); FIPRESCI Prize; INTERFILM Prize; Jury of Catholic Film Work; Adult Education Organization Bade-Württemberg; environmental organization Krempelmarkt Mannheim & others. Ind. int'l jury awards prizes. Films shown publicly in German cinemas or screened on German TV prior to fest or which have participated in official program of another European film fest ineligible. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 12 mos. Entrants pay shipping costs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Deadline: Sept. 5. Contact: Dr. Michael Koetz, Internationales Film Festival Mannheim, Collini-Center-Galerie, D-6800 Mannheim 1, Germany; tel: 0621 10 29 43; fax: 0621 291564.

**MUNICH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILM ACADEMIES**, Nov., Germany. "Budding professional talent" from film schools around world invited to submit entries for fest, estab. in 1980. Entrants must have been students at time of prod. Participating film schools have incl. institutions from US, Israel, Ghana, Kenya, India & Australia; about 120 films from 30 film schools annually participate. Awards: First & second prizes (total DM-30,000); best doc; most interesting school program & screenplay subsidy prize (DM10,000). Jury of student representatives awards prizes of film stock & equipment to films in competition. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Munich Int'l Festival of Film Academies, Turkenstrasse 93, D-8000 Munich, Germany; tel: 49 89 38 10 40; fax: 49 89 38 19 04 26.

**MUNICH INTERNATIONAL MEDIA MARKET**, Nov., Germany. Munich Int'l Media Market is new market for professional users of audio-visual & electronic media for info, culture & education; about 200 companies & institutions from over 25 countries (US, Canada, Japan, Australia, Africa, Europe) attend, incl. TV stations & educational institutions & ind. film, TV & video producers. Cats: films for schools, youth & adult education; company in-service training & advanced programs; films for science & research; industrial, business & PR films; docs on politics, agriculture, sport, tourism, leisure, fashion, environmental protection, ecology, natural science, technological innovation, health & hygiene; cultural films on art, music, theatre, lit., anthropology, archaeology, history, religion; films dealing w/ Third World; software programs for computer-assisted learning & teaching & learning programs for children & young people. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Internationaler Medienmarkt München, Turkenstrasse 93, D-8000 Munich 40, Germany; tel: 49 89 38 19 04 17; fax: 49 89 38 19 04 26.

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**NATURE, MAN & HIS ENVIRONMENT FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., Italy. Recent narrative, animated or doc prods of any length accepted for noncompetitive fest, now in 22nd yr, held in Viterbo, Italy. Entries addressing basic ecological information; increasing awareness of natural resource preservation; chemical, physical & noise pollution; preservation of flora, fauna, natural landscape; nat'l parks & reserves; man-made landscapes; defense of historic character of towns & ancient buildings, works of art & cultural heritage; public health & environmental hygiene; environmental education accepted. Awards: Gold Awards to organizations or indivs contributing to safeguarding environment. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: late Sept. Contact: Liborio Rao, Ente Mostra Cinematografica, Internazionale "La natura, l'uomo e il suo ambiente," Via di Villa Patrizi 10, 00161 Rome, Italy; tel: 06 8847 3218.

**ORLEANS CINEMA FESTIVAL**, Nov., France. Competitive fest shows about 10-12 films unreleased in competition, as well as tribute to nat'l cinematography & tribute or retro of dir. Awards: fest prize to film distributor (40,000FF) & media prize (20,000FF). 1989 fest featured tribute to Kenneth Loach, program of Thatcher yrs, British animation, cinema & fantasy lit., films on art & selection of short films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Bernard Perreux, general delegate, Orleans Cinema Festival Journées Cinématographiques d'Orléans, Centre d'arts Contemporains, Carré Saint-Vincent 45000 Orléans, France; tel: 33 38 62 45 68; fax: 33 38 62 01 54.

**PACIFIC FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL NATURE FILMS**, Nov., New Zealand. Estab. to commemorate 150th anniversary of Treaty of Waitangi, which held partnership btwn European settlers & indigenous Maori, fest encourages prod. of natural history films in Pacific. Entries must be completed in previous 3 yrs. Awards: Conservation; People & Nature; World of Birds; Newcomers; Underwater; Youth; Craft; Outstanding Achievement. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Dorothee Pinfold, Pacific Festival of Int'l Nature Films, P.O. Box 9438, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 64 4 844 496; fax: 64 4 851 807.

**PARMA INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., Italy. One of larger cinematographic meeting points in field of health & science, fest annually receives more than 300 film programs entered from about 25 countries w/ about 100 competing for several Grand Prix & Special Awards. Awards: best medical updating film, best surgery film, best ecology film, best health education film. Special awards go to best films on cancer, AIDS, pesticides, surgery, surgical info & education, medical training, general medicine, biomedical sciences, handicaps, prevention, rehabilitation, health education campaigns, environmental education & info, environmental impact, technology for environmental safeguard. Official program incl. cats of medicine: professional updating, health education & ecology & health. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Deadline: late Sept. Contact: Karin Munk, Parma Int'l Medical & Scientific Film Festival, Medikinale Int'l Parma, Via Garibaldi n. 1, 43100 Parma, Italy; tel: 39 521 377 92; fax: 39 521 531 518.

**STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., Sweden. Begun 2 yrs ago, fest programs feature films "otherwise overlooked by commercial distributors," w/ about 60 feature film in 4 cats, of which principal is Absolute Film. Prizes awarded by 2 juries,



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incl. FIPRESCI, Int'l critics' jury. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept. Contact: Stockholm Int'l Film Festival, Box 45015, S-10430 Stockholm, Sweden; tel: 46 8 612 3810; fax: 46 8 612 3805.

**TOULON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MARITIME & SEA EXPLORATION FILMS**, Nov., France. Estab. in 1959, fest is "yrlly rendezvous of seafarers, divers & movie-makers of sea adventures above & below the surface." Sponsored by French Navy, city of Toulon, World Underwater Activities Confederation, French Underwater Sports Federation & several other sponsoring partners, fest accepts entries w/ relation to various maritime fields or exploration (oceanology, archaeology, history, underwater exploration, ethnography, sports & fiction). Shorts & features accepted; both film & video screened. Awards: Gold Anchor, Silver Anchor, Bronze Anchor, French Navy Award, Rolex Grand Prize for Subaquatic Wildlife Protection, World Underwater Activities Confederation Award, Young Director's Award (offered by French Underwater Sports Federation), French Sea Institute Award, Press Award & Audience Award. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta SP. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Sept.. Contact: festival secretariat, Festival Int'l du Film Maritime et D'Exploration, Secretariat du Festival du Film Maritime et d'Exploration, 14, rue Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France; tel: 33 94 92 99 22; fax: 33 94 91 35 65.

**VALLADOLID INTERNATIONAL FILM WEEK**, Oct., Spain. Considered "most serious & best organized film event in Spain," competitive fest of fests celebrates 37th edition in 1992. Stated objective is "to show & promote films of artistic quality that contribute to knowledge & dialogue between human beings." Sections: Official (panorama of current int'l cinema: feature-length & short films in section may participate in competition or remain out of competition); Meeting Point (non-competitive section incl. films from past & present worthy of special attention); Tributes (devoted to presentation & analysis of dirs, genres, styles, schools, nations cinema, etc.) & Time of History (docs that treat moments or epochs in history from privileged viewpoint of cinema). Films entered in Official & Time of History sections must be recent prods w/ no previous commercial or TV/video screening in Spain; unscreened at any other film fest in Spain, in or out of competition. Awards: Golden Spike & Silver Spike to 2 best feature-length films; additional Ptas. 2,000,000 (approx. US\$20,000) to Spanish distributor of Golden Spike winner; Best 1st Film in competition—jury will consider 1st film to be up to & incl. director's third feature-length film for cinema, (\$10,000); Best Actor/Actress Awards; Best Dir of Photography Award; Golden Spike (\$5,000) & Silver Spike to 2 best short films; Special Jury Prize to short & feature-length films. Ind. jury awards \$5,000 prize to Best Doc in Time of History section & 2 Special Mentions. 1992's special programs incl. retros of Ken Loach, Gabriel Figueroa & Bruno Bozzetto; program of Lodz cinema school; Spanish Cinema & TVE series of yr. Format: 35mm (16mm, 3/4" & 1/2" accepted in Time of History Section only). No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Fernando Lara, Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, Teatro Calderon, c/Angustias, 1-1, P.O. Box 646, 47080 Valladolid, Spain; tel: 34 83 30 57 00; fax: 34 83 30 98 35.

**VARNA WORLD ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., Bulgaria. As one of major biennial animated film fests, along w/ Anney & Zagreb, fest welcomes int'l animation entries completed in previous 2 yrs. Cats: shorts, features,

children's animation, TV prod., student films & 1st films. Awards: Gold Mummer; special merit prize; film debut prize & children/youth film prize, sponsored by SIFEJ, int'l organization for films for children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Varna World Animated Film Festival, 1 Bulgaria Square, 1414 Sofia, Bulgaria; tel: 359 589159.

**VIDEODANCE GRAND PRIX INTERNATIONAL**, Sept., France. All styles of dance on film or video eligible for competition, judged by 9-member jury of dance & video specialists & 5 member panel of int'l dance & TV journalists. Awards: Grand Prix Int'l Video Danse for choreographic work of highest quality (FF100,000); Press Prize (FF30,000); Special Awards (history of dance, choreographic creation, TV prod., video dance reporting, special jury). Preliminary judging held in Prague in Sept.; fest held in Sete, France. Entries must be completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Formats: 3/4", 1/2" PAL. Entry fee: FF400. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Grand Prix Int'l Video Danse, General Secretariat, 45, rue Lamarck, F-75018 Paris, France; 33 1 42 23 40 27; fax: 33 1 42 23 60 21.

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**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ 35mm Arriflex BL, Zeiss Superspeeds, zoom, video tap plus lighting/grip pkg & video editing. Feature, commercial & music video credits plus producing exp. Call to see my reel. Blain (212) 279-0162.

**BETACAM SP** field prod. w/ Sony Broadcast BVW 400 camcorder, best & most light-sensitive camera avail. Complete sound, lighting, grip equip. incl. stabilizer for steadicam-style shots. Exp. DP & crew. Color correction & full editing avail. (212) 529-1254.

**BETACAM SP:** Award-winning cameraman w/ BVW 507 field pkg. will work w/in your budget. Equip. pkg. incl. Vinten tripod, DP kit, wide-angle lens, Neuman KMR81, Lavs & Toyota 4-Runner. BVP7/BVW 35 pkg & full postprod. services. Hal (201) 662-7526.

**THE SCREENPLAY DOCTOR & the Movie Mechanic—** Professional story analysts/postprod. specialists will analyze your screenplay or treatment & evaluate your film-in-progress. Major studio & ind. background. Reasonable rates. (212) 219-9224.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** available for dramatic 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Credits include *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

**AWARD-WINNING CAMERAMAN** w/ 16mm ACL II & Betacam looking for challenging projects. Partial client list: ABC Sports, IBM, LIRR, Pitney Bowes, Wilderness Society. Complete crews avail., incl. sound & grip pkgs. Reasonable rates. Mike Carmine (718) 352-1287.

## Preproduction

**ONE-ON-ONE DOCUMENTARY WORKSHOP:** Emmy-Award winning PBS producer-writer, univ. prof., works w/ you as you make your own doc. From idea thru research, reporting, shooting, editing, writing & final cut. Rich Kotuk (212) 691-0025.

**FILMMAKER SEEKS PARTNER** to produce short "slice of life" comedies. Need someone good at writing. I am energetic, Emmy-winning film editor w/ passion for films & comedy. Send resumés or letters to: Wildflower Films, 240 W. 98 St., #6B, New York, NY 10025.

**INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER** looking for serious partner(s) for upcoming projects. Need editor, co-writer & producer. Do one thing or do it all. Maybe we can even make some bucks. Call Loch at Off Ramp Films, (718) 384-3555 (eve.); (212) 326-7729 (days).

**ATTN SCREENWRITERS:** 99% of unsolicited scripts are returned unread. For industry attn, submit your work to major competitions, grants & fellowships. For detailed list, send check (\$14.75) to Golden Wings Prods, P.O. Box 291460, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

## Postproduction

**OFF-LINE AT HOME!** Will rent 2 Sony 5850s w/RM440 or RM450 edit controller & monitors. Low monthly rates, \$650/wk. Answer your own phone & cut all night if you like! John (212) 245-1364 or 529-1254.

**3/4" SONY OFF-LINE** editing sys. delivered to you & installed: \$500/wk; \$1,600/mo. 5850, 5800, RM440,

Teac mixer, amplifier, 2 monitors, 2 speakers, black generator. Or edit in my space, 30th & 8th Ave. Betacam SP prod. pkg, \$450/day. Tom (212) 279-7003.

**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape. Precision guaranteed. \$30/400' (1000') camera roll. Student rates & pick up/delivery avail. Call NY's only Downtown Dailies Service (212) 431-9289.

**OFF-LINE** in comfort & privacy w/ or w/out editor on a JVC hi-fi VHS sys. Can make window dub transfers from Betacam, hi-8, or 3/4" to hi-fi VHS. Call Dan at EDITIT! (212) 628-0178.

**3/4" OFF-LINE VIDEO** system w/ time-code reader/generator. Comfortable, economical, convenient downtown location. Call (212) 941-1695.

**BRODSKY & TREADWAY:** Super 8 & regular 8mm film-to-video masters, scene-by-scene to 1" & Betacam. By appointment only. New tel.: (508) 948-7985.

**FOR RENT:** Sony 5850 edit system in own home or in cozy Greenwich Village office w/ private bathroom, kitchen & garden. \$700/wk or negotiable. (212) 727-1732.

**DESKTOP VIDEO SYSTEMS.** Complete hi-8/S-VHS pkgs under \$5,000. Incl. Sony hi-8 w/ time code, editing VCR, computer & frame-accurate decision list controller sys. Install, train, support. Cliff, Box 668, Peck Slip Sta., New York, NY 10272; (212) 285-1463.

**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND** film services. All S-8 prod., postprod., editing, sync sound, mix, multitrack, single &

double system sound editing, transfers, stills, striping, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of independents. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

**16MM CUTTING ROOMS:** 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

**STILL COZY & CHEAP,** but great, new 57th St. location. Rent our Sony 3/4" off-line system for only \$500/wk. Call Jane (212) 929-4795 or Deborah (212) 226-2579.

**NEGATIVE MATCHING:** 16 or 35mm. 40 yrs exp., all work guaranteed! Will beat any competitor's price. Video matchback to the AVID 1 Composer. Northeast Negative Matchers (413) 736-2177 or (800) 370-CUTS. Now accepting AMEX, VISA & MC.

**BARGAIN VHS OFF-LINE & HI-8 DUBBING:** \$10/hr editing system, hi-8 TC striping & VHS window dubs extra. Private comfortable space in accessible Park Slope, Brooklyn location. Exp'd editor also avail. Call Robbie (718) 783-8432.

**EDIT IN NEW ENGLAND COUNTRYSIDE.** Two fully-equipped 16mm edit rooms w/ 6-plate Steenbeck, KEM, sound transfers. Office/living space in brick Victorian. Edit help & prod. pkg avail. Very reasonable rates. GMP Films (413) 863-4754.



## PRODUCTION HEADACHES?

*If you're on a tight budget,  
don't pay more than you have to.*

## ELECTRIC FILM

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE & COMPILATION DOCS:** Locating, Researching & Using Historical Footage in Docs & Features. Sat. & Sun., Aug. 22 & 23. Contact: Maine Film & Video Workshops; 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** end-of-summer courses include: intro to 3/4" video editing, intermediate 3/4" video editing, grantwriting, Amiga Video Toaster, 3D Amiga imaging, Arriflex cameras, optical printing & location sound recording. For more info, contact: Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY CONGRESS**, Oct. 21-23, CA. Open invitation to filmmakers, distributors, programmers, critics, scholars & general public to participate in global dialogue about future of doc. filmmaking. General sessions & seminars on following topics: how to find funding for docs in US & global markets; distribution & marketing of docs: new aesthetics in doc. prod.; ethical standards; docs as tools for social change; censorship; preservation of doc. film & video tape; how to survive & thrive as doc. filmmaker; new imaging technologies. Field trips & screenings also included. For add'l info, contact: I.D.C., Rita Odum, coordinator, c/o Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (818) 244-7263; fax: (818) 244-7267.

**LATIN AMERICAN VIDEO MEETING**, Lima, Peru, Oct. 26-30. Self-convened meeting of Latin American Video Movement w/ debates on subjects such as: evaluations & tendencies of movement; new strategies; special committees on women, children, peasants, ecology & education. Parallel activities: Latin American video exhibition and Latin American workshop on Strategies & Methodologies for Training in Video Prod. and Use. US contact: Karen Ranucci (212) 463-0108.

**MEDIA CENTER** at Children's Museum of Manhattan will host programs in video for teachers of all grades & subjects. Courses will focus on use of video as educational tool. Full-day courses (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.) in editing, studio prod. & basic video prod. held over 3-day period wkly through Aug. 1 day, \$85; 2 days, \$160; 3 days, \$225. Contact: Betsy Newman (212) 721-1223 ext. 259 or Joseph Mara (718) 634-3823.

**MEDIA EXCHANGE SEMINAR** to be held Nov. 11. Panel discussion on factual programming & opportunities for coproducing areas of programming w/ Europe. Panel will incl. American & European executives. UK TV producers will be in attendance. Contact: Katrina Wood (212) 925-9834.

**MIDWEST PRODUCERS:** Labor Day weekend sunset cruise for film- & videomakers on Lake Michigan, featuring continuous screenings, dinner, dancing, open bar & special guests incl. directors, distributors, editors, exhibitors, producers, students, film- & videomakers, writers & media. Fee: \$60. Contact: Zanzibar Films, 230 N. Michigan Ave., #505, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 443-1540.

**911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER** will hold grantwriting workshop for first-time grantseekers on Aug. 19, 8-10 p.m. Contact: 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552; fax: (206) 682-7422.

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., August 8 for the October issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ARTICULATED SPECULATION**, 1/2-hr cable access program featuring experimental TV, video art, music videos, improvs & works-in-progress, seeks tapes that show unique or expressive point-of-view. Broadcast on Monmouth Cablevision covering central NJ, show has potential audience of 90,000. Send 3/4" or VHS tapes w/ SASE to: Anthony Stephenson, *Articulated Speculation*, 606B Willow Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712.

**BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION** seeks film & TV projects by black ind. filmmakers, directors or producers to be presented in *Black Vision* segment of *Screen Scene*, weekly 1/2-hr show that previews TV line-up & latest theatrical releases. Contact: *Screen Scene*, Black Entertainment Television, 1899 9th St. NE, Washington, DC 20018; (202) 636-2400.

**BRAVO'S COMMUNITY CINEMA** program will permit local cable operators to preempt nat'l feed once per mo. to showcase work of local ind. filmmakers. All selected films eligible to enter nat'l community cinema competition cosponsored by Bravo & IFP/West. Winning film will be broadcast on Bravo & receive \$5,000. Bravo has also created Unfinished Stories, annual telethon designed to raise awareness & monies for AIDS care giving & research organizations. Bravo invites submission of videotapes chronicling battle w/ AIDS at local level & stories of indivs assuming leading role in fight. For more info., contact: Amy Briamonte, Bravo, 150 Crossways Park W., Woodbury, NY 11797.

**CATHODE CAFE** seeks short video art interstitials to play btwn alternative music videos. Broadcast on Seattle's TCI/Viacom Channel 29, Sundays 9:30 p.m. 3/4" preferred, 1/2" accepted. Contact: Stan LePard (206) 937-2353.

**EASTERN STANDARD TIME PRODUCTIONS**, non-profit collective, seeks videos for broadcast on *Young, Gifted & Broke*, thrice wkly Manhattan Cable TV program. Works must be under 25 min. VHS, S-VHS, 3/4" or 1/2" videotape w/ return postage & signed release. Contact: Tom Becker, Eastern Standard Time Prods, P.O. Box 102, New York, NY 10009-0102; (212) 777-3741.

**FRAMES PER SECOND**, monthly fest of ind. films & videos seeks works of 20 min. or less. Screenings held 2nd Thursday of each mo. at L.A.'s Highland Grounds, 742 N. Highland. Send VHS tapes & info about yourself & film to: Frames Per Second, c/o Travis Zimmerman, 748 N. Hudson, Ste. #4, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 464-6836.

**IMAGE UNION**, US's longest running regularly scheduled program for ind. producers, seeks 3/4" tapes for broadcast in doc., narrative, animation, comedy & experimental cats. Contact: Jamie Ceaser, WTTW, 5400 N. St., Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-5000.

**LATINO COLLABORATIVE AT DCTV** seeks works by Latino film- & videomakers for ongoing series of bi-monthly screenings. Send 3/4" or VHS tapes to: Latino Collaborative, 280 Broadway, Rm. 412, New York, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

**NEW TELEVISION**, joint series of public broadcasters WGBH-Boston & WNET-New York, seeks work using medium &/or technology in artistic ways. Broad range of genres w/ strong ind. visions accepted. Must be under 30 min. & should not have received major broadcast. \$110/min. Submit 3/4" or VHS cassettes of finished or in-progress works to: Lois Bianchi, Thirteen/WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-3137.

**PBS' THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE** will no longer accept proposals yr-round. Submissions will now only be accepted for review during the months of Oct. & April. For guidelines, call (617) 492-2777 ext. 4313.

**P.O.V.**, nat'l primetime ind. doc. series, is preparing for 6th season on PBS during summer of '93. Films & tapes eligible if completed since July 1, 1989 (or are in fine cut) & have not already been submitted or broadcast nationally. Acquisition fee: \$375/min. Deadline: Sept. 1. For guidelines & submission form, contact: *P.O.V.*, 330 W. 58th St., Ste. 301, New York, NY 10019; (212) 397-0970.

**QUICK FLICKS**, nonprofit cable access TV show, seeks short subject drama, doc., animation & experimental films/videos. Send 3/4" tapes to: Quick Flicks, c/o Eugene Haynes, 814 10th Ave., #3A, New York, NY 10019; (212) 642-5236.

**REEL TIME**, monthly film series at P.S. 122, seeks new experimental, doc. & narrative films. Submit super 8 & 16mm only. Contact: Jim Browne, c/o Reel Time, P.S. 122, 150 1st Ave., New York, NY 10009.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** seeks current catalogs & mailing lists from distributors & membership organizations for women of color database. Contact: Helen Lee, project director, Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606; fax: (212) 925-2052.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**BROADCAST SUPERVISOR** of broadcast facilities for Dept. of Journalism, New York Univ. Job incl. ENG camera & 3/4" computerized editing for stories aired on WNYC. Must have knowledge of studio news prod. & facilities, basic technical knowledge of video for basic maintenance & troubleshooting. Other responsibilities incl. training & supervising student teaching assistants, training students in basic ENG prod. techniques & assisting professors in studio classes. Req: 2 yrs field exp. Please send resumé. Must have reel for interview.

# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

## 7 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Conservation Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

Person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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Here

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625 Broadway  
9th floor  
New York, NY  
10012

## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### Equipment Insurance

Equipment coverage for all of your equipment worldwide whether owned or leased.

### Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### Nationwide Car Rentals

AIVF membership provides discounts on car rentals from major national rental agencies.

### Mastercard Plan

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### Facets Multimedia Video Rentals

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## Join AIVF Today.....

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers—providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

### Individual membership

10 issues of *The Independent*  
Access to all plans and discounts  
Festival/Distribution/Library services  
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Discounted admission to seminars  
Tape and publication discounts  
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Vote and run for office on board of directors

### Student membership

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### Library membership

10 issues of *The Independent*  
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Free *MPE Guide*  
PLUS: Special notice of upcoming publications

### Nonprofit Organizational membership

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Join AIVF today and get a one-year subscription to *The Independent*.

### Rates

(Canada, Mexico, US, PR)

- \$25/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$45/individual
- \$75/library
- \$100/nonprofit organization
- \$150/business & industry
- Add \$18 for 1st class mailing

### Foreign Rates

(Outside North America)

- \$40/student (enclose copy of student ID)
- \$60/individual
- \$90/library
- \$115/nonprofit organization
- \$165/business & industry
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Charge by phone: (212) 473-3400.

Contact: Prof. Marcia Rock, NYU Journalism, 10 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-7985.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** has positions avail. for film & video instructors at Film/Video Arts, largest nonprofit media arts center in New York City. Courses range from basic filmmaking & video prod. to non-linear editing & line producing. Instructors should be working professionals w/ teaching exp. Artists of color or from underserved communities encouraged to apply. Send resumé &/or proposals to Media Training Director, Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE** at Film/Video Arts. Min. 6-mos. commitment. Interns receive free media classes, access to equipment & facilities in exchange for 15 hrs/wk work. Film/video knowledge helpful but not required. Plan for ind. project in film or video necessary. Minorities strongly encouraged to apply. Appls accepted at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**SUBMIT PROPOSALS** for possible exhibition. Seeking work by indiv. artists, curators & guest venues. Student submissions not accepted. Contact: Foundation for Art Resources, Gone to Far Exhibitions, P.O. Box 26A01, Los Angeles, CA 90026; (213) 289-4181.

**VOYAGERS GROUP**, member managed, corporate underwritten cooperative of ind. TV & print professionals based in Annapolis, MD, seeks producer/director w/ strong doc. background to become associate or full member. Applicants must have 15 yrs combined education & exp. w/nat'l & int'l credits & awards. Send resumé, sample reel & list of credits to Organization Committee, Voyagers Group, 49 Old Solomons Island Rd., Ste. 300 Annapolis, MD 21401; (410) 573-1400.

## Publications

**ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKING FOUNDATIONS 1992**, comprehensive guide to 250 most significant private & community foundations that give environmental grants. 500 pp. \$40 + \$4 shipping & handling. NY residents add 7%. Send orders to: Environmental Data Research Institute, 797 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, New York, NY 14620-2946.

**FOUNDATION CENTER** offers *Corporate Foundation Profiles* (\$125) & *National Guide to Funding in Arts & Culture* (\$125). Contact: Foundation Center, 79 5th Ave., New York, NY 10003-3076; (800) 424-9836.

**MEDIA ACTION KIT** by Rick Sheridan describes step-by-step how to work w/ mass media. Chapters on developing effective press packet, getting on radio & TV talk shows, inexpensive radio promotion, etc. \$19.95. Contact: Media Distribution Co-op, 1745 Louisiana St., Lawrence, KS 66044.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' 26th Annual Report** is now avail. Book contains brief descriptions of endowment programs & complete listing of all endowment grants. Report is free while supplies last. Contact: NEH 1991 Annual Report, Rm. 406, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506.

**PROGRAM FOR ART ON FILM** announces publication of *Art on Screen*, 1st directory in field in over 15 yrs. Book is guide to over 900 films & videotapes about visual arts & incl. complete filmographic info & detailed

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**PBS's The American Experience** will no longer accept proposals year-round. Due to the volume of proposals we receive, submissions will now only be accepted for review during the months of October and April.

Proposals sent at other times will be returned and producers will be invited to resubmit during review months. For guidelines, please call  
**The American Experience**  
at 617-492-2777, ext. 4313.



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**EDITING IN HOUSE:** BETACAM SP / AMIGA-TOASTER 2 combination at 3/4" SP prices! Bump HI-8, S-VHS, OR 3/4" TO BETA SP in house adding SMPTE TC. Edit off line BETA SP to BETA SP, \$ 40 hr w ed. and TOASTER 2, \$15 hr self-service; Edit component BETA SP to BETA SP (cuts only) same prices. Includes AMILINK computer editing with EDL..Edit on line BETA SP w TOASTER 2 DVE and auto assembly mastering: \$65 hr w ed, w A/B roll \$75 hr . HI-8 control track off line editing: \$10 hr .self service!

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**CENTER FOR NEW TV** offers 1992 New TV Awards. New TV Prod./Postprod. Grant provides free access to video equipment services (\$45,000 value) in 3 categories: young artists (16-21), nonprofit organizations & general (producers, students, video enthusiasts); New TV Consulting Grant provides consultant's time & services to 5 artists to aid in developing fundraising, income, and marketing plans (\$800 max. value/recipient); Deadline: September 4. For guidelines & appl. contact: Center for New TV, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 951-6868

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**MEDIA ALLIANCE** will award 3 \$5,000 fellowships to emerging artists working in film, video & related electronic arts. Fellowship money may be used for advanced professional training, equipment & facilities rental, supplies, travel & living expenses & membership fees for professional media arts associations or centers. Fellows encouraged, but not required, to use funds for new work. Fellows will have opp. to receive consultation from professional media artist mentors during fellowship period. Must be indiv. media artist, age 30 or under, economically disadvantaged resident of New York State, based in New York City during fellowship period & have completed college or formal training. Deadline: Oct. 1. Fellowship period: Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, '93. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o Thirteen/WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

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**WOMEN'S STUDIO WORKSHOP** has residencies for art writers avail. for 1- to 3-month periods. Designed as opp. for artists, writers &/or critics to have time to develop new ideas about art & contemporary culture. Deadline: Dec. 15. Send resumé, 3 writing samples, letter of intent & SASE to: WSW, Box 489, Rosendale, NY 12472; (914) 658-9133.

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## TVC UPDATE

As reported in the last issue of *The Independent* ["TVC Traps Negatives," July 1992], TVC Precision Film and Video in New York City has closed due to financial difficulties. Filmmakers wishing to retrieve negatives from TVC's vault may do so by phoning (212) 642-5533 and leaving a message; messages will be returned. Formal requests for the release of negatives may be faxed directly to the vault at (212) 459-9431. A copy of appropriate identification (individual or corporate depending on how the film is registered with the lab) must accompany each request, and balances owed must be paid before negatives will be released. A third party may retrieve negatives on behalf of a filmmaker but must present a written, signed request and photo identification from the filmmaker at the time of retrieval. *The Independent* was assured at press time that negatives were not being destroyed or thrown out, but filmmakers are urged to retrieve works as soon as possible since the current arrangement is informal and could change.

## INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH MEMBERSHIP

AIVF has established a new membership category for business & industry members. In addition to the many benefits enjoyed by the AIVF membership such as *The Independent*, discounts on publications, and information services, business members receive a monthly listing in *The Independent* and invitations to special events. For more information on how your business or industry can join, contact AIVF (212) 473-3400.

AIVF is pleased to welcome **Delphis**, an independent production company run by Roger Hatfield and Molly McMahan, in Cortland, Ohio, as new business/industry members.

## FIVE SPONSORS

FIVF extends its hearty thanks to new sponsors **Daniel Edelman** and **George Stoney** whose generosity helps keep our programs strong! AIVF's new membership category for sponsors offers the benefits of individual membership plus invitations to special events and a monthly listing in *The Independent*. For more information on how you can become a sponsor, contact (212) 473-3400.

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to AIVF recipients of the **New York Foundation for the Arts Artists' Fellowships**: Robby Henson, Tony Avalos, Anita Gonzalez, Barbara Hammer, Thomas Allen Harris, Jr., Kay Hines, Yun-ah Hong, Heather MacDonald, Branda Miller, and Rea Tajiri. The **Rockefeller Foundation** honored AIVF members Rea Tajiri, Camille Billops, Indu Krishnan, Judith and David MacDougall, Michelle

Parkerson, and Chris Spotted Eagle with grants from its Intercultural Film/Video Program. The **Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium** has awarded Chris Spotted Eagle and Sandra Osawa grants to fund their respective projects *Culture Robbers* and *Jim Pepper*. Chris Spotted Eagle was also the recipient of a grant from the **Minnesota Humanities Commission**. The National Latino Communications Center has received a grant of \$100,000 from the **Ford Foundation** to commence work on the documentary series *¡Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Jose Luis Ruiz will serve as executive producer on the series and Paul Espinosa and Hector Galan will work on the producing team.



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## THE INDEPENDENT

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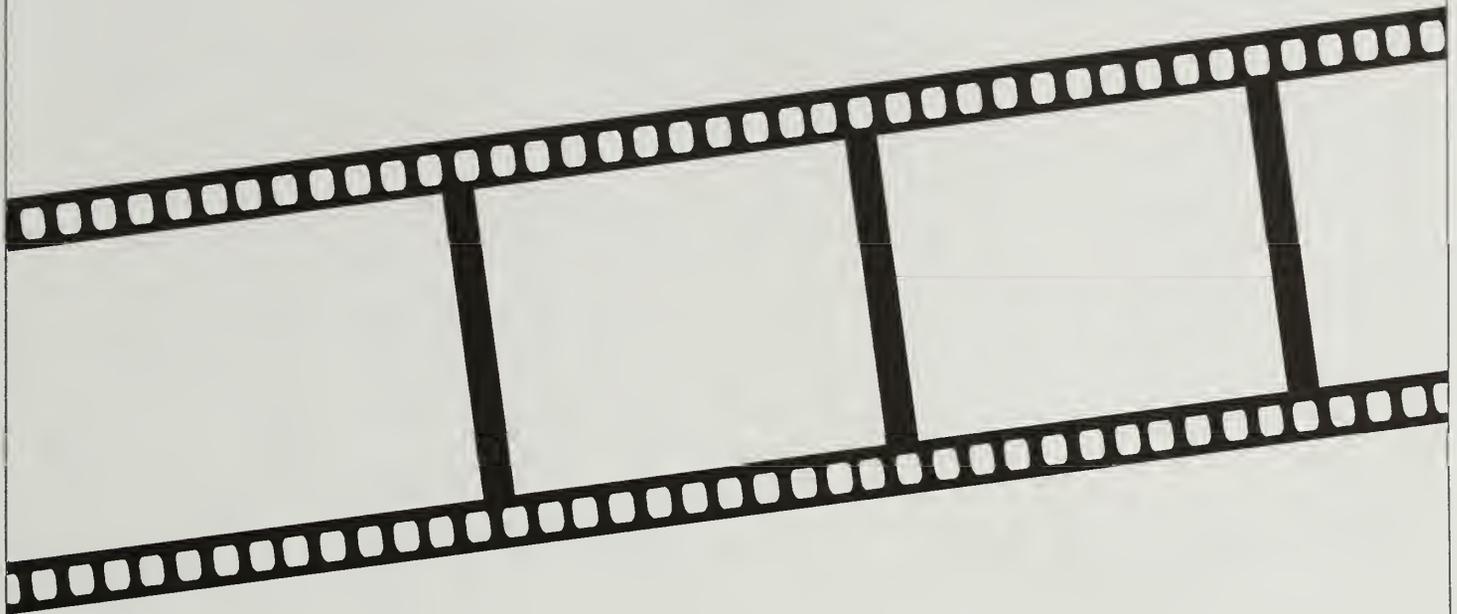
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## NATURAL ALLIES

To the editor:

We want to thank DeeDee Halleck and *The Independent* for the thoughtful Field Report suggesting a new collaboration between ITVS and media art centers ["Beyond Simi Valley: ITVS and the Future of Alternative TV," August/September 1992].

DeeDee's right: New visions and approaches to the television medium are more important than ever. Media art centers can provide tremendous leadership and creative resources as we develop, in her words "new contexts within public television." ITVS and media art centers are natural allies, and we're looking forward to exploring and implementing productive working relationships.

ITVS needs and wants to hear from the field. For single projects, we ask that you work within our Open Call procedure. If a series concept is evolving, our Extended Play initiative is accepting proposals through November 30.

New approaches, critiques, and programming concepts, such as Deedee's challenge, are welcome any time. Any suggestion informed by her level of commitment and creativity is genuinely appreciated and will be rigorously considered. And good ideas about how to involve regional production entities specifically—including the proposal for "State of the Union"—are high on our list. Write to us at our new address: 333 Sibley Street, Suite 200, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

John Schott  
executive director, ITVS

## THE EQUALITY MYTH

To the editor:

I've found in America that while the women's movement and feminism are emphasized, in practical life men tend to ignore women completely. Even though there's an equivalent excellence between men and women filmmakers, discussion centers on men: men's films are shown, articles are written about men.

For example, the article about Asian films at the Vancouver Film Festival ["Chinese Menu: Vancouver's Cinema of the Pacific Rim," April 1992] didn't mention any of the women filmmakers who are very important—Fifth Generation or otherwise—since none were programmed in the festival.

Where women are concerned, Zhang Nuanxin's recent great film *Good Morning, Beijing* (also called *Budding Desire*) has only been shown at the Montreal World Film Festival, as far as I know. Hu Mei's *Army Nurse* was the first Chinese film to talk about repression in a working environment. Her very important and sensitive films—certainly the equivalent of those by Chen Kaige and Tian Zhuangzhuang—haven't received

the international recognition (dispersed by a handful of men) accorded the films of Fifth Generation men.

In China there are proportionally more women filmmakers than in other countries. But their films are disregarded here by the men who choose what's to be shown.

Because Chinese women filmmakers aren't getting the recognition they deserve, they don't get financial support from abroad—so they can't make their films of preference, as Zhang Yimou, Tian Zhangzhuang, and Chen Kaige—men with foreign backing—are able to do. These women directors now either work within the confines of Chinese censorship or are unable to make films at all.

Xiao-Yen Wang  
Beijing-San Francisco Film Group  
Richmond, California

Bérénice Reynaud responds:

I want to thank Xiao-Yen Wang for her letter, on two counts: first, because it will allow me to be in touch with her and the Beijing-San Francisco Film Group, something I had wanted to do since I saw *Blank Point*, Wang's challenging tape on transexualism, at the Museum of Modern Art last winter; second, because the point she makes is extremely relevant not only to the field, but to my work.

As a feminist critic/curator, I sometimes get tired of asking again and again, when I write a festival review, why so few works by women are represented. The answer is that there are still too few women curators. My piece was intended to convey some information and enthusiasm about recent filmmaking developments in Asian countries, and I felt I didn't have enough space to deal with gender issues. I would like to add, however, that the work of Chinese women filmmakers is getting greater recognition in the West. Wendy Lidell of the International Film Circuit has been circulating not only Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Horse Thief*, but also Peng Xiaolian's *Women's Story* (and asked me to write a catalog essay about the film). Last year, the Créteil International Women's Film Festival in Paris, France, organized a section on Asian women (on which I also collaborated) which was hailed as "the most exciting part of the festival" by the French press. We wanted to include Zhang Nuanxin's *Good Morning, Beijing*, but the Montreal Film Festival insisted on having total exclusivity for 1991—which may be why Vancouver didn't show the film either. At Créteil, we had to wait until last spring to finally screen it.

Tony Rayns, being a male critic/curator, cannot help being gender-biased I guess, but things are not that black and white. His selection included *My American Grandson*, by Hong Kong director Ann Hui, which I did not mention. And at the last Rotterdam Film Festival, he organized a special screening of a videotape of *Bloody Dawn* by Li Shaohong, a Fifth Generation woman

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COVER: Since the completion of his first feature film three years ago, director-writer Hal Hartley has earned an international reputation for his madcap existentialist comedies about suburban malaise. With the release of *Simple Men* this fall, Hartley breaks into the big time while his characters once more plot how to break out of conventional lives. Chris Cooke, William Sage, and Mark Bailey (left to right) are among the actors featured in the film. In this issue, Ellen Levy profiles the director, his working methods, and his muses. Photo courtesy Fine Line Features.

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by Harvey Braunstein

# All video is not created equal

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director, which had been banned for exportation.

It is true that the work of women filmmakers from all over the world is often bypassed. This is why we need more women's film festivals, more female curators, more articles written on gender bias, and more letters like yours.

## HI-8 IS GREAT

*To the editor:*

Your June cover story on hi-8 video was a timely and important one ["Hi-8: Videomakers Take the Plunge"]. However, of the quotes attributed to me, one was a misquote and another omitted part of the point.

First, I was quoted as saying, "Video is much harder to light than film." As someone who has freelanced as a director of photography for the last dozen years while making my own documentaries, it's an especially embarrassing attribution. What I actually said was, "Hi-8 is much harder to shoot well than Betacam." This is particularly true of the one-chip, high-end consumer models (like the Canon A-1 Digital), which are far less forgiving of contrast and lack "zebra bars" to indicate excessive highlight levels. My advice to producers and directors considering hi-8 for serious professional purposes is: Don't be fooled. Just because it's easy to shoot with hi-8 doesn't mean that anyone can shoot hi-8 well. Make sure the person behind the camera understands the limitations of the format.

As for the second quote, I did say that with my new documentary project, done entirely on hi-8, "I'll be able to do a show reel for under \$5,000." What the writer strangely omitted was the fact that that \$5,000 would cover the cost of shooting the entire documentary as well as the sample reel! It's certainly a stronger point in hi-8's favor.

One additional point on the advantages of hi-8: After five months of sporadic shooting on that same hi-8 project, it recently became clear to me that the story wasn't developing as I'd hoped. When an exciting new project came along, I set the first aside. Despite having shot over seven hours of footage, I had spent less than \$200 on it. Thus, hi-8 not only encourages a documentary film- or videomaker to leap into shooting when inspiration hits, it also makes it feasible to divorce oneself from a project should inspiration wane or circumstances change.

*Doug Block  
New York City*

*To the editor:*

Congratulations to you and your staff at *The Independent* for the fine June cover story. Indeed, hi-8 is here for good.

We were disappointed, however, that the still photographers who did work for *The 90's* were not given credit. They were: Matthew Gilson (cover photo); Kevin Smith (p. 21 bungee jumper); and Jody Sibert (p. 21 photo of *The 90's* correspondent Nancy Cain).

Thanks, and continued good luck on your important and prestigious publication.

*Patrick Creadon  
assistant executive producer, The 90's  
Chicago, Illinois*

*The editor responds:*

The omission was an oversight. Our apologies to the photographers, who should get credit where credit is due.

## SHORTS SHRIFTED

*To the editor:*

I was rather surprised that Eileen Wilkinson's article on short films ["Short Shrift: In Search of Short Film Venues," May 1992] and their possible airing on television did not mention Coe Film Associates.

As far as I can tell, you set out to tell a comprehensive story about shorts, but you failed to note a salient factor in this business. Actually, Coe Films was the company that first introduced shorts to cable via HBO as interstitial material. We have been a very important factor in the distribution of shorts ever since 1973. Bernice Coe founded this business on the basis of short films and has been successfully distributing them as well as documentaries from that time on.

*Beverly Freeman  
director of independent acquisitions  
Coe Film Associates  
New York City*

*Eileen Wilkinson responds:*

The article "Short Shrift: In Search of Short Film Venues" was never intended, and expresses as much by its very title, to be a comprehensive history of the making and selling of the short film.

Thank you for your letter and I hope that some readers will benefit by knowledge of your organization.

## ERRATA

In the article "Hell to Pay: *Damned in the USA* Countersues Wildmon Over Exhibition Rights" [July 1992] the ACLU's Arts Censorship Project was incorrectly listed as a plaintiff in the suit. The ACLU was in fact a counsel for Human Rights Watch, which has shown *Damned in the USA* at its film festivals in New York and Los Angeles in recent months.

The article "Putting Media on the MAP: The Media Alternatives Project" [August/September 1992] neglected to mention the assistant editor of MAP's book *Mediating History*, Kimberly Everett, who also authored the section on alternative media resources.

In our August/September issue we published an article that contained a quote characterizing David Horowitz as "one of the biggest liars in public life." *The Independent* had no basis for this characterization. We regret publishing this statement.

## FIVE THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film supports a variety of programs and services for independent producers, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following individuals and businesses:

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**METROPOLITAN**  
*by Whit Stillman*

**SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT**  
*by Spike Lee*

**WELCOME BACK TO  
THE FIVE AND DIME**  
*by Robert Altman*

**WORKING GIRLS**  
*by Lizzie Borden*

## NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

### Vanderbilt Television News Archive Faces Closure

The crisis at the Vanderbilt Television News Archive has been averted, but the situation remains serious. For months this spring rumors had been flying that the Nashville, Tennessee-based archive would close its doors in July, a victim of a depressed economy and a shrinking endowment from Vanderbilt University. The archive, which provides an invaluable service to filmmakers and researchers looking for television news footage, presently is operating with a 38 percent reduction in staff. Although taping continues, the archive's indexing service (which has been authorized to continue operations through December) is about two months behind schedule, and the service of making compilations for researchers has been discontinued. If new funding is not found before January 1993, the archive may well yet shut its doors forever.

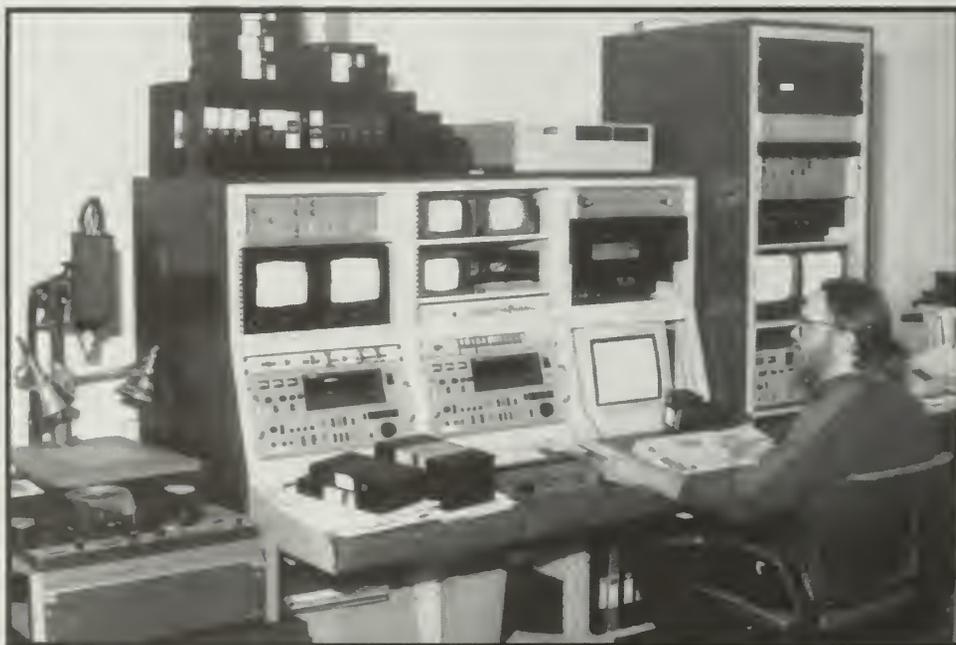
Motion Picture and Recorded Sound Division at the National Archives, and others in the archival field. Vanderbilt not only lends tapes for viewing, but also compiles selections of TV news clips on request. Furthermore, its Television New Index and Abstract provides an extremely useful service to media researchers looking for footage of news events and personalities.

Unfortunately archival management costs have skyrocketed in the last few years, and income from services provided by Vanderbilt's Television News Archive have lagged far behind expenses. The indexing service in particular has drained financial resources, since it is both labor and cost intensive. In the last two years the archive has run a \$300,000 deficit annually, which the university covered. But as far as the trustees of Vanderbilt University are concerned, the archive needs to be put on a firmer financial basis.

At the end of last year, an internal decision was made to put the archive on notice that the university would no longer subsidize its operation. Making the archive self-sufficient by raising fees to cover expenses is not an option, according to John Lynch, Vanderbilt's television archivist, since the fees would be prohibitive. The person power necessary for taping, indexing, and preservation of materials makes archival work so expensive that only outside subsidies make operations feasible. Since 70 percent of Vanderbilt's archive users are from the outside community, the university's president has argued that funding should come from elsewhere.

According to Jeff Carr, vice chancellor of the university, fundraising efforts have so far been unsuccessful. One foundation is interested in funding the indexing service, and there are discussions concerning the creation of a national consortium of universities that would help fund the taping and archiving. The participating institutions would in return receive copies of tapes for local use. Another effort by the archives and university envisions the creation of an endowment separate from the university specifically to support the archive.

If the archive does close, it is unlikely another could replace it. Although the Library of Congress has purchased duplicate copies from Vanderbilt in the past several years using the National Endowment for the Humanities and in-house funds, it is improbable that they would be able to duplicate Vanderbilt's efforts. According to Paul Spehr, deputy chief of the Motion Picture Division, Vanderbilt operates much more cheaply than the Library of Congress which has to pay



The Vanderbilt Television News Archive, which has recorded all national nightly newscasts since 1968, may cease operations due to budgetary cutbacks.

Photo Denny Adcock, courtesy Photographic Archives Vanderbilt University

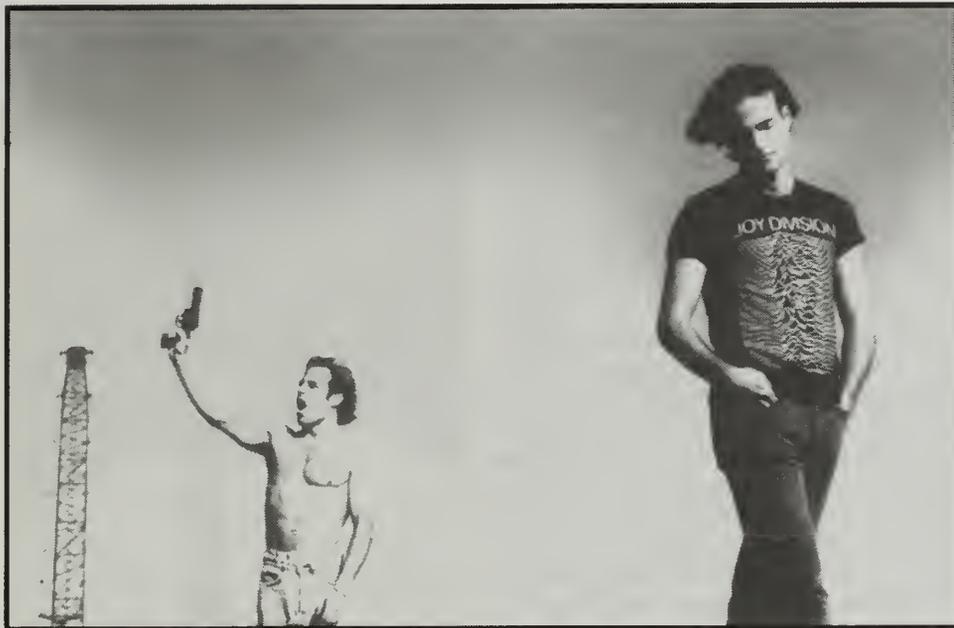
Founded in 1968, the Vanderbilt Television News Archive was designed to fill a void by preserving the nightly television news broadcasts of the major networks, CBS, NBC, and ABC, as well as the political conventions. Soon the archive was not only recording the news (it added the CNN evening news in 1982), it was also making tapes available to researchers, filmmakers, academics, government agencies, and business persons who were denied access to the major networks' archives. The Vanderbilt archive is considered the authoritative source in the television news field, according to Bill Murphey, head of the



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professional wages for the work that students perform at Vanderbilt. He also notes that copyright deposits from the national networks are sporadic at best, whereas Vanderbilt tapes all news broadcasts continuously in house. The National Archives and Research Administration only receives master tapes of the evening news from CBS.

If the Vanderbilt Television News Archive ceases to exist in 1993, the Library of Congress might begin taping the evening news, but it would have no public mandate to make the tapes available, nor an interest in comprehensive taping or providing indexing services. In that worst case scenario, television news researchers would find themselves back in a pre-1968 situation, despite the belief of the general public that "everything is now available on video."

JAN-CHRISTOPHER HORAK

*Jan-Christopher Horak is senior curator of film collections at George Eastman House.*

## **HOMOSEXUALITY=PORNOGRAPHY, NOT!**

Avoid Dubs, Inc. if you're making copies of your film or video in Los Angeles. As independent filmmaker Gregg Araki discovered, this lab equates homosexuality with pornography by refusing to process work with queer content. When Araki's new, critically acclaimed feature, *The Living End*, was delivered by producer Marcus Hu to Dubs, Inc. for VHS copies, Hu was told the company would not accept the order. Earlier in the week, the same order had been improperly transferred with low audio levels, and Hu wanted the dubs redone. However, Jordan Jacobs, the operations manager, informed Hu that the film was "pornography" and that Dubs, Inc. should never have agreed to take the job in the first place.

"You can have Michael Douglas giving head to some woman on screen but you can't have two

**The protagonists in Gregg Araki's *The Living End* are taunted and abused by gay-bashers. Araki, too, faced discrimination by an L.A. duplication lab that refused his film because of its gay content.**

Courtesy October Films

men kissing each other in the same frame," Araki protests. *The Living End*, Araki's third feature, is the story of two HIV-positive men on the road, in love, and on a mission. Jon has just received his diagnosis when he meets a hunky hustler named Luke who's much more cavalier about the opportunities and challenges the crisis presents. Opposite sides of the same coin, they challenge each other's flirtations with death.

Although Araki doesn't have a regular dubbing house, a lab in the middle of the San Fernando Valley, "further out than Burbank, in the Republican Heartland," he says, has been processing his fourth feature-in-progress, *Totally F\*\*\*ed Up*. Unlike Dubs, Inc., which ironically is located in the middle of Hollywood, other labs have never given Araki a problem. "This really knocked me for a loop," says Araki. "I've never heard of it happening before." Araki considered bringing suit against Dubs, Inc. but put it off to focus on his current film and a rigorous press tour. "I'm not hugely established," he adds, "but if I were some kid fresh out of film school with a gay movie and they said it was pornography, I would be crushed. There are others who are not so impervious to harm, and I'm concerned about them, too."

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

*Catherine Saalfield is a film- and videomaker, curator, and consultant.*

## **YALE INAUGURATES BLACK FILM COLLECTION**

The Yale Film Study Center at Yale University has expanded its research facilities to include the

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newly established Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis Black Film Collection. The collection is a library of over 400 motion pictures relevant to the study of African American history and culture and spans 70 years in motion picture history. From the "black audience films" of the twenties through the forties by William Alexander, Jack Kemp, and Oscar Micheaux to the new black productions of the nineties by Charles Burnett, Euzhan Palcy, and Spike Lee, the collection provides an overview of African American life as seen through the eye of the camera.

The collection is primarily a teaching resource for the African and Afro-American Studies Program at Yale University and contains material of importance to the fields of American studies, English, film studies, history, music, political science, and women's studies. The films were purchased by the African and Afro-American Studies Program with a grant from the Ford Foundation and supplemented by titles from the Yale Film Study Center's holdings. The collection consists of black and white and color feature films, shorts, fiction films, documentaries, and animation on 16mm, videotapes, and laserdiscs, by black producers and writers. Films are available for class use as well as individual research, and the center houses two screening rooms and study carrels for viewings.

In addition to black-produced works, the collection includes films made by white directors, producers, and writers that have one or more of the following elements: all-black casts, leading or cameo performances by black actors, artists, musicians or dancers, the portrayal of the life or work of an African American, or subject matter of significance to African American history and culture. An annotated catalog will be available in the near future.

The Film Study Center entrusted the bulk of the decision-making process to Hazel Carby, a professor of African and Afro-American Studies. Relying on recommendations from her peers at the center and distribution catalogs and periodicals, Carby has amassed numerous titles relating to black culture that together indicate an imaginative and rigorous approach to the definition and support of black film. Works by Marlon Riggs, William Greaves, Zeinabu irene Davis, Melvin Van Peebles, and Julie Dash; documentaries on Toni Morrison, Paul Robeson, Sarah Vaughan, and Alvin Ailey; and black misrepresentation in major productions such as *Birth of a Nation*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *Showboat* are all accounted for in the collection.

Director of the Yale Film Study Center Michael Kerbel considers the collection "one of the most significant aspects of the film center's holdings. I find, as do many of my colleagues, that the most important new filmmakers are African American, and I am proud of the fact that we have not only recent black films but many older films of the black cinema."

TROY SELVARATNAM

## DONALD WOODS: 1957-1992

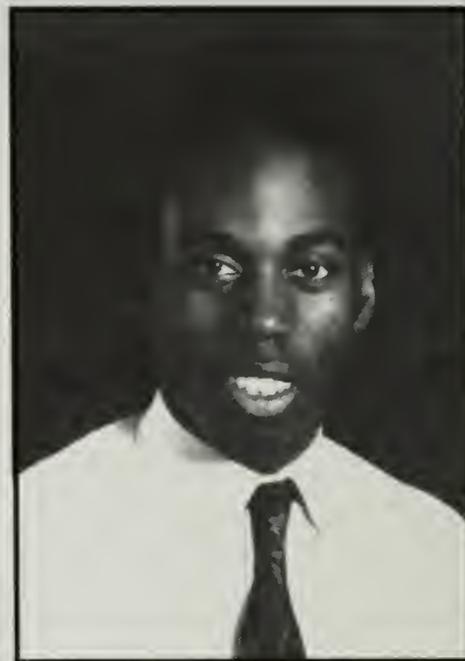
Donald Woods, executive director of AIDS-FILMS, a nonprofit AIDS prevention video production company, died June 25 at the age of 34 from an HIV-related illness. Woods, who was hired in 1990 as part of the production company's experiment with multiculturalism, led the organization towards community accountability and responsiveness to the shifting challenges of the HIV epidemic.

At the time of his death, Woods had completed major fundraising for three videos for the AIDSFILMS Library, launched development of two videos targeting heterosexually-identified black men and black gay men, and was planning a third to target heterosexual Latinos. Woods significantly expanded the library's approach to community involvement, steering the organization and the HIV prevention video production field into a new relationship with its audiences by involving not just professionals but consumers in each step of the filmmaking process. Collaboratively produced with the community service organization Gay Men of African Descent, the black gay men's video forms the centerpiece of an ambitious project to foster safer sex peer workshops for black gay men, using video and companion materials as community organizing resources.

Woods came to AIDSFILMS after five years at the Brooklyn Children's Museum where he was responsible for expanding the museum's community programs and strengthening the institution's relationship with parents and children in its Crown Heights neighborhood.

In addition to his accomplishments as an arts administrator, Woods was nationally known as a cultural artist and activist. He is featured in Marlon Riggs' recent documentary on black gay men living with HIV, *Non, je ne regrette rien*, and his poem *Prescription* frames the work. His poetry is also used as text in Riggs' other videos on black gay experience, *Anthem* and *Tongues Untied*, for which he was also credited as a production assistant. Woods served on the Steering Committee of Art Against Apartheid and worked with the Blackheart Collective and on the board of its successor, Other Countries: Black Gay Men Writing. In 1989 he directed *Acquired Visions: Seeing Ourselves Through AIDS*, a writing-based performance piece by Other Countries which made experimental use of interactive video. *Acquired Visions* was presented at the Studio Museum in Harlem, Syracuse University, and Yale University. Woods performed his poetry in various locations and published it in several collections. In 1988 he helped form Sons and Daughters, an a cappella quintet performing freedom and gospel music.

Born in Jamaica, Queens, to Barbadian parents, Woods attended the Parsons School of Design and Sangamon State University and studied poetry with Audre Lorde and music with Ysaye Barnwell. He made his home in Prospect Heights



Donald Woods

Courtesy AIDSFILMS

and Fort Greene in Brooklyn for the past decade.

COLIN ROBINSON

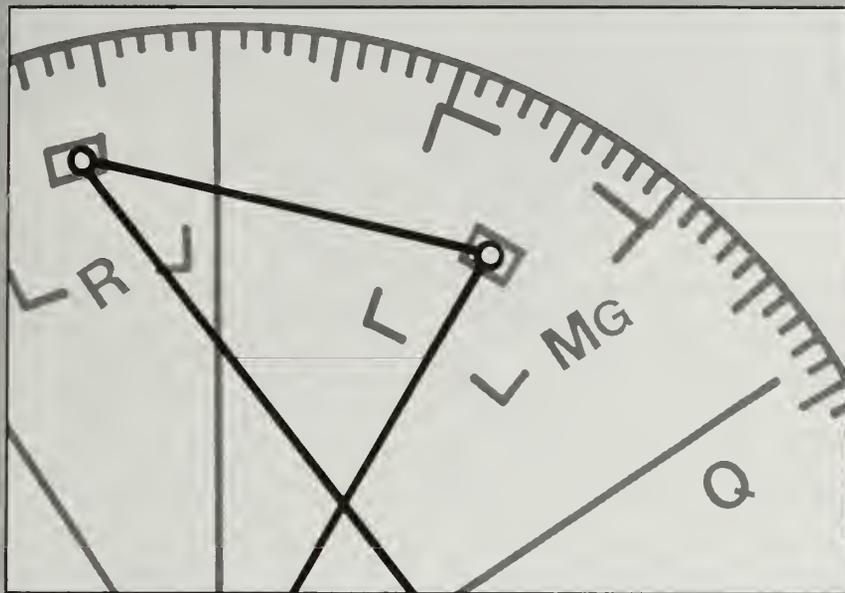
Colin Robinson is a writer and community organizer who works as an HIV public policy advocate. He was New York field producer of *Tongues Untied*.

## SEQUELS

Despite pressure to veto the bill reauthorizing funding for FY 1994-96 for the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)**, President Bush signed the measure into law on August 26 ["Uncivil Wars: The Conservative Assault on Public Broadcasting" August/September 1992]. Bowing to pressure from public TV's critics, the bill includes language requiring CPB's board of directors to evaluate the system's "objectivity and balance" and, in the process, invite public comment. The process by which CPB will gather and evaluate data will be defined by mid-September, and the first annual report is due in January. People for the American Way cautions that three months is not sufficient time for completion of a thorough and scholarly evaluation.

Debate on the appropriations bill for the specific level of funding for FY 1994 is expected to take place through mid-October—and congressional opponents of public broadcasting are expected to reiterate many of the same critiques and accusations heard during reauthorization.

In a related development, Lawrence Jarvik has left the Heritage Foundation, where he was Bradley resident scholar, and is working with the Washington, DC-based thinktank the Capital Research Center, and is continuing to work with David Horowitz and Peter Collier on *Comint*, published by the Los Angeles-based Committee on Media Integrity.



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## INITIATION RITES

## The Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema

RUTH AND ARCHIE PERLMUTTER

The First Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, held May 6-17, was an unexpected hit with the public. In a city where local festivals have often met with sparse attendance and wan enthusiasm, this first-time festival demonstrated what a city can do when the press, ethnic organizations, and the film community come together behind a cultural project. Both local and inclusive, the festival took place all over town, in commercial movie theaters and nonprofit institutions like the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum and the Free Library, augmented by multilingual, ethnically-oriented programming tailored to the concept of Philadelphia as a "City of Neighborhoods." With more than 60 screenings in 13 venues throughout the city, many festival events were sold out, and—of a total audience capacity estimated at 16,000—there were almost 13,000 in attendance, representing a broad cross-section of the city.

According to festival director Linda Blackaby, the diverse audiences that crossed age, gender,

income, and ethnic lines were an outgrowth of the festival's work with community groups and the dedication to politically engaged films fostered under her leadership by the Neighborhood Film/Video Project, the media center which produced this year's festival.

For more than two decades the Neighborhood Film/Video Project has provided consultations, low-cost equipment rental, and library access to community groups. The concept of a city-wide festival provided an additional means of developing audiences and often influenced the selection of films. Some ethnic organizations had long been trying to program particular films, which the festival was finally able to secure. The Iranian and Puerto Rican films shown at the festival, for example, grew out of such informal collaborations. On a more formal level, 100 community groups were offered free tickets as a result of a Sun Company grant. The 34 groups that responded included senior centers, artists' coops, and women's groups.



*Open Distance*, by Philadelphia producer Eugene Martin, was one of many works by Philadelphia-area media artists highlighted in the first Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema.

Photo Bella Eve Friesel



Classics such as Hail Gerima's *Bush Mama* were included along with recent African American work in the festival's sidebar *Living in the Light*.

Courtesy Mypheduh Films

As a new endeavor, the Philadelphia festival was aided by its relationships and collaborations with the San Francisco and Washington, D.C. festivals. By cooperating with each other, the festivals were able to offer programming in a manner they could not have afforded individually. For example, an invitation to Russian director Dmitri Astrakhan (*Get Thee Out!*) was shared by the San Francisco, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Seattle, and Human Rights Watch festivals. Personal appearances by Kazakhstan filmmaker Yermek Shinarbaev (*Revenge*) and Savi Garbizon (*Shuroo*) from Israel were also a result of the festivals' networking.

Another important result of collaboration was the increased availability of subtitled prints. Often, obtaining the only available English subtitled print of a particular movie requires a considerable amount of organization and planning. This year programmers of the Toronto Film Festival joined with others to strike a subtitled print of *Confessions to Laura*, a new film from Colombia, which subsequently screened at the Philadelphia festival. According to Tony Gittens, director of Washington, D.C.'s International Film Festival, such collaborations benefit everyone concerned, and both he and Blackaby hope that they can continue to share costs of subtitling inaccessible but important films.

During the planning stages the festival organizers sought support from the commercial theaters across town. The AMC, United Artists, Ritz, and Roxy chains not only offered their local theaters free of charge, but endorsed the festival heartily—recognizing the public image and audi-

ence development benefits. Ray Posel, owner of the Ritz Theaters, was the first to agree, and his endorsement helped the credibility of the new festival. AMC was also receptive, the result of good experiences with festivals elsewhere. All the commercial theaters agreed to run the festival trailer, *Dede's Glamarama*, which appeared for four weeks in over 100 screens in the Delaware Valley. The local media production community, led by SBK Productions and Metropolis Studios, produced the \$200,000 trailer free of charge.

Besides working with the commercial sector, the festival negotiated times, dates, and arranged films with nonprofit institutions throughout the city. The Franklin Institute, the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, the Free Library, the Jewish Film Festival at the Gershman Y, and the Alliance Française all offered to showcase films appropriate to their own constituents (e.g., Astrakhan appeared at the Gershman Y with *Get Thee Out!*). Workshops, seminars, and local audience participation events were presented as part of the festival at the International House, where the Neighborhood Film/Video Project is housed. Sold out immediately were an acting lab with Barbara O. (*Daughters in the Dust*); a workshop on screenwriting with Charles Fuller (*A Gallery of Old Men* and *A Soldier's Story*); and "How to Break In, Succeed, and Remain Sane in Hollywood" with producer Alan Gershenfeld.

The media support was phenomenal, providing not only thorough coverage but in-kind and cash donations as well. According to Nancy Becker, the festival's publicist, the Philadelphia Newspapers (publishers of the *Daily News* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*) contributed the design and printing of the festival poster and produced the tabloid festival program at cost. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* also distributed 125,000 festival schedules within selected zip codes of their delivery area.

# SHOOTERS WANTED

The Association of Independent Video Journalists seeks members who are willing to submit video of breaking news, social, political or environmental issues. This material, either for review or requested, will be cataloged and or edited for national distribution. If your video is selected for broadcast or distribution, on the Independent Video News Network, you will be compensated for its use. All formats are accepted, S-VHS or HI-8 preferred. Amateur shooters are encouraged to apply, format training tapes are available.

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The *City Paper*, a free weekly newspaper, donated three-and-one-half pages for additional festival information. Others also donated space, including *At the Ritz Movie Guide*, *Philadelphia Magazine*, *Applause*, the *Jewish Exponent*, and *Evening Magazine*. The International House estimated the values in column inches and advertising costs of these donations at \$289,000 from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, over \$54,000 from the *Daily News*, and \$12,000 from *City Paper*. Every TV station in town recorded the opening event, a gala on the Delaware River, and WXPB-FM provided \$12,000 worth of air time and created promotional contests with donated prizes.

The festival prided itself not only on a wide range of films and visiting filmmakers from North America, Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Mexico, and other Latin American countries, but also on the two festivals within the festival. One was devoted to Philadelphia-area media artists and the other to Living in the Light, a series of films celebrating 25 years of black independent cinema and presented in conjunction with the city-wide Africamericas Festival. The local media festival included screenings of *Pleasureville* by Victoria Plummer and Steve Ream; Wendy Weinberg's *Beyond Imagining: Margaret Anderson and the Little Review*; a collaboration between Connie Coleman, Alan Powell, and 4th and 5th graders, *The Bache-Martin Project*; and *The Non-Essential Black Voice*, a program of independent shorts curated by Cheryl Dunye and Thomas Harris. One of the major events of Living in the Light took place in the Afro-American Museum, with the local premiere of *Color Adjustment* by Marlon Riggs. Another, which precipitated an enthusiastic response from a culturally diverse audience, was the screening of *Bush Mama* (1977) by Haile Gerima, with its star, Barbara O., in attendance and featur-



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ing an impassioned militant prose-poem by local poet Sonia Sanchez.

Home-grown filmmaker Susan Seidelman (*Desperately Seeking Susan*) was a compelling attraction with her documentary *Confessions of a Suburban Girl*, created for BBC-TV. Based on her life as a girl in the sixties, born and brought up in an upscale Philadelphia suburb, the film screened before an audience of her "stars:" the drama class from her high school alma mater, who portrayed her girlfriends; the real girlfriends, now in their forties; and her family. Ed Lachman, a freelance cinematographer who has worked with Werner Herzog and Jean-Luc Godard, among others, was present with a premiere of Hanif Kureishi's *London Kills Me* and a presentation of clips from his other work. Spalding Gray appeared for the screening of his new film *Monster in a Box*. Alan Berliner presented *Intimate Stranger*, an innovative biography of his enigmatic grandfather. In addition, there were wonderful films that might never have come to Philadelphia: the magical realist fable from Puerto Rico by Jacob Morales, *What Happened to Santiago*; an unexpectedly sophisticated murder mystery from Iran, *The Last Act* by Parde-Ye Akhar; and our personal favorite, the Polish film *Escape from the Liberty Cinema* by Wojciech Marczewski.

Coming a week after the massive video coverage of the L.A. riots, the festival gave the citizens of Philadelphia an intimation of how movies can provide a window and a mirror for insular populations. The festival's emphasis on giving voice to an ethnically pluralistic society—and the enthusiasm of its young and avid audiences—offers promise of a positive future for this troubled urban center, which nevertheless has the ingredients of a great American city.

Ruth Perlmutter teaches film studies at the University of the Arts and Tyler School of Art and has published widely in scholarly and popular journals. Archie Perlmutter is codirector of the Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival.

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## "NYET" AND "DA"

### An Insider's Guide to Filmmaking in Russia

MICHAEL BRASHINSKY

"The Volga flows into the Caspian Sea," said a dull Chekhov character who was notorious for saying nothing that was not perfectly well known to everyone. Today, this is perhaps the last truth about Russia that remains firm. The social order, the president, even the name have changed; the only thing one can rely on is Russia's chronic unpredictability.

downtown Moscow. You will do well to learn the magical Russian sound *nyet*, which still seems to be the key word in the Russian vocabulary. Say it to the con men who try to sell you who-knows-what on the dirty square in front of the Bolshoi, amidst teenagers skateboarding around the monument of Karl Marx. Say it to the black-marketeers (one of whom might be wearing a T-shirt that reads "Are we having fun yet?") who insist on exchanging your dollars for rubles in the subway. Say it when the new Russian yuppies with brand-new Visa cards name their first price at the film

400 features with the few dozen in the works in 1992. Half of this year's productions will go bankrupt before completion; half of the films completed won't find a distributor.

The new predicament caught Russian filmmakers off-guard. In the good old days, when the red flag waved above the USSR, the film industry was funded by the government via the monolithic state-controlled studios that produced and distributed films. Censorship was solid but cheatable. Filmmakers were on the studio payroll, whether they were working or not, and nobody cared about making money. Today, that's all gone, along with the red flag and the USSR. State funds have dried up; the studios have dissolved into multiple independent units, which rarely can afford to distribute their own product. The filmmakers have become freelancers, poor and often unemployed.

These shifts in the film business have affected well established directors as much as the emerging generation of the post-*glasnost* first-timers. For instance, Filmmakers' Union president Elem Klimov resigned from his administrative post to direct the Russian-US joint venture *The Master and Margarita*, an adaptation of the classic fantasy novel by Mikhail Bulgakov. But Klimov, whose *Rasputin* remains one of the few Soviet features to receive a major video release in the US, had to stop halfway through preproduction because of budgetary difficulties. Vassily Pichul's (*Little Vera*) second feature, *The Nights Are Dark in the City of Sochi*, bombed last year. Production on his new project, *Ostap*, a remake of a classic satire filmed by Mel Brooks in 1970 under its original title *The Twelve Chairs*, closed down as of this summer. The reason? Plainly, no cash.

Despite all the *nyets*, some pictures do get completed. But these are often launched in the international festival circuit, bypassing the local "theater near you." No wonder the audiences won't pay to see Russian movies today: cheered in Cannes or Venice, these movies rhyme with despair and feature dismal faces on a shady day, living a morbid life. Not accidentally, one of the first post-*glasnost* features to be released in New York was *Raspad* (1991), a Chernobyl saga that translates into *Disintegration*, *Collapse*.

And don't let the titles mislead you. *A Smile*, director Sergei Popov's first feature, opens in an asylum, which, aside from Stalin's concentration camp, is the favorite location of Russian filmmakers of the *glasnost* and post-*glasnost* period. The film presents vignettes about what led the patients



Members of the St. Petersburg Parallel Cinema group hold a mirror in front of a statue of Lenin—a gesture of farewell to things past and a symbol for their deconstructive avant-garde playfulness.

Courtesy filmmakers

Before any independent US producer heads off to the former Soviet empire, there are a few basic points one needs to know. Whether you plan to shoot or to drum up coproduction business, keep this article on hand and, above all, be ready to improvise.

As you blush under the drilling eye of the passport control officer at the Sheremetyevo Airport, start thinking of what you will say to the cabby when he asks for \$100 to take you to

coop, a small independent production facility you will most probably end up dealing with. Keep in mind that *nyet* is the word the Russians have always heard and still hear all the time—from their government, their bosses, their grocers. They are used to retaliating with the same.

Among other things, Russians today are saying *nyet* to the movies. Ticket prices have skyrocketed in the past few years along with all other costs. Plus the day-to-day madness leaves little room for entertainment, let alone art. Theater attendance in Moscow, Russia's largest film market with several hundred screens, is down this year to a mere five percent of capacity. The dismal box office receipts profoundly affect the industry. Compare last year's record production of over

to their present condition. The punch line of *A Smile* is that the horrors of a madhouse are nothing compared to the terrors of daily life in the Commonwealth of Independent States, a country that has turned itself from an Animal Farm to a funny farm.

And now, if you are crazy enough to still want to travel there to produce a film or video, here are the top 10 necessities that will help you survive the venture:

1. Plenty of chewing gum and Marlboros for the natives. Russia is a country favorable to miracles. One predictable miracle is that, against all odds and *nyets*, you will fall in love with the land, and you will be back. Another is that your cab driver will take a pack of Marlboro Reds instead of \$100.

2. Film stock. Russian film stock is of miserable quality and is still more expensive than Kodak film purchased in the US.

3. Production and postproduction facilities, plus equipment, both cameras and sound. The material base of the studios is outdated and could serve as a symbol for the Russian economy in general—impoverished and chaotic. There is some Western equipment available, but the price is dear. Keep in mind, you will be dealing with executives who, overnight, have become more capitalistic than the original capitalists.

4. Your own script. The language barrier won't be a problem; most Russians can communicate in decent English. However, if you are planning to hire a Russian writer or scout for a native story, you will have to stay much longer than you might want (for your first trip).

5. A \$100,000 budget. If all of the above is done, you will never reach into your pocket for more than that. And with \$1 equaling 100 rubles on the black market, you can be rich and famous on \$20 per day.

Although an average Russian feature budget has jumped in the last five years from \$5,000 to \$500,000, most of it goes to buying Western film stock and equipment and doing postproduction abroad (usually in France). One of the most expensive Russian features ever made, *Moscow Parade* (1992), a musical period piece directed by Ivan Dykhovichny, required a \$5-million budget, which took care of special effects, French facilities, and a major German star. The most arrogant of Russian filmmakers, Elem Klimov and Vassily Pichul, asked for an unimaginable \$20-million (Klimov wanted major US stars and George Lucas' lab for postproduction), which instantly killed their works-in-progress.

Ironically, the same economic and social changes that have jeopardized the Russian film industry have also opened doors for Western producers and coproducers. Russians welcome foreign filmmakers with arms outstretched: they need your money, your markets, and your name on the credits, which would satisfy their longing for international acceptance.

The Russians know they are not very good

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In what is perhaps a harbinger of things to come, Roger Corman, the master of low-budget features, signed a five-picture coproduction deal with the studio Mosfilm. According to *Variety* (May 25, 1992), Corman will invest \$15-million over the next 18 months and supply above-the-line talent, film stock, and his considerable production expertise, while Mosfilm will provide existing sets, locations, and postproduction facilities, which the studio has been upgrading. Corman's first production will be *Burial of the Rats*, based on a story by Bram Stoker (*Dracula*).

6. A visa to St. Petersburg. Travel inside the country still requires visas for foreigners, and St. Petersburg is the most inspiring Russian film center today. Its only major studio, Lenfilm, has over the years become a retreat for the Soviet auteurs. In the 1970s and 1980s it produced the movement which became known as the Leningrad School, the product of which were noncommercial, moody, sepia-toned pieces, most likely set in the past.

Leningrad was also home to the wild independents who developed the concept of necro-realism, which playfully romanticizes life after death in a manner that marries George Romero and Dziga Vertov. Together with the Moscow "conceptualists," they formed the Parallel Cinema movement, declaring an underground war against dusty socialist aesthetics. By the late 1980s, the movement had its own authorities and connoisseurs, its own festival, and even a publication, *Cinephantom*, the only independent Soviet film magazine. In 1990 a package of Parallel super 8, 16mm, and video shorts toured the US under the title "Red Fish in America."

After Lenfilm disintegrated a few years ago, an independent unit, Debut, was formed. Its head is director Alexei Gherman, who started the Leningrad School with such nostalgic features as *Twenty Days without War* (1977) and *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* (1984). Combining the efforts of system and nonsystem filmmakers (many of Parallel descent), Debut has become a testing ground for independent thinking in film.

7. A map of the former Soviet Union. As the country collapsed early this year, the ties between the new independent countries and states have torn apart. A Moscow executive admitted to me that film people in the former empire's capital simply don't know what goes on in the film business in Lithuania or Kazakhstan. Meanwhile,



these two regions in particular are the most stimulating, with highly developed film cultures and original creative visions. Lithuania, when part of the Soviet Union, was considered the most Western republic. It is better tempered and organized than Russia and is closer to the Scandinavian spirit than to the disorderly dramatic Slavic psyche. If you are interested in medieval locations or Northern existentialism, that's the place to go. Kazakhstan is an oasis in the cultural desert which Soviet Asia became under Communist rule. The Kazakh-film studio, home to such innovative, playful features as *The Needle* (1988), *Little Fish in Love* (1989), *Woman of the Day* (1990), and *The Blown Kiss* (1991), is a perfect stop to experience bizarre cross-cuts between Western and Asian worlds.

8. Autographed photos of *Terminator 2* (for the hotel bartender), Robert Redford (for Moscow officials), and Jim Jarmusch (for the younger filmmakers). Plus, your address book should include at least two phone numbers: Raissa Fomina, Director of International Cultural Programs at the Filmmakers Association in Moscow, who seems to hold all the strings needed for successful coproduction; fax: 095-973-2029; telephone: 095-

Russian filmmakers don't have to invent a new language to describe the day-to-day madness of their country; they can borrow it from absurdist like Samuel Beckett, whose play *Happy Days* was filmed there last year.

Courtesy filmmakers

255-9052. In St. Petersburg, there's Sergei Dobrotvorsky, an independent filmmaker, producer, and critic who launched Parallel Cinema and who knows the scene better than anybody else; telephone: 812-314-4136.

9. An electrical adaptor, a water filter, and lots of Imodium A-D.

10. A pocket dictionary, ear-marked on the letter D, so that you can quickly look up another key Russian word, which is the opposite of *nyet: da*.

*Michael Brashinsky has been trying to become a New Yorker for the past three months. Originally from Leningrad, he has taught film courses at the University of New Orleans and published (with Andrew Horton) The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition.*



Bizarre cross-cuts between Western and Asian worlds are at the center of *The Blown Kiss*, directed by Abai Karpykav who, among other young Kazakh filmmakers, believes that film is a medium invented by Wim Wenders.

Courtesy XXL Film Studio

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## TOYS R US

## Confessions of a Video Junkie at the NAB Convention

BARTON WEISS

As a self-professed video equipment junkie, I was buzzing at the prospect of oggling the future at the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) conference, held in Las Vegas from April 13 to 16. This is an annual conference and equipment show for television broadcasters, whose needs and purses are not in the same ballpark as independents'. Since it is intended for this crowd, few independents traditionally attend NAB—in my three days there I only saw a handful, including Jon Alpert checking out some JVC cameras. Even so, it remains an excellent opportunity for independents to scope out the latest video technology.



Though geared for big spenders, the annual NAB conference allows independents a chance to find out what new, technology is out on the market.

Courtesy National Association of Broadcasters

And NAB's exhibit is always big enough to include something for everyone.

### *Nonlinear editors*

My main mission was to see if there were any cheap nonlinear editing systems, something that would do for video editing what NewTek's Video Toaster did for image processing. If there was any trend this year, it was computer controlled equipment, both in the high- and low-end. Nowhere was that more evident than in editing. Digital nonlinear editing and sound editing workstations were the most exciting and well-trafficked booths. Happily for independents there are some cheap nonlinear systems aimed at the low-end broadcaster. But at

NAB, cheap is definitely a relative term.

Nonlinear editing is like editing video the way you write on a computer. Words are input into the computer's memory through a word processing program, which allows all the elements—letters, words, paragraphs—to be easily rearranged. With video, the signal is digitized—transformed into a series of 0's and 1's—then the massive volume of numbers is compressed to fit on a hard or floppy disk. As with word processing, once the video is in the computer it can be easily manipulated. Though the digital transfer and compression steal quality from the original video, giving it a strange look, every year this gets better.

Nonlinear editing systems can generate an edit decision list for your subsequent on-line session or, if you use a lot of memory and have a good system, you can finish your project on them. Image Matrix in Dallas produces industrial shows on hi-8, transfers them to a nonlinear editor, and then projects the finished program from the editor directly to a state-of-the-art GE projector, so that it never goes back to tape.

Nonlinear systems offer the advantages of both film- and video-style editing without their disadvantages. You organize the materials in bins, just like film, but you can also log the material with a database which allows you to easily access and regroup shots and scenes by subject or keyword. You can edit sound as accurately as with film, but without the razor blade (no need for Band-Aids in the editing room). You can conceptualize changes as you would in either medium and not wait to sync up tracks or machines to pre-roll in order to see if your ideas work. You can save many versions of your project. And you can try an edit faster than talking about it. Because you can change and undo everything, you can work more intuitively. Unlike tape off-line systems that slip, these are so accurate your on-line sessions will fly by. On my last project we were able to go through 100 events an hour using an AVID edit decision list.

Here are a few things to look for when evaluating a system: How easy it is to learn and work with? Does the layout of the computer screen seem logical and intuitive to you? How good are the image and sound quality? How much memory can you use and how expensive is it? All of the nonlinear systems eat up disk space. You are translating live action video at 30 frames per second into millions of zeros and ones that describe the attributes of the image. For a recent

project on an AVID, I used five-and-a-half gigabyte drives to digitize about eight-and-a-half hours of video. All systems would need about the same disk space. What really separates the nonlinear systems is the flexibility and ease in working with the software.

It's preferable to use external hard disks similar to your computer's. But these are expensive. Most systems also use some sort of magneto-optical drives, which are cheaper, but they are slower and severely restrict the available resolution. Still, when you have to change jobs, they are the only way to go and not waste precious space on your hard drive.

The AVID Media Composer, a Macintosh-based system that runs from \$30,000 to \$100,000, is becoming the industry standard. AVID showed its latest image resolution levels at NAB, including the AVR5 (or AVID resolution #5), their best, Betacam-like resolution, which looks pretty good and is very close to that mythical "broadcast quality." This year's worst AVID resolution looks better than last year's best. The most exciting item in the AVID booth was the portable nonlinear system that can grab and digitize a videotape image from a film camera's viewfinder. This allows you to find out on the spot whether your close-up cuts into the master shot. It also enables your editor to cut the scene before the dailies come back from the lab.

Editing Machine Corporation's Emc2, an IBM-based system for around \$40,000, is a nonlinear editor that also shows good resolution. However, it takes longer to get up to speed on this system, not being as editor-friendly as the AVID. In the 90 minutes I worked at the Emc2 system at NAB, I couldn't get a scene together; on the AVID, I had one in minutes. In the war between Emc2 and AVID, proponents usually side with the computer they are used to: IBM people like the Emc2, while Mac-philes go for the AVID.

On the lower end of the nonlinear system is the PC-based DVision system. The demo footage in DVision's booth was shot on hi-8—a sure sign it's meant for the budget-conscious producer. The system starts at \$6,000, but by the time you add the computer, multisync monitor hard drives, accelerator, and Digital Video interactive card, you're up to about \$18,000. Though the DVision system allows you to get into nonlinear editing at a relatively low price, it doesn't have the flexibility of an AVID or Emc2. It performs all the basic functions of a nonlinear system, but not as nicely, and it lacks the added features of the pricey systems. Using the DVision is somewhat like driving a Yugo; it gets you there, but you know there is a better way.

The new Mac-based D/FX system was a disappointment. Designed for people who are moving from desktop publishing to desktop video, it's clumsy, and working with sound is difficult. The D/FX comes in two parts. One is a simple edit controller which controls the videotape machines (it's usually shown with S-VHS decks for some

reason) and allows you to add Mac-based graphics from Aldus' PageMaker. The other section is a nonlinear editor.

Other new systems include the PC-based Lightworks, which has the best graphics and a nifty trackball. However, various people I spoke with didn't think it would catch on, and nobody wants a dead-end editor. Matrox, also PC-based, mixes effects with editing nicely. Its software is better suited for layering graphics and adding text than it is to flexible and precise editing. It combines some elements from the Toaster and the AVID, but it doesn't do any of them as well. Then there's the Henry, a system that has picture quality as good as the digital D1 and D2 formats, but at \$750,000 costs so much it could bankrupt a postproduction house. (Nonetheless, 50 facilities bought Henrys at the show.)

### From DAWs to Toasters

Digital audio workstations (DAWs) were displayed in another room at NAB, along with the antennas and radio station equipment. DAWs are essentially nonlinear editors for sound, but without the need for nearly as much memory. By cutting and pasting pictorial waveforms on your computer screen, DAWs allow you to add sound effects, re-equalize sound, and change levels yourself, rather than paying for a sweetening session or a film mix. The up-side is, you have more control; the down-side is, you don't have the advice of a sound professional. If you have a good ear and know exactly what you want and how to get it, these are for you.

I looked at 15 DAWs on the convention floor, which were all impressive, particularly how they can put control of the sound editing, sweetening, and mixing into independents' hands. But their \$50,000 to \$100,000 price-tags left me cold. AVID showed an audio station that allows you to use your digital picture rather than sync-up a VCR, as the other systems demand. Since sound is digitized at the same time as the picture, this saves you from another conversion. But the AVID audio station still needs a few years of development to work all the bugs out.

In the affordable realm, Digidesign's Pro Tools is becoming the low-end standard because it does so much for a relatively small price-tag. In the last year they've offered several free updates on their software, which is a much better track record than the nonlinear editor manufacturers, who make you pay a lot (up to 10 percent per year) to keep up with the changing software—in essence, making you pay for the development of product with expensive upgrades. The DAW manufacturers, particularly Digidesign, don't make you pay for their mistakes. Pro Tools starts at a reasonable \$5,900, but you have to add a Mac and a la carte hardware—including an accerator, disk drives, tape drives for back-up, a box with faders for better control than a mouse provides, etc. So it ends up closer to \$15,000 to \$20,000, depending

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on the number of audio tracks and the system's speed.

Sonic Solutions had a nice add-on to their DAW that eliminates background noise, a major problem in production. For a demo, they had an old Doors song with plenty of scratches and hissing on the soundtrack. When they put it through the No Noise program, it sounded clear and pristine. With all the archival material in video these days, this feature could be extremely valuable.

The NewTek Video Toaster booth was always packed with broadcasters who still can't believe a piece of equipment does so much for only \$5,000. Such manufacturers as Abakus and Panasonic have clearly taken notice. Both have come out with relatively inexpensive switchers—the Abakus Solo and Panasonic WJMX 50—that can produce page turns and other digital effects. These effects boxes give cleaner digital effects than the Toaster, but they don't do much more than switch and add digital effects. The Panasonic also mixes sound. But the Toaster has a character generator, two- and three-dimensional paint and animation programs, an image processor, and frame store. The important point is that the success of NewTek's Video Toaster has forced manufacturers to come up with powerful low-end gear.

In terms of hi-8, there was some good news. Sony showed their new one-piece hi-8 professional camera, the EVW 300. It looks like a mini Betacam and sells for about \$5,000 without lens. It weighs much more than a consumer hi-8 camera, but the three chips give a truly superior picture. Sony also had on display a new edit deck for hi-8, the EVO 9850. This model fixes the problems of its predecessor, the EVO 9800. It can use real SMPTE time code, and it is truly frame accurate. No doubt more people will start editing in hi-8.

The Canon booth was packed with numerous expensive cameras, but the professional version of Canon's consumer L1 got most of the attention. The LX 100 is a one-chip hi-8 camera (\$2,500) with interchangeable lenses. The key here is that the lenses look great. There is a three-to-one zoom lens that is extremely sharp and has a wide enough focal length to be truly useful. The camera is not as good as the Sony three-chip, but it's the next best thing at less than half the weight and half the price (with a lens).

Minolta showed a two-chip hi-8 camera called the Master Pro8 918 (\$2,500). One chip is for luminance (brightness) and the other for chroma (color). It comes with lens attachments for wide angle and telephoto. But it was designed for amateur consumers who only use autofocus. The camera has no focus knob, so you have to play with the near and far buttons. I spent an hour trying to like this camera, but couldn't.

Producers working in consumer hi-8 who are frustrated with the lack of real time code will welcome Future Video's TCG 2000. This is a battery powered, portable box the size of a cigarette pack that generates real SMPTE code on one

of the sound tracks. It won't read time code, but it will write it, and that's a start.

In the hospitality suite Sony showed a prototype for a new format. Not that we need another format, but this one sounds promising. It's a digital 8mm component hi-speed system. Like Betacam it would run the tape at a high speed for better resolution and separate color in a true component system. But, best of all, tape drop-out—the number one problem with hi-8 production—would be solved because a digital system can compensate for dropouts. Sony was mum on what such a camera would cost or weigh or when it will appear.

The NAB convention also included an entire high definition TV (HDTV) sidebar, showing different kinds of monitors and projectors and exhibiting the competing standards. But this wasn't as exciting as what was in the Sony booth. For years HDTV hasn't looked even close to film. But this year Sony featured an HDTV camera that is as close as you can get to the film look in video. I walked over to the camera and panned it away from the brightly lit scene they wanted you to see toward the dark parts of the convention floor—and it still looked good. (This is something you should always do. Most cameras look good shooting bright colors under bright lights, but often we end up shooting the ugly world with much less light. You need to know how well any given camera performs under these more realistic conditions.)

As I wrapped up my trip to NAB, I was glad not to have to carry home all the literature about these shiny new machines. Rather, at each booth you could hand over your ID badge to a smiling representative who would run it through a credit card machine. Then, lo and behold, these heavy catalogues would arrive in the mail.

It seems appropriate that NAB was held in Las Vegas this year, since buying any of these systems is a real gamble. Though it's great to know what's out there, it's also a bit depressing to know how much it all costs. NAB also gives you that same unsettling feeling as video magazines, that no matter what equipment you have, it's not as good as what's coming down the pike.

*Barton Weiss is director of the Dallas Video Festival, an award-winning director and editor of film and video, a teacher, and a board member of AIVF.*

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IN THE PINK LINOLEUM DINER IN TRIBECA WHERE HE COMES EACH MORNING to write, 32-year-old director Hal Hartley is searching for a quote. He thumbs through a notebook which he carries with him to record his thoughts, questions, and stray equations, in search of a statement by Bertolt Brecht to explain his own highly stylized approach to filmmaking. As with the self-educated everywhere, Hartley takes pains to be precise in his use of language and ideas. It's an earnest intellection that distinguishes his films as well, films in which characters ruminate on the constituent elements of love and a plot can pivot on a quote from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Throughout his work, Hartley makes innovative use of narrative and theatrical techniques—cyclical dialogue, non-naturalistic acting—to communicate the philosophic conflicts and interior lives of his white middle-class characters. Despite what might seem a decidedly unpopular approach to filmmaking, his work is catching on. Hartley's bleak meditative farces have won him a growing following and earned their director praise as the creator of a new cinematic genre, the "existentialist comedy of manners."

With the national theatrical release this September of *Simple Men*, his third feature in as many years, Hartley has crossed the line from obscure independent to auteur director. It is a change you can notice in the way people discuss the latest "Hal Hartley film," instead of "that great movie by what's-his-name." It has been a remarkably rapid transition. Hartley arrived on the scene just three years ago with his first feature, *The Unbelievable Truth* (1989). Praised by *New York Times* critic Caryn James for reinventing "1950s cool in the face of contemporary culture," *The Unbelievable Truth* chronicles the romance between nuclear-apocalypse obsessed Audry (Adrienne Shelley) and ex-con auto mechanic Josh (Robert Burke). Propelled by its quirky, charismatic characters—Audry reads Molière and hears bombs overhead; Josh harbors a fondness for George Washington, looks like a priest, and inadvertently killed his previous girlfriend and her father—*The Unbelievable Truth* toured the festival circuit and was released theatrically to critical acclaim by Miramax. But it was Hartley's second feature, *Trust* (1990), that launched him into the limelight. Another case of *l'amour fou* in Lindenhurst, Long Island, *Trust* charts the struggles of pregnant teen drop-out Maria (Shelley) and disaffected grenade-toting computer genius, Matthew (Martin Donovan), who together confront abortion, patricide, corporate corruption, TV opiates, and in the process redefine love and their own humanity. Theatrically released by Fine Line and Republic Pictures in the US, *Trust* also garnered the Grand Prize at the Houston International Film Festival, Critics Prizes at both the Sydney and Deauville film festivals, and the prestigious Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 1991 Sundance Film Festival. After viewing the feature at Park City, *American Playhouse* approached Hartley about developing a short film for television. The result, *Surviving Desire* (1991)—about a literature professor enamored of both Dostoyevski and one of his own students—aired the following January. At the same time Hartley produced two short films, *Ambition* and *Theory of Achievement*. The former, a brilliantly choreographed vignette about a man who literally has to fight his way to work, was commissioned by *Alive from Off Center* (now *Alive TV*). The second, *Theory of Achievement*, about would-be artists wrestling with

whether happiness comes from creativity or credit cards, premiered at the 1991 Museum of Modern Art's New Directors/New Films Festival. This year, his oeuvre is the subject of festival retrospectives in Rotterdam, Munich, Ales, Göteborg, and Torino. The screenplay for *Surviving Desire* has been published in the inaugural issue of *Projections*, a new film journal from Faber and Faber, and this autumn the screenplays for *Trust* and *Simple Men* will be released as a book by Faber and Faber, accompanied by a lengthy interview with the director. Hartley has indubitably arrived.

In many ways Hartley's success is surprising. Riddled with philosophical speculation, references to literature, politics, Buddhism, and the Bible, his films are hardly the stuff American dreams are made of. Hartley breaks with the conventions of American cinema, which, as Wim Wenders has noted, is a cinema of "surface" in contrast to the "European cinema of angst and introversion." Set principally in his hometown, Lindenhurst, in a world of eloquent anarchists, baby thieves, accidental murders, and nuclear dread, Hartley's films treat the malaise of contemporary American suburban and urban life with a philosophical perspicacity more traditionally the province of European cinema than the anti-intellectual movies of America. "I feel like I'm a traditional filmmaker," comments Hartley, "but the tradition is Brecht, Godard, Warhol."

Hartley has been compared to both Jean-Luc Godard and Preston Sturges. His work navigates a curious path between European existentialism and Hollywood screwball comedies of the thirties. In preparation for shooting *Trust*, the director had the actors watch Godard's *Hail Mary* (1985) and Sturges' *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944), to give them a sense of what he was after. In addition to that odd couple, he cites among his influences Wenders, modernist writers Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, and novelist John Gardner ("he wrote a couple of pretty good books on making fiction"). He also names some of his film school contemporaries at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase such as Nick Gomez, whose feature *Laws of Gravity* is meeting with its own success these days.

Despite his European influences, Hartley's is an American sensibility, combining equal elements of Horatio Alger optimism, Puritan work ethic, and bohemian bluster. In a Hartley film people pull themselves up by their intellectual bootstraps to transcend the petty tyranny of middle-brow American suburban life—using books, etymology, philosophy, work. Characters have usually spent time in jail or are on their way for breaking the law. "You don't get something for nothing; I guess that's just an outlook I have," admits Hartley. Above all, his films laud the value of truth and work. It's an ethos that has paid off for Hartley, who admits to being obsessive in his own labors. Hartley plays numerous roles in his productions: writer, director, producer, casting director, even composer [see sidebar page 22]. "If [Hal] could," suggests actress Adrienne Shelley, "he'd play all the parts himself." Hartley prepares scrupulously for each production, rigorously rehearsing his cast until each gesture is defined, diagramming each scene for the technicians, and developing visual equations to organize the look of the film. "He's the best prepared director I've worked with," says cinematographer Michael Spiller, who has shot all but one of Hartley's films.

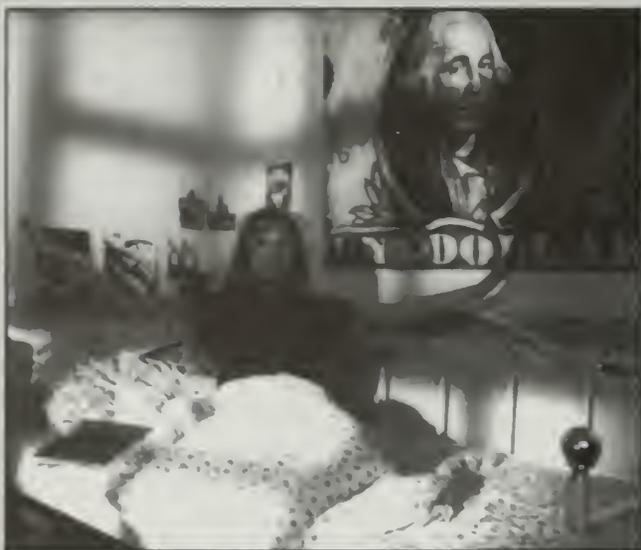
Rigorous preparation is part of what has enabled Hartley to keep his budgets so low. *The Unbelievable Truth* was made for \$75,000; *Trust* cost \$650,000; the hour-long *Surviving Desire* ran approximately \$500,000. *Simple Men*, his biggest budget so far, cost slightly under \$2-million. It was backed by the British company Zenith Productions (*Prick Up Your Ears*) and American Playhouse Theatrical Films in association with Fine Line Fea-

The brothers MacCabe: Dennis (William Sage, left) and Bill (Robert Burke) in *Simple Men*.

Photo: Richard Ludwig, courtesy Fine Line Features



# HAL HARTLEY'S Moments of Truth



Filmed at the close of the eighties, *The Unbelievable Truth* is an comic critique of that avaricious decade. Throughout his films, Hartley casts a wary eye on American mercantilism and rates of exchange in the markets of intimacy, love, and truth.

Courtesy Miramax



The story of a Long Island bimbo (Adrienne Shelley) turned suburban saint, *Trust* catapulted its writer-director into the limelight.

Photo: Chris Buck, courtesy Fine Line Features

tures/Film Four International. The fact that Hartley worked with non-union crews on his first two features helped keep costs down, as did his thorough rehearsal before filming. About three months before shooting began on *Trust*, Hartley met regularly with the principal actors to discuss their roles. A month before starting principal photography, they rehearsed in a studio eight hours a day. Hartley attributes the ease with which he has achieved his current success to this work ethic. "There's only one subject in the world for me," says Hartley on the matter of work, "and that's it. What one chooses to spend one's time on is ultimately a spiritual thing. Everything proceeds from there."

Despite his mounting success, Hartley has no intention of parlaying his current popularity into blockbuster Hollywood budgets, as have his contemporaries the Coen brothers, Spike Lee, and Steven Soderbergh. "It's an aspect of classic capitalist sensibility," Hartley explains. "The longer you can control your work, the more control you'll have over your work. If I spend six or seven million dollars on a film, I've gotta be sure I'm going to make that money back. And if I can't be sure, I'm going to have to start making concessions in my day-to-day work and conception of things. It's going to have to be popular, and I don't think I make popular films." The increasing audiences for Hartley's films, however, may soon prove him wrong.

**B**ORN IN NOVEMBER 1959, HARTLEY GREW UP IN LINDENHURST AS PART OF an extended family of construction workers inhabiting one block. After graduating from Lindenhurst Public High School in 1976, Hartley attended the Massachusetts College of Art where he studied painting and was first introduced to filmmaking through a course on super 8. Excited by the medium, he returned to Lindenhurst for a year before matriculating at SUNY-Purchase film school in 1980. It was at Purchase that Hartley met many of the cast and crew he currently works with, including Robert Burke (who played the lead in *Truth* and *Simple Men*), Karen Sillas (the nurse in *Trust* and lead in *Simple Men*), film editor Nick Gomez, and cinematographer Michael Spiller. At the end of his second year, Hartley had a crisis of faith and announced to the faculty that he was leaving the film department. "It just occurred to me that film couldn't be a real art. The finance prohibits real creative obsession." Not long after making the decision to leave film, Hartley attended a lecture on and screening of Wim Wenders' *In the Course of Time*. "That changed everything," he says. "I knew you could make films that will last forever. So I stayed."

After graduating in 1984, he worked as a production assistant for some eight months but found it left him no time to pursue his own work; so he quit to take an office job with Action Productions answering telephones and continued to make films on the side. "It got easy when I decided that I was a filmmaker regardless of whether someone was paying me to be a filmmaker," recalls Hartley. "I said, 'If it escalates to a point where I'm getting paid to do [films] fine, but I'm a filmmaker whether I'm making a three-minute super 8 film or *Lawrence of Arabia*. It doesn't matter; both need to be compelling.' I psyched myself out, and that protected me from disappointment to a certain extent."

Hartley made three short films—*Kid* (1985), *Cartographer's Girlfriend* (1986), and *Dogs* (1987)—before his feature film debut with *The Unbelievable Truth*. To raise money to produce the feature, Hartley sent out cassettes of his work to various regional cable stations and tried to market himself as a regional filmmaker from Long Island. But he had no success there or raising public funds. Eventually, he went to his boss at Action Productions, Jerry Brownstein, and asked him to co-sign a \$20,000 bank loan to finance the film. At that time, Hartley intended to shoot in 16mm, but Brownstein suggested that he work up a budget for 35mm and Action Productions would consider financing it. Hartley drew up a budget for \$50,000, and Brownstein agreed. With the additional backing of businessman Bruce Weiss, "that was it," says Hartley. The film was shot in 11 days with the crew taking vacation from their day jobs. It took about six months before the film elicited any

commercial interest, but in the end Action Pictures, the company formed to back the film, sold the picture to Miramax for \$200,000, making it possible to pay cast and crew.

Since the release of *The Unbelievable Truth*, films have followed in such rapid succession that even Hartley is dazzled. "We work so much, it's like we go from one film to the next," he says. "It kind of gets mixed up, which is nice, too, because it takes some of the preciousness out of it." After *The Unbelievable Truth* screened at the London Film Festival in the autumn of 1989, Zenith approached Hartley and Weiss to inquire about other projects. Hartley had finished rewriting the script for *Trust* during postproduction on *The Unbelievable Truth* and happened to have a copy with him. Impressed by the piece, Zenith quickly agreed to back the film. The following spring production was underway. The film was shot in 24 12-hour days, with its non-union crew living in a Howard Johnson's motel off the Long Island Expressway. "A circus was staying there at the same time," Hartley recalls. "It was great." *Trust* went on to win numerous awards on the festival circuit and critical acclaim after its theatrical release.

For a man uninterested in business, Hartley has a remarkable talent for attracting money. Zenith, *American Playhouse*, and *Alive from Off Center* all approached Hartley to produce or commission work. But this popularity has been a mixed blessing. "The demand on my professional time changes the way I work," says Hartley. "I've got to spend two days a week doing interviews and having my picture taken and going into the office to check over the account books. I'm a businessman now," he says. "My time is not my own as it used to be. And the content of the films changes as a result of all this new experience as well." *Ambition*, a short film in which George (George Feaster) literally fights his way to work only to be beaten up by his boss, "is clearly me screaming about my business life," explains Hartley. Still, Hartley seems relatively unscathed by his success. Other than accommodating "the usual bullshit you put up with with agents—inflated costs, blackmail, junk"—on *Simple Men*, Hartley admits it has been smooth sailing. "It has been easy because [my associates and I] understand what we really want and what we value and what we're willing to get screwed on," says Hartley. "If people want to make a lot more money off of me and exclude me from certain profits, I could spend six months not making a film and pay extremely high legal fees to argue the point, or just say 'fuck it, take the money, and I'll make the film.' My associates and I aren't greedy. We understand what's important, and that's to work."

Since *Trust*, Hartley's films have increasingly edged away from naturalism. As Manhola Dargis has pointed out in the *Village Voice*, Hartley defies film school musts, such as establishing shots, and he hybridizes genres—borrowing cinematic tropes such as the talking head interview in *Trust* and musical dance numbers in *Surviving Desire* and *Simple Men*. This startling anti-realism is most evident in his short films, in which he incorporates stylized fight choreography. "These films aren't really fiction," says Hartley of the two shorts. "They're like direct communication between me and the audience. I'm using story elements to entertain and convey meaning, but the point of those films isn't really to feel or empathize with the characters in them." Which brings us back to Brecht. "Characters are not matter for empathy," Hartley quotes the dramatist. "They are to be understood. Feelings are private and limited." What he's getting at," continues Hartley, "is that the pretense of being able to empathize with an already constructed entity is baloney. We stop looking at people when there's this assumption that what they're doing is appealing to our emotions. One of the things [the Brechtian technique of] distancing does is it reawakens your consciousness to what's really happening and refocuses your attention." Hartley eschews any political purpose behind the technique. Unlike Godard's political poison pen, Hartley's nonnaturalistic effects are intended not to convey a message, but "so you can have more fun."

*Simple Men* is both an extension of and departure from Hartley's earlier work. The film chronicles the odyssey of the mismatched McCabe brothers who travel to Lindenhurst in search of their father, a former all-star major league short stop who is on the run for allegedly having bombed the

*Surviving Desire*, about a college professor (Martin Donovan) undone by his infatuation with a student (Mary B. Ward), plays on the difference between theory and action.

Courtesy American Playhouse



Unlikely love affairs—in this case between a homeless woman (Rebecca Nelson) and a failed theology student (Matt Molloy)—are a common denominator in Hartley's work.

Courtesy American Playhouse



The Rumanian epileptic anarchist (Elina Löwensohn) in *Simple Men*. Unlike many of his compatriots, Hartley draws on a variety of genres and mediums, including literature, painting, and films from Godard to *Gone with the Wind*.

Photo: Richard Ludwig, courtesy Fine Line Features.



Martin (Martin Donovan) and Dennis (William Sage) hanging out at Homer's in *Simple Men*.

Courtesy Fine Line Features.

Pentagon years before. The younger brother, Dennis (William Sage), is after the truth about his father; Bill (Robert Burke), the elder brother, is trying to recover from love—both familiar themes in the Hartley repertoire. Shot in six weeks, *Simple Men* constitutes a budgetary breakthrough for Hartley. "For the first time I was able to make a film that really took the [location] into account," says Hartley. "Usually in making low-budget films, the whole job is forcing what you have to say on the environment that you're stuck with, so that it is really a process of elimination of things you don't want to see. This was the opposite. We were allowed to work with nature. We found things that almost changed the text." Hartley was able to reshoot takes and rehearse on location for two of the production's six weeks of rehearsal, luxuries he hasn't had before. Nevertheless, it was necessary to film in Texas because of prohibitive costs and location fees in New York State, a problem he suspects may be permanent.

"I tend to think of *Simple Men* as the more mature example of stylization that I worked very hard with in all of the films," says Hartley. "There was a level of choreographed movement in the short films that I really tried to bring very obviously into *Simple Men*. The actions are stripped right down to very highly designed gestures." For example, when Bill is tracked down by the police, the heroine Kate (Karen Sillas) gives him a set of car keys in a smooth gesture—which because of its simplicity resonates with practical and symbolical significance. Hartley did not ask his cast to view particular works in preparation for *Simple Men*, but he did emphasize certain principles. There was, he says, "a much more rigorous education of the actors in terms of [Robert] Bresson. Not psychologizing the characters and gestural acting." In rehearsals, as actors ran repeatedly through scenes, Hartley isolated gestures, deciding which were important. "It's getting away from the idea of naturalistic acting," says Hartley. Such stylization is a key to the appeal of Hartley's films. Reminiscent of the arch repartee of classic screwball comedy, the devices he employs—flat delivery of lines, streamlined gestures, cyclical dialogue—have a two-fold effect. In addition to playing as deadpan comedy, this formalizing of everyday events and language reframes them and inverts their value. Thus the pedestrian iteration of a student bookseller in *Surviving Desire*—"Can I help someone?"—takes on the quality of philosophic inquiry. By the same token, speculative exchanges—such as the debate about power, sex, and Madonna in *Simple Men*—can seem remarkably sophomoric.

For some female viewers, *Simple Men* may signal a disquieting continuation as well of the director's mystification of female characters as shadowy icons, an approach that has marked his work after *Trust*, which richly explored its heroine's perspective. "That exploration of things female is something I'd been writing for 10 years," contends Hartley. "It all came together [in *Trust*]. I asked all the questions and got a lot of answers. There was a sense of conclusion and, at the time, an interest in asking other questions. The natural other question is to concentrate on the man. *Simple Men* is the same conversation that *Trust* was having but rigorously in the male world."

In developing the look of his films, Hartley selects a group of images to serve as an organizing principle. "I spend some time and come up with one thing or one group of things—art, paintings, architecture or whatever—which I, Michael [Spiller], and Dan [Ouellette, the production designer] have as a common reference. So when we walk into a natural situation that has its own stuff, we can impose certain prejudices of our own upon it. Michael from the camera, Dan mostly in the color, props, and things like that, and me, with the way I want to see it." Weighing location, budget, and the general look he wants for a film, Hartley devises an equation that "every image of the film is submitted to." For *The Unbelievable Truth*, that design equation emphasized broad planes of color, wide shots, and outdoor filmming. With *Trust*, he aimed for broad colorless spaces—an effect achieved by greying all but the colorful objects in a given scene by 40 percent, emphasizing close-ups, and indoor filmming. For *Simple Men*, Hartley selected maritime paintings by Whistler, Homer, Hopper, John

Singer Sargeant, and nautical images ("just tons and tons of these boats, greenish bluish," he says of the paintings). Hartley's choice of images for *Simple Men* derived from the fact that this is his first "pastoral film," but it is also no doubt a play on the notion of the brothers' quest as a quasi-Homeric Odyssey (it is no accident that the brothers are stranded at a joint called Homer's). Shot almost exclusively with a 50mm lens and low angles, the film has a consistency of imagery and perspective that Hartley believes affects the audience in much the same way a distinctive authorial voice informs a work of fiction.

Hartley thinks of his feature films "as fiction primarily and films secondarily. The rules of fiction are not something we make up," he contends. "It's like a science or archaeology. It has to do with investing ourselves in the idea of characters." His films often develop from "philosophical concepts or questions, where I'll ask myself something and the other half of myself will answer. [I] just get a dialogue going in here until eventually one of those characters is just that, a character. The story tends to develop from my understanding of these characters." When he was first writing scripts, Hartley tried to develop work that "accurately and realistically portrayed the world as I know it." But he was disappointed by the results. "I don't want to spend the time it takes to fabricate naturalism," Hartley has said. "I want to get to the point, whatever that is." Increasingly, the point is moving him away from character altogether. "The more things I make, I begin to see what really excites me is this musical aspect of it," says Hartley. "The way I'm working now is a lot different even than when I wrote *Simple Men*. I'll start writing a scene just as much from a sense of a babble I hear, like the noise in a coffee shop like this, and I'll want to make a scene about that. It naturally pushes you away from conventional, naturalistic filmmaking—which in our day means you're not going to be very profitable, and you better keep your budgets low—but I'm definitely moving in that direction."

Though he discounts the importance of speed when it comes to art, Hartley admits that he works fast. The writing of the initial draft for each of his feature films has taken a month or less. "But that's meaningless," protests Hartley. "Because no matter how long your first draft takes, you're still going to spend six months rewriting it, whether in rehearsal or other ways." Nevertheless, his rapid-fire production of scripts has certainly enabled him to capitalize on opportunities when funders have presented themselves. Nicholas Gottlieb, manager of program development for *American Playhouse*, remarked that after their initial discussions, Hartley produced the screenplay for *Surviving Desire* "in some astronomical amount of time, like four weeks." From the time *American Playhouse* first approached him to the film's television debut, it was almost precisely a year.

Much of Hartley's material is culled from notebooks he carries with him and has kept consistently since he discovered at age 18 that he couldn't read. "I graduated from high school and had never read a book," Hartley recalls. "We live in a society where that can happen." Browsing magazines once he was out in the world, Hartley came across "references, simple references, to things I didn't understand, that I had no clue about." In his frustration, he began educating himself. He bought notebooks and began reading books, writing down every reference and word he didn't understand. "Obsessive," Hartley concludes. "I am that way. I'm really obsessive."

Hartley's current obsession is his next film, an hour-long piece he hopes to produce for *American Playhouse* called *The Heart Is a Muscle*. "It's about how to save yourself from despair, do our lives have meaning." Melancholia might seem a curious preoccupation for a filmmaker as good at what he does as Hartley. "But you have to remember that from the inside and the outside things look a lot different," he protests. "I'm doing well financially; I'm getting paid to do films. I'm just a little more productive now than I was when I wasn't making money doing it. But when you're finishing the mix or the print on a film like *Simple Men*, you watch the last couple of frames and the music swells up at the right time and everything is constructed as you wanted, but all it urges you to do is continue working."



## The Truth about Ned Rifle



Sooner or later viewers of Hal Hartley's films notice Ned Rifle. He is the author of books that appear in *Trust* and *The Unbelievable Truth* and the man credited with music composition on *Simple Men*, *Surviving Desire*, *Ambition*, and *Theory of Achievement*. A year ago, a savvy journalist ferreted out the fact that Rifle was a pseudonym for

Hartley, who wanted to avoid the appearance of megalomania. But Ned Rifle is more than a silly name. He is a character with a past and, judging by his recent incarnation in *Simple Men* (played by Jeffrey Howard), perhaps with a future. Rifle first came on the scene almost a decade ago as the hapless hero in Hartley's thesis film, *Kid*. On a mission to get out of Lindenhurst and save his girlfriend, Rifle spends the 33-minute film trying unsuccessfully to get his motorcycle started. The name was a favorite among Hartley's classmates when he read the script aloud at Purchase, but after Hartley edited the film he found to his dismay that all mention of the name had been cut out. So in *Simple Men*, he brought Ned back. The McCabe brothers stumble on him in Lindenhurst 10 years later, still trying to start his motorcycle, still accompanied by his kid sister (who has grown up a little), still trying unsuccessfully to leave Lindenhurst behind.

## DISTANT MIRROR

### The Cinema of Chen Kaige

BERENICE REYNAUD

Chen Kaige first came to the United States for the screening of his film *Yellow Earth* at the New Directors/New Films festival in the spring of 1986. He looked shy and barely spoke English. His only other trips outside Mainland China had been to the Hong Kong Film Festival—where his film, neglected and criticized at home, was hailed as “the best film made in China since 1949”—and then to Hawaii. In New York someone asked him if he’d like to make a film about America. “I’m a Chinese filmmaker,” he replied through a translator. “I want to make films in China.”



The Emperor (Zhang Fengyi) and his concubine (Leslie Cheung) in *Farewell to My Concubine*. Though now living in New York City, Fifth Generation filmmaker Chen Kaige remains devoted to Chinese subjects.

Courtesy filmmaker

Six years later, Chen keeps an apartment in Manhattan’s Upper West Side, speaks almost unaccented English, has shaven his beard, and become a US resident. Awarded an Asian Cultural Council grant in October 1987, he extended his stay and is now able to commute between the US, Europe, and Mainland China. And, even though he dreams of directing an English-language film, his relentless struggle has been to continue making films in China, even if that sometimes forces him to live abroad.

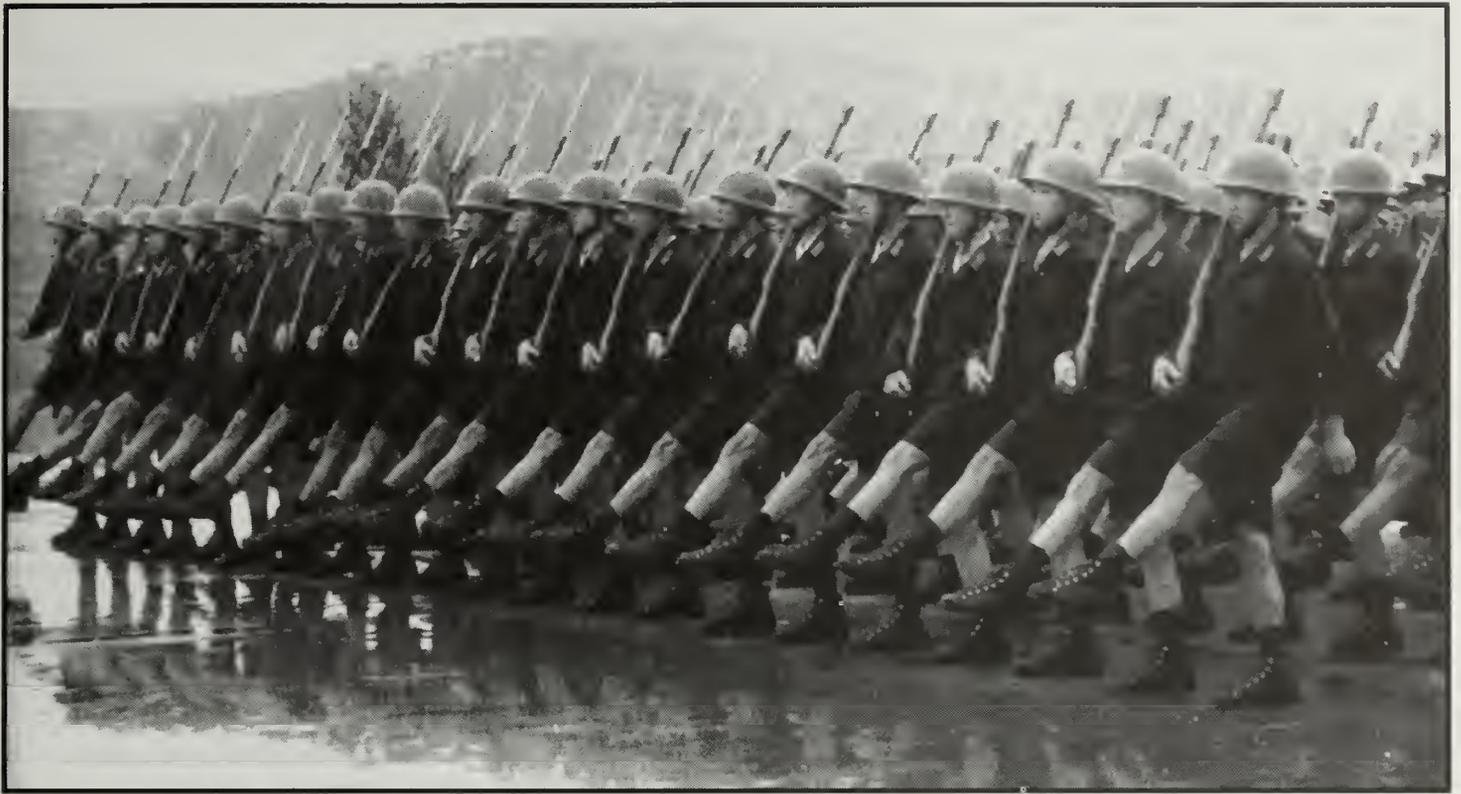
In 1965 the Cultural Revolution exploded in China and a wind of ideological madness swept across the country. Young people, inflamed by

Mao’s political slogans, wanted to change the “old ways of thinking” and build a new society. All the schools were closed and a 13-year-old Chen Kaige was roaming the streets of Beijing in the hope of joining the Red Guards, some of whom were his best buddies. His father, the famous opera and film director Chen Huai’ai, was not a member of the Communist Party and would later be put under house arrest at the Beijing Film Studio as “ideologically suspect”—a fact that was used to deny young Kaige admittance to the ranks. Left to his own devices, with no adult to take care of him (except for an old servant of the family), and with no social contacts other than his former schoolmates, now members of the Red Guards, Chen eventually “pronounced a speech against his father”—an act he had the courage to admit to later. “During the Cultural Revolution, we were not solely a nation of victims,” Chen says. “We all had our share of responsibility.”

Later, to “join the masses,” Chen became a woodcutter in the faraway regions of the Hunan province and enlisted in the army in 1968—to which, ironically, he was admitted because they needed a “tall baseball player” in the team. There, faced with the gravity of the Vietnam war—though Chen wasn’t in a fighting unit—and the growing militarization of Chinese society, he started to reconsider his juvenile political enthusiasm. At 26, after three years as a low-level technician in a Beijing lab, he was unschooled, disenfranchised, in a word, lost. His experience reflects that of an entire generation: His schoolmates at the Beijing Film Academy—Li Shaohong, Peng Xiaolin, Tian Zhuangzhuang, Zhang Yimou, later known as Fifth Generation filmmakers—all spent their teenage years in factories or the countryside to redeem their “bad family background.”

In 1978 the schools reopened and Chen entered the Beijing Film Academy in spite of his father’s warning that it was “too dangerous to become a filmmaker in China.” Irreparable damage had been done to Chinese culture. The continuity with 5,000 years of civilization, the belief in traditional values, already shattered in 1949, were definitively destroyed. Artists and filmmakers of Chen’s age and background were left with a huge cultural void to manage and the trauma of their stolen childhoods to overcome. “We lost something during the Cultural Revolution,” says Chen. “There is no way for us to create another culture or tradition in a short time.”

Upon graduation, Chen was assigned to the



Beijing Film Studio. But "there were too many old directors there," he says. So, in collaboration with his classmate Zhang Yimou, who was a brilliant DP before turning director, Chen submitted a script to veteran filmmaker Wu Tianming, then head of the Xi'an Film Studio, who gave many Fifth Generation filmmakers their first chance to direct. Produced with the equivalent of \$100,000 and shot in the spectacular landscape and desolate poverty of the Shaanxi province, *Yellow Earth* (1984) describes the friendship between a peasant girl and a soldier who comes to her village to collect traditional folk songs. "Officials said the film showed the dark side of Chinese society, the people in it were ugly," recounts Chen. Later the film was banned for exportation. However, the director of the Hong Kong Film Festival, who had seen it on tape, convinced them to change their minds.

In his second feature, *The Big Parade* (1985), Chen draws on his experiences as a soldier to reflect on Chinese society at large and on the almost desperate desire to belong to an organized body, which he had himself experienced as a teenager. The film, considered by Chinese officials to be a misrepresentation of army life, "ran into trouble," according to Chen, who had to change the ending and add a voice-over giving moralistic overtones to the inner feelings of the soldiers. *King of the Children* (1987), which recounts the struggles of a young, emotional teacher to change the educational methods in a country school, was shown at Cannes in 1988, but received the Golden Alarm Clock Prize, designed by a group of sassy journalists for the "most boring film." The award was a gag, but one that

deeply offended Chinese authorities. A boycott of Western festivals was enacted and a national press campaign was launched against the Xi'an Film Studio and Wu Tianming. Western responses, positive or negative, have finally very little impact on the way a film is received in China. Fifth Generation films are rarely box-office hits at home, and they often undergo subtle forms of

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In 1978 Chen entered the Beijing Film Academy in spite of his father's warning that it was "too dangerous to become a filmmaker in China."

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ensorship (e.g., not enough prints are struck) or outright bans. Despite such criticism, Chen thinks that *King of the Children* is still "the best film [I] ever made" and that it expresses "very important things about Chinese culture." But, Chen maintains, "there is a huge gap between Chinese and Westerners," which is why the latter often miss the film's subtle symbolism.

So Chen set out to discover "what makes Ameri-

**Drawing on his experience as a soldier, Chen made *The Big Parade*, a film that ran into trouble with Chinese officials for "misrepresenting" army life.**

Courtesy China Film Import and Export (L.A.), Inc.

can movies work." During his two-and-a-half-year residence in the United States, during which he directed a music video for Duran Duran, Chen made a lot of contacts and saw a lot of movies. Far from being naive or grossly commercial, Chen's quest for "universality" reflects a real urgency. How can Chinese cinema survive and remain Chinese? How can Fifth Generation directors account for their painful past while entering modernity? How can China remain faithful to herself while entertaining a fruitful dialogue with the West? "Western spectators...shouldn't expect our culture to remain unchanged," says Chen. "Living in the West, I am in-between. And Chinese society needs this kind of art—that which opens new possibilities for us."

In 1990 Chen started production on *Life on a String*, a fable about two blind singers travelling through the provinces of Ningxia, Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia. The film was entirely financed with European and Japanese money, channeled through Dan Ravaud's Serene Production company. Chen describes it as "a Chinese-language film made for the world market." The postproduction was done in Berlin, but it was shot on location with an all-Chinese cast and crew "subcontracted" from their original work units. "I had no problem with the Film Bureau," says Chen, speaking of the division of the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television that controls the film studios

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in China. "They told me they needed my help to make good films in China."

At Cannes *Life on a String* deeply moved Hong Kong producer Hsu Feng. A former kung fu actress—in her teens, she starred in King Hu's landmark film *A Touch of Zen*—Hsu was looking for the right director for a filmic adaptation of a novel she had optioned. Written by the popular Hong Kong novelist/screenwriter Lilian Lee, *Farewell to My Concubine* tells the story of two Peking Opera actors who grow up together in the 1920s as "stage brothers," then perform together: one as the Emperor, the other as his beloved concubine. As historical events unravel in the thirties and forties—the emergence of the Communist Party, the Japanese invasion, the fight with the Kuomintang, etc.—the female impersonator's unrequited love for his partner triggers a series of intimate dramas and betrayals that culminate during the Cultural Revolution after the latter marries a former prostitute. Chen accepted the directing assignment and was granted complete artistic freedom—and an unlimited budget—by his producer. *Farewell to My Concubine* was shot last spring at the Beijing Film Studio, where historical decors, buildings, and costumes were painstakingly reconstructed. The cast and crew were Chinese—including two of the main actors, Gong Li, the star of Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*, and Zhang Fengyi, known for his performance in Ling Zifeng's *Rickshaw Boy*. A Hong Kong actor, Leslie Cheung (*Rouge*, *Chinese Ghost Story*, *Days of Being Wild*), played the part of the concubine.

*Farewell to My Concubine* is the first film shot in Mainland China to look sympathetically at homosexual desire—though not without a certain reticence. "The [protagonist] is not a real homosexual," comments Chen. "He's a dreamer...

From *Life on a String*, Chen's fable about two blind singers.

Courtesy filmmaker

faithful to his art...who strives for perfection. He is the character who represents me the most." Even though *Farewell to My Concubine* is the first project Chen didn't initiate himself, he got involved in the screenplay at a very early stage. He worked long hours with Lilian Lee and Lu Wei, a screenwriter from the Xi'an Film Studio, to refine the historical details, tighten the structure, and add more juice to the relationship between the two opera "brothers" and the woman.

On the set, Chen Huai'ai often comes to sit with his son and watch reruns of the takes on the video monitor. That *Farewell to My Concubine* deals with Peking Opera only adds to the complexity of Chen Kaige's involvement in the project. This typically Chinese art form was forced to accommodate numerous "readjustments" by the Communist Party in order to drain it of its "feudal content" and "revolutionize" it. As well as a reconciliation with Chinese artistic tradition, the film may also be read as an homage to Chen Huai'ai's work in theater and opera.

*Farewell to My Concubine*—in which Chen Kaige had access to a Steadicam and the use of 500 extras—will be a test of the director's marketability in the West. It should also confirm the talent of a man who is, he acknowledges, in a "unique position" between East and West, but still can't get his own apartment in Beijing—another form of "displacement."

*Bérénice Reynaud*, the New York correspondent for *Cahiers du cinéma*, is currently teaching at the Film/Video School of the California Institute of the Arts.

TROY SELVARATNAM

**Black Holes/Heavenly Bodies** is a new video production by Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reese that tells the story of two people on their journey through the afterlife. Its first segment, *Hell*, has just been completed and is a mordant satire of contemporary society and its use of the media to define the individual and the family. Its entire action confined to a kitchen gone awry, with grating sitcom themes playing throughout, the video is an unrelenting descent into a nightmarish, media-made landscape. Also by Ligorano and Reese is the video installation **Breakfast of Cham-**

explores McLuhan's claim that reading a daily newspaper is "like taking a warm bath" and offers an acute assessment of the visual muzak that governs the form and content of the media. *Black Holes/Heavenly Bodies* and *Breakfast of Champions*: Nora Ligorano/Marshall Reese, 67 Devoe St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 782-9255.

**Lost Prophet**, the debut feature film by New York filmmaker Michael de Avila, explores the world of the subconscious and its relationship to the experience of film viewing. The film's main character, Jim, captive to his dreams, struggles to survive in the wilderness of his mind. Charting his odyssey through dark, mystical landscapes, the film simultaneously seduces the viewer into a hypnotic state. Using an experimental narrative,

everyone in Northern Ireland. The film will include commentary by American, Irish, and British human rights professionals, as well as testimony from residents of Northern Ireland. *Northern Ireland Now*: Canoe Productions, 162 6th St., Hoboken, NJ 07030; (201) 795-4408.

A postmodern story of *l'amour fou* propelled by a hardcore-industrial soundtrack, **The Living End** throws an unblinking eye on the sexual and fatally romantic consequences of gay male attraction in the nineties. The film focuses on the dire relationship between a pair of young, HIV-positive outcasts with literally nothing to lose who are on the lam in the desolate, quasi-surrealistic American Wasteland. Director Gregg Araki invigorates the film by taking formal, aesthetic, thematic, and political risks. The production itself was filmed guerilla-style, on the run, without permits, utilizing a minimal crew. Relentless and extreme, *The Living End* marks a significant advancement in the couple-on-the-run movie in the tradition of Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* and Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night*. *The Living End*: Gregg Araki, Desperate Pictures, 740 S. Detroit St., #1, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 857-5963.

Accepted into the 1992 Cannes Film Festival's prestigious Un Certain Regard category, **Through an Open Window** is a poignant yet dark, not-often witnessed glimpse into American life. Anne Meara plays a suburban housewife confronted by a seemingly harmless incident, which conceals terrifying potential. In the course of one summer afternoon, her carefully ordered existence becomes an inextricable nightmare. The film was shot on location in Long Island, New York, and is narrated by Academy Award winner F. Murray Abraham. *Through an Open Window*: Caruso/Mendelsohn Productions, Tribeca Film Center, 375 Greenwich St., Suite 514, New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-4036.

Drawn from the lives of pre-schoolers and grandmothers, rock musicians and priests, students and laborers, **400 Miles from Moscow** is an intimate portrait of the lives of ordinary Russian citizens and an American videomaker during the final days of Communist rule. Shot between January and July of 1991—primarily in the Belgorod region of Russia near the Ukrainian border—the film examines interactions between East and West, communism and capitalism, old and new modes of thinking and acting. Videomaker Carol Beck interweaves interview and cinema vérité footage with excerpts from letters she received from West-



The media's coma-inducing images are treated with gentle humor by Marshall Reese and Nora Ligorano in their video installation *Breakfast of Champions*.

Courtesy videomakers

**pions**. The work comprises a breakfast table, an American flag place setting, a cup of coffee, a half-eaten piece of toast, a chair, and a copy of the *New York Times* with a video monitor replacing the front page photo, displaying thousands of disjointed images from the many lamentable moments of Bush's term in office. The installation

de Avila constructs a "dream portraiture" with a storyline that is subtext to the mood and tone of the piece. *Lost Prophet*: Rockville Pictures, 273 Mott St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-6010.

Currently in production, **Northern Ireland Now** is a 16mm documentary that explores the pervasiveness of human rights violations in Northern Ireland as recognized by international human rights organizations. Produced and directed by Maggie Bruen, the film analyzes the ramifications of emergency legislation enacted there, the consequences of the military presence, and the many forms of abuse which touch the lives of virtually

ern Europe and the United States. In the process, she provides audiences with a glimpse of Russia seldom found by television crews. *400 Miles from Moscow*: Carol Beck, Film Studies/Parker Hall, Keene State College, 229 Main St., Keene, NH 03431-4183.

A *cinéma vérité* documentary, *Rock Soup* chronicles the trials of a group of homeless people on New York's Lower East Side who band together to create an outdoor soup kitchen in a park called La Plaza Cultural. Led by Kalif Beacon, the group faces stiff opposition from the Housing Authority Board who plan to build housing for the elderly on the site of their encampment. Following the group's travails from the streets to board meetings, *Rock Soup* provides an arresting portrait of the forgotten ones in a highly competitive, throwaway society. That things have only gotten worse for the homeless since the film was shot in 1988, only compounds the tragedy of this affecting and timeless story. *Rock Soup*: Gaetano Maida, 1307 Josephine St., Berkeley, CA; (510) 525-7594.

First in a series of films on American heroes by *Vogue* photographer Arthur Elgort, *Texas Tenor: The Illinois Jacquet Story* is a vibrant homage to the jazz tradition and to one of the men who helped forge it. Illinois Jacquet started turning heads at the age of 19 when he played his wild, over-the-top sax solo on "Flying Home" with the Lionel Hampton Big Band. Thus began the remarkable musical legend of Jacquet, the last living exponent of the Texas Tenor tradition. Interspersing interviews with jazz giants like Sonny Rollins and Dizzy Gillespie with gritty footage of Jacquet in action, Elgort has fashioned a fluid and honest picture of the life and inspiration of a jazzman. *Texas Tenor: The Illinois Jacquet Story*: Arthur Elgort, Ltd., 136 Grand St., New York, NY 10013.

*Home Is Where the Heart Is*, an experimental documentary by Sian Evans, bridges multiple definitions of "home" through interviews with construction workers, developers, and residents of Fort Greene, Brooklyn; the allegories of nursery rhymes; global images of home life; and the developmental psychology of children. The film employs psychoanalytic principles and addresses such factors as the tangibility of memories in an individual's geography, knowledge of names and other actions of mental mapping, and the projection of abilities and responsibilities in the workplace. In piecing together these disparate elements, Evans comes to a cumulative definition of "home," a seat of identity and a font of emotions common to all people. *Home Is Where the Heart Is*: Sian Evans, 235 Berry St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8404.

During the World War II, Lidice, a small Catholic town in Czechoslovakia, was annihilated by the Nazis for allegedly collaborating with the resistance movement. "Lidice!" became a rallying cry for Allied sympathizers throughout the war. Documentarian Jacky Comforty addresses the legacy of that experience in his film *Lidice!*—

He comes from the deep in *Undertow*, a film by Robert Withers, starring Manty Cantsin, Joseph Jarman, Mante (la Flamenca), and Quentin Crisp.

Courtesy filmmaker



*Legacy of a Survivor's Child*, currently in production. The production will focus on Evanston, Illinois, resident Jerry Zbiral, whose mother lost her first husband in the Nazi slaughter. The film will feature interviews with survivors in Czechoslovakia and other Lidice residents. Archival footage never before seen in the West has additionally been made available to the production team. *Lidice!—Legacy of a Survivor's Child*: Comforty Mediaconcepts, 613 Michigan Ave., Evanston, IL 60202; (708) 475-0791.

*Headhunters*, a 15-minute video shot on location in Papua New Guinea and England, satirizes cultural confusion—as well as racism, tourism, and male rituals of manhood—in a postcolonial story about a white boy's trip to get his first shrunken head. Using humor to evoke the obscenity of the continued exploitation of other peoples, director Terese Svoboda puts to question just what it is we are teaching our children. In addition, Svoboda is working on a 30-minute experimental documentary on Margaret Sanger and the opening of the first birth control clinic entitled *Margaret Sanger: A Public Nuisance*. *Headhunters*: Svoboda/Bull Productions, 56 Ludlow St., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10002; and *Margaret Sanger: A Public Nuisance*: Barbara Abrash, Margaret Sanger Film Project, 67 E. 11th St., #418, New York, NY 10003.

With the ascension of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, the conservative tradition in the African American community is now under tough scrutiny, and an old debate among African Americans has been revived. Clarence E. Page, syndicated columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, examines this question in *Black American Conservatism: An Exploration of Ideas* and takes a closer look at today's men and women who have applied a range of conservative ideas and self-help principles to deal with the social and economic problems that plague the black community. Produced and directed by Zach Richter and edited by Martin Lucas, *Black American Conservatism* addresses the concerns of African Americans empowering themselves and tries to make sense of the conservative ideas that are finding vogue among blacks in the political arena. *Black American Conservatism: An Exploration of Ideas*: Zach Richter, Corporation for Educational Radio and Television,

Box 564, New York, NY 10014 (212) 582-8078.

Abigail Child's *8 Million*, a video album combining documentary and narrative elements, with music by Ikue Mori, takes the myths and motifs of popular culture—romance and television drama—and twists them through gender reversals, a critique of the social order, and a fragmented narrative. This collaboration between Child and Mori focuses on expanding the possibility of an interactive relationship between image and music. In addition, Child is now working on a 16mm feature film entitled *Rubble*, set against the devastated and alternatively hopeful exteriors of New York's Lower East Side. The film portrays a day in the life of the Dodds, a family condemned to live in the heart of the "rubble" jungle. Documentary footage is interspersed with the narrative to parallel the fictional crisis and create a multi-layered portrait of a neighborhood in disrepair. *8 Million* and *Rubble*: Abigail Child, 903 East 8th St., New York, NY 10009.

Examining the intimate, often unexplored relationship between nannies and the children they raise, *Martha & Ethel* addresses issues pertinent to women's studies, childrearing, and the dynamics of the American family. The title characters, now both 88-years old, were the real-life nannies of the film's director and coproducer. Associate edited by Alysha Cohen, the film includes interviews with the two families and a wide range of archival footage from the fifties and sixties—feature film and television clips, advertisements, and personal memorabilia. Significantly, *Martha & Ethel* explores the roles of upper-class women in the fifties and sixties and the unique emotional challenges their children faced when an outsider was hired as their primary nurturer and caretaker. *Martha & Ethel*: Canobie Films, Inc., 252 E. 52nd St., #2A, New York, NY 10022; (212) 486-1357.

*With Reservations*: Jim Northrup will combine elements of traditional narrative documentary with videopoems and videoessays to form a portrait of the Native American poet and writer. Northrup is well-known in Native American circles

for the beauty of his writings and the humor of his column, The Fond Du Lac Follies, which he writes for nationally-distributed Indian newspapers. The video will use the work of Northrup to present a portrait of the artist and to explore issues such as treaty rights and racism. With this inspiring new film, poet and videomaker Mike Hazard continues his series of video portraits about poets, in which he has profiled Robert Bly and Thomas McGrath. *With Reservations: Jim Northrup*: Mike Hazard, Center for International Education, 344 Ramsey St., St. Paul, MN 55102; (612) 227-2240.

In the spirit of *My Dinner with Andre* and *Swimming to Cambodia* comes **Painting the Town**, a documentary-style feature produced by Sara Sackner, about downtown New York painter Richard Osterweil. Osterweil has been painting for almost 20 years, living on a \$6 per day food budget, driving a cab, and working as a coat check at a fancy uptown restaurant. Despite his unremarkable life, Osterweil manages to get himself into some quite remarkable situations. For the past 15 years he has been crashing thousand-dollar-a-plate dinners, funerals, opera openings, parties, benefits, and weddings of the rich and famous. The anecdotes and experiences he relates throughout the film make him a surprisingly engaging and sympathetic fellow. *Painting the Town*: Padded Cell Pictures, 14114 Harstook St., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423; (818) 981-2582.

**America Becoming**, part of a major research project supported by the Ford Foundation, captures the great diversity—linguistic, class, racial, and ethnic—of America's communities. Narrated by CBS correspondent Meredith Veira, the 90-minute video explores what it is to be American and what the nation is becoming, by telling the story of the relationships among newcomers and long-term residents of six communities throughout the country. Cowritten and produced by Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, *America Becoming* eloquently addresses the changing face of American society. *America Becoming*: Mary Schultz, WETA, Box 2626, Washington, DC 20013; (703) 998-2875.

Written, produced, and directed by Robert Withers, **Undertow**, a 30-minute surrealist fable shot in 16mm color, evokes the dramatic suspense, flow, and resolution of fiction film while preserving an enigma at its heart. Underman, a guerilla trickster from another dimension, emerges from the sea and crawls through the streets of a decayed urban landscape. His presence conjures up floating eyes, sea creatures in the gutter, and bizarre encounters. As he is pursued by a motley cabal intent on thwarting his mysterious mission, Underman escapes destruction and returns to the sea. Performance artist Monty Castin, Joseph Jarman of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and Quentin Crisp are all players in this inventive piece of surrealist filmmaking. *Undertow*: Robert Withers, 202 West 80th St., #5W, New York, NY 10024; (212) 873-1353.

**Guerrillas in Our Midst** is an upbeat half-hour documentary by Amy Harrison featuring the



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Guerrilla Girls, the self-proclaimed "Conscience of the Art World," and many of their adversaries, including gallery owner Mary Boone. With gorilla masks, miniskirts, and a large dose of humor, these anonymous women artists expose the rampant discrimination in the "blue-chip" art market. Interviews with artists, critics, museum directors, and the girls themselves are included in the film providing a lively commentary on the art world today. *Guerrillas in Our Midst*: Amy Harrison, Box 145 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276; (212) 929-5116.

A meditation on Japan scholar Donald Richie's two-decade-old internal travelogue, *The Inland Sea* explores the complex relation between East and West. Coproduced by Brian Cotnoir and narrated by Richie, the film becomes a personal journey through the rural islands of Richie's adopted country. Travelling by public transportation—the occasional local train, the countless ferries—Richie leads the filmmakers through serendipitous encounters with local people and through the bewitching scenery of the Inland Sea, a nearly landlocked body of water bounded by three of Japan's four major islands. Shot in 16mm, *The Inland Sea* is an intensely personal and lush account of the experience of enchantment and reflection. *The Inland Sea: The Inland Sea Project*, 35 East 10th St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 477 5486.

A new five-part video series by the Program for Art on Film, *Art on Film/Film on Art* explores the challenges of translating visual arts into moving-image media, without conforming to commercial formats. Directed by Michael Camerini, the series includes *The Fayum Portraits*, codirected by Bob Rosen, with music by Meredith Monk, on the mummy portraits painted in the Fayum region of Egypt between 100 and 300 A.D.; *Trevi*, codirected by Corey Shaff, in which different cinematographic and editing styles elucidate the changing attitudes over time toward the near mythical Trevi fountain in Rome; *A Mosque in Time*, by Edin Velez, analyzing the architectural space and the forms of Islamic and Christian ornamentation in the Great Mosque of Cordoba; and *A Day in the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China, or Surface Is Illusion but so Is Depth*, by Philip Haas, with artist David Hockney guiding viewers along a seventeenth-century Chinese scroll painting. The series encompasses a variety of innovative approaches to presenting art on screen, and is sure to influence future films on art. *Art in Film/Film on Art*: Program for Art on Film, 980 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 988-4876.

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## Domestic

**AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 26-30, IL. Now in 35th yr, fest for educational media will be held at Palmer House in Chicago. Entries must have been produced &/or released btwn Jan. 1, 1991 & Dec. 30, 1992 & avail. for general distribution in the US. Cats incl. docs, business & industry & curriculum-oriented prods & student-produced works. Entrants incl. ind. film/videomakers, distributors, corporate prod. depts, gov't media prod. divisions & broadcast networks. 1st place winners in each cat receive Blue Ribbon Awards; second place winners receive Red Ribbon awards. Blue Ribbon winners eligible for Academy Award nomination in doc & short subject cats. Three cash awards of \$500 each presented; Emily Award given to Best of Fest; John Grierson Award given to 1st time director of social issues doc; Murrow Award honors best historical or int'l issues doc. Attendees at fest incl. distributors, media buyers & programmers from public libraries, colleges & universities, school systems, museums & other media-related institutions. Deadline: Nov. 2. Contact: Kathryn Osen, American Film & Video Assoc., Box 48659, Niles, IL 60714; (708) 698-6440; fax: (708) 823-1561.

**BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Spring, NJ. Contemporary ind. film video prods accepted for 12th annual edition of fest named for 1st known motion picture studio. Fest seeks "artistically & conceptually provocative" works up to 90 min., any style or genre, solo & collaborative, which "reveal character, boldness, compassion, rigor or which explore medium's expressive forms &/or address vital human or social issues." After judging, winning & selected works form a collection of 45 pieces exhibited in Traveling Showcase tour, presented at host institutions across country. Fest cited by Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences as Academy Award nominee qualifying competition. Black Maria "does not impose conventional categories in jurying entries; works are judged w/in context of makers' intent." Cash awards incl. Juror's Awards sharing \$2,000; Juror's Citations sharing \$1,500; Director's Choice sharing \$1,000 plus \$4,000 or more in rental honoraria. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 16. Contact: John Columbus, fest director, Black Maria Film & Video Festival, c/o Dept. of Media Arts, Jersey City State College, 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07003; (201) 200-2043.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Spring, MA. Noncompetitive fest, nonprofit community access TV project, forum for women's creative video expressions. Videos should be produced by women & reflect personal, political, social, historical & community issues. Theme: The 1990's: How We See It. Cats: showcase tapes which explore theme; snapshot tapes (compilation of 1-min. interview tapes in which women asked "As a woman, what have the 1990's meant to you?") Format: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Int'l Women's Day Video Festival, Box 391438, Cambridge, MA 02239; (617) 628-8826 (Somerville Community Access Television).

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 18-23, CA. This key US fest for educational media now in 23rd yr. Top winners eligible for Academy Award competition in doc & short subject cats. Eligible productions incl. docs, dramatic features & shorts, animation, classroom programs, medical/health programs, training/instructional tapes, special interest videos, made for TV programs, PSAs, film & video art, student-made docs & narratives. Entries must have been

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

completed btwn Jan. 1, 1991 & Dec. 1, 1992. Fest held in Oakland & San Francisco. Entry fees: \$80 & up, depending on length; student fees \$30 & up. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", interactive media prods. Deadline: Dec. 1; entries postmarked on or before Nov. 2 receive early bird discount of \$5 per entry; late entries accepted through Dec. 15 w/late fee. Contact: Nat'l Educational Film & Video Festival, 566 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 465-6885.

**POETRY FILM AND VIDEOPOEM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 5-6, CA. Now in 17th yr, competitive fest specializes in films & videos that "integrate poetry, film & music in a unified work of art" & "incorporate verbal poetic statement in narrated or captioned form." This yr's theme: Innocence & Corruption, but entries need not conform to this. Max. length: 15 min. About 30 works selected for screenings. 4 awards & 4 honorable mentions given. Narrative, doc (involving poetry), video & animated works accepted. Entry fee: \$5. Deadline: Nov. 26. Contact: Herman Berlandt, Poetry Film & Videopoem Festival, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 776-6602.

**SAN FRANCISCO FILM FESTIVAL/GOLDEN GATE AWARDS COMPETITION**, April 29-May 13, CA. Presented by San Francisco Film Society, competitive section of 36th San Francisco Int'l Film Festival now in 31st yr. Annual audiences average 40,000. Competition entries come from 34 countries. Awards of trophies & cash honoraria in 4 divisions: film/video (short narrative, artist profile, art work, animation, history, current events, sociology, environment); TV (feature, comedy, drama, fine arts/variety, arts/humanities, sociology, history, current affairs, environment); Bay Area film/video (shorts, doc); New Visions (experimental/personal/abstract). New categories incl. nature, biography docs & music videos. Main section curated & noncompetitive. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Brian Gordon, San Francisco Film Society, 1560 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94115-3516; (415) 567-4641; fax: (415) 921-5032.

**SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 5-14, CA. Features, shorts, docs, student films

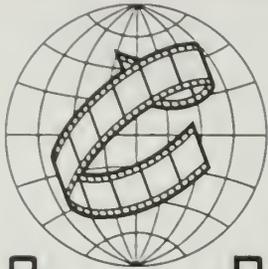
accepted. Awards: Best Director, Jury Award, Dame Judith Anderson Award for Best Feature Film, Bruce C. Corwin Award for Artistic Excellence, Best of the Fest Peoples Choice Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Entry fee: \$30. Deadline: Nov. 30. Contact: Diane M. Durst, Santa Barbara Int'l Film Festival, 1216 State St., Ste. 710, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; (805) 963-0023; fax: (805) 962-2524.

**SANTA FE FILM EXPO**, March, NM. Fest showcases recently made, outstanding ind. films of varied subject matter, length, style & genre, incl. doc, dramatic, animated, film art & "that which defies categorization." Films televised nationally or in NM before fest not eligible. All selected films paid rental fee. Entry fee: \$15. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Nov. 16. Contact: Lisa Lyon/Linda Klosky, Santa Fe Film Expo, Center for Contemporary Arts, 291 E. Barcelona Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501.

**SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**, January, UT. Sundance has become premiere US showcase for new ind. films; many important works have premiered & launched their theatrical life at competitive fest. Dramatic & doc films accepted. Entries must be at least 51 percent US financed (films produced, financed, or initiated by major film studios ineligible for competition, but films purchased after completion eligible). Work must be completed after Oct. 15, 1991. Entries may not open theatrically before Feb. 1, 1993 in more than 3 N. Amer. markets or be broadcast nationally & may not play in more than 2 domestic film fests prior to Sundance. Dramatic films must be at least 70 min. & docs at least 50 min. Shorts ineligible for competition, but may be submitted for fest screening. Awards: Grand Prize (jury ballot); Cinematography Award (jury ballot); Audience Award (popular ballot); Filmmakers' Trophy (filmmakers' vote). Films selected in drama cat. also compete for Screenwriters' Award (jury ballot). One rep from each competing film invited to attend as fest's guest. Fest attended by large number of distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Entry fee: \$35 (\$10 short). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" or 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Geoffrey Gilmore, programming director, Sundance Film Festival, Ind. Film Competition, 3619 Motor Ave., Suite 240, Los Angeles, CA 90034; (310) 204-2091; fax: (310) 204-3091.

## Foreign

**BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, February, Germany. One of world's top int'l fests, 29,000 attending fest & European Film Market each yr. Now in 43rd yr, Berlin offers ind. films hospitable atmosphere. Fest, supported by all levels of German gov't, divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: by invitation, programmed by fest director Moritz de Hadeln, 35mm & 70mm features & shorts. Section known for strong programming of US ind. films: Int'l Forum of New Cinema, headed by Ulrich Gregor & Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program) headed by Wieland Speck. Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Forum specializes in avant-garde intellectual & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm). Panorama presents wide range of work from low-budget to more commercial ventures, incl. studio films (features & shorts under 15 min.; 16mm, 35mm, 70mm). Other sections: Kinderfilmfest, 35mm, 16mm films over 59 min. produced for children; New German Films & Retrospective. The European Film Market is important meeting place for screenings & sales, w/ reps from over 40 countries. All entries must



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**CRÉTEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 26-Apr. 4, France. One of world's oldest fests of films by women & important showcase, now celebrating 15th yr. Held in Paris suburb of Créteil, fest annually attracts audiences of over 35,000, incl. filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers. Controversial & critical discussions traditionally part of proceedings. Sections: competition, retro of modern woman director, self-portrait of an actress, tribute to pioneer of women's film, young cinema, int'l program. Special events for 1993: Image of women in Chinese cinema; European section; film & dance; lesbian cinema & video (1st major retro); doc cinema & environmental concerns; symposium on feminist film criticism. Competitive section selects 13 narrative features, 13 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Cash & equip. prizes: FF20,000 Prix du public in each cat.; FF20,000 Grand Jury prize; 6 other prizes totalling FF45,000. US pre-selection made by fest US rep Bérénice Reynaud. Films must be directed or codirected by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1991; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV or shown at other French fests. Student prods. ineligible. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for accommodations (3 days) for filmmakers & round-trip shipping for films selected. Films need transcript of dialogue, synopsis, publicity & bio material. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" only. Entry fee: \$15 to cover shipping & handling, payable to Bérénice Reynaud. Deadline: Nov. 1. For application, send SASE to: Bérénice Reynaud, California Institute of the Arts, School of Film/Video, 24700 McBean Pkwy., Valencia, CA 92355. Do not call; all phone inquiries will be handled by Kathryn Bowser at FIVF, (212) 473-3400.

**INPUT (INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION SCREENING CONFERENCE)**, May, United Kingdom. In 16th yr, INPUT gathers about 700 producers, programmers & broadcast executives from US, Canada, UK, Scandinavia, Latin America, Germany & Eastern Europe to view & discuss public TV programming. 100 programs selected by team of ind. producers & directors looking for innovative work. Entries must be produced & broadcast 15 mo. prior; all genres accepted. Conference held alternately in Europe & N. America; last yr in Maryland, this yr in Bristol, UK. No entry fee. Format: 3/4". Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Sandie Pedlow, US INPUT Secretariat, SCETV, 2627 Millwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29205; (803) 737-3208; fax: (803) 737-3417.

**ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL NON-FICTION FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 1-7, Russia. Invites docs, experimental (no actors), TV docs under 100 min. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1991. Special section: music videos (5 min. or less) or

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## FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, New York 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.

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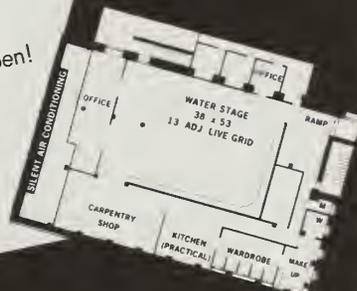
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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

In person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

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Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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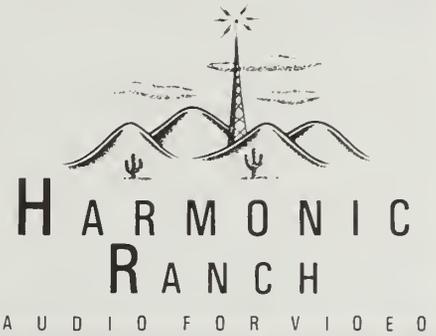
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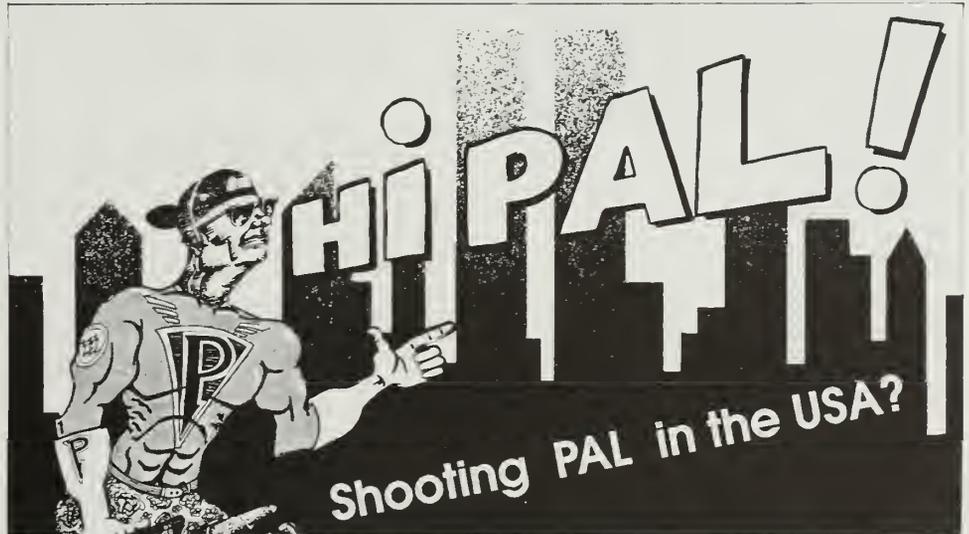


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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**BOGAZIÇI UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS ARTS** holds int'l conferences w/ visiting participants from across globe. For center's '93 program, contact: Bogaziçi Univ., Center for Educational Technology & Communications Arts, (Kuzey kampüs), Bebek 80815, İstanbul, Türkiye; tel.: (90) (1) 2-2651540 ext. 788.

**CALL FOR PAPERS/PANELS:** "Console-ing Passions," 2nd annual TV/Video/Feminism Conference, Apr. 1-4, Univ. of Southern California. 250-word proposals only. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Lynn Spigel, School of Cinema-TV, USC, University Park, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2211; fax: (213) 740-7682.

**FESPACO: PANAFRICAN FILM & TV FESTIVAL**, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, offers specially-priced packages for parties interested in attending fest. For brochure & details, contact: Access Africa, 303 5th Ave., #1913, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-4700; fax: (212) 545-1267.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** media workshops incl.: Amiga Video Toaster (10/1, 10/26); Jon Jost's Ultra-Low Budget Guerrilla Filmmaking Workshop (10/3); Film Editing (10/6); Intermediate Video Editing (10/10); Intro to Video Prod. (10/17) & *One Bad Daughter*: Barbara Hammer presents her Video Image Processing (10/23). For more info.: Media Training Dept., F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY CONGRESS**, Oct. 21-23, CA. Open invitation to filmmakers, distributors, programmers, critics, scholars & general public to participate in global dialogue about future of doc. filmmaking. General sessions & seminars on following topics: how to find funding for docs in US & global markets; distribution & marketing of docs; new aesthetics in doc. prod.; ethical standards; docs as tools for social change; censorship; preservation of doc. film & videotape; how to survive & thrive as doc. filmmaker; new imaging technologies. Field trips & screenings also included. For add'l info, contact: I.D.C., Rita Odum, coordinator, c/o Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (818) 244-7263; fax: (818) 244-7267.

**LATIN AMERICAN VIDEO MEETING**, Lima, Perú, Oct. 26-30. Self-convended meeting of Latin American Video Movement w/ debates on subjects such as: evaluations & tendencies of movement; new strategies; special committees on women, children, peasants, ecology & education. Parallel activities: Latin American video exhibition and Latin American workshop on Strategies & Methodologies for Training in Video Prod. and Use. US contact: Karen Ranucci (212) 463-0108.

**MEDIA ALLIANCE's** annual meeting will be held in conjunction with state-wide arts conference, *Common Ground: Creating Community*, cosponsored by New York Foundation for Arts in association w/ Alliance for New York State Arts Council & New York State Council on Arts October 13-16, in Saratoga Springs, NY. Media arts programming incl. panels on racial inequality in arts and media; local & nat'l advocacy campaigns; programming initiatives & options for progressive education and literacy, in addition to screenings and Arts Wire demo. Fee: \$35 (entire conference), \$20 (one day). Contact: Media Alliance, Thirteen/WNET, 356 West 58th Street, New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., October 8 for the December issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

**MEDIA EXCHANGE SEMINAR** to be held Nov. 11. Panel discussion on factual programming & opportunities for coproducing areas of programming w/Europe. Panel will incl. American & European executives. UK TV producers will be in attendance. Contact: Katrina Wood (212) 925-9834.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ITVS SEEKS SERIES:** Independent TV Service requests proposals from ind. producers for TV series designed to test new formats or address new audiences. Guidelines now avail. for *Generation*, 4-part series for teens (deadline Nov. 16) & *Extended Play*, fund for extraordinary series of any variety (deadline Nov. 30). Contact: ITVS, 333 Sibley, St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 225-9035.

**LA PLAZA**, wkly doc. series produced at WGBH Boston for & about Latino community, seeks works by ind. film- & videomakers that deal w/ social & cultural issues concerning Latinos. Send 3/4" or VHS tapes to: La Plaza/ Acquisitions, WGBH, 125 Western Avenue, Boston, MA 02134.

**NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO's** Hothouse Project seeks radio programming that reflects & promotes cultural diversity in US. Proposals for 13-segment series, specials, limited series, or long-form series considered, as well as programs transferred from other media. For guidelines, contact: Sandra Ratley, senior producer, Hothouse Project, (202) 822-2369.

**NOMAD VIDEO** seeks works from videomakers of all ages, backgrounds & skill levels for monthly screenings, designed to showcase grassroots artists. Held at changing locations around Seattle area. Send VHS, S-VHS or hi-8 w/SASE to: Gavin the Nomad, 501 N. 36th St. #365, Seattle, WA 98103; (206) 781-0653.

**PBS' PRIMETIME SERIES INITIATIVE** seeks proposals from ind. producers who have previously produced for nat'l primetime. Deadline: January 29. Contact: Pat Hunter, dir of programming admin., PBS, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-5060.

**SUBMIT VIDEOS** for possible inclusion in lectures/exhibition of Latino/a video art from US presented in S. America. 30min. max. in all genres and topics. Deadline:

Oct. 30. Send VHS preview copy w/ statement on work, bio, resumé, reviews & SASE to: Luis Valdovino, Dept. of Art, College of Fine Arts, Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890; (412) 268-2409.

**WNET** in New York seeks work for 16th season of *Independent Focus*. Narrative, doc., animation & experimental work of any length under 2 hrs accepted for consideration; about 40 new programs acquired out of approx. 600 submissions. 3/4" & 1/2" tapes only. If selected, \$55/min. for 3 releases in 3 yrs. Deadline: Nov. 1. For entry form, contact: Ind. Focus, WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2917.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**MONTAGE '93**, int'l media fest, seeks proposals for 2-hr workshops, symposia & lectures on innovative media education programs by & for teachers, artists & students, pre-K through Grade 12. Proposals should attempt to develop understanding of media arts through exploration of its history, practice, theory & criticism; explore how media impact & shape our experiences, imagination & perception of world; investigate & demonstrate creative uses of technology; & encourage students' visual & verbal, creative & critical thinking skills. Selected proposals will receive round-trip transportation, lodging & \$500 honorarium. Deadline: Nov. 1. For guidelines, contact: Montage '93, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607-1499; (716) 442-8897; fax: (716) 442-8931.

**VIDEO ARTIST/INSTRUCTOR SOUGHT** for troubled youth programs, to teach basic prod., equip. use, help make short tapes, interest & excite youngsters in learning process, teach prod. values, etc. Exp'd, creative editor/instructor also sought for similar position. Flexibility & adaptability nec. Resumés to: Gary Beck, Sidewalks of New York Prods, 40 W. 27th St., New York, NY 10001.

**WOMEN IN SELF HELP**, career counseling & skills training program for displaced homemakers & dislocated workers, seeks professional filmmaker or group to co-produce educational film/video on job interviews aimed at older & minority women. Film should address their fears, demonstrate their abilities, realistically reflect their circumstances & provide practical guide to negotiating complex process of applying & interviewing for jobs. Film potentially distributed through nat'l network of libraries & other orgs. For more info, contact: Sarah Safford, WISH, New York State Displaced Homemaker Program, 421 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215; (718) 768-9700.

## Publications

**ART ON SCREEN**, newsletter of film & video on visual arts, published 3 times/yr by Program for Art on Film. Subscriptions avail. free of charge to media & art professionals. Call or write: Program for Art on Film, 980 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 988-4876.

**BLIMP**, ind. int'l film magazine published in German & English, now avail. For free copy, send SASE to: Blimp Film Magazine, Griesplatz 36, A-8020 GRAZ, Austria, Europe.

## Resources ■ Funds

**CREATIVE TIME** sponsors projects by visual & performing artists as part of ongoing city wide series. Goal

to bring exciting, challenging art to diverse, wide-spread & untapped sites in New York City. Interested in projects that challenge viewers, defy categories & bridge cultures. Artists must be practicing professionals. No deadline; proposals viewed every 3-4 mos. Send 5 copies of project description; description of desired public site; technical assessment, incl. consideration of vandalism, security, materials' stability & utilities description; resumé of participants; budget; up to 10 slides of past work of each participant in group w/ accompanying descriptions; 1/2" or 3/4" video of past work, no longer than 5 min., w/ explanatory notes, sketches & drawings to clarify proposal & SASE to: Creative Time, 131 W. 24th St., New York, NY 10011-1942; (212) 206-6674; fax: (212) 255-8467.

FRAMELINE accepts appls from lesbian & gay film & videomakers for '92 Film/Video Completion Fund. Grants up to \$5,000 offered to artists working in any format or genre. Deadline: Oct. 15. For guidelines, contact: Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-5245.

INTERMEDIA ARTS/MCKNIGHT INTERDISCIPLINARY FELLOWSHIPS awards 6 to 9 grants of \$8,000 to \$12,000 to artists in Midwest. Total of up to \$26,000 awarded to regional artists outside MN & at least \$46,000 avail. to MN artists. Fellowships may be used by artists for time to create new work, for travel, to work w/ mentor or for any other purpose which advances their work & career. Deadline: Oct. 8. Send work samples & resumé to: Intermedia Arts/McKnight Fellowships, 425 Ontario St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS (NESC), nonprofit org that provides management consulting to other nonprofit orgs, seeks source for producing 30-sec. PSAs. Formerly produced by St. John's Univ. free of charge, spots designed to profile org & what NESC did for that org. Any suggestions & help welcome. Contact: Mimi Reiter, NESC, 257 Park Ave. So., New York, NY 10010-7304; (212) 529-6660; fax: (212) 228-3958.

## FIVE THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.

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The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

## DISABILITY 101

## An Introduction to Disability Insurance

HARVEY BRAUNSTEIN

Mediamaking is risky business, economically and physically. If you were totally disabled due to sickness or injury, who would provide your lost income? How long would your savings cover your basic needs? And if you were partially disabled, who would make up the difference in lost income?

According to a study by the US Government and Home Finance Agency, a couple in their mid-thirties "face a greater than nine out of 10 chance" of suffering an extended illness or injury before reaching age 65, and "nearly one out of two mortgage foreclosures is the result of disability." We insure our cars, our property, our camcorders, and our lives, but the fact is, we are *four times* more likely to become disabled at an early age than to die young. Our most important asset is our ability to earn an income. Isn't this income stream worth protecting?

If you currently have disability coverage, do you know: The length of the elimination—or waiting—period before you qualify for receipt of benefits? How long your disability benefit payments would last? The monthly amount of your benefit coverage? Your policy's definition of disability?

There are differences. The following is intended to acquaint the uninitiated with the basic definitions and features found in better individual policies in order to provide a benchmark for assessing your own needs.

### *What is disability insurance?*

Disability insurance replaces the income that is lost as a result of being disabled. Though definitions of disability vary with policies, generally speaking a person is considered totally disabled when, as a result of sickness or injury, he or she cannot work, thereby losing all earned income. To be considered partially disabled, your income loss must exceed 20 percent of your income. In other words, two conditions must be met for disability insurance to apply. First, there must exist an established income level which, if not regular, should be sustainable over time. Then, there must be a reduction or cessation of that income stream due to sickness or injury.

Disability insurance does not replace the eco-

nomical vitality of a business lost when a key person (e.g., the self-employed owner/operator) is disabled for an extended period of time. For example, say Jeff is a self-employed DP and becomes totally disabled for two years, after which his doctor tells him he can resume his normal work. However, by now all of Jeff's clients have secured other cinematographers. The original source of Jeff's income must be rebuilt. Disability insurance will not pay him for the economic disaster suffered by his business, only a portion of the lost salary.

### *Defining disability*

The definition of disability lies at the heart of any policy. Definitions differ among companies and policies, especially between group and individual policies. Under a good definition, a person will be considered totally disabled when, as a result of sickness or injury, one cannot perform the main duties of one's *own occupation*. A policy based on this definition would provide benefits if you could not do what you normally do for a living and were not otherwise working. By contrast, a less desirable policy might require you to take a job for which you are reasonably well suited—by virtue of education or experience—if prevented from performing your regular work.

Partial disability benefits are another important part of disability coverage. To continue with the example above, if Jeff can return to work but, as a result of his disability, continues to suffer an income loss of greater than 20 percent, he is considered partially disabled. He is entitled to benefits if he has either elected this benefit option or if the option is built into his insurance policy or contract. Depending on the specific application, this feature is variously known as partial disability, a residual disability rider, or a back-to-work benefit. Another feature of partial disability is that, if you are unable to perform the main duties of your regular job and choose to work at one that pays less, partial disability payments will cover the difference. The exact benefit is defined in the insurance contract.

### *Types of contracts*

Some disability contracts, especially group contracts, differentiate between disabilities caused by an accident and those resulting from sickness. If a person is disabled as a result of an accident, for

example, some contracts will pay for the rest of one's life, but if one is disabled by illness, payments will extend only to age 65.

Some contracts state that in order to qualify for partial disability benefits a person must first have been totally disabled for a specified amount of time, called a waiting period. Standard waiting periods can range from 30 days to 360 days. Such requirements can be tricky, however, since not all partial disability is the result of recovery from total disability. Some, like arthritis, can be degenerating without ever being totally disabling.

A personal policy should always include a rehabilitation clause. This clause includes the cost of vocational training, re-education, books, and materials. Some policies may include the cost of physical therapy and equipment. Other policies may limit the total amount of rehabilitation payments to a multiple of the monthly benefit (e.g., if one receives \$2,000 per month in benefits, rehabilitation expenses may be limited to 15 times that amount, or \$30,000). The option to purchase additional amounts of disability insurance without taking another medical exam is also important and relatively inexpensive. If you feel your income will rise substantially over the next one to 10 years, this option is worth its weight.

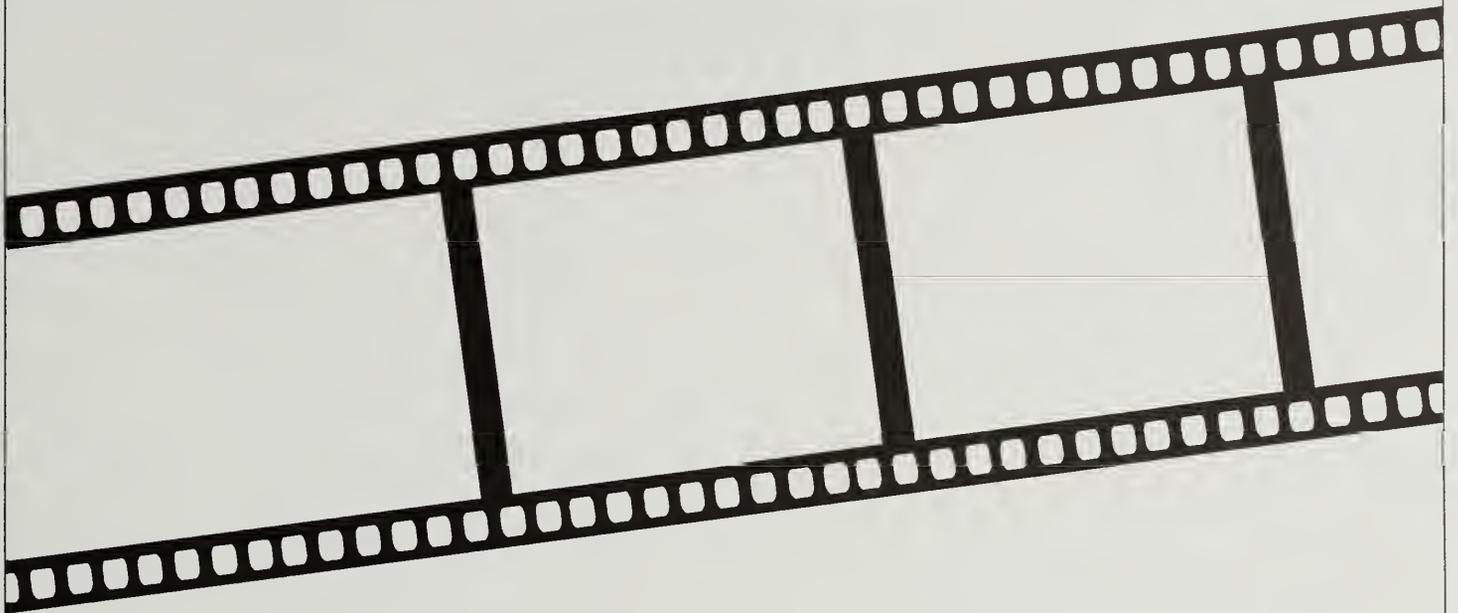
Finally, a good individual contract should be noncancellable by the insurance company and guaranteed renewable to age 65. If you continue to work full-time after age 65, make sure coverage is optional on a more limited basis. And remember that a group policy can be riskier than personal coverage since it may be cancelled by the group, leaving individuals—whose medical condition has changed—stranded.

### *In short*

You get what you pay for, and this is certainly true in disability policies. Remember that it is the language of the disability definitions and the benefits that determine the substance of a policy. Bare-bones dollar comparisons are often misleading, because policies are usually not identical. Work with someone you trust to intelligently identify your own needs. If you buy right, you may increase your dollar benefits over time, and you will only have to buy once.

*Harvey Braunstein is an agent with the Southern Connecticut Financial Group, a member of the Connecticut Mutual Alliance.*

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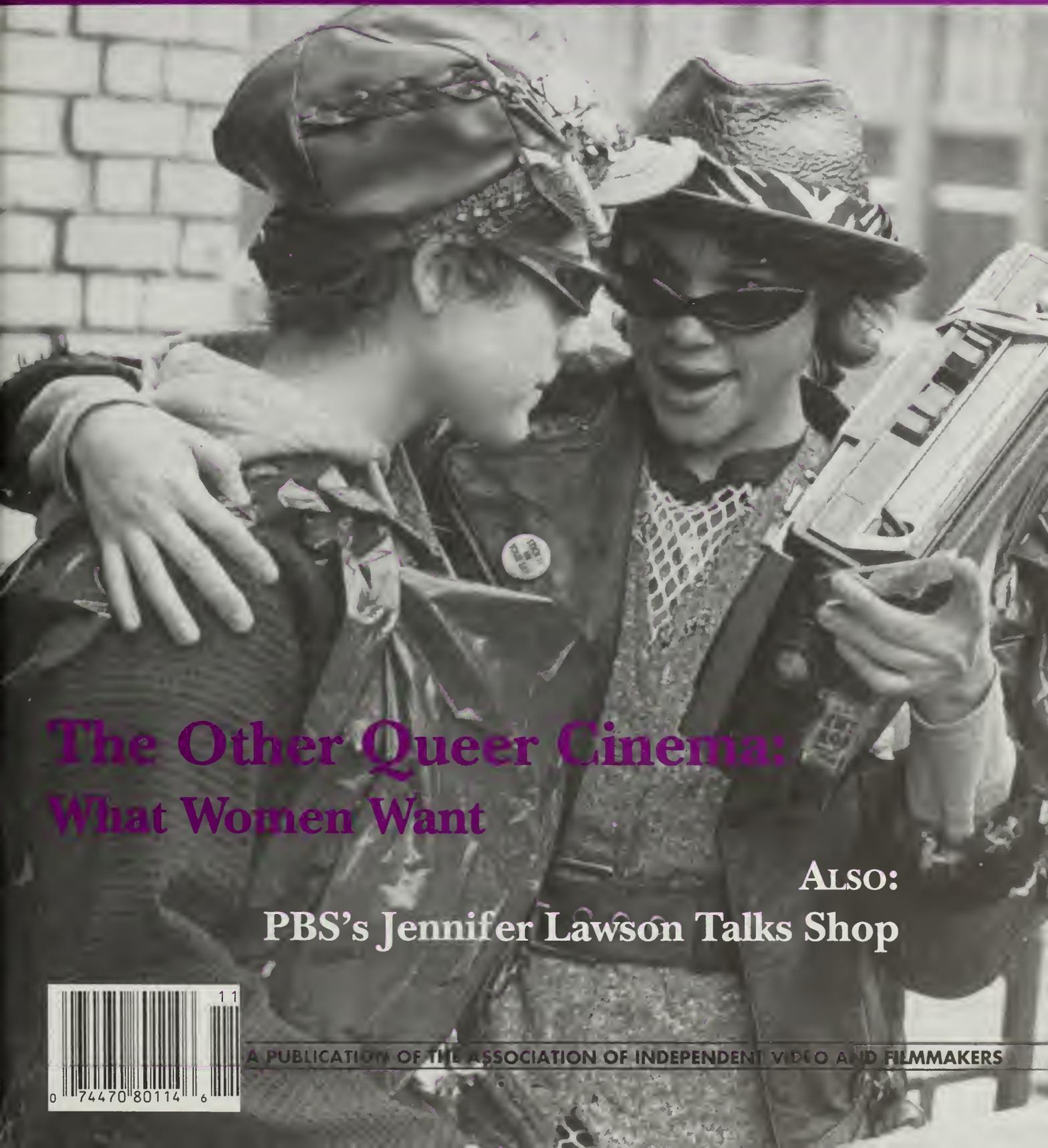
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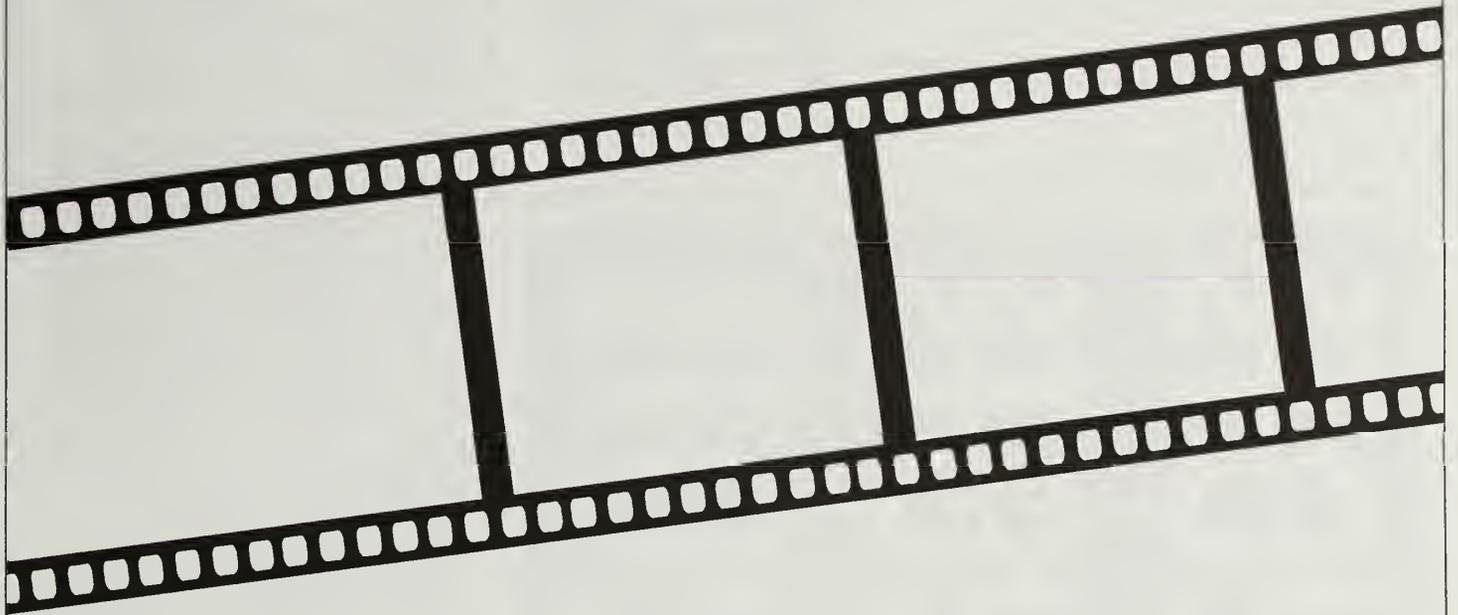
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NOVEMBER 1992

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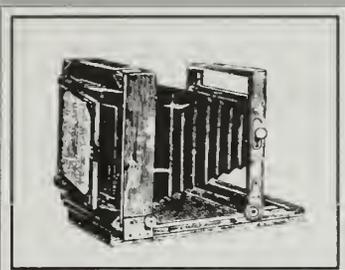
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COVER: The success of recent gay-themed feature films like *Swoon*, *Poison*, and *My Own Private Idaho* has thrust the newly dubbed Queer Cinema into the limelight. But what constitutes Queer Cinema? And where are the lesbians? In this issue, Judith Halberstam looks at a recent crop of lesbian films and videos, and discusses their aesthetic directions and multiple audiences. Films like the 1980 feature *Times Square* (pictured), revived at the 1992 San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, are evidence of the forgotten images of lesbian revolt and autonomous sexuality which serve as precedents for the lesbian new wave. Photo courtesy Frameline.

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## MUM'S THE WORD

## Artsave Releases Report on Art Censorship

Artsave, a project of People for the American Way, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public interest group defending constitutional liberties, has recently published the first nationwide report of its kind: a 90-page study documenting 74 attacks on artistic expression during 1991. Titled *Artistic Freedom Under Attack*, the report's findings are far more extensive and revealing than other records of skirmishes in the current culture wars. Unlike the several pages included in the National Coalition Against Censorship's monthly *Censorship News* or the incidents listed in the American Library Association's *Newsletter on Intellectual Free-*

dom, valuable as these are, *Artistic Freedom Under Attack* does more than document: It attempts to assess the cumulative impact of attacks on art while recommending several ways that artists can galvanize against them.

children were being taught about demons and witchcraft, complained to La Crosse School officials about an upcoming performance by African American storyteller Shanta, who, as a result, was forced to alter her presentation of African, Caribbean, and African American folklore; in Charlotte, North Carolina, the police, influenced by City Hall and individual protesters, forced a local theater to change a brief nude scene in Terence McNally's play *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*; at the University of Maryland in College Park, two parents and the faculty co-chair of AIDS Awareness Week removed from the Parent's Association gallery an exhibit of AIDS Awareness posters promoting safe sex, just prior to a Parent's Association meeting; and in Watsonville, California, 26 city government employees petitioned for the removal of *Espiritu de El Salvador*, an exhibition within City Hall of color prints depicting the anguish of Salvadoran citizens, thousands of whom died at the hands of the military. The employees considered the prints anti-American, offensive, and inappropriate for a public building.

Viewed collectively, these incidents illustrate the diverse pressures on art in public spaces and in private colleges and universities, and reveal some surprising patterns. For example, although media attention has focused on censorship of works funded by or seeking funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), most of the censored art actually was not NEA-supported. The Religious Right and Far Right were responsible for only 30 percent of censorship efforts; 42 percent were prompted by so-called "unacceptable" representations of nudity and sexuality, many involving homosexuality; and a smaller but significant number of attacks were instigated by the Left. For example, Elizabeth Broun, director of the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., removed a photographic installation from an exhibit of Eadweard Muybridge's work at the museum on the grounds that it was "degrading and offensive to women." The installation required the viewer to peer through a series of successive peepholes to view the figure of an advancing woman. Broun maintained that by "focusing increasingly on the pubic region [the peephole] invokes unequivocal references to a degrading pornographic experience." Other attacks stemmed from ideological objections to messages about two social issues—AIDS and race relations. The authors offer one especially perceptive interpretation of such censorship trends:



The San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival is just one of 74 case studies included in *Artistic Freedom Under Attack*. Film still from *Last Call at Mauds*, by Paris Poirier, about life in a 1940s lesbian bar.

Courtesy Frameline

The first of what Artsave anticipates will be an annual series, the report consists largely of descriptions and analyses of each censorship case. With the exception of a report on the high profile attacks on Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*, aired on *P.O.V.*, few incidents had been previously documented, even on a local level. People For collected information through a survey mailed to arts organizations across the country and through interviews with respondents. A sampling of the cases included suggests the range of pressures and ideologies inhibiting expression: In La Crosse, Illinois, religious fundamentalists, fearing their

"Generally speaking, these incidents fit into a larger effort by political forces in the U.S. to eliminate pluralism in American culture and American society, at a time when we most need to come to grips with our increasing diversity."

The authors of *Artistic Freedom* view their report as an illustrative survey rather than a comprehensive listing of art attacks in 1991. "Such incidents are the tip of the artistic iceberg," they write. "Various situations covered in our report reveal compromises made by artists themselves once works were completed, in place, and then challenged." This statement suggests thousands of untold self-censorship stories as well. Elsewhere, the report denounces artists who censor their own work, contending that they perform a disservice to the art community at large.

The report ultimately calls individuals and art communities to arms. It makes the following recommendations, among others: Individuals, especially well-known artists, should speak out in defense of art whenever they hear about an attack against it; they should seek direct involvement with their community's selection and exhibition processes in order to broaden the dialogue about art in their community; they should view challenges to the rights of individual artists as broader attacks on collective freedoms. Such suggestions, viewed in conjunction with the report's catalog of annotated censorship stories, will be most valuable if they succeed in inspiring artists and citizens, regardless of political stripe, to come out and rigorously combat the new censorial forces, outside of them and within.

*Artistic Freedom Under Attack* is available from People for the American Way, 2000 M Street, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 467-4999.

CHARLES LYONS

*Charles Lyons is completing a dissertation at Columbia University on contemporary film censorship and protests.*

## AVAILABLE VISIONARIES

While the resurgence of commercial black film has meant new opportunities for a few African American filmmakers, the unfortunate truth remains that most independent black filmmakers are still peddling their own films, as the saying goes, from door to door. Forced to be both artist and merchant, few have the resources or the time to explore the avenues opened by new technologies or the swelling video market. From July 24 through 26, thirty filmmakers, programmers, critics, and distributors met at the Available Visions conference in Sonoma County, California, to discuss strategies for increasing the presence of African American film and video in the international marketplace. Unlike most other black film conferences, questions of craft and aesthetics were put aside to focus exclusively on nontheatrical distribution of African American media.

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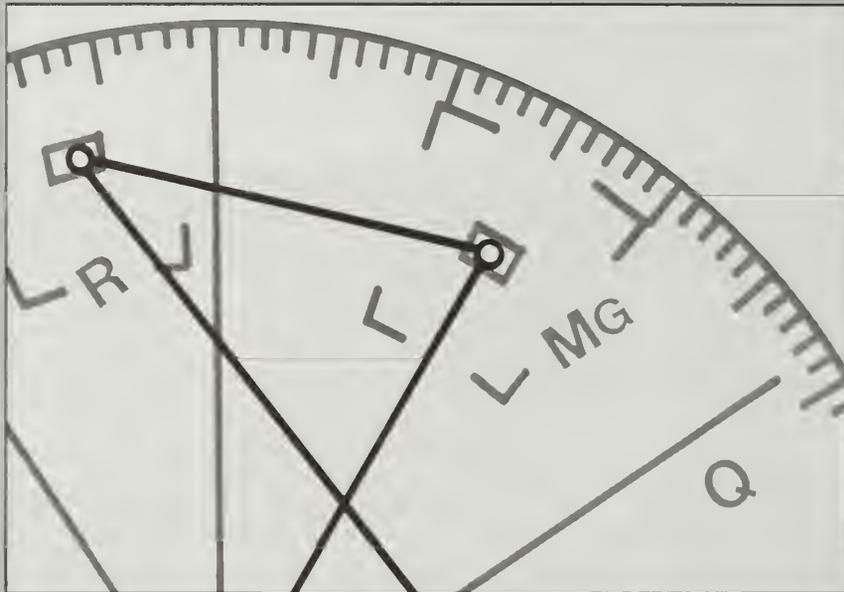
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able Visions was organized by six distributors, exhibitors, producers, and arts administrators: Cheryl Chisolm of the Atlanta Third World Film Festival, Linda Gibson and Cornelius Moore of California Newsreel, O. Funmilayo Makarah of In Visible Colors, Michelle Materre of the Educational Video Center, and Spencer Moon of Realize Your Energy.

Documentarian Jackie Shearer kicked off the meeting by challenging distributors, on behalf of all black independents, to find a home for her work. Working groups representing all phases of distribution—from established organizations, such as Third World Newsreel, to newer video-based enterprises, such as Inter Image Video—mapped out plans for disseminating information to the field. New technologies, international markets, video distribution, marketing, and promotion were among the specific areas of concentration.

The need for a federation of African American media professionals and organizations became increasingly apparent over the course of the conference. As a result, a federation of distributors, producers, administrators, filmmakers, and programmers was organized, with the aim of encouraging distribution of African American media by providing promotional services, outreach, advocacy, and serving as a conduit of information. Federation subcommittees have been formed to address specific distribution issues. Proposed projects include development of an African American media database and working with librarians and educators to identify and integrate black independent media into curricula. Third World Newsreel has agreed to serve as the federation's fiscal sponsor, overseeing the more than \$5,000 in cash and in-kind contributions received from conference participants. A conference report will be available after November 15 to participants, media arts centers, and individuals.

As the group was dispersing, noted independent filmmaker William Greaves summed up the conference well when he said, "I have a feeling of history, and I hear the rumblings of thunder. In the 21st century, what has happened here will have repercussions that we can't even imagine."

For information, contact: AV Federation, Box 18665, Washington, DC 20036. For a copy of the conference report, contact: Mabel Haddock, National Black Programming Consortium, (614) 299-5555.

JACQUIE JONES

Jacque Jones is the editor of Black Film Review.

## NVR TO GO IT ALONE

In a time of dwindling public funds, National Video Resource's (NVR) recent announcement that it will cut ties with its founder, the Rockefeller Foundation, has caused consternation in a media distribution community fearful of competition. Formed by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1989 to increase the public's awareness and use of inde-

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pendent media through videocassette distribution, NVR will become an independent nonprofit organization this fall when it announces its first board of directors. The change is part of the project's initial five-year plan, but has raised concern in a field reeling from federal, state, and local funding cuts. However, NVR executive director Tim Gunn assures that the project poses no threat, as Rockefeller will continue to fund NVR through 1994, at which time the project's five-year contract with the foundation will end.

For now, the Rockefeller Foundation will remain involved with NVR in an advisory capacity. NVR will continue its current activities as the work of developing a structure, bylaws, and mandate begins under the leadership of the new board, according to Gunn. The selection of the board of directors will be based on discussions between NVR staff and the Rockefeller Foundation, with representation from the field. It is with the board's direction that NVR will define its future course, funding base, and role in the independent media field, including how NVR will function and seek funding after 1994.

NVR was formed subsequent to an extensive study of the independent media field conducted by the Rockefeller Foundation in the late 1980s. Rockefeller concluded from the study that although American independent film and video was being made, it wasn't reaching its audience. NVR was created to focus specifically on the research and development of initiatives that would benefit independent distribution. In an effort to raise the profile of independent media, NVR engages in a combination of activities, including direct grants to distributors, development of model projects, research, information networking, and collaborative projects. NVR also publishes informational newsletters and facilitates special projects ranging from technical assistance to the launching of video packages on African and environmental film.

Perhaps the most critical and complex area that NVR is positioning itself to address is the sea-change taking place in the media field as a whole. Multimedia, pay-per-view, and fiber optics are just a few of the elements that are transforming the field of distribution, to which independents will have to adapt. "Our entire way of marketing and distributing has to be completely changed, and independent distributors are going to need a lot of assistance to do this," contends Debra Zimmerman, executive director of Women Make Movies.

Precisely what role NVR will take in defining future distribution strategies will largely depend on the new board. NVR will continue to focus on issues of independent media distribution, but what form their activities will take, funding priorities, resource allotment, NVR's on-going role in the field, and how they will be funded beyond 1994 will continue to be sources of discussion as NVR moves into its next phase of operation.

CARA MERTES

*Cara Mertes is an independent producer and*

*curator, currently producing Independent Focus for PBS' Thirteen/WNET in New York.*

## ITVS CLOSES GENERATION GAP

Memory Quiz I: Remember when you were a teenager? Remember watching TV shows that were purportedly written "for the teenage audience" only to discover that they were just one more chance for adults to preach at you? The Independent Television Service (ITVS) is looking for a solution.

Mandated by Congress to address underserved audiences and to increase innovation and diversity on public television, ITVS is seeking proposals from independent producers or producing teams for a four-part series geared to high-school age teenagers that calls for teenagers to participate in the production of programs. ITVS will award a maximum of \$1.3-million to a single producer or production team to create four one-hour programs, each costing no more than \$330,000. Applications are due November 16. The selected project will be announced in spring 1993.

Memory Quiz II: Remember yesterday? Remember trying to find something to watch on TV that challenged you and also entertained you? ITVS seeks a solution for this problem as well. Extended Play is a call for proposals for multi-part television series that bring new forms and new subjects to public television. Series may be of any genre and in any format. A small number of proposed series will be awarded production funds in the \$100,000 to \$2-million range. Independent producers may apply in the capacity of series producer, individually, or as the representatives of producing teams. Applications are due November 30. The review and selection process for Extended Play will take place over the first six months of 1993.

This is the first time ITVS has invited submissions for Generation and Extended Play, but not the first calls issued by the service, which has previously issued a request for proposals for Focused Programming and two Open Calls. Open Calls invite producers to propose individual programs on any subject and in any genre; Focused Programming seeks series or specials built around specific issues of vital public interest.

The following 20 projects were recently selected for development in the first round of Focused Programming. Titled *Television Families*, the programs address "the inextricable influence television has had on the changing American family—and vice versa." The series will be offered to PBS in 1993.

*A Psychic Mom*, by Shelli Ainsworth (writer, co-director) and Steve Busa (co-director), Minneapolis, MN; *Bob's Life—A to Y?*, by Giles Ashford (co-writer, producer) of Altadena, CA, and Michael Wright (co-writer, director) of Long Beach, CA; *Playing Poinciana*, by Carlton Baker II (writer) of New York, NY, and Steve Mahone (director) of

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For a copy of applications and guidelines (an 18-page booklet), contact ITVS, 333 Sibley, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 225-9035.

WENDY LEAVENS

Wendy Leavens writes about media issues.

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## MALCOLM ARTH 1931-1992

The 16th annual Margaret Mead Film/Video Festival screened in October at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. As usual, the festival used four spacious theaters within the museum, each screening different documentary programs. But a big change had taken place this year—its chief was absent. Eminent anthropologist Malcolm J. Arth died on January 13 at age 61, after a one-year illness. His death came three months after his retirement as chairman of the Education Department at the Museum, where he had served for 21 years. In 1976, Arth cofounded the festival with Florence Stone, later succeeding anthropologist Margaret Mead as its director upon her death.

Arth was much esteemed by documentary producers for his generosity and his enthusiasm for cinema. Aside from the Mead festival, Arth programmed film events year round at the museum, expanding the word "anthropology" to include the study of humankind on film. Aside from its scholarly value, the festival is praised as a popular theatrical venue for international documentary. Although documentaries are most often confined to public TV, video stores, classrooms, and small public gatherings, the festival provides a congenial environment for mainstream audiences, not far from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Born in Boston, Arth received his doctorate in anthropology at Harvard, where he later taught. He also taught at New York University and was professor and chair of anthropology at Adelphi for nine years. Never an abstract theoretician, Arth conducted field research in China, India, the USSR, the American Southwest, and in six African nations. Appointed to the American Museum of Natural History in 1970, he pioneered innovative programs and events that challenged the standard image of stuffy museums, including overnight "camp-ins" for children brave enough to bed down near dinosaurs; exhibitions and demonstrations of crafts by the city's ethnic minorities; and creation of the People Center, with native performances and dances. Arth also pioneered minority hiring, foreign exchanges, training of educators, and consultations with and assistance to small museums. A member of the American Association of Museums, Arth won its Educators Award for Excellence in 1986.

During memorial services at the museum on May 4, a dozen scholars and museum officers honored Arth for his accomplishments and his personal qualities. Some comments were humorous, others deeply personal. Elaine Gurian of the U.S. Holocaust Museum "outed" Arth, without malice, when she observed that he had kept his gay life in the closet because he feared that knowledge of it could damage his work within the conservative academic and museum communities

and among their patrons.

Arth's legacy is threefold: his accomplishments as an anthropologist, his founding and directorship of the Margaret Mead Film/Video Festival, and his virtues as a gifted, complicated man whom we can remember and admire.

Meanwhile, life and the festival go on. Thirteen Americans had films in the 16th annual session of Mead: Harrod Blank, Marco Williams, Kevin Adams, Johanna Spector, Alan Berliner, Maria Brooks, Jonathan Blank, Amy Harrison, Stephen Roszell, Lisa Korn, Tony Heriza, Lucienne Taylor, and Ilsa Barbash.

GORDON HITCHENS

*Gordon Hitchens, founder and former editor of Film Comment, most recently introduced a program of U.S. documentaries at Nippon Audio Visual Library in Japan.*

## SEQUELS

After almost a year of litigation, *Damned in the USA*, an Emmy-award winning documentary about censorship in the United States, is free to screen before the public ["Hell to Pay: Damned in the USA Countersues Wildmon over Exhibition Rights," July 1992]. Anti-pornography crusader Reverend Donald Wildmon, a subject of the film, had impeded its screening by bringing a lawsuit against its producers, claiming contract violation. The producers countersued for a declaratory judgment stating that Wildmon had no right to interfere with the film. In early September, a Mississippi Federal judge found in favor of the producers; a week later, however, the same judge barred the film's exhibition until Wildmon's appeal of the decision could be heard. On September 22, a three-judge panel of the Federal Appeals Court in New Orleans unanimously lifted that injunction, freeing the film. The film is scheduled to be shown by Loews Theater chain and on public television. The producers' \$3-million damages claim against Wildmon is pending in New York Federal Court.

## FIVE THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; a federal agency; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund; the Beldon Fund; the Rockefeller Foundation; the Consolidated Edison Company of New York; the Benton Foundation; and the Funding Exchange.

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## SITTING ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY

Screenwriting at Maine's International Film and TV Workshops

BRIDGETT M. DAVIS

Imagine a tiny, remote New England village frozen in a time warp. It sits at the head of a protected harbor halfway up the Maine coast, on the western edge of Penobscot Bay. Fishing is the main industry, sailing the main sport, and swimming is something people do in nearby ponds and lakes. Boats rock along the dock in the morning fog, and summer days are more rainy than hot. It's the kind of place that begs for languid hours spent sipping tea, curled up in a rocking chair, with a good book in hand and a nice window view.

*Village life*

Having just celebrated their twentieth anniversary, the workshops are an institution in Rockport—as integral to village life as the sea. The residents know that over the course of every summer 2,500 workshop participants will invade their village like locusts to attend the largest summer school for film, TV, and photography in the world. Over 100 one- and two-week classes are taught by industry professionals and cover every aspect of film and TV production, with

Every summer 2,500 workshop participants invade scenic Rockport, Maine, on Penobscot Bay.

Photo: David Lyman, courtesy International Film & TV Workshops



Now imagine plopped in the midst of this idyllic landscape 200 out-of-towners snapping photographs, lugging film equipment, and dominating the village's town hall, farmhouses, converted barrel factory, and the few bed-and-breakfast spots for weeks of screenings, parties, communal meals, and classes. Imagine career-driven baby boomers inside a Norman Rockwell painting, and you get an idea of what the International Film and Television Workshops in Rockport, Maine, are like.

courses ranging from film directing to production design to on-line editing.

During the week in July that I attended, the campus was abuzz over its star instructors. David Hoffman, who produced over 50 documentaries for PBS, Fox, Turner, and the Discovery Channel, was teaching a TV producers workshop. Vilmos Zsigmond (*Deer Hunter*, *The Rose*), who won an Oscar for his camera work on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, was conducting a cinematographers seminar. And Ralph Rosenblum, who edited *Annie Hall*, *Goodbye Columbus*, and other

films, was teaching his scene editing workshop. Rosenblum is the workshops' filmmaker-in-residence and is a major draw for many emerging filmmakers because of his accessibility and extensive knowledge.

It was the screenwriting course, taught by Janet Roach (*Prizzi's Honor*), that brought me to Rockport. To attend her workshop, I was required to send Roach a completed feature-length screenplay several weeks in advance. Roach tries not to take more than 12 people in a class, as she finds it difficult to give enough individual attention in larger groups. A mixture of ages and experience is also a factor in her selection process—from established professionals to young, emerging writers. She also focuses on revising and polishing an existing script. (Two members of our group had not completed a draft of the screenplay they were collaborating on, and they were clearly at a disadvantage the entire week.) And while polished writing ability is not a high priority, subject matter is. "I was looking for people who were writing something that I thought was worth writing about," she said.

For those who have not yet written full screenplays, five other scriptwriting workshops are offered during the summer by other instructors—two for TV scripts, one for corporate scriptwriting, another for scene writing only, and a two-week course for film writers who arrive with a story concept and leave with the first act of a screenplay.

As soon as I'd registered, I walked around the campus a bit to get a feel for the place. As a native Detroit, new Brooklynite, and African American, I felt totally out of my element. From what I could see, I was the only African American participating in a workshop that week. After getting lost en route to dinner and winding up walking alone on a highway road as cars whizzed by, I knew I was an oddity in this little, remote village. Clearly the workshops need to work harder to encourage and recruit people of color to participate in what turned out to be an enriching week of learning.

### The screenwriting workshop

The Sunday night of our arrival, the 10 screenwriting workshop participants clustered around Roach and got a quick sense of what to expect. "I've read all of your screenplays, and I can truthfully say that not one of them is producible," she said with a straight face. "See you in the morning."

The next day after breakfast at the Homestead, a 20-acre seventeenth-century farm that houses the workshops' kitchen and dining rooms, we gathered in a small classroom on the farm. Roach lectured on the basics of screenwriting, and her assistant, Dennis Hawkesworth (who had also read all our scripts), made occasional observations. Roach then turned to our scripts, citing examples of what not to do: "Don't make your protagonist reactive, make him or her proactive."

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"Don't allow your characters only one emotion."  
"Don't tell when you can show." She wound up  
the morning with a homework assignment due the  
next morning. We were to create outlines of our  
own script and a classmate's by listing the pro-  
tagonist, the central conflict, the precipitating  
incident, and the first and second plot points.

After lunch, we were free to work on our  
assignments. We were also encouraged to read  
one another's scripts and offer written feedback  
outside of class time. Ours was a varied group of  
five women and five men. I was the sole New  
Yorker. The two women collaborating on a screen-  
play were natives of Iran living in Boston, and the  
others were from Pittsburgh, South Carolina,  
Connecticut, Baltimore, Maine, and California.  
We also had a Polish emigrant living in East  
Boston who'd worked with Roach in the past and  
was monitoring the course.

Our tastes were diverse, but clearly our screen-  
plays' subjects were a reflection of the times.  
There were stories on sexual harassment, dolphin  
intelligence, body image for women, a white  
Baltimore mayor passing for black, native Ameri-  
can culture in conflict with white culture, and  
culture shock for Middle East immigrant women.

Each evening after dinner (Roach ate her meals  
with us, giving us more opportunity to talk about  
our scripts), the screenwriting group would gather  
again before an 18-inch TV and watch a Holly-  
wood film that Roach had selected (*Jaws*, *Wit-  
ness*, *Missing*) to show well written and tightly  
structured studio films: the exceptions to the rule,  
noted Roach.

As the screenings indicate, the focus of Roach's  
screenwriting workshop was on Hollywood con-  
tinuity-style screenplays. She spent no time dis-  
cussing foreign films, independent features or  
experimental works. Roach teaches the rules re-  
quired for getting your script past the story reader  
at a major Hollywood studio. It's her view that, "If  
you're going to distribute a film, you have to do it  
for the majors, so you might as well learn the  
rules."

During the weekday afternoons, each of us met  
once with Roach for a private conference to dis-  
cuss specific questions about our individual screen-  
plays. My meeting began with her handing me a  
one-and-a-half page, single-spaced critique out-  
lining what didn't work and why, and where I  
could begin to revise. It evaluated the screenplay's  
plot, structure, characterization, dialogue, action,  
visual quality, settings, and overall effectiveness.  
"CeCe seems terribly passive," she wrote about  
my main character, for instance. "She does not, as  
a protagonist must, drive the action." "Settings  
not sufficiently detailed." "Men are not sympa-  
thetic here." "Needs more feeling of personal  
tension," etc. She and Hawkesworth then pro-  
ceeded to suggest films I should see that contained  
elements similar to the ones I was grappling with.  
Finally, Roach returned her copy of my manu-  
script, which had scribbles in the margins of  
page after page. Like my fellow class members, I  
left the meeting feeling optimistic, yet anxious to



**One of the several screenwriting workshops offered at Rockport.**

Photo: Pot Fisher, courtesy International Film & TV Workshops

get started on a rewrite, and wondering how I could ever have thought my screenplay was any good.

On the last day of classes, the group met at workshop founder David Lyman's lakefront house. We gathered on the porch for a laid-back talk about the business of selling screenplays. Roach briefed us on copyrights and the value of registering our scripts with the Writers Guild, and cautioned us to be wary of fly-by-night independent producers promising to finance our scripts. Roach also told anecdotes about her experience working with director John Huston on *Prizzi's Honor* and shared a few Hollywood horror stories.

The final evening brought together the 200 workshop participants for a lobster dinner. The screenwriters sat in a group, bonded by five days of intensive labor and a knowledge of each other's ideas, goals, and struggles gained through our writings and discussions. Roach gave each of us champagne and a "diploma," then our party moved to a couple of bars in downtown Camden. As we drank and talked about returning to the lives we'd escaped from, we all agreed that despite the rainy days, the high costs, the work load, and the smell permeating campus from the new municipal sewer system, the week had been worthwhile. "A book is totally intellectual," said screenwriting student Jane McGuire. "This impacted me emotionally."

A word about the costs. The workshops have a reputation for being expensive, because they are. In addition to the \$700 course fee, there's room and board, which can add up to another \$500. Add to that the cost of airfare and \$65 roundtrip van service from Portland (a two-hour drive to Rockport), plus incidental costs, and the week winds up being about \$1,500. The good news is that there is an extended payment plan available for the course fee, and the workshops offer half-tuition scholarships.

It's worth it, for several reasons: The work-

shops provide a good environment for networking with fellow classmates and instructors. Roach gallantly provided her home number and address to class participants. And unlike the one-shot seminars led by Richard Walter, Syd Field, Robert McKee, and other screenwriting gurus, you're not just being lectured to, but are interacting with one another and the instructor. You can ask questions pertaining specifically to your own work, rather than settle for generic examples.

Many also found the setting to be ideal for their muse. It's so much easier to focus on creative work in a picturesque place where all your needs are taken care of and there's but one task before you. As fellow screenwriter Hardy Jones noted, "The business of being isolated for a week with no telephone, no children, no distractions, is really an

invaluable experience. And worth every penny." It's like a writer's colony with class instruction thrown in.

The workshops are designed to make participants feel catered to. The food is decent and well-served (with vegetarian choices); a van moves around picking people up at 15-minute intervals; the campus supply and bookstore is well-stocked (though I couldn't find typing paper); and there are even aerobics classes, a masseuse, and a resident career counselor on hand.

For an independent filmmaker or technical person who can't afford film school, the workshops are a good way to learn a lot fast from working professionals. Classmate Diana Osberg, who works in Pittsburgh on independent film shoots in various jobs, said the workshops have helped her get work because of their good reputation. Plus, the week inspires her. "I always find I come away very centered," Osberg observed. "I always come away knowing more about myself and where I need to go—both literally and figuratively."

*Bridgett Davis teaches film and TV writing at Baruch College, where she is an assistant professor of English. She recently directed a short film for Third World Newsreel's 1992 filmmaking workshop.*

**Rockport hosts the largest summer school for film, TV, and photography in the world.**

Photo: David Turner, courtesy International Film & TV Workshops



## CHIPS AHOY!

## The Next Wave of Hi-8 Cameras and their Recording Systems

DAVID LEITNER

The Independent's June 1992 cover story, "Hi-8: Videomakers Take the Plunge," by James McBride, elicited much enthusiastic feedback from our readers. One informative letter came from producer David Leitner, who created the In Focus technical column in 1981.

The look of today's video image—color, crispness, contrast—is decided more by lens, chip quality, and camera processing circuitry than by acquisition format, whether hi-8, S-VHS, 3/4" SP or Betacam SP.

In Jim McBride's article on hi-8 I am quoted as saying, "I can't get beyond the fact that hi-8

nothing about the quality or sophistication of cameras built into consumer or prosumer hi-8 camcorders is inherent in hi-8—which, after all, is a tape format, not a camera design. That's why one-chip auto-everything cameras typical of first-generation hi-8 camcorders are giving way to two-chip and three-chip designs that provide better sensitivity, detail, processing, and control of the image. Earlier this year Minolta introduced the Master Pro 8-918, which at 2.5 lbs proves that better—two chips, a knee compensation circuit to retain highlight detail—doesn't mean bigger. And on September 1 in Tokyo, Sony made available to the Japanese market the first three-chip consumer camcorder, the Handycam PRO CCD-VX11.

Try this for proof: The pro economy model Sony DXC-537 three-chip camera docks equally to a PVV-1 Betacam SP or EVV-9000 hi-8 on-

imposed by single-chip cameras or compromises in color reproduction inflicted by hi-8's "color-under" recording technique (shared by S-VHS and 3/4" SP). In so doing, they fail to impart a working understanding of hi-8's capabilities.

Here's what you need to know about single-chip sensitivity: A CCD chip is color-blind; it captures brightness only. To sense color, a single-chip camera uses a filter of alternating magenta, yellow, and cyan stripes on the face of the chip to divide the image into green, blue, and red signals. The drawback? Reduced color resolution—if every third stripe is magenta (green's complement), then green resolution can't exceed one-third of the overall resolution—and a dimmer image. Like all filters, the striped screen absorbs light and reduces exposure. That makes single-chip cameras noisy in low-light conditions.

Here's what you need to know about color reproduction: Videotaping original color and re-recording it present different challenges. When a decent camera is used, hi-8, S-VHS, 3/4" SP, and Betacam SP all capture impressive pictures. But what about generation number five? Does color detail smear? Not if it's component. Component video like Betacam SP conveys green, blue, and red signals (or the equivalent: one luminance and two chrominance signals) directly from camera to tape, where they're recorded on separate tracks. Processing the three signals independently averts familiar NTSC defects like moire and dot crawl; laying them on separate tracks inhibits signal interference in recording and playback.

By contrast, "color-under" systems like hi-8, S-VHS, and 3/4" SP (and their predecessors, 8mm, VHS, and standard 3/4") merge the two chrominance signals into a single chroma signal. This composite chroma signal is then channeled apart from the luminance signal through all stages of signal processing. (These are the two signals present at an S-Video connection. The "S" stands for separate.)

However, to record luminance and chroma, color-under systems combine them on a single track. To do this, they "modulate down" the chroma signal to a frequency range much lower than that of the luminance signal, which is unaltered; then the two signals are joined (hence the term, "color-under"). Although signal separation is preserved by stashing the chroma signal out of sight of the luminance signal, a composite signal is created nonetheless. It's not NTSC, but it's not component either.



Minolta's new Master Pro 8-918 is one of a new wave of two- and three-chip hi-8 cameras now making their way onto the market.

Courtesy Minolta

cameras are not up to Beta standards." What I meant was that hi-8 image quality is often dragged down by inferior lenses and cameras. Indeed,

board recorder. Videotape the same subject using both decks. Is the playback strikingly different? Not much. Why not? Whether one records 400TV lines of horizontal luminance with hi-8 or S-VHS, or 360 lines with Betacam SP (yes, less than hi-8 and S-VHS), the outcome easily exceeds the 334-line limit of the NTSC transmission standard.

Too often, discussions of hi-8 fail to examine compromises in sensitivity, color, and resolution

Nothing about the quality or sophistication of cameras built into hi-8 camcorders is inherent in hi-8—which, after all, is a tape format, not a camera design.

It was of small concern in 1971 when the first color-under system, 3/4" U-matic, debuted that the chroma signal was relegated to a frequency range incapable of resolving and reproducing it in its original detail, or that as a result color blurred more and more with each generation. Intended for the home market, 3/4" was viewed by all as a godsend: the first inexpensive, easy-to-operate, cassette-loading color recording system.

If color-under as a recording method left something to be desired, 3/4" did manage to provide blank areas of tape called guard bands between adjacent tracks to discourage signal crosstalk during recording and playback. This safeguard wasn't possible in the miniaturized version of 3/4" called Betamax, which soon followed in 1974. Betamax's reduced scale demanded smaller tracks and higher recording densities, which eliminated vacant "real estate" on the tape necessary for guard bands. So Betamax introduced azimuth recording.

In azimuth recording, two magnetic heads are used. The first records even tracks, the second, odd tracks. Set at opposing angles, neither head can read the other's track. (Azimuth is the angle of the head gap relative to tape travel.) This eliminates the possibility of crosstalk. But there's a rub. It only works with higher frequencies, where the luminance signal is. It fails to inhibit low frequency crosstalk, i.e., that affecting the chroma signal. The reproduction of red detail is degraded most, since reds are conveyed by the very lowest frequencies.

To cancel chroma signal crosstalk, Betamax and VHS hit upon a novel fix. During playback, each postpones the chroma portion of the signal by a scan line (sometimes two) in order to directly compare each scan line of chroma to the line that succeeds it. Matching the signal values of the two lines at all corresponding points along their respective horizontal scans provides a basis for averaging out random differences induced by signal crosstalk. Such color processing delays the chroma by one line relative to the luminance signal.

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How to avoid it? Dub your hi-8 original to a component format like Betacam, M-II or D-1, or even a direct NTSC format like 1" Type-C or D-2, then remain in that format for further dubbing or editing.

Alternately, use advanced hi-8 playback equipment that tackles chroma delay and decay head-on. The Sony EVO-9000A studio recorder/player has a built-in digital chrominance noise reducer that uses a full field store to mitigate chroma jitter and delay and improve chroma signal/noise ratio. Various editing and playback systems use other techniques to enhance and sharpen chroma. Some time base correctors even have a Y/C delay adjustment (Y/C stands for luminance/chrominance) for delaying the luminance signal, so that chroma can catch up and match up.

Does this imply that hi-8 to hi-8 editing is inferior? Yes and no, depending on your expectations. It's not component, and it's not digital. Each technical fix seems to precipitate an added problem and another fix. There remains generational signal loss. However, image degradation is scarcely worse than 3/4" and, with enhanced signal processing, in some respects better. How the fragile hi-8 tape survives a bruising edit is another matter, a topic under debate at the moment.

In a significant and related development, the Fox Network announced in July that it had designated S-VHS as the standard ENG format for its owned-and-operated stations and affiliates. Fox cited an acceptable quality after four generations and an unprecedented "price-performance point" (the new corporate jargon replacing "bang-for-the-buck"). Since hi-8 and S-VHS are neck-and-neck in most performance categories, Fox's decision has broad commercial implications for both low-cost formats.

Audio must also be emphasized in any report on hi-8. The downsizing of camcorder and videocassette in no way alters the stock-in-trade of competent audio recording: microphone, boom, windscreen, mixer, cable, XLR connector, radio transmitter, and experienced sound recordist.

Regarding the statement, "Originally introduced as a consumer format in the late 1980s, hi-8 has quickly been coopted by the professional community," it just didn't happen that way. The professional community has been aware of 8mm longer than anyone. German giant BASF developed 8mm videotape in 1979. From 1981 to 1985, 8mm technology was jointly developed by 127 of the biggest electronics companies, the very companies busy inventing pro camcorders. In September 1985, before most independents had ever seen

Is hi-8 to hi-8 editing inferior? Yes and no, depending on your expectations.

an 8mm camcorder, I chaired a technology panel at the American Film Institute's National Video Festival where Michael Felix, Ampex vice president of advanced technology, described testing 8mm for ENG use, then predicted 8mm as ENG's future.

Which brings up an interesting question. Given the obvious drawbacks of color-under recording, why didn't the 127 companies that developed 8mm video opt to create a true component system, perhaps a miniature version of Betacam, with its separated luminance and chrominance tracks?

In fact, a substitute for color-under was discussed in the early 1980s at the International 8mm Video Conference in Japan: the digital compression of separate luminance and chroma signals, which would be checkered as alternating bursts on a single track. However, it was decided that digital technology was too immature. A measure of how far things have come was the eye-popping demo last April at the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas of Toshiba's working prototype of a consumer 8mm HDTV VCR using the DigiCipher compression technique developed by General Instruments and MIT. With metal evaporated tape in a standard 8mm cassette, the briefcase-sized VCR recorded and played back an astonishing 120 minutes of full 16:9 HDTV.

Lastly, a personal reflection. I began making 16mm films in the early 1970s. As I learned filmmaking, I also learned Sony AV-3400 1/2" black-and-white reel-to-reel portapak, Ampex 1200 2" Quad VTRs, and in the mid-1970s, balky Sony 2850 U-matic edit VCRs. I have never known a world without video. This is true of every filmmaker of my generation.

I can't help marveling how far video has come. Yet, to me, 8mm transcends the miracle of miniaturization. It empowers the many to immortalize the sights and sounds of our day, to collectively extend to the future active tableaux of who we were, what we believed, and what we accomplished—free of the mediation of written word and the imprimatur of accepted history.

*David Leitner contributed 37 articles to the In Focus column, which were later translated and published as a book by the Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano. He is working on a feature-length documentary, Notorius Pastorius, on the life and death of genius bass guitarist Jaco Pastorius.*



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## LET'S GET DIGITAL

## The Emerging Communications Technologies and their Consequences

SANFORD BINGHAM

People often mistake innovations for inventions or, to put it in political terms, evolutions for revolutions. Johannes Gutenberg, for example, is widely held to be the inventor of the book. But while Gutenberg's invention of movable type certainly allowed far wider dissemination of information, it is better seen as an evolution of the earlier, unaccredited, development of the bound book. Before books, information was contained in

There will almost certainly be cross-border alliances on a grand scale—IBM offering cable television, ABC transmitting programs over telephone company facilities, Microsoft making the operating system for General Electric refrigerators.

scrolls; cutting the scrolls into discrete pages not only allowed them to be mass-produced, but also changed the way they were read, substituting random for serial access.

In a similar way, fiberoptic transmission systems are commonly held to be a revolutionary development in the telecommunications and cable television industries. The harbinger of limitless channel capacity, fiberoptics are expected to do for video what the printing press did for publishing. But fiberoptics is in some ways the less interesting part of the unfolding story of communications media.

By the time light-wave transmission over glass fibers was invented by AT&T during the 1970s, the revolution had already occurred a decade before. Fiberoptics was an evolution atop the revolutionary development, also by AT&T, of digital signal transmission. If it is true, as Sprint claims in its ad-

vertising, that "you can hear a pin drop" over a fiberoptic connection, that is a result of the connection being digital, not of it being fiberoptic. "A bit," says Dr. Robert Lucky, AT&T's executive director of technology, "has no memory of whether it has traversed a digital microwave link or an optical fiber. It is either correct or in error; there is no other quality measure."

Digital bits are remarkably indiscriminating. Not only do bits not care whether they travel over fiberoptic cables or over, say, direct broadcast satellite systems, they also don't care what it is they are carrying. The digital bit does not care

businesses can compete against entrenched companies. For example, the development of desktop publishing systems allowed dozens of new companies to enter that field. There are other such industries out there today, and some of them are now starting to take notice. Industry gatherings are full of worried talk about the "convergence" of the computer, consumer electronics, communications, and media publishing industries into what Apple Computer CEO John Sculley calls a single multi-trillion dollar "mega-industry."

The sobering fact seems to be that these industries are not converging in the way crowds converge or ideas converge. Rather, they are converging in the way that freight trains converge. What we are now seeing is a group of very large businesses—AT&T, IBM, Time-Warner, Nynex, Sony, Apple, to name just a few—traveling at great speed toward a single spot, which they will not all be able to occupy at once.

These companies have all prospered over the years in discrete industries—telephones or computers, television or film—which they perceive will soon be the same industry. Even as the hardware companies race to develop new devices based on their particular expertise—"multimedia" computers, "smart" telephones, digital cameras—they realize that there are already more emerging technologies than the marketplace can absorb. Knowledge that there will be winners and losers over the next few years is leading these companies to hedge their bets as best they can in a frenzy of consolidation and alliances. Sony has bought Columbia Pictures, Kodak bought the Image Bank, Toshiba has a stake in Time-Warner, IBM and Apple have formed a joint venture, the list goes on and on.

The list of competing technologies is equally long. To name just a few, there are fiberoptic and copper transmission systems from the telephone and cable companies, direct-broadcast satellite television systems from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation and General Motors' Hughes Network Systems subsidiary, competing standards for cellular telecommunications and "wireless multiple channel television," low-earth-orbit satellite systems like the Iridium system conceived by Motorola, as well as new types of fixed media designed to replace the VCR, including Philips' compact disc interactive (CD-I) and the emerging high-capacity "blue-laser" CD-ROM.

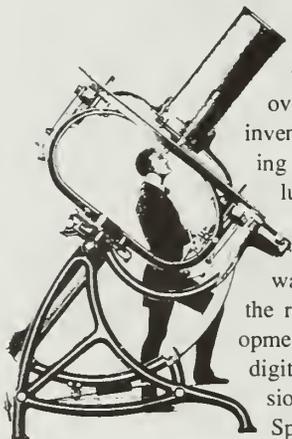
It is not yet safe to predict which technologies, or even which companies, will be around in five years. There will almost certainly be cross-border

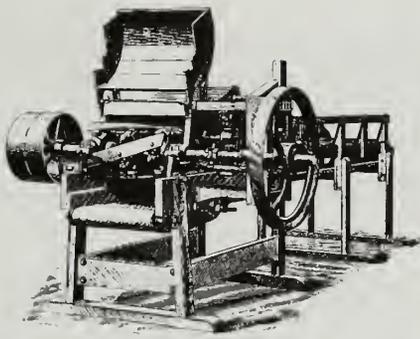
whether it is serving the recording industry or the telephone industry, the cable television industry or an independent film producer. Digital bits do not even respect the distinction between these industries.

*Trouble ahead*

Digital technology has had a wrenching effect on every industry that has adopted it. For every industrial worker who lost his or her job to foreign competition over the last two decades, there is surely another who was replaced by a computer-controlled machine or whose job now consists of watching such a machine. AT&T, the inventor and first to implement digital technology on a wide scale, has shed nearly a quarter of its workforce over the last half decade. The regional Bell companies and AT&T quite simply discovered that digital switching and transmission devices require many fewer technicians to maintain than the old analog ones.

In the long run, most new technologies have a positive effect on economic growth—if Gutenberg's press threw thousands of scribes out of work, it also created a new industry that employed their children and grandchildren. But new technologies also provide a means by which new





alliances on a grand scale—IBM offering cable television, ABC transmitting programs over telephone company facilities, Microsoft making the operating system for General Electric refrigerators and so on.

And in the end, the likely scenario is that the old media will remain, but all growth will be taken up by the new media. This is traditional. It is what happened with the introduction of the VCR. When Universal tried to stop Sony from selling VCRs in the early 1980s, the domestic film industry was a \$4-billion market. Today the domestic film industry is a \$12-billion market, but \$8-billion of that is from sales of videocassettes.

### Good news and bad news

“Television is called a medium,” said Ernie Kovacs, “because it is neither rare nor well done.” Regardless of which media companies and technologies prevail over the next few years, one thing is pretty certain: There will in the future be more available channels than there are today. The good news, then, is that in the future there will be more outlets for the creative production of programs. The bad news is that these outlets will have to fight over the funds necessary to produce programs, which should mean that any given television program will have a smaller budget in the future than it has today.

Assume for the moment that the market for film and video products consists of a more-or-less fixed number of media, call them “channels,” chasing a more-or-less fixed amount of revenue. This revenue consists of advertising expenditures, which aren’t growing much—advertising has been stuck for a decade at a level of about two percent of gross domestic product—and payments from customers, which are growing more quickly than advertising but not explosively. The number of subscribers to pay cable stations, for example, peaked in the late 1980s and has been declining ever since. The theatrical and home video markets for filmed entertainment, which were growing at 16 percent per year over the last five years, have now slowed down to about 8 percent of annual growth—roughly the average for all communications media.

There is no “law of decreasing budgets,” but the trends do seem to be moving in this direction. Already, film, television, and video producers of all types are looking for ways to make more with less—making primetime programs from the camcorder footage of ordinary people, recycling old advertising footage into new spots, and so on.

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Video dialtone networks will allow producers to set up their own "servers"—multimedia computers equipped with multiple phone lines—into which anyone can dial to receive a program.

This could be good news to independent producers, who are accustomed to doing more with much less.

### *The market forces model*

The move from an analog and linear world into a random-access digital world should happen across the board. It will be felt in the production process as serial access videotape is increasingly replaced by random access digital media at all stages of production and postproduction, as well as in the way the end product is consumed.

At the consumer end, the difference between television of past decades and cable TV today is that viewers now have a limited amount of random access via the remote control device. "For the first time," says Terry Hershey a strategist in the office of the executive vice president of Time Warner, "we have taught consumers how to manipulate TV by pushing buttons rather than cycling through channels on a dial."

But this is only random access among channels which are playing their programs serially. The next logical step is to offer random access between and within the programs themselves—the so-called "video on demand" systems, in which viewers are able to choose from hundreds of programs and, once they have chosen, to pause, stop, rewind or forward the programs.

The difference is analogous to that between listening to a priest read from a scroll and entering a bookstore. Not a library, but a bookstore. One of the abiding features of computer technology is that it permits companies to refine their pricing and billing process to manage ever-smaller units. This trend, which has created pay-per-view billing of cable television, will be particularly evident on the "video dialtone" networks which the telephone companies intend to introduce over the next decade.

The telephone network is a common carrier, which means it must carry all lawful traffic. Under the video dialtone scheme being outlined by the FCC, the telephone companies will continue to operate as common carriers of video programming. This suggests that telephone company video networks will be very different from cable TV

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networks insofar as cable TV companies decide what content they will carry. In theory, this means that any producer can make his or her work available over the dialtone system—much like anyone can set up a 900 telephone number today. The challenge to independent producers will be to use other media to market and generate interest in their programs.

This, of course, is very similar to what a video rental store or bookstore does today. The combination of inexpensive video technology and a video rental outlet in every neighborhood has not made everyone a movie producer; nor has the combination of desktop publishing and the corner bookstore made everyone a publisher. But it is certainly easier today than it was 10 years ago to make and market a movie or a book.

Even if the network operators achieve their goal of taking over these marketplace functions—becoming the video- and bookstores, the catalog marketers, the express mail carriers—they will simply be replacing one set of middlemen with another.

The telephone network, as any subscriber knows, already bills for calls lasting as little as six seconds, but emerging telecommunications technologies—especially the one called Asynchronous Transfer Mode—are capable of billing by units as small as a single digital byte. This suggests that in the future it will be possible, if not necessarily desirable to the system operators, to charge subscribers for exactly—and only—what they watch.

The switched broadband networks being contemplated by the telephone industry and, to a lesser extent, the two-way cable networks being built by the cable television industry are both more open marketplaces than anything which exists today. Like the Minitel videotext network in place today in France, future video dialtone networks will allow producers to set up their own “servers”—multimedia computers equipped with multiple phone lines, similar in concept to the video jukebox available on cable systems—into which anyone can dial to receive a program. Producers will own these servers, thus eliminating all middlemen, except the network operator, who will handle the billing. Unlike public access and public television producers today, people operating such a server will be able to gather a great deal of information about their audiences—what they like, what they’re willing to pay—and will be able to use this information to market future programs directly to their niche.

*Sanford Bingham is vice president of the Manhattan-based Magnetic Press, Inc., a provider of specialized information about telecommunications.*

This article is adapted from the panel discussion High Fiber Optics on September 17, 1992, cosponsored by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film and the Independent Feature Project.



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# PBS's Jennifer Lawson

## on Public TV's Programming Priorities and the Role of Independents



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PATRICIA AUFDERHEIDE

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*In honor of the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the founding of public television as we know it today, The Independent features a discussion with one of its leading figures: Jennifer Lawson. As chief programming executive at the Public Broadcasting Service, Lawson sets the agenda for the National Program Service, the "core scheduling" common to PBS stations around the country. PBS is the national member organization of public television stations, which are the base units of a service deliberately created to be decentralized.*

*Lawson's early career in media was marked by her role as executive director of the Film Fund, a small, private foundation funding independent, social-issue work. She later directed the Television Program Fund at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, serving in this post from 1980 to 1989. In 1989 Lawson became the first national programming executive at PBS following a major reorganization of the public television system, at which time stations jointly decided to vest power for the core schedule in a single programming executive, abandoning the traditional cooperative purchase of programs by stations.*

*In this interview, Lawson outlines her view of the role that independents can play in fulfilling public television's noncommercial mission and discusses the factors at work in determining PBS's programming.*

**Patricia Aufderheide:** Political and technological shifts are changing public TV's programming. Could you, first, speak to the current emphasis on public TV's instructional programming, which appears to reflect a need to clarify public TV's uniqueness, especially to Congress. Does this mean

putting less emphasis on the national program schedule, especially the primetime shows?

**Jennifer Lawson:** No, the emphasis on our educational mission is not really a big shift for public TV. There are any number of public TV stations that have always highlighted their educational role above the at-home service: South Carolina, Kentucky, many of our state systems which have provided programming for the schools. In the age of [Christopher] Whittle [founder of Channel One, the in-school commercial TV program], we recognized that this role of public TV was getting lost. But it's not a shift in terms of our resources and our commitment to the viewer at home.

**Aufderheide:** With digitalization and channel compression, television seems to be turning into a multichannel environment. Does the possibility of having more channels mean more opportunities for independents?

**Lawson:** PBS, through its engineering department, has been playing a real role in media technology. Howard Miller, our senior vice president for engineering, is considered a leader in channel compression. We now transmit via satellite four channels of material to our member stations. Most of our viewers are familiar with the National Program Service, the primetime and children's programming, which I manage. On the others we send material for telecourses and instructional programming. In the next few years, because of channel compression and new technologies, we will be able to deliver to the stations up to 50 channels on Telstar I, to be launched in late 1993.

The problem is that people would still not be able to get more channels on their TV sets, unless we all buy small dishes for direct satellite reception. Currently cable systems are the gatekeepers for additional channels. It's very difficult for new channels to get carriage on a local level.

Until the problem of viewer access is solved, we are not putting any

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Jennifer Lawson

Photo: Chad Wyatt, courtesy PBS

emphasis on designing general audience services, because it's too speculative. We are, however, developing educational services—a math channel, a science channel, an arts education channel—for learners of different age groups and targeted for use by educational institutions.

When channel compression gets to the level of the viewer, then far more channels of programming will happen. But it's hard to say when, because for cable system operators the main revenue potential [from expanded channel capacity] is pay-per-view.

We all need to be aware of technological developments that will change what we think of as programming. We're still in an early stage of research. For instance, we are currently engaged in a project with Apple Computers through a division called Classrooms of Tomorrow. They have designed a demonstration module based on a segment from the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* on global warming and rainforests. The Apple people created a simulation of the earth. The participant is then able to go back to the theories presented by the experts on *MacNeil-Lehrer* and play that out. It's where the computer and the TV screen mesh.

**Aufderheide:** Since you became head of the National Program Service, many independents feel there has been quite a bit of confusion over communication. Are you creating some kind of plan or strategy for integrating independent work that gives them a good sense of your priorities and methods—something that's like your plans to integrate kids' programming into the schedule?

**Lawson:** What we have been doing is designing a multi-year programming plan that would articulate who we are trying to reach, and how we are trying to reach them. Our children's programming plan tries to lay that out. Now we're trying to do the same for our evening schedule for a general audience.

We believe that independents should be part of all that thinking and that process. It's a false notion in my view to think that independent programming should be singled out from the overall programming goals of public TV. That too often means that it limits the way we use independent producers. It leads to anthologies that are very difficult for the viewer to get a handle on, because they vary so much from week to week.

So we would ask independents to contribute work that is on target for what we have identified as the way public TV can provide services. One of those is programming for preschool children. We have solicited and funded independents on subjects like that. In fact, our most popular three new children's shows on the schedule are all by independents, working with stations: the Lyons Group, two women outside Dallas, Texas, who had created a home video for the child of one of them, created the series *Barney and Friends* with Connecticut Public TV; *Shining Time Station*, created by Rick Sigglekow, a New York-based independent producer; and Paragon Productions, the company based in Canada, for which Shari Lewis, creator of *Lamb Chops*, is the key talent [in *Lamb Chops' Play-Along*].

As well, when CPB put out an initiative for children's programming, *The Puzzle Factory* was selected. It's through KCET, but produced by Lancet Media, an independent company.

Independents should play a vital role in planning programming for general audiences as well as for children, and they do. The greater tension, as I see it, isn't independents versus station-based producers. It's what is the role of single documentaries. We continue to air specials and they play a vital role in programming, but our funding priority is for series. We make conscious efforts here and at CPB to involve independents in all our

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## Many independents feel public TV should be cable access with funding, with a schedule showcasing single programs.

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activities, but we try to articulate beforehand what the needs are and why.

**Aufderheide:** Do independents get an opportunity to help articulate those needs?

**Lawson:** Yes. When the position I hold was created in 1989, the intent was to bring greater unity to the disparate parts of the system, independents being a big part of that. CPB was tasked with surveying the public and the public TV community to find out what social needs can be addressed by public TV. Independents, organizations, and minority producers have had input to CPB's needs assessment. CPB's report is issued to Congress and the [public broadcasting] system at large annually.

I am responsible for a programming plan that shows I am responding to those issues. That plan is where I have to look at the priorities out of the CPB needs assessment and how independents can play into that. We try to map out strategies that allow for the full participation of independents as well as stations.

My plan is looked at by the National Program Policy Committee, a 17-member special committee of the PBS board. The minority consortia nominate two members, and the National Coalition [of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers] nominates two members.\* CPB has representation, and the stations do too.

The NPPC can withhold its approval, and then I have to come up with something that it will pass and that the PBS board will approve. So that's where independents have been built in, where they have real clout. Of course, if there were a major disagreement, it would be such a major vote of no confidence I imagine I would have to start job hunting or something.

We're now asking independent producers for their best ideas for a primetime series for public TV—and this is our primary activity for this year, not some sop to independents. We have only defined it as something appropriate for an eight o'clock audience. We would like programming that continues to give the public a sense of the importance of public TV and its difference from commercial or cable TV. We also want engaging, entertaining programs. We with CPB have distributed an invitation for proposals to our entire mailing list, so it would have a full distribution to the independent community. While we require that someone on the producing team has had a program or series nationally distributed, we did not limit that to public TV or cable.

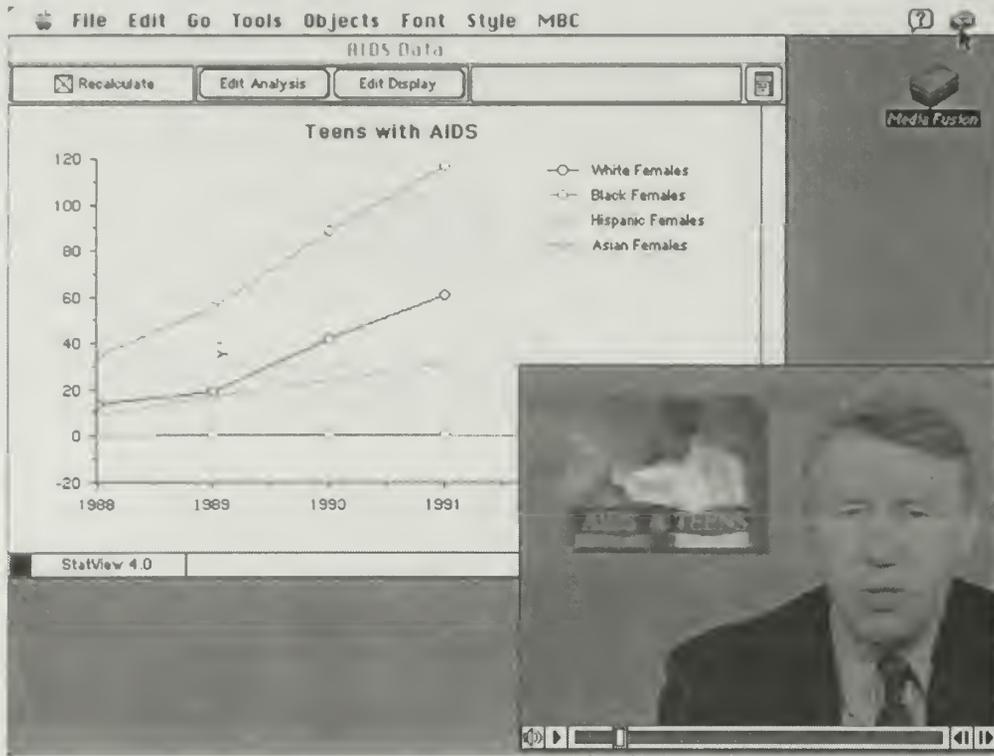
**Aufderheide:** The Independent Television Service is a much-touted hope for independents, but it has a major obstacle to overcome—getting its material on the air. Does PBS have any plans to work with ITVS to get its programming to stations?

**Lawson:** ITVS is producing with several different approaches, and we will give every consideration to the programs and series as they emerge. They'll send them to us, and we'll review them on a case-by-case basis.

**Aufderheide:** When you took this job, you were often described as public TV's programming "czarina." But from the examples you've given—children's and primetime programming—it's clear your role is more limited.

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\* Mable Haddock (National Black Programming Consortium) and Frank Blythe (Native American National Broadcasters Association) from the minority consortia, and Lillian Jimenez and Marlon Riggs from the National Coalition. The next meeting date of the NPPC is scheduled for April 23, 1993.



PBS's instructional programming includes a new multimedia collaboration between Apple Computers and MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour.

Courtesy Apple Computers

basis of the subject of the program, not the fact that it's an independent work. It's because it's about Stephen Hawking and made by Errol Morris. Promoting a single independent work gives us the same challenges as a single musical event, like the Crosby, Stills, and Nash special. It's a challenge that has nothing to do with whether the work is independent.

**Aufderheide:** Could you talk a little about the frustrations for you of working with independents? Where don't you think independents understand PBS?

**Lawson:** The frustration for me is in communication. Any programming service is dependent on creative and talented people. That's where public TV will ultimately succeed or fail. So it's quite frustrating and, to me, a missed opportunity that for years there has been inadequate dialogue between public TV and the producing community. We've been trapped in a discussion that misses the point.

The dialogue that's missing is how can we all create a stronger and more vital public service TV system in this country. It cannot rest solely on the notion of a thousand flowers blooming. Many independents, as I hear them, feel that public TV should be an alternative to commercial and cable TV by being cable access with funding, with a schedule showcasing single programs. And that it should then find some way of convincing viewers and critics that this is a more interesting form of TV.

But all of us, producers and programmers, who care about using TV for public service must find ways that connect to viewers, to the majority of people in the country, so they feel that this is indeed a valuable service to them. We must then all be in service to them. The difference between us and commercial TV is service that really connects to the mission as set by Congress, public TV stations, and PBS. We need to have a better dialogue with the independent community about our mission and how we're doing it.

That's where the frustration comes. Through the years of knowing and meeting independent producers I have come across people who have good ideas, who know of people with expertise and perspective, but the notion is always that the only acceptable way for it to come in is through the filter of independent production.

Sometimes it is more productive to use a TV format such as a talk show to have a dialogue about an idea. WGBH produced a special about health care in America, hosted by Phil Donahue, in a town meeting format. That was a very important and useful program. It was a TV program, it got across the issues. Usually when I've met with independent producers, their solution to the same issue might be to create a series of five half-hours, and five producers will make programs on that topic, and then we can air these issues on health care. It's autonomy at all costs. You sacrifice coordination, similarity of style.

I'm not suggesting that's all that would ever be done. But it would be a welcome change to have independents consider doing something in collaboration, with one person being the defining editor and having stylistic control, even though that would not be the entirety of how independents would always work [with PBS].

Often an executive producer can make a good idea happen, even more than a central programming service can. Look at *Eyes on the Prize* or *The*

**Lawson:** I think that the whole notion of a programming czar is a misnomer. While it may be cute in the press, it is quite incorrect about what my job and responsibilities are.

I'm responsible for providing the best possible schedule to the stations between 8 and 11 p.m. EST. Even there we try to allow for local programming. PBS distributes the programs to the 300-plus stations around the country, but we are not the only distributor of programs. The American Interregional Program Service [previously the Interregional Program Service (IPS)] does, and the stations produce local programs and acquire them. They rely on us mostly for children's programming, *MacNeil-Lehrer*, and primetime. The stations would probably see non-primetime PBS programming as an infringement on their scheduling rights.

Each station has other sources they can draw on for single programs. When they want single programs from us, it's the high-visibility specials, like a major musical performance event, or a *Live from Lincoln Center*. TV viewing is a product of habit, and viewers tend to tune in at a particular time, so it becomes very difficult to build an audience for an anthology series.

**Aufderheide:** It sounds like there is a lot about independent work that doesn't fit easily into primetime scheduling. Is there anything about independent work, as independent work, that works for it?

**Lawson:** One of the strengths of independent work is its diversity, and what helps make public TV distinctive is the variety of work that comes from the producing community. *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* is very different from a Marlon Riggs documentary or from *Paris Is Burning*. All are very different from Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* or *A Thousand Pieces of Gold*. That diversity adds to the distinction and character of public TV.

Their diversity is only a liability if the expectation is that they should be in a series. It's not a liability of the individual works.

We continue to have a schedule that features specials. Our schedule is like a magazine. On one hand, you will have columns by regulars, and you also have features, pieces by writers who show up just on occasion. Independent works show up as specials much like *National Geographic* specials do. Then we promote them on the basis of the subject matter.

The truth is that series stand out much more. It's much harder to gain publicity for a special. But there are successes: One was *Black American Conservatism: An Exploration of Ideas*. And as part of the election coverage, the Latino consortium is doing one on Latinos and the ballot box.

What I hear from independents is the expectation that specials could be highlighted more as independent works. But the publicity comes on the

***Black American Conservatism: An Exploration of Ideas*, by Zach Richter, is one successful case of an independent documentary that had good visibility as a stand-alone program, says Lawson.**

Courtesy Corporation for Educational Radio & Television

*Civil War*. There are a number of strong independent producers who worked with Henry Hampton and Ken Burns. Subsequently they have gone on to make their own programs. The crux of the problem is how one defines being independent, and whether it always means a single work by a single producer, emphasized solo, or as part of a series.

One of the most disturbing things for me, when I meet with independents, is that they often say they not only don't watch television, but they hate it. You can imagine that it doesn't give me great comfort that people are proposing something for a medium they hate.

**Aufderheide:** Several people have remarked on what they saw as your quiet courage at the last annual PBS meeting, when you stood up before station managers complaining about *Tongues Untied* and *Stop the Church* and reminded them of their responsibilities to air sometimes difficult material. This year the political heat has been turned up as well with conservative attacks on reauthorization [of CPB], and an ensuing amendment requiring CPB to look at balance and bias in its programming. Do you think it's a more difficult time for controversial programming than it has been?

**Lawson:** No, we believe it's very important to present a diversity of views to the public, and we think Congress will expect us to serve the entire American public. So of course there are times when a particular program may offend or anger some in the viewing audience, but we would hope people would look at our schedule as a whole.

We also hope that producers will make every effort to fairly represent the topic they cover and in a way that assumes first and foremost the intelligence of the audience. We believe presenting a case fairly actually helps public understanding of the issues. We have to have programs perceived as fair and intelligent, as being nonpartisan.

**Aufderheide:** Do you find it a common problem among independent producers that they do not respect the intelligence of their audience?

**Lawson:** Producers in general, not just independents, if they have a passionate interest in a subject, may have that problem. We have turned down any number of programs because we think they don't respect the intelligence of the audience. More often than not they are from advocacy groups. Those don't meet our editorial or underwriting guidelines. In the same way, it is of no value to us if a producer, who may not be an official member of such an organization, tries to create a program to advance some organization's agenda. Those efforts are transparent, and they harm the integrity of our service.

**Aufderheide:** What about point-of-view shows, in which a producer wants to express a perspective rather than hosting a balanced discussion of an issue?

**Lawson:** Of course the program called, purposively, *P.O.V.*, which stands for point-of-view, is designed expressly for that. Nothing implies that because a film has a point of view, it has to be partisan or from one side of the political spectrum rather than the other.

Additionally, we always evaluate programs on a case-by-case basis. We don't believe in a rigid construction of balance. Over the course of our schedule a diversity of views should be presented, so our schedule is seen as fair, balanced, and something that all viewers see as reliable.

**Aufderheide:** Many viewers did not see *Tongues Untied* as reliable, yet you



supported and later defended PBS's showing it.

**Lawson:** You will always have on something very controversial like *Tongues Untied*, to have some real difference of opinion. It becomes an artistic and editorial judgment rather than a science. You cannot assure that everyone will always be pleased. But we would expect that our schedule be respected by the country and be seen as a tremendous educational and informational asset.

**Aufderheide:** Some independent producers have been upset by PBS's stated intention to link funding to video rights.

**Lawson:** When it finances programs, in an attempt to provide the best stewardship of funds, PBS does through its contracts require certain rights. This new requirement is fine tuning. There have always been requirements that some revenue be returned. I don't know the details, though. Peter Downey, senior vice president for the program business group, is the person to contact.

**Aufderheide:** Anything else you want to share with independent producers?

**Lawson:** Yes, I'd like to explain the process of applying to PBS to have a program considered for broadcast or for funding. You just send it to PBS Programming at 1320 Braddock Pl., Alexandria VA 22314. Everything received that way is logged into a computer and the senior staff person for that area—news and information; drama, performance, and culture; or children's programming—reviews the cassette with his or her staff, as well as with scheduling, to check for duplication. And then that person accepts or rejects, or accepts and finances.

Finally, if there are other ways and places to facilitate this conversation, I'd be happy to cooperate.

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# Some Like It Hot

## THE NEW SAPPHIC CINEMA



A question of marketing: Is an avant-garde film like Su Friedrich's *First Comes Love* better received in a lesbian festival or an experimental film festival?

Courtesy filmmaker

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JUDITH HALBERSTAM

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WHAT DO LESBIAN AUDIENCES WANT? JUDGING BY THE SUCCESS OF *DESERT HEARTS* in 1986, we might conclude that lesbians who watch lesbian films want stories about conventional looking women who romance each other and then live happily ever after. But in fact, it is extremely difficult to judge what kind of lesbian feature film appeals to a lesbian public because there are so few made. As lesbians, we do not constitute a consumer group that Hollywood targets, obviously, and so the films that actually make it through mainstream channels—works like *Desert Hearts*, *Personal Best*, *Lianna*, and *Fried Green Tomatoes*—tend to be unrepresentative of either audience desires or the state of lesbian filmmaking in general. This article looks at the possible intersections between mainstream and independent lesbian productions, and addresses the sometimes strained relationship between lesbian artists and their audiences.

Recently my local Landmark theater in Los Angeles showcased a series of lesbian films and videos under the title "Girls Night." The theater was packed with lesbians eager and excited to finally see cinema with lesbian

content. The program began with Su Friedrich's experimental film *First Comes Love*. After about 15 minutes of black-and-white images of church weddings, the audience became restless. When text began to roll on the screen listing the countries that did not allow homosexual marriages, the audience was hushed and somewhat appeased. But when more images of weddings appeared on the screen following the text, women became downright hostile and began demanding loudly that the projectionist shut off the film.

The mood of the evening was established in this confrontation between image and audience, and the works that followed, many of them short avant-garde videos, received little serious attention from a by now restless and irritated crowd. This incident—and there have been many like it at lesbian and gay film festivals all over the country—suggests the tension that exists between the desires of the artist and those of the spectator. As a community of viewers, we sometimes project unrealistic expectations onto lesbian films, and we demand that they include something for everyone. For lesbian film- and videomakers, of course, there is often little or no incentive to target a popular audience in one's work.

In the case of Friedrich's film, an audience less focused upon literal images of lesbian lives and desires might have been willing to read *First*



*Comes Love* as an exquisite visual journey through heterosexual marriage rituals, which undermines their authority and centrality. An audience might also view it as a wistful vision of the beauty of a ritual from which lesbians and gays are excluded. Instead, because audiences are in general not trained to do careful readings of difficult films, most viewers saw Friedrich's piece as a tedious celebration of heterosexuality.

Now, if the audience simply wanted to argue about Friedrich's piece, then the hostility it provoked would at least be productive, having promoted some discussion. But, in fact, this audience had nothing to say about *First Comes Love* or the avant-garde pieces that followed. It's no surprise; these were all art works made for the consumption of an art audience. They were in no way related to the mainstream narratives that this audience probably came to see. In fact, the hostility that was generated by screening this particular film to this particular audience should really be blamed on marketing as much as anything else: Why should a lesbian audience, after all, be interested in avant-garde cinema any more than any other kind of general audience? In some way, the responses provoked by Friedrich's film suggest the problems inherent in any attempt to match up films with audiences solely on the basis of theme or subject matter.

Some lesbian film theorists argue that lesbian desire cannot be represented within the same narrative codes that dominate Hollywood film. This position understands conventional linear narratives to be programmed in such a way that they can only reproduce stories and images of heterosexual desire, even if the desire is between two women rather than a man and a woman. Feature films like *Desert Hearts* have, I think, proved the validity of this line of reasoning to a certain extent. But this does not mean that lesbians are incapable of producing narrative films that escape the heterosexual imperative. Lesbian narrative cinema possibly requires and might indeed be in the process of creating a new aesthetic.

Watching many of the recent productions by lesbian video artists and filmmakers at this year's 16th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, it seemed clear that both artists and audiences are changing their conceptions of what it is that lesbians want. If this festival was any indication, lesbians want more: They want sex in their films, they want lots of it, and they want it in many different forms.

What do lesbians want? A film with conventional romance and a happy ending, like *Desert Hearts*?

Courtesy Samuel Goldwyn Co.

Or the drama of S/M, as in Cleo Ueblemann's *Mano Destra*?

Courtesy Fromeline



This year San Francisco's festival had a carnival feel to it. Pressed together in dark rooms watching all kinds of lesbian bodies do all kinds of things to other lesbian bodies, one had the feeling of being at a kind of mass orgy. The audience was always a part of the show; never an idle group of zoned out spectators, these female gazers were constantly caught looking, enjoying, identifying, and generally getting off on an astounding array of new lesbian cinema.

Was there then a particularly high percentage of sexually explicit or pornographic material this year? No, not really. Was there evidence of ever more expansive lesbian sub-plotting? No. What made these films interesting, engaging, sexy, and transgressive was that they assume, or at least many of them do, highly-sexed, adventurous, and risk-taking lesbian viewers.

The only exception to a general atmosphere of tolerance and pleasurable diversity occurred at the screening of the controversial *Mano Destra* by Cleo Ueblemann. This proved to be one of the few films that elicited the dread lesbian sex police behavior. Women left in droves during this tense and challenging S/M film which studies the agony and the ecstasy of sexual control from the point of view of the bottom. One could give any number of reasons why this film in particular tested and discovered new taboos, but what is important is that the film was shown, that some people even stayed to watch it, and that perhaps because there was a great deal of discussion about the audience's response, next year a film like it might play to a more responsive audience and might even be the main attraction, given the trend towards representing sexual diversity.

One overwhelming theme that emerged from the film festival was fetishism. Fetishes, indeed, seem to be in. In one program, "Sex, Lesbians

and Videotapes," body parts became detachable, then were snapped on, sucked off, jacked in and off and out. In a particularly effective German safe sex tape titled *No Glove, No Love* by Inka Peterson, the whole hand becomes a glistening and twitching sex organ. Its protective rubber glove shines with lube as the hand prepares to enter an expectant ass that sways in anticipation. The hand flexes and clenches until it finally becomes a tightly balled fist. No faces are shown, this sexual encounter is strictly between fist and ass or fist and vagina.

The fetish, in fact, challenges definitions of sex organs. It forces one to ask, can any organ be a sex organ? And what is the difference between a penis, a finger, and a hand? What is the difference between a penis and a dildo and a cucumber? What is the difference between a dildo and a yam? What finally is the difference between a penis, a yam, and a sweet potato?

*What's the Difference Between a Yam and a Sweet Potato* is indeed the unlikely title of a video by J. Evan Dunlap and Adriene Jenik. This tape explores interracial desire by examining how ethnic and sexual differences



From *What's the Difference Between a Yam and a Sweet Potato?*, by Adriene Jenik and J. Evan.

Courtesy Video Data Bank

Europe is producing numerous experimental lesbian narratives, such as the bizarre Austrian cult film *Flaming Ears*.

Courtesy Frameline

interact. It involves a series of recipes for cooking yams and sweet potatoes. The kitchen heats up as the cooks get in on the action. For those who like their penile objects inorganic, *Stafford's Story*, by Susan Muska, is a quick glance at the lesbian sex club scene. Stafford, a butch dyke in tie and jacket drag, tells of a hot moment in the club. She recalls pulling out her lesbian cock; in a flashback to the scene of the crime, we watch as her anonymous partner rolls a condom onto the dildo with her mouth. Stafford recalls this as being one of the hottest sexual encounters she's ever had. *Perilous Liaisons*, by Charlene Boudeau, never left the sex club. Under a strobe light effect, figures and bodies flash in and out of visibility. This film provides tantalizing glimpses of intricate sex scenes. It glances at a few choice body parts and weaves together a chain of provocative images of arousal and aggressive seduction.

WHAT TRENDS, THEN, MIGHT BE IDENTIFIED IN LESBIAN FILM AND VIDEO? What kind of lesbian feature, furthermore, might be expected to break through to a mainstream audience? And what exactly do lesbian viewers want? These questions and more were addressed at a panel discussion during the San Francisco festival. Predictably, discussion quickly turned to economic constraints. Lesbians in general are not being funded to direct, produce, or write feature-length narrative films. As much as many lesbian directors would welcome the chance to work on a feature, there seems to be no network that feeds scripts and channels directors to producers who have the ability and financial connections to make a project happen. The one successful lesbian producer on the panel, Christine Vachon (*Swoon* and *Poison*), said she would like to work on a lesbian project, but to date has



Of the new crop of Queer Cinema by gay men, Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* promises the most, with its peculiar narcoleptic time-scheme that moves easily between dreamscape, allegory, and street life.

Photo: Abigail Tarsches, courtesy Fine Line Features



worked on films with gay men instead because that was where the opportunities arose.

What was really interesting about this discussion and the mood of the festival as a whole was that no one could identify what exactly defined a lesbian audience or what would constitute a popular lesbian film or video. Certainly we all want some images we can identify with, images we are turned on by, images we are angered and challenged by, but lesbians, people agreed, are a sexually diverse group with many different aesthetic and erotic needs. Some thought lesbians wanted narrative, some thought they could handle complicated avant-garde pieces. Some artists claimed not to want to second-guess their lesbian audiences. Indeed, second-guessing was perhaps part of the problem in the past, because it assumes that lesbians all want the same thing, that they all do the same things sexually and romantically, and that they will respond as a uniform group to media productions. The panel agreed that individual lesbians have to have confidence in their own images, their own ways of seeing.

One might ask why a similar discussion did not take place about what gay male audiences want, especially since this festival showcased the recently heralded Queer Cinema. Given the current trend among many gay writers and activists to identify homophobic trends in popular Hollywood films, one might assume that gay men want so-called "positive" images of themselves on film. For this reason it was extremely surprising that one of the festival highlights in the gay men's program was *Swoon*, by Tom Kalin. *Swoon* is another retelling of the infamous story of Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb, the two Jewish law students who in 1942 kidnapped and killed a young boy in order to prove that they could plot and enact the perfect crime. Previous film versions of this story include Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* and Richard Fleischer's *Compulsion*.

While *Swoon* is a gorgeous piece of filmmaking, its subject forms a rather repulsive focus, not simply because it visualizes gay male violence but because it aestheticizes that violence and transforms the *supermensch* theme of *Rope* into the glorification of a kind of elite fraternity between two beautiful white gay men. Though this may be the future of Queer Cinema, I personally think a feature film like *My Own Private Idaho* serves as a much better bridge between popular film and independent cinema. Gus Van Sant's movie offers a vision of the kind of liberties one should be able to take with the form as well as the content of narrative film. By replacing linearity and normative temporal structures with the time-scheme of the narcoleptic,

Van Sant's film moves easily between dreamscapes, allegory, dramatic liberties, and street lives. In *My Own Private Idaho* a sleep disorder creates new vision, and each time River Phoenix's character wakes up from his dream time, he has to begin constructing his reality anew. The film succeeded theatrically, raking in well over \$6-million at the box office, because it took the audience along on a visual adventure and made queer sexuality part of that adventure, part of a narrative and an identity, but not the only symbol of narrative and identity.

The few feature-length films with lesbian themes at the festival were thrilling and outrageous productions that suggest there is both a past and a future for lesbian features. For example, Jenni Olson, guest curator of this year's lesbian program, revived a brilliant film called *Times Square* (1980) that hones in on a fantasy of sexual and physical female power. Although, as Olson recounted, overt lesbian scenes were excised from the film, *Times Square* still comes across as a powerful narrative. It is about two young girls, a punk and an heiress, who run off together in New York. They begin to wage war on middle-class heterosexual complacency through appearances on a radio show and by ritualistically throwing televisions off rooftops. Reclaiming films like these, that are implicitly geared toward a lesbian audience, indicates that there is a forgotten tradition of lesbian films.

This lost tradition of images of lesbian revolt and autonomous sexuality (think also of a film like *Born in Flames*, 1983) suggests that there is a precedent for the lesbian new wave of exciting, perverse, and often violent visual imagery. One film in particular that for me represents the future of this new wave is a film called *Flaming Ears*, by Austrian codirectors Angela Hans Scheirl, Dietmar Schipek, and Ursula Purrer. Indeed, in *Flaming Ears* the future *is* lesbian. This extraordinary film, which has attracted a cult following in Europe, is set in the year 2700 in the town of Asche where a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

## SPANKY AND OUR GANG

### Jean-Pierre Gorin's *My Crasy Life*

BARBARA OSBORN

The oil-and-water formula of Jean-Pierre Gorin's new film, *My Crasy Life*, is only part of what makes it so provocative. Flippantly described by Gorin as "Robert Flaherty meets Sam Fuller," the film is a hybrid that accomplishes its mix well enough for the documentary jury at Sundance last

winter to give it a special award for its "experimental play between documentary and fiction." But the film's significance runs far deeper than the debate over whether it's fair and proper to script scenes in a documentary. *My Crasy Life*, which was financed by the BBC in association with FR3, seeks to empty itself of moral judgments about its subject: gang life. Since it does not present gangs as a social "problem," the film consequently poses no "solutions"—an approach that directly chal-

lenges the formula used throughout network television and in many independent works.

*My Crasy Life* (the "s" mimics Latino English) is about a Samoan Crip gang in Long Beach known as the Sons of Samoa (SOS). Most scenes were developed, scripted, and acted by the SOS gangsters or gangbangers, as they're commonly called. The script evolved through a series of meetings with the gang. Gorin brought in a lap-top computer, they told him stories about their lives, and he started mapping out scenes. Gorin would later come back with scenes written down to check for accuracy and get suggestions for revisions.

"A great deal of this film was about listening to what these guys had to say and translating that into a cinematic strategy that would impact the film," Gorin says. The gang had very clear ideas about how they wanted to be portrayed. They were intent on including material about their Samoan heritage. The film contains scenes where they discuss Samoan ghosts, and one gang member is filmed taking a trip to Samoa—their mythic paradise lost—to visit relatives. The boyz adamantly refused to be depicted as victims or as a symptom of social disease. They were most concerned with a fidelity to the details of their lives and with portraying some of the joy and empowerment of gangbanging.

The film was produced for \$260,000. Gorin and crew shot for 15 days in Long Beach with additional filming in Samoa and Hawaii. As they shot, Gorin showed the gang "video dailies" but, he says, the gangsters were less interested in watching than in doing. They came to the editing room only once. But during the shooting, they were fully engaged, yelling "action" and "cut" and debating continuity questions. Gorin offered to pay the gang for their work, but the boyz preferred that Gorin and his producers, Cameron Allen and Daniel Marks, pay for a recording session instead. The film includes the scene in which the gangsters go to the studio to record their raps.

Documentary sequences are interwoven throughout the film. (The terms "documentary" and "fiction" are used here in a narrow sense simply to describe degrees of preparation and set up.) Among the documentary elements are a series of unscripted talking head interviews that



Spanky, who voyages to Samoa, SOS's mythic paradise lost, to visit relatives.

Courtesy BBC

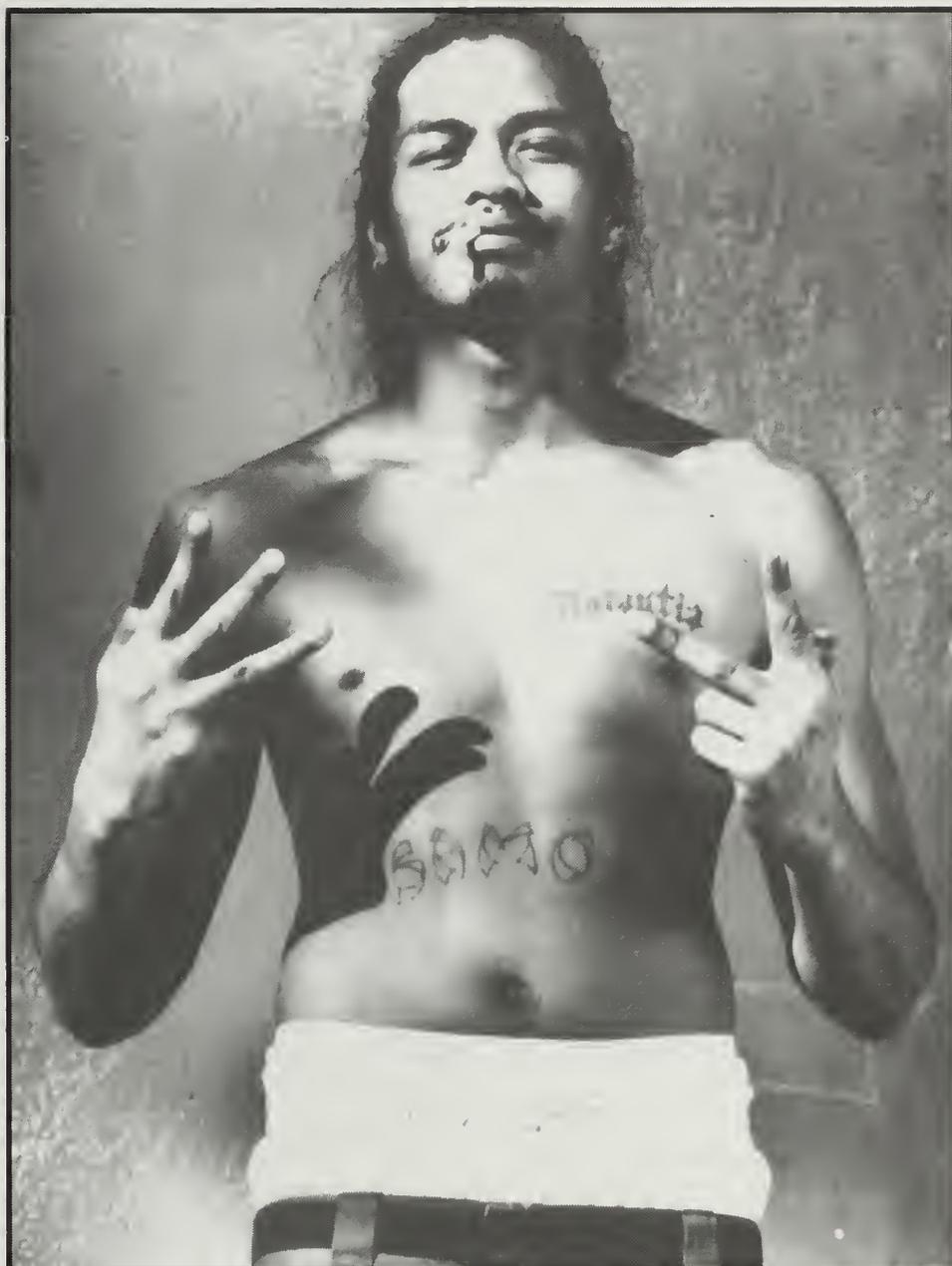
probe gangster experience. Under the knowing questioning of an older gangbanger named Bullet, the boyz speak openly about why they joined the gang and when they'll quit; their identity as Samoans and Crips ("If you had to take out a Samoan or a Crip, who would you kill?"); their experience with family, drugs, crime, jail, and getting even (Joker recalls getting stabbed and the homeys "taking care of what needed to be taken care of").

Gorin's documentary camera also follows Sergeant Jerry Kaono on patrol. The police car searchlight cuts the nocturnal stillness of the Long Beach alleys, slithering over doorways and into garages, searching out illegal activity. But Kaono's patrol is uneventful. Like concentric circles, the police presence surrounds gang turf, but the two worlds rarely touch.

The most unorthodox and conspicuous of the film's fictional devices is a voice that emanates from the sergeant's squad-car computer. It is just one of many "trip wires," as Gorin calls them—dozens of moments in which viewers are jostled from a complacent reading of the film and reminded that what they are seeing is neither cinema verité nor Hollywood drama. Gorin resists the temptation to make the voice a source of authority or analysis, although it starts out that way in the film. But the computer's commentary becomes discursive and inconsistent. The patrol car voice taunts the officer's efforts to help the gangsters ("Why don't you give it up, Sergeant?"), coos seductively ("Do you think of me as your companion, Jerry?"), and ruminates on the incomprehensibility of gangster life ("These gangsters, Jerry, do they hold as much mystery for you as they do for me?"). As Gorin explained to an audience at Sundance, the computer's authority degenerates: "It's the voice of God with a Ph.D in Sociology. Then it's Hal. Then it's not Big Brother, but Little Brother, like a faithful dog. So the information is less up here [in the computer] and more coming out of the gangsters themselves."

Gorin's mix of "fiction" and "documentary" wasn't meant to dupe the audience into mistaking one for the other. In fact, Gorin is incredulous when viewers don't catch the fiction. "There's a mugging scene with three changes of camera angle!" he sputters. "A gangster comes out of the Samoan jungle and says 'Fuck Margaret Mead'—and people think it's documentary!"

The film takes for granted the irrelevance of which strategy gets closer to "the truth" of the gangsters' lives and self-image. In an interview, Gorin offered an example of how documentary



and fiction blended during the filmmaking process. (Gorin prefers the term "documentation," a word that offers a sense of the *process* of accumulating layers of information and the drama inherent in that process.) In one instance, they had developed a scene around a routine event in the 'hood: Someone comes to buy drugs. Initial filming was interrupted by a real-life dope deal. They waited and started over. Meanwhile, the gangster who was supposed to transact the fictional deal suggested that he put a "jack move" (mug) on the buyer, played by the film's white intern. Gorin agreed, but didn't tell the intern about the change of plans. The scene, says Gorin, is "close to the ground and, at the same time, it is a pure, fictional construct."

Arguably the film's most radical aspect is not its play between fictional and dramatic sequences, but its relation to its subject. Gorin did not want the film to be *about* the Sons of Samoa, at least not in the sense that a documentary normally has a

subject and the filmmaker, sitting in judgment, takes a position outside it. (Gorin, who can be witheringly direct and passionately opinionated, remarked at the Sundance panel Truth In Documentary that, "the pandering voyeurism" of a film like *Paris Is Burning* was the opposite of what he wanted to do.)

Gorin began making documentaries because dramatic filmmaking was formally "locked up." But now he's convinced that documentary is just as entrenched in its own constraining codes of subject-object positioning and melodramatic stories in which conflicts must be resolved. Gorin worked with Godard making films as part of the Dziga Vertov collective in the late sixties. Since coming to the US 15 years ago, he has made two other documentaries: *Poto and Cabengo* and *Routine Pleasures*.

In discussing *My Crazy Life*, Gorin repeatedly mentions not a documentary but Luis Buñuel's fiction film *Los Olvidados* as a touchstone. That

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### The boyz and film crew.

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film is about Mexico City street kids and was based on stories Buñuel drew from reform school records. *Los Olvidados* is a film that Buñuel argued had a social argument but made no moral judgments.

Likewise *My Crazy Life* departs from moral grandstanding. There are no good guys or bad guys. In this sense, the film is closer to how gangsters think about their own lives. "They think tragedy," says Gorin, "we think melodrama, with morality. They don't judge their lives or indict the system: they just live them. I want a fiction disengaged from melodrama."

Daniel Marks, one of the film's producers and an anthropologist, adds that people never realize how normal gangster life is for gangsters. And yet despite the film's absence of melodramatic framing, the film is not dispassionate. Says Gorin, "When you're on the inside, you feel the warmth, the community. You don't feel the violence." But there is violence aplenty, as the film indicates through its inclusion of police homicide photos showing some bloody hits. "The film avoids violence," Gorin noted at Sundance, "yet it gets to 99 percent of what their lives are about—which is young men talking like old guys who see the end of their lives coming up. 'How old was so-and-so when he died?' 'Fourteen.' *That's* the tragedy."

While challenging cinematic forms, *My Crazy Life* tries simultaneously to challenge public discourse surrounding gangs. In Southern California, gangs are a subject of daily, almost obsessive, discussion in the press. Some 375 gang-related homicides took place in Los Angeles last year. Despite the endless coverage, the gangs virtually never have a chance to speak for themselves. (It took three days of rioting in Los Angeles before it occurred to any news operation, in this case, *Nightline*, that they might actually talk to gang members.) "We did not produce a film that replicates bastardized social analysis," says Marks. Gorin agrees that they wanted to change the discourse, and thus eliminated from the film any interpretation by "experts" from the justice system, the welfare system, and so on.

Lacking such interpretation, the film impresses its audience as much with the subject's ultimate impenetrability as with its depiction of gangster life. If documentaries are meant to bring problems and people within our comprehension, then *My Crazy Life* deliberately fails; gangster life remains

full of paradox and opaque. "You are as inside the ethos, pathos, and rhetoric of gangster life as you can be," says Gorin, and at the same time, "you get your true distance from it."

Perhaps the clearest example of this is the *Gangster Glossary*. Gang members take turns standing in front of the camera, defining gang-speak terms. Gorin calls the sequence a "Dadaist poem" in which slang is used to define slang. The list begins with a couple of easy words, terms that, once defined, we understand. We think we're getting someplace. But as the list continues, the rat-a-tat-tat of gangster speech becomes increasingly difficult to follow and we're left reeling in a swirl of meaning that we only half follow:

*O.G.*: Original gangster. A gangster back in the old days.

*Baby Gangster*: A peewee like me and the rest of the homeys. Young bucks trying to come up.

*Golddigger*: A bitch who tries to come into the 'hood and juice you for your duckets.

*Trippin'*: When a nigger comes out with a swole face.

*Low*: Like me, Lil Cool. Crazy.

*Wolf Ticker*: A lyin' ass motherfucka.

*207*: Motherfuckin' kidnap.

*187*: Murderer. B.K.

*Sissy*: A 6-0 from the Westside of L.A. Fuck dem muthafuckers.

*Sherm*: The stuff they shoot in dead people to make em so they don't smell bad.

*Sea Rag*: Our color. The color of justice.

*Rip*: Someone like me. A Crip.

*Gauge*: A gun. A rifle that you pump. You shoot slobs with.

Anticipating our bewilderment, one of the boyz directly addresses the viewer: "For all you motherfuckers who don't understand what they saying, as far as you IBM motherfuckers, this is straight from the gangster 'hood. Trey love and we outta here."

*Barbara Osborn is a journalist who writes about film, TV, and technology. She has also worked with gang members through the Los Angeles Probation Department.*

## ETHICS IS THE AESTHETICS OF THE FUTURE

### Documentary Dilemmas: Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies*

by Carolyn Anderson and Thomas W. Benson  
Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991; 244pp; \$14.95 (paper)

Carolyn Anderson and Thomas Benson's chronicle of Fred Wiseman's controversial first documentary film should be required reading for any new producer. *Documentary Dilemmas: Frederick Wiseman's Titicut Follies* offers meticulous documentation of the making of the 1967 verité film about a Massachusetts state hospital for the criminally insane and the subsequent battle to control and limit its exhibition. The documentary, a sear-

ners, and lawyers. The tragic theme of betrayal lurks beneath the elaborate charges and countercharges described here, an apparent struggle between the inmate's right of privacy and the filmmaker's freedom of speech. Did Wiseman betray the trust of the officials who agreed to let him film? Did he callously profit from the misfortune of madmen? Did he ruthlessly invade their privacy, or did he, by drawing public attention to their plight, set in motion a chain of events that led to improvements in the care of the criminally insane? And what of the hospital officials who administered an institution described by one film critic as a "modern Bedlam" and the politicians whose careers could be made or broken by their involvement with the film? These and other moral questions multiply as the history of the film unfolds.

quo. This cautionary story should propel documentary makers to ponder anew how the practices and attitudes of everyone involved in a documentary influence the lives and futures of the film's subjects, as well as its filmmakers, sponsors, funders, and, last but not least, the public.

Wiseman has found his equals in authors whose rhetorical approach in recounting this saga mimics Wiseman's filmmaking style: relentless exposure of accretive details, an absence of any apparent authorial voice, and a veiled yet unmistakable point of view directing the real-life story from beginning to end. Anderson and Benson may withhold more of themselves than even Wiseman does in his films, leaving one straining to read between the lines to discern their judgments on the thorny legal issues and the prickly cast of characters. It isn't until the final brief chapter that they tersely assert that the film should have been made and should never have been suppressed. The reader may think she arrives at her own judgment of Wiseman and his adversaries, but the authors have woven a complex tale of good and evil, shaded in many tones of gray, which leaves no one entirely free of blame. The only thing missing is the final chapter in this more than 20-year battle—the 1991 judicial ruling which finally lifted the ban on public exhibition of the film—which occurred after the book was completed.

DEIRDRE BOYLE

*Deirdre Boyle is currently a Fulbright Lecturer on alternative video at Moscow State University.*

From *Titicut Follies*, Frederick Wiseman's banned film on the cruel conditions inside the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Mentally Insane,

Courtesy Film Forum



ing exposé of asylum conditions, was barred from circulation by a lawsuit upon its release. Considering the film an invasion of inmates' rights, the presiding judge ordered it burned. Although the ruling was stayed pending an appeal and the Massachusetts Supreme Court ultimately conceded that the film had value for professional audiences concerned with custodial care, *Titicut Follies* remained unavailable to the general public until last year, when a Massachusetts court lifted the 24-year-old injunction.

*Documentary Dilemmas* recounts this real-life *Rashomon* tale involving politicians, state employees, judges, former hospital inmates, and staff, as well as Wiseman, his distributor, part-

The censorship of *Titicut Follies* was bounded by time, place, and the competing interests of the various participants. Wiseman's unflinching view of the institution—with its scenes of forced feeding, naked men incarcerated in isolation cells, and helpless madmen taunted by mocking prison staff—was ripe with opportunities for political intrigue and litigious response. However, this story is not just a historical curiosity about constitutional rights nor merely the first chapter in the career of a now famous filmmaker. Its relevance to today is obvious, when attempts have become commonplace to suppress the production and exhibition of visual works that raise the hackles of public officials and otherwise threaten the status

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A MEDIA ACTIVIST

### Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing

by Charlotte Ryan

Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991; 295 pp; \$25.00 (cloth)/\$12.00 (paper)

### Roar! The Paper Tiger Television Guide to Media Activism

by Paper Tiger Television Collective

New York, NY: Paper Tiger Television Collective, 1991; 64 pp; \$10.00 (paper)

From Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* to the flowering of independent media production during the Civil Rights, anti-Vietnam, and women's movements of the sixties and seventies, the mass media have always played a role in

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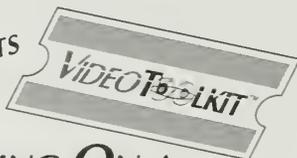
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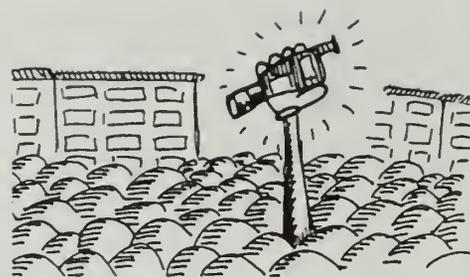
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America's political and social movements. But it wasn't until the eighties that activists began to realize that, more than a means of disseminating information and recording political battles, mass media constitute a political battlefield of their own. In a decade wrought by Reagonomics, U.S. imperialism, and a backlash against women and minorities, the emergence of media activism signified a realization that, unlike citizens' relationship to economic or legislative power, ordinary people have a real shot at critiquing, reforming, and subverting the more fragile cultural power wielded by film, video, print, television, and other media.

Two recent books, *Roar! The Paper Tiger Guide to Media Activism* and Charlotte Ryan's *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*, recount the trials, successes, and lessons of 10 years of media organizing and activism. *Roar!* chronicles the activities of the Paper Tiger video collective, which since 1981 has been critiquing the mainstream media with low-budget, low-tech video "readings" of texts ranging from the *National Enquirer* to the *New York Times*. Short essays by video artists, academics, and other collective members make a strong case for the democratic potential of the electronic media, but independent producers and would-be producers will find *Roar!*'s hands-on production advice most useful. In these "how-to" pieces, seasoned activists make overcoming production obstacles seem easy, offering tips on creating props cheaply, producing with low-power equipment, and obtaining scarce funding for media projects. An exhaustive resource list, which includes the names, addresses, and phone numbers of producers, collectives, support groups, and funders involved in media activism, should prove invaluable to independents as well.

While *Roar!* champions media activism in the form of alternative message production, Charlotte Ryan's *Prime Time Activism* teaches activists how to shape the mainstream media. Ryan, a former union activist who is currently codirector of the Boston College Media Research and Action Project, analyzes how and why news stories are selected by print and broadcast outlets. Ryan explains how activists can take advantage of everything from lazy editors to seasonal shifts (e.g., the onset of winter could increase coverage of the plight of the homeless) to pitch, frame, and sell stories conducive to social change.

While Ryan's step-by-step advice will benefit activists inexperienced in the ways of media, her sophisticated, yet clearly written analysis of the role of media in social change makes *Prime Time Activism* important reading for old hands as well. Unlike most academics, Ryan skips unnecessary jargon, focusing instead on identifying those aspects of disparate media theories that can help activists understand the media and that allow for the possibility of change. "To challenge the media," Ryan explains, "we must understand how it operates—the overall constraints defined in the propaganda model, and the potential cracks in



From Paper Tiger TV's new manual, *Roar*.

institutional power suggested by gatekeeper studies. We must not be seduced by the pluralist message that we can use the media if we learn how it works on a micro level. We are looking for openings not as quick fixes but as opportunities for grassroots social movements to push further."

At a time when fewer than 23 giant corporations control the overwhelming majority of media outlets, media activism—whether it is covering a neighborhood demonstration with a personal camcorder, teaching kids to look critically at cartoons, joining a video collective, or organizing around the mainstream media's coverage of urban decay—has never been so crucial to a pluralistic, democratic society.

LAURIE OUELLETTE

Laurie Ouellette writes frequently about media and culture for the alternative press.

## TAKING THE LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS

**Producing, Financing and Distributing Film:  
A Comprehensive Legal and Business Guide,  
second edition**

by Paul A. Baumgarten, Donald C. Farber, and  
Mark Fleischer

New York: Limelight Editions, 1992; 244pp;  
\$27.50 (cloth) / \$17.95 (paper)

Are you serious about producing films independently? If the answer is yes, then you need to learn about the legal and business aspects of the industry. *Producing, Financing and Distributing Film: A Comprehensive Legal and Business Guide* is a good place to start. It contains broad descriptions of how the business works and examines in detail the various contracts vital to the successful financing, production, and distribution of films.

Most general guides to independent filmmaking spend 10-15 pages providing hopelessly incomplete, outdated, and in some cases incorrect descriptions of the legal issues associated with film production. By contrast, this book provides a readable, comprehensive, and up-to-date description of the wonderful world of turgid film contracts. Its style makes the material accessible, though not easy, for the independent filmmaker. Its concise description of major deal points and contract provisions makes it a useful reference tool for the entertainment attorney.

Each of the book's first 14 chapters addresses

a specific aspect of filmmaking. There are two chapters on literary rights, one focusing on option and acquisition agreements, the other outlining the basic terms of a writer's agreement and addressing issues raised when dealing with a Writers Guild member. Financing methods are given another two chapters. Among the financing options addressed are production-financing distribution agreements, investor financing, and studio financing, although only two pages are devoted to coproductions with foreign subsidies and foreign governmental financing. There is a chapter devoted exclusively to contingent compensation, which includes a very detailed discussion of what to watch out for when negotiating a definition of "net profits"—a definition that often exceeds 30 pages in length.

For the producer going into preproduction there are individual chapters addressing the important issues when negotiating with actors, directors, and crew. The chapter on the actor's contract (a/k/a the "Artist's Agreement") takes an exhaustive look at a long list of commonly negotiated clauses, including such issues as dubbing, doubles, nudity, tax indemnification, rights of approval, and merchandising. Producers will find the chapters on technical agreements and facilities agreements informative, although a bit short.

Distribution is addressed in two chapters: at the end of the chapter on the production-financing distribution agreement and in another chapter devoted exclusively to theatrical distribution. What is missing from the book vis-a-vis independent film distribution is a description of the myriad rights and distribution channels important to those interested in self-distribution. Only two pages and three lines are devoted to foreign distribution, which is odd given that foreign rights are commonly the source of over half the budget on numerous big-budget, low-budget, and no-budget films; descriptions of the terms of video deals and television rights are brief and hard to locate.

The only major fault with the book is its lack of an index. There is a treasure trove of information here, but unless a topic is listed in the table of contents you may have trouble finding what you're looking for (e.g., insurance and union contracts are included in the chapter on production-financing, as are sections on domestic and foreign distribution). Also, if you have no familiarity with legal concepts and terminology the book may be somewhat rough going at first—you may want to read it with a dictionary of entertainment-related legal terms at your side.

Whatever your level of involvement in independent film, you should consider adding this book to your reference collection. And if you are an independent dead serious about your relationship with filmmaking, consider spending a long weekend together, just you and the book.

W. WILDER KNIGHT II

*W. Wilder Knight II is an entertainment attorney with Pryor, Cashman, Sherman, and Flynn in New York City.*

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## Domestic

**ATLANTA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, GA. Presented by media arts center IMAGE, competitive fest, now in 17th yr, is dedicated to innovative, entertaining prods & boasts enthusiastic local audience. \$7,000 in cash & equip. awarded in dramatic, experimental, animated, doc, student & other cats. Small honoraria for exhibited work. Extensive local press coverage. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1990; only independently produced films/videos appropriate. Entry fee: \$30; \$25 IMAGE members & students; \$40 for works entered by distributor; add \$5 for works entered from Canada. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 18. Contact: Claire Reynolds, IMAGE Film/Video Center, 75 Bennett St., NW, Suite M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4225.

**CITY LORE FESTIVAL OF FILM & VIDEO**, March, NY. 7th edition of this noncompetitive fest of folk cultural docs, held at NYU, seeks nonfiction works w/ alternative visions of US & its many peoples—expressions of community, tradition & identity. Genre-bending works that explore new methods of storytelling also considered. Program for '93: "Passageways: A Film/Video Journey Through Life Cycle." explores rites of passage & seasons of life. Program segments incl. birth & childhood, initiation & adolescence, marriage & adulthood, death & remembrance. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: \$10 or return postage; incl. press materials & synopsis. Deadline: Jan. 1. Contact: City Lore Festival of Film & Video, 72 E. 1st St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 529-1955.

**CLEVELAND INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 15-25, OH. Over 50 features & 80 shorts from 25 countries screened for audiences of 18,000. Cash prizes for shorts totalling \$1,500. Premiere audience estimated at 21,000. Program incl. competitive ind. film series of shorter works by young & student filmmakers. Entry fee: \$25/short (under 45 min.) & \$50/feature (45 min. & over). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: David Wittkowsky, Cleveland Int'l Film Festival, 6200 SOM Center Rd., #C20, Cleveland, OH 44139; (216) 349-0270; fax: (216) 349-0210.

**EARTHPEACE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 14-18, VT. This biennial competitive fest is forum for doc, animated, short & feature-length films/videos that address issues of global concern in 3 competition cats: Issues of War & Peace; Justice & Human Rights; Environment. For 1993, fest also interested in films that examine topics related to: World's Children, United Nations Yr of Indigenous Peoples, Positive Solutions to Global Problems. This is sister fest w/ Hiroshima Int'l Film & Video Fest. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1991; films/videos w/ nat'l US network TV (incl. cable) or theatrical distribution prior to fest dates ineligible. Entry fees depend on length: \$30 to \$1/min. over 90 min. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 8. Contact: Lorraine B. Good, fest dir., EarthPeace Int'l Film Festival, c/o Burlington City Arts, City Hall, Burlington, VT 05401; (802) 660-2600.

**NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS**, Mar. 19-Apr. 4, NY. Prestigious fest, estab. in 1972, surveys world cinema to capacity audiences at Museum of Modern Art. Dedicated to discovery of new & unrecognized narrative features, docs & shorts, 20-25 programs w/ entries from 18 countries last yr; no specific cats. Shorts programmed w/ features. Entries must be NY premieres. Cosponsored by MoMA's Dept. of Film & Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents NY Film Fest. No entry fee;

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

entrants pay shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 6. Contact: New Directors/New Films, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Feb. 12, NJ. This fest accepts work in any genre (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal, etc.) that originated on super 8mm film or 8mm video. All works screened by panel of judges, which will award \$1,000 in cash & prizes. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: Jan. 18. Contact: 1993 United States Super 8 Film/Video Festival, Rutgers Film Coop, Program in Cinema Studies/Rutgers University, 43 Mine St., New Brunswick, NJ 08903; (908) 932-8482.

## Foreign

**BERLIN BLACK INT'L CINEMA FESTIVAL**, May, Germany. Produced by Fountainhead Tanzatre & held in conjunction w/ Indiana University in South Bend, fest screens cinema from African diaspora, focusing on works of an artistic, cultural or political nature coinciding w/ general interests of African people. Awards in 3 cats: best film/video by black filmmaker; best film/video on matters relating to black experience, open to filmmakers outside Germany; best film/video by German or filmmaker residing in Germany that portrays injustices inherent in racist, sexist or homophobic society. \$1,000 awarded in each cat, plus plaques. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: Andrew Salgado, prod. manager, Black Int'l Cinema, c/o Maverickatre & Film Co., 73-11 Utopia Parkway, Fresh Meadows, NY 11366, (718) 591-1646 or Tracy Clarke, public relations coordinator, Black Int'l Cinema, Indiana Univ. at South Bend, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., Box 7111, South Bend, IN 46634. In Germany: Angela Kramer, program coordinator, Fountainhead & Black Int'l Cinema, Hohenfriedbergstrasse 14, 1000 Berlin 62, Germany; (030) 782 1621.

**FESPACO PAN AFRICAN FILM & TELEVISION FESTIVAL OF OUAGADOUGOU**, Feb. 20-27, Burkina

Faso. Founded in 1969, FESPACO has grown to be one of most important & largest int'l celebrations of African film. This yr theme is "Cinema & Liberties" ("the essence of expression is creativity & its basis is liberty"). Biennial fest aims to increase distribution of African films, develop African cinema & encourage dialogue. Fest consists of competition section for African films (other sections may show int'l films) & info section, as well as market called Int'l Fair of African Film & Television (MICA). Program this yr also incl. 5th Congress of FEPACI (Pan African Federation of Filmmakers), round table on fest theme & homage to actor Doua Seck. Over 500 guests from over 35 countries participate; fest attracts 500,000. In 1987, fest established Paul Robeson Prize for filmmakers from African diaspora. Work must have been completed in previous 3 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 8. Contact: Philippe Sawadogo, Festival Panafrican du Cinéma de Ouagadougou, 01 BP 2505 Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso, W. Africa; tel: 30 75 38; fax: 31 25 09.

**OBERHAUSEN INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 22-28, Germany. FIVF will again work w/ Oberhausen this yr to collect preview cassettes & arrange for preselection by fest rep who will be in NYC at FIVF's offices Jan. 20-30. Founded in 1954, fest showcases innovative ind. & experimental short & doc films of all genres. Competitive event, recognized by IFFPA, programs social, doc, new developments in animation, experimental & short features, student films (esp. from film schools), 1st films & works from developing countries. Sections & int'l competition screen films only, up to 35 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1991, German premieres. Beginning this yr, videos up to 35 mins also admitted to int'l competition. Awards: Grand Prize of Town of Oberhausen—10,000DM; 4 Principal Prizes—2,000DM; Special Prizes—1,000-5,000DM; Alexander Scotti Prize to best film on "old age & death"—2,000DM; Best film on educational politics—5,000DM; FIPRESCI Prize—2,000DM. INTERFILM Prize—2,000DM; DGB Prize—3,000DM. Fest also incl. 24th Filmotheque of Youth & 15th Children's Cinema, which awards prize of 3,000DM, decided by jury of children. Special programs for 1993 are "Confrontation of Cultures," a program of films by African-American, Afro-European & S. African filmmakers; retro of film & tv school in Pune, India; special program of NAFTI, film school of Ghana; discussions about Shorts in TV to present work of South Prods of Channel 4, London. FIVF will consolidate shipment of films & return to filmmakers after preview. Fest format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Preview on cassette only. For entry forms & info, send SASE to: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Entry fee: \$25 AIVF members, \$30 nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Deadline: Jan 15. In Germany: Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Angela Haardt, fest director, 39 Int'l Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Christian-Steger-Strasse 10, Postfach 101505, D-4200 Oberhausen 1, Germany; tel: 49 208 807008; fax: 49 208 852591.

**TAMPERE FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 10-14, Finland. Tampere, one of largest European short film fests, now celebrating its 23rd yr. Fest screens shorts w/ human theme (no films against human values or encouraging hatred & discrimination). About 350 works in fest, w/ competition showing about 95 films from 1,600 entries from 50 countries to

audiences of 23,000 from 20 countries. Cats: animated, doc, fiction/experimental. Children's films accepted in any cat. Awards: Grand Prix (bronze statuette Kiss & \$6,500 for best film); best film in each cat (statuette & \$1,000); diplomas of merit; cash prizes. Competition entries must be under 35 min. & have had 1st public screening after Jan. 1, 1992. Films shown at other int'l fests ineligible. Also incl. are special programs. FIVF will act as liaison w/ fest this yr. collecting & organizing films for prescreening by fest rep who will visit NYC in mid-December. Entry fee: \$20/AIVF members; \$25/nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" or 3/4" only. Deadline: Dec. 4. For info. & appls, send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

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**For Information/Entry Forms Contact:** Al Nigrin, Director, 1993 U.S. Super 8mm Film/Video Festival, Rutgers Film Co-op, Program In Cinema Studies, Rutgers University, 43 Mine Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903 (908) 932-8482

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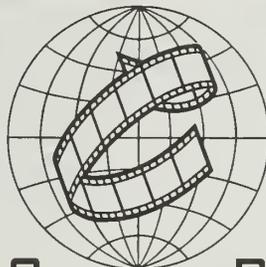
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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**CALIFORNIA LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS** offers Recordkeeping for the Artist workshops, Nov. 10 (Los Angeles); Nov. 11 (San Francisco). Also workshops on Bankruptcy, Nov. 4 & Copyright & Trademark Overview, Nov. 18 in Oakland. Contact: (415) 775-7200 (San Francisco); (213) 623-8311 (Los Angeles) or (510) 444-6351 (Oakland).

**CENTER FOR NEW TELEVISION** offers Legal Aspects of Video Production workshop, November 18, at the Center for New Television. Contact: CNTV, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL; (312) 951-6868.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** media workshops for November incl.: Introduction to 3/4" Editing; Production Management II (Line Producers Workshop); Avid Media Composer Training Workshop; Directing the Independent Doc; Distributing Independent Films; Amiga Video Toaster; 3D Animation on the Amiga; Arriflex SR Workshop & Camera Orientation Evening. For more info., contact: Media Training Dept., F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES' ANNUAL MEETING** will be in Chicago, November 12-15. Guest speakers are Robert Novak & Carl Rowan. Contact: (202) 347-6352.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**CARNEGIE MELLON UNIV.** seeks videos for inclusion in lecture/exhibition series on U.S. Latina/o video art for presentation in South America. Only videos made by Latinas/os eligible. Must be 30 min. in length or less & use medium in creative way. All subjects & genres (experimental, doc., narrative, animation) accepted. Deadline: December 30, 1992. Send VHS w/ statement about work, bio, resumé, reviews & SASE to: Luis Valdovino, Dept of Art, College of Fine Arts, Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, PA, 15213-3890; (412) 268-2409.

**CINEMA EXPERIMENTO**, monthly program of experimental & avant-garde short films, seeks work on 16 & 35mm (30 minutes max). Send work or preview tapes on VHS or U-matic w/ return postage to: Pike Street Cinema, 1108 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101. For info., contact: Jon Behrens or Galen Young, (206) 682-7064.

**CITY TV** seeks programs for & about disabled, senior & Latin communities & shorts & video art pieces of any length. Broadcast exchanged for equipment access to their state-of-the-art facility. Contact: Laura Greenfield, Cable TV Manager, CITY TV, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. (213) 458-8590.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV CENTER** accepts 3/4" Beta & VHS tapes for open screenings & special series w/ focus on women, Middle East, gay & lesbian, Native American, labor & Asian Art. Contact: Tanya Steele, DCTV, 87 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-1298.

**MINORITY TELEVISION PROJECT**, Bay Area's multicultural public television station, invites submissions from independent producers & writers. Program must have person of color in key creative position &/or present crosscultural perspectives. Contact: Spencer Moon or Roger Gordon, 71 Stevenson Street, Suite 1900, San Francisco, CA 94105. (415) 882-5566.

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., November 8 for the January/February issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

**NOMAD VIDEO** seeks works from videomakers of all ages, backgrounds & skill levels for monthly screenings designed to showcase grassroots artists, at changing locations around Seattle area. Send VHS, S-VHS or hi-8 & SASE to: Gavin the Nomad, 501 N. 36th St. #365, Seattle, WA 98103; (206) 781-0653.

**QUICK FLICKS** nonprofit cable access show seeks short drama, doc, animation & experimental films/videos. Interested parties should send 3/4" U-matic copies to: Quick Flicks c/o Eugene Haynes, 814 10th Avenue, #3A, NYC, NY 10019 or call (212) 642-5236.

**SHORT ATTENTION SPAN THEATER**, *Comedy Central's* flagship program seeks high-quality comedic short student/independent films & videos under 3 minutes in length to air in short film showcase segment of this nat'l TV show. No fees. Submit VHS or 3/4" NTSC videotape to: Josh Lebowitz, HBO Downtown Prods, 120 East 23 St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 512-8851.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**NEW YORK CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIBLE MEDIA**, monitor of public access & media democracy issues for New York City cable, seeks film/video producers for inclusion in gov't access programmers directory to link qualified independents with city agencies planning media productions. Send name, address, phone & list of recent credits to: Larry White, chairperson, NYCCRM, 370 W. 30th Street, #4B, New York, NY 10001.

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE** Dept of Studio Art seeks videomaker w/ rank of assistant/associate professor. Candidates must possess production/screening record & teaching exp. commensurate w/ rank. Knowledge of computer imaging & MFA or equiv. desired. Candidates must be able to teach both undergrads & grads (teaching load is 2 courses/quarter) & be willing to work on curriculum development as well as development of video facilities w/ assistance of technical staff. Teaching duties begin September 1993. Appls should include vitae, statement of teaching philosophy & adequate representation of production, w/ any necessary supplemental material, 4 letters of ref. & SASE for return of appl. EEO. Direct appls or

nominations for position to: Catherine Lord, Chair Dept of Studio Art, UC Irvine, CA 92717.

## Publications

**ALTERNATIVE PRESS CENTER**, publisher of quarterly *Alternative Press Index*, announces 1st annual cumulative index for Vol. 23, 1991. Nearly 400 pgs in length, index includes 36,000 citations covering 216 publications. Price: \$50 through December 1992, w/ special discount for individual, nonprofit & movement groups. Contact: Alternative Press Center, P.O. Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 243-2471.

**ART ON SCREEN**, newsletter of film & video on visual arts, published 3 times/yr by Program for Art on Film. Subscriptions free to media & art professionals. Call or write: Program for Art on Film, 980 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 988-4876.

**CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY**, the newspaper of nonprofit world, lists grants, fundraising ideas, job opportunities, deadlines, texts, regulations, IRS rulings & statistics. 1st 4 issues are free. Contact: Chronicle of Philanthropy, 1255 23rd Street NW, Suite 775, Washington, D.C. 20037.

**DISC MAKERS GUIDE** to Master Tape Preparation avail. free upon request from Philadelphia-based audio manufacturer. 45-page booklet, revised & updated for 1992, explains how to prepare master tape for error-free mass production. All master tape formats covered, including all-new 19-pg section on DAT. Contact: Tony van Veen, (800) 468-9353.

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TELEVISION, CABLE & VIDEO** covers every aspect of 3 fields, from engineering technology to laws, advertising jargon & industry associations, awards, events, companies, people & programs. Published September 1992, \$49.95, hardcover. Contact: Van Nostrand Reinhold, Division of Thomson Publishing Corporation, 115 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003; (212) 254-3232.

**FUTURE SAFE** brochure, published as part of Alliance for the Arts' Estate Project, provides comprehensive guide for artists w/ AIDS & other life-threatening diseases to secure future of their work & estates. For free copy, contact: Alliance for the Arts, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036; (212) 947-6340.

**MUTUAL IMAGES**, new publication on U.S./Japan relations, seeks articles & opinion pieces from journalists, business people, academicians & politicians expressing opinions & knowledge about Japan/U.S. bashing & to further intercultural understanding btwn 2 countries. Contact: Mutual Images: Japan U.S.A., Teri Yamada, editor, P.O. Box 364, San Pedro, CA 90733-0364.

**RUNGH**, a project of Rungh Cultural Society, is new interdisciplinary magazine committed to exploration of traditional & contemporary South-Asian cultural production. Contact: Rungh Cultural Society, Station F, Box 66011, Vancouver, BC Canada V5N 5L4; (604) 876-2086.

## Resources ■ Funds

**CPB/PBS** seek proposals for Primetime Series Initiative. CPB's Television Program Fund & PBS' National Program Service will allocate up to \$6-million in FY 1993 in support of series w/ no fewer than 10 episodes & no more than 52, suitable for primetime scheduling on

public television. Deadline: Jan. 29. Contact: Charles Deaton, CPB, (202) 879-9740 or Pat Hunter, PBS, (703) 739-5449.

**CREATIVE TIME** sponsors projects by visual & performing artists as part of ongoing CityWide series. Goal to bring exciting, challenging art to diverse, wide-spread & untapped sites in New York City. Interested in projects that challenge viewers, defy categories & bridge cultures. Artists must be practicing professionals. No deadline; proposals viewed every 3-4 mos. Send 5 copies of project description; description of desired public site; technical assessment, incl. consideration of vandalism, security, projects material stability & utilities description; resumé of all participants; budget; up to 10 slides of past work of each participant in group w/ accompanying descriptions; 1/2" or 3/4" video of past work, no longer than 5 min., w/ explanatory notes; sketches & drawings to clarify proposal & SASE to: Creative Time, 131 W. 24th St., New York, NY 10011-1942; (212) 206-6674; fax: (212) 255-8467.

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER (ETC)** offers residency program for artists wanting opportunity to study techniques of video image processing during five-day intensive residency. Appls must incl. resumé, project description, tape of recent work & specify residency week btwn Sept.-Jan. 1993. Also, ETC's Electronic Arts Grants Program offers Presentation Fund grants to nonprofit organizations in New York State. Partial support avail. for presentation of audio, video, computer & related time-based electronic art works. Deadline: End of each month. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St, Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

**INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE** seeks proposals from ind. producers for TV series designed to test new formats or address new audiences. Deadline: Nov. 16 for Generation, 4-part series for teens; Nov. 30 for Extended Play, for extraordinary series of any variety; January 15 for HIV Weekly, 9-part multi-genre series exploring issues confronted by people affected by HIV/AIDS. For guidelines, contact: ITVS, 333 Sibley, St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 225-9035.

**JEROME FOUNDATION** funds individual film & video artists living & working in New York City metropolitan area. Appls, accepted any time, are reviewed 3 times per year. Contact: Jerome Foundation, West 1050 First National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 224-9431.

**LILA WALLACE-READER'S DIGEST FUND** Internat'l Artists Program, program of Arts Internat'l, accepting appls for 3- to 6-month residencies for visual artists at select sites in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & South Asia. Deadline: December 11. Contact: Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest International Artists, Arts Internat'l, Institute of Internat'l Education, 809 U.N. Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

**MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION** supports arts administrators through its Visual Arts Travel Fund. Applicants must be employed as administrator or curator of nonprofit visual or media arts organization which is located in Mid-Atlantic state, offers at least 3 professionally organized visual or media arts exhibitions each year &/or includes exhibitions as at least 50% of annual programming & is artist-run or small- to mid-sized contemporary arts organization. Events must be scheduled to take place outside applicant's organization's state. Travel grants awarded for 50% of documented expenses incurred to attend an event (maxi-

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mum \$200). Deadline: no later than six weeks before event or dates of travel. Contact: Michelle Lamuniere, Visual Arts Program Associate, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, 11 East Chase Street, Suite 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES** offers high school & college students \$2,000 grants (includes \$400 for teacher) for 9-week research projects under supervision of humanities scholar/teacher. Deadline: November 2, 1992. Contact: Younger Scholars Guidelines, Room 316, Division of Fellowships & Seminars, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506; (202) 786-0463.

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS'** offers Erik Barnouw Award for outstanding reporting or programming on network TV, cable & doc film, addressing U.S. history &/or history as habit. Deadline: December 1. Contact: OAH, 112 N. Bryan St., Bloomington, IN 47408-4199; (812) 855-7311.

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**The Association of Independent  
Video and Filmmakers**

peculiar band of lesbian characters live out a strange subcultural existence. In this film—the hottest I saw at the festival—the sex was bizarre, almost unfamiliar, and it was spliced with ritualistic violence like vampirism. In one scene in a sex club, a performer dons a belt from which a cock and balls hang like perverse wind-chimes. She suspends herself from parallel bars with hands and ankles, and the dildo ornament swings between her thighs as two women begin to touch her.

*Flaming Ears* attempts to capture a new queer aesthetic, one radically different from the sleek and beautiful images of gorgeous gay men that has been heralded as the new Queer Cinema. *Flaming Ears* works because it never completely gives up on narrative, but, like *My Own Private Idaho*, frames narrative progression in new and interesting ways. Also, in *Flaming Ears* lesbianism is not the issue that motors the narrative, nor is it in any way naturalized within the film's new visual aesthetic. Rather, lesbian desire in this odd film becomes the only kind of desire represented. However, the diversity of forms it takes reinvents lesbianism as a complicated and heterogeneous set of practices and identities.

Because *Flaming Ears* takes its viewers to a place that is totally unfamiliar, it has been less than enthusiastically received by audiences (although critics love it). People walked out in droves the night I watched it. But there is a difference between the responses it generates and the responses to a film like *First Comes Love*. In the case of Friedrich's film, the images were familiar, but what was at issue was why they should be generated by a lesbian artist, why a lesbian audience should be interested in them, and what exactly constituted their status as lesbian film. In the case of *Flaming Ears*, the film is distinctively lesbian, but it constitutes its narrative frame in ways unfamiliar and even disturbing. In the context of American lesbian narrative film, *Flaming Ears* is ahead of its time. But in Europe, where artists like Ulrike Ottinger, Valley Export, and

Monika Treut have radically rewritten the conditions of narrative realism, a film like *Flaming Ears* makes much more sense. In the European context, I think, stylistic and formal experiment does not automatically mean the loss of narrative coherence. As in *My Own Private Idaho*, the terms of narrative realism are reconstituted rather than simply lost to style.

In *Flaming Ears* the future is not an extension of the present; it is barely connected to what we recognize as either present or future reality. The film creates hope for the development of a lesbian narrative and aesthetic because it creates its own context and borrows very little from either conventional images of lesbians or conventional narrative techniques. Obviously we cannot expect a film like *Flaming Ears* to attract mass audiences any time soon, but what a film like this does accomplish is to subtly but irreversibly influence ways of seeing and modes of imagining desire, the future, bodies, and identity.

Spectators are not defined by passivity; they do not simply accept or reject the films they watch. Rather—and this is particularly true of specialized audiences—spectators participate in the creation of new ways of seeing. Also, mainstream and counterculture productions are not distinctly separate enterprises, but constantly inform each other.

While much lesbian work still seems to be happening in video—partly because of budgetary constraints—it is ever more clear that the time is ripe for lesbian feature films. But is the world ready for lesbian films as opposed to the pseudo-lesbian images of features like *Fried Green Tomatoes*. Probably not. But the films and videos at the San Francisco film festival show that, ready or not, lesbians are becoming more visible, and they are changing the way we watch, the way we desire, the way we imagine.

*Judith Halberstam teaches literature and queer theory at University of California/Santa Clara and is a regular contributor to On Our Backs, in which an earlier version of this article appeared.*

# THE INDEPENDENT

## Foreign sales: A special report

In the next issue

### A producer's guide to self-distribution to foreign markets

A preview chapter from FIVE's upcoming book on self-distribution, *Doing It Yourself*, 2nd ed. by Karen Lorsen

### Foreign sales agents

Who they are, how they work, where to find them by James McBride

### Selling your documentary abroad

A report on Europe's leading documentary market in Marseilles and the new Franco-German TV channel, Arte. by Nothlie Magnon

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## RUBY LERNER SIGNS ON AS AIVF HEAD HONCHO

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and its foundation affiliate, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), welcome Ruby Lerner as the new executive director for both organizations. Lerner joined AIVF/FIVF in October after serving as executive director of Atlanta's IMAGE Film and Video Center, a media arts center, since 1989. She succeeds Martha Gever, who left AIVF/FIVF in August in order to pursue a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies at CUNY (City University of New York). Prior to her year-and-a-half tenure as executive director, Gever had served as editor of *The Independent* since 1984.

Ruby Lerner comes to AIVF/FIVF with a solid background in the administration of media and cultural organizations. Prior to her tenure at IMAGE, she was an independent arts consultant for three years; served as executive director of the Atlanta-based Alternate Roots; and was audience development director of New York's Manhattan Theater Club for four years. She received the Paul Robeson Award for arts advocacy in 1991, serves on many advisory boards and panels, and writes and speaks frequently on the arts across the U.S.

In other staff changes, Stephanie Richardson was promoted to the position of membership director, after Anne Douglass left New York City for Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Richardson had acted as AIVF's administrative assistant for the past two years, a position now filled by Anissa Rose, AIVF's former program assistant.

## MINUTES FROM THE AIVF / FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film met in New York City on April 25. In attendance were: Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Dee Davis (vice president), Debra Zimmerman (treasure), Christine Choy, Jim Klein, Lourdes Portillo, James Schamus, Bart Weiss, and Martha Gever (ex officio). Executive director Gever announced her intention to leave AIVF at the end of August. Gever, who is succeeded by Ruby Lerner, is relinquishing her post to pursue a Ph.D. in cultural studies. Kim-Gibson praised Gever for her many years of hard work and service to AIVF.

Gever also reported on the progress of the NEA Advancement Grant received by FIVF this July. The two-year grant is intended to strengthen institutional development of arts organizations through consultations and monetary support. It was announced that Kim-Gibson, Davis, and development director Susan Kennedy would attend an Advancement Grant orientation meeting in August in Washington D.C. on FIVF's behalf. Lillian Jimenez has been selected to facilitate the organization's development of a long-range plan.

Gever advised that AIVF go on-line with Artswire, an electronic bulletin board covering the arts. Artswire provides a means of quickly notifying members of conferences and services as well as disseminating news.

Reports from the AIVF staff were truncated as many staff members were on vacation. Administrative director Kathryn Bowser, *The Independent* staff Pat Thomson and Ellen Levy, and membership director Anne Douglass were all unable to attend the board meeting. Gever announced that Douglass had resigned as membership director. Development director Kennedy announced that, in response to an announcement of new membership categories, AIVF gained its first benefactor, Irwin Young, and two new sponsors, Daniel Edelman and George Stoney.

The proposed recruitment video for the Next Generation project was discussed as part of the Membership Committee's report. A sequel pitch to community groups was also discussed. Schamus suggested the committee sponsor or cosponsor one event per year involving AIVF's regional representatives.

Treasurer Zimmerman provided a financial overview of each program. She urged that each FIVF program be assessed with an eye to possibly restructuring or reducing services and increasing income. The board discussed various options for implementing this.

It was announced that the Donor Advised Fund will be temporarily discontinued.

Davis asked for a resolution to thank Gever for her efforts and encouraged her to stay in touch with the organization.

## WELCOME A BOARD

In September, AIVF members elected five people to the AIVF board of directors. New to the board are media activist Joan Braderman and entertainment attorney W. Wilder Knight II. Incumbents Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Robert Richter, and Christine Choy will be returning. Alternate board members are Jim Klein (first alternate), Helen de Michiel (second alternate), and Skip Blumberg (third alternate).

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to our Bay Area members who received grants from the **Film Arts Foundation**. Kathy Brew, Michelle Handelman, and Marina McDougall were awarded grants for short, experimental works; and Jonathan Robinson and Linda Tadic received grants for the development of new

projects. The **Minneapolis College of Art and Design** honored Judith Yourman with a MCAD/McKnight Foundation Fellowship for work on a multimedia installation. Robby Henson received a **New York Foundation for the Arts** Fellowship in Screenwriting and a Southern Humanities Media Grant for *Blood on the Water: the Life and Death of Bean Short*. And the **National Endowment for the Arts** awarded a major grant to Demetria Royals for *Conjurers*, a series on African American artists.

Kudos to Irit Batsry, whose *A Simple Case of Vision* received the Szellemkep Prize at the **Mediawave Festival** in Gyor, Hungary. Ron Senkowski garnered the top prize for Best American Independent Film for *Let's Kill All the Lawyers* at the **Eighth International Film Festival of Troia, Portugal**. And David Blair's *WAX: or the discovery of television among the bees* shared the Grand Prize at the **Sixth Montbeliard Film and Television Festival**. Congratulations to all!

## FIVF SEMINARS

Upcoming seminars include low-budget production workshops in January and March, and the ever-popular tax workshop in February. Watch for details in *The Independent*.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars, and workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following individuals and businesses:

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## HEAR YE, HEAR YE

AIVF will host an open meeting on Thursday, November 12 at 5 p.m. to develop proposals for public media facilities in the Silver Screen waterfront development on NYC's West Side. We need your input. Call to confirm time & date. (212) 473-3400.

## WHERE, OH, WHERE HAS MY INDEPENDENT GONE?

Due to a computer error, some members' names were inadvertently left off the mailing list in recent months. If you have not received your copy of *The Independent* lately, please notify membership director Stephanie Richardson. (212) 473-3400.

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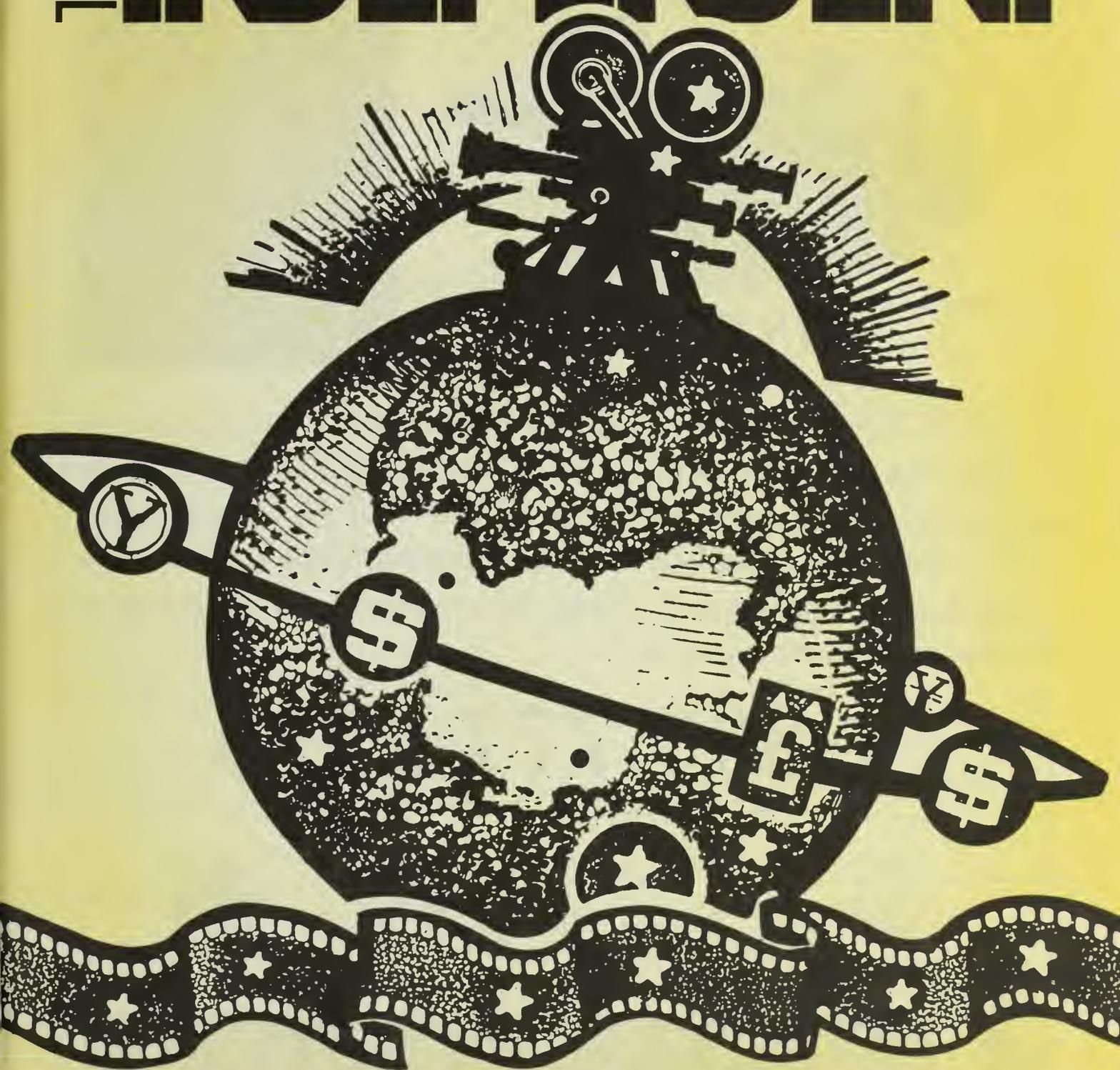
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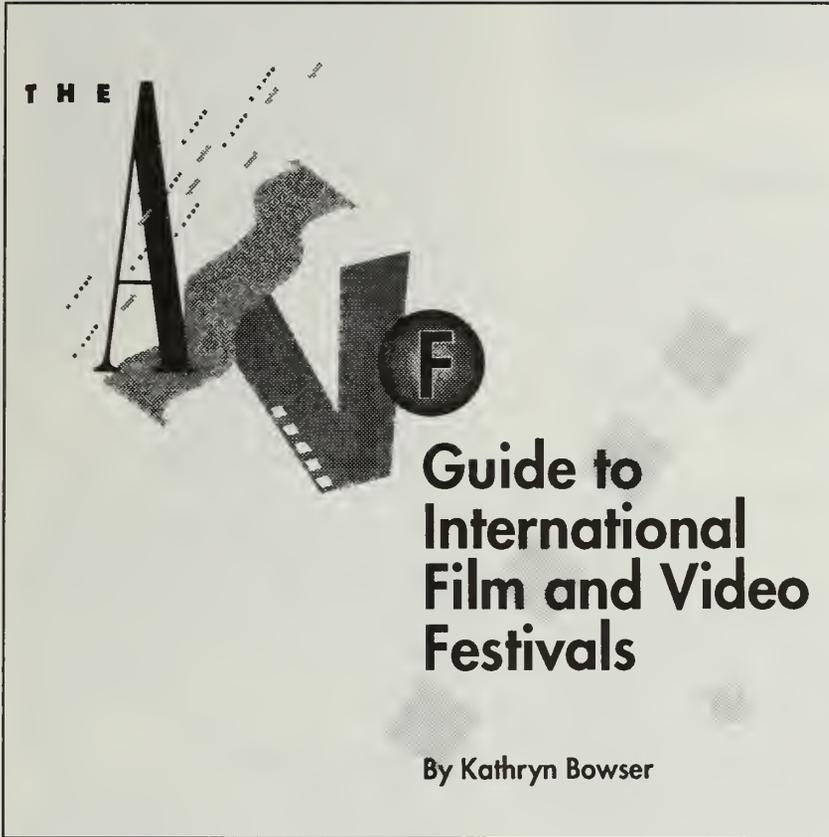
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## PBS AND PROPAGANDA

To the editor:

Having been slandered in print by David Horowitz as a "hardline Marxist propagandist"—a big public lie, since I am not now nor have ever been a Marxist or a propagandist—I was greatly disappointed by your statement of regret in the October 1992 issue.

Rory O'Connor  
president, Globalvision  
New York, NY

## ERRATA

The article "No News Is Bad News: Vanderbilt Television News Archive Faces Closure" [October 1992] stated incorrectly that the archive has ceased making compiled tapes. Compilations are still assembled, but, because of staff cutbacks, it may take the archive longer to complete tape requests.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

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COVER: Foreign sales are becoming increasingly important to video- and filmmakers in covering bottom line costs. This month *The Independent* looks at ways to reach the overseas market. In the feature story, Karen Thorsen reviews the do-it-yourself method of distribution. In accompanying columns, James McBride advises readers on how to find a top-notch foreign sales agent, while Nathalie Magnon guides readers through the thriving Sunny Side of the Doc market in Marseilles and introduces Arte, the new French channel devoted entirely to cultural programming. Cover illustration by Chris Spollen.

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## RISKY BUSINESS

### PBS Links Production Funding to Video Rights

A new Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) policy linking production funding to distribution rights could have a devastating impact on independent producers and distributors. In late August, PBS president Bruce Christensen sent a memo to station and principal independent producers informing them of an "important change in [PBS'] programming contracting practices." Effective fiscal year 1993 (July 1992), the memo announced, PBS began reserving the right to condition production funding on the availability of North American audiovisual and/or home video rights.

For PBS, the decision makes perfect business sense since they want to "invest" in projects and reap the accompanying public acknowledgement and financial rewards. In addition, PBS argues that the distribution rights will result in larger program reach through its distribution outlets: PBS Video, which services the educational market, and PBS Home Video, a commercial joint venture between PBS and Pacific Arts.

But for producers, the policy smacks of coercion. As Tim Gunn, director of National Video Resources, the Rockefeller initiative designed to assist independent media distribution, points out, the policy puts producers "in a vulnerable position, since PBS, with its \$100-million annual production budget, is often one of the few places independents can go for production funding. Producers could be put in a position in which they hand over the rights [to PBS], or they don't produce."

The new policy is just one of several standoffs between independent distributors and PBS in recent years. The conflict first ignited two years ago after PBS denied independent distributors the right to use the PBS logo and name in promoting videotapes aired on public television and prohibited their use of toll-free 800 telephone numbers to promote programs at the end of broadcasts. While these policies frustrated independent distributors' attempts to parlay public television airings into increased sales, the new regulation threatens to cut distributors out of the equation even more by effectively monopolizing video rights to PBS-funded programs.

Although many independents acknowledge PBS' effectiveness as a distributor, PBS Video is not necessarily the best distributor for every project. Some independent productions require more specialized marketing than PBS Video provides. Gunn notes that a producer with a project that appeals to a "specialty market"—like women's issues, experimental/avant garde, or lesbian and

gay—might be better off with a distributor that has a customer base and developed expertise and marketing in that area. In addition, the restrictions could lead to absurd circumstances such as California Newsreel, an independent production and distribution company, being unable to distribute its own works. Independent producers could be forced to break long-standing relationships with distributors.

Larry Edelman, codirector of California Newsreel, calls the policy "predatory trade practices," arguing that "PBS is using an unfair advantage by wrapping up all the rights for shows with PBS funding in them." Edelman also expresses fear that the new policy will further divert public broadcasting from its mandate, and that PBS will make programming decisions based on potential video unit sales rather than diversity of programs. In an October op-ed piece in the public broadcasting trade magazine *Current*, PBS denies that the policy will have any effect on programming decisions, and most distributors seem less concerned with its hypothetical impact on programming than its more certain effect on distribution.

Distribution consultant Debra Franco predicts that some distributors will not survive the long-term consequences. "If PBS controls the *creme de la creme*, then everything else will fall away," she says. "Most distribution companies work on an 80/20 model. Twenty percent of the product brings in 80 percent of the revenue." Surviving independent distributors will carry PBS' "left-overs," works whose primary market is the less lucrative educational market with little or no consumer crossover potential. Ultimately there will be fewer distributors for producers to choose from, and without a competitive market, producers may be forced to settle for lower license fees, despite the fact that PBS says it will match competitive offers received for productions for which they want the rights.

At the moment, it's hard to know how broadly the policy will be implemented. Even PBS admits that it isn't entirely sure. Peter Downey, PBS senior vice president, reports that the policy will not be "uniformly applied." If a producer has already sold home video rights, for example, the program will not automatically be turned away. PBS will not want rights for every project it funds, says Downey, and rights for some projects may prove too expensive or unavailable. As for extending the policy to acquisitions, Downey won't rule it out entirely, although he says it's "very unlikely." PBS is particularly interested in bring-



Will PBS abscond with a national media treasure under their new video rights requirements?

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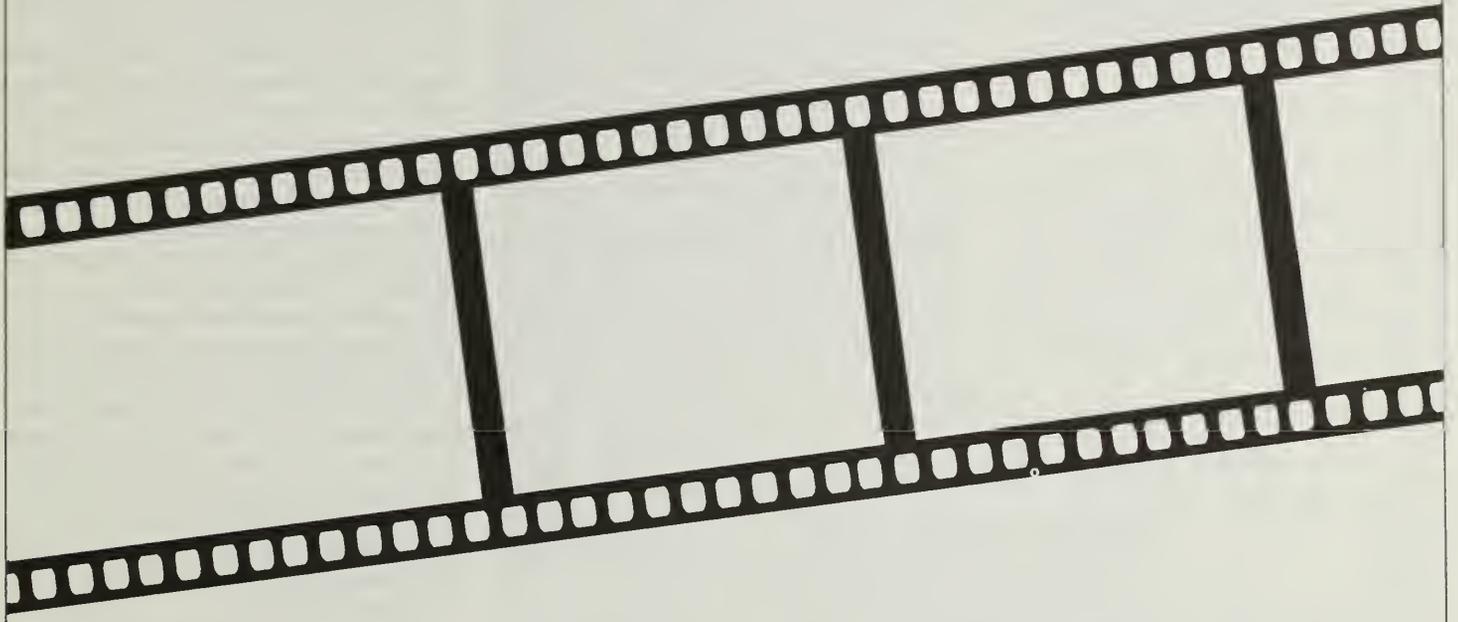
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ing established, on-going series like *Nova* and *Great Performances* under the PBS Video label, although these are not the only productions that will be affected.

Late in September, the Coalition for Public Television Program Access and Diversity, an ad hoc group established to address the new policy, sent a letter to PBS president Bruce Christensen to request a meeting and discuss alternatives to the proposed policy. Coalition members include the International Communications Industries Association, Association for Information Media and Equipment, Independent Media Distributors Alliance, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, and National Alliance of Media Arts Centers. The coalition asserts in its letter that the new policy is "inconsistent with PBS' mandate to support diverse programming." Lewis Paper, the coalition's attorney, argues in the letter that the new policy will "restrain trade" in a manner similar to the circumstances that led the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to impose the financial interest and syndication rules on the networks in 1970, which prevent the networks from profiting by sale of their programs to other markets. The letter also states that the coalition will "seek appropriate relief at the FCC and Congress" if the problem is not satisfactorily resolved. PBS responded to the coalition's letter with a request that a November meeting be arranged. At press time, a date for the meeting had not yet been set.

BARBARA OSBORN

*Barbara Osborn reports on film and television from Los Angeles.*

## PUBLISHER PITCHES NATIONAL ACCESS NETWORK

For the public access community, the proposed National Cable Network (NCN) could seem like a dream come true. Spearheaded by *Cablevision* publisher Jim Dickson, this plan to link access stations by mid-1993 into a nonprofit national access network proposes to solve the distribution problem that has plagued public access since its beginnings in the 1970s. The idea is to provide a national outlet for local programming and offer an alternative to the current practice of sharing tapes by mail, a tedious process that has been largely ineffective.

But if access supporters are beckoned by promises to improve the profile and accessibility of access programming, others fear that NCN could fast become a cable access nightmare. Backed by Daniels Communications, one of the oldest and most powerful players in the cable industry, NCN will rely for funding on local cable operators, who will be asked to contribute an initial \$25,000 to launch the network. The cable operators' annual fee will be based on its total number of subscribers and the financial needs of the network. The fund-

ing strategy has raised questions within the access community and among media watch organizations about placing the control of access in the hands of corporate interests, who have long viewed access as an expensive nuisance. Others worry that NCN programming could displace the local focus of cable access with a less diverse, less controversial, cost-cutting substitute.

According to Dickson, the network would work like this: local producers will submit programs to the network for consideration by NCN staff. An executive board, composed of cable operators, community telecommunications authorities, and public/educational/government (PEG) access/local origination groups will be established to provide direction and assistance in all aspects of the network, including programming. Selected tapes will be organized for retransmission around themes and point/counterpoint. Only programs that aired previously on local access will be eligible. Originally intended to be a 24-hour network, NCN will start by broadcasting eight hours of programming to member stations each week. Programming will be aired directly by local stations, or taped for later broadcast, and will be repeated as often as the access programmer chooses. Once established, the network will provide grant money, of an as yet unspecified amount, to local access producers to create programming for NCN. It has not been determined whether producers will receive royalties for aired programs.

In addition to funding from local cable operators, NCN will need approval from each community's access station in order to operate. So far, Dickson has been diligent about winning support for the network among the access community. He attended the annual meeting of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) this past summer and has been negotiating with NFLCP board members to earn support for the project. In addressing concerns that have arisen within the NFCLP and access community, he has insisted that the network is not designed to replace local access but to enhance it. As Dickson told *The Independent*, "The key to local access is in its localness. We want to provide compelling TV that might fill some of that dark, underutilized time that local access stations might have, providing a national outlet and providing more viewers. NCN can take access to the next step, which is communication at the national level."

The rationale for Dickson's interest is dollars and cents. "Cable needs to improve their image as 'good corporate citizens,'" maintains Dickson. "With competition from DBS [direct broadcast satellite] and wireless and telco services, NCN can further establish cable as the only service that can provide [a] local element to the public, because the other services are not required to deliver the local access that cable does under its franchise agreements. For cable, NCN is a competitive tool to differentiate them from other services."

Others are less optimistic about the network and its potential impact on cable access. Caryn Rogoff, acting executive director of Deep Dish

NCN's plans have raised questions about placing the control of public access in the hands of corporate interests.

TV, the nonprofit cable access network that provides grassroots programming to access stations across the U.S. via satellite, worries that NCN might be a way for the cable industry to develop "controlled programming"—programming that is less diverse and less controversial than what one usually sees on local access. For example, unlike the first-come-first-served policy at local access stations, programming aired on NCN will have content standards. Dickson is rather vague about what the standards will be, but he has said that programming that "may cause divisiveness among communities," including "hate" programming, will not be allowed. "Community standards will be met by the network," explains Dickson. "The operator is paying for this, and they don't want to be associated with programming that features questionable language or nudity or excessive violence or strong sexual content. That doesn't mean that the network won't run programs on topics like AIDS. It means that you don't need full frontal nudity to do it."

Andrew Blau, chair of the NFLCP board, believes that the network could potentially meet the needs of both the access community and the cable industry. "NCN can enhance distribution and visibility of local access to stimulate interest in access and support of the concept of community based communication," says Blau. "But we want to make sure such a service would be complementary rather than a low-cost alternative to access commitments. We want to make sure that NCN doesn't compete for local funding or prompt cable operators looking into renewal to offer cities the national service instead of the full access service or to preclude funding plus new access centers." Blau says that the NFLCP board will consider the project, and if they decide to support NCN, will work with the network to make sure it meets the needs of the access community.

Jeff Chester, codirector of the Center for Media Education, a Washington-based public policy organization devoted to helping fulfill the democratic potential of electronic media, remains skeptical of NCN. "This is a very dangerous offer," says Chester, who cautions the access community to consider the cable industry's "many broken promises" before turning over one of the only forms of public telecommunications available in the U.S. "If access turns over channels to the cable industry, and ultimately to the advertising indus-

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try that controls what goes over the air, they will be violating the spirit of 20 years of hard work that access activists and public interest organizers have done to secure this tiny piece of public space." Chester warns that NCN might be the first step in cable operators' attempt to replace access stations with their own programming, including pay-per-view. "The cable industry is a highly vertical media monopoly that cannot be trusted to provide community programming. Access shouldn't be smothered in its crib because we want a few extra dollars. Not only will programming be homogenized, but people like [those at] Deep Dish will be pushed further into the margins."

Laurie Ouellette

*Laurie Ouellette works with the Institute for Alternative Journalism and writes frequently about media and cultural politics.*

### MANHATTAN CABLE ACCESS NEWLY RECONFIGURED

After 20 years of red tape and fiscal deprivation, Manhattan's public access cable stations have received a badly needed overhaul. On September 28, the Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) officially took over responsibility for the city's public access system, with a projected \$4.7-million capital budget and an additional \$978,000 for operating expenses in its first year. Born of the 1990 renegotiation of Manhattan's cable franchise agreements, MNN represents the successful conclusion of a long-standing battle to shift control of public access from the hands of the cable companies to an independent nonprofit organization devoted solely to the programming, production, and broadcast of Manhattan's public, educational, and governmental (PEG) channels. MNN's stated mission is "to ensure the ability of Manhattan's residents to exercise their First Amendment rights through the medium of cable television."

The first cable franchise agreements in Manhattan, set up in 1970 between the borough of Manhattan and the two cable operators, Sterling Cable and TelePrompTer, were among the country's first to include access provisions. These early agreements, however, required operators only to provide airtime for access programming. Money and facilities to produce access shows were not part of the package, unlike subsequent cable franchise agreements elsewhere. The lack of production facilities left Manhattan's access producers paying stiff fees to independent media centers and commercial studios for equipment rental and studio space. "Paper Tiger TV [a public access production group] would pay almost \$200 for a half hour of studio time," recalls Diana Agosta, coordinator of MNN and author of the *Participate Report*, a 1990 case study by Media Network of public access in New York state.

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cess in the eighties, after a 1979 Supreme Court ruling shifted responsibility for insuring access from the FCC to the cities. This occurred just before the franchise wars started heating up in many cities across the country, when bidding cable operators would promise extravagant access provisions in order to win the city's franchise. But Manhattan's access system was left unchanged and unimproved, since it was bound by the 20-year contract already in place.

In 1990, Manhattan's cable contract came up for renewal. In a historic move, the city refused to renew its contract with the current franchise holders, Time-Warner subsidiaries Paragon and Manhattan Cable. Among the principal reasons were the excessive 20-year length of the franchise term, the lack of provisions for community television stations, and the absence of a plan to increase public access channels. Eventually a deal was struck; both parties agreed to an eight-year franchise term, increased funding for public access centers, and more access channels. Out of this agreement MNN was born.

To counter the neglect endured by Manhattan access, MNN is employing a strong outreach component as its primary tool. "If the idea of public access as 'the First Amendment in electronic media' is to work, it has to be made known to the people," says Victor Sanchez, MNN director of Outreach and Education. The need to "diversify the face of access" is also a priority for Sanchez because many facets of Manhattan's communities, particularly poorer ones, have been excluded from participating in access. To incorporate these potential producers, MNN has started multilingual workshops to train Manhattan community organizations in the basics of videotape production on Hi8 equipment.

Sanchez began to make headway this summer with training workshops at the Children's Art Carnival in Harlem and Downtown Community Television (DCTV) in Chinatown. He hopes to involve both groups in the production of public service announcements and video postcards to be shown between programming. To increase community participation, MNN plans to offer low- to no-cost use of portable video equipment.

Another innovative feature of MNN's outreach program is the Annual Revolving Grant Fund. According to the 1992 guidelines, MNN annually administers \$250,000 in grants to non-profit organizations to develop satellite sites at which television production training, space, and

equipment will be provided for the public. Organizations can receive up to \$25,000. "The goal of these grants is to support a broad range of community-based programming produced by people who may never before have had access to television production or distribution," says Alex Quinn, executive director of MNN. The first grants will be awarded in early 1993 and "will enable MNN to provide direct financial support to organizations interested in becoming sites for public access," says Quinn.

MNN plans to bring New York access up to date within the next year. Proposed plans include the addition of two more channels on each franchise by December 1992 for a total of four per franchise; highly structured programming and scheduling, stricter policy guidelines for producers, and better quality picture and sound transmission. Yet there is still room for change and growth. According to Agosta, people "need to know that nothing is formed in stone and...they can have a voice in how MNN works."

THANDEKILE SHANGE

*Thandekile Shange is a writer living in New York City.*

## GERMANY'S FAB NEW STATION

The idea for Fernsehen aus Berlin (FAB), a collectively owned independent broadcasting service in Berlin, was born late one night in 1990 when five independent television producers happened to meet in a bar after work. Frustrated by their inability to produce the films they really wanted to make for Berlin's existing television stations, they fantasized about creating their own network. As it happened, their meeting took place on the eve of the collapse of East Berlin's Deutscher Fernsehfunk (DFF), the principal East German television network, and what started as a pipe dream became a reality with remarkable speed. FAB took over the frequency freed up by DFF's demise and received its cable license within six months of applying for the channel.

This experiment in alternative television, unparalleled in Europe, is now in its second year of broadcasting. Serving the residents of Berlin with regional information and news, innovative magazine format shows, documentaries, and experimental video, FAB has become Berlin's fifth largest station. "People can't believe we are still functioning," says Paul Stutenbaeumer, chair of the executive committee, "and we don't know either why we have been so successful."

One of the keys to FAB's success is its mix of innovative and more commercially viable programming. FAB's regular programs cover topics as diverse as music, dating, fashion, contemporary cinema, ecology, women's issues, and technology. *Zeitzeugen*, for example, a program under the direction of documentarian Thomas Grimm, features conversations with contemporary personalities in politics, literature, art, sci-

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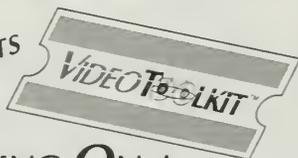
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FAB has become Berlin's fifth largest station. "People can't believe we are still functioning."

ence, and philosophy which reveal "what of history has remained in the heads of its participants." *Lesbisch* presents the diversity of lesbian culture and often includes pieces from foreign contributors. *Special Edition*, hosted by journalist Tom Cuson, is Berlin's English-language magazine, combining cabaret, music, poetry, and theater with interviews, controversial discussions, and political analysis.

The station is governed by 41 producer/shareholders, each of whom has a 5000 DM (approximately \$3,400) share in the enterprise. Shareholders are responsible for filling one program slot on a regular basis. Dividing their time between FAB productions and income-producing work, shareholders use their own studios or their employer's production facilities to produce programming. In this way, FAB's operating costs are kept low. The paid staff is small, and FAB owns very little equipment.

FAB aired its first program on February 1, 1991, and has been broadcasting 24 hours a day ever since. Each day, FAB broadcasts three hours of new programming in a continuous loop for 24 hours. This rotation principle allows FAB programs to reach various target audiences at different times of day, a principle that FAB uses to its advantage in attracting advertisers. In fact, FAB's monthly cable and personnel budget of 120,000 DM (approximately \$83,000) is financed almost entirely through advertising revenues. Currently two to three minutes of commercials are shown at the end of every hour of programming. Stutenbaeumer would like to see this increase to six minutes per hour, but no more, to enable FAB to pay producers more for their programs.

The idea of funding an alternative programming service through advertising seems truly remarkable, particularly when compared to commercial and even public stations' resistance to comparable programming in the U.S. Stutenbaeumer admits that in the beginning FAB had difficulty finding an advertising agency willing to work with the station. Even now, despite FAB's undisputed commercial success, some companies refuse to buy advertising time as long as the homosexual magazine show *ANDERSrum* continues to air. Advertising revenues are distributed according to a formula determined by the total number of programming hours, not the commercial success or viewership of individual shows. Thus popular entertainment shows—such as the hit *Partnerwahl* (*Partner Choice*), from which at

least 28 marriages are known to have resulted—help to support programs on the cutting edge.

An unexpected side effect of FAB's success, says Stutenbaeumer, is that it is actually exerting influence over other stations' programming decisions. FAB's ability to capture 15 percent of Berlin's potential viewers is only slightly behind the average of 18 to 20 percent for more established German stations such as ARD or ZDF. After FAB has broadcast an experimental work, other stations sometimes become interested and call up to inquire about obtaining the rights. And, adds Stutenbaeumer, commercial German stations are beginning to realize that there is an audience for this work at primetime instead of midnight.

Now in its second year of programming, FAB reaches approximately 200,000 of the 1.38-million cable households in East and West Berlin, according to a statistical analysis conducted in March 1992. Although FAB hopes in the future to acquire the technical capability of reaching many more viewers outside of Berlin, its geographic limitation also has some advantages. "A local phone call just costs 20 Pfennig," points out Stutenbaeumer, "and many viewers call or write in response to our programming, or even just drop by."

Stutenbaeumer would like to see FAB develop into a nationwide German television service with the possibility of an international exchange of programming. In the meantime, he encourages U.S. independents to submit their films to FAB for broadcast consideration. Work accepted for broadcast will be aired only once, and all rights are retained by the producer. As of August 1, 1992, FAB is able to pay 30 DM (approximately \$21) per broadcast minute.

There are no written submission guidelines or deadlines. However, independents are advised to consult the list of current FAB programs and editors' contact addresses (available from AIVF) before submitting works to ascertain the full range of FAB's programming interests. Only short films will be considered, as programs run 25 to 55 minutes in length. A 1/2" VHS preview cassette, with accompanying list of all musical works, should be sent to the appropriate program editor or to Ernst Meyer, Vorstand, FAB, Nollendorfplatz 5, 1000 Berlin 30, Germany.

DEBORAH LEFKOWITZ

*Deborah Lefkowitz is an independent filmmaker and a member of this year's international jury for the Leipzig International Festival for Documentary and Animation Films.*

## ITVS ANNOUNCES OPEN CALL WINNERS

In its second annual Open Call to independent film- and videomakers for innovative product, the Independent Television Service (ITVS) received more than 2,000 proposals from 50 states and

commonwealths. The result? Twelve new television projects, including three childrens' programs and nine shows for general audiences. According to an ITVS spokesperson, the organization received grant requests ranging from \$45,000 to \$304,118 and allotted \$2.5-million in funding for the 12 projects.

The recipients of grants for childrens' programming are *Zero Street* (Daniel Bergin, writer/director, Minneapolis, MN); *The Wilson Sisters Circus* (Diana Ritter, writer/director and Michael J. Sudyn, producer/editor, New York City); and *Fabletown* (Paul Tassie, writer/director from San Pedro, CA).

Recipients for dramas, narratives, and documentaries are: *Struggles in Steel—A Visual History of African American Steel Workers* (Anthony Buba, codirector, Braddock, PA, and Raymond Henderson, codirector, Forest Hills, PA); *Coming Out Under Fire* (Arthur Dong, producer/writer/director, Los Angeles, and Allan Bérubé, coproducer/writer/historical consultant, San Francisco, CA); *A Fool Uttereth All His Mind* (Bill Golfus, coproducer/codirector, Minneapolis, MN, and David E. Simpson, coproducer/codirector, Chicago, IL); *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde* (Ada Gay Griffin, producer, New York City, and Michelle Parkerson, director, Washington, D.C.); *Moscow: X* (Ken Kobland, writer/director, New York City); *The Life and Death of Tio Oscar* (Lourdes Portillo, director, San Francisco); *She Lives to Ride* (Alice Stone, director, Boston, MA); *What Happened to Her?* *And the Strawberry Fields* (Rea Tajiri, cowriter/director, Brooklyn, NY, and Kerri Sakamoto, cowriter, New York City); and *Stone Columbus and the Santa Maria Casino* (Gerald Vizenor, screenwriter, Los Angeles, Victor Nunez, director, Tallahassee, FL, Elliot Lewitt, producer, Berkley, CA, and Robert Silberman, screenwriter/associate producer, Minneapolis, MN).

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; a federal agency; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund; the Rockefeller Foundation; and the Consolidated Edison Company of New York.

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## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

### Marseille's Sunny Side of the Doc Market

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 NATHALIE MAGNAN
 

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Now in its third year, Sunny Side of the Doc has grown to be *the* European market for documentaries, including independent productions. The market takes place each June in Marseille on the French Riviera alongside a documentary festival called *Vue sur les docs*.

Sunny Side is not so much a forum for the debate of ideas, as are some European festivals, but rather a very technical and efficient business meeting. Personal interaction is the main activity; the market is primarily about networking and setting up potential deals (although most of the

premiere in 1990, the market has grown at a rapid pace. The initial event attracted 660 participants. This year in Marseille there were 1,364 professionals from 30 different countries, 135 international buyers, 219 production companies, and 53 TV channels represented.

Held over the course of four days, Sunny Side is set in tents situated in front of a nineteenth century palace built by Napoleon III. The tents overlook both the harbor and the Marseille Bay. Buyers meander from booth to booth, while daily discussion groups on documentary's role in the

Klaus Wenger, responsible for documentaries at Arte, speaks with a festival attendee at Sunny Side of the Doc.

Photo: Bruna Decaux



deals finalized there were initiated well in advance).

One of Sunny Side's cofounders is Yves Janneau, who also runs a prominent documentary company, Les Film D'ici, which is behind such landmark work as Robert Kramer's *Route One*. In 1989, Janneau decided to launch a documentary film festival together with the current organizers of Sunny Side, Olivier Masson and Brigitte Rubio. After their first effort, held in Lyon, it soon became clear to the organizers that the festival should include a documentary market. Since its

changing TV market take place in the palace. The ornate palace also serves as the site of numerous cocktail parties and a center of social interaction.

One of the most efficient tools at this year's market was *The International Guide of Documentary Buyers*. This guide profiles more than 650 buyers working with TV channels, plus the institutions that acquire documentaries in Europe, Canada, the U.S., and Australia. In addition to contact information, it lists the average price paid per minute, the program themes, plus program titles, lengths, and formats. This very desirable



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Since one of Sunny Side's objectives is to encourage coproductions, next year there will be a new office of coproduction set up during the market.

untitled, replaces the old "bande a lumiere," an association that included both directors and producers (whom, it was felt, didn't share the same agendas or needs). The producers have already regrouped and formed the new Syndicat des producteurs de programmes audiovisuels, which is more oriented toward the financial than creative aspects of production.\*

Since one of Sunny Side's objectives is to encourage coproductions, next year there will be a new office of coproduction set up during the market. Producers looking for coproduction opportunities will provide this office with a package of information on the project well in advance of the market. Then this information will be sent to all registered buyers and TV programmers a month before the market begins. This new coproduction bureau could turn out to be an extremely useful tool, since producers normally get the most out of a market when the groundwork is laid in advance. Plus, as Sunny Side reflects, the strategy for independents parallels that of TV systems like Britain's BBC, Japan's NHK, Belgium's RTBF, and Switzerland's RTSR, which is to manage difficult economic times for documentary production through international coproduction.

The next Sunny Side market is scheduled for June 17-20, 1993. For further information contact: Sunny Side, Doc Services, 3, Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseille, France; tel: (33) 91 08 43 15; fax: (33) 91 84 38 34. For the festival, contact: Vue sur les Docs, A.B.C.D., 3, Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseille, France; tel: (33) 91 84 40 17; fax: (33) 91 84 38 34.

*Nathalie Magnan is a freelance writer and videomaker living in Paris.*

\* For more information, contact: S2PA, 38 rue de Moscou, 75008, Paris; tel: (33 1) 42 93 79 01; fax: (33 1) 42 93 29 04.

## EUROPANACHE: THE NEW ARTE CHANNEL

Arte, the new Franco-German TV broadcast channel, has a cultural mission. As Europe builds itself up both financially and politically, many view the very ambitious European TV project as the cultural component of the European Community's drive towards unification. Unlike any channel before it, Arte is a collaboration between channels from two nations—France's La Sept and Germany's ZDF and ARD—and is financed equally by both partners. Arte began broadcasting this year from 7 p.m. to midnight in the slot formerly occupied by France's defunct private channel La Cinq and on cable in Germany and Belgium. Belgium will begin contributing programming in January. Austria and Switzerland have also expressed interest in joining the endeavor to make Arte the European television system.

Arte's mission is to bring culture to prime-time. The dream is to invent a new TV, and a new chief programmer, Alain Malval, was hired in August to oversee the channel's fine-tuning. Arte wants to be an anti-zapping channel that demands a lot from the spectator without being elitist. Its motto—"Let yourself be disturbed by Arte"—says a good deal about its programming ideology. Its most original concept is to dedicate an entire evening to one theme. Mix-

ing documentaries and fiction, interviews and video clips, an evening's programs will range from poetic musings on the theme of "the moon" to more serious subjects, like the concept of "work."

Documentaries are privileged on the channel, as they kick off every evening except Sunday. Thirty percent of Arte's programs will be documentaries; 40 percent of these will be non-European. Each day is organized by theme: Monday is science and technology; Tuesday is history; Wednesday is man and the land; Thursday is societal issues; Friday is art and culture; and Saturday is the star show of La Sept, *Histoire Parallele*. This series in particular highlights the politics of Arte's programming, which play with the contradictions that different national perspectives can bring. In *Histoire Parallele*, host and historian Marc Ferro screens WWII newsreels from different countries that played the same day during the war. These are followed by two historians debating their similarities and differences, as well as the conflicts between what is represented and what is real.

The challenges Arte faces are great—logistically, politically, and financially. The government already has difficulty financing its two national channels, Antenne 2 and FR-3, renamed France 2 and France 3 this fall. Its continued



support of Arte may hinge on the elections in the spring of 1993. The Socialists, who have been in power for 10 years, have always had audio-visual projects. But they may well lose a majority of seats in the spring. Such a defeat may portend the loss of all government financing for Arte. Even as Arte continues to garner the support of other European broadcasters, its financial future is anything but secure.

For further information, contact: Klaus Wenger, documentary programming, Arte, 2a rue de la Fonderie, 67080 Strasbourg Cedex, France; tel: (33) 88 56 78 00.

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## GET SMART

## How Foreign Sales Agents Can Work for You

JAMES MCBRIDE

Foreign sales, especially to television, have become a vital revenue source for U.S. producers in the last few years. The rise of private TV, the expansion of cable and satellite distribution, and the dollar's drop against other major currencies have all contributed to a heightened demand for American product. For many independent producers, a key conduit to profitability abroad is the foreign sales agent. Unfortunately, many film- and videomakers don't have the slightest idea what these agents do or why they are important in today's marketplace.



Whit Stillman, foreign sales agent-turned-filmmaker (*Metropolitan*), recommends offering agents generous commissions because, "It's better to have 70 percent of something than 100 percent of nothing."

Courtesy filmmaker

"Foreign sales agents' roles are fairly specific," says producer James Schamus, who, with partner Ted Hope and their company Good Machine, has produced a number of successful features, including Todd Haynes' *Poison* and Jan Oxenberg's *Thank You and Good Night* and associate produced Alexander Rockwell's *In the Soup*. "They are people who know how to deal with other people in various countries and get deals done and sold. You hand the sales rights over to a sales agent, and they go out and try to sell it—taking their share off the top, plus expenses."

Despite the seemingly straightforward nature of film sales, the task of moving foreign product in different territories is complex and demanding. "You have to know the culture, how things are released, what kind of numbers they've gotten for other American independents, who's honest, who's

not, who pays overages, and what contracts look like," explains Schamus. "The fact is, nobody can guarantee what a film will do in any given territory. And it's the filmmaker's job to know what kind of deals are out there already." The sad reality is that many filmmakers don't take the time to find out. "Filmmakers need to do their homework and educate themselves on the finer points of marketing," says Gerhard Kleindl, president of Meridian Entertainment Corporation, a New York City-based production and foreign sales entity. "The biggest misconception filmmakers have is that their work will be shown in theaters around the world," he continues. "It hasn't been like that for many years. I see films that are an hour long and people expect them to be shown in a movie theater. It just doesn't happen."

Kleindl emphasizes that the current market for independents is in television. Accordingly, there are a few things producers can do, both technically and artistically, to increase their chances of making money overseas in this medium. "I advise filmmakers not to do a lot of transfers, blow anything up, or spend a lot of money until there are sales," Kleindl says. "If something is the wrong length, it will be very hard to sell. I've had people come to me and want to sell an eight-minute short on percentages. No way. As far as content, many filmmakers feel compelled to make stories about love, God, and the rest of the world, and the idea of making something that is going to entertain is the farthest thing from their minds. You can't tell someone how to make their vision, but it always helps if there is some degree of commerciality in a project."

So just what does a foreign sales rep do? "The distinction between foreign sales agent, distributor, and producer's rep is always difficult [to make]," says Nancy Walzog, vice president of Tapestry International, a full-service production and distribution company specializing in television. "And with the business being the way it is, with presales, etc., it is becoming even more blurred because everybody has to do everything anyway."

Walgog says her company targets about 500 different outlets worldwide but has less than 100 regular buyers. "Tapestry works a lot with first time filmmakers," she says. "It is always important to get clear up front what everyone's expectations are. We have a personal approach for the producer, but we also have that for the buyer, too. We show as an exhibitor at all the major TV markets, such as MIPCOM, Berlin, London, Monte

Carlo, and Cannes, and we try to get a handle on what our clients' new time slots are and how their schedules have changed. Buyers now want some continuity of scheduling, and they're not check-boarding schedules like they used to."

What this means for independents is the market for single programs is getting increasingly difficult. "Programmers go with what gets ratings and audiences. Timing is very important," Walzog continues. "We have tried to package things of a similar theme or length so it becomes a more manageable prospect for the buyer. We usually know pretty quickly after going to one or two markets whether a film is going to sell. Often a film can be of excellent quality, but just isn't working for various reasons. We are too small to hold on to things in our library for very long. Single dramas are very evergreen and can go on for five or six years making sales. Social issue documentaries are more timely. It's really a matter of waiting for time slots."

Once a work has been sold, the financial arrangements with foreign buyers can vary greatly, depending on the territory and the film. Many agents prefer straight, flat-rate buyouts because it is so difficult to check up on buyers' books. Also, in some areas theatrical distributors know they will lose money, so they insist on acting as the agent for sales to television and video. In such cases, the sales are still funnelled through the original agent. Many of those distributors will cross-collateralize, which means if they lose money on a theatrical release, they get to take money from TV and video to compensate.

In the UK, Japan, and some of the larger countries, there is often room for negotiation if the piece is sought after or it has some specific relevance to that audience. In smaller countries, there may be only one station—and many of those are government run. In these situations, producers have less leverage and are often at the buyer's mercy. That's why developing a good relationship with an agent who regularly services these accounts *and* looks out for the producer's interests is so important.

So how do you pick an agent? Many agents and experienced producers suggest talking to other filmmakers and asking about their experiences. There is no one list or association for foreign sales agents. But one can begin to gather names from several sources: agents who attend the annual Independent Feature Film Market are listed in the market catalog; others are included in the *AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors*; and some are members of the American Film Marketing Association, a Los Angeles-based group with 114 members.

"It is crucial that filmmakers feel comfortable with the person they are dealing with," says David Van Taylor, whose *Dream Deceivers* is being handled by Tapestry. "It is also good to be geographically close to your agent. I talked to other filmmakers and distributors to make sure I wasn't getting into bed with the wrong people. This is my first documentary, and my advice to people start-

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Fans with the lead singer of the heavy metal group Judas Priest, whose trial was the subject of David Van Taylor's first documentary, *Dream Deceivers*. Van Taylor advises filmmakers to select agents who are geographically close.

Courtesy Tapestry International

ing out is to expect that everybody will turn you down. If you've got a really hot property, then you can ask for an advance or guarantee. That gives them a real kick in the pants to sell it. But if there isn't competition for your product, you have to adjust your expectations." Van Taylor concludes, "Even when you have a distributor, you have to work hard. If you get good reviews, you've got to bring it to their attention. If you hear about leads, you've got to follow up on those, too."

When evaluating an agent, producers should look into what other kinds of films he or she is representing. "It's good to have your film in with similar films," says Whit Stillman, who was a foreign sales agent before becoming a filmmaker and directing the highly successful feature *Metro-politan*. "People come to certain agents and reps looking for those films. But I would also be careful about which festivals one enters," he continues. "Know who's going to be seeing your film at these places because you might ruin your eligibility at another. Sundance, Telluride, New Directors, and the New York Film Festival are good. Most foreign markets consider these American markets, and it doesn't ruin eligibility."

Filmmakers also need to be sensitive to how their work will be presented at different venues. "Having your film in a number of film festivals does not necessarily translate into having your film in theaters around the world," says Alexander Kogan, president of Films Around the World, a New York-based agent. "Film festival audiences bend over backwards to enjoy films, but they are a small percentage of the audience. Very few buyers will screen an entire movie on video at a market. So what they tend to do is look at trailers and promos."

Producers must be aware that they will be responsible for providing their sales agents with various materials, such as preview cassettes, master tape, production stills, press kits, and all the other items that go into the marketing effort. Many agents will arrange for these details and, of course, deduct them from earnings. Again, this is an area where it pays to organize oneself during preproduction, or even during the writing stage. "It is very easy to create a promo while your editing a film," says Kogan. "The editing suite is already paid for and everything is there. If you have to go back and create a promo, it will be unnecessarily expensive. Very few filmmakers think about these simple things. But they can enhance the marketability of a film and allow creative control over these promotional materials."

Controlling the destiny of a project should be of



paramount concern to any filmmaker. Among the key points to consider when dealing with foreign sales agents are: how many years are you handing over the rights? (One to 12 years seems to be the norm.) What kind of expenses will the agent be deducting? Will they need to travel to promote the film, produce advertising, have office expenses, make prints, etc.? Try to sign contracts that carefully lay out what the expenses are, and negotiate the ability to approve expenditures that go over certain amounts in certain categories.

Producers also need to know what percentage agents are going to take from the gross. It can be from 10 to 50 percent, although the 25 to 35 percent range is fairly standard. Sometimes there will be different percentages for different markets. It all depends on when the agents come into the picture, how much you need them, and how much they need you.

Other things that should be straight from the beginning concern delivery items: Are you selling ownership of the print or videotape? Are you selling them the rights to TV transmission? Who's going to pay for that transfer, especially if it's to PAL? How is the accounting taken care of, and how explicit is that accounting? How does the agent collect from buyers, and when do you get paid? Publicity, posters, shipping, customs charges—all of these things should be hammered out before any deal is signed.

Then again, producers can always go out and do foreign sales themselves [see "Foreign Sales: Doing it Yourself," pp. 20-24]. But many producers are less than sanguine about the do-it-yourself approach. "A lot of people decide they don't need a sales agent, they can do it themselves, or it's too expensive. That's a real mistake," says Stillman. "They should get the best person for that film. Someone who has a realistic attitude about what it can do. I advise people that whatever sales commission it takes to sell a film is what it takes. I would be generous with the commission, but get caps on expenses," he concludes. "It is much better to have 70 percent of something than 100 percent of nothing."

*James McBride is freelance writer and film/video producer based in New York City.*

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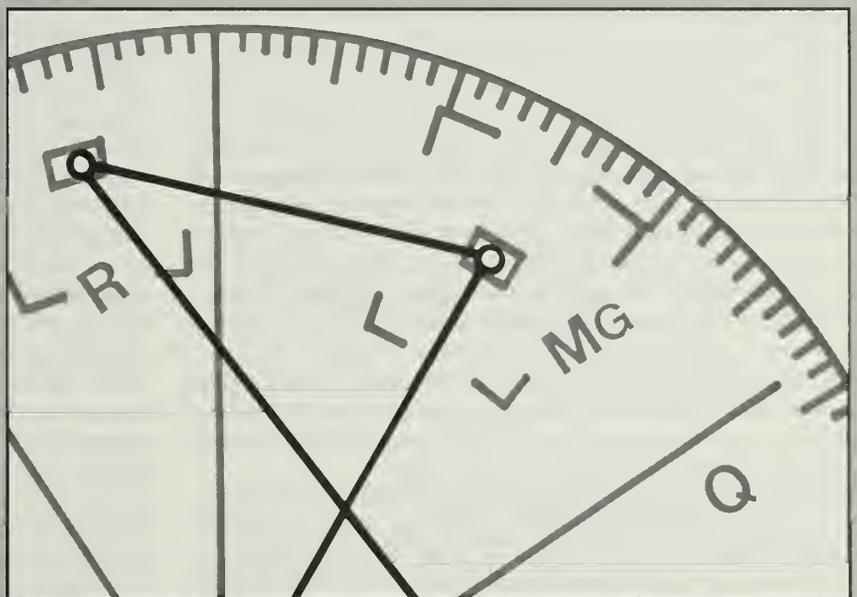
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# Foreign Sales DOING IT YOURSELF

KAREN THORSEN

When our feature-length documentary film *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket* was completed in 1989, coproducer/cowriter Douglas Dempsey and I decided that the only way to pay off our debts was to handle foreign distribution ourselves. Since then, we've been to over two dozen film festivals in 15 countries. We've crossed the Atlantic 12 times and the Pacific six. We were in Berlin when the Wall came down, in Istanbul while the Middle East crisis heated up, and in Japan at the height of U.S. Japan-bashing.

Are we glad we did it? Without question, yes. We made a lot more money than if someone else had done it for us; we literally "saw the world"; and we now know the name of every documentary buyer on the festival circuit—a real plus when fundraising for our next production.

Why is the foreign market so important? Mainly because the U.S. dollar just isn't enough anymore. Production costs keep rising, while U.S. government grants, corporate funding, private donations, and even production loans keep shrinking. Without additional funds from abroad, many independent films can't even get made, let alone make a profit.

Despite the worldwide economic slump, foreign money *is* still available for some U.S. productions—in the form of either coproduction funding, pre-sales, or, most common these days, territorial sales of distribution rights once the film is completed. This money is there largely because foreign audiences are still fascinated by most things American and because the number of foreign TV stations, cable networks, and satellite broadcasts are still increasing, thus creating a massive need for media product.

Which films or videos qualify as suitable product? A foreign sale usually

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When approaching foreign buyers with their documentary *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, coproducers Karen Thorsen and Douglas Dempsey tailored their approach to suit individual countries.

Courtesy filmmakers

depends on six determining factors: (1) The person you've chosen to make the sale; (2) the kind of film or video you're trying to sell; (3) the festivals that have screened your work; (4) the country you're trying to sell to; (5) the release format you've chosen for that particular country; and (6) the effort you put into your sales pitch. If you want to sell your film or video overseas, try using these six points as the backbone of your distribution game plan.

## Select the best sales person.

Some filmmakers choose to sell to the foreign market themselves; others can't imagine a more horrible task and assign this to a foreign sales agent [see "Get Smart: How Foreign Sales Agents Can Work for You," on p. 16].

How could anyone who has survived postproduction want to take on the long task of shepherding the film through a labyrinth of festivals, buyers, contracts, and shippers when he or she could be making another film? The answer depends on the filmmaker and is, in fact, an extremely personal choice. Certain filmmakers actually relish the change of pace, the chance to travel, the rewards of public attention, and—finally!—income. A few others do it as a one-time experience for the chance to make contacts with potential funders or to learn another side of the business. A small number do it because they can't find an agent. But these groups are still a minority. Most filmmakers wind up assigning their distribution rights to an international agent. Some choose an agent because they don't have time to sell the film themselves; others because they don't like "the business"; and still others because they don't know self-distribution is possible. If you're still debating which way to go, the following guidelines may help you decide.

Selling to **foreign television** is the easiest phase of foreign distribution. This is because there are usually only one or two networks per country; it's easy to learn the name and phone number of the appropriate buyer; prices vary only slightly, so negotiation is simple; most contracts have relatively similar wording; closing the deal, getting paid, and shipping are a one-time-only activity; there's no need to attend to local publicity; and the money earned is certainly worth the effort. If you think your film or video will appeal to these buyers, then self-distribution is certainly possible. If you'd rather sign with an agent, remember that in exchange for their efforts, they get a substantial piece of what could be your most lucrative pie.

Foreign distribution of a **theatrical, nontheatrical, or home video release** is much more complex than selling to TV. Why? All three of these markets vary from country to country; venues frequently change owners, bookers, and even film preferences, from, say, "art films" to Hollywood product; booking and shipping is a non-stop activity; contracts vary from formal to informal; local publicity demands someone with local knowledge; the amount earned per booking is usually small change; checking the books from afar is next to impossible. Such sales *can* be handled by an individual filmmaker, but it's hard work and payments come slowly. On the other hand, if you assign any or all of these rights to an international agent, be forewarned: whatever profits exist may well have to be shared with a number of people because agents aren't likely to handle local bookings themselves. They'll probably sell the rights you give them to one or more sub-distributors who specialize in your type of release—who, in turn, may well resell them to a variety of local distributors.

There is a third option: **international self-distribution/national sub-distribution**. Basically, this means that you do the simplest deals yourself



(i.e., TV sales) and assign the more specialized tasks to specific sub-distributors within each country. This does take some effort, of course—but if you have time and energy, it's the surest way to maximize your returns. First, the percentage that usually goes to an international agent (anywhere from 15 to 35 percent of each sale plus certain expenses) can now go to you. Second, all those "little sales" that many agents consider too small to pursue can now be pursued by you, hopefully creating additional earnings. Third, if you really have your heart in the effort, you may earn just a bit more from each individual sale—simply because you can pour more time and emotion into the sale of your single film than any agent with a full portfolio.

We chose this third approach for our film *James Baldwin*. We handled foreign TV sales ourselves, then assigned whatever foreign theatrical and nontheatrical rights we could to a selection of sub-distributors on a per-country basis. How did we know whom to choose? Word-of-mouth on the film festival circuit, mixed with gut instinct—plus the best clue of all: the amount of advance that was being offered. In our experience, a bigger advance against future returns is almost always better than a bigger percentage of actual earnings. First, because an advance means money *now*, and second, because a percentage of nothing is nothing. (Unfortunately, with both theatrical and nontheatrical releases, foreign sub-distributors' expenses all too often exceed the hoped-for profits.) Did this approach work? To a large degree, yes: within two years of the film's completion, we sold theatrical rights in six countries, broadcast rights in nine countries, and nontheatrical rights in eight countries. As for home video, we have yet to make those rights available, simply because the other markets are not yet exhausted.

### Analyze your film.

Fiction, documentary, experimental, comedy, horror, thriller, animation, short.... You may want to avoid traditional labels, but remember buyers love anything that helps them assess a film with one glance. Give them a slick presentation, a couple of labels, a quick hint of contents—and a list of good reasons why *their* particular audience would want to see your film above all others. (Remember: these reasons can vary from country to country.) Naturally, it's always hard to predict the sudden twists and turns of what's hot, what's not—but even so, there are a few basic guidelines.

**Language.** If you've made a fiction film, your distribution chances improve when your film has more action than words. If you've made a

documentary, you'll do far better with a music film than with anything that is word-heavy. If your film does have a lot of talk, try screening it without its sound-track. Do the images tell a story, even if grossly simplified? Now screen your film with your music tracks only. Does the music telegraph plot and mood changes? If you think foreign audiences will be able to tune out the subtitles while your music and visuals tell the tale, you've overcome one of the biggest obstacles between you and overseas distribution.

**Relevance.** Is your film too American?

How universal will it appear overseas? Will a foreign audience identify with your characters or care about the dilemmas they face? Is the subject matter something they're already familiar with, or have you made it "accessible" by providing some kind of explanatory context? Without a few well-planted clues, foreign viewers may lose interest fast. Also beware of films based on a current event. By the time such films reach the foreign market, they may be old news—unless couched within a wider context.

**Length.** "Feature-length" means different things to different markets. For theatrical releases, anything close to 90 minutes usually works. For television broadcasts, it gets stickier: fiction films just under 90 minutes can find slots fairly easily, but documentaries do better if they're just under 60 (or even just under 45, as is currently required in Switzerland and Japan). Why are docs so short-changed? Outside of the most enlightened countries, most TV programmers don't think their viewers' attention spans can stand a large dose of nonfiction. Why the phrase "just under"? Even if they don't show commercials, most TV programmers need time for their opening and closing I.D., or "sandwich." As for sales to the nontheatrical/educational market, shorter lengths are also recommended simply because schools rarely have classes that last 90 minutes.

Sometimes films can defy some rules if they satisfy others. In the case of *Baldwin*, we had an overly long (87 min.), excessively verbal documentary—since Baldwin was, after all, best known as a writer, preacher, and public speaker. Did these weak points keep us from trying for sales overseas? No way! We simply approached foreign buyers with our emphasis on more positive, more "international" aspects. For example:

- James Baldwin was and still is an international figure: a world-famous writer whose works have been translated into 28 languages.
- *Baldwin* is more than a literary analysis. Produced immediately after Baldwin's death, it provides an overview of his whole life—not just the life of a writer, but the life of an African American.
- The film is also worthy because of its historical context, which examines American racism from the 1920s through the 1980s, with an emphasis on the turbulent 1960s, the height of the civil rights struggle.
- Even the production is international. Funded by the U.S., Great Britain, France, and Japan, it was shot on three continents and includes archival materials from over a dozen countries.

Did our international sales pitch convince foreign buyers? To a large degree, yes: *Baldwin* sold very well. We do have to confess, however, that

If competitive buyers exist in a particular country, meet with as many as possible, and be sure to let the others know.

our initial refusal to re-edit the film down to a shorter, more salable version has softened. We're currently negotiating with the few "hold-out" countries who haven't yet bought *Baldwin's* broadcast rights for reasons of length, trying to get them to share in the cost of our re-edit.

The moral of the story: some rules can be defied in some countries; others can't. Every film will result in a slightly different approach and outcome.

### ***Pick the right festivals.***

The film festival circuit is one of the best sales tools available for selling your work abroad. Most films use a series of carefully selected festivals as the springboard to further distribution. How do you know which festivals are right for you? And if you can attend, what should you do once you get there?

*When choosing a festival for your premiere, prestige matters most.* Although opinions do vary, in our experience the two most prestigious festivals for independent films—and, therefore, the best for meeting potential buyers and for starting good word-of-mouth—are Berlin and Sundance. Cannes, Venice, and Locarno are extremely prestigious as well, but few independents get invited. Other important festivals that showcase independents are Toronto, New York, London, San Francisco, and Sydney. Top documentary festivals include Nyon, the Festival dei Popoli, Cinema du Reel, Amsterdam, Leipzig, Yamagata, Goteborg, Amiens, and Valladolid—in roughly that order. Festivals for short films, experimental films, animated films, and even horror films also exist.

*Not every festival will want your film.* Festivals often specialize, restricting entries to certain lengths and/or genres. For detailed information, write the festival directors and read their application forms carefully. But be realistic. The more prestigious the festival, the more competitive the selection process.

*Your favorite festival is worth waiting for—even if this means delaying your premiere—because, first, prestigious premieres are good for sales and, second, some top festivals accept premieres only.* If you can't wait because of your finances or future commitments, choose the next best fest—and do your best to make a big splash.

*The more noise you make, the more attention you'll get.* First, provide the festival with basic P.R. materials (posters, press kits, glossy B&W photos with captions, transcripts) *well in advance*. Second, be there yourself for as much of the event as possible. Third, bring additional P.R. material with you: more press kits and photos, plus flyers, buttons, postcards, stickers, T-shirts, video cassettes. You'll be amazed how much these tools can help. Also essential: double-stick tape, scissors, red Sharpies, and lots of gummed labels—so you can add screening times and locations to your posters and flyers. Fourth, get a list of local press outlets and contact them by phone, letter, hand-delivered press kit—whatever polite device you can think up. Fifth, give good Q&A after each screening. When audiences are too shy to ask questions, break the ice—and pass out buttons and postcards to anyone interested. And sixth, if you can afford it (or find pro bono help), hire a P.R. firm, and then work with them. This is particularly useful for a premiere.

*If you make a big splash at your premiere, other festivals will want you, too.* Try to structure the rest of your circuit so that you hit the most prestigious festivals first in the countries where you're most likely to make a sale. The more you correspond with festival officials ahead of time, asking

what promotional materials they need and assuring them that you'll be available for Q&As, interviews, and seminars, the better your reception will be.

*Make sure that you have enough film prints to handle all of your festivals.* Hand-carrying your print from festival to festival probably won't suffice because festivals usually need prints in advance for press previews, and festival schedules start to overlap. So get your lab to give you a discount for making more than one print at a time and then get each festival to guarantee in advance that it will cover shipping charges.

*(Warning: If a festival is returning your print to the States, insist ahead of time that they don't ship it via some airline's air freight. You'll have to pay huge customs and storage fees just to get your print out of the airport. Instead get them to ship via Federal Express, DHL, or United Parcel Service, all of which have their own in-house customs clearance and will deliver your print right to your door.)*

*If you aren't accepted by an important festival, find out if they hold a film market and consider entering your film there.* True, market screenings aren't as prestigious and cost more money, but if you make a lot of noise, word will spread and the buyers will show. Both Berlin and Cannes hold well-known film markets. Independent film markets also exist outside of festivals. The Independent Feature Film Market in New York is perhaps the most worthwhile. As for the mega-markets MIP, MIPCOM, and MIFED, they cost a lot and are usually attended by production companies and agents who have more than one product to sell and can afford to rent entire booths.

*Festival prizes are not all created equal.* Sure, a long list of prizes look great in your press kit, but most buyers know which ones are worth winning. So be realistic and go for the biggest one within reach.

*Prizes aren't the only way to build word-of-mouth.* If your film has some local connection—either you shot in a particular country or one of your actors is from there or the subject ties in with some local issue—exploit it. Enter the nearest festival, revamp your press kit, let the key buyers and media know. Or create your own event: rent a theater, hold a benefit, involve local big-wigs. Then send copies of press clips to buyers.

And how can you afford all this travel, since you won't get any payments till much later? First, find out which festivals pay what—airfare, hotel, food, screening fees, speaking fees, shipping, a share of the box office—then schedule your travel so you can attend more than one festival per trip. By combining festival resources and by asking for cash instead of plane tickets (tell festival officials your plans, they'll understand), you can usually cover most expenses. If you revel in local color, cheap transportation, and regional produce, and if you remember to stuff your food bag with whatever freebies each festival provides, you'll do fine. It also helps if you have local contacts: relatives, friends, friends of friends. Film festivals sound glamorous, and you can usually trade free passes and a few good stories for free hospitality. Just remember to do the same for them when they travel in your direction.

### ***Decide which countries to target—and when***

The best countries to target are the ones most likely to buy your film. The best time to do it is whenever you can meet face-to-face with each buyer. Obviously, if you're on the festival circuit, that's when to strike: when your film's in the spotlight and the buying frenzy is on.

Some films will appeal to virtually every country; others will be more

**Markets such as the Independent Feature Film Market and Berlin offer video- and filmmakers multiple opportunities to make potential foreign sales contacts.**

Photo: Gory Pollard, courtesy Independent Feature Project



limited. Some word-heavy films, for example, may sell overseas only in the English-language markets: Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, as well as certain Asian markets (Hong Kong, Singapore, and maybe Japan). A film marked by a slightly leftist slant may have more success in Northern Europe than in the more conservative southern nations. In the case of *Baldwin*, we kept changing our approach to suit the country. In the Netherlands, *Baldwin* was marketed as a film that dealt with homosexuality as well as racism; in Turkey, it was the tale of a writer who, persecuted in his own country, managed to find freedom in Istanbul; in Japan, *Baldwin*'s life story was a rarely-seen glimpse of black America and an opportunity to examine racism in Asia.

How should you proceed once you've decided which countries to target? Aim for the biggest sales first. Once you've sold to big-buck nations like Great Britain and Germany, your international cachet will be validated, and smaller buyers may follow suit more easily.

And how do you make the sale? Hopefully, you already set your sales pitch in motion back when you were fundraising for your unfinished film. The best approach is to send every potential buyer a letter-plus-proposal, just to let them know you exist. Even if you didn't get a presale, you'll have gotten into their file—and you can fatten the file with updates, letting them know your production is thriving. That way they'll be primed for your next tactic: an invitation to your festival screening and a request for a meeting.

Above all, project confidence. Give buyers reasons why they should pursue you. If competitive buyers exist in a particular country, meet with as many as possible, and be sure to let the others know. If an offer is made, try to meet with the contract negotiator as well. At most TV networks, this is usually a separate person from the program buyer who negotiates deals without seeing the films (thereby keeping a convenient emotional distance). Try to let them know why your film is important, even if they won't see it. Be honest, don't hustle.

As for the price, research will tell you what they've paid for similar films. You can usually do better than their first offer, but don't push too hard, or they'll turn off altogether. You can almost always get the buyer to pay for materials and shipping—but don't bring this up until you've got the best offer.

Finally, be prepared to wait. Sometimes buyers truly want your film, but don't have the money in this year's budget; sometimes they're simply overworked and your press kit gets lost somewhere deep in their file. Keep your film on their mind with friendly reminders about recent successes (festival selections, awards, rave reviews, sales) without overdoing it. Eventually, they may buy. At worst, they'll remember you the next time you're looking for presales.

### ***Decide how to release your film by country.***

The format you choose for domestic release may not be the best choice for overseas distribution. Certain theatrical releases do better on foreign television; a few made-for-TV documentaries actually thrive in some foreign art

houses. The ideal venue may vary from country to country. Basically, the foreign market is divided into the same categories as our domestic market:

- Theatrical release, either for nationwide distribution or a limited art house run;
- Television programming, for broadcast via national networks, cable channels, and/or satellite;
- Nontheatrical release, both film print and video, for sales and/or rentals to educational institutions, libraries, museums, and special interest groups;
- Home video release, for mass distribution direct to the consumer via sales and/or rentals.

Most independent filmmakers have fantasies of theatrical distribution—and some small films do surprisingly well up on the big screen. If you think your film is right for the theater or if theatrical buyers approach you, go for it. You should wind up with some kind of advance against returns from the box office. Even if you never make much beyond that, you'll certainly gain in publicity. (Publicity, by the way, should never be underestimated. It's easily translated into future TV and home video sales, as well as into funding for upcoming productions.)

Look what happened with *Baldwin*: We managed to score small-to-medium-sized theatrical releases in six countries. Once expenses and distributors' fees were covered, the amount of money we made was negligible, but we let every potential TV buyer hear about our "great theatrical successes." The lure of a theatrical "crossover" worked; we wound up at the top end of most TV buyers' budgets.

In the long run, it pays to remember: most independent films earn more money via sales to foreign TV than any theatrical box office grosses. Most countries have at least one national network; some countries have several, plus a growing number of cable and satellite channels. All of them need product, far more than theaters—and most of them have decent budgets.

And what about the nontheatrical (a.k.a. educational) market? Apart from America, where a nontheatrical market has existed for years, this category is relatively new overseas. In some countries (e.g., Great Britain, France, the Netherlands) distribution to schools and libraries is subsidized by the government. In others (e.g., Canada, Australia, Germany), a few independent nontheatrical distributors are doing their best to make sales. What kind of films do these distributors look for? Anything "educational" or "informative" that isn't too "foreign" for their own local audience: biographical portraits, historical overviews, political exposés, social

## Sell your theatrical rights in each country before you sell your broadcast rights. Few theater programmers will buy a film that has already aired on TV.

commentaries. What kind of money will these distributors pay? Sad to say, not much. But small sales do add up, and you may even find that your nontheatrical distributor can handle small-sized theatrical releases as well.

At present, the foreign home video market for independent works is still relatively undeveloped. Even though foreign home video rights are included in most distribution deals, and even though some independent films do get released on cassette overseas, most foreign consumers go for the better-known Hollywood titles. Independent fiction films sometimes sell, particularly if they're full of sex and/or action—or if they've already enjoyed a successful foreign theatrical release. Docs have less chance of success unless they fit into some distributor's nonfiction series.

Once you've decided how your film should be released in a particular country, however, the following guidelines should be applied:

*Sell your theatrical rights in each country before you sell your broadcast rights.* Few theater programmers will buy a film that has already aired on TV. If the TV sale must come first, try to get a theatrical "window" inserted in your contract preventing the network from broadcasting your film before a certain date, so that you still have a chance at a theatrical sale. (Six months? A year? Take as much time as they'll give you.)

*Sell your broadcast rights to national networks before you make any deal with a satellite programmer.* This is because a satellite's "footprint" (the geographic area over which it broadcasts) usually spills over national borders, or, even worse, sometimes covers a good half-dozen countries, thereby eliminating your chances at any national broadcast sales there.

*Sell your broadcast rights to national networks before you make deals with local cable channels.* If a cable deal's already pending, check with the national network before you sign, just to make sure that a sale to some smaller programmer won't stop it from purchasing your film.

*If a nontheatrical/educational buyer exists in a particular country, sell those rights before you sell either your broadcast or your home video rights.* This is mainly because librarians, school teachers, and other nontheatrical programmers prefer the cheaper option of taping a film off the air or buying a low-priced home video cassette. Or, try for a "non-theatrical window," allowing you to complete at least some of the higher-priced sales before your film is released more cheaply.

And remember, every country is slightly different—so consider each format on a country-by-country basis. We found it hard to sell *Baldwin*'s TV rights in certain conservative countries, but then discovered an unexpected bonus: politically-active special interest groups, ranging from racial minorities to gay rights activists who were frustrated by local conservative attitudes, created a whole new 16mm market for *Baldwin*. A variety of groups actually adopted *Baldwin* as a banner for their cause and made it a hit at their local box-office!

## **Make a big effort—and make it fun.**

Ready to start distribution? Remember, the bigger your effort, the bigger the return. Also, once you've entered your first round of festivals, you should plan to have the proverbial "time of your life." We call it the "Maggie Renzie Principle," which we learned at one of the first festivals we attended with *Baldwin*. Producer Renzie and her partner, director John Sayles, told us their survival secret: Always build some free time into your schedule, either

before or after each festival, so that you can do some local exploring. Leave time for tourism, shopping, exercise of body and mind. Who knows, you may even find inspiration for a future film project. You certainly will hit the next stop on the circuit refreshed, and when you finally head home, each festival will have its own set of memories.

One final set of helpful hints: those survival details that make all the difference, the things we wish we'd known when we took on this gargantuan task:

First, buy a folding luggage-cart, the kind that holds 300 pounds; the flimsy ones won't last. Also buy a fiberboard case with the optional canvas straps, which make all the difference when you have to lift it. (In New York, Ikelheimer-Ernst on W. 26th St. sells carts & cases.) Now fill the case(s) with your P.R. material. The airline limit of 70 pounds is probably all you'll need—and is certainly all you can lift! Once you distribute your goodies, you can refill the case with souvenirs.

As for the rest of your luggage, don't forget the following: lots of black clothing (it doesn't show dirt, and seems to be *de rigueur* on the festival circuit); tall-size canvas boat or duffel bags (available from L.L. Bean, can be packed flat when empty, but sturdy enough to lug everything from film prints to wine bottles); silk turtle-necks and underwear (L.L. Bean again, lightweight and essential for sudden dips in temperature); Ziplock bags of all sizes (great for storing everything from wet clothing to foreign coins); a stash of vitamin C plus a baggie full of Celestial Seasonings Sunburst C tea bags (for preventing incessant cases of festival flu); eyepatches (for sleeping at any and all hours); made-in-USA toilet paper; a laundry bag; a nice thick towel; a Swiss-knife; eating utensils; a set of Rubbermaid "Servin' Saver" containers (they nest compactly when empty, and the lids make great plates); an *international* AT&T credit card number; a list of fax numbers for all festivals and buyers whom you plan to contact (you can't get these from information, and foreign phone calls are a major headache); and, in the *luxo* category for those who can afford it, a laptop computer and portable printer. (We've seen people with portable fax machines, but that really seems over the top—and festivals usually let you use their fax machine anyway within reason.)

Also, be sure to hand-carry the program from the most recent festival you've attended. It helps a *lot* if you can show your film's write-up when trying to get videotapes and heavy cases through customs. One important last detail: don't forget to request your frequent flyer miles, either at the airport or as soon as you get home. After one good round on the festival circuit, you'll have enough miles for your next production.

*Karen Thorsen is a journalist, screenwriter, and producer/director, currently nursing her latest production, eight-month-old Dylan Kai Dempsey.*

This article is excerpted from a chapter in the forthcoming book *Doing It Yourself: A Handbook on Distributing Independent Media*. A copublication of the Foundation for Independent Video and Film and New Day Films, the book will be edited by Debra Franco and Julia Reichert and provide information on successfully navigating the complicated distribution scene of the 1990s. It will address the most commonly asked questions about self-distribution, including which markets are appropriate for your work, how to assess your title's consumer potential, what forms of self-distribution are working for independents today, how to plan a theatrical opening or benefit for a documentary, and much more. The book will be available through FIVF in 1993.

## NAKED TRUTHS

## Hara Kazuo's Iconoclastic Obsessions

LAURA U. MARKS

Seen from above, in grainy black and white, a Japanese woman and a black American man are making love. Even knowing that it's 1974, when the student, feminist, and civil rights movements were as hot in Japan as in the West, this is a disturbing scene—especially given the fact that the voyeur with the camera is the woman's former lover.

A group of middle-aged, neatly dressed people sit around a low table reminiscing. "How did my

the charged relationship between filmmaker and subject. Hara's practice revolves around a definition of truth that has little to do with objectivity.

Throughout its relatively short history, documentary practice in Japan has been untroubled by pretensions to critical distance. The tradition began with filmmakers who allied themselves with the activist movements of the 1960s. Subsequently, filmmakers' personal involvement with their subjects has often bordered on the extreme. For instance, Ogawa Shinsuke began *Nippon-Koku: Furuyashiki-mura* (*A Japanese Village: Furuyashiki-mura*, 1982) after a group of farmers criticized his earlier film about rural life for being shallow. In response, the director and his production company settled in the community and devoted themselves to rice farming for six years, only producing *Nippon-Koku* after they felt they understood farming life. This sort of excessive commitment also characterizes Hara, who considered working with Ogawa on *Nippon-Koku* at one point.

The impetus for *The Emperor's Naked Army* came from Hara's contact with director Imamura Shohei. Hara worked as assistant director on Imamura's *Vengeance Is Mine* (1979) and *Eijanaika* (1980). An affinity with Imamura is apparent in both Hara's films. Like Imamura, Hara finds his subjects among people beyond the pale of conventional Japanese society, using their experience as a filter through which to view official history. Imamura's *History of Postwar Japan as Told by a Bar Hostess* (1971) could be seen as a fictional counterpart to *Extremely Private Eros*. Both deal with tough, lower-class women who live by their wits, bear mixed-race children (who face extreme prejudice in Japan), and offer critical observations about their country's history and politics.

Imamura had been interested in making a film on Okuzaki Kenzo, the psychopathic activist of *Emperor's Naked Army*, ever since Okuzaki made headlines in 1969 by assaulting Emperor Hirohito with metal pachinko balls (used in a Japanese game similar to pinball) in a slingshot. Since that time Okuzaki has been on a crusade to implicate the Emperor in Japanese atrocities in WWII. According to Hara, Imamura initially planned to involve Okuzaki in a film about postwar history and the imperial family. But because criticism of the imperial family is still so taboo in Japan, Imamura's regular backer, the production company Toho, would not have agreed to support the



Okuzaki Kenzo, the psychopathic activist in Hara Kazuo's *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On*.

Courtesy filmmaker

brother's body look when he was killed?" a woman asks. "Where did you cut the meat from the bodies of the men you ate—their buttocks, their thighs?" A gruesome, detailed discussion ensues of cannibalism and illegal executions by Japanese soldiers during the Second World War.

These taboo-defying scenes are from *Extremely Private Eros: Love Song 1974* and *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987) by Japanese documentary filmmaker Hara Kazuo. After *The Emperor's Naked Army* gained something of a cult following in Japan, the two films were picked up for international distribution, and Hara is beginning to experience notoriety in and outside his country. Both films follow a strong, magnetic character on a rampage through Japanese social life, uncovering numerous taboos. Both expose

**Extremely Private Eras:**  
*Love Song 1974* features  
jarring scenes, including  
the filmmaker's ex-lover  
delivering a child unaided  
in Hara's apartment.

Courtesy filmmaker



project. Despite this, Okuzaki obstinately continued to press Imamura for 10 years. Finally the director suggested that Hara take on the project.

Hara calls his relationship to Okuzaki "a love at first sight." It was certainly the kind that throws caution to the wind. Since there are no support structures for independent production in Japan, the filmmaking process became a consuming relationship, both emotionally and financially, that lasted five years. *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* was funded by Hara, with additional donations from his family, Imamura, and the fans Okuzaki had gained through his past notoriety.

In *The Emperor's Naked Army*, Okuzaki is first seen driving a van painted with political slogans, shouting inflammatory statements over a loudspeaker. His anti-imperial rage focuses on Emperor Hirohito's responsibility for the Pacific War. Okuzaki is a veteran from the 36th Independent Engineering Corps, which served in New Guinea. Of the 1,000 soldiers in his regiment, only about 30 survived the war. The film follows Okuzaki's mission to uncover their terrible history. He tracks down and interviews former war buddies, officers, and the families of fellow soldiers who died. A secret history of officers ordering the execution of their own soldiers for desertion after the war's end and survivors practicing cannibalism slowly emerges. In trying to unearth the history, Okuzaki shows up unannounced at people's houses and workplaces, pressuring them to reveal information on camera until they break down. He has no qualms about literally wrestling people to the floor to extract the information he wants when polite persistence doesn't work.

Although the filmmaker appears to follow Okuzaki's agenda entirely, Hara actually had a considerable hand in shaping the film. While Okuzaki envisioned it as a vehicle for his crusade against the Emperor, Hara wanted to take a more historical approach. It was his decision, for instance, to raise the issue of cannibalism in New Guinea. And although the interviews were conducted ambush style, Hara had spoken with all

Okuzaki's interviewees at some point before the confrontations took place.

The film's controversial subject matter seemed to guarantee that it would not find wide distribution. Thus it was a great surprise when the film ran for a full year at a small Tokyo theater. Image Forum, the pioneering center for experimental media in Japan, picked it up for national distribution. *The Emperor's Naked Army* became overwhelmingly popular in Japan, placing in top-10 polls for Best Film and, interestingly, Best Actor.

According to Hara, older audiences were less shaken by the film's revelations—the information on cannibalism had been in the print media before—than grateful that the film expressed doubts about official history that they could not voice themselves. What remained unacceptable to them were Okuzaki's violent methods and the accusation of Emperor Hirohito's complicity in the war. Young audiences were much more shocked at the war atrocities. Yet, says Hara, the

theaters were "often engulfed with laughter." In Japan, where social restrictions are so overwhelming and "My Way" is one of the most popular requests at karaoke bars, Okuzaki's fearless iconoclasm gave expression to a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction.

Film reviewers have referred to Okuzaki's "sincerity and humility," but these were largely manufactured in the editing process. Okuzaki was endlessly critical of the filmmaker and insisted that Hara record his every movement. When Hara suggested he get his own 8mm camera and film himself, Okuzaki said no, he wanted to be covered in 16mm. Hara shot 49 rolls in New Guinea, only to have Okuzaki theatrically surrender them to the local police. Ultimately Okuzaki was dissatisfied with the final film, and he wrote Hara from prison (where he is serving time for the attempted murder of his former officer's son) that he wanted to make a sequel, for which he would be the producer, writer, main character, and director. "You just have to operate the camera," he told Hara.

This sort of struggle is the stuff of Hara's filmmaking practice. He speaks of his subject as his *aite*, or opponent, but the contest is an unusual one. For Hara, "Losing is winning." Rather than confront his subject, he tries "to become empty and receive of the other. When you make a film about a strong character," he explains, "you become confused within yourself. In that state of confusion the world starts to look different. Documentary filmmaking could be such that if you make a film in that state of mind, you can show your audience something special." Hara concludes, "As a documentarist I want to become involved with a character and see how I myself become changed in the course of the relationship."

Enough of this power inversion is evident in *The Emperor's Naked Army* that one Tokyo critic called Hara "masochistic." Yet to see *Extremely Private Eros: Love Song 1974* is truly to compre-



hend the radicalism of Hara's approach. Here the strong character is Takeda Miyuki, a young woman who had been Hara's lover, and whom the filmmaker clearly still loves. She asks him to film her: her goal is to become pregnant and deliver the child on her own to "express that she is alive." Hara follows Takeda's odyssey in the tough red-light districts of Okinawa as she throws herself into the sexual, racial, and national politics that color life on the margins in the early 1970s. She pursues lovers of both sexes; she sleeps with a black GI with the intention of becoming pregnant; she distributes feminist manifestos on the street. As planned, Takeda has her child without assistance on a futon in Hara's Tokyo apartment, in one of the most astounding birth scenes ever captured on film. Her coolness and assurance during the birthing process contrast markedly with the filmmaker, who is so anxious that his glasses fog up and he gets the focus wrong. Afterwards she talks on the phone to her mother: "I did it all by myself....Yes, it's mixed-race....No, I can't kill it now."

Much as the structure of control gets reversed between filmmaker and subject in *The Emperor's Naked Army*, the structure of voyeurism is inverted in *Extremely Private Eros*. In many scenes Takeda is subject to the camera's rude gaze—most notably when giving birth and making love, but also when she pleads tearfully with the woman she loves or fights with the soundperson, Sachiko Kobayashi (who was Hara's girlfriend, now wife). But these are precisely the moments when Hara is most vulnerable and his jealousy, fear, and hurt are most apparent. Hara explains that he wants to violate not others' privacy, but his own. "This is the most frightening thing I can think of—so I feel I have to do it." Eighteen years later Hara is still extremely embarrassed by the one scene in which, arguing with Takeda in front of the camera, he cries.

Documentary filmmakers have increasingly acknowledged how little theirs is an objective practice. Reflexivity has taken hold as the primary guideline for responsible documentary making. Yet this approach still sometimes disguises an unequal power relation between the people on opposing sides of the camera. Hara Kazuo's is a symbiotic relationship to his subject. His work reveals his need to be completed by the other person and to grow through the process of mutual struggle. This dynamic underlies Hara's radical documentary practice.

*Laura U. Marks is a writer, artist, and curator living in Rochester, New York.*

This article is based on Hara Kazuo's presentation at the 1992 Flaherty Seminar, plus a joint interview with the author and Scott MacDonald, translated by Steve Schible. Japanese names appear surname first.

From *Extremely Private Eros*.

Courtesy filmmaker

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## THE BIAS DEBATE

### Radicals Rule PBS Documentaries

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DAVID HOROWITZ

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*Is public television biased? In what direction? In the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992, Congress instructed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to address the hotly debated question of public television's objectivity and balance. By January 31, 1993, CPB must report back to Congress on what procedures and policies it follows, or plans to follow, to ensure the "quality, diversity, creativity, excellence, innovation, objectivity, and balance" of its programs. Congress also instructed CPB to solicit public comment as part of its self-assessment. CPB is considering an 800 telephone number, a postal box number, and public forums chaired by CPB board members. In addition to this formal input, CPB (and Congress) will no doubt be hearing from professional media watchers with deeply conflicting assessments of public television's objectivity and balance. The following articles continue the debate voiced during the contentious 1992 reauthorization hearings, and follow up on The Independent article "Uncivil Wars: The Conservative Assault on Public TV," by Josh Daniel, in the August/September 1992 issue. We encourage readers to join the debate by responding to CPB's solicitation of public comment when it occurs and by sending us your views on the issues.*

When I edited *Ramparts* back in the 1960s, I used to commission articles like "Uncivil Wars: The Conservative Assault on Public TV," which identified myself and other PBS critics as agents of a shadowy conservative plot. Hidden motives, secret funders, covert conspiracies, tentacles of influence—this is the stuff that radicals live for. Even when I was still a radical, it used to amuse me that my political friends would talk in code during phone chats "in case the line is bugged." What narcissism! As if our little contrivances were world historical events. I always wondered why the CIA, the FBI, or whatever organization it was that was so curious and pervasive would want to waste its time on trivia like ours. It occurred to me that radicals are like spoiled children who just want someone—anyone—to notice their existence. Hence their paranoia; hence their tantrums. These are some of the reasons why I'm no longer a leftist today.

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#### *The left's lock on PBS documentaries*

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But I digress. The thrust of *The Independent's* article and the amusing diagram accompanying it (supplied by FAIR) appears to be that conservative nonprofit foundations are funding conservative media critics so that they can get the conservative shows they fund on the air. Now there's a sinister conspiracy.

It's true that I have complained in public about the leftward monopoly of public television documentaries. In fact, anyone watching public TV without a jaundiced eye can see that in the field of television documentaries, films from the left outnumber films from the right by an extraordinary multiple—somewhere between 50 and 100 to 1, if I had to guess. Of course conservative foundations want to see a greater balance. And the law requires it.

The left can hardly have a problem with all this. The left itself is funded by mega-foundations like MacArthur and Rockefeller and Ford, which are bigger than all the conservative foundations mentioned in the article combined. They, too, fund advocates on public television issues.

Moreover, the left has sunk its hooks into Congress as well, and its pet representatives Edward Markey and Henry Waxman have earmarked

\$8-million per year for production funds and operating expenses to the leftist bureaucrats at ITVS, who have yet to get a program aired. Any reasonable person will see that until Congress forks over an identical \$8-million per year to a conservative consortium, public broadcasting will remain in violation of both the spirit and the letter of the public broadcasting law.

It would never occur to me to accuse FAIR of acting as a front for the millionaires on its board of directors or the corporate foundations that fund its activities, though by FAIR's own logic that would be the politically correct way to explain its positions. Nor would it occur to me to see a sinister influence of the Bush Administration on AIVF just because it receives NEA funds. But then, that's probably another reason why I'm no longer a radical. A lifetime of experience has shown me that the radical logic, while persuasive on paper, has little or no relation to actual people, institutions, and events.

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#### *Where's the deception?*

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*The Independent* article purports to see an irresolvable contradiction in my statement that I "[do] not do any direct lobbying" and my remark on Charlie Rose's show *Public Television: A Public Debate* that "probably Senator Dole and I are the two individuals that had the most to do with the present hold" on the legislation reauthorizing CPB last spring. The article characterizes this as "saying one thing while doing another" and calls this "typical behavior for Horowitz." Actually it's saying two things and doing one thing. I did not lobby directly with any legislator on behalf of any specific legislation. I did present a public case arguing that there is an imbalance in the programming for public broadcasting. Anyone reading the legislative debate will recognize in the legislative arguments a case that was put forth first in the pages of my newsletter *Comint*. Where's the deception here?

Also misrepresented was the episode concerning the truly awful *South Africa Now* series, funded by Rockefeller and produced by Globalvision. Let me make myself perfectly clear: *South Africa Now* was a disservice to the struggle to liberate South Africa from the chains of apartheid. It distorted the news on behalf of a narrow political agenda, which was to promote the Stalinist wing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

## THE BIAS DEBATE

### Public Television's Conservative Slant

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JEFF COHEN

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Let's face it: public television has veered way off course. While it still occasionally airs programs not found elsewhere, the once-hopeful enterprise is running aground as Public Broadcasting Service executives succumb to the pressure of corporate, conservative underwriters and right-wing censors (in and out of Congress).

Look what happened on PBS this September. The same week that George Bush dodged his first scheduled debate with Bill Clinton, PBS officials helped the president evade another one—this time discussing concerns of African Americans and Latinos.

The independent producers of PBS's *Voices of the Electorate*, two one-hour documentaries conceived by Alvin Perlmutter, had invited Bush and Clinton to respond to issues raised by black and Latino voters at a dynamic series of town meetings taped across the country. Clinton agreed to participate; his answers were taped and incorporated into the program. But just prior to the broadcast, because Bush had refused to appear, PBS's chief programming executive, Jennifer Lawson, ordered the producers to remove Clinton's appearance from the show, or she'd cancel the program.

PBS had also scheduled a live program—*Word! Teens Speak Out!*, coproduced by the five National Minority Public Broadcasting Consortia—so that a racially-diverse audience of young people could aim questions directly at the candidates. The Democratic campaign pledged that Clinton or Al Gore would be available. The Republicans said neither Bush nor Dan Quayle would. The show was cancelled. PBS's actions were a re-run of 1988, when *MacNeill/Lehrer* sought interviews with the two vice-presidential candidates. After Dan Quayle refused to answer questions, *MacNeill/Lehrer* chose to follow its Lloyd Bentsen interview by broadcasting 20 minutes of Quayle's flag-draped stump speech. This played straight into the G.O.P. strategy of hiding the candidates from the press, while serving up staged photo opportunities for the TV cameras.

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#### *Hysteria over a few documentaries*

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Public TV was launched as a "forum for debate and controversy," in the words of the 1967 Carnegie

Commission Report. Today it mostly shrinks from controversy. It set out to "provide a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard" and to "help us see America whole, in all its diversity." Today the unheard voices remain largely muted because PBS executives habitually cave in to censors who would rather see America *in all its conformity*.

Right-wingers like Jesse Helms and David Horowitz won't tolerate real diversity on public TV. Nor are they content just with conservative dominance. Their goal seems to be the silencing of viewpoints opposed to their own. How else does one explain their hysteria over a dozen or two controversial documentaries per year, when conservatives clearly dominate public TV's regular public affairs line-up?

Many PBS stations air three weekly programs hosted by editors from the right-wing *National Review* magazine: William F. Buckley's *Firing Line*, plus a pair from the ubiquitous John McLaughlin, *One on One* and *McLaughlin Group*. PBS's weekly program on foreign affairs, *American Interests*, is hosted by the hawkish Morton Kondracke. And the weekly PBS program aimed at blacks, *Tony Brown's Journal*, is hosted by a Republican.

Up against these five shows, PBS does not offer one weekly show hosted by a political partisan of the left—say, an editor or columnist from *The Nation* or *Mother Jones* or *Ms*.

In programs on the economy, it's business as usual. PBS stations offer regular coverage of corporate news and agendas: *Adam Smith's Money World*, *Wall Street Week*, hosted by conservative Louis Rukeyser, and the *Nightly Business Report*. Yet PBS does not offer a single weekly news/talk show presenting the agendas of groups often in conflict with big business, such as consumers, labor movements, or environmentalists.

Given the conservative, pro-corporate bias in PBS's weekly line-up—amounting to several hundred programs per year—*there are far too few documentaries offering a forthright progressive and anti-establishment viewpoint*. Documentaries that are too hard-hitting are often denied access to PBS, such as this year's Oscar-winning short, *Deadly Deception*, which exposes the environmental abuses of General Electric.

And because of censorship by right-wing watchdogs and PBS bureaucrats, some of the documentaries we do see are sanitized before airing. British audiences could see the series *Korea—The Un-*

*known War* in full on Thames Television; U.S. audiences—thanks to the intervention of the misnamed Accuracy in Media, Reed Irvine's right-wing watchdog group—were only allowed to see the series after political edits were made at the behest of General Richard Stillwell, a CIA officer involved in the war.

To push PBS toward even greater timidity, right-wingers have created the myth of the "legions"—David Horowitz's term—of allegedly leftist documentaries on PBS. To Horowitz, these include the muzzled Korea series, *Frontline* (most of whose documentaries are centrist or non-controversial), the eclectic *P.O.V.*, and Bill Moyers' eloquent pleas for a return to constitutional checks and balances.

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#### *Weekly series vs. documentaries*

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Weekly public affairs shows are usually topical, focusing on current events when those events are capable of being influenced by public opinion or lobbying. By contrast, documentaries cannot generally be pegged to issues currently before Congress or on the ballot.

It is therefore crucial to balance the weekly line-up. It is also easy: you simply offer shows with hosts and agendas opposed to the Buckleys and Rukeyzers.

But how do you "balance" documentaries, which are often investigative or historical works taking months or years to research? Before a producer begins his or her investigation, should PBS mandate what that examination will end up concluding? Of course not (though such an approach might placate anti-intellectuals in Congress and the Right).

Although PBS executives admit that their weekly current events line-up favors conservative commentators, steps have never been taken toward balance. One reason: Big money talks—as loudly on "noncommercial" public TV as on commercial TV. PBS officials say they can't find funding for weekly shows opposing the views of conservatives. In essence, conservative and corporate underwriters—like the Wall Street firms that sponsor Buckley and PBS's business shows—are determining which programs are seen and which are not.

Public TV shows featuring tough critics of government or corporate policies—such as the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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HOROWITZ: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

of the African National Congress (ANC). When Winnie Mandela was turned in to the authorities by ANC supporters in the black townships who were terrorized by her thugs, *South Africa Now* sprang to her defense. In a tendentious segment, *South Africa Now* attempted to discredit Graham Boynton, an ANC sympathizer who had written an agonized report on Winnie's murderous activities for *Vanity Fair*. *South Africa Now* insinuated that a plan by Conde Nast, publisher of *Vanity Fair*, to invest in South Africa was the hidden agenda of Boynton's article.

In my view *South Africa Now* was an embarrassment to PBS, to South Africa's blacks, and to itself. I communicated this to KCET station manager Stephen Kulczycki. I told him that the reporting level of *South Africa Now* was so low, so crudely propagandistic, and so narrowly partisan that I would not have run it as an article in *Ramparts* when I was still a radical. I suggested he (1) balance the show with a more honest program, (2) label it opinion (because it deceptively presented itself as "news"), or (3) cancel it. Months after I had this conversation, WGBH and KCET simultaneously cancelled the show. (I have never spoken to anyone at WGBH about *South Africa Now*.) After a week of tantrums by leftist groups, the show was restored to the air, but KCET did label it "opinion." This was a blow to the egos of its producers (who heaped plenty of abuse at me on retaliation), but it was a fair warning to *South Africa Now*'s unsuspecting audience.

There is a lot of paranoia in the Left which leads it to discount what people say and do and to search always for hidden motives and agendas (perhaps because the Left itself has so many hidden agendas). I am on record as supporting the Left's complaints that talking heads shows like the *McLaughlin Group* and *Firing Line* ought to be balanced with parallel shows from the Left. I actually mean what I say and am willing to join in any effort to promote such balance, even with my detractors at FAIR.

In closing, I have a question or two for the Left myself: Aren't you embarrassed by all those films you made during the 1970s and 1980s promoting Communist movements and regimes that the people themselves finally rejected? Aren't you going to be embarrassed again by the national celebrations that will surely follow the fall of your favorite dictator, Fidel? Why not admit your mistakes, assume a posture of humility, and join me in my efforts to get some documentaries aired that will give proper credit to the anti-Communists who defeated these bloody and oppressive tyrants and set so many people free?

*David Horowitz is codirector of the Committee for Media Integrity, which publishes the newsletter Comint.*



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*Kwitny Report*, *South Africa Now*, and WNET's *11th Hour*—have repeatedly died for lack of funds. Meanwhile, Buckley's *Firing Line* is so well-funded by corporations and conservative foundations (some of the same ones underwriting Horowitz) that it could afford to pay Jack Kemp \$30,000 for two guest appearances.

Even PBS's centrist programs, like the *MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*, have a distinct pro-establishment bias. A study by FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting) of the *NewsHour's* guest list in 1989 found it dominated by government and corporate officials, but lacking in public interest experts: civil rights, environmental, consumer rights, etc. *MacNeill/Lehrer* repeatedly featured scholars from conservative think tanks such as American Enterprise and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, but not progressive ones such as the Institute for Policy Studies.

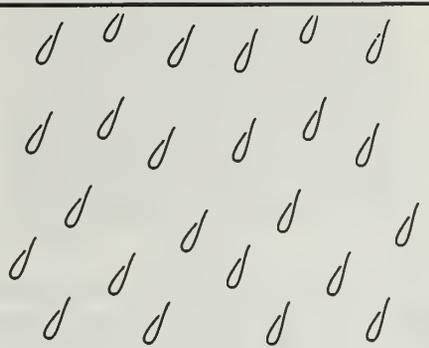
It's no wonder that right-wingers like Accuracy in Media and David Horowitz, who denounce "liberal" media bias quite wildly, praise the "balance" of *MacNeill/Lehrer*. Nor is it a mystery—given its establishment-dominated guest list—that AT&T and Pepsico have sponsored the program to the tune of \$12-million per year.

Will public broadcasting ever fulfill its original mandate of diversity and controversy? What's needed—besides a political change in Washington—is a new source of funding to free the system from corporate and monied influences (like a small tax on TV and radio ads earmarked for public *noncommercial* broadcasting).

Revitalizing public TV will also require a multi-year campaign by free speech activists, independent TV producers, and concerned funders. One lesson to learn: You don't make deals with censors. It just encourages them. The only way to respond to censorship is by galvanizing affected constituencies, generating a public outcry, and out-organizing the censors.

Nor do you engage in counter-censorship. FAIR has never proposed that the weekly shows hosted by the Buckleys, McLaughlins, Kondrackes, and Rukeyser be muzzled. Only that shows hosted by folks like Barbara Ehrenreich, Juan Gonzalez, Jim Hightower, Molly Ivins, Manning Marable or Ralph Nader be aired every week as well. Then we'd be seeing something more akin to "America in all its diversity."

*Jeff Cohen is a syndicated columnist and the executive director of FAIR, a New York-based media watch group.*



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## Domestic

**ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 30-May 6, OH Celebrating its 20th anniversary this yr, competitive fest for independent films & videos seeks entries in cats of narrative (traditional & experimental), doc (traditional & experimental), experimental & animation. Entries must have been completed between Jan. 1990 & Dec. 1992. All works selected for public screening receive approx. \$3/min. rental fee w/ minimum of \$50 & max. of \$300. Selections judged by audience & guest artist-balloting. Awards: certificate winners for first, second & third prizes in each cat. Last yr's competition received 521 entries; 164 were chosen for public competition screening & 22 voted certificate winners by fest attendees. Entry fee: \$15 plus pre-paid shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Contact: Ruth Bradley, director, Athens Center for Film & Video, Box 388, Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330.

**BIG MUDDY FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 1-7, IL. Competitive fest for independent film & video is organized & run by students. Three independent filmmakers present their works & serve as judges. Sections incl. best of festival, jurors' presentations, competition & animation. Awards: prize money of about \$1500 & honorable mentions. Entries must be completed after Dec. 1990. Entry fees: \$20-30. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Amy Brakeman, Big Muddy Film Festival, Dept. of Cinematography & Photography, Southern Illinois Univ., Carbondale, IL 62904; (618) 453-2656.

**LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, CA. Sponsored by Visual Communications & UCLA Film & TV Archive, 8-yr-old fest highlights cinematic expression by Asian Pacific American filmmakers & Asian/Pacific Rim int'l productions. Eligible films incl. short & features in cats: dramatic/narrative, doc, experimental, graphic film/animation, 1-channel videoworks, NTSC-format works. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8; preview on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Abraham Ferrer, coordinator, Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Int'l Film & Video Festival, Visual Communications, 263 S. Los Angeles St., Ste. 307, Los Angeles, CA 90012; (213) 680-4462; fax: (213) 687-4848.

**LUCKY CHARM AWARDS**, Mar. 17, WA. Awards program "honoring achievement in non-mainstream videography". Entry fee: \$10. Format: 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Kelly Hughes, Lucky Charm Studio, #181, 2319 N. 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103; (206) 522-6195.

**NEW ENGLAND FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 20-22, MA. Co-presented by Arts Extension Service & Boston Film/Video Foundation, fest focuses on independent & student films. Independent cat open to residents of New England only. Student cat open to undergrad & grad students whose entry was completed while attending New England college/univ. or who are residents of New England attending college anywhere. Works must have been completed in past 2 yrs. Media works of all lengths eligible; no more than 2 works per artist. Narrative, doc, animation & experimental genres accepted. Awards: up to \$5000 in cash & services. Awards in both cats w/ separate awards for outstanding film & video. Entry fee: \$20 students; \$30 independent. Formats: 16mm, super 8, video. Deadline: Jan. 25 (independent); Feb. 1 (students). Contact: Pam Korza, New England Film & Video Festival, Arts Extension

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

Service, Div. of Continuing Education, 604 Goodell Bldg., Univ. of MA, Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

**ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL**, May 6-8, NY. Sponsored by Movies on a Shoestring, founded by group of Rochester filmmakers in 1959, this fest focuses on works of amateur cinematographers. Entries previewed by members & panel of judges. Awards: Shoestring trophies & honorable mention certificates. Held at Dryden Theater, International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House. Entries must be under 45 mins. (entries over 30 mins. unlikely to be shown); limited to 2 entries per indiv./org. Selected films from each yr's fest assembled into "traveling show" called *Best of Fest*. Entry fee: \$15. Format: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Josephine Perini, Movies on a Shoestring, Box 17746, Rochester, NY 14617; (716) 288-5607.

**SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 18-27, CA. This is one of world's largest & oldest lesbian & gay fests (17 yrs) showcasing diverse works by/about lesbians & gay men. Fest produced by Frameline. 1992 fest broke previous records, w/ audiences of more than 38,000 at 4 Bay Area venues in 10 days. Fest encourages work by women & people of color. Entries may be any genre, length or form. Call ahead to confirm address for UPS or FedEx entries; offices being moved in late 1992. Entry fee: no fees for entries rec'd before Jan. 1, 1993; \$10 after Jan. 1. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 703-8650; fax: (415) 861-1404.

**VIDEO SHORTS**, March, WA. Nat'l competition of video artworks now in 12th round. Special cat this yr is "computer animation." Max. length for entries is 6 mins. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", 8mm, Hi8. Minimum of 10 entries chosen as winners. Awards: \$100 & certificates to winners; winning works mastered onto 1" tape & made available for screenings. Some works chosen for Best of Video Shorts collection for sale to general public. Entry

fee: \$20/piece & \$10 for each add'l entry on same cassette (max. of 3 entries per person). Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Video Shorts, Box 20369, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 32508449.

**W.O.W. WOMEN'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 28-29, May 1, NY. W.O.W. (Women One World) Cafe seeking entries for 6th annual fest to be held at W.O.W. Cafe in NYC. Accepts works produced by women; any genre, on any topic. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Harriet Hirshorn, W.O.W. Women's Film & Video Festival, 59 E. 4th St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 674-4736.

## Foreign

**SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 16-May 1, Singapore. FIAPF-recognized invitational fest for features, shorts, docs & animation offers noncompetitive & competitive sections for Asian cinema w/ award for best Asian feature. Fest open to feature-length productions completed after Jan. 1 of the preceding yr. Entries must be Singapore premieres. About 70 feature films shown in 1992, along w/ 80 shorts & videos, from 25 countries, to audiences of 40,000. Main section shows 35mm & may show 16mm depending on theatrical venue; all formats shown in fringe programming. Programmers are open to American independent films. 1993 focus will be on South East Asian films, w/ short film program dedicated to emerging cinemas such as Brazilian New Wave. New Children's/Young Adults section est. last yr. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Philip Cheah, fest director, Singapore Int'l Film Festival, 26 Liang Seah St., Singapore 0718; tel: 65 336 8706; fax: 65 336 8713.

**SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 10-25, Australia. Now celebrating its 40th anniversary, this major Australian film event is one of world's oldest fests. Noncompetitive int'l program mixes features, shorts, docs & retrospectives in selection of over 200 films from several countries. Many selected films shared w/ Melbourne Film Festival, which runs almost concurrently. Most Australian distributors & TV buyers attend fest, which has enthusiastic & loyal audience. Excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Australian markets. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers. Entries must be Australian premieres, completed in previous yr. FIVF will again act as liaison w/ Sydney this yr, collecting & organizing films for prescreening by fest director Paul Byrnes, who will visit NY at end of February. Fest pays roundtrip group shipment of selected films from FIVF office. Entry fee: \$25 AIVF members; \$30 nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Fest formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" or 3/4" only. Deadline: Jan. 19. For info. & apps, send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Fest address: Paul Byrnes, fest director, Sydney Film Festival, Box 25, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia; tel: 61 2 660-3844; fax: 61 2 692-8793.

**UMBRIAFICTION INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF TV FICTION**, Apr. 21-May 2, Italy. Competitive annual event w/ purpose of comparison btwn ways of producing televised fiction in Europe & outside Europe. Cats:

TV corporations, private TV networks, sister companies, subsidiaries & associates producing or coproducing fiction programs; production companies producing fiction for TV; independent producers & coproducers of fiction for TV. Sections: Gubbio (TV movie, mini-serial, drama serial); Terni (TV for children 8-14 in cats of TV movie, drama serial, animation, music clip). In Gubbio Section 2 juries (European & non-European) will judge works; in Terni Section single int'l jury judges all entries. Awards: Umbriafiction TV 1993 Top Award, Golden Monitor Awards to best European produced TV movie, mini-serial, drama; best extra-European produced works in same cats (Gubbi); Golden Monitor Awards to best TV movie & drama serial for children & young, best cartoon & best music-clip. Nomination awards incl. best director, actor/actress, screenplay, film score, photography. Work must not have been publicly shown in country of origin after Jan. 1, 1992. Format: 3/4" PAL. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: Umbriafiction TV, Via Boezio 19, 00192 Rome, Italy; tel: 39 6 654 3945; fax: 39 6 654-3091.

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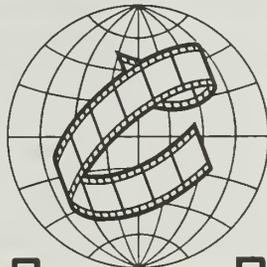
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## Preproduction

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**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape. Precision guaranteed. \$30/400' (1000') camera roll. Student rates & pick up/delivery avail. Call NY's only Downtown Dailies Service (212) 431-9289.

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**OFF-LINE AT HOME!** Will rent 2 Sony 5850s w/RM440 or RM450 edit controller & monitors. Low monthly rates, \$650/wk. Answer your own phone & cut all night if you like! Betacam SP location crews avail, too. John (212) 245-1364 or 226-7686.

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**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of inds. Fully equipped w/6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 366-5101.

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Reprints from *The Independent* explain the changes in tax law enacted in 1986 and how they affect freelance artists. Learn what you need to know about uniform capitalization, safe harbor requirements, and their consequences. Free for AIVF members; \$4 nonmembers. Send SASE with 45¢ postage. to: AIVF 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012. Or call (212) 473-3400 and charge to your Visa or Mastercard.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS TRAINING PROGRAM** is accepting appls for 1993 program: incl 400 days of training. Accepts 8 to 20 indivs annually. Must be 21 w/ Bachelor's or Associate's degree. Deadline: January 16. For appl., contact: 14144 Ventura Blvd., Ste 255, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ARTISTS' TELEVISION ACCESS** accepts 1-pg. proposals for video installations on politics, media, social org./control & gender issues. 8' x 7' space faces storefront window. Esp. interested in local artists. Samples of past video work helpful. Contact: ATA, 992 Valencia, San Francisco, CA 94110; Attn: Sean Ryan.

**AXELGREASE**, wkly public access program, seeks experimental, narrative, animation, doc & computer imaging under 27 min. Showcases video & film on Buffalo access & around U.S. Send 1/2", 3/4", Beta, 8mm, or Hi8 tapes to: Axlegrease, c/o Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo Media Resources, 372 Connecticut St., Buffalo, NY 14213; (716) 884-7172.

**CENTRAL AMERICAN NEWS PROJECT** seeks indivs to produce news & public affairs pieces for monthly access show on Central America. Contribute footage or contacts w/ people in CA w/ film or video equip. Contact: Carol Youman, 362 Washington St., Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 492-8719.

**CINCINNATI ARTISTS' GROUPEFFORT (CAGE)** seeks proposals for video/film work to screen w/ gallery exhibits in 1993-94 programming season. Deadline: December 15. Contact: CAGE, 344 W. 4th St., Cincinnati, OH 45202-2603; (513) 381-2437.

**CINEMA EXPERIMENTO**, monthly program of experimental & avant-garde short films, seeks work on 16 & 35mm (30 min. max). Send work or preview tapes on VHS or U-matic w/return postage to: Pike Street Cinema, 1108 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101.

**CITY TV**, progressive municipal cable access channel in Santa Monica, seeks works on seniors, the disabled, children, Spanish-language & video art; any length. Broadcast exchanged for equip. access at state-of-the-art facility. Contact: Laura Greenfield, Cable TV Manager, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (213) 458-8590.

**COMEDY CENTRAL** seeks comedic, short student/independent films & videos under 3 min. to air on its flagship program Short Attention Span Theater. No fees. Submit VHS or 3/4" tapes to: Josh Lebowitz, HBO Downtown Prods., 120 E. 23rd St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10010; (212) 512-8851.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV CENTER** accepts 3/4" Beta & VHS tapes for open screenings & special series w/ focus on women, Middle East, gay & lesbian, Native American, labor & Asian Art. Contact: Tanya Steele, DCTV, 87 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10013; (212) 941-1298.

**FLICKTURES** seeks 2-5 min. comedy prods, any genre, any style, to air on L.A. cable access; possible deferred pay. Send 3/4", 1/2", Beta, or super 8 w/ SASE to: Flicktures, c/o Barker/Morgan Prods, 12039 Allin St., Culver City, CA 90230-5802.

**IV-TV**, wkly half-hour video shorts program in Seattle,

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., January 8 for the March issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, NY, NY 10012.**

seeks mini-docs, video art, found footage, news leaks. Contact: John Goodfellow or David Moore, IV-TV, 2010 Minor E., Ste B, Seattle, WA 98102.

**LESBIANS IN THE CREATIVE ARTS (LICA)** invites submissions of original works for an Evening w/ LICA video cabaret. Artists must own all rights. Contact: Video, Ste. 443, 496A Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

**MINORITY TELEVISION PROJECT**, Bay Area multicultural public TV station, invites programming from independent directors, producers & writers who have person of color in key creative position & present crosscultural perspectives. Children's, entertainment, animation, features, health, education & lifestyles sought. Submit 1/2" or 3/4" tapes (orig. must be on 3/4" or 1" for broadcast) to: Roger Gordon, 71 Stevenson St., Ste. 1900, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 882-5566.

**NATIVE VOICES** seeks proposals for 2 half-hour cultural affairs progs. by/for Montana Native Americans. Contact: Native Voices Public TV Workshop, Dept. of Film & TV, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6223.

**NOMAD VIDEO** seeks works from videomakers of all ages, backgrounds & skill levels for monthly screenings. Screenings showcase grassroots artists at changing locations around Seattle area. Send VHS, S-VHS or Hi8 & SASE to: Gavin the Nomad, 501 N. 36th St. #365, Seattle, WA 98103; (206) 781-0653.

**REEL TIME**, monthly film series at Performance Space 122, seeks experimental, doc & narrative films. Submit super 8 & 16 mm to: Jim Browne, c/o Reel Time, P.S. 122, 150 1st Ave., NY, NY 10009; (212) 477-5288.

**THE 90's CABLE CHANNEL** seeks programs that bring alt. perspective to issues. Network of 8 full-time cable channels reaches 500,000 homes. Contact: Laura Brenton, 1007 Pearl St., #260, Boulder, CO 80302.

**THE 90's** seeks short (under 15 min.) doc, music & experimental Hi8 works for nat'l broadcast. Excerpts, works-in-progress accepted. Pays \$150/min. Contact: The Fund for Innovative TV, 400 N. Michigan Ave., #1608, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 321-9321.

**TOONTOWN RATS**, Artists Television Access' new animation forum, seeks animated shorts. Send submissions to: Artists Television Access, 992 Valencia

St., San Francisco, CA 94110; or contact Keith Knight, (415) 752-4037; (415) 824-3890.

**UNQUOTE TELEVISION**, cablecast on DUTV, Drexel University's channel 54, seeks narrative, animation, experimental, performance & doc works by young filmmakers from Philly & elsewhere. Show reaches 767,000 households in 3 states. Contact: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

**WGBH** seeks works using medium creatively & new tech. Range of genres w/ strong independent visions. Pays \$110/min. Submit 3/4" or 1/2" finished or in-progress works to: WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777.

**WILLOW MIXED MEDIA** seeks Amiga-based works for Amiga Artists on the Air, program distributed on cable access & video. Small fee. Submit material on 3.5" Amiga disks, VHS, 3/4" tape to: Toby Carey, Willow Mixed Media, Box 194, Lenox Ave., Glenford, NY 12433; (914) 657-2914.

**WOMEN OF COLOR** in Media Arts Database, submit films & videos to database which incl. video filmographies, bibliographical info & biographical data. Contact: Helen Lee, Women of Color in Media Arts Database, Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette, Ste. 207, NY, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606.

**WYOU-TV**, cable access station in Madison, WI, seeks music-related videos for wkly alternative music show. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes. No payment; videos credited. Contact: WYOU-TV, 140 W. Gilman St., Madison, WI 53703.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**CAROLINA THEATRE PROJECT** seeks film programmer/manager for 3-screen, nonprofit complex. Appl. deadline: February 1. For info., contact: Carolina Theater, Box 1927, Durham, NC 27702; (919) 687-2748.

**FORTY ACRES & A MULE FILMWORKS** now accepting scripts for development. Submit feature manuscripts to: Forty Acres & a Mule Filmworks, Story Development Dept., 124 Dekalb Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

**IMAGE FILM/VIDEO CENTER** in Atlanta seeks exec. director w/ vision. Oversee programming, effect PR, fundraise from public & private sources, supervise staff & manage org. Requires B.A. in media arts or related field, demonstrated success in grantwriting & fundraising for arts & proven leadership ability. Begins January 1. Send salary history & resumé to: IMAGE Film/Video Center, 75 Bennett St., NW, Ste. M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309.

**ITHACA COLLEGE** has narrative film production position avail. in Cinema & Photography Dept. of Roy H. Park School of Communications. F/T, tenure-eligible position starts August 15, 1993. Teach fiction film prod., directing & all levels of 16mm film prod. Must have PhD or MFA in film or related discipline; active ABDs also considered. Send resumé, 3 refs to: Marcelle Pecot, chair, Film Production Search Committee, Dept. of Cinema & Photog., Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY 14850-7251; (607) 274-3242.

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE** Dept of Studio Art seeks videomaker w/ rank of ass't/assoc. professor. Candidates must have prod./screening record & teaching exp. Knowledge of computer imaging & MFA or equiv. desired. Candidates must be able to teach

# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

In person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### Equipment Insurance

Equipment coverage for all of your equipment worldwide whether owned or leased.

### Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

## Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### Nationwide Car Rentals

AIVF membership provides discounts on car rentals from major national rental agencies.

### Mastercard Plan

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### Facets Multimedia Video Rentals

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## Join AIVF Today

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers—providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

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### Rates

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### Foreign Rates

(Outside North America)

- \$40/student (enclose copy of student ID)
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both undergrads & grads (teaching load is 2 courses/quarter) & be willing to work on curriculum development as well as development of video facilities w/ assistance of technical staff. Teaching duties begin September 1993. Appls should incl. vita, statement of teaching philosophy & adequate representation of production, w/ any necessary supplemental material, 4 letters & SASE for return of appl. EEO. Direct appls or nominations for position to: Catherine Lord, Chair Dept of Studio Art, UC Irvine, CA 92717.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film has 2 positions open: production & screenwriting. Prod. requires MFA, PhD & strong record. Screenwriting requires teaching experience; prod. teaching skills desired. Submit 1-pg. teaching philosophy. Send cover, resume, sample work (on VHS) or screenplay & 3 letters to: Faculty Search Committee, Production/Screenwriting, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, Univ. of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712-1091.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON seeks tenure-track ass't professor in Television Studies for fall 1993. Looking for scholars w/ expertise in history, industry studies, policy & regulation, audiences, int'l & inter-cultural studies, media & cultural theory. Should be able to teach undergrad. courses in one or more areas & grad. seminar. PhD required. Deadline: January 15, 1993. Women & minorities encouraged. Send inquiries & vita, three letters & samples of work to: Prof. Vance Kepley, Dept. of Communication Arts, 6110 Vilas Hall, U. of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706.

VIDEO SHORTS, nat'l competition of video artworks, announces 12th annual round. Accepting entries in 3/4" & 3/4" SP, VHS & S-VHS & 8mm & Hi8 formats, NTSC standard only. 6:00 limit. Entry fee of \$20/piece & \$10 for each add'l on same cassette. Max. is 3/person. Submit to General or Computer Animation categories. Entries postmarked by Feb. 1, 1993. Min. 10 winners get \$100 & works mastered on 1". Contact: Video Shorts, Box 20369, Seattle, WA 98102 (206)325-8449.

## Publications

TAX REFUNDS IN FLORIDA, 32-pg. ref. manual for producers working in FL includes summary of law, definitions & appl. for refunds. Send check for \$45 to: FMPTA, 355 Beard St., Tallahassee, FL 32303 (in-state orders should include sales tax). Fax VISA or MC requests to: (800) 989-9FAX.

GRANT GUIDES available. Both *Arts, Culture & the Humanities* and *Film, Media & Communications* feature foundations that provide funds for the arts. Breakdown of grants by subject, type of support, and recipient type. \$60 each (plus \$4.50 s&h) to The Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3076. Charge by calling (800) 429-9836 or fax (with return address and credit card number) to (212) 807-3677.

## Resources ■ Funds

ADOLPH & ESTHER GOTTLIEB FOUNDATION has two assistance programs for visual artists. Grants awarded annually to artists working in medium at least 20 years. Contact: Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Fdtn, 380 W. Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

CPB/PBS seek proposals for Primetime Series Initiative. CPB's Television Program Fund & PBS' National Program Service will allocate up to \$6-million in FY93 in support of series w/ no fewer than 10 episodes & no

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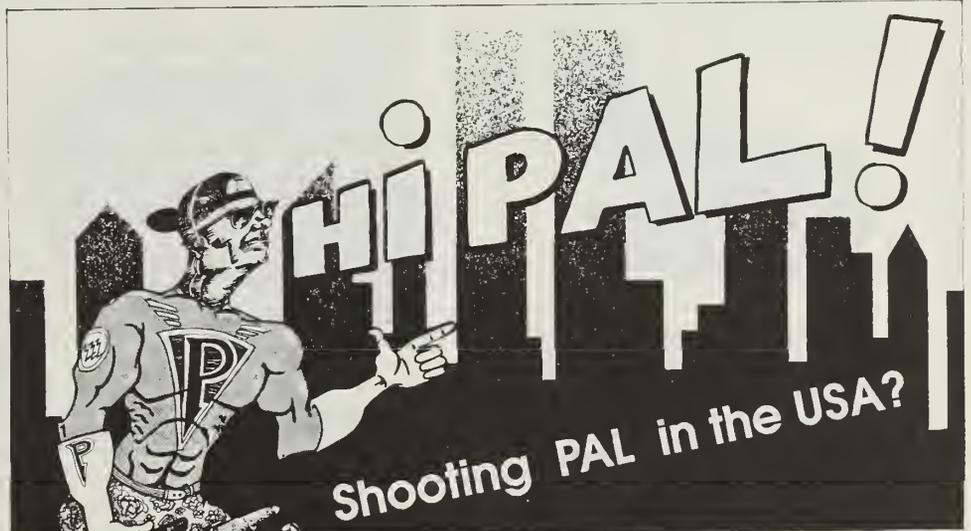
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more than 52, suitable for primetime scheduling on public television. Deadline: Jan. 29. Contact: Charles Deaton, CPB, (202) 879-9740 or Pat Hunter, PBS, (703) 739-5449.

CREATIVE TIME sponsors projects by visual & performing artists as part of ongoing CityWide series. Goal to bring exciting, challenging art to diverse, wide-spread & untapped sites in New York City. No deadline; proposals reviewed every 3-4 mo. Send 5 copies of project description; description of desired public site; technical assessment, incl. consideration of vandalism, security, projects material stability & utilities description; resumés of all participants; budget; up to 10 slides of past work of each participant in group w/accompanying descriptions; 1/2" or 3/4" video of past work, no longer than 5 min., w/explanatory notes; sketches & drawings to clarify proposal & SASE to: Creative Time, 131 W. 24th St., NY, NY 10011-1942; (212) 206-6674; fax: (212) 255-8467.

CUMMINGTON COMMUNITY OF THE ARTS offers private living spaces & studios for residencies from 2 weeks to 3 months. Children's program provides for 12 artists' children during July/August. Contact: Cummington Community of the Arts, RR 1, PO Box 145, Cummington, MA 01026 (413)634-2172.

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM RESOURCE CENTER provides detailed info on environmental films produced in last four years. Services include subject, prod & acquisition info, annual newsletter. Contact: EFRC, 324 N. Tejon St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903; (719) 578-5449.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER Electronic Arts Grants Program offers Presentation Fund grants to nonprofit orgs in NY State. Partial support avail. for presentation of audio, video, computer & time-based electronic art. Deadline: End of each month. Contact: Experimental Television Center, 180 Front Street, Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

FILM PRESERVATION PROGRAM, joint program of the Nat'l Endowment for the Arts & Nat'l Center for Film & Video Preservation at Amer. Film Institute, awards grants to help orgs preserve & restore films of artistic or cultural value. Tax-exempt orgs. can apply. Must have archival film collection, adequate staff & equipment to carry out project. Grants are matching, generally less than \$25,000. For appl. & info, contact: AFI/NEA Film Preservation Program, National Center for Film & Video Preservation at AFI, John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, DC 20566; (202) 828-4070.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS' internship program provides free classes & access to facils. in exchange for 15 hrs work/wk. Prior experience not required. Submit resume, proposal & sample to: Angie Cohn, intern coord., F/VA, 617 Broadway, NY, NY 10003 (212) 673-9361.

FOUNDATION CENTER provides info on philanthropic foundations & agencies that award grant money to the arts. They also publish guidebooks. Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., NY, NY; (212) 620-4320.

GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE SERVICE seeks appls. for 6 mo. Artists-in-Berlin program. Incl. studio, monthly stipends, travel expenses, insurance & language courses. Work sample & appl. by Jan. 1. Contact: German Academic Exchange Service, 950 Third Ave., 19th fl., NY, NY 10022 (212) 758-3223.

HELENE WURLITZER FOUNDATION OF NEW MEXICO offers studio residencies for artists in all media. Residencies approx. 3 mo. & do not include stipends/

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**INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE** seeks proposals from ind. producers or teams for 9-part, multi-genre TV series that explores issues confronting variety of people affected by HIV/AIDS. Deadline: Jan. 15, 1993. For guidelines, contact: ITVS, 333 Sibley, Ste. 200, St. Paul, MN 55101 (612) 225-9035.

**INTERMEDIA ARTS CENTER** offers artists free access to equipment in exchange for participation in collaborative arts projects. Org. has 3/4" A/B/C/D roll computer, chroma-key, computer graphics & 3-D animation systems. Call Michael Rothbard, IMAC Exec. dir., (516) 549-9666.

**JEROME FOUNDATION** funds individual film & video artists living & working in New York City metro area. Appls reviewed 3x/yr. Contact: Jerome Foundation, West 1050 First National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota St., St. Paul, MN 55101; (612) 224-9431.

**LACE ARTISTS' PROJECT GRANTS** appl. avail. Send SASE to: LACE Artists' Projects Grants, 1804 Industrial St., Los Angeles, CA 90021.

**LILA WALLACE-READER'S DIGEST FUND** Int'l Artists Program accepting appls for 3- to 6-mo. residencies at select sites in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & South Asia. Deadline: December 11. Contact: Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Int'l Artists, Arts International, Institute of International Education, 809 U.N. Plaza, NY, NY 10017.

**MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION** supports arts administrators through its Visual Arts Travel Fund. Applicants must be administrator or curator of nonprofit visual or media arts org. in Mid-Atlantic state. Travel grants awarded for 50% of documented expenses incurred to attend an event (max. \$200). Deadline: 6 wks before event or dates of travel. For guidelines contact: Michelle Lamuniere, VAP Associate, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, 11 East Chase Street, Suite 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

**O.T.O.L. VIDEO** invites producers to edit projects on video at its Southern CA facil. Submit synopsis of project, cover letter describing financing plan & brief description of principal people involved. For more info, contact: O.T.O.L. Video, 1800 Stanford St., Santa Monica, CA 90404 (310) 828-5662.

**UNIV. FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION (UFVA) & UNIV. FILM & VIDEO FOUNDATION (UFVF)** offer grants for student projects. Up to \$4,000 avail. for film or video prods & up to \$1,000 for research projects in historical, critical, theoretical, or experimental studies of film or video. Must be sponsored by faculty member who is active member of UFVF. Deadline: Jan. 1. For info, contact: J. Stephen Hank, Dept. of Drama & Communications, Univ. of New Orleans, Lakefront, New Orleans, LA 70148.

**WOMEN IN FILM FOUNDATION FILM FINISHING FUND** awards grants from \$25-50K for completion & delivery of work consistent w/WIF's goals: at least 50% of prod personnel must be women, subject matter must relate to women & be of general humanitarian concern & project must be broadcast quality for exclusive 1-year or 4-broadcast exhibition rights on Lifetime Cable. For guidelines, contact: Lifetime TV Completion Grant, WIFF, 6464 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 900, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

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## FIVE PROCEEDS WITH NEA ADVANCEMENT GRANT

In June, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Advancement Grant. The goal of the first year of this grant is to develop a three-year plan for FIVF/AIVF, which is then submitted to the NEA in August, 1993, for funding consideration. During this first year, the NEA provides a consultant (Lillian Jimenez) to help develop the plan, plus \$5,000 for technical assistance.

The Advancement Grant gives AIVF/FIVF the opportunity to reassess its current programs and services, to examine the current state of the independent media field and AIVF/FIVF's place in that field, and to plan a future that ensures the vitality and longevity of the organization.

AIVF/FIVF's staff and board of directors need your help during this process to ensure that the three-year plan submitted to the NEA reflects your vision for the organization. We will be soliciting your input in a variety of ways during the next few months. *In December, you will receive a questionnaire from FIVF.* We strongly encourage you to complete this and return it before the holidays. From December through February, executive director Ruby Lerner and several AIVF/FIVF board members will hold meetings with members in a number of cities across the country to hear your ideas in person. *Independent* editor Patricia Thomson will also conduct another of these focus groups for AIVF members at the Sundance Festival (see box). In early January, we will also get on the phone and talk to members in other states.

So don't be surprised if you get a call from us asking for your opinions and wishes for the organization or receive a notice about an AIVF/FIVF meeting in your community within the next few months. Your participation is key to our self-assessment. We ask for your help in keeping the nation's largest organization of independent producers healthy and vital into the next decade.

### GOING TO SUNDANCE?

AIVF members who are attending the Sundance Film Festival this year are invited to participate in an informal focus group that will help evaluate and set the future course for AIVF/FIVF. You can meet and hobnob with fellow AIVF members in the process. This session, which is part of our NEA Advancement Grant self-assessment process, will be conducted by *Independent* editor Pat Thomson. Time and place to be announced. Call 212/473-3400 to get your name on the list and for further details.

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to our Midwest members who received **Film in the Cities** 1992 Regional Film/Video Grants: Raul Ferrera-Balanquet (Iowa City, IA); Al Gedicks (La Crosse, WI); Kathleen Laughlin (Minneapolis, MN); and Rosemary Davis (Minneapolis, MN) received production grants; Karla Berry (Oshkosh, WI); Sayer Frey (Minneapolis, MN); and Leighton Pierce (Iowa City, IA) received completion grants; and Jennifer Rogers (Iowa City, IA) was awarded an encouragement grant. Kudos to AIVF members in the South Central and Mid-American states who garnered Independent Production Fund grants from the **Southwest Alternative Media Project**: Melissa Bucklin, Van McElwee, Cynthia Mondell, Tom Shipley, Joseph Tovares, and Millard Rice. The **Jerome Foundation** awarded seven New York City film/video grants for low-budget, personal work by emerging artists. All seven grants, totalling \$47,500, went to AIVF members: Yau Ching, Norman Cowie, Robin Guarino, Thomas Allen Harris, R.D. Lounsbury, Catherine Saalfield and Jaqueline Woodson, and Su Friedrich. Wolfgang Held is one of three students in the country to receive a \$5,000 1993 Eastman Scholarship from **Kodak**. Michelle Handelman received a **Film Arts Foundation** grant for her documentary film *Hell on Wheels*, about the International Ms. Leather contest.

**New York State Council on the Arts** awarded Media Production Grants for 1992 to AIVF members Margie Stroesser for *Between Sisters*, an experimental work on the effect of drug abuse on two siblings; Laura Belsey's *Three Sisters*, a video/audio collage based on the Wooster Group's adaptation of the Chekov play; Alan Berliner's *Audiophile* interactive audio-sculptural installation; Stephanie Black's *The Way We Look to a Song*, a documentary on popular music's political and cultural role; Norman Cowie's *War Is a Violent Crime*, on the media's presentation of the military; Peter Friedman's *Silverlake Life*, a doc-

umentary on a gay couple with AIDS; Pamela Jennings, for *The American Art Song Trilogy*, an interactive installation; Indu Krishnan for *Navjivan (New Life)*, a documentary on the political and social influences shaping Indian women's identities; Carlos Ortiz for *Spirit of Survival*, a documentary on AIDS in prisons; Scott Sinkler for *Addiction in America*, a documentary on addiction in contemporary society; and Renee Tajima for *The Asian American*, a series on contemporary Asian American experience.

Boston member Lyn Goldfarb was recently nominated for an ACE Award for a Lifetime Television documentary, *Danger: Kids at Work*. On the festival circuit, San Francisco member Craig Baldwin received Best of Show at the 1992 **Utah Short Film and Video Festival** for his mock doc *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America*. Roger Paradiso's *Looping*, a 23-minute comedy, won an award at Worldfest Houston and received honorable mention in the Humor/Satire category from the **Association of Visual Communicators**. Pat Ferrero's film *Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World* was selected by the **MacArthur Foundation** Library Video Project and **National Video Resource's** Native American videography for inclusion in the development of Native American video collections for public libraries across the United States. Congratulations to all!

## UPCOMING SEMINARS

### TAX WORKSHOP

Tuesday, January 12, 7 p.m.

Place to be announced. Watch your mailbox for details, or call (212) 473-3400.

Join tax consultant Susan Lee for pointers on filing as a film/videomaker. Learn everything you ever wanted to know about uniform capitalization and other essential accounting practices.

Also: low-budget production workshops in January and March. Watch for details.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars, and workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following individuals and businesses:

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## ERRATA

In last month's issue, the Minutes from the AIVF Board of Directors' Meeting listed the date incorrectly. The board meeting was held on July 18, 1992. In addition, Ruby Lerner had not been named the new executive director at that time, but was appointed in September after a national search.

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