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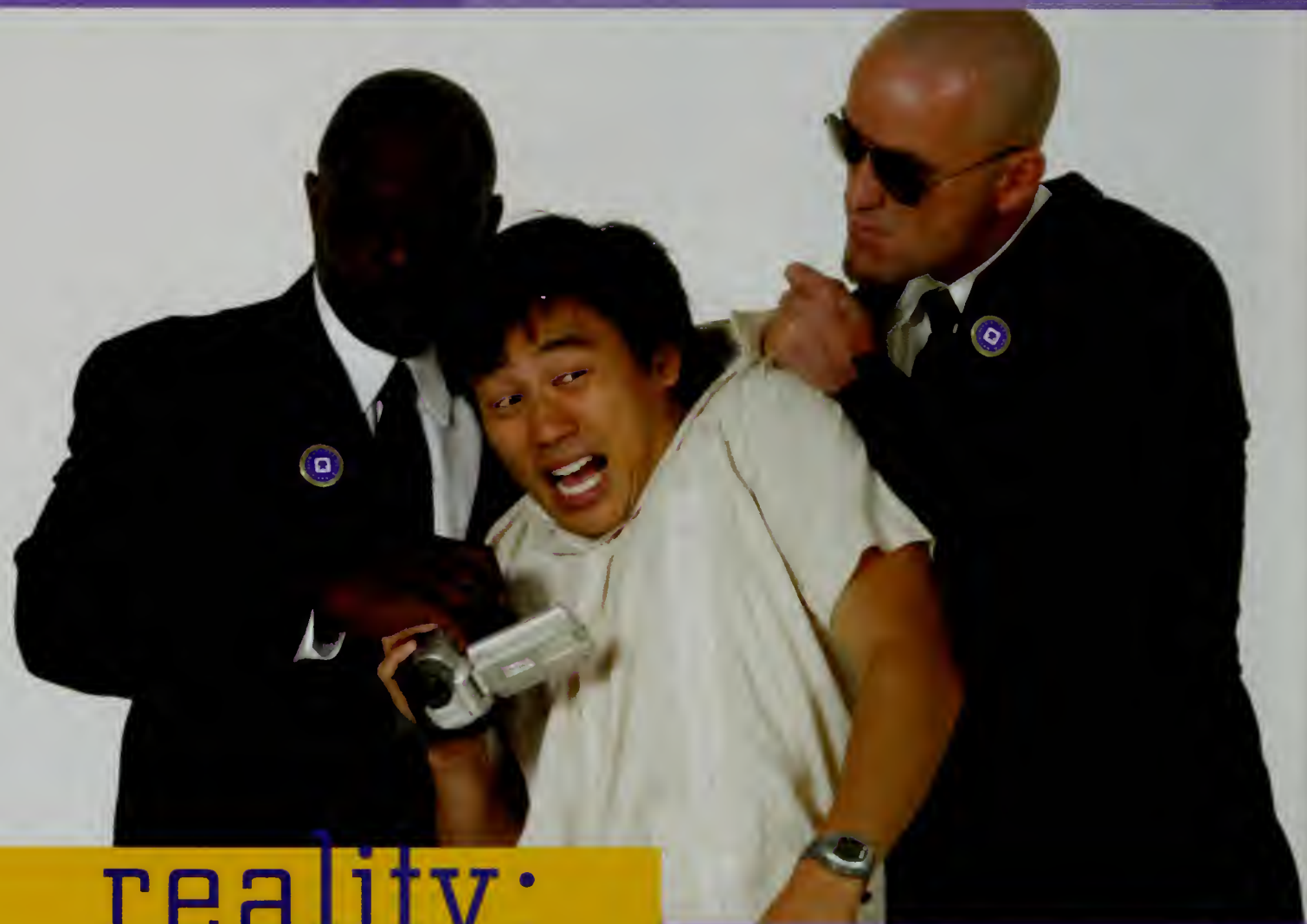
Photos: A scene from Gadi Harel's film *Nights Like These*, about a dissatisfied shadow, was shot on 16mm (Emily Lemole); this archival photo was digitally remastered to create a scene in Nanette Burnstein and Brett Morgen's 2002 Sundance hit, *The Kid Stays in the Picture* (Edgeworx); director of photography Uta Briesewitz, here on location in Baltimore, helped conceptualize and create the unique visuals for films *Session 9*, *XX/XY* and HBO's *The Wire* (Boots Shelton).

Page 5 photos: Sam Chen's animated film *Eternal Gaze* is based on the life of Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (Sam Chen); Jason DaSilva's *Lest We Forget* was funded by the Paul Robeson Fund (Jason DaSilva); Todd Stephens' *Gypsy 83* is about a Stevie Nicks fan who follows her dream (Small Planet Pictures); the short film *Sock it to Me* screened at the 2003 S.N.O.B. Film Festival (Anna Christopher).

On the Cover: A portrait from Sam Chen's animated biopic about Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (Sam Chen).

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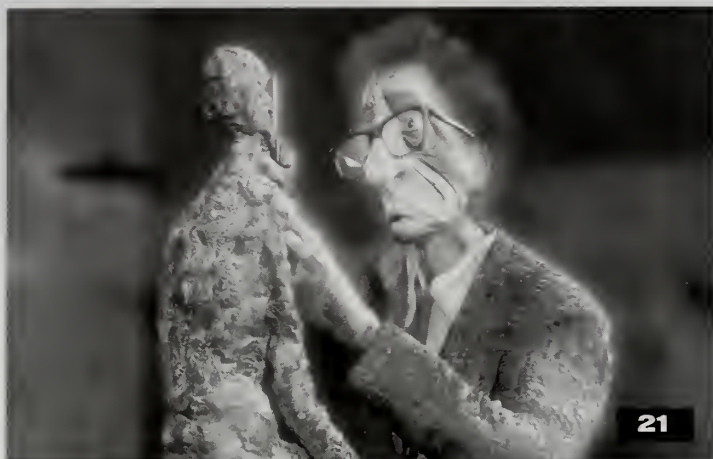


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Letters to the Editor

READERS RESPOND TO PAST ISSUES

Dear Editor,

I am a documentary filmmaker and screenwriter, a member of AIVE, an editor at *Vogue*, former Senior Editor of *Film Comment*, and Jewish. For the first time in my life I feel compelled to write a letter to the editor to express how insulting and offensive I found your November 2003 cover. I must clarify that I am not offended by *The Hebrew Hammer* itself; its subject, content, and context are clear. I also understand that *The Hebrew Hammer* is a film reflected in your magazine's contents. But the image you have chosen from the film and your cover design—a prominent Jewish star (echoed by two others in the background) adjacent to the large text MONEY MATTERS plays into one of the world's oldest and most degrading stereotypes of Jewish people. As someone who represents imagemakers for a magazine that represents imagemakers, you have firsthand awareness of the power of the visual image—especially in its juxtaposition with text—and it is inconceivable in this day and age there could be such an oversight, or such a conscious choice for cover. Only through some searching through your pages does the reader discover that the image on your cover relates to an article in your magazine (your TOC never mentions *The Hebrew Hammer*, and leaves one guessing why this film was even chosen to represent your publication) and how, and only then does this “visual pun” become (barely) apparent. Had your cover played/preyed upon any other minority stereotype, I would have been equally

offended and aghast. We imagemakers have a responsibility to challenge stereotypes not reinforce them. As a filmmaker, a journalist who has focused on the representation of minorities in the film and media for *Vibe*, *Rolling Stone*, and numerous other publications, and a human being, I am appalled and, frankly, speechless, at your magazine's unawareness and irresponsibility. For what it is worth, my coworkers at *Vogue* echo my sentiments.

Sincerely,
Marlaine Glicksman

Dear Marlaine Glicksman,
We appreciate your taking the time to let us know how you felt about the cover of our November issue. And you are correct that as a representative of imagemakers, *The Independent* has a significant responsibility to be aware of the images we present, as well as the messages these images

convey. When we chose the *Hebrew Hammer* shot for the cover, we had no intention of perpetuating any stereotypes. Instead, the cover, like all of our covers, is a link to one of the features about funding independent film and is captioned on page 3. This article focuses on the financial production of *The Hebrew Hammer*, a film that

consciously exploits Jewish stereotypes using cartoonish figures. Our association of an absurdist Jewish gangster and the words “Money Matters” were playing on the ironies in the film. However, we deeply regret that this offended you and we welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,
The Independent

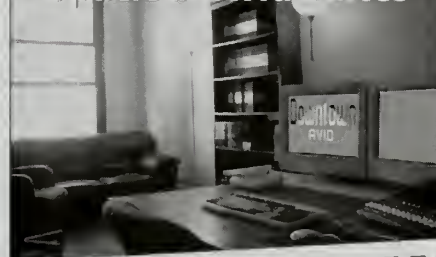


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The Revival House

RHODE ISLAND MAKES SPACE FOR FILMMAKERS

By Alyssa Worsham

On November 4, 2003, The Revival House, a fifty-seat cinema and cafe located in Westerly, Rhode Island, opened its newly renovated doors to the public. Daniel Kamil and Emily Steffian, husband and wife, converted the former hardware store into a venue for classics, documentaries, and independent film and video. Not only does the theater screen new and old classics, but the owners also encourage individual submissions from filmmakers who want a chance to show their work outside of the festival circuit—and get paid for it. Featured filmmakers receive all the money from the door sales.

Kamil, a filmmaker, and Steffian, a visual artist, originally wanted to open a similar venue in LA, where the couple lived for several years, using a model like the combination restaurant/theater Foreign Cinema in San Francisco. “But we wanted to tweak it in a way that suited our interests, which were renovating an old building, showing inde-

pendent film and older American films, and running counter to the exhibition industry,” says Kamil. Ultimately, the couple decided to move back east to be near their families. After downtown Providence didn’t work out, they found the small beach community of Westerly. Having located the perfect building (actually two store fronts), the couple did the demolition and painting themselves, and they now live in an upstairs loft in the 2,500 square foot space.

The space itself is both conceptually and visually impressive—the Department of the Interior placed the restored “commercial Victorian” building on the National Register of Historic Places—and for the centerpiece of the theater, the lobby mural, the couple commissioned Katharine Lovell, an ex-studio mate of Steffian’s, who teaches at RISD. “The curved center wall contains windows from all of our old houses, and we asked her to paint around them,” explains Kamil. “It’s really stunning.” They also reused much of the wood in the 170-year-old building and went dumpster-diving outside the LA public library to get

their bathroom wallpaper. An old card catalogue gives patrons something to read when they visit the restroom. “This theatre is about reviving older things, things that have been neglected,” says Kamil, “and the importance of incorporating newer things into that. Everything that we could reuse, we have reused within the space.”

During the summer, chairs and tables will be placed outside The Revival House, as the theater is located along the town’s river. Every aspect of the business has been carefully considered—the cafe serves paninis, candies, and specialty beverages, including wine, which patrons can enjoy in the cafe or inside the theater. Kamil and Steffian even hired a classically trained French chef who specializes in innovative chocolates, which may contain wasabi, sesame, chili peppers, curry, or saffron. “We can tie [these flavors] into Kurosawa films or Indian films—there are thematic projects we’d like to try,” says Kamil. For now films are grouped by director, usually three in a series. In November and December, Revival House showed films by Billy Wilder, John Huston, Milos Forman, Alfred Hitchcock, John Frankenheimer, Michael Moore, Steven Frears, Frank Capra, and Stanley Kubrick.

“There are people starving for great film,” says Kamil, “and we wanted to fill

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that niche. We want filmmakers to send whatever they have—we are begging for submissions. The game almost seems rigged, as there is no access other than film festivals. Venues are not risking showing individual films, and we want to support the independent film movement as much as we can.”

For more information go www.revivalhouse.net

Bush in 30 Seconds

Last fall, to motivate voters for the upcoming 2004 presidential elections, the online advocacy group MoveOn.org sponsored a contest



called “Bush in 30 Seconds,” in which any mediamaker could submit a thirty-second commercial that told “the truth about George Bush.” The ads were posted on the “Bush in 30 Seconds” website (www.bushin30seconds.org) between December 15-30, 2003, during which time visitors could vote for their favorite entries. Once the online votes were tallied, a high-profile panel of judges—including Moby, Michael Moore, Gus Van Sant, Jack Black, Margaret Cho, Janeane Garofalo, and Eddie Vedder—chose the winner. At press time, the winning commercial is set to air as part of a television advertising campaign during the week of the 2004 State of the Union address.

“For the last three years, President

Musician Moby is one of the sponsors and judges of the “Bush in 30 Seconds” commercial contest.

Bush’s policies have ransacked the environment, put our national security at risk, damaged our economy, and redistributed wealth from the middle class to the very wealthiest Americans. Yet thanks to a complacent media, the president has managed to hide behind a carefully constructed ‘compassionate’ image. As the 2004 election nears, it’s crucial that voters understand what President Bush’s policies really mean for our country,” explained the website. While the ads were supposed to challenge a current policy in an “informative, memorable, and creative way,” contestants were not allowed to “expressly advocate the election or defeat of any candidate.” Aside from a few other minor rules, the contest encouraged participants to be as creative as they liked—animation, rants, live action, and silent films were all permitted.

Voters and judges used four criteria to determine the finalists and the winner: overall impact (forty percent), originality (twenty percent), memorable content and delivery (twenty percent), and clear message (twenty percent).

The contest was developed and run by Laura Dawn, David Fenton, Eli Pariser, Lee Solomon, Moby, and Jonathan Soros to seek out new talent and messages in the otherwise mainstream realm of political advertising. In addition to posting a recommended reading list regarding Bush’s policies, the organizers provided their seven top reasons for launching their contest. In short, they criticized Bush’s policies on the following: the Iraq war, the environment, education, the Patriot Act, tax cuts, unemployment, and homeland security.

Film Festival Channel

The rapidly growing digital cable industry has made it possible for the new Film Festival Channel to allow unprecedented exposure for new and unknown filmmakers. The Channel

began accepting submissions in September. They asked filmmakers for features, shorts, or documentaries, and a nominal fee based on the length of their project. The films chosen by FFC will be broadcast in Summer 2004 by satellite, cable, or other digital transmissions. Local channel listings will also be announced at that time. FFC viewers will be able to vote for their favorite films via internet, phone, or mail, and while the winners will not receive a monetary prize, FFC has a distribution model that will help promote the films to other venues.

Contestants are required to enter under one of the following categories: comedy, drama, documentary, science fiction, action, thriller, animated, foreign, alternative edge (includes NC-17 rated films, but no porn is permitted), and winner’s circle (in house or festival winners chosen by FFC). In addition to showcasing films, the FFC will produce a behind-the-scenes show about the running of FFC, and features about filmmakers, writers, and directors. ■

See www.filmfestivalchannel.com

*Alyssa Worsham is an intern at
The Independent.*

CORRECTIONS

We regret the following errors in the December issue:

In “The Nuances of Film Editing,” we reported that Sam Pollard wrote, directed, and produced *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, when in fact Richard Wormser was the originator, co-writer/director of the series. The executive producers were Bill Grant and Bill Jersey—who also co-wrote/directed the series.

In “Cowboy Rides into the Sunset,” Alex Smith and Andrew Smith’s film *The Slaughter Rule* was incorrectly identified as *Slaughterhouse Rules*.

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BEYOND PUBLIC INTEREST FUNDING

By Alyce Myatt

I've been lucky. While I have had what some might call a pretty zigzaggy career, it is a career that has afforded me a unique view of the documentary field. An introduction to Third World Newsreel in 1969 led to stints in commercial television, public television, media philanthropy, new media, even newer media, and the new-for-the-moment-oops-now-old new media. Regardless of who was signing the checks, though, I'm proud to be able to say that all of my experiences have been within the realm of social interest media. I'm not going to lie though; it hasn't been easy. Sometimes moving a project forward has seemed almost impossible (sometimes making the next month's rent has seemed almost impossible, too). But, I've found that you can often come up with alternative routes to complete your work, get it in front of an audience, and, ideally, make a positive impact on society.

Looking over the past thirty or so years of my career, it does strike me that there are patterns in time, events, and process. One of the positive things about getting older is that you can actually begin to recognize those patterns. For example, it's important to remember that this isn't the first time the documentary field has been broke, which it is. It isn't the first time that filmmakers committed to casting light on important issues have faced closed doors at distribution outlets, which they do, time and time again. And, it isn't the first time that political events in this country, and around the globe, have sparked outrage.

I'm not going to wander down the halls of the old school, but I will suggest that it is useful for you and your work as a social interest documentary maker to be familiar with the conflu-

ence of events in the late 60s and early 70s: the war, the political climate, and the impact of changing technology. For example, the creation of mag striped film did away with double-system shooting, quickly replaced by portable videotape, which began its own evolution—all allowing filmmakers greater agility in the field and quicker turnaround time in post-production. Such seismic events created change for filmmakers not just in the United States, but in Europe, Latin America, and within the Pan-African movement. There are not only films, but media organizations that exist as a direct result of those extraordinary times and that environment.

I think my protean existence has given me the opportunity to cultivate not only a historical perspective but also a fairly wide view of who's doing what, how, and how well. Despite the financial difficulties all mediamakers are experiencing now, and despite it being a very disquieting time in our nation's history, believe it or not, there are some very good things to report and consider.

I have had the privilege of engaging in several informal conversations with funders and they, too, are concerned about the health of the social issue documentary field: the diversity of voices, the quality of storytelling, and the need to reach audiences—all essential to support a strong, democratic nation. Like you and me, they find themselves in a situation of limited and, in some cases, reduced funding, whether from government sponsored support or private foundations. And because dollars are tight, funders are often subjected to a higher burden of proof for each and every grant they seek to issue. I think it's important for filmmakers to realize

that the grantmakers are sincerely developing creative ways to keep, and where possible increase, the dollars flowing into the field. We all know that no one is going to fund your project based solely on the fact that you, as a filmmaker, think it's important. These days everybody needs to see measurable outcomes. Therefore, you have to help the funder make the argument that your project is central to furthering the stated goals and objectives of the funding organization.

Sometimes that requires the repositioning of your project—not changing your content or storytelling style, just talking about your project in a different way. So, instead of making a film about, say, domestic violence, make a film that serves as a “communications tool comprised of a film and educational print materials to be broadcast and disseminated through partner organizations that specialize in domestic violence issues.” That's no different than a film with an outreach project, but it has the ability to resonate with foundations that would otherwise not normally fund a film, but that do provide financial support for projects focusing on specific issues. A slight recalibration of language surrounding your project can provide traditional media-funders with the ammunition they need to convince their organizations that your project will have an impact on society.

One of the great differences between today's world and that of thirty years ago is that there are organizations that can help you frame your work and create tools that will extend the impact of your project—Active Voice, mediarights.org, and Working Films, to name a few. This is a significant change, and it is important to take advantage of their expertise. AIVF and mediarights.org offer an outreach toolkit, and a number of organizations that serve the field now have workshops and panels on how to create community engagement campaigns and how to strengthen your project to

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have greater resonance.

Another relatively new phenomenon is that there are now multiple places where you can go to talk about not just film, but the impact that certain films are having on a specific community, the country as a whole, or even around the world. For example, the Center for Social Media at American University and the NYU Center for Media, Culture, and History have year-round programs of screenings and discussions. These efforts are helping to increase the visibility of work and can help you think through how you might approach your own project.

What I don't feel I'm hearing enough about, however, is the "art" of documentary making. Often when a filmmaker is working on an issue-driven film he or she may short change the artistry.

2003 brought us Travis Wilkerson's documentary film, *An Injury to One*, which deconstructed the documentary form. Judith Helfand has perfected the seamless integration of humor into her films that tackle very serious and complex themes. We must remind ourselves that while there is a business to making and marketing films, social issue filmmakers belong to the community of artists. Artists and their forms do get into ruts (yes, it's a direct result of market forces), but I would love to see the art form move forward in a major way. The successful work of Wilkerson and Helfand will, hopefully, spark the imagination of others.

These are difficult times. But what's most important to remember is that no matter what, as a filmmaker you are first and foremost a storyteller, and your stories must be told. If they are told well, they will find an audience—even if it means working and existing in the margins. Warrington Hudlin, founder and chief of dvRepublic.org, and president of the Black Filmmakers Foundation, maintains that the margins can be a position of strength. "The key is not to confuse the 'margin' of access to the dominant media plat-

forms with having a 'marginal' story. Independent filmmakers are attracted to the core of our nation's most compelling stories, but are then relegated to the margin of media access in telling them. Conversely, the mainstream media platform is wasted on American myth, fantasy, and denial," says Hudlin. I tend to agree with him. Filmmakers need to be aware of that positioning and work tactically to use it rather than fight against it. A great example of this is Mark Moskowitz's documentary *The Stone Reader*, where Moskowitz organized a series of theatrical screenings across the country—literally booking the film market by market, very often in fringe timeslots. His film created such a buzz about the out-of-print book that its story is based on, that the book was picked up by a major publisher and reprinted, which in turn pushed the sales of Mark's film on DVD. It's a great success story, with strategy and tactics that can serve as a template for others.

I believe that it's important for a film not just to be seen, but to serve as a catalyst for change. As a filmmaker, if you're concerned about the current state of things—funding, distribution, global turmoil, paying your rent—I believe that it is within your power to effect change. Through your work, yes, but also through advocacy, activism, and general hell-raising. As in the 60s and 70s, it requires people to band together to make things happen. Back then, activist efforts changed arts funding and the production process, influenced domestic public policy, and, in some cases, changed the world by putting a face on issues and individuals previously excluded from the mainstream media. ■

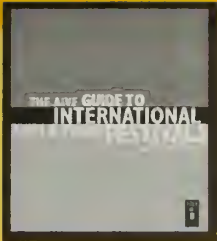
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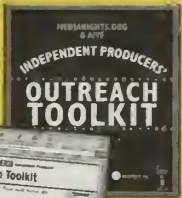
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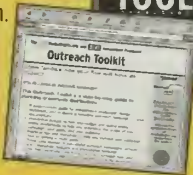
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Colorvision

MARC JOHNSON'S ENLIGHTENING NEW SERIES

By Christine Schomer

Marc Henry Johnson, executive producer and chief visionary of the newly premiered public television series *Colorvision*, is a passionate advocate for fair and balanced representation of minority cultures on our airwaves and movie screens. Disarmingly affable, Johnson is also politically savvy, articulate, and inclusive-minded. With *Colorvision*, an interesting, if at times overly ambitious, showcase of short films and their filmmakers, Johnson has found a place and a way to apply his unique sensibility.

Johnson, whose previous work as a producer includes the award-winning film *The Huey P. Newton Story* for HBO, adapted from a stage performance by Roger Guenveur Smith and directed by Spike Lee, explains that his film and television interests go back to a crucial moment in college where, as an undergraduate at Cornell and recent transplant from the school's engineering department to its theatre and film department, he took his first film history survey course. The course included a screening of D.W. Griffiths' *Birth of a Nation*, and Johnson remembers that the class discussion focused more on the film's cinematic influence than its racism and historical revisionism. Although his first impulse was to bolt back to the clear boundaries of engineering, Johnson decided instead to stick it out with a promise to himself that he would, "find a way for the voices of my community to get their stories told."

If you've ever tried spitting in the

wind, you probably know what it feels like to be a filmmaker of short films. Considering that the medium has few distribution outlets, no financing options (save inheritances, credit cards, and wealthy relatives), and razor-thin chances that the final product will end up in the hands of someone who can actually kick-start your career or your financial independence, it hardly



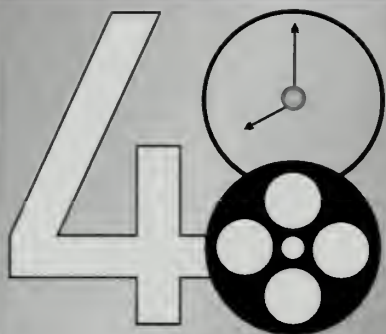
screams mainstream opportunity outlet. So when *Colorvision*, which was funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The Ford Foundation, and ITVS, hits American Public Television (APT) in January, with its mission to create a national venue for African American, Asian American, Native American, Latino, and Pacific Islander filmmakers to screen their short films and create a dialog on race and culture, you may feel the impulse to give your head a scratch. That is to say, when the medium itself is marginalized, under-funded, under-appreciated and misunderstood, at what point does the hair split so fine that only a barber would give a damn?

The ultimate goal for *Colorvision*, though, Johnson maintains, goes beyond the series itself, further specifying

ing that his hope is to generate enough revenue to found and support a studio for independents. That kind of cash, however, has to come from a mainstream economic infrastructure that sees a bottom line profit opportunity. With other producing projects in various stages of development and completion, including a documentary on black filmmakers, a TV series on the history of Latino baseball, and Rodney Evans' 2004 Sundance entry *Brother to Brother*, Johnson is not a novice in the industry, and understands well that the fact of his being a one-man equal opportunity impresario is largely why the unique and admittedly risky venture of *Colorvision* has any legs at all. To wit, he has taken a deceptively passive route with the series by taking confrontational material and wrapping it around softball segments and soft-focus patter from a recognizable minority host. The real meat of racial and cultural identity is in the short films themselves, where it should be.

As a producer, Johnson has worked with such cultural maelstroms as Michael Moore and Spike Lee, as well as less controversial outlets like PBS, The Learning Channel, and Discovery. Although the original idea for *Colorvision* was conceived of by a multi-cultural consortia looking to get their communities' programming on television, the series is Johnson's first production as auteur—it's his baby from start to finish, which, Johnson concedes, has been both exciting and daunting. He recalls that the day after the project was approved he felt the full scale of its weight come crashing down on him, briefly turning his enthusiasm to paralyzing anxiety. But after a night in the Mojave Desert with friends under an intense meteor shower, he had, he says with a sheepish laugh, a vision: "We could put *Colorvision* together and make the most of it [by augmenting] the films with these originally produced, hosted seg-

Colorvision's producer Marc Johnson.



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ments, which string it along and highlight the themes and give you a pool of talent and, hopefully, the audience will come back week after week and see what they are up to."

And so it came to pass. The two-year journey culminates with six hour-long episodes hosted in a TV magazine format. The series host is J. Lo's late 80's doppelganger, Daisy Fuentes, and the short films are broken up by light-hearted segments hosted by a mélange of multicultural talking heads in fish-out-of-water scenarios. For example, in episode three, Kate Rigg, a quick-witted Canadian comedian with Indonesian roots, dives into the current craze of three-minute dating parties in an effort to gauge the ethnic diversity of the mainstream singles scene. And in one of the series' few self-generated segments where racial tension is a palpable presence between host and community, Marc Anthony Thompson, a dynamic, Panamanian born African American extrovert (who also happens to be the series composer) takes a trip to New York City's Puerto Rican Day parade, where his non-Puerto Rican presence briefly raises hackles. The six episodes are divided up into universal themes: "Heroes," "Dreams," "Identity," "Love," "Rage," and "Death," respectively. The films run the gamut of experimental non-narrative to Hollywood-lite; crude to eloquent; stiff to poetic; technically complex to barely competent.

The twenty-three films featured in the series were culled from over 500 submissions that came through the casting of a wide net—Johnson solicited from film festivals, museum curators, film departments at universities, and film agents. While he already had long-standing connections to the African American film and television community, he had to take a crash course in the four other less familiar cultural identities, which drew for him an interesting conclusion. "I realized that if you put those five groups together (African

American, Asian American, Pacific Islands, Latino and Native American) all of a sudden they are not a minority group—together they are a majority. From that point of view it kind of lightened things up and allowed me to look for good stories. Which in the end, that's what it's about."

The end game, as far as Johnson is concerned, for *Colorvision* or any other of his forthcoming projects, is not just in giving airtime to minorities, but in



changing the infrastructure that evaluates and finances the future work of the directors. He credits promising models of institutional diversity within public broadcasting itself, as well as divisions within HBO, the Ford Foundation, and ITVS, although he sees perpetual stagnation within the larger outlets. He explains, "The result of the [last] census [demonstrated] a changing face of the American public. Media ultimately is for the people and it should reflect the people. That might sound idealistic but I think a problem is that the media—i.e. studios and networks—are the last bastion of the old boys network."

Johnson admits that progress in front of the camera has been notable (black and Latino sitcoms, for example), even though he strongly adheres to the notion that any real change will only occur when network, studio, and cable executives who greenlight projects are themselves representative of our national diversity. Johnson says that in the five-year process of seeking funding for *The Huey P. Newton Story*, he never

Colorvision's host Daisy Fuentes.

once sat across from a black executive who could sign a check. "I pitched all these young white guys and they'd be like, 'Okay, what's this Huey Lewis thing you got?'" He laughs about the curious phenomenon within studios that have created "diversity departments," adding, "Why don't you just hire a VP of production who happens to be Latino? Or a VP of Development or Creative Affairs who happens to be black or Native American? It seems like a real waste of resources . . . but it's something that they can point out and say, 'hey, we have black executives . . . in the diversity department.'"

There are inevitable gaps in a six-episode series with such a broad mandate as *Colorvision*—perhaps the most glaring of which is that the patronage of the consortia inevitably generates a series that represents a rather neat assemblage of cultures, and it is that very oversimplification that denies the viewer a window into how complexly the American identity is tied up in its native and immigrant experiences. Which, one could argue, creates the very sort of economic tit-for-tat that Johnson hopes to defy (i.e. mainstream cash buys the programming it wants to see). And what is most obviously absent (save a Palestinian character in *The Satellite Shooters*) is the Arab point of view, a culture at the forefront of disenfranchisement and misunderstanding on a global scale. Johnson brushes off these observations, explaining that he was randomly selective since obviously no show could ever claim to represent every culture, and this series represents the best of what they screened. In fact, he suggests the only way *Colorvision* could get any broader would be to consider foreign films, which is where he hopes to take the show if it gets picked up for another season.

Potential faults and criticism aside, *Colorvision* is a solid first step in the post-affirmative-action world of culture identity, and it says a lot about Johnson's skills as a producer that he has managed to adequately represent



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such a dynamic panoply of identities through these twenty-three short films. But can this dialog and format affect the larger public, beyond American Public Television and PBS's reach? Is there new ground here, not yet covered? Johnson ambitiously aspires not only to get his show franchised in Europe, where minority culture is fraught with a sea change of new hostility around the tide of immigrants from the African colonies, but also to seek out the newest means of distribution and broadcasting, through technological innovations like satellite and HD. And in terms of programming innovations, some of the films in the series do challenge the viewers' assumptions about other people and the simultaneously protective and isolating nature of community, through good storytelling and filmmaking.

Johnson's plans for an as yet unconfirmed second season of *Colorvision* include themes on family and hustling—segments like a Cowboy-Indian poetry showdown and the separate black and white Thomas Jefferson family reunions. But for now, his focus remains on his high hopes for the series debut this January. Because the series is offered by APT, it is not on the PBS schedule, and Johnson has lobbied tirelessly to impress affiliate stations and seize precious time slots, the last leg of the production process that many show creators leave for others to sort out, either because they lack the savvy to pursue it, or the production has worn them out. And Johnson is convinced that if he can appeal to the local markets and build an audience on his own, he can create a demand that will ultimately penetrate the mainstream. Because the goal, he says, is not to win viewers by pegging interest to the minority content, per se—he wants to expand on the “majority” experience. “Revelations about the culture we call America,” says Johnson. “That’s what we set out to do.” □

Christine Schomer is a freelance writer and television producer in New York City.



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Sam Chen

COMPUTER-ANIMATED BIOPIC STRIKES A CHORD

By Neil Kendricks

Ofentimes an independent filmmaker requires the support of an army of many—actors and crew—to nurture his or her film into fruition. In the case of director-producer Sam Chen's computer-animated short film *Eternal Gaze*, a biopic on the life and art of Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti, the required support came down to an army of one.

Chen, a San Diego based animator and a graduate of UCLA's computer science program, wrote, directed, designed, and edited *Eternal Gaze*,

to more festivals with the film, which qualified for Academy Award consideration in November.

An Oscar nomination would do wonders for any filmmaker's career, but Chen, who cites Pixar-pioneer John Lasseter as a major influence, did not make such a complicated film with the sole intent of using it as a calling card. When asked what he had learned through the making of *Eternal Gaze*, Chen is candid about how deeply personal the film is to him, especially after dedicating the last three years of his life to completing

The age-old issue of artistic truth is a central theme in Chen's film. From the film's opening moments, the viewer crosses the threshold into Giacometti's studio to find the sculptor hard at work, trying to express the inner turmoil that is suggested by his illuminating yet soul-weary eyes. He is the angst-ridden artist incarnate, and Chen establishes an intense, introspective mood in the film where the audience is invited to share Giacometti's existential view of the human condition.

Set in Paris circa 1957, Chen unfolds *Eternal Gaze* as a dramatic fever dream of light and shadows, taking undeniable cues from Gregg Toland's deep-focus cinematography in Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*. With composer/co-producer Jamey Scott's music and sound design complementing Chen's imagery, the 16-minute short is part



which in 2003 became a festival favorite and garnered a slew of awards ranging from the San Diego Filmmaker Award at the San Diego Film Festival, to grand prize honors for Best Animated Short Film at the Siggraph 2003 Convention. And the wave of critical kudos still continues to gather momentum as Chen travels

Sam Chen's animated images of Italian sculptor Alberto Giacometti.

the project. "It sounds corny, but I found out who I am and who I am supposed to be," says Chen. "It's been a personal journey." Chen further explained that it was a journey during which he felt driven to put his professional and artistic self to the test. "You always want to prove yourself to yourself like, 'Can I do this? Do I have what it takes? Do I have something unique to say and offer?' Those are questions that every artist struggles with."

portrait of the artist and part meditation on the creative process. Interestingly, the initial spark for the film's concept emerged from a reading assignment given on a day Chen ditched a drawing class he was taking at Stanford. He later picked up the assignment, though, "A Giacometti Portrait," and from the first page onward, Chen says, he was hooked.

"It was an accident," says Chen, who was born in Taiwan and immigrated to

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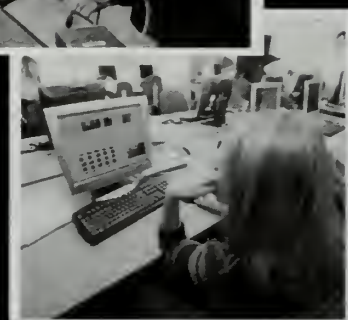
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the US in 1975. "And, maybe, it was fate. But I was taking an evening, life-drawing class and the professor gave a reading assignment about Giacometti written by James Lord. [Lord] posed for Giacometti for eighteen days. It was suppose to be a one-day pose, but it became eighteen days," Chen explains. "That's really a reflection of Giacometti. Art is never finished; just abandoned... He's searching for the meaning of life; the meaning of the human gaze. To him, there is no time limit." There was no time limit for Chen either when it came to realizing his dream project.

In the three years that it took Chen to resurrect Giacometti as a computer-animated character, the first year alone was dedicated to doing research and character design. Chen read everything he could on the artist best known for his stark, monolithic figurative sculptures, which included the rediscovery of Lord's work in *Giacometti: A Biography*. And then the writing began. "I spent six months writing a first draft and it went nowhere," Chen recalls. "I threw it



away and started from scratch. The next morning, it finished itself in two hours because it felt right."

Chen, who thrives on working in a state of "healthy stress," says the breakthrough materialized when he shifted the script's focus away from

the art and started taking a serious look at the man behind the startling modernist masterworks. The key was making the audience empathize with Giacometti as a human being, Chen explains, thus allowing them to better appreciate the art that dominated his



life. And though one might think that a depiction of Giacometti as the existentialist human being he was is a far cry from the more whimsical themes often associated with computer animation, Chen believes his film openly challenges this notion.

Like the technique of his elusive subject, Chen approached his project as a search that started with pencil and paper, developing the character's anguished look from hundreds of drawings in his sketchbooks. Chen later drew storyboards on Post-It notes that he scanned into a computer for an animatic—or animated storyboards—which were then set to music. It's a process that varies, says Chen, and one that is not always clear. "The difference between animation and live action is you're making the film backwards," he explains. "And what I mean is you have to edit everything ahead of time, and then you animate only enough to fill the length of each shot that's been pre-planned. That's because animation is so expensive and time consuming. You're not going to animate one more

frame than you have to."

Working on an animated piece like *Eternal Gaze* demands precision and a willingness to make every image count, in order to create an illusion of life that makes sense both visually and conceptually. Since he was creating the film

primarily on his laptop computer, Chen had to be at the top of his game, otherwise time, money, and energy would be wasted. In the end, nothing wasted and much gained, says Chen, who confesses to more than a passing connection to the sculptor's philosophy. "The coolest thing about this project was that parallelism," Chen explains. "It's one of those things where by the third year, all of my friends accused me of channeling Giacometti. It's almost as if I became Giacometti."

"Animators are actually frustrated actors," says Chen, whose research for the film included taking acting and improv classes. "I'm the one who is actually acting as Giacometti. And so I almost had to feel his torment and strive for the impossible. Not just 'Am I going to sell this? Does this look pretty?' It's more like you're putting your life on the line. The direr it is, the better it is." ■

Neil Kendricks is a San Diego based artist, filmmaker, and writer who is currently working on his latest short films-in-progress, *Cipher* and *Duct Tape*.

Left: animator Sam Chen; right: Giacometti in *Eternal Gaze*.



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Detroit, Michigan

SLOWLY GROWS FERTILE FOR FILMMAKERS

By Matthew Miller

Over the course of two generations, Detroit has gone from a symbol of American industrial prowess to a shorthand term for the worst of American urban decay. The city's hardest days are over, though—the days when commentators were calling Detroit a third-world city or, as Diane Sawyer once said, “the first urban domino to fall”—and there are real signs of recovery. Businesses have started moving into the once empty downtown area. New housing developments have filled in previously vacant lots in the neighborhoods surrounding the city center. But three decades of middle-class flight, which started in earnest with a riot in 1967, have left Detroit in sorry shape. While the metro area has grown, the city's population is about half of what it was in the 1950s. The majority of the region's population and economy resides in the suburbs. So too do the region's cultural resources.

Detroit, to put it another way, doesn't exercise the whirlpool effect of most large cities. It doesn't draw people, ideas, and resources down into a single center. It has trouble achieving that critical mass where individual cultural activities and institutions exceed the sum of their parts and become a vital cultural scene. This, however, is not to say that the city's film scene is altogether barren. Detroit and its surrounding suburbs have their share of working filmmakers, and there is a thriving production community, though its output is almost exclusively focused on the auto industry. Still, it is a film scene in-progress and likely to remain so for some time.

DFC: Ten years, three names, one acronym

The Detroit Film Center was formed around the idea of sharing resources, specifically an eight-plate Steenbeck flatbed. A little more than a decade ago, DFC founder Robert Andersen discovered the Steenbeck for sale, and thought to purchase it using cable franchise money (money from franchise fees paid to the city of Detroit by cable



companies, a portion of which is set aside for local film projects). The administrator of those funds, a government functionary, told Andersen that he could have the money if he put together an organization of twenty people and agreed to house the machine in the city of Detroit. The organization Anderson put together was called the Detroit Film Co-op, the first of three names that would use the DFC acronym. The group incorporated in 1993, changing its name to the Detroit Filmmakers' Coalition when members realized “co-op” was a legal designation, and soon began holding workshops to

raise money for the \$225-a-month rent on offices in a former downtown department store. They started holding monthly screenings of local work, and after that, Anderson says simply, “One thing led to another.”

Last October, the DFC celebrated its tenth anniversary and changed its name yet again to the Detroit Film Center, a name members felt better reflected the organization's increasingly inclusive mission. The DFC is now a 180-member organization with an annual budget of around \$150,000, and is very likely the most important resource center for independent filmmakers in the city. The group offers more than a dozen regular filmmaking classes and workshops, taught by local film professionals and university instructors, on topics ranging from basic film production to screenwriting to Super 8 experimental work. It provides inexpensive equipment rental, holds open screenings on the last Friday of each month, and sponsors several film series including the New Cinema series, which focuses exclusively on independent and experimental filmmakers.

And the DFC is growing. In February 2002, the group hired its first full-time employee, executive director Anthony Morrow, and in May, signed a five-year lease on a 3,600-square-foot storefront in the Book Tower building downtown, a space more than three times the size of their previous location. The organization also plans to launch the DFC Academy in 2004—a low-cost program of instruction in film and video production and digital design—while other ongoing plans seek to double the number of regular courses to accommodate a program that's expanding to include digital filmmaking techniques.

In an effort to invite a broader community, DFC is also trying to appeal to film lovers as well as filmmakers. “The idea has been to offer things for a lot of people out there who don't [just] want

Director Anthony Garth preparing a shot during DFC's Music Video Course.

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to make films, but are appreciators of the art form," Morrow said. "Once we started telling more people about it and shifting the perspective, more people started coming down." Anderson added that expanding the organization and broadening its mission are part and parcel of maintaining its relevance. "If you want to keep [DFC] an important part of the community, you have to be responsive to the needs of the community," he said. "This is an outlet for people to engage in what I would consider the most popular communicative form of media in the world: film and cinema language," he said. "We've given hundreds, really thousands, of people the ability to be able to speak in this language. I think that's incredibly important."

Detroit Docs: One of the newest, and only, games in town

For the most part, Detroit Docs executive director and founder Chris Walny is terribly excited about her fledgling film festival. In November, just a few days before the festival went up for its second year, she gushed about the 10,000 hits her website had received the month before, along with the festival's substantive programming. "We're showing sixty-five films, which is insane for one weekend," she said. "We have thirty directors attending. It's great." At times, though, she has looked at the event a bit ruefully. "There are days when I can't believe that I have to do this," the former freelance producer contends, "[and] that I live in a city that doesn't have a film festival I can just go to."

Detroit is a city with a lousy track record as far as film festivals are concerned. "They don't stick around," said Janet Lockwood, director of the Michigan Film Office. "The city's just never gotten a film festival that's lasted." Ironically, though, this has prob-

ably worked in Walny's favor. When she started the festival in 2002, she thought it would be little more than a showcase for the documentary work of her friends. But a call for entries on



filmfestivals.com generated a huge response, and Walny's small-scale vision quickly grew into a weekend-long event that has generated a generous and impressive dose of attention. Detroit Docs may be new, but in a city where the competition is thin, it's already being seen as a major source of hope. Walny welcomes the encouragement, but admits to being slightly overwhelmed by the venue's sudden success. "It [has] turned into a bigger thing than I had expected."

In addition to putting on the festival, Detroit Docs has partnered with the Woodward Film Society, an organization based in the Detroit suburb of Birmingham that sponsors local film events, for a monthly documentary screening series that began in April 2003. The focus of the series has begun to shift from documentaries in general toward "more cause-related events," Walny said. "We'd like to partner up with other nonprofits and use these films to help people get their messages out. Documentaries do that so well."

Walny has said that ultimately she would like for Detroit Docs to function as a resource center, providing information on grant research, funding ideas, and crew support, but that

she will be patient with the process. "It's in the works in the board's mind."

One city, ten screens

Phoenix Theaters Bel-Air Centre would be exceptional in most cities. It's an independently owned multiplex—a ten-screen theater owned by partners Cory Jacobson and Charles Murray.

In Detroit, it's even more exceptional. It's the city's only first-run movie theater.

Like many of Detroit's former residents, the city's movie theaters have made their way to the suburbs over the last three decades. For Jacobson and Murray, this is not necessarily a bad thing. The two bought and refurbished the dilapidated theater in 2001, and renamed it after the mythical bird that rose from its own ashes. They have done well enough that in May 2003 they were able to purchase a second nine-screen multiplex in the suburb of Farmington Hills.

The facts of its ownership aside, few independent films ever make their way to the main screens at the Phoenix. With the dearth of competition, Jacobson can pretty much get any film he wants, and says family films, comedies, and action flicks attract more of an audience than art films ever would, though a handful of local filmmakers have held screenings there. "[It's] fun when people come along and have enthusiasm for their work," Jacobson says—and film crews working in the city often use the forty-seat screening room to view dailies.

Where the local film scene is concerned, Jacobson said, "There's a very natural connection." ■

Matthew Miller is a Lansing, Michigan based writer and former Detroit resident.

For more information:

Detroit Film Center: www.detroitfilm.org

Detroit Docs: www.detroitdocs.org

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Detroit Docs founder and executive producer, Chris Walny (left), with local filmmaker James Petix and friend.

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Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media

Jason Guerrasio interviews Trinh Duong

What is the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media?

It is a fund that gives grants to video, film, and radio programs.

How long has it been in existence?

It's been around since 1987. Originally it was called the Film Fund and in '87 the name was changed.

Was there a reason for that?

Back then there was a sense that the name, the Film Fund, was too generic and we wanted to have a name that better reflected its progressive values.

Why did you decide to name the fund after Paul Robeson—the world-renowned African American scholar, actor, athlete, and singer?

The fund was named to honor him as both a legendary artist and civil rights activist. Paul Robeson spoke fiercely against the injustice in this country, even in the face of blacklisting during the McCarthy era. We thought the name was perfect to represent who we are—a fund that connects independent media artists, community organizations, and social change.

What's the mission of the fund?

We're looking to fund or distribute mediamakers that are innovative, that are grassroots, and that have projects that lead to social change—which means we encourage independent makers to use their creativity and skills to further the critical base-building work necessary to transform our society into one that is democratic and socially just.

What types of projects do you seek?

Sandi Dubowski's *Trembling Before G-d* funded by the Paul Robeson Fund.

We typically fund projects on contemporary social issues that are misrepresented, or viewpoints that are underrepresented in mainstream media. All of our projects must articulate a thoughtful distribution strategy, in which the



maker presents a target audience and the means to reach this audience. They must also tell us the reason for selecting this audience and why the involvement of this audience is essential to the social change goals of the video, film, or radio. Some of our grantees have partnered with grassroots social change organizations to hold screenings and conduct follow-ups.

How much is the fund?

We give out up to \$20,000, though our grants typically range from \$10-\$15,000, and the overall amount of money that we give out is about \$230-\$285,000 a year. In most years we give grants to thirty to forty organizations or applicants.

Is the same amount given out each year?

Yes. Those are the ranges each year.

How many submissions do you receive annually?

Last year it went up a lot; it was 497 applications. Prior years we got about 200.

What was the reason for the increase?

We've been doing a lot more outreach. We've seen five times as many radio applications as we've seen in the past, so that accounted for a hundred more

[applicants] than usual. But we've also seen more video and film applications as well.

How many projects did you accept last year?

Out of the 497 applicants we funded twenty-eight.

Talk a little about the review process.

It's really a two-step process. The staff in the grant department looks at all the applications to make sure they fit in the general guidelines—which can be downloaded on our website (www.fex.org). We do a first screen and then we present a significant number to our grant-making panel that ultimately selects the grantees. The panel is composed of about six mediamakers from around the country with expertise in video, film, and radio.

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How long does that take?
About four months.

Are there any restrictions in applying?

Usually we stay away from projects that have budgets over \$500,000; nothing historical; and most importantly, we are looking for progressive issues, or progressive viewpoints on issues. The filmmaker must keep in mind that we're looking to fund projects that can be used to further social change. They can't just say, 'I want to make this video so I can take it to a festival.' Who is going to be your audience? Why do they need to see this? What will the viewer do or what will they be encouraged to do or think

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about as a result of seeing your video or film, or listening to your radio program? And we only give out grants for pre-production and distribution; we don't fund films that are in production or in post.

What's your relation with the Funding Exchange?

The Paul Robeson Fund is a grant-making initiative of the Funding Exchange, so it's not its own separate foundation. The Funding Exchange is several different funds, and there are three activist funds where the grant-making is advised by a panel of activists. In the case of the Robeson Fund, it's mediamakers. So it's a fund that is administered through the Funding Exchange.

How do you get your name out to the mediamakers?

We go to panels to talk about the fund. Members of our grant-making panel



conduct workshops. We also send information to radio conferences.

Is there a timeline within which the funds must be used?

No. We do ask for periodic reports, but we don't put a time limitation on when someone needs to complete their project by. When the project is finished, we need to get a copy of it.

What's the deadline to apply?

May 15.

2003 Robeson grantees included (left) Norman Cowie's *The Dimensions in Which it Reigns Supreme*; and (right) Randy Shadowalker's *Guerilla Video Primer*.

Can you give a few titles that were selected for the fund in the past?

Honoring the Seven Sacred Fires: Protecting Prophecy from Piracy Guerilla Video Primer by Randy Shadowalker & the



Cascading Media Collective; *On the Edge: Human Rights at the US-Mexico Border* by Edwin Mercado (radio program); *Caught Between Two Worlds: Iranians in the USA* by Simin Farkhondeh and Persheng Sadegh-Varziri; *Lest We Forget* by Jason DaSilva; *Trembling Before G-d* by Sandi Dubowski, and *Live from Death Row* by Noelle Hanrahan (radio program).

What are the most common mistakes applicants make when they approach you?

We find that they don't have a distribution plan, or it's so lacking that it's just an afterthought.

Are there any tips you can give mediamakers to make a project look more attractive?

They need to have a sound fundraising strategy. If they're coming to us for a pre-production fund, and we award it to them, they need to have some plan of bringing this project to completion.

Seeing that Paul Robeson is the centerpiece to the fund, is there anything he said or did in particular that puts the fund in perspective?

We always like to use this one quote of his: "The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative." ■

Jason Guerrasio is a staff writer for *The Independent*.

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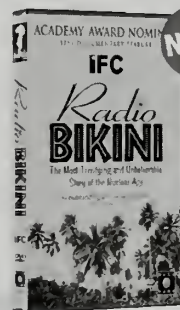
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Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

I made my last film with a small, competent team and a hefty budget, though I've seen many filmmakers getting all the equipment and doing it themselves. This time around I don't have as much money at my disposal. Am I wasting what little I have by renting equipment and hiring people?

Just because the possibility of doing it all yourself is out there, doesn't mean you have to go for it. Choosing to fly solo is a big decision for a filmmaker—money is just one of the reasons, and a misleading one at that. Working on the cheap can mean more hours, which can in turn mean a more expensive shoot in the long run. Or even worse, it can mean not having experienced professionals to assist you, which can in turn mean very expensive mistakes.

Before you embark on a long and lonely odyssey, consider the idea of raising more money so that you can enjoy the benefits of working with capable professionals. If, indeed, you have arrived at the end of your fundraising wit and have exhausted all of your favors in the filmmaking community, see if other circumstances besides money merit taking the plunge all by yourself.

Filmmaker Carlo Ontal, a native of New York who now shoots social documentaries in Sierra Leone for the UN, says he was motivated by more than a lack of funds to strike out on his own: "Confidence bordering on

arrogance and the certainty that my vision was non-existent if I just talked about it." The fear of not getting your story told combined with an exuberant amount of confidence can get you to move mountains, or at least a few pounds of equipment.

Washington-based filmmaker Denise Ohio (*Amazing World*) was moved to work independently by creative frustration. After not seeing eye-to-eye with her DP, she snatched the camera and got to work as a one-woman production team. Carrying the equipment herself paid off—she ended up the patent holder of a lighting system that is lightweight as well as tough. She also handled all post-production tasks, and claims that she would happily do it all over again.

On the other side of things, San Francisco filmmaker Nathan Friedkin (*Specially Wonderful Affair*) has decided to leave behind his days of lonely filmmaking, with an eye toward lessening his stress level: "Doing it all yourself is a great way to learn but a stressful way to live! Now when I decide to pick up a camera or edit a project, it's not out of necessity—it's because I feel that I can bring something unique to the process."

All filmmakers and films are born differently. The equation: "the more I do the more I save" has hidden costs that, according to your personality and goals, could become huge dividends or debt. It's not perfect math. It's perfect awareness of your situation and possibilities.

Dear Doc Doctor:

What are your thoughts on the so-called "digital revolution"?

Every time I tackle the subject of the "digital revolution," my hands tremble at the keyboard in anticipation of an avalanche of emails. No matter what I say, there will invariably be those who

agree, disagree, condemn, and accuse. And that, in fact, is precisely why it's a revolution—it touches all of us on all fronts in very deep ways.

Many big words get tossed around at the mention of the "digital revolution." Some people talk about the democratization of media, while others are concerned about the question of distribution: Who controls distribution? Will the Internet deliver its promise of equal access to the audience?

Others are purely focused on digital aesthetics and whether or not they can be measured up to par. Is there a medium appropriate for each story or should all stories aspire to come alive in 35mm? There are also the environmental issues regarding the manufacturing of film and tape, all those non-friendly chemicals used in the making and processing. Let's also not forget the financial consideration for both producers and big corporations involved, as it is cheaper to shoot digital, many have to find their place in this new landscape.

The last decades have shown greater change in filmmaking technique, but there has always been some sort of big, imminent technological change that would turn the filmmaking world on its head. There was the introduction of sound, which left most actors of silent movies without work. Then there was color, which made cameras so heavy that aesthetics went back in time. And then there was 16mm and then 8mm and then video and then digital and who knows what will be next!

Technology is accessible and therefore permeates language, but don't get intimidated by the talk. Regardless of the historical film climate, I still believe that shooting happens in the eye and editing happens in the brain. ■

Want to ask the Doc Doctor a question for a future issue of *The Independent*? Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. She also leads the bimonthly Documentary Dialogues discussion group offered by AIVE. For more info, visit www.documentarydoctor.com

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Work to Watch For

By Jason Guerrasio

Theatrical

Gypsy 83

dir. Todd Stephens

(Small Planet Pictures, February 6)

Because of his disappointment over his first film, *Edge of Seventeen*, director Todd Stevens was uncertain if he wanted to continue his childhood dream of making movies. But after a Stevie Nicks concert, he was convinced to keep going. The concert introduced him to Nicks' following on the internet—where he met one fan, Susan Childs, who triggered what Stevens calls "the healing process" of writing a script about both his love for Nicks and his frustrations over his last film.

In *Gypsy 83*, the main character, Gypsy (Sara Rue), is a Stevie Nicks fanatic who mimics her rock idol's style down to the velvet cape. When her friend, Clive (Kett Turton) finds out about the annual "Night of 1,000 Stevies" at a New York nightclub, the two decide to drive from Ohio to New York. Throughout this journey, they gradually abandon the Goth facade that they've been hiding behind and reveal insecurities very similar to the ones Stephens had while writing the script. "Gypsy has a lot of issues and a lot of fear that holds her back, and I think in a way there's a lot of me in the part," Stephens explains. "I think [writing her character] was really a way of telling myself that I could [make the film]."

Nicks wouldn't allow her music to be used in the film, which proved to be a challenge when the script called for Gypsy to sing Stevie Nicks popu-

lar song "Gypsy" at the "Night of 1,000 Stevies." "It seemed so crushing that we didn't get the 'Gypsy'

The Statement

dir. Norman Jewison

(Sony Pictures Classics,

December 12, 2003)

As a young man during World War II, Pierre Brossard (Michael Caine) was a Nazi sympathizer and committed heinous crimes against the Jews. Since then, the faces of his victims



song," says Stephens, though he eventually teamed up with a composer to write an original song for the scene. "Everybody says that the new song works so much better. It shows that Gypsy removes the Stevie Nicks persona and becomes herself for the first time."

have haunted him in his sheltered life under the protection of the Catholic Church. When an ambitious judge (Tilda Swinton) and colonel (Jeremy Northam) launch a new investigation into his crimes, assassins try to silence him before he testifies against their hires. Based on

Sara Rue & Kett Turton in Todd Stephens' *Gypsy 83*.

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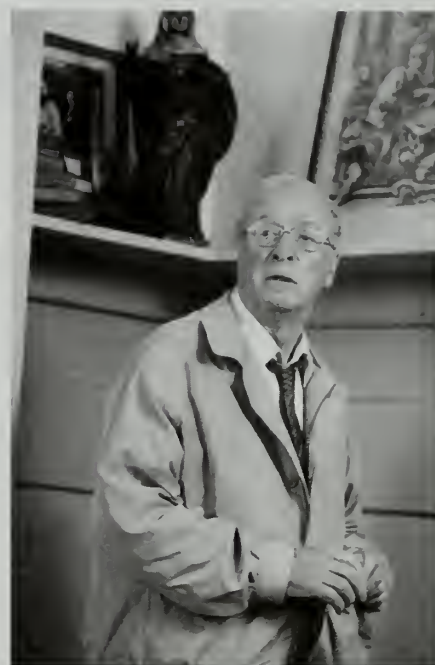
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the novel by Brian Moore, *The Statement* is Norman Jewison's twenty-seventh feature and deals with similar themes from his previous films, namely betrayal and hypocrisy.

Kitchen Stories

dir. Bent Hamer
(IFC Films, February 13)

The latest film by Norwegian filmmaker Bent Hamer is a comical take on home science research. While observing 1950's housewives in their kitchens, Swedish scientists stumble upon some interesting data. To further their research, they decide to cross into Norway—the land of many bachelors—and study the kitchen habits of single males. After arriving in their egg-shaped campers, the scientists find that the bachelors are not very receptive to the study, especially Isak (Joachim Calmeyer), who immediately takes a disliking to his observer, Folke (Tomas Norström). But eventually the two become friends, and together realize the stupidity of the research in-progress.



one man's frustrations over his lack of money and success push him over the edge. Hussein (Hussein Emadeddin) is a humble pizza deliveryman struggling to get through the daily grind when his friend Ali (Kamyar Sheissi) finds a purse with



Crimson Gold

dir. Jafar Panahi
(Wellspring Pictures, February 20)

Based on true events, Iranian director Jafar Panahi's film explores how

a receipt for an expensive necklace inside. Hussein is amazed by the amount of money one person would spend for an inanimate object. He decides to check out this kind of jewelry, but once he arrives at the store in ratty clothes he is quickly escorted out, which begins a tragic downward spiral.

Top: Michael Caine in *The Statement*.
Bottom: The Jones and the West family at Oak Bluffs harbor, 1909, from *A Place of Our Own*.

Television

A Place of Our Own
dir Stanley Nelson
(PBS, February 17)


Known for his films on forgotten figures in black history, Stanley Nelson's most recent project takes on a subject he's never explored—his own life. Although he originally wanted to make a film about African American resorts in the US, a lack of funding forced him to highlight only one: Oak Bluffs in Martha's Vineyard, where Nelson spent his childhood summers.

A Place of Our Own covers the history of African Americans at Oak Bluffs, as well as Nelson's own experience there. Nelson grew up in a middle-class family and spent his childhood among mostly white kids. In the summer, however, his family would drive eight hours from New York to Oak Bluffs where Nelson found himself in a predominantly black community, an environment he has since cherished. "Making the film made it really clear how essential it was for my life," says Nelson of his time at Oak Bluffs.

"[For most people] you grow up, you move from the old neighborhood or you move four, five times while you grow up and there's no connection," says Nelson. "[In] Martha's Vineyard the same people are still there, the same families, the same houses, so it's very grounding. I never thought about it in exactly that way before I made the film. It was kind of like my Mayberry."

Although he admits that he didn't want the film to turn into an "expensive home video," Nelson felt it was important to include the shaky relationship he's had with his father and how making the film brought them closer. "I'm not able to divulge my deepest, darkest secrets [to him], but I love him dearly," says Nelson. During the filming, he and his father spent a lot of time

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together, which Nelson thinks "is a jumping off point."

Colorvision

Exec. prod. Marc Henry Johnson
(American Public Television,
January 2)

This new series showcases diverse works of independent filmmakers addressing issues of the minority experience. The first episode highlights "heroes" through short films integrated with social commentary. Two of these films were favorites at festivals in the past year. In Dream Hampton's *I Am Ali*, a young man's relationship is ruined when he deludes himself into believing he is Muhammad Ali. Dayyan Eng's *Bus 44* illustrates a different kind of heroism; a man comes to the rescue of a female bus driver after the bus is hijacked. In between the shorts, radio host Dan Ho reports on one of his heroes, El Vez the Chicano Elvis, and visits Marvel Comics in hope of finding more ethnically diverse superheroes.

Why Can't We Be A Family Again?

dir. Roger Weisberg and Murray
Nossel (PBS, January 27)

Danny and Raymond have been waiting most of their lives to be reunited with their crack-addicted mother who, despite a supportive family, can't stay out of rehab. In this emotional documentary about the brothers' harsh journey from childhood to young adulthood, they talk about the embarrassment of constantly excusing their mother's absence, and how they yearn for her to return. When their grandmother finally files for custody of them, they begin to realize that their mother will never get clean. □

Jason Guerrasio is a staff writer
for The Independent.

Locus Novus

FLASHING MODERN TALES

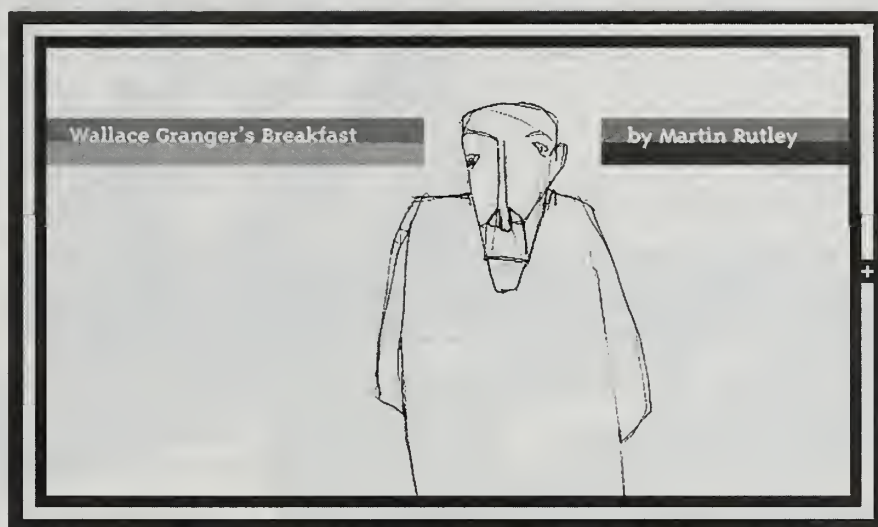
By Leslie Harpold

Faruk Ulay wanted to find new ways to tell stories. So in January 2000, he created the site Locus Novus (www.locusnovus.com), which three times a year presents unconventional tales layered in text, motion, and sound—tales that read like candy from a Whitman's Sampler; while you try to guess by the title and opening screen what the filling will be, you have to bite down and commit to learn what's inside—and then you are often surprised.

Filmmakers have long controlled the pace and method at which details of a story are revealed—unlike magazines or web pages where you can scan ahead, jump to the middle, then jump back at will. The web's technology and limitations leave the medium somewhere between film and print. Ulay sought to present multivalent narratives, whereas with film, the readers had to take things at a predetermined pace—spend time with characters,

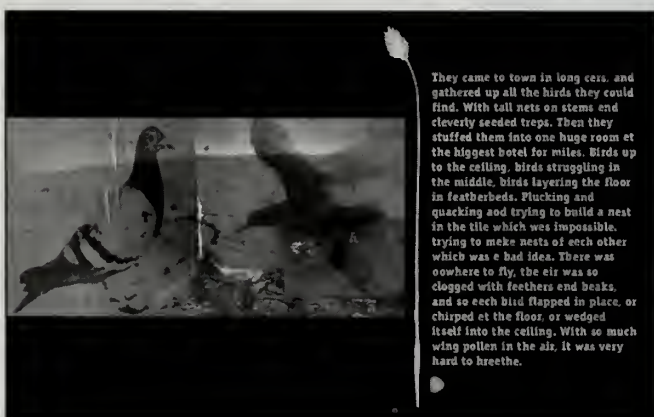
“deeply rooted in print design and [I] take design in general quite seriously. In the early years I was contributing

would allow him to actualize his personal and unique style of storytelling. “The primary objective is to present literary texts in such a way that new layers of reading are created. Some pieces require viewers’ interaction,” he says, “some of them impose their own time to the viewer. Continuous movement and sound intercepts the reading of the viewer,



my short stories and cover designs to a Turkish literary magazine. They were thinking of having a web presence as well, so I started publishing their magazine on the web. It became my

alters the textual condition of the image on the screen and affect the perceptibility of the text.” The pieces are moody and ephemeral, combining text narrative with images that



images, and sentences before advancing. “I am an older generation graphic designer,” says the Turkish-born Ulay,

lab and I learned many of the tricks of the trade when playing with that magazine.”

When Macromedia's Flash technology came of age, Ulay found the tool he'd been seeking—one that

propel readers forward, unravel the plot, and fill in the emotional subtext of the words. “The works invite the thought that the literary history is also the history of reading and they question the usage of the com-

Unconventional tales from Frank Ulay's Flash site, Locus Novus.

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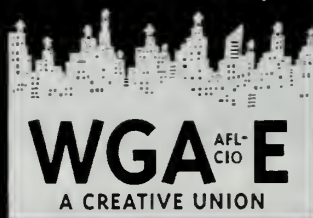
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puter as a stable reading device. In other words, Locus Novus is an experiment with systems of representation and presentation, and integrated forms of expression," Ulay explains.

The history of reading is reflected in the story selections. Referencing artists Alexander Calder and Joseph Cornell and early French filmmaker George Méliès, Ulay also pays attention to those who influence visual interpretations. While he does most of the design and motion work himself, he also invites authors to contribute



ideas as to how their work will be interpreted. Contributing writer Tobias Seamon submitted his work, *A Treatise on Seizures*, already folded into the format in collaboration with designer and friend Andrea Morris.

The result is evocative, brief escapes into tales of heartbreak, frustration, and love. The sentiments are simple, and in their simplicity, offer touch points for the viewers to immediately engage. The imagery is stylish and varied, and the stories are infused with literary references—there is no mistaking this for casual fiction. Everything seems carefully considered. *This Story Does Not Have a Happy Ending* by G.S. Evans is presented in such a way that if the reader clicks too soon, the text they have just seen is repeated, and one must learn to accept the pace, even thought the story is engaging enough to create a desire to rush toward the promised unhappy end-

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White Balance:	1/4, 1/8, 1/15, 1/30, 1/60, 1/90, 1/100, 1/125, 1/180, 1/250, 1/350, 1/500, 1/725, 1/1000, 1/1500, 1/2000, 1/3000, 1/4000, 1/6000, 1/10000 second (NTSC) 1/3, 1/6, 1/12, 1/25, 1/50, 1/60, 1/100, 1/120, 1/150, 1/215, 1/300, 1/425, 1/600, 1/1000, 1/1250, 1/1750, 1/2500, 1/3500, 1/6000, 1/10000 second (PAL)
Exposure:	Auto/Manual
Minimum Illumination:	1 lx
Horizontal Resolution:	530 TV lines
Viewfinder:	180,000 dot Black & White LCD, Zebra Pattern
Audio Signal Rec:	48 kHz/16-bit, 32 kHz/12-bit
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ing. Generally, this is hard to do successfully in a medium where speed and ease are the technology's prom-

The fruits of his restraint in presentation occasionally produce a sense of tedium, but much more often serve as



ise. These stories are not for those who are rushing to get information. Locus Novus offers a respite from the factually dense space of the web, creating a small place where haste is willingly sacrificed for the unexpected satisfaction of a true multi-sensory experience.

When presenting linear narrative, no matter what the medium, traditional design ideas apply to keeping content intact. Ulay feels much of the current crop of site designers are so smitten with the technology that they forget the importance of the text. He considers himself conservative in his storytelling presentation, which, he explains, is a strict interpretation of Modernism. "If you are dealing with a slow moving, melancholic piece of narration, you wouldn't want the type flying all over the page, doing somersaults and disappearing after exploding into smithereens. I admit that they look exciting, but do they complement the content?" When making decisions about motion and sound, Ulay is similarly respectful of his writer's work. "Rather than focusing on never-done-before wipes, and magical appearances and disappearances, [the] 'why' question should be asked first: Why do I need this movement? Why does this photo turn pink before it dissolves into a photo of an elephant?"

a reminder that in any medium it is the story that holds everything together. The fabric of experience is always in plot—sounds and motion compliment and contribute, but ultimately, words are the foundation from which all the other enhancements hang.

What started as a pure artistic experiment has had some professional side effects Ulay wasn't anticipating. Although not his intention, his Locus Novus site has proven itself a magnet for attracting new work to his design firm, Ulay + Ulay Communications (<http://ulaydesign.com/>). Literary and arts magazine *Grand Street* contacted him last year and asked him to redesign their site, hoping he could give them something dynamic to wrap around their content. And, he is currently working on a new site for Dalkey Archive Press, a nonprofit that strives to keep selected titles in world literature both in print and in circulation.

The reward is deeper than the financial consideration, Ulay explains, "Independent, nonprofit organizations are more receptive to adventurous design, so I like working with them. It also has a redeeming value for a designer who mingled with pure commercialism for fifteen years." ■

Leslie Harpold is a San Francisco based writer and web designer.

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The S.N.O.B. Fest

NEW HAMPSHIRE REELS IN SOME COOL FILMS

By Rebecca Rule

Some thought S.N.O.B. might be an off-putting acronym for the Somewhat North of Boston Film Festival; others believed the irony was obvious. After all, the festival's mascot is a sock puppet with the S.N.O.B. logo stitched to its lips, and besides, real snobs wouldn't call themselves S.N.O.B.

It was students and teachers at New Hampshire Technical Institute that joined business and cultural leaders

She's on the committee that put together the second annual S.N.O.B. Film Festival held November 6-9 at the New Hampshire Technical Institute and City Auditorium.

In this presidential primary season, the city—the whole state for that matter—was buzzing with political candidates hoping to win the first-in-the-nation primary. One young rep for a prominent Democrat confessed that he'd stopped by to stump for his man, but got so caught up in the films he

His slices of rural life mix professional actors with regular folk from Tunbridge, Vermont, best known for the Tunbridge Fair, second best known for Fred Tuttle, the recently deceased star of *Man With a Plan*, who—seventy-two years old and too crippled for farming—played himself running for U.S. senate, then, talk about irony, ran for the senate in real life a couple of years later. He won the Republican primary, but, being Fred, urged voters to support his Democratic opponent in the general election.

In O'Brien's films, character is pivotal, plot minimal, scenery bucolic, dialogue improvised, and the Yankee accents authentic. S.N.O.B. is a good match for these funny, affectionate stories of a disappearing way of life. Besides, "When you open in New York," he says, "you've got to spend a minimum of \$200,000 for publicity. That's the budget for my whole film."

Concord has an "affinity for film," O'Brien says. It also has O'Brien booster and film aficionado Barry Steelman who, for thirty-five years, has run Cinema 93, once an independent theater, now a video store. Steelman chairs the board of Red River Theatres, S.N.O.B.'s nonprofit sponsor. In Red River's quest to establish a new independent theater downtown, S.N.O.B. is a step in the right direction.

S.N.O.B organizers mixed full-length films of national and international prominence with short films and their local makers. Elia Suleiman's Grand Jury Prize winner at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival, *Divine Intervention*, depicts the dreams and nightmares of contemporary Palestinians and Israelis. At S.N.O.B., it played downstairs from *Jack Milton: Fairytale Detective*, a clever short from young New Hampshire director, Todd Norwood.

The Weather Underground from Sam Green and Bill Siegel generated passionate discussion about the radical

Anna Christopher's short *Sock It To Me* inspired the S.N.O.B. Fest's mascot, the Sock Monkey.



from a group called Red River Theatres to see if a festival of independent and art films would fly in Concord, New Hampshire, a city of 40,000 and the state capital. Without a theater to call home (yet) and run entirely by volunteers, S.N.O.B. proves you don't have to live in a big city to appreciate innovation. When a community comes together to be surprised, provoked, even shocked by a good independent or art film, the experience, says organizer Connie Rosemont, can be a social event as well an intellectual or sensual one.

played campaign hooky and ended up staying all day. "This is so much cooler than what I was supposed to be doing," he said, as he shook the hand of Vermont filmmaker John O'Brien. O'Brien's trilogy—*Vermont is for Lovers*, *Man With a Plan*, and the just completed, *Nosey Parker*—played back to back for the first time. O'Brien spoke before and took questions after each film. It was a long day, but O'Brien says, like folk singers, filmmakers who self-distribute have to be "persistent and ubiquitous."

activists of the Vietnam era: motives, actions, and morality. For this movie and others, the New Hampshire Humanities Council provided scholars to lead discussions. Tempers flared when Deborah Scranton van Paassen—who directed *Stories from Silence, Witness to War*, a tribute to local World War II veterans—warned speakers to respect veterans. “Nobody here disrespects veterans,” one audience member shot back. A young woman wondered if in America we’re allowed “a choice not to honor vets?” Several observed similarities between the frustration that fueled Vietnam War protests and today’s debate over Iraq.

But it was *Blue Vinyl* organizers cited as the keystone challenge to the status quo. John O’Brien, who introduced the documentary, described



director Judith Helfand as “Michael Moore without the ego.” And sure enough, as she travels the world with a hunk of vinyl siding from her parent’s home under her arm, attempting to find out how safe this product really is, she comes across as curious, willing to listen, and determined to get to the truth. Stubborn, yes, but never egotistical; the subject of this documentary is, clearly, vinyl, not Judith Helfand. (see also page 52)

Lynn Kilchenstein, interim president of New Hampshire Technical Institute and S.N.O.B. committee member, said her favorite part of the festival was the Celebration of Shorts,

Michael Eschenbach’s short *The Passage Beneath* and Todd Norwood’s short *Fairytale Detective* were both screened at the 2003 S.N.O.B. Fest.

five films ranging from four minutes for *The Rogue Song* (a 1930 Laurel and Hardy fragment) to the twenty-nine-minute *The Passage Beneath*, directed by Michael Esenbach, a tour of the tunnels and campus of New Hampshire State Hospital. Bruce Cronin’s *Wild Goose* provides a glimpse into the mischief of nursing home life. *Lost and Found*, set in Manchester, New Hampshire, involves a young women, a panhandler, and a lost wallet. And *Sock It To Me*—inspiration of this year’s mascot—chronicles the adventures of Alex, who sings in a bee suit for a living and makes sock monkeys for the joy of it.

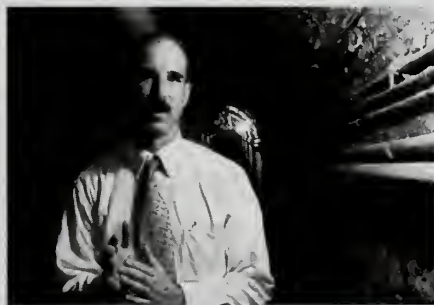
The challenge for S.N.O.B. is to present great films on a limited budget, just as the challenge for the makers of shorts is to create great little films on a shoestring. These shorts represent “young talent taking risks with their art,” Kilchenstein says. The audience is willing to take risks, too, “because you know it will be over in a few minutes.”

Organizer Bill Whitman discovered *Speedo*, directed by Jesse Moss, at the Boston Film Festival. He was looking for a “sort of fringe documentary documenting fringe people.” At a special screening, a father and son seemed riveted by the story of Ed “Speedo” Jager, demolition derby driver. They exclaimed over the crashes, laughed at Speedo’s irreverence, and suffered through Speedo’s own suffering—estrangement from his wife, fights with other drivers, worries about his kids.

The S.N.O.B. Film Festival is big enough to draw 450 people to a Friday night presentation of Buster Keaton’s *The General* accompanied by the inimitable Alloy Orchestra, and small enough, accommodating enough, to reschedule and replay *Penobscot Basketmaker* or *Speedo* for an audience of two.

The weekend culminated with *Lost Boundaries*, produced by two-time Academy Award winner Louis deRochemont. This film broke the subject of racism wide open in 1949

when the *New York Times* named it one of the year’s ten best. Based on a true story, *Lost Boundaries* takes place in Keene, New Hampshire. A black family passes for white, because the father, a doctor, is too light-skinned to work



in a black hospital. Mel Ferrer plays Dr. Carter, whose secret is exposed when he applies for a commission in the Navy, hoping to serve in World War II. The reactions of colleagues, neighbors, the congregation of the Episcopal Church are chilling. And yet some rally to support the family. The Carters—like their real-life counterparts, the Johnstons—refuse to give in to prejudice.

Larry Benaquist, whose documentary *Here Am I: Send Me: The Journey of Jonathan Daniels* was another hit of the festival, says *Lost Boundaries* “opened up the whole issue of racism for public debate.” Jonathan Daniels—killed by police in 1965 while trying to protect a black woman—grew up in Keene. Daniels’ father had been a colleague of Dr. Johnston. And, of course, Daniels knew the story, knew the family. How did a young white man from New Hampshire become one of the heroes of the Civil Rights Movement? The experiences of the Johnston family and *Lost Boundaries*, the movie that Louis deRochemont mortgaged his house to finance, undoubtedly played a role. ■

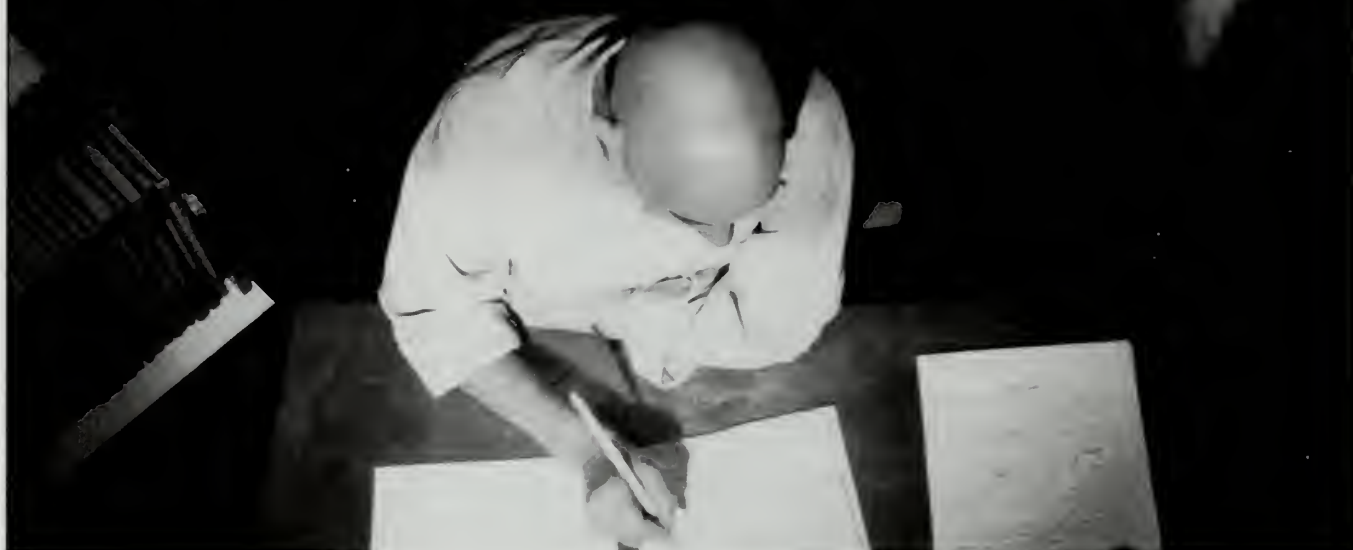
See www.snobfilmfestival.org for information.

Rebecca Rule is a New Hampshire based writer, and the author of two collections of short stories. Her latest, *The Best Revenge*, will be out in paperback this spring.

Sweet Sixteen

SHOOTING UP WITH 16MM

By Gadi Harel



MAY 10, 2003

The movie premieres at the Tribeca Film Festival. I watch from the aisle and think, "Man this looks *good*." The movie is *Nights Like These*, a 16mm black and white short I shot the year before, about a bored shadow that attempts to switch places with the shadow of a mysterious, hopefully more interesting, man. Shadows played supporting roles in all the great noir films, and what I wanted to do with this film was to give them the starring roles. And sitting there in Battery Park United Artist Theatre, home of the Tribeca Film Festival, it feels like we totally nailed it. Hard to believe that—

FIRST WEEK OF MAY 2002 (a year earlier)

My producer and I are *convinced* we're shooting on DV. Let

me explain. Pre-production on *Nights Like These* is continually interrupted by trips to various festivals for a feature I co-directed with Will Keenan called *Operation Midnight Climax* (OMC), which was shot on Super 16 by the super-talented "Wild Bill" Miller. You know how they say that Super 16 is not a projection format? And that in order to project it on film you have to blow it up to 35? Well, here's what I found out: That's not just what they say. For OMC, Will and I have two options: (A) blowing up to 35 or, well, there was only one real option and it wasn't (A). So we're traveling the country with a DigiBeta tape in hand. And let me tell you, you show up with a tape of your gorgeously shot movie and

Gadi Harel's *Nights Like These* follows a restless shadow.

EMILY LEMOLE

see it listed in the festival catalog as “video” and it breaks your poor little independent filmmaking heart. I guess if there was one saving grace, it’s that the film still looked great—better than shot-on-video projected video.

The point is, I do not want to go through this again—I do not want to shoot *Nights Like These* on Super 16, or 16, and for either technical or, more likely, financial reasons have to resort to video in the end. Which is why, when Bill Miller (who loves the script but is booked along with his Super 16 package for at least the next six months) suggests we consider shooting on DV, it feels sort of right (after the sting fades).

LATE APRIL 2002

Look, this movie, *Nights Like These*, will either work or not work based largely on fragile lighting situations alone. We need shadows moving around (while maintaining a consistent look), steady lighting in the rest of the shot, and our shadow actors out of frame. Immediate playback will be essential to see if we get the shot right. DV will easily allow us to play with contrast (for the shadow-consistency) and add subtle digital effects in post at a more affordable rate.

This is me convincing myself that DV is the right choice.

LATE MAY 2002

I meet with DP/director Tim McCann (*Revolution No.9*) in hopes that he will shoot *Nights Like These*. He’s been researching DV for his own film, a feature called *Nowhere Man*, so I think he’s probably renting a camera for his movie and maybe I can piggyback. But Tim insists that the only way he’ll shoot my movie is if I use film. I voice my concern and Tim assures me he will get it all on film, all in-camera with no needed post effects. His argument turns out to be simple and true: If I want it to look like film noir, keep in mind that those movies—*Double Indemnity*, *The Big Heat*, *Detour*, and every other one—were not shot on DV.

I dare not bring up the rumored and perhaps somewhat mythological “film filter” my DV enthusiast friends all whisper about.

MOMENTS LATER

I suddenly realize 16mm is the PERFECT choice (I’m so easy). I’m going to make a *film* and I’ll end up with a *film*. Not like last time when I had no choice but to dump it to tape. Next year, I’m carrying canisters around.

JULY 25, 2002

We’re midway through our five-day shoot. Running up a set of stairs with Tim and Charlie (the AC) I realize one tremendous advantage of 16mm: its weight. Not just for quick one-off shots like this one from a roof, but even, considering our total of eight cases of equipment, for entire crew moves from one location to another across town. Less weight means moving the camera faster and more set-ups

per day, which translates to a shorter shoot and less money spent. Also, start-of-day set-ups and end-of-day breakdowns are easier so everyone’s happy. And in the case of this one shot, happiness is key since it’s on the tail end of a twelve-hour day, and the idea of tagging on a whole new location before we call it a night doesn’t go over huge. But the three of us charge up the stairs and get a great moment on film so quickly (and a shot that turns out to be one of my favorites in the movie) that it actually ends our day on a surprisingly high note.

MAY 10, 2003

Nights Like These premieres at the Tribeca Film Festival after I deliver my DigiBeta master to them. Yep, that’s right. DigiBeta. No canisters because there’s no money for negative cutting, nothing left for a blow-up, and I’m sending around a tape of *Nights Like These* just as I swore I wouldn’t do. Tribeca, though, with its American Express backing, is able to create a high-def conversion of my tape and the projection is, I swear, unlike anything I’ve seen before. It’s simply perfect, and what Tim the DP describes (better than I could) as: “the rich, lush, hyper-reality that film provides.”

LESSON LEARNED

The thing is, 16mm is the perfect format for short films. There are so many people with 16mm cameras that finding someone you’d need anyway (in our case, the AC) who has one isn’t going to be terribly difficult. And these days I’ll bet people with film cameras are dying to use them. So get them on board, pay them whatever their rate is and see if their camera can be included in the price (or at least drastically discounted). Chances are you’ll never have to rent a camera of your own.

Do what you can to raise the little extra you’ll need to shoot on 16. Before *Nights Like These*, I thought what format you ended up with was more important. But I think I was wrong. It’s what you get it on that counts. And for shorts, begin with 16mm, have it all dumped to tape immediately, create a digital master, and don’t worry about going back to film if you don’t want to or can’t. It’s still worth it.

Yes, with DV you don’t have the same film and developing costs. But especially for a short that runs between five and 10 minutes, these costs are completely affordable. So find a student, give them a co-producer credit, and use their discounts on both. It’s still going to cost a little, but this is a worthwhile expense. This is the few hundred bucks that, when you’re watching the movie down the line, you’ll realize were the best few hundred you spent. Every other expense is there no matter the format: lighting, editing, sounds, music, etc. Whatever you shoot on, you’ll need these. Don’t blame film. And don’t blame me. ■

Gadi Harel is a Los Angeles based filmmaker.



Digital Intermediates

IT'S NOT YOUR PARENTS' TECHNIQUE

By Paul Boutin

Your next film probably won't be digitally mastered. But the one after that probably will be. That's how fast the costs of a digital intermediate are falling, even as the quality and benefits of digital mastering rise. Sure, digital video doesn't have the warmth of Super 16 or 35, and you're not about to throw away everything you've learned about capturing a scene on film. But we're not talking about shooting your scenes with a digital camera, or distributing your feature on DVD. We're talking about digital intermediates: A digital scan made from film at the mastering stage of a movie.

Film is still usually the best choice for shooting and projection, but a digital step in between can bring out the best from film.

The stunning look of the Coen brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, for example, which used a digital intermediate for the whole film, killed the myth that digital mastering was only for sterile, cartoonish sci-fi action films. Big stu-

Examples of digital mastering using intermediates (clockwise): *The Kid Stays in the Picture*; *Names in Marble*; the photo scanned to create a scene in *The Kid*; *Baltic Sea*.

dio blockbusters are already moving to digital intermediates (the terms “digital intermediate” and “digital mastering” are often used interchangeably) for entire films rather than just special effects sequences. Or, to put it another way, digital intermediates are enabling every frame of film to be a special effects scene. So much so that Cinesite Hollywood, the former special effects house, switched its focus entirely to digital intermediates in 2003.

Independent filmmakers can go digital, too—you don’t need to be shooting *Star Wars Episode III* or *S.W.A.T. 2* to benefit from the technology. Filmmaker Victor Nunez used a digital intermediate for *Coastlines*, a human drama

processing tricks like bleach bypass. The processed film is then run through a scanner that digitizes each frame into a computer file. The digitized frames are much more flexible than film when it comes to color correction and adjustment, conformity, and the sort of special effects viewers don’t notice, from raising or lowering contrast on parts of a scene to replacing the entire sky in the opening scenes of Kevin Costner’s *Open Range*. Once the filmmaker signs off on the completed master, it can be printed onto film again for screening or release.

Nunez admits to being a longtime computer enthusiast who had wanted to work with digital technology.



set in rural Florida. First screened at Sundance 2002 and slated for release by IFC in 2004, *Coastlines* is the last movie that would make viewers think “digital,” yet it may have been the first indie to use a digital intermediate for the entire film. Nunez cut a deal with Technicolor’s digital post-production setup at Technique in Burbank to use *Coastlines* as a test run for Technique’s then-new facilities.

To create a digital intermediate, the cinematographer shoots to film and develops the film normally, without any

Nonetheless, a digital intermediate opened up new filmmaking opportunities that would have been undoable—or unaffordable—on straight film. “I wanted *Coastlines* to have almost a fairytale quality to it. It’s a romantic triangle, something like a country song. We set out to give the whole film a glow. You have a much more rigorous ability to manipulate contrast and colors in the digital domain than with film.” Nunez liked the intense colors of Kodak’s newer film stock, but not its darker blacks. At the intermediate stage, it was easy to adjust the entire movie’s color to lighten shadows and blacks without washing out brighter colors as well. The trick is that color correction software fixes each pixel individually, so it can skip over those that don’t need adjustment.

Robert Evans and Ali MacGraw enjoy a romantic dance at the premiere of *The Godfather*. A series of archival photographs were scanned and layered in Adobe Photoshop, then animated and illuminated with glowing wisps in 3DS Max. Final compositing and additional effects were done in Adobe After Effects.

Nunez found some accidental benefits, too. "There was a sequence where Josh Brolin, as a deputy sheriff in a small Florida town, has to disarm a drunkard. We shot in a dock area with a lot of oyster beds and oyster dust. As much as we tried to keep things clean, we ended up with about 150 feet of film that was critical to us that had a scratch in it. Traditionally, you'd crop inside the damage, but there were parts of the scene

Pros/Cons of Digital Intermediates

PROS

Color correction and adjustment

Digital post-processing goes far beyond what's possible in the darkroom, letting you manipulate each pixel and color individually.

Conforming

Scenes with different lighting can be made to look like the same shoot.

Post-production cinematography

No need to decide on bleach bypass or other custom film exposure techniques before you shoot. Software can add them later. This lets you change your mind after you see the results.

Compositing

You might not believe what's possible with digital compositing software until you get a demo. Beyond traditional greenscreen techniques, it's possible to add, remove, or merge scene elements, even to an outdoor scene with natural lighting.

All of the above

Best of all, in the digital domain you can perform multiple adjustments at the same time to each frame without beating up on a strip of film, and undo them with a single keystroke if you don't like the results. When you're done, you can stamp out a high-definition DVD master, or print out a film for cinematic release.

CON

Price

Expect to spend at least \$75,000–\$250,000 to digitally master a full-length film. The good news: This price will fall by half in a year or two, as personal computers get more powerful and digital mastering studios proliferate.

outside that area we wanted to keep. Or we could reshoot, which was prohibitive. But in the digital process, that scratch just disappeared."

Digital software can also act as a sort of virtual gaffer for dealing with lighting problems. "Let's say you have a shot that has very contrasting lighting," Nunez says. "Most of the shots are fine but there's one that's not right—like in *Coastlines*, there's a store where the villains of the piece work. It was a dark place that had sunlight coming in through one window." The light, alas, was too bright, making it impossible to see part of the set in the developed film. "We were able to go in there and just change the contrast on the area around the window, letting viewers see into the room where they couldn't before." Technique showed Nunez they could even remove the graininess from 16mm footage, if he wanted.

A more powerful effect came into play in a scene where Josh Brolin pulls Timothy Olyphant from a burning boat. "There was really very little smoke or fire," Nunez says. "The compositor simply laid a flame from somewhere else into the shot. You would never know it. It's the kind of thing you don't even want to tell people until after they've seen it." In another scene, Nunez and crew speeded up the near-collision of two cars in an expensive helicopter shot without sending the film out for Varispeed work—Nunez took home the digital frames from the scene and used a Macintosh computer to cut individual frames from the scene, speeding up the apparent motion of the cars. The result was not only more dramatic, it didn't require an extra generation of film that might mismatch the rest of the picture. Carrying his feature film home on a FireWire drive was a turning point for Nunez: "I never cease to be amazed that these images that were going to be part of our 35mm print were right there on our little Mac."

But Nunez' little Mac is exactly the harbinger of a new era any technology pundit would look for. Just as personal computers took over still photography and music production in the 90s, they're about to radically change the landscape of filmmaking. It took a while longer for the Mac to show up in the movie studio because there's so much more information in a few seconds of film than in a magazine photo or a three-minute pop song. Once the Macs start showing up, though, it's only a matter of time.

Another film that made its debut at Sundance 2002 was mastered entirely on a Macintosh: *The Kid Stays in the Picture*, the documentary of Hollywood legend Robert Evans, directed by Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen. Produced from archival footage, still photos, and print articles digitized one by one, the entire movie was then uploaded into a Mac by technicians from Edgeworx, who performed a masterwork of digital cut-and-paste work and

color adjustment to conform the sources and give Evans' history a unique, consistent look.

Edgeworx president Dave Tecson says the hardware setup for *The Kid* cost about \$35,000—a beefed-up Macintosh, plus film scanning and printing hardware. “The cheapest solution is still cutting a negative and doing one pass of color timing,” he says. “But that’s changing.” And for Burstein and Morgen, a digital master enabled them to get their movie to Sundance on time and on budget. Pressed for time and costs, Edgeworx lowered the resolution of the working copy from accepted cinematic levels (2048 columns of pixels in each frame, commonly called “2K”) to high-definition video, or HD, which only uses 1920 pixels across. “HD takes advantage of how human eyes see in order to save data,” Tecson explains. “That let us work faster. The Sundance deadline was Thanksgiving. We screened in HD at Sundance, at the Eccles theatre, and it looked great.”

Besides advanced color correction and compositing, today's software can also emulate the look of traditional film production tricks, such as skipping the bleach process to mute colors and blacken blacks. “Things like skip-bleach are kind of scary,” Tecson says. “You make that choice as you’re processing the film and cross your fingers.” If you don’t like the results, you’re stuck. With a digital intermediate, you can apply a skip-bleach look to the entire film—in fact, you can fiddle with different levels of the effect to see what they look like. Unlike film, there’s no commitment. If it doesn’t work, just hit the Undo key. The same applies to rendering a dream sequence in black and white, or changing the color of an actor’s eyes.

Nunez and Tecson both say that the most crucial step—and the biggest unknown—when going digital is the one where your carefully exposed and developed film is converted into digital bits by a scanner. A carefully done scan can be printed back out to film without a visible generation of degradation in quality—something just not possible with film. But a poor quality scan can undermine your work by not transferring it truthfully into the computer. This happened with an early version of *Coastlines*, according

to Nunez. They were able to rescan the film, but the process can be expensive.

In early 2004, the biggest roadblock to a digital intermediate for independent filmmakers is the price—estimates of the costs of a digital intermediate range from \$75,000-

\$250,000 per project, with perhaps a twenty-five to thirty-five percent premium in cost over a straight film approach. Nunez suggests that independent filmmakers use their already sharpened entrepreneurial skills to find and make deals on digital work, as he did for *Coastlines*. Look for newer companies that may be eager to jumpstart their client list, or that are short on work for the coming year. Like any other aspect of filmmaking, it’s all about The Deal.

In another year or two, though, digital intermediates won’t be a high-tech curiosity. They’ll be a standard part of the production process, just like Photoshop at a magazine or Pro Tools in a music studio. As personal computers continue to double in power every two years, the entry level cost of doing digital work is falling sharply, and the number of companies able to offer

digital intermediates keeps climbing. Those two factors will push prices down quickly, even as the quality of results gets better.

Nunez has just one worry about the pending invasion of home computers into movie studios. “There’s no substitute for delivering the best negative you can. You know that saying from music studios, ‘We’ll fix it in the mix?’ You have to be careful or you begin to lose the power of the very limitations that make independent films unique. The big-budget pictures are all starting to look the same now, because they all use the same tricks. The very technology that can free a filmmaker can cut them off from the life and energy they’re trying to capture.”

It seems early to worry. But Nunez says, in anticipation of more and quick advances in hardware, software, and expertise: “In six months, everything you write will be wrong.” ■

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Should your next film use a digital intermediate?

Edgeworx offers these guidelines to decide whether a digital intermediate is worth the potentially higher price to help bring your vision to the screen.

Are you merging different source materials?

Digital mastering can bring continuity and clarity to archival footage.

Are you shooting outdoors?

You’ll be able to conform shots from different days, or even different times of the day. It might not reduce your shooting budget, but it will pay off in a consistent look.

Do you want a custom color palette?

A digital colorist can literally work wonders.

Do you plan lots of special effects?

You might as well put the whole movie into the computer.



The Medium is the Maker

AFFORDABLE OPTIONS FOR UNIQUE VISUALS

By Elizabeth Angell



Filmmakers are often touted for their “vision”—their singular sense of how a movie should look, sound, and feel. But every film starts on paper, with a screenplay or even just an idea for a character or a mood. A director must partner with a cinematographer, a production designer, and others to translate that idea into a compelling, visually sophisticated narrative. Below, how three filmmaking teams on tight budgets brought their stories to the screen using film, digital video, high def, and anything else they could get their hands on.

XX/XY

Written and Directed by Austin Chick

Director of Photography: Uta Briesewitz

Production Design: Judy Becker

Austin Chick began his first film *XX/XY* by imagining the most common of male fantasies, two girls and a guy. “I sort of liked the idea of exploring how awkward and uncomfortable a situation like that can be, as opposed to what everyone thinks it will be,” says Chick. “It’s hard enough for two strangers to go to bed together, let alone three.” The writer-director wanted to launch his career with a small, personal movie that would evoke the newest wave of French films and 70s-era anti-romantic comedies like *Carnal Knowledge* and *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice*, films Chick calls “fucked-up relationship movies.”

For *XX/XY*, Chick wrote an unconventional script about an aspiring filmmaker named Coles Burroughs, who pursues a beautiful college student named Sam. He falls into bed with Sam and her friend Thea, though their ménage quickly becomes uncomfortable. Coles and Sam begin to date in earnest, but their relationship eventually disintegrates as well. In the second half of the movie, the audience encounters Coles, Thea, and Sam ten years later. Coles is still an indecisive narcissist, only now he has money and comfortable furniture. His long-time girlfriend, Claire, realizes he is still in love with Sam and demands that he make a real commitment to her. She makes a speech at the film’s climax that will resonate with everyone who has ever worried that they were someone’s “consolation prize.” When the film closes, the audience is still unsure whether Coles has made a definitive choice, or if it is Sam who has finally left him behind.

Chick, who initially trained as a visual artist, knew he wanted to give the two halves of his film distinct palettes. He and production designer, Judy Becker, used blues and yellows to evoke the aimless, slightly degraded world that the younger characters inhabit. They frequent bars and

parties, travel on the subway, and do almost everything at night, lit by flickering fluorescents. As things begin to go wrong between the characters, the blues and yellows begin to bleed into green—an uneasy, sickly color. By the second half, Coles, Claire, Sam and Thea live in chilly, beige, Pottery Barn interiors—“blank and neutral,” says Becker.

Despite his firm ideas, Chick didn’t want his audience to take active note of *XX/XY*’s production design: “I didn’t want to do anything that looked overly designed or stylized.” So Becker used the blue and yellow elements sparingly. “We discovered together that a very little went a long way,” she says. “We incorporated all the colors, but in just one place or in a muddled version on the walls.”

Still, *XX/XY* has a tonal consistency that grew out of Chick and Becker’s commitment to their limited color range. That range only expands, says Chick, when the characters venture outside. “The scenes I like least in the movie are the exteriors, because I couldn’t control those,” he says, laughing. “All the different colored shirts that people are wearing and the bright green foliage—that drives me crazy.”

Initially, Chick thought he would make his movie on DV. The limited scope and intimate nature of the story seemed perfect for cheap-and-easy digital. But as Chick began to describe how he wanted his movie to look to his cinematographer, Uta Briesewitz, she realized that he wanted to make a film in the true sense of the word. Briesewitz, who also shot the psychological thriller *Session 9*, and is DP for HBO’s *The Wire*, wanted *XX/XY* to look lush and jewel-like, even when the characters live in cramped, messy apartments, drink too much, and sleep with the wrong people. It needed to be dirty and pretty at the same time. “I felt that [the movie] really needed to have a certain elegance to it,” she says.

Chick had planned on making a \$120,000 DV movie and found himself in the end on a \$500,000 35mm film shoot in fifty-seven locations. “Both Uta and Judy were amazing,” says Chick. “And I think the movie looks like it cost more to make than it actually did.”

“That’s really the goal,” adds Briesewitz. “Every independent film should look more expensive than it was.”

The Shape of Things

Written and Directed by Neil LaBute

Director of Photography: James L. Carter

Production Design: Lynette Meyer

Until last year, Neil LaBute kept his two identities separate. To theater audiences, he was the author of a series of dark, dispassionate social comedies, and to movie audiences, he was the filmmaker behind an entirely different series of dark, dispassionate social comedies. But in 2001, LaBute decided to transplant his play *The Shape of Things* from the stage to the screen.

Shape premiered in London in 2001, starring four actors,

Facing page: top: Maya Shange in Austin Chick’s *XX/XY*; bottom: Danvers mental hospital shot during a location scout for *Session 9*.

Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, Gretchen Mol, and Frederick Weller. A defiant art student named Evelyn (Weisz) woos Adam (Rudd), a hapless undergrad, and over the course of their relationship, she transforms him from an overweight, self-effacing loser into a svelte, confident boyfriend whose makeover baffles and alienates his friends. Evelyn's coup de grace is talking Adam into a nose job.

Like many of LaBute's works, *Shape* is about the superficiality and brutality of ordinary human interaction. The play's climax is Evelyn's presentation of her mysterious final art project. Adam and his friends, Jenny and Phil, played by Mol and Weller, take their seats in the audience—in the stage production, they are quite literally sprinkled in among theatergoers—and listen as Evelyn describes Adam as her creation. Feigning love, she manipulated him into changing everything about himself in order to please her. Adam has even, in the end, given up his old friends and asked Evelyn to marry him.

In its theatrical incarnation, *Shape* was deliberately spare. Minimalist sets and a few carefully chosen props filled in the details of the various locations: a museum, a doctor's lounge, an apartment, a playground. Jenny and Phil were dressed in preppy neutrals and Adam in baggy, indistinct college-kid garb. Only Evelyn popped on stage, her punky, bright clothes demanding as much attention as her cruelly ambitious project.

Shortly before LaBute brought the play—complete with the same cast and sets—to New York City in the fall of 2001, a producer offered him funds to turn *Shape* into a film. He jumped at the chance, but decided not to change much about his production. *Shape* would keep its essential form and message. Instead of the usual fifty to sixty scenes, the movie version would have only ten just like the play. And instead of slashing away swaths of dialogue to make room for the kind of visual storytelling that is impossible on stage, LaBute made only a few minor changes to accommodate his new medium.

The resulting movie, which was shot on film in 18 days, may be the most rehearsed movie ever made. Rudd, Weisz, Mol, and Weller had been running their lines for a year.

"With the film, I was trying to achieve something akin to the theatrical experience," says LaBute. "I like it when a movie is basically two people talking. If the script is good enough, I don't think you have to have a lot more than that to make it interesting." To that end, LaBute used the camera to create a kind of static frame in which the actors delivered their dialogue. He seldom cut between his characters; instead, he showed them reacting to each other and the space they occupied. In addition, LaBute and his DP, James Carter, rarely moved the camera and almost never quickly. In the final scene, a swooping camera movement startles the viewer precisely because the camera has moved that way only a few times before.

There are of course, significant differences between the theatrical and film versions. This is largely because a play has one thing going for it that a movie will never have: an audience just doesn't expect it to look real. On stage, for instance, Rudd wore baggy clothes and slumped over when he was the old Adam. When changed by Evelyn, Rudd donned a form-fitting costume and carried himself with more grace and confidence. But onscreen, LaBute supplied Rudd with devices to add nuance to his character's alteration. He wore pads that made him look overweight, and he had prosthetics in his nose, which came out after the operation.

"Everything that Paul conveyed on stage was through his own bodywork, what was in the text, and with the costumes," says LaBute. "And of course the added ingredient of suspension of disbelief. In a theater, the audience says: 'I'll give you this. I know he's not losing 25 pounds over the course of two hours, but just let me sort of believe it.'"

At the movies, an audience requires proof.

The story's location also had to be more concrete on film. The play took place at a Midwestern college. The site was left deliberately vague, and allusions to place were only meant to evoke the insular cocoon of a university town. On screen, however, *Shape*'s venue is clearly Southern California. The palm trees and idyllic campus setting offset both Adam's awkwardness and Evelyn's defiant remove from the mainstream. The sets, in particular, were a marked contrast. Where the stage was almost bare, *Shape*'s filmic scenery was maximalist, a heightened version of reality. Evelyn's apartment is a riot of primary colors and littered with her art projects; Phil's living room a goofy beige lair, cluttered with knickknacks a college student might describe as "cool."

Even though production designer Lynette Meyer, who also designed the costumes for both the stage and movie version, exaggerated each film set, she had to be careful not to distract audiences too much from their focus on the characters. Rooms could be bright and playful, but they had to be believable. She and LaBute may have been going for theatrical, but they were still making a movie.

Blue Vinyl

Directed by Daniel B. Gold and Judith Helfand

Director of Photography: Daniel B. Gold

In 1998, Dan Gold and Judith Helfand set themselves one of the most difficult tasks in contemporary filmmaking: They would make a documentary about industrial pollution and environmental toxins that didn't bore their audience into a stupor.

Blue Vinyl is their account of the siding on Helfand's parents' house in Merrick, Long Island. In 1994, Florence and Ted Helfand replaced their deep red, wooden clapboards with powder blue vinyl, a supposedly safe, durable materi-

al that would fit in nicely in their quiet, suburban neighborhood. But their daughter, Judith, wasn't convinced that vinyl was harmless. Helfand's cinematic investigation into her parents' blue siding took her to Lake Charles, Louisiana, a city largely dependent on the \$6 billion vinyl industry; Venice, Italy, where magistrates have charged vinyl manufacturers with poisoning the city's lagoon; and back to Merrick, where she finally convinced her mother and father to trade in their vinyl for a building material that was not a hazard at any point in its life cycle.

Environmental films are a particularly tough sell. Documentaries that have done well in recent years have featured adorable children, breathtaking footage of birds, or Michael Moore. Films about environmental damage, in contrast, are usually heavy on the science and on depressing images of sick people or spoiled landscapes. They are not crowd pleasers. To be sure, there is a small, committed audience that would watch paint dry if it were lead paint and the documentary exposed corporate malfeasance. But Gold and Helfand did not want to pitch their film to the converted—they hoped for a new kind of audience.

"We wanted to reach middle-class, average consumers who are going to buy something because it's cheap and effective, and they're not going to have to pay a whole lot of attention to it over the long haul," says Helfand. "They are the battleground between the environmental movement and industry. Everybody wants those people." Gold and Helfand knew *Blue Vinyl* had to forge a vivid link between their audience, the workers who make vinyl, the people who live near production plants, and the corporations that work so hard to convince the average consumer that vinyl is a harmless and endlessly useful plastic. To do this, the filmmakers used two primary tools: humor and a compelling aesthetic.

Their first trick was to make *Blue Vinyl* resolutely personal. Because everything in the movie is seen, quite literally, from Helfand's perspective, the film is never clinical or pedantic. As Helfand—as well as Gold's camera—travel from Long Island to Louisiana, Italy, and California, she totes a piece of blue vinyl with her. It is a constant reminder of both the wide-ranging effects of the plastic industry and

her own family's implication in that story. The difficult task of situating the viewer in a dozen different locations becomes a disarming visual joke: Helfand's vinyl scrap bobs along at a Lake Charles Mardi Gras celebration, in a gondola on the Grand Canal, and on a car dashboard over the Golden Gate bridge.

The filmmakers also used humor to undercut the sober science that they knew they had to deliver. They commissioned stylishly drawn segments by animator Emily Hubley to illustrate the potential toxicity of the vinyl manufacturing

process. And instead of filming talking heads in cramped university offices, the co-directors sat a series of experts on plastic chairs on the lawn in front of the Helfand house.

From the beginning, Gold insisted that the film should be beautiful as well as entertaining and informative. As an experienced documentary DP and news "shooter," he had been on too many shoots where the filmmakers grabbed B-roll or beauty shots as an after-

thought on the way to lunch. He knew that the grueling, expensive process of filming hundreds of hours of video footage would make it easy for him to skimp on precisely the kinds of images that would make his film a pleasure to watch. "We were always trying to show everyday life unfolding against a constant backdrop of industry," says Gold. "We worked from the background forward."

He and Helfand took one trip to Louisiana exclusively to shoot landscape and setting shots. They hired a jib operator at considerable expense in order to get the height they needed for sweeping shots of vinyl factories and the surrounding houses. And Gold always insisted that they find the most picturesque, appropriate location for an interview—even if it meant spending a few extra hours standing in front of hay bales on the Northern California coast.

Gold and Helfand's efforts were rewarded with two Emmy nominations in 2003 and the 2002 Documentary Award for Excellence in Cinematography at Sundance, proving that a film with an activist agenda doesn't have to be tedious. ■

You can find copies of *Blue Vinyl* at www.bluevinyl.org, or email info@workingfilms.org or call (910) 342-9000.



Directors Judith Helfand and Daniel B. Gold in *Blue Vinyl*.

Elizabeth Angell is a New York based freelance writer.



48 Hour Picture People

By Derek Loosvelt

At 7:00 p.m. on a Friday night, more than twenty teams of filmmakers gather at a local film center or bar. In a random drawing one member of each team picks a film genre out of a hat. Every team is then given the same character, prop, and line of dialogue they're required to include in a film—a film they will write, shoot, and edit in less than 48 hours.

This is the premise behind the 48 Hour Film Project, the creation of Washington, DC-based independent filmmakers Mark Ruppert and Liz Langston. Inspired by New York's 24-Hour Plays, Ruppert and Langston translated the time-restricted theater production competition into film and video, holding the first 48 Hour Film Project in DC in May of 2001. Since then, they've expanded the Project to 10 additional US cities, created a countrywide offshoot called the National Film Challenge, and even taken their idea overseas. Last year, Auckland, NZ, played host to a 48 Hour Film Project, and this year, teams will be fighting the clock in Dublin and Copenhagen.

Filmmaking teams begin production on their five to twelve minute shorts at 7:30 p.m. on Friday night. Story brainstorming is the first order of business. "After the 'opening ceremonies,' we ordered pizza, bought a case of

PBR, and began to write," says Geoff O'Brien, director of *Trash—A Time Travel Odyssey*, which won Best in Show in New York's 2003 Project. "We didn't stay up too late, because we figured out early on that the schedule was pretty obvious—write on Friday, shoot on Saturday, edit on Sunday. We were up [until] about 2:00 a.m. writing and storyboarding the shots." Often, teams will talk story until midnight, then assign a couple of writers to work into the early morning hours to hammer out a script. "Preproduction is key," says Kent Nichols, director of *Baggage*, the best picture winner of the 2003 Los Angeles Project. "Know what your resources are—where you can shoot, what sort of costumes and props you have access to, and then write the script based on those resources." For the most part, teams will have something to work with by 8 a.m. on Saturday, but sometimes, entire teams will have been up all night without a script by the morning.

Given the tight deadline, teams run into all sorts of production problems. The most common are sound problems, which can be time consuming to fix. Gaining a false sense

Team Lucky shot co-producer Andy Birch taking a breather during a recent 48 Hour Film Project in Washington D.C.

of security is another typical mistake. "Things will be going smoothly, teams will stop pressing, and then they'll turn around and their time's almost up," says Ruppert, who adds, "But the beauty of the time limit is it gives filmmakers a sense of freedom in that they have to make decisions quickly and move on." O'Brien agrees. "It makes you think on your feet. With such a short time period in which to make an entire film, you're forced to trust your instincts and the decisions you make, and to believe you're making the best possible film given the nature of the piece."

Other major challenges come in the editing studio, often during the final minutes before the 7:00 p.m. Sunday deadline. Computer crashes are frequent, and unforeseen difficulties can also arise. During the latest project in Nashville, a team called The Freudian Slips couldn't get their tape out of their computer, so they ended up filming the computer screen. "It still was a funny film that the audience loved," says Ruppert. "The amazing thing is just how good the majority of these films are. Some just blow us away."

Team Boondogglers' dark comedy *White Bitch Down*, winner of the 2002 national title, 48 Hour Film of the Year, was accepted by the Atlanta Film Festival where it won \$100,000 in finishing costs. Other 48 Hour Film Project success stories include LA-based Itty Bitty Films' *Realities of Love*, which placed third at Shriekfest, and LA-based Genesis Films' *A Life for a Life*, which screened at the Los Angeles International Short Film Festival.

Every team that enters and completes a 48 Hour film is guaranteed a commercial theater screening, typically held the night after the deadline. Awards such as Best Directing, Best Editing, and Best Screenplay are handed out in addition to Best in Show. In March, the 12 Best in Show city winners from 2003 will vie for 48 Hour Film of the Year honors at the South by Southwest film festival in Austin, where the competing films will be screened again.

Participants in the 48 Hour Film Project run the gamut from film professionals working in the industry every day—the Boondogglers are full-time advertising producers—to first-time moviemakers. The average team size is 15 to 20, but the Project has included teams of as many as 50.

"The screenings and parties that go along with the 48 Film Hour Project have brought together a lot of independent filmmakers," says Ruppert. "It's really energized filmmaking communities." It's also re-energized certain filmmakers. Maryland-based Travesty Films, which made more than a half dozen short films in the eighties but hadn't made a film in over 10 years, attribute their reunion to the Project. "We ran out of steam and were just yakking about doing stuff," explains Travesty's Dave Nuttcombe. "Then the 48 Hour Film Project came along, and we've been involved in every DC Project except for one—which occurred while we were making our first feature."

Indeed, says Ruppert, "knowing that you can actually

finish a film is very powerful. And don't forget that on top of a finished film, you get a screening. Watching your film on the big screen is what it's all about." ■

For more information, go to www.48hourfilm.com and www.filmchallenge.com.

Derek Loosvelt is a Brooklyn based freelance writer.

Fast Film Drive-Thrus

The Challenge is sponsored by the Chicago based nonprofit Split Pillow, which promotes motion picture improvisation, and requires each part of the film to be handed off to a different team. www.splitpillow.com/events/main.html

The 24-Hour Video Race, now entering its second year, is the brainchild of the Video Association of Dallas. Video teams create a five-minute or shorter digital video during the 24-hour period. The required theme and prop are surprises until the race begins. www.videofest.org

An internet-based variation of the 48 Hour Film Project, **MadeInAWeekend** contestants are emailed the information they need to start making their film. The teams compete in local time, and the films can be presented in any language. Each competition is genre based and, starting in 2004, films will be screened in theaters in addition to the internet. www.MadeInAWeekend.com

The Vancouver ReelFast 48 Hour Film Festival is open to teams of ten people who write, shoot, and edit a ten minute (or less) film in 48 hours using an "Inspiration Package," which consists of five items: a sound bite, a photograph, a location idea, a surprise (prop or other random contribution) and a donation to craft services. www.REELFASTFILMS.com

In the manic **24-Hour Film Contest**, also held in Vancouver, Canada, filmmakers are given different props, sayings, and themes to incorporate into their films. The time constraints require the use of digital technology, and there is a maximum of eight filmmakers per team. www.the24hour-filmcontest.com

The 72-Hour Filmmaker Contest, held in the small town of Frederick, Maryland, unleashes teams of filmmakers in a three-day frenzy. Each team is given criteria to include in their film, which may include props, character names, lines of dialogue, and locations. The grand prize is \$250. www.frederickfilm.org/72hour.html

—Alyssa Worsham

The FCC Showdown

CAN INDEPENDENTS WIN THE BATTLE?

By Matt Dunne

On October 22, 2003, the FCC held a hearing on localism in Charlotte, NC.

FCC chairman Michael Powell probably wished he'd stayed home.

There was a kind of "Showdown at the OK Corral" feeling to the whole thing, with nearly 350 witnesses—everyone from fundamentalist Christians to independent film producers and songwriters—making strange bedfellows as they ranted and raved at the FCC commissioners. At times it seemed that all they had in common was their anger.

For the FCC, whose deliberations over licensing and market share rarely attract anyone but the wonkiest political insiders, being at the center of the storm was a new experience. And the Charlotte hear-

ing against the new rules—to organize opposition across the country. Suddenly, the FCC and its decision-making process were leading on the evening news. Despite the opposition, the FCC pushed forward and narrowly passed the new rules in June on a 3-2 vote. The new rules and the lack of public input provoked a maelstrom of controversy. Everyone from National Rifle Association executive vice president Wayne LaPierre to musician Billy Bragg stood up to decry the relaxing of ownership regulations. "These big media conglomerates are already pushing out diversity of political opinion," LaPierre complained to the *Austin-American Statesman*.

Then, on August 20, as political opposition in Congress reached a fever pitch, the FCC announced that it was embark-

video makers and producers are many right now. Powell's laissez faire approach to regulation could well lead to cross-ownership of film and cable delivery companies and further consolidation in the industry. Most problematic is the very real possibility of vertical integration. A handful of companies could conceivably own studios, cable companies, video/DVD rental stores, and movie theaters, allowing for absolute control over the future of the market. We've already seen vertical integration in the music industry. Clear Channel, the most audacious of the high-profile corporate media giants, has been accused of using its ownership of ticket distributors, major concert venues, and a dominant ownership of airwaves to ensure artists use all three of its services. No airplay unless you use its ticket service. No ticket service unless you use its venue. The film and video corollary should be obvious.

Along with vertical integration comes the possibility of monopsony (the flip side of monopoly, when there is no real competition between companies that will actually purchase a given product or service) through further consolidations. With relaxation of ownership regulations, independent film and video makers and producers could see their markets—and their ability to charge a fair price for their work—disappear.

So where's the good news? Well, the FCC and the issues around consolidation finally have the public's attention. Constituencies with varied and competing interests have now come together to oppose consolidation and create grassroots support for localism and diversity of voice. While many independent artists have portrayed the hearings as an empty gesture, the rule changes—and by extension Powell himself—are more vulnerable than it may seem. The 3-2 vote by the commission makes the rule susceptible to court challenge and there's a very real chance that Congress will be successful in overturning the new forty-five percent ownership cap.

The Congressional efforts indicate the breadth of public anger over the changes.



For the first time in a long time, artists and independents have a real opportunity to contribute to the debate. Unfortunately, we may be squandering it.

ing was supposed to be about localism, supposed to give broadcasters in the area a chance to explain how they were working to preserve local programming and news. So where did all the anger come from? In order to understand that, you have to go back to last winter, when the FCC proposed to make a dramatic change to its media ownership rules for broadcasters—including raising the cap on ownership of the national viewing audience from thirty-five to forty-five percent.

In what now appears to have been a monumental misstep, Powell announced that the FCC only had enough money for one public hearing, leading dissenting commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein—who would vote

ing on a new initiative to study localism in broadcasting. Hearings would be held in six locations and would focus on how broadcasters are serving their local communities. Cynics said the planned hearings were political farce, and that the FCC was just giving big media companies a platform for defending the higher ownership caps by boasting about their commitment to localism. With all of the unexpressed anger out there, it was no wonder that in Charlotte the commissioners faced a rehashing of the debate on the new ownership rules, and it's clear that whatever the FCC tries to put on the agenda at the next hearing—scheduled for San Antonio in January 2004—the commissioners are going to get an earful.

The dangers for independent film and

While no one pretends that the hearings themselves will result in the voiding of the rules passed to date, the FCC is not doing this for fun. The commission is at least conscious of appearing to be interested in what the public has to say. Media coverage is keeping the issue front and center, and when hearings unfold in Santa Cruz, California, Rapid City, South Dakota, Portland, Maine, and Washington, DC this year, you can bet that the press will be watching.

For the first time in a long time, artists and independents have a real opportunity to contribute to the debate. Unfortunately, we may be squandering it. For all the noise that opponents of consolidation are making, there is little discussion of where we should go from here, little discussion of how the FCC should figure in the brave new world of media delivery.

A fundamental problem is that the FCC has been using rules generated in the 50s and 60s, based on models that, in technology terms, are hundreds of generations old. There is no longer one mechanism for transferring a particular medium. Television channels compete with other television channels, but also with cable and satellite. With this change there has also been a shift in the standard for evaluating whether to implement a rule that will constrict the free market. The law says that the FCC must look at "public interest, convenience, and necessity." Traditionally, the FCC has regulated emphasizing a perceived public interest—i.e. diverse ownership of broadcast organizations, but the Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit seems to be erring on the side of the free market, telling the FCC that in order to regulate at all it must show empirical proof that a new regulation is "necessary," and that without it, American's constitutional rights will be curtailed.

The court's statements were music to Powell's ears, but he misstepped by not defining what the public interest was in the new ownership rules he supported. In short, he brought the anger down upon himself by passing rules before defining what the public good will be under his FCC. This series of hearings on localism are his first steps in creating that defini-

tion, and if we don't take this opportunity to create a new model for defining public good, Powell's actions show that it will be defined for us.

Those of us working to preserve competition, choice of voice, and localism, must look ahead rather than backward. The landscape is new and the emerging mediums do allow for the possibility of richer competition. We have the attention of the commission and the public, but we must aggressively act to define the public interest. I encourage the independent community to connect, if you haven't already, with organizations like the Writer's Guild, AIVF, Consumer Federation of America, and the Media Access Project to bring added strength to your efforts and to ensure that those with a stake in reversing the current trend are focusing on the long-term policy remedies, not just politics.

At the writing of this article, there are five more hearings scheduled, and we—both the independent community and the general public—have got to be there. The rules that will really affect the work of independent film and video makers and producers have not yet been passed, but they are on the way. Rules that allow for the consolidation of film and video outlets may not garner the same widespread opposition as the rules allowing for broadcast and news ownership. The independent community has the opportunity to set a new model for public good in the modern age. And all of us must work now to frame the debate and create a clearly defined public good that protects the competitive marketplace and offers a wide spectrum of consumers for a variety of voices in film and video. It's okay to be angry, but if we don't come to the table with new definitions of public good, we may win the battle but lose the war. ■

See www.aivf.org/advocacy for links to above mentioned organizations.

Matt Dunne is the Democratic state senator of Vermont, and founder of the Vermont Film Commission. Previously, he served two and a half years as National Director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and four terms as a Vermont state representative.

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Aaton's Cantar & A-Minima

By Greg Gilpatrick

Aaton, the innovative French camera and audio manufacturer, has recently released two new and remarkable products—the Cantar digital audio recorder, and the A-Minima Super16 film camera. The A-Minima is a film camera built to operate like a DV camera, while the Cantar is a digital audio recorder that operates much like a standard reel-to-reel recorder, but records to an internal hard drive in a way that surpasses other digital means like DAT or DV cameras. Where DV cameras (or their operators) regularly produce timecode errors, these new products from Aaton, a known pioneer in creating timecode recording products specifically geared toward reliable use of the media in post-production, result in a more exacting process.

In November, Aaton loaned me both a Cantar and an A-Minima for a few days to try out for this article. Rather than running dry technical tests in a controlled environment, I decided to actually shoot a short narrative film. After working with the equipment for three consecutive twelve-hour days of production, I can attest that the Cantar and A-Minima are both stable and useful products. However, as with many products, they are in some ways ingenious, and in others less than ideal.

The Cantar

The Cantar is a great piece of equipment that could very possibly revolutionize the way location sound is recorded. Not only does the Cantar record high quality digital audio but it saves important information that

proves invaluable during post-production. The Cantar saves the audio onto files that can be easily transferred to a computer for immediate use in editing or mixing. Of all the ways I have seen audio recorded onto a separate device during production, the Cantar provides the smoothest and best method.

With its large control knob and circular meters on the front, anybody familiar with location sound record-



ing will notice how much the Cantar looks like the standard analog recorders from Nagra. But that's where the similarities end. The Cantar is a specialized computer that processes audio digitally and records it to a file on its own hard drive along with timecode, scene and take, and the time of day. A complete rundown of the Cantar's technical features could take up this entire magazine, but the key things to know about the Cantar are that it can record up to six analog inputs along with two digital inputs in either 16-bit or 24-bit audio formats. It can also mix tracks together during recording, and offers both regular potentiometers for level adjustment and linear faders for controlling the mix. A full rundown of the Cantar's features and technical specs can be found on Aaton's website (www.aaton.com).

Before I tested the Cantar, I was apprehensive about several aspects of its design. Recording to a hard drive allows for the potentially catastrophic loss of all recorded audio when the hard drive fails. The Cantar is basically a specialized computer with many of its features implemented as software that could end up being buggy and fail to work properly—especially since Aaton is not known for conducting much software engineering. After three days of using the Cantar (and an unfinished pre-release version to boot), however, it's clear that Aaton has developed a product that can be counted on to record critical production audio.

The Cantar has a built-in DVD/CD recorder that allows for backing up audio files, even while running around on a location or documentary shooting. Even better, a built-in FireWire port allows backing up files and re-recording to a second hard drive for redundant recording. The Cantar's method is even better

than recording to a magnetic tape because it is built to create multiple copies of recordings with very little hassle and no generation loss in quality.

Though the Cantar is constructed to mimic the controls of a standard audio recorder, even an experienced audio recordist may not feel immediately comfortable setting up its initial configuration. Cantar's feature set is so deep that it could potentially take hours of practice use before employing it effectively on a production. Once the technical controls of the Cantar are understood and set up, though, it is actually quite simple to operate.

Where the Cantar's features really shine is in post-production. At the end of each day, I connected the Cantar into my Mac via FireWire and copied the files from the Cantar onto the computer. Once the files were in

The Cantar digital audio recorder.

the computer, I imported them into Avid Xpress Pro and they immediately showed up in a bin logged with information like timecode, scene and take, and the time it was recorded. With each recording already logged, it's much easier to work with the sound at the editing stage than with unlogged audio files from an analog or digital tape that need to be listened to for determining which shots they correspond to.

As to be expected, there are a few things that could be improved about the Cantar, starting with its price. Though the Cantar is a great piece of equipment, \$15,000 is a lot of money for an independent filmmaker. Professional sound recordists who are paid for their work on a regular basis might not find the price much of an obstacle, but for independents to use it on a regular basis, the price would have to be about half as much. Hopefully, the unit's price will drop as the technology evolves.

Beyond the price, my only major complaint was that we found it difficult to scan through files as we played back our takes on set. Other than that, I was very impressed with the Cantar and regretted having to give it back. I am now in Cantar withdrawal.

A-Minima

I didn't have as great an experience with the A-Minima as with the Cantar. Though the A-Minima is by no means a bad product, it is not the ideal camera for many types of shoots. About the size and weight of a DV camera like the Sony PD150, the A-Minima is clearly designed primarily for people who need a small and light high-quality film camera outside of a studio environment. Though it looks like a DV camera, the A-Minima shoots 200-foot Super 16 film rolls that can be printed to 35, regular 16, or transferred to HD video. The widescreen aspect ratio of Super 16 is a good fit with the wider frame of HD video. Kodak's web site even lists the A-

Minima as "the world's smallest, most affordable HD camera."

The A-Minima does offer an impressive array of high-tech features. It generates timecode that can be used to slave other timecode devices like the Cantar; it has a built-in intervalometer that allows for any frame rate up to 50 fps; and it records AatonCode timecode to the film. With all these features built into a small and light camera, the A-Minima appeared at first to be the ideal camera for independent production. However, my experience with the A-Minima, while far from a complete disappointment, did not live up to my expectations.

My number one complaint with the A-Minima is that it is awkward to load. My crew and I made several attempts to load it, only to find several times that it was loaded wrong and in need of reloading. To see the process of loading the A-Minima, watch the video on Abel CineTech's web site (www.abelcine.com). Adding to our frustration with the A-Minima is that it is surprisingly loud. Even after blimping the camera with a towel and jacket, the sound of the camera can be heard in the background of all our sync-sound shots.

Part of what makes it possible to produce such a small camera is that Aaton partnered with Kodak to package their film on a special 200-foot roll made exclusively for the A-Minima. 200 feet of film provides twice the amount of film as the regular 100-foot daylight spool used in other small cameras, but it is still half the amount of most cameras which use a full 400-foot roll. The result was that we ended up taking more time to reload the camera and often found ourselves at the end of a roll without enough film left for a full shot.

Since Kodak worked with Aaton on the A-Minima, only Kodak stock is available for the A-Minima. Personally, I prefer Kodak stock so that was not an issue during my test

shoot. Considering that the A-Minima is especially suited for filming in documentary and location environments, it makes sense that Aaton worked with Kodak to provide filmmakers with access to Kodak's Vision stock that is more forgiving of varying lighting situations. Still, it would be nice to have access to a broader variety of stocks.

I would suggest the A-Minima as an MOS (shooting without sound recorded at the same time) camera where a small and light camera would be best. If you do plan on using the A-Minima as your primary camera where sound will be recorded, make sure you are prepared to cover the camera with something to keep its sound from reaching the microphone, and make sure that whoever loads the camera is comfortable with the challenge of its loading procedure.

Conclusion

As I write this article, we are about to begin post-production on the film we shot while testing these products. After any production is finished, the only thing that really matters from a technical perspective is how your picture looks and how your sound sounds. In this case, everything looks and sounds great. Though the A-Minima may not be a perfect camera, it certainly provides a better image than any non-HD video camera and makes it possible to create a 35mm print. The Cantar's 24-bit sound surpasses the quality of any DAT or DV camera and can be loaded directly into 24-bit audio workstations. I applaud Aaton, and can't wait to see what they do next. ■

Greg Gilpatrick is a Brooklyn based filmmaker and consultant. His email address is greg@randomroom.com.

The following companies provided assistance with this article:

Equipment: Aaton & Abel CineTech

Film Stock: Kodak

Laboratory Services: Metropolis Filmlab

Telecine: Mind's Eye Media

Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Feb. 1st for April issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.

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DOMESTIC

ANTELOPE VALLEY INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL. May 14-16, CA. Deadline: Feb. 1; March 15 (final). Fest seeks short & feature films of all genres & formats for its annual fest. All films will be screen in their original formats. Cats: short, doc, feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Entry Fee: \$25; \$40 (Final). Contact: AVIFF, 3041 West Avenue K, Lancaster, CA 93536; (661) 722-6478; fax: 772-6612; info@aviff.com; www.aviff.com.

ARIZONA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, April 15-25, AZ. Deadline: Feb. 6. Festival's mission is to showcase independent work (preferably not in distribution) from around the world to Arizona audiences. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DV, DVD, 16mm. Preview on VHS. DVD. Entry Fee: \$30 (under 45 min.); \$50 (45 min. & over). Contact: Gullio Scaler, Box 431, Tucson, AZ 85702; (520) 628-1737; reel.frontier@yahoo.com; www.azmac.org.

ARIZONA STATE ART MUSEUM SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. April 18, AZ. Deadline: Feb. 13. The fest is a one night outdoor fest. Entries should be no longer than 10 min. Cats: short, experimental. Awards: Juror's Choice (2), LeBlanc Audience Choice, & AZ award (Arizona artists only). Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: John D. Spiak, Curatorial Museum Specialist, ASU Art Museum, Tenth St. & Mill Avenue, Tempe, AZ 85287-2911; (480) 965-2787; fax: (480) 965-5254; spiak@asu.edu; asuartmuseum.asu.edu/filmfest/.

ATHENS INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 23-29, OH. Deadline: Feb. 20. Annual fest celebrating independent, doc & experimental works. Each entry is pre-screened by a committee of artists. Works w/ high regard for artistic innovation, sensitivity to content & personal involvement w/ the medium are welcomed. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta, Beta SP, mini-DV. Preview on VHS (NTSC), 16mm. Entry Fee: \$35, plus s.a.s.e./insurance. Contact: Festival, Box 388, Rm. 407, 75 W. Union St., Athens, OH 45701; (740) 593-1330; fax: 597-2560; bradley@ohiou.edu; www.athensfest.org.

BIG MUDDY FILM FESTIVAL. February 20-29, IL. Deadline: Jan. 23. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", DVD, Mini-DV, DVCAM. Preview formats same as screening formats. Entry Fee: \$35 (under 20 min);

Founded: 1996. Cats: feature (over 60 min.), narrative (under 60 min.), doc (under 60 min.), animation, experimental, student, feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Awards: Over \$5,000 in prizes. Formats: 16mm, Beta, DV, 35mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS, Beta SP, super 8, Hi8, U-matic, 8mm, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS (NTSC) & DVD. Entry Fee: \$25-\$40. Contact: Firstglance Films, Box 571105, Tarzana, CA 91356; (818) 464-3544; (215) 552-8566; email wropro1@email.msn.com; www.firstglancefilms.com.

GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL. April 14-20, NY. Deadline: Dec. 12 (early); Jan. 26 (final). Fest is curated, non-competitive championing American independent film & its audiences. Founded: 1996. Cats: animation, feature, experimental, short, doc. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$15 shorts, \$20 (late); \$25 features, \$30 (late)- \$5 discount for w/outabox.com



City of Light

The ten-year-old Los Angeles Film Festival has become the place for indie films in Southern California. Run by IFP/Los Angeles since 2001, the fest screens domestic and international films, and hosts special events and screenings throughout the LA area.

Heavy press and industry attendance, along with lush opening and closing night parties, make for an exceptional program. And then there's the The Target Filmmaker Award—sponsored by Target Store—an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000, which is the largest cash prize bestowed by a major U.S. film festival. Last year Paxton Winters won the jackpot for his film, *Crude*. See listing.

\$40 (20-50 min.); \$45 (over 50 min.). Contact: Evan Smith, Dept. of Cinema & Photography, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6610; (618) 453-1482; fax: 453-2264; bigmuddy@siu.edu; www.bigmuddyfilm.com.

BLACK POINT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. April 21-25, WI. Deadline: Dec. 31; Jan. 31 (final). Fest takes place in Lake Geneva, WI, about an hour from Chicago, Madison & Milwaukee. Founded: 2002. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 1/2", DVD, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (Short); \$30 (Feature); \$25 (late-Short); \$40 (late-Feature). Contact: Richard Paro, 3235 Chicago Club Drive, Delavan, WI 53115; (262)740-BPFF; richardparo@yahoo.com; www.blackpointfilmfestival.com.

FIRSTGLANCE: PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. June, PA. Deadline: Jan. 15, Feb. 1 (final).

members. Contact: Jeffrey Abramson, Festival Director, 133 W. 25th Street, 6th Flr., New York, NY 10001; (212) 255-7300, ext. 505; fax: (212) 255-7400; film@genart.org; www.genart.org.

HUMBOLDT INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL. April 3-10, CA. Deadline: Jan. 30. Films must be under 45 min. in length & completed in the last three years. Cats: narrative, experimental, animation, doc, & the "you call it" category, short, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, Digital Video. Preview on VHS/DVD. Entry Fee: \$10 (under 9 min.); \$20 (10-29 min.); \$30 (30-60 min.); \$10 additional for Int'l entries. Contact: Pablo Koontz, Dept. of Theater, Film, & Dance, Humboldt State Univ., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113; fax: 826-4112; email filmfest@humboldt.edu; www.humboldt.edu/~filmfest.

IFP LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL, June 17-26, CA. Deadline: Jan. 16; Feb. 20 (final):

shorts, music video); March 1 (final: features). The IFP/Los Angeles Film Festival showcases the best of American & int'l independent cinema. Playing to huge crowds, the fest screens over 50 features & 40 shorts. Fest has evolved into a world class event, uniting emerging filmmakers w/ critics, scholars, film masters, & the movie-loving public. Films must not have had theatrical/commercial/TV play in the U.S. Features must be at least 60 min. in length & not screened at other LA fests. Founded: 1995. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Animation, Music Video, Student. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DigiBeta, 70mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$50/\$65 (features); \$35/\$45 (shorts); \$20/\$30 (music videos). Contact: Richard Raddon, Festival Director, c/o IFP West, 8750 Wilshire Blvd. 2nd Floor, Los Angeles, CA, USA 90211; (866) 345-6338; lafilm fest@ifpwest.org; www.lafilmfest.com.

INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL OF BOSTON, April 29-May 2, MA. Deadline: Oct. 31, Jan. 31, March 1. Fest was created to discover unknown filmmakers, incl. students, first-timers, & int'l directors. Festival specializes in films still seeking distribution. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Awards: Best Fiction Feature & Short, Best Doc Feature & Short, Festival Filmmaker, & Audience Choice. Formats: 35mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$45. Contact: Festival, 44 School Street, PMB 385, Boston, MA 02108; (857)891-8693; email info@iffboston.org; www.iffboston.org.

INT'L WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL, May 1-8, MT. Deadline: Jan. 30. Created & based in Missoula Montana, the fest is the world's longest running juried wildlife film competition & fest. The IWFF strives to build bridges for the people who are involved in wildlife, filmmaking, & distribution. Cats: see application. Formats: NTSC Beta, NTSC Beta SP, NTSC DigiBeta, VHS, PAL, 1/2", Beta, DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM). Entry Fee: \$25-\$200. Contact: IWFF, IWFF, 718 S Higgins, Missoula, MT 59801; (406) 728-9380; fax: 728-2881; iwff@wildlifefilms.org; www.wildlifefilms.org.

IOWA CITY INT'L DOC FESTIVAL, April 15-18, IA. Deadline: Jan. 15; Jan. 31 (final). A competitive fest showcasing short documentaries. Length of entries is limited to 30 min.. Festival seeks short documentaries of 30 min or less. The definition of a "doc" is open to wide interpretation. Founded: 2002. Cats: doc, short. Awards: Cash prizes. Formats: 1/2", 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry

Fee: \$25; \$30 (late). Contact: T. Seeberger, P.O. Box 10008, Iowa City, IA 52240; (319)335-3258; email info@ICDocs.org; www.icdocs.org.

JAMES RIVER FILM FESTIVAL, March 29-April 4, VA. Deadline: Feb. 13. The JRFF is administered by the Richmond Moving Image Co-op, a nonprofit organization that supports & promotes independent media arts. The purpose of the fest is to celebrate and examine the history & continuing contributions of independently produced film & video. Accepting works 30 min. or less produced after Jan. 1 of previous year. Founded: 1994. Cats: short, any style or genre. Formats: Super 8, 16mm, DVD, 1/2", Mini-DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Festival, P.O. Box 7469, Richmond, VA 23221; (804) 355-1383; email james@rmicweb.org; www.rmicweb.org.

METHOD FEST INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April 2-9, CA. Deadline: Dec. 5; Jan. 25 (final). Named for the 'Stanislavski Method,' fest highlights the great performances of independent film. Seeking story driven films w/ outstanding acting performances. Founded: 1999. Cats: Feature, Short, Student, Feature, Short, Quality Low Budget, & Audience Favorite Feature. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, DV, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: Student: \$25; Shorts: \$30, \$40 (final); Features: \$40, \$50 (final). Contact: c/o Franken Enterprises, 880 Apollo St. Ste. 337, El Segundo, CA 90245; (310) 535-9230; fax: 535-9128; Don@methodfest.com; www.methodfest.com.

NEW YORK ASIAN AMERICAN INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, July 16-24, NY. Deadline: Feb. 1. Founded by the Asian CineVision in 1978, the fest is the oldest fest in the U.S. showcasing works by film & video makers of Asian decent. Founded: 1978. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, script. Awards: Emerging Director Award (1st/2nd time feature directors); Screenplay Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$35 member/non-member. Contact: Asian CineVision, 133 W. 19th Street, 3rd Flr., New York, NY 10011; (212) 989-1422; fax: 727-3584; email info@asiancinevision.org; www.asiancinevision.org.

NEW YORK INT'L LATINO FILM FESTIVAL, July, NY. Deadline: March 5. Festival presents the works of Latino artists & people of Latin American descent. Founded: 2000. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee:

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PALM BEACH INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. April 15-22, FL. Deadline: Dec. 30, Jan. 30 (final). Festival showcases over 80 American & Int'l independent features, shorts & documentaries. Cats: Open to any genre, incl. doc, animation, experimental, drama & comedy, etc., any style or genre, feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30-\$70. Contact: Festival, 289 Via Naranjas, Royal Palm Plaza, Ste. 48, Boca Raton, FL 33432; (561) 362-0003; fax: 362-0035; info@pbilffest.org; www.pbi filmfest.org.

PHILADELPHIA FILM FESTIVAL. April 8-21, PA. Deadline: Jan. 16. Formerly the Festival of World Cinema, the annual competitive fest organized by the Philadelphia Film Society offers "an enriching view of world culture & a diversity of filmmaking culminating in a region-wide celebration of cinema." Founded: 1991. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, animation, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (shorts): \$30 (features). Contact: Festival, 234 Market Street, 4th Flr., Philadelphia, PA 19106; (215) 733-0608 ext. 219; fax: (215) 733-0637; tcadwell@phillyfests.com; www.phillyfests.com.

REELWORK: MAY DAY LABOR FILM FESTIVAL. April 24-May 1, CA. Deadline: Feb. 1. Fest seeks work about labor & union issues. Fest pays for travel & lodging for participating filmmakers. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Regan Brashear, 130 Sycamore St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 469-3848; submissions@reelwork.org; www.reelwork.org

ROSEBUD FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. March 27-28, DC. Deadline: Jan. 25. founded in 1990 to promote independent film & video communities of DC, Maryland & Virginia. Founded: 1990. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (Entry fee incl. a one-yr. membership to Arlington Community Television, the sponsoring organization). Contact: Jackie Steven, Festival Director, 2701-C Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201; (703) 524-2388; fax: 908-9239; jax@arlingtonmedia.org; www.rosebudact.org.

SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL. March 3-7, TX. Deadline: Jan. 25. The country's longest running int'l Chicano/Latino/Indigenous film & video fest will feature four days of film screenings, workshops & panels at the historic Guadalupe Theater & in venues San Antonio. Founded: 1978. Cats: short, feature, doc, animation, experimental, youth media. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$25; \$15 (students: high school, college & community youth training programs). Contact: Catherine Herrera, Festival Director, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio, TX, USA 78207; (210) 271-3151 x32; fax: 271-3480; cinefestival@guadalupeculturalarts.org; www.guadalupeculturalarts.org/media.html.

SAN FRANCISCO INT'L LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL. June 17-27, CA. Deadline: Jan. 5, Feb. 2 (final). Fest one of the oldest & most respected, is committed to screening the best in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender film. Many works premiered in fest go on to be programmed or distributed nat'lly & int'lly. Rough cuts accepted for preview if submitted on 1/2". Fest produced by Frameline, nonprofit arts organization dedicated to gay & lesbian media arts. Founded: 1976. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 1/2", Beta, 16mm, BETA cam SP-NTSC only. VHS- NTSC/PAL. Entry Fee: \$15-25. Contact: Program Coordinator, 146 9th St., Ste. 300, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650; fax: (415) 861-1404; info@frameline.org; www.frameline.org.

SHRIEKFEST FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 11-12, CA. Deadline: March 12; May 28; July 23 (final). The fest focuses on the horror film genre & the work of young filmmakers (18 & under). The fest "screens the best independent horror films of the year." Cats: feature, doc (about the horror genre), short, script, Young Filmmaker (under 18), youth media. Entry Fee: \$20-\$55. Contact: Shriekfest Film Festival, PO Box 920444, Sylmar, CA 91392; email@shriekfest.com; www.shriekfest.com.

SILVERDOCS: AFI/DISCOVERY CHANNEL DOC FILM FESTIVAL. June 16-20, MD. Deadline: Jan. 30; March 5. Cats: doc. Preview on VHS. Entry: \$25 (short), \$30 (feature); \$30 (short, final), \$35 (feature final). Contact: Festival, 8633 Colesville Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20910; (301) 495-6776; fax: 495-6777; info@silverdocs.com; www.silverdocs.com.

TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL. April 15-18, NM. Deadline: Jan. 16. Established as an artists' colony more than a century ago,

Taos is known for its eclectic mixture of cultures, traditions & philosophies. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation, music video, any style or genre, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25-\$50 (no fee for int'l entries). Contact: Kelly Clement, Dir. of Programming, 1337 Gusdorf Rd. Ste. B, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 751-0637; fax: 751-7385; ttpix@ttpix.org; www.ttpix.org.

UNA FILM FESTIVAL, April 15-17, AL. Deadline: Jan. 31. Annual film fest sponsored by the University of North Alabama & UNA alumnus George Lindsey, who had an illustrious career on the Broadway stage in New York & Hollywood. Cats: feature, short, Short Doc, music video, student, doc, animation. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20; \$10 (Student); \$5 (Lion Club). Contact: Festival, UNA Box 5151, Florence, AL 35632; (256) 765-4592; lindseyfilmfest@una.edu; www.lindseyfilmfest.com.

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM & DIGITAL VIDEO FESTIVAL, February 20-22, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 23. Annual fest encourages any genre, but work must have predominantly originated on Super 8 film or hi-8 or digital video. Formats: Hi8, super 8, 16mm, 8mm, 1/2", 3/4", DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35 (check or money order payable to Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC). Contact: Albert Nigrin, Rutgers Film Co-op/New Jersey Media Arts Center, 72 Lipman Dr., 018 Loree Bldg-Douglass Campus, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.njfilmfest.com.

WASHINGTON DC INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 21-May 2, DC. Deadline: Jan. 16. Annual fest that brings "best in new world cinema" to nation's capital. Cats: feature, doc, animation, children, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$15 (under 30 min.), \$25 (30 min. & up). Contact: Tony Gittens, Fest Dir., Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 724-5613; fax: 724-6578; filmfestdc@filmfestdc.org; www.filmfestdc.org.

INTERNATIONAL

ALGARVE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, May 1-9, Portugal. Deadline: Feb. 15. Comp. works under 30min. Founded: 1972. Cats: doc, animation, fiction, short. Awards: totaling \$20,000. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Carlos Manuel, Gen. Dir., Box 8091, Lisbon Codex, Portugal 1800; 011 351 21 851 36 15; fax: 351 21 852 11 50; email algarvefilmfest@mail.telepac.pt; www.algarvefilmfest.com.

FESTIVAL INT'L DU DOCUMENTAIRE (MARSEILLE), July 2-7, France. Deadline: March 15. Festival is open to every form, past & present, of doc film. Cats: Doc. Awards: Grand Prix (Feature length) 30,000 FF, Prix de la compétition française 15,000 FF, Prix de la Critique (First film) 10,000 FF, Prix Planete, Prix Georges de Beauregard, & the Prix des Cinemas de Recherche. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Michel Tregan, President, 14 Allée Léon Gambetta, Marseille, 13001; 011 33 (0)4 9504 44 90; fax: 9504 44 91; welcome@fidmarseille.org; www.fidmarseille.org.

INSIDE OUT: TORONTO LESBIAN AND GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 20-30, Canada. Deadline: Jan. 15. Founded: 1991. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, student, youth media, family, children, TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Kathleen Mullen, 401 Richmond St. West, Ste. 219, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 3A8; (416) 977-6847; fax: 977-8025; inside@insideout.on.ca; www.insideout.on.ca.

INT'L FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS, Sept. 22-26, Hungary. Deadline: March 31. Fest presents film & video works of various genres, which are somehow related to science: they deal w/ scientific work & achievements, or science plays an important part in their plot, language or manner of interpretation. Cats: doc, short, experimental, animation. Preview on VHS PAL. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Istvan Demeter, Managing Director, Tisza Mozi, Ltd., Templom u. 4., Szolnok, Hungary 5000; 011 36 56 511 270; fax: 36-56-420-038; festival@tiszamoz.hu; www.tiszamoz.hu.

INT'L FILM FESTIVAL OF URUGUAY, Apr. 3-18, Uruguay. Deadline: Jan. 15. Annual fest devoted to short & feature length, doc, fiction, experimental, Latin American & int'l films, w/ purpose of promoting film quality & human & conceptual values. Ind. fest aims at being frame for meetings & discussions of regional projects & of mutual interest. Founded: 1982. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation, student. Awards: Best Film; Jury Prize; Opera Prima Prize. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-VHS, U-matic, Beta SP, DVD, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Manuel Martinez Carril, Lorenzo Carnelli 1311, Montevideo, Uruguay 11200; 011 5982 418 2460; 409 5795; fax: 5982 419 4572; cine.muy@chasque.net; www.cinematica.org.uy.

INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL HAMBURG, June 9-14, Germany. Deadline: Feb. 15 (shorts

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MONTREAL JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL. May 6-13, Canada. Deadline: February 15. Annual fest showcases Jewish films from around the world. Founded: 1995. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, children. Formats: 1/2", 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, VHS (Beta SP). Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Susan Alper, Dir., 1564 Saint-Denis St., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3K2; (514) 987-9795; fax: 987-9736; festi val@mjff.qc.ca; www.mjff.qc.ca.

NETHERLANDS TRANSGENDER FILM FESTIVAL. May 21-25, Netherlands.

Deadline: March 1. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Kam Wai Kui, c/o Stichting T-Image, PO Box 15650, Amsterdam, The Netherlands 1001 ND; 011 31 20 636 3727; fax: 31 20 636 3730; info@transgenderfilmfestival.com; www.transgenderfilmfestival.com.

OBERHAUSEN INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL. April 29-May 4, Germany. Deadline: Jan. 15. The woldest short film fest offers a forum for aesthetic & technological innovation & reflection. Founded: 1954. Cats: Short, Any style or genre, Children, Music Video. Awards: incl. Grand Prize, Jury of Int'l Film Critics award. Works will compete for prizes worth a total of 32,500 EURO (approx. \$30,000). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP/PAL, Super 8, DV, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Melanie Piguel, Coordinator, Grillostr. 34, Oberhausen, Germany 46045; 011 49 208 825 2652; fax: 49 208 825 5413; info@kurz filmtage.de; www.kurzfilmtage.de.

SINGAPORE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. April 15-May 1, Singapore. Deadline: Jan. 15. Invitational fest offers non-competitive & competitive section for Asian cinemat. Cats:

Short, Feature, Doc, Animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Philip Cheah, Festival Director, 45A Keong Saik Rd., Singapore, Singapore 089149; 011 65 738 7567; fax: 011 65 738 7578; filmfest@pacific.net.sg; www.filmfest.org.sg.

VIDEOEX INT'L EXPERIMENTAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. May 16-25, Switzerland. Deadline: Jan. 30. Cats: experimental. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, Kanonengasse 20, Zurich, Switzerland 8004; 011 41 43 322 0813; fax: 322 0815; info@videoex.ch; www.videoex.ch.

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The oldest and largest national moving-image media organization, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AIVF offers a broad slate of education, information, and resource programs for members and non-members alike.

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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices and screening opportunities are listed free of charge as space permits. Commercial notices are billed at classified rates. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., March 1 for May issue). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending.

DISTRIBUTION

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS, the leader of documentary films that focus on health & powerful life challenging situations is seeking additional programs to add to our award winning collection. Our strong, targeted marketing program & film festivals will help increase awareness for you. We look forward to pre-viewing your film. Please send your film to Aquarius Health Care Videos, 18 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770. (888) 440-2963.

ARTHOUSE FILMS & DOCS WANTED for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. Call 212-966-5877, or email www.PassionRiver.com.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS VIDEOS on guidance issues such as violence, drug prevention, mentoring, children's health & parenting for exclusive distribution. Our marketing gives unequalled results! Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

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INDIE-UNDERGROUND SEEKS OFF-BEAT, EGYPTIAN FEATURES and doc features for foreign/domestic distribution. Gross percent on internet sales. Established track record, fast response. Visit www.IndieUnderground.com Submissions page, send us your show.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and videomakers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your profits while working within a remarkable community of committed activist filmmakers, then New Day is the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and within the media we represent. Explore our films at www.new-day.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at (650) 347-5123.

SUBMIT YOUR FLICK TO: The William Bonney Picture Show. A Festival That Shares the \$!!! * Detailed Feedback on Every Submission * Low Entry Fees * Run by Filmmakers * A Roaming Festival of Kicke Ass Movies www.williambonney.org.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation

NoodleHead Network distributes videos made with kids. Educational videos in all subjects. Check out our distributor FAQ at www.aivf.org/independent and get your students' voices heard. (800) 639-5680.

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENINGS

CELLULOID SOCIAL CLUB is a monthly screening series in Vancouver featuring the best in independent provocative short & feature films & videos followed by fun & frolic. Hosted by Ken Hegan at the ANZA Club, #3 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC. No minors. Prizes galore. For more info call (604) 730-8090; or email info@alterentertainment.com; www.CelluloidSocialClub.com.

CLUB DIY is a new monthly screening series in Hollywood, CA, showcasing the best work from the DIY Film Festival at the Derby nightclub. Each screening will also feature discussion panels and cocktail party. For more info, (323) 665-8080; DIYConvention@aol.com; www.DIYReporter.com.

DAHLIA'S FLIX & MIX, a weekly showcase of new film & music held on Tuesdays at NY's Sugar, is seeking submissions. Showcases fresh and previously undistributed film & video work, as well as DJs spinning great music. No guest list, cover charge, or submission

VIEWNAPPY

Dante Gonzalez's refreshingly fun film festival, Viewnappy, is a monthly contest for homemade music videos, which takes place in New York—where parties are held in a 2000sq.ft loft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn with screenings on the roof in the summer months, San Francisco, Austin, and London. The rules are simple; the videos must be music-based and under fifteen minutes. Works are not judged solely on technical merit, and Gonzalez encourages experimentation "with recycled footage, original works, animations, video games, motion graphics, scored with music (non-commercial preferred)." Finalists are entered in quarterly video slams where audiences choose the winner—who receives free post-production for his/her next project, among other prizes. See listing.

programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; gcrowdus@cinemaguild.com; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

YOUTH-PRODUCED VIDEO. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Only

submission fee. For more info, contact dsmith@independentfilm.com or stop by Sugar any Tuesday evening (doors open 7pm, screenings begin 8pm). To submit your film, please send a VHS or DVD copy and a brief synopsis to: Dahlia Smith, c/o SUGAR, 311 Church St., New York, NY 10013.

EMERGING FILMMAKERS series at the Little Theatre in Rochester, NY, seeks work

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from New York State amateur filmmakers of all ages. Deadline: ongoing. Send VHS screener & cover letter to Karen vanMeenen, programmer, Emerging Filmmakers Series, Little Theatre, 240 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14604; ren@eznet.net.

FLICKER encompasses a Super 8 & 16mm showcase held in Ashville, Athens, Chapel Hill, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Richmond & Bordeaux, France. Film grants of \$100 to filmmakers are also offered through some groups. Send a short proposal to the Flicker nearest you. See the website for a list of local Flickers: www.flickeraustin.com.

GIRLS ON FILM is a quarterly screening series in San Fran that seeks short narrative, doc & experimental works of 30 min. or fewer by women of color. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS, or Beta; preview on VHS (NTSC) or DVD. No entry fee. Send preview (with name, title, length, phone & e-mail) to: Jennifer Jajeh, Girls On Film, 1566 Grove Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94117. Include S.A.S.E. if you'd like your work returned. For more info, e-mail girlsonfilmseries@hotmail.com; www.atasite.org.

MAKOR continues its Reel Jews Film Festival & ongoing screening series showcasing the work of emerging Jewish filmmakers. Now accepting shorts, features, docs, and/or works in progress, regardless of theme, for screening consideration. Program sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact Ken Sherman: (212) 413-8821; ksherman@92ndsty.org.

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a monthly microcinema screening program of int'l short films, videos & digital works, seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Submit VHS or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) labeled w/ name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Banchar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; email info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com.

NEW FILMMAKERS LOS ANGELES seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. Films can be any length/year of production. Films without distribution only. No entry fee.

Keep press kit to a min. synopsis, dir's bio, 1 production photo. Submissions on DVD; VHS (NTSC) & Mini DV also accepted. Send submissions to New Filmmakers, P.O. Box 48469, LA, CA 90048. For more info, newfilmmakersla@yahoo.com; www.newfilmmakers.com/LA%20call_for_entries.htm.

ROOFTOP FILMS seeks submissions for its 7th season of films screened on a Brooklyn rooftop. Series runs every Friday night from June 13 to Sep. 12. Seeks work in any genre; especially seeks work by women or people of color. Submissions accepted on an ongoing basis. Curators encouraged to send entire programs. For more info, visit www.rooftopfilms.com, or email Dan Nuxtoll, dan@rooftopfilms.com.

SHORT FILM GROUP seeks shorts (under 45 min.) throughout the year for its quarterly series of screenings in Los Angeles. The group is a nonprofit organization created to promote short film as a means to itself. For more information & an application form, visit www.shortfilmgroup.org.

THE CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY is seeking original fiction/non-fiction films in 16mm, VHS, or DVD formats for potential screenings throughout 2004 (especially during Spoleto-related events). To submit material, please send a non-returnable preview copy (VHSS/DVD) of the film and a cover letter to Kevin Crothers, Audio-Visual Head, Main Library, 68 Calhoun St. Charleston, SC 29401. Email crothersk@ccpl.org for more information.

TINY PICTURE CLUB seeks Super 8 films for quarterly, theme-based programs. Films will screen on Super 8 & be accompanied by live music. Tiny Picture Club is especially interested in work from the Portland area. Send VHS tape to: Tiny Picture Club, 6202 SE 17th Ave., PTX, OR 97202; www.tinypictureclub.org.

VIEWNAPPY'S HOMEMADE MUSIC VIDEO FESTIVAL: Monthly screening parties, & finalists to be entered in quarterly video slams. Music based submissions, 15 min. or under. No deadline, no fee. Acceptable formats: VHS/DVD (preferred), Beta sp/digi, MiniDv, Hi-8; email formats: Quicktime, Mpeg, Flash, SWA. Include a short artist bio & label tapes with your name, title, and contact info. Send to: Viewnappy, c/o Final Cut, 118 W. 22nd St. 7th floor, New York, NY 10011. For more info, visit www.viewnappy.org.

GALLERIES • EXHIBITIONS

OPEN CALL FOR VIDEO SHORTS to be part of an Art Exhibition called "Unensored Gifts" at Mt. San Jacinto College's Fine Art Gallery, in San Jacinto, CA. We are looking for imaginative shorts on any subject, limited to 10 minutes in length. These works will be screened each day of the exhibition period which will run from mid-October to mid-November, 2004. No entry fee. Deadline for submissions: Feb. 1st, 2004. Please send VHS screeners/ NTSC, to MSJC/ Fine Art Gallery, Lucinda Luvaas, Director, 1499 N. State St., San Jacinto, CA 92583, making sure all contact information and bio materials are included with SASE for return of tape. Send questions to: lluvass@msjc.edu.

SHOWCASES

FREIGHT FILM SALON seeks submissions for its Monday Night Shorts showcase series. Work can be any genre, 20 min. or fewer; must be on VHS or DVD. Will screen on 6' screen, 2 plasma screens & 4 monitors. E-mail FreightFilmSalon@yahoo.com for additional info, or visit www.FreightNYC.com.

WORKSCREENING/WORKS PRODUCTIONS is accepting submissions of both feature & short documentaries & fiction films for programming of its upcoming inaugural season of weekly showcases of independent work streamed online as well as on our microcinema screen in New York City. Looking for alternative, dramatic, animation, etc. Submit VHS/S-VHS (NTSC please) labeled with name, title, length, phone number, e-mail, address & support materials, including screening list & festival history. Tapes & material will be returned only if you are not selected for showcase & you include an S.A.S.E. Contact Julian Rad, Works Productions/WorkScreening, 1586 York Ave., #1, NY, NY 10028; WORKSinfo@aol.com.

TOURING PROGRAMS

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is an ongoing event hitting major cities & cultural centers on a global level. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip-Hop culture and connect with other mediamakers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com for info, email Info@HipHopFilmFest.com, or call (866) 206-9071 x9211.

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NEW DAY FILMS is the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media. Owned and run by its members, New Day Films has successfully distributed documentary film and video for thirty years. New Day has a strong commitment to promoting diversity within our membership and within the content of the media we represent.

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BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

BROOKDALE TELEVISION is a progressive educational access channel in Monmouth County, NJ reaching over 79,000 households at the Jersey Shore. We are currently seeking independent works for consideration for cablecast. All lengths & genres considered. Nonexclusive rights release upon acceptance, no payment but promotional & contact info will be provided on air and through our office. VHS for preview, Beta SP, MiniDV, SVHS and DVD accepted for Cablecast. Contact Roger Conant; BTV Brookdale Community College, 765 Newman Springs Road, Atec Rm.112, Lincroft NJ, 07738; (732) 224-2467; rconant@brookdalecc.edu.

DUTV is a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia that seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. Will return tapes. Beta SP, DV, S-VHS & DVD accepted for possible cablecast. VHS for preview. Contact: Debbie Rudman, DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg. 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for cutting-edge television station from Nantucket Island, Mass. Must be suitable for TV broadcast. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. S.A.S.E. to Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

WEBCASTS

ATOM FILMS seeks quality films & animations for worldwide commercial distribution to our network of television, airline, home entertainment & new media outlets, including the award-winning AtomFilms website. Submissions must be 30 min. or fewer. For more info & a submission form, visit www.atomshockwave.com.

TURBULANCE is a project of New Radio and Performing Arts, Inc., a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) org. that commissions net art works by emerging and established artists. Rolling deadline. Proposals can be in the form of text in the body of the email, or an attached RTF file. Email proposals to: newradio@si.rr.com. For more info., visit www.somewhere.org.

WIGGED.NET is a digital magazine that is a showcase, distributor & promotion center for media artists via the web. Seeks works created in Flash and Director as well as traditional animations & videos fewer than 10 min. in length to be streamed over the internet. For details, visit the "submit media" page at www.wigged.net. Deadline: ongoing

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Notices

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., March 1 for May issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending anyone anything.

COMPETITIONS

ACTION/CUT SHORT FILM COMPETITION:

This competition showcases new work from across the world, with multiple awards & career services, and access Hollywood. Cats: fiction, doc, animation; prizes: \$25,000 in cash, career services, and sponsor awards, including career meetings with industry players and exposure at festivals, distribution deal offers, and promotions throughout the biz and the web. Deadline: May 15, 2004. www.actioncut.com or (800) 815-5545.

AMERICAN ACCOLADES SCREENWRITING COMPETITION:

A competition which offers feedback, designed to provide an outlet for emerging talent in a relatively impenetrable industry. Finalist judges include agents, managers, & other industry executives. Cats: Drama, SciFi/Action/Adventure, Comedy/Romantic Comedy, Thriller/ Horror and Other. Over \$5000 in prizes. Grand Prize winner takes home \$2,500. Late deadline Jan. 30 w/ fee of \$60. Contact: Accolades TV & Shorts, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., Ste 160B, Santa Monica, CA 90403; info@AmericanAccolades.com.

DIGIT, a digital media exposition sponsored by Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, the arts council for Sullivan County, NY, is calling for entries for Media works in four categories: Animation, Narrative, Documentary and Experimental/Hybrid/Alternative. DiGit was conceived to encourage creative and technical excellence and experimentation among individual artists and small groups working with digital tools. Over \$3,000 in prizes will

awarded. Application forms online at www.ArtsAllianceSite.org or by calling 845-252-7576. Deadline is February 29, 2004.

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION

2004 SCREENWRITING COMPETITION is accepting submissions. Prizes: "Artistic Talent Award" of a \$1000 grant to the Maine Photographic Screenwriters Workshop and a \$1,000 "On Location Award" will be given in recognition of an outstanding screenplay that includes at least 75% Monterey County settings. Deadline: March 1, 2004 with \$35 entry fee; April 1, 2004 with \$45 fee. Screenplays must not have been optioned or sold at the time of submission. Full length film or TV (90-130 pgs). Entry fee: \$35/\$45. Discounts for submission of 2 or more scripts. Contact: (831) 646-0910; filmmonterey@redshift.com; www.filmmonterey.org.

ONE IN TEN SCREENPLAY COMPETITION

promotes the positive portrayal of gays & lesbians in film. The competition is open to all writers and offers cash awards & industry contacts to winners. Deadline: Sept. 1, 2004. Complete rules & entry forms available at website or by sending S.A.S.E. to Cherub Productions, One In Ten Screenplay

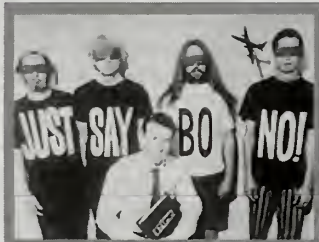
Total cash and prizes are valued at over \$10,000. Deadline: June 1, 2004. Contact: Tatiana Swancy or Patrick Moran, RIFF, PO Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 861-4445; fax: 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org.

SCRIPT MAGAZINE'S OPEN DOOR

SCREENWRITING CONTEST: This competition aims to discover, promote & recognize a talented new screenwriter by awarding them cash and an "open door" to the industry. Top 3 finalists are forwarded to a production company which will choose the winner and may contact any of the finalists to work in the future. Entry fee: \$45. Deadline: March 1, 2004. Contact: Open Door Contests, Script Magazine, 5638 Sweet Air Rd., Baldwin, MD 21013; (888) 245-2228; fax: (410) 592-3466; contests@scriptmag.com; www.scriptmag.com.

SCRIPTAPALOOZA 6TH ANNUAL

SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: First prize is \$10,000, and the top 30 winners receive screenwriting software from Write Brothers. Top thirteen winners will be considered by Scriptapalooza's outstanding participants: A Band Apart, Samuel Goldwyn Films, HBO, Material, Disney, and many more.



According to Noel Lawrence, OtherZine functions as the "house organ" of Other Cinema, the long-running program of nearly twenty years that showcases experimental and unusual film in San Francisco. Five years ago, Lawrence joined forces with Craig Baldwin, culture-jammer and filmmaker (whose 1995 film *Sonic Outlaws* is pictured) to

become the webmaster, and eventually the curator, for OtherZine. The goal of OtherZine is to provide a forum for discussion and criticism of film, video, and other media that often "falls between the cracks, be they underground, experimental, or just plain obscure." Since the zine is only available online and the staff is all-volunteer, there is no overhead and no profit. "We're just trying to get information about films we like out to the public," says Lawrence. See listing.

Competition, Box 540, Boulder, CO 80306; (303) 629-3072; cherubfilm@aol.com; www.screenplaycontests.com.

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SCREENPLAY COMPETITION

2004: Created to recognize creativity, innovation & art of storytelling. Scripts must not have been sold or optioned prior to entry. Entry fee: \$35. The Grand Prize winner will have segments of the work produced during Take 1-2-3: Filmmaking With the Pros, RIFF's annual Master Class on Production which features the participation of a noted industry director.

Sponsored by Fimmaker Magazine. All entries must be postmarked no later than April 15, 2004. For further information or an application please visit www.scriptapalooza.com or call (323) 654-5809.

VIDEO CONTEST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

sponsored by the Christophers, is now in its 17th year & seeks films & videos relating to the theme "One Person Can Make a Difference." Entries must be 5 min. or less & submitted on VHS (NTSC). Deadline: July 11, 2004. Cash prizes totaling \$6,500. Winning entries will be aired nationwide via the Christopher Closeup TV series. Contact: 12

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VIDEOGRAPHER AWARDS: Deadline: March 26, 2004. Awards program, funded by video professionals, honors excellence in commercials, corporate videos, & television productions. Founded in 1995; over 200 categories highlighted such as internal & external communications, government, medical, religious, music videos, broadcast news, cable television. Feature docs, shorts, animation, experimental, script, youth media, student, family, children, any genre. Certificates awarded. Formats 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40. Contact: Festival, 2214 Michigan St., Suite E. Arlington, TX 76013; (817) 459-4011; fax: 795-4949; ed@communicator-awards.com; www.communicator-awards.com.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

DI2004 CONFERENCE, January 30-February 1, 2004 at the San Francisco Marriott Hotel. This conference will bring together indie innovators in film, TV, music, games, policy and the arts to tackle the impact of digital production and distribution on independent content makers. Open to the public, registration required and press passes are available upon request; for a full description of sessions, panelists and moderators, visit www.digitalindies.com.

GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT & MEDIA SUMMIT 2004: New York City: April 3-4; Los Angeles: June 12-13. A lively and engaging forum of people with vision from the independent and mainstream music, film, video and multimedia worlds of the entertainment, media, and communications industries. People connect with people, exchanging ideas and creating projects in a context of innovation, reinvention, and possibility. Together, this community is proactively effecting new ways to achieve sustainable careers and the direction of the revolution now taking place in marketing and distribution. For more information visit www.globalentertainmentnetwork.com.

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL FILM & PRODUCTION WORKSHOP begins its 27th year as a unique "hands-on" program which trains people who have limited resources & access to mainstream educational institutions & standard training programs, with an emphasis on people of color and traditionally marginalized groups. This intensive 6-month, 8-participant program focus-

es on preproduction, production & post skills necessary to take a project to completion in both 16mm film and DVcam. Prior film, video, or related experience recommended but not required. Application required & 2nd round of applicants selected for interviews. Cost: \$550. Deadline: Jan. 30th, 2004. Workshop begins early April 2004. For application visit www.twn.org or send a S.A.S.E. to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl, New York, NY 10018. For more info, call (212) 947-9277 x301.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

2004 IFP/CHICAGO PRODUCTION FUND offers an in-kind donation of production equipment & services valued at up to \$85,000 for your next short film. Applicants must be IFP/Chicago members & the film must be shot in the Midwest region, defined as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio & Wisconsin. Deadline for proposals: Sept. 19, 2003. For an application, call (312) 435-1825, fax (312) 435-1828, or e-mail infoipmw@aol.com. The application is available online at www.ifp.org. This is a production fund not a completion grant.

THE ANTHONY RADZIWIŁL DOC. FUND, administered by IFP/New York, is a new fund providing seed/development grants for independently produced documentary projects by U.S. resident filmmakers. Six to ten grants up to \$10,000 will be given annually, with the initial cycle's grants to be awarded in June 2004. Deadline: March 1, 2004. On-line applications, submission requirements, and complete guidelines for proposals are available at www.ifp.org/docfund.

ARTSLINK: provides support to U.S. arts professionals & nonprofit arts organizations to work w/ their counterparts in 27 countries in Central & Eastern Europe, Russia and Eurasia. Projects should be designed to benefit participants or audiences in both countries. Applications must be postmarked by Jan 15. Contact: ArtsLink, CEC International Partners, 12 West 31 Street, NY, NY 10001, (212) 643-1985 x.22, artslink@cecip.org, www.cecip.org.

THE ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL has provided, over the past 40 years, grant assistance to more than 3,700 Asians & Americans in the arts. For information on fellowships, visit www.asianculturalcouncil.org.

BLACK DOCUMENTARY COLLECTIVE (BDC) provides people of African descent

working in the documentary film & video field with the opportunity to network professionally, promote each others' work, exchange ideas in order to generate productions & advocate on issues impacting black documentary makers. They hold works-in-progress screenings, project seminars, participate in the IFP Film Market & have special sessions with funders for independent producers. For more information, email BlkDocCol@aol.com.

THE ROY W. DEAN NEW YORK AND LA FILM GRANTS:

Film and video grants are each \$50,000 in goods and services. Our only criteria is that your documentary or short film be "unique and make a difference to society." See www.fromtheheartproductions.com for application and guidelines. Deadlines: NYC grant closes April 30, 2004; LA closes June 30, 2004.

DIY REVOLUTION is now accepting free listings/classifieds on an indy media network. DIYR is a resource aimed to unite independent filmmakers, artists, activists, musicians, media groups & writers working for a more just, authentic & progressive world working outside of a corporate paradigm. Visit us at www.diyrevolution.com or www.diy.com for your free membership.

EMEDIALOFT.ORG CREATIVE PROJECTS GRANT:

Ongoing support for 8 artists a year who work 30 hours with digital video to produce/post with our editor/videographer. Docs, political, promo tapes not covered by this grant, but low rates and discounts for all work are available. There is no self-use. Send 250-500 word project description, resume and SASE to Bill Creston and Barbara Rosenthal, at eMediaLoft.org, 55 Bethune St. #AAA-628, NY, NY 10014-2035.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP FOR FILMMAKERS:

Film Forum, a nonprofit cinema, administers grants, retaining 5% of all monies from foundations, corporations, individuals (but not government sources). Budget must be a minimum of \$100,000 & filmmaker must have track record. Send brief project description to: Film Forum Fiscal Sponsorships, 209 W. Houston St., New York, NY 10014. No calls, faxes, e-mails.

GLOBAL CENTER, a nonprofit, IRS-certified 501(c)(3) educational foundation, seeks filmmakers seeking fiscal sponsors. For more info, call (212) 246-0202, or email roc@globalvision.org; www.globalvision.org.

INTERNATIONAL FILM SEMINARS GRANTS-IN-AID:

A general category of support for those interested in attending the 50th Robert Flaherty

Film Seminar and involved with film and video. Awards cover part of the registration fee to attend the 50th Robert Flaherty Film Seminar held at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie from June 12-19, 2004. Deadline: April 5, 2004. Contact: Margarita De la Vega-Hurtado, The Flaherty/IFS, 6 East 39th St., Rm 1200, New York, NY 10016 (212) 448-0457; fax: (212) 448-0458; ifs@flahertyseminar.org; www.flahertyseminar.org.

JEROME FOUNDATION'S MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM

offers prod. grants ranging from \$10-30,000 to emerging NYC artists w/ works budgeted up to \$200,000. Narratives, docs, new media & experimental works, as well as radio, interactive formats, online programs & virtual reality experiments considered. Contact program officer Robert Byrd; (651) 224-9431 (or toll-free in NY or MN only, (800) 995-3766); fax: 224-3439; www.jeromefdn.org.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue in one of the foundation's 2 major programs (human & community development; global security & sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter. Contact John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org.

LOCAL INDEPENDENTS COLLABORATING WITH STATIONS (LINC'S) FUND

is a funding initiative from ITVS that provides matching funds (up to \$75,000) for collaborations between public TV stations & indie producers. Projects may be in any stage of development and all genres are eligible, including documentary, drama, animation and innovative combinations. Only single shows, no series. Programs should stimulate civic discourse & find innovative ways to explore complex regional, cultural, political, social, or economic issues. Indie film & videomakers are encouraged to seek collaborations w/ their local public TV stations. Deadline: April 30, 2003. Guidelines and apps at www.itvs.org, or call Elizabeth Meyer (415) 365-8383 x270; elizabeth_meyer@itvs.org.

SUNDANCE DOCUMENTARY FUND

supports int'l doc films & videos on current issues in human rights, social justice & civil liberties. Dev. funds for research & preproduction awarded up to \$15,000; works-in-progress funds for production or postproduction up to \$50,000 (average award is \$25,000). Email sdf@sundance.org, or visit www.sundance.org.



BRENDAN C. FLYNT

Director of Photography
for feature films, shorts, and music videos

credits:

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PER ISSUE COST: 0-240 characters (incl. spaces & punctuation): \$45 for nonmembers/\$30 for AIVF members; 241-360 chars: \$65/\$45; 361-480 chars: \$80/\$60; 481-600 chars: \$95/\$75; over 600 characters: Call for quote, (212) 807-1400, x241. **FREQUENCY DISCOUNT:** \$5 off per issue for ads running 5+ times.

Ads exceeding the specified length will be edited. Place ad via www.aivf.org/independent/classifieds or type copy and mail with the check or money order to: AIVF, 304 Hudson St, 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013. Include billing address, daytime phone, # of issues, and valid member ID# for member discount. To pay by VISA/MC/AMEX include card #, name on card and expiration date.

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DP W/ SONY 900 24P HD PKG. Young, cool DP with tons of gear. Full grip pkg, HMIs, tungsten, doorway dolly, crew contacts etc. If I don't have it, I can get it cheap. Call for more info Steve (917) 573-2470; eggjelly@yahoo.com.

EQUIPMENT RENTALS FOR LOW BUDGETS: Production Junction has cameras, lights, audio gear, VTRs and more for day or weekly rental. ProductionJunction.com or (917) 288-9000.

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ARE YOU STUCK? FERNANDA ROSSI, SCRIPT & DOCUMENTARY DOCTOR, specializes in narrative structure in all stages of the filmmaking process, including story development, fundraising trailers and post-production. She has doctored over 30 films and is the author of "Trailer Mechanics." For private consultations and workshops visit www.documentarydoctor.com or write to info@documentarydoctor.com.

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COMPOSER JOEL DIAMOND: NYC Studio. Credits include "The Believer" Sundance Winner, A&E, ESPN. (917) 215-3112; www.joeldiamondmusic.com.

COMPOSER MIRIAM CUTLER loves to collaborate - docs, features. Lost In La Mancha, Sundance/POV Scout's Honor & Licensed To Kill, Peace x Peace, Stolen Childhoods, Amy's O & more. (310) 398-5985 mir.cut@verizon.net; www.miriamcutler.com.

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INDEPENDENT FILM AND DESIGN company is looking for a uniquely talented production associate to be involved with image research and lighting on an upcoming film on the: Future of the City. For more insight call Chris at: (610) 346-9164.

THE COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, is seeking an outstanding scholar of film or electronic media to direct the Program in Film and Video Studies. The Program, which has enjoyed sustained growth and achievement, integrates media studies and production within a larger university community that encourages interdisciplinary dialogues and engagements. We invite applications and expressions of interest from senior colleagues with a distinguished record that merits a full-time, tenured appointment at the rank of Professor, to begin

September 2004. Applications are welcome from scholars in all humanities-based research areas of moving image media. Review of applications will begin December 1, 2003, and will continue until the position is filled. Send substantive letter of application that addresses scholarly and administrative experience, evidence of teaching excellence, c.v., and names of three references (with addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail) to: Chair, Director Search Committee, Program in Film and Video Studies, University of Michigan, 2512 Frieze Building, 105 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285. The University of Michigan is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and members of minority groups are encouraged to apply. The University is responsive to the needs of dual career couples. Additional information about the Program in Film and Video Studies can be found at its web site, <http://www.umich.edu/filmvideo>.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO seeks an independent film artist for Asst. Prof./tenure track position for Fall 2004. Candidates should have substantial experience as independent filmmaker-including analog and digital technologies. EO/AA employer. <http://medias.tudy.buffalo.edu/s/overview.shtml>.

HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE AND THE FIVE COLLEGE Consortium Joint Appointment. Assistant Professor of Video/Film Production. Hampshire College and the Five College consortium (Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts) are pleased to announce a regular faculty position at the Assistant Professor rank in Video/Film Production. Teaching experience, professional recognition, and a strong background in history, theory, and criticism are essential. Graduate degree or the equivalent required. Teaching load will be two courses per semester, one offered at Hampshire College, one at other institutions in the consortium on a rotating basis. (Each member of the consortium is within 15 miles of the others.) Teaching at Hampshire College also includes supervision of independent work including senior theses, advising, and normal college governance. Candidate must be comfortable working in an interdisciplinary setting. Position begins September 1, 2004, with review of applications to begin by December 1, 2003. We offer a competitive salary and comprehensive benefit program. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae (including e-mail address), and three letters of reference, at least one of which addresses teaching experience, to: Video/Film Search Committee, School of Humanities,

Arts, and Cultural Studies, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002. Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Employer. www.hampshire.edu.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Radio-Television-Film seeks to fill a tenure-track screenwriting position. Candidates must demonstrate a strong creative track record in feature screenwriting. Teaching experience is strongly preferred. Additional experience with TV writing and/or story development at a studio or production company is also highly valued. Terminal Degree (MFA, PhD) preferred but not required. Salary commensurate with experience. Mail cover letter, resume, 3 letters of recommendation, three work samples to: Professor Richard Lewis, Chair, Screenwriting Search Committee, The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Radio-Television-Film, 1 University Station A0800, Austin, TX 78712-0108. The Department of Radio-Television-Film has 25 permanent faculty, approximately 950 undergraduate majors & 150 graduate students pursuing Ph.D., M.A. or M.F.A. degrees. RTF offers courses in film & video production, screenwriting, digital media research & design, film & television studies, international communication, telecommunication technology & policy, gender & sexuality, & ethnic issues in communication. For more information on the production program, go to: www.utexas.edu/coc/rtf/production/index.html. The University of Texas at Austin is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply. For more information about the University, visit the University's home page at www.utexas.edu.

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when: Sat., Jan. 10, 9-9:30 am
registration, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
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where: AIVF

cost: \$165/\$125 AIVF, WMM and
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Nationally recognized media consultant Morrie Warshawski presents his popular, full-day workshop on how to effectively raise money for independent projects, including the best ways to approach individuals, foundations, and corporations; conduct research; write a grant proposal. Participants will receive a copy of the 2nd edition of *Shaking the Money Tree* and an extensive packet full of information and references on fundraising. For information visit www.warshawski.com.

Morrie Warshawski's fundraising workshop is sponsored by Public Media:
www.PublicMediaInc.org



IN BRIEF:

**FILM FINANCING:
PRIVATE OFFERINGS**

when: Thurs., Jan. 29,
6:30-8:30 p.m.

where: AIVF

cost: \$40/\$25 AIVF members

Series Fees: 5 sessions pass \$100 for
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The AIVF Producers' Legal Series helps answer legal and business questions about structuring and negotiating deals in film and television. It also introduces independents to legal and business resources.

This session presents successful legal and business strategies for raising funds from private investors, including private placement deals, securities laws, and disclosure documents.

IN BRIEF:

FILM FINANCING: CABLE TV

when: Thurs., Feb. 19, 6:30-8:30 pm

where: AIVF

cost: \$40/\$25 AIVF members

This session will address the structure and negotiating strategies for cable financing deals, pitching your project, and reserving foreign and non-broadcast media rights.



MEET & GREET:

**TAXES FOR
INDEPENDENTS**

when: Tues. Feb. 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

where: AIVF

cost: \$10 members/\$20 general

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Join CPAs Steve Cooperberg (Todres &
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where: San Francisco

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Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY:

Upstate Independents

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY

Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

Where: Redlight Café

553 Amsterdam Ave.

Contact: Mark Smith, (404) 352-4225 x12
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Boulder, CO:

"Films for Change" Screenings

When: First Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

Where: Boulder Public Library

1000 Arapahoe

Contact: Michael Hill,
(303) 442-8445 x100; boulder@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street

Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or
Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH:

Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette
Gillota, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays

Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.

Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-Monthly

Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.

Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: 1519 West Main

Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska

Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street

Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St.,
Santa Monica

Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140

Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre

Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop

Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly

Where: Media Arts Center, 921 25th
Street

Contact: Ethan van Thillo
(619) 230-1938; sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders

(650) 271-0097;
sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-Monthly

Where: Wiggly World and
911 Media Arts Center

Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

DAY OF THE DEAD

The Cleveland Salon, along with Independent Pictures, recently completed its fourth annual Director of Photography workshop which allows members a rare opportunity to create a film in one day and then see it on the big screen only days later. During the workshop, three directors of photography have two hours each to light, stage, direct, and shoot a film using only two rolls of 16mm film and the workshop participants as crew and talent. The films must correspond to a theme, which this year was *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). After the film is processed, it is shown at the Ohio Independent Film Festival—which in November 2003 celebrated its 10th anniversary—where participants can see and appreciate the fruits of their labor.

— Annetta Marion

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



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Black Maria Film Festival; Freedom Film Society; **NM:** University of New Mexico; **NY:** American Museum of Natural History; Bronx Council on the Arts; Center for New American Media; Chicks with Flicks Film Festival; Cinema Arts Centre; Cornell Cinema; Council for Positive Images, Inc.; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Department of Media Study SUNY Buffalo; Educational Video Center; Experimental Television Center; Film and Video Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Film Video Arts; Firelight Media; Globalvision, Inc.; Learning Matters; Listen Up!; LMC-TV; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; National Black Programming Consortium; National Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New School, Dept. of Communications/Film Department; New York Women in Film and Television; Non Profit Media Group; Paper Tiger; POV/The American Documentary; Squeaky Wheel; Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; Syracuse University; Witness; Women Make Movies; **OH:** Athens Center for Film & Video; Cleveland Film Society; **OR:** Art Institute Portland; Northwest Film Center; **PA:** DUTV Cable 54; Prince Music Theater; Scribe Video Center; WYBE Public TV 35; **RI:** Flickers Arts Collaborative; Rhode Island School of Design; **SC:** Hybrid Films; South Carolina Arts Commission; **TX:** Austin Film Society; CAGE, Dept. of Radio and Film; **UT:** Sundance Institute; **VT:** The Noodlehead Network; **WA:** Seattle Central Community College; Thurston Community Television; **WI:** UWM Department of Film; **Bermuda:** Bermuda International Film Festival; **Canada:** The Banff Centre Library; **France:** The Camargo Foundation; **India:** Foundation for Universal Responsibility; **Singapore:** Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library

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Some of Our Favorite Shots

By Jessica McDowell

What makes one scene in a film stand out from all the rest? This month, we asked a handful of cinematographers and DPs to tell us about the most memorable scenes they've worked on throughout their careers. The criteria ranged from unique technical setup to the emotional or physical intensity provided by the actors in the scene.

"My favorite scene was the back-of-the-car sex scene in *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*. We set up the lights, taped the mike to the ceiling, and closed the set. Since I was the shooter and director, it was just me filming the actors making out. It was such an intimate moment, very intense, lots of trust. It came out looking great and ended up being the most powerful scene in the movie. I have never watched it with an audience and heard anything but awed silence."

—Sarah Jacobson,

I Was a Teenage Serial Killer, Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore

"A scene from *Requiem for a Dream* in which Harry Goldfarb (Jared Leto) learns that his mother Sarah Goldfarb (Ellen Burstyn) has developed an addiction to pills. It's a rather simple photographic set deconstructed by Darren Aronofsky and myself in a subtle and simple way to gain maximum effect from the narrative. We begin on one side of the stage line in over-the-shoulder shots for each character. As the scene develops, Harry senses that his mother is tweaking—the height of his realization is the sound of his mother's grinding teeth. The camera begins to move 180 degrees from the initial side of the line to the opposite side, turning from a single shot on Harry's perplexed expression and ending on Sarah's close-up. Combined with tour de force performances by Jared Leto and Ellen Burstyn, this simple technique gave the scene such resonance for me as a filmmaker; its meaning is the core of the story—(both) in the film and the novel by Hubert Selby Jr. from which it came. It held such emotional weight for me on a personal level that I struggled to maintain the frame. In that moment, I knew that I was experiencing the very reason that I make film... for that rare moment where you are a part of something that has the power to truly touch humanity."

—Matthew Libatique ASC,
Requiem For a Dream, Gothika

"I was shooting my Down's Syndrome brother, Marty, [who I call] Mart-Face, on a gold couch. I asked him about death—his death. He started talking about heaven, and the fact that

Desiree Delight, nicknamed Desi, his beloved sable and gold tiger cat would be with him, in heaven, when he died (in 200 years!) While he was talking, I got the idea to run upstairs, get Desi and add her to the scene. What followed is one of my favorite scenes from any movie anywhere: Mart-Face telling Desi how much he loves her, and how beautiful heaven would be. The fact that Mart-Face and Desi are both together in heaven now makes that scene powerful and profound."

—Leslie Chain,

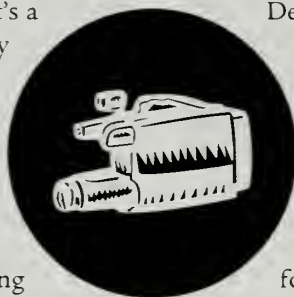
Mart-Face

"The finale of the feature length narrative *Vince Del Rio*—the US Olympic qualifying track and field meet. Vince Del Rio, the protagonist, needs to qualify at the 5km distance to validate the last ten years of his life. The challenges for the cast and crew included a variety of issues. To cover the race appropriately, the schedule listed over 100 setups during four overnight shoots. Plus, the Mike A. Myers Stadium at The University of Texas in Austin had to look like it was sold out for the event. On one night, there were 250 extras on hand to provide a crowd for certain shots. We used those 250 people, CGI compositing, and 500 cardboard cutouts to make the stadium look like it was filled to its capacity of around 10,000 spectators. On the third night, the runners experienced the toughest day of the shoot for them. They were all very dedicated, running in shot after shot and never complaining. It seemed like they ran the whole night. Then, when we wrapped at 6am, a handful of the runners jumped in their cars and drove for two hours to compete in a 10km race somewhere else! They were back in time to run for the last night of the shoot. Incredible. After the fourth night, champagne was toasted and all the gear was wrapped, but there was one last race to run. It wasn't pretty, but the race provided a context for the challenges that the cast and crew of *Vince Del Rio* faced while creating and capturing the finale of the movie."

—Jim Eastburn,

Vince del Rio, Blaze Foley Documentary

Jessica McDowell is an intern at The Independent.

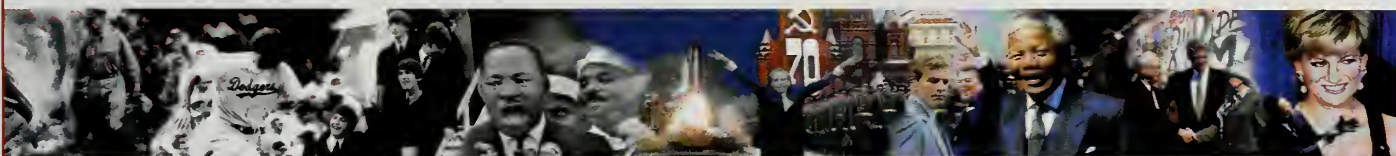




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Four docmakers explain the struggle to remain loyal to their subjects, and themselves.
[by Nancy Schwartzman]



Photos: The three day pitching session in Amsterdam known as the IDFA (courtesy of Fleur Knopperts at IDFA); behind the lens: filmmaker Tanya Steele (Seith Mann); Farah Jasmine Griffin in Aishah Shahidah Simmons' *NO!*.

Page 5 photos: Meg and Jack White in Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes*, produced by Deutsch/Open City Films; protestors in the documentary *Farmingville* which premiered at Sundance this year (Catherine Tambini & Carlos Sandoval); Macon Blair in *Crabwalk*, which won the Grand Jury Sparky Award for Best Short Narrative at Slamdance 2004 (Lab of Madness); Ingrid Betancourt's mother, Yolanda Pulecio, and husband, Juan Carlos Lecompte, hold a cardboard image of the kidnapped presidential candidate in *The Kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt* (courtesy of HBO).

On the Cover: Filmmaker Julie Talen on the set of *Pretend* (Cynthia Stewart).



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Campbell Scott, producer/actor,
The Secret Lives of Dentists.



Todd Komarnicki, screenwriter/director,
Resistance, with composer Angelo Badalamenti.



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Editor's Letter

Being a woman is and has always been the easiest part of my identity. To wit, I seldom see what the fuss is all about in terms of parity

with men and a lack of opportunities and all the rest. I actually think it's kind of funny that men think they wield all this power, when in fact, it seems pretty clear that whatever power they wield doesn't extend much beyond how it relates to women. For most men there's always a mother or a wife or a daughter or some girl somewhere who tugs at their masculinity and sense of purpose in life. And while I find it absurd and aggressively common when men do things like catcall (and I frequently resist the temptation to ask them if that ever genuinely works), I cannot stand these conversations about the hopelessness of men, which almost invariably end up being shallow metaphorical critiques of their nether regions. These kinds of conversations always strike me as unimaginative, and sort of beneath us as women.

All that said, I do recognize and understand that the world does not revolve around my perception of womanhood, and also, that the women of my generation are not called upon to perform the same fight and fury as those from the generations of Gloria Steinem or Ida B. Wells (as confirmed by three young filmmakers in Erin Torneo's article "The 'F' Factor"). Still, I must be honest in saying that I was reluctant to run an issue with a "Women in Film" theme. Not simply because I like being a woman and would rather not have that fact "celebrated" or addressed in a collective way, but also because themes, in general are so, well, "theme-y."

On the other hand, themes can also serve as a framework—like grammar.

My high school English teacher used to say to me: "Get the grammar down, then you can be as wild as you want." So, when assigning the pieces for this issue, I tried to use the "Women in Film" theme as a kind of grammatical framework within which to offer as wildly broad a range of styles, perspectives and ideas as possible—ones that are by and about women but also go beyond women and the conventional notions of what women do and why we do it.

Documentary filmmaker Nancy Schwartzman interviewed four international women filmmakers, and allowed them to answer in their own words what it's like to work with risky and provocative material that will almost always require them to defend it, explain it, and to try to remain loyal to it. Freelance writer Erin Torneo conducts a smart and edgy survey of women filmmakers at different stages in their careers with the intention of trying to gauge where women are, and how far we've come, in the industry. A perhaps silly and counterproductive approach, says multi-channel maverick Julie Talen, who was interviewed for the article and offers this rich and refreshing apothegm: "The assumption is that women are a strange subset and that the *real* people who are [making films] are male."

Elizabeth Angell profiles five female producing teams, ranging from veterans in the field to young but established teams to the newly incorporated. Albany-based journalist Theresa Smolen profiles Michelle Montas, the widow of Haitian crusader for democracy and Director of Radio Haiti Inter, Dominique Jean (Jean is also the subject of a new doc by Jonathan Demme). And frequent contributor to *The New York Times Magazine* Austin Bunn talks to one of the go-to girls of independent film casting, Avy Kaufman.

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
The Independent,
Rebecca Carroll
Editor-in-Chief



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From Global to Solo

SCREENWRITER MYLO CARBIA IS ON HER OWN

By Alyssa Worsham & Sonya Fatah



On her twenty-first birthday, Mylo Carbia's first play, *The Dolly Parton Conspiracy*, which Carbia wrote, directed, and produced, opened to a packed house and was awarded the Troubadour Theatrical Society's Best Play Award for 1992. By twenty-five, the New Jersey born and raised Carbia had switched paths and was already managing a multi-million dollar division of an Atlanta-based technology company, having turned down the Woodruff Foundation Law Scholarship some years earlier. And now the thirty-two year old has returned not only to writing—she has decided to take a gamble with producing as well. Dubbed by several industry sources as “one of the hottest Latina writers on the Hollywood Scene,” Carbia has an outstanding history of making waves in whatever profession she tries, and this may well be her boldest move yet.

In late December 2003, the screen-

writer announced plans to leave Global Screen Partners, taking with her several of her scripts, most notably *Statute of Limitations*. Currently in pre-production, the psychological thriller is about a college girl gang-raped by three frat brothers and paid to keep quiet. Once the statute of limitations expires and the girl can no longer press charges, she embarks on her own form of justice. With a tagline of: “Revenge has no expiration date,” the film has already created considerable buzz since Global Pictures, who originally bought the script as part of a three-picture deal with Carbia, kept details about the project tightly locked. All this publicity will help Carbia with her new endeavor, Zohar Films, an independent production company, which for now will house Carbia's projects and in the future expand to include others. Carbia has named her company after her favorite book, *The Zohar*, which she reads while studying Kabbalah, her favorite hobby.

Known for her love of lingerie and her overtly sexual persona, Carbia has three films tentatively scheduled for

release in 2004—in addition to *Statute of Limitations*, Enrique Carralero's *Double Impact* (based on his comic book series), and *Totally Lipstick*. *Double Impact* is the seventh best-selling comic book series of all time, and Carbia describes the basic plot as “two hot Latina babes in latex fighting the bad guys.” She was asked to write the script based on the quality of *Statute of Limitations*, an almost unheard of invitation based on the success of one previous script alone. *Totally Lipstick*, another original by Carbia, is slated for release during Christmas 2004. A music-driven comedy, the film involves four down-and-out South Beach drag queens saved from a mob beating by a rowdy tomboy. After taking her into their home, the queens discover that the girl can sing, and they decide to transform her into a diva to save their unsuccessful show.

When asked about the unprecedented nature of her success, Carbia's inherent business sense stands out. After writing the story for a screenplay on a legal pad, she designs posters, taglines, and possible marketing campaigns to see if the script might be viable in the Hollywood market. Only if she sees a market for the story will she then draft the script. In addition to penning her own work, Carbia also has a reputation for being an extraordinarily fast rewriter (she claims to have rewritten a messy script in under thirty minutes), and she is still accepting freelance proposals. In between all of these ongoing projects, she has begun to research and write a historical drama. As for her split with the company that gave her a head start in yet another successful career, there are apparently no hard feelings. “Mylo Carbia is a phenomenal screenwriter and we always knew that she would move on to bigger and better things,” Global Screen Partners' president Richard Garcia told *The Hollywood Reporter*. “We are extremely grateful for all of her hard work and wish her the very best with her new endeavor.”

Alyssa Worsham is a freelance writer.

Screenwriter Mylo Carbia recently launched her own production company.

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Tribeca Gets All Access. . . and Reopens The Screening Room

The Tribeca Film Institute and its founding organizers—Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff—have announced the launch of “Tribeca All Access,” a new program aimed at matching up minority filmmakers and their projects with producers and film investors. The Tribeca Film Institute, a fledgling nonprofit established in January 2002 as a September 11th public charity, has also recently acquired the legendary Screening Room at 54 Varick Street in Manhattan—which shut down last fall. The new owners will reopen it as Tribeca Cinemas.

“Tribeca All Access,” which will match funding agents with twenty fiction and documentary directors who have submitted work by the mid-February deadline, welcomes work from filmmakers of Latino, African American, Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander descent. Like the Independent Feature Project’s “No Borders” program (which is more producer-driven and is not exclusively race-based), “Tribeca All Access” seeks to broaden the cultural and ethnic landscape of the independent film community.

The new program also bodes well for the Tribeca Film Festival, which has been criticized by many Tribeca residents and members of the independent film community as being more of a star-studded corporate affair meant to suck in tourism dollars for lower Manhattan than a real venue for independent filmmakers. According to Nancy Shaeffer, Managing Director of the Tribeca Film Institute, Tribeca All Access is designed to demonstrate an effort that goes beyond general outreach, and a once-a-year event mentality. “We’re starting to look for programs we can implement year-round,” she explains. “We feel that there is a need for it.”

The Tribeca Film Festival crew hopes that the Screening Room will help fulfill the growing demands of the Fest,

opening its third year this May, for which films have been screened at the seventy-seat Tribeca Film Center. The Screening Room has three viewing rooms, the largest of which can seat 130 people. When not in use for festival screenings, the Screening Room will continue to serve as a quintessential New York spot, and in the future, as host to educational and cultural events.

—Sonya Fatah

New DVD/VHS Labels

Filmmakers Alliance (FA), the LA based filmmakers’ collective, and Cinema Libre Studio, an entertainment production and distribution studio for independent filmmaking, have partnered in the unveiling of a new DVD/VHS label geared toward the production and distribution of exclusively independent films. The Filmmakers Alliance Collection (FAC) will issue its first five releases into the home-entertainment market this month, with titles that include Erik Moe and Peter Rudy’s high school hockey saga, *No Sleep Till Dawn*, Jacques Thelemaque’s redemption-through-pet-care story, *The Dogwalker* (Thelemaque’s short *Infidelity* screened at Sundance in January), and *America So Beautiful*, a film by Babak Shokrian that takes a close look at Iranians living in LA during the 1979 hostage crisis.

The start-up label joins a host of other new DVD labels, such as Microcinema International’s Blackchair Label. “We began as, and continue to be, exhibitors,” says Joel Bachar, founder of the nine-year-old Microcinema, who started his career as a filmmaker. “We see this step as an additional economical outlet for these films.” Microcinema International, which Bachar describes as a kind of “label of labels,” also distributes the work of other labels, citing as inspiration the ultra hip record label Sub Pop, which after nurturing the grunge movement has become a world-renowned name brand.

Also relatively new to the scene is Film Movement (subtitled “A Declaration of Independents” on its

website), which releases independent films through a DVD subscribers club. The company, which operates out of New York, and was founded by the producers of *Sling Blade* and *You Can Count on Me*, offers its members an annual \$189 subscription fee (or \$19.95 per film monthly) to receive twelve small, award-winning, independently produced, first-run films.

As for FAC, Beth Portello, head of marketing for Cinema Libre Studio, says that the label is about creating new opportunities and “getting independent filmmakers [and their films] out to consumers through a great grassroots organization,” thereby, “really empowering filmmakers who realize their dreams.” FAC also gives independent filmmakers control over the final edit of their film, which if distributed through more conventional channels, would be compromised by producers and executive producers. Locale is important too, says Adam Chanick, head of distribution at Cinema Libre. “Because we’re in Hollywood,” he explains, “we’re taking in the finest from Hollywood who are not interested in Hollywood.”

FAC distribution is targeted to national and regional video chains, rental outlets, and independent video stores in DVD and VHS format. Additionally, each DVD features a five-minute episode from the FAC Five Minute Film School, which offers production tips for established and aspiring low-budget filmmakers, as well as short actor and director interviews, film commentaries, and behind-the-scenes footage. ■

Sonya Fatah is an editorial intern at
The Independent.

Filmmakers Alliance:
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Casting Call

AVY KAUFMAN DIRECTS THE SHOW

By Austin Bunn

Casting, says Avy Kaufman, is about controlling your attention. "If you're noticing people in the background, that's a problem," she explains. "And if there are too many famous people in the frame, that's distracting too—it can be hard to get past the name to find the character." In her thirteen years as a casting director, working on over three dozen indies (*Dogville*, *Dancer in the Dark*, *In America*) and major studio releases (*A.I.*, *Hulk*), the New York-based Kaufman has deftly negotiated the divide between auteur idiosyncrasy and the pressure to crowd the screen with "names." But she shrugs off the assumption that there's a difference between the two. "The only difference is the people I deal with," she says. "I treat the movies the same. Your job is to intuit the director's vision. And that comes from a place that you can't learn."

With the proliferation of Miramax-style "future casting" and television networks anointing their own celebrities (think the WB or Fox), the pool of available (and marketable) new talent has no doubt expanded. But new "celebrities," from Paris Hilton on down (or should we say up?), doesn't necessarily mean more cast-able actors. Winning over international distributors, critical for small-scale films, means aiming for bankable actors with the highest international profile possible. Young phenoms like Colin Farrell or Mandy Moore, seem-

ingly everywhere in American media, might still be mysteries to the rest of the planet. "Is it more important to put famous people in a movie now? I think it's always been that way," says Kaufman. "At the same time, movie stars become movie stars for a reason. They're that good." Plus, a poorly-received film often reflects more on



the actors than the director. So, no matter what background actors have, "be it television or film," says Kaufman, "it's all hard to break into. We need to recognize them no matter what media they come from."

Kaufman, who matched Jude Law and Jim Carrey in the upcoming *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and landed Nicole Kidman in both *The Human Stain* and the 2004 thriller *Birth*, started out in advertising. She worked for a big New York

advertising firm until her frustration with the casting process for ads sent her off on her own. "I would bring in these actors that I just loved and they wouldn't get the job because of what I knew in my heart were silly reasons," she says. "I always went to the theater and to movies and I said, 'Let me see if I can switch.'"

The transition, she says, "was hell." Casting directors claimed a background in advertising was a liability. "I'd knock on doors and people would say, 'No, if you did advertising, you don't know anything about film . . .'" Kaufman credits John Sayles with her first break, casting extras for his West Virginia coal-town epic *Matewan* in 1987. That was followed by Ed Zwick's *Glory* in 1989. "There is such an art to extras casting," says Kaufman. "It's like production design—the people should feel real inside a director's vision of the world." At the same time, extras need to know their place as believable wallpaper—not stars in the making. "Nobody should look at the camera," she says, "and they should do whatever they're supposed to be doing and not wish they were doing something else."

Kaufman takes projects based on the source material: script and director. "If the director hasn't done anything, then it's the script and a meeting with the director that makes the difference," she says. It's Kaufman's knack for early discoveries that shot her to the top. "When I first read Jim Carroll's *The Basketball Diaries*," she says, "the only person I thought of was Leonardo DiCaprio, and he wasn't famous yet." At that point, the young star had done *This Boy's Life*, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, and *Critters 3: You Are What They Eat*, but hadn't carried a film on his shoulders. Next, she fought for Tobey Maguire, who had then done only a smattering of television and bit parts, for Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm*. That

Casting director Avy Kaufman.

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film, with its ensemble cast and hand-ful of indelible supporting characters, gave Kaufman a chance to launch more than one career.

"Basically, I flew into L.A. for an *Ice Storm* casting session the same day as this girl Katie Holmes, who was coming in from Ohio," recalls Kaufman. "Literally, she had never done any-

'Wow, I didn't even think they were capable of that.' That's not intuition. That's just staying awake." Often, though, she's shocked awake during casting sessions—and not always in the positive sense. Particularly when it comes to kids eager to break into the business. "I was working on this film, trying to cast some kids, but the

**"It's so funny to me," says Kaufman.
"When I see the credits roll, I'm always
surprised when I see a man's name. I think,
'Oh my gosh—a gentleman did that?'"**

thing. I don't even think she had a real agent—it was like a friend of someone's manager who asked me to read her as a favor. She came in, I gave her pages to read, and an hour later she read with Ang. We didn't even see anybody else for the role. She got the part that day."

Compared to directing or cinematography, casting may be the one bastion of female talent in the film business. "It's so funny to me," says Kaufman. "When I see the credits roll, I'm always surprised when I see a man's name. I think, 'Oh my gosh—a gentleman did that?'" The overwhelming presence of women in casting may have less to do with the work itself—auditioning hundreds for a specific role—and more to do with the films getting made. Since the majority of films feature male leads, working as a casting director means that you're often interviewing and judging men, a role men could find uncomfortable.

Kaufman says she operates mostly from "intuition" when it comes to choosing actors for specific parts, but that intuition isn't enough. "You really have to be open to the changes an actor will make over time," she says. "I may think that I've nailed an actor in my head, and then I see them doing something new and I'll say,

script had lots of language that really wasn't for kids ears," she says. "We changed the dialogue a bit, except that one script had the old language. So I ended up hearing this kid say, 'We fucked each other's brains out.' I felt sorry for him."

Despite working at the highest level of studio productions, Kaufman makes sure her casts bring something unexpected: Haley Joel Osment in *The Sixth Sense*, Eric Bana in *The Hulk*, or Nicole Kidman in Lars Von Trier's *Dogville*. ("I thought it was so brave of her to star in *Dogville*," she says. "It's not like everybody will flock to see this movie, but it's amazing. Lars just had such a strong vision.") At a time when name actors are increasingly resistant to auditioning for parts, Kaufman still does it. Interviews and auditions are the main element of her job. In an aspect of industry that traffics in personalities, Kaufman approaches her work with humility. "Everybody wants to be recognized for their work," she says. "But in casting, you can't do it for that. You have to step back and realize that you are casting one person at a time to make the perfect film. They are one piece in a giant puzzle." ■

Austin Bunn is a New York based writer and frequent contributor to The New York Times Magazine.

Michelle Montas

FRAMING POLITICAL AND PERSONAL REVENGE

By Theresa Smolen

Tall, elegant, and poised, Michelle Montas defines herself first as a journalist, second as a woman, and third as a militant for change. But the native Haitian says her life cannot be described as happy because of the hole left by the recent personal and professional loss that has changed her life's meaning. She is unable to safely function as a journalist in her country. She is a woman robbed of her soulmate. She is seeking justice.

Her story is intertwined with that of a lanky, tobacco pipe-smoking man, Jean Dominique, whose life is portrayed in a new film by Jonathan Demme, *The Agronomist*, which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in September 2003.

The film started out, Montas says, much like a sentimental home movie about her husband as a journalist in exile returning to his home country. But his triumphant return in 1994, meant to serve as the film's dramatic conclusion, was never captured, because Dominique went straight to work rebuilding his radio station, Radio Haiti Inter, and the film project was shelved. Six years later, on the morning of April 3, 2000, Jean Dominique was assassinated as he was entering Radio Haiti Inter. Work on the film soon recommenced, with the story now having shifted from a straight biography to more of a tribute to Dominique's life in the context of Haiti's struggle for democracy. "It's a film that celebrates the life of a great, great human being—two great human beings because now it's a portrait of Michelle," says Demme.

Michelle Montas and Jean Dominique in *The Agronomist*.

Montas, who grew up in Port-au-Prince and Petion-Ville, Haiti, studied journalism and politics at the University of Maine and the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. She fled to Maine at the age of seventeen after supporters of Haitian dictator "Papa Doc" Duvalier killed her aunt and five cousins in the mid-1960s. Her

mately brought her to Radio Haiti Inter, and to Jean Dominique.

Together, in the early 1970s, Dominique and Montas began to air the first news broadcasts in Creole, the language of the majority of Haitians. Because Haitian radio at the time was primarily for the purposes of entertainment, this was a major development and also, as Dominique described it in the film, "risky business."

"We were doing investigative reporting and started realizing how dangerous it was. Advertisers pulled all of their advertising from the station overnight on request from the



brother lived in Maine at the time, and she had been accepted to college there prior to leaving Haiti. Upon completing her graduate studies, she returned to Haiti to begin a career in journalism. "My parents were very much against it," Montas says of her decision to become a journalist. "In a country run by a dictatorship, it was unthinkable that I would pick that type of profession." But she persisted, and soon decided that radio was the medium in which to best utilize her skills and combine her passion for politics and media. This decision ulti-

government," Montas explains. In 1980, the political police arrested Montas and the radio staff and took them to jail. "Luckily Jean was not there, because they had orders to kill him," Montas says. She spent six days in jail before being released. "I was taken straight to a plane bound for Miami with just the clothes on my back," she says. From there, she traveled to New York. Dominique, who had taken refuge at the Venezuelan Embassy in Port au Prince, later joined her there. "We did our best to adapt," said Montas of that first five-

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year exile. "We went to movies; it was our passion beyond the struggle."

It was during their second exile in New York, after a military coup in Haiti in 1991, with Montas working at the United Nations as a public information officer and radio producer, and Dominique giving lec-

her until she reopened the radio station a month later on May 3, 2000, World Press Freedom Day. In the film's dedication, Demme cites his overwhelming appreciation of Montas: "Thanks to Michelle Montas for her trust, support, and participation without which the film could not

**Before her husband was killed,
she usually rode into work with him,
although by chance, and perhaps fate, did
not choose to on the day he was shot.**

tures on cinema, that they connected with the filmmaker Jonathan Demme. Montas says that Demme and her husband had met previously in Haiti, but became close friends during the period they worked on the movie project. "It was art and culture that brought them together—beyond politics," explains Montas of the friendship between the two men. "It was a very personal vision, but so many things brought Jean and Jonathan close [such as] their love of Haiti and the fight for democratic principles."

The periods of exile also brought she and Dominique closer to each other, Montas says, because they had nothing but each other. Montas says for her it was the deepest she and Jean loved, and she believes it was the same for Jean. When they returned to Haiti in 1994, their ability to function as journalists was dependent upon the success of the first democratically elected President, Jean Bertrand Aristide. But the situation in Haiti only worsened, and Dominique's criticism of government corruption grew increasingly relentless until the day he was gunned down in front of Radio Haiti Inter.

When Dominique was killed, Montas says that Demme was one of the first people to call her, and had then flown to Haiti and stayed with

have been made."

Montas herself has escaped possible death twice. Before her husband was killed, she usually rode into work with him, although by chance, and perhaps fate, did not choose to on the day he was shot. Two years later, an assassination attempt on her life killed her bodyguard instead. This and ongoing threats against the radio station staff compelled her to leave Haiti and seek justice from afar.

Montas, now back in New York serving as spokeswoman for the president of the United Nations General Assembly, believes Demme's film will make a difference. She has traveled to several screenings, where she continues to speak with strength and conviction about determining who was behind her husband's assassination. The void that his death left cannot be filled, but one day, Montas maintains, she will return to Haiti to pick up where she and Dominique left off at the radio station. Because as it is now, "I'm not doing the job I wanted to be doing." ▣

ThinkFilm is distributing *The Agronomist* and is planning an April 2004 limited theatrical release.

*Theresa Smolen is a freelance writer
in Albany, New York.*

Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

My career as a documentary filmmaker is about to take off—at the same time, my biological clock is ticking away. Should I follow nature's urge and ultimately risk the possibility of not being able to reenter the film industry?

When the career countdown and the biological clock are ticking simultaneously, I suggest you try to synchronize them so that they tick in harmony. Sure, easier said than done. I won't underplay the challenges of becoming a mother in this culture. The irony, of course, is that those challenges are mainly imposed by society as opposed to being an intrinsic consequence of motherhood.

Ever wonder why there is bicycle parking everywhere and no stroller parking anywhere? Why there aren't soundproof booths in the back of every movie theater? Or diaper dispensers in every public bathroom? Or film grants for moms? The notion of catering to a culture of motherhood in America may sound farfetched, but in other parts of the world it's not that farfetched at all. In Bolivia, for example, women are the main breadwinners; they work the fields with their babies wrapped around their backs. As do women in many parts of Africa. In all of Asia, children are part of the family business during after-school hours, and extended family lives nearby often to

help as well. As you can see, in many countries work and motherhood for women is not an either/or situation. But I will assume that those of you documentary making mothers-to-be are not planning to wait for the dawn of a matriarchal society in America, nor are you planning on a move to Bolivia.

Bear in mind that the life of a documentary filmmaker is more similar to the life of a home business owner than a corporate worker, in that you have to manage your own schedule, your goals, and your staff. The first years might be more difficult, but thanks to the internet you can work on fundraising even while you are pregnant, because it generally takes a full year to get a documentary off the ground anyway. And who knows, motherhood can be very creative and engaging—you might feel completely different about filmmaking after you become a mom.

Kathy Leichter became a mother two years ago, and started with dis-

thanks to the support and additional income of her husband, Andrew, Kathy is able to earn her living by working as a freelance grant writer and fundraising consultant. Being both a mother and a filmmaker has meant that Kathy has had to make some hard choices, but she knows that the career sacrifices are not permanent, and she has even begun to integrate stories and themes of motherhood into her current film projects.

For further inspiration on the subject, check out the book *I Love My Life: A Mom's Guide to Working from Home*, by Kristie Tamsevicus (Wyatt-Mackenzie Publishing, 2003), which serves as a helpful primer on the balancing of family and career.

Dear Doc Doctor:

I am a sixty-year-old grandmother and aspiring documentary filmmaker. Every time I attend a documentary workshop, event, or party, I feel like everybody is half my age. Am I too old to become a successful documentary filmmaker?

It's never too late! I will invite you to my next consultation with Justin D. Call, an eighty-year-old California-based filmmaker and psychiatrist working on his first documentary

Ever wonder why there is bicycle parking everywhere and no stroller parking anywhere? Why there aren't soundproof booths in the back of every movie theater? Or diaper dispensers in every public bathroom? Or film grants for moms?

tribution for her film *A Day's Work, A Day's Pay* when her son was just a few months old. She is currently serving as the project director of a community screening initiative while also developing two new films. Also

about how children can overcome trauma through play. Or I'll introduce you to eighty-one-year-old Benedict Yedlin, who became a filmmaker at the age of seventy and is now working on his third film.

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The older women that I work with, most of whom are either returning to or just starting filmmaking, are all very youthful in spirit and would probably prefer that I not mention their real ages anyway. However, after a very successful experience with her film *Daring to Resist*, co-produced and directed with Barbara Attie, senior filmmaker Martha Lubell is putting the final touches on *Queen of the Mountain*. With camera in hand, she wrapped her long silver hair in a bun and headed to Mali to shoot her first film. The list of documentary makers over the age of fifty is endless, and those are just examples of people I'm acquainted with—think of how many potential others are out there.

What's more, documentary filmmaking seems to lend itself to a more mature individual. It's no coincidence that many film schools across the globe require a previous degree from their candidates and that students be at least twenty-three years old. In her 1998 book, *Work Left Undone, Choices & Compromises of Talented Females* (Creative Learning), Sally Morgan Reis devotes an entire chapter to "women who achieved eminence after the age of fifty-five," and also offers a thoughtful analysis of the socio-political and economic ramifications of this success in later life.

Aging is a wonderful and enlightening process for everyone, but for women especially, I leave you with an adage from my production designer friend, Tema Levine: "We don't go gray, we go blonder!" ■

Want to ask the Doc Doctor a question for a future issue of *The Independent*? Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com.

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. She also leads the bimonthly Documentary Dialogues discussion group offered by AIVE. For more info, visit www.documentarydoctor.com.

New Orleans, Louisiana

SNAPSHOTS OF THE INDIE FILM COMMUNITY

By Margaret Coble

Rick Delaup, Filmmaker

"The great thing about living and working in New Orleans is that the city is so rich with subject matter, for any artist," says Rick Delaup, a native of New Orleans who studied film at Chicago's Columbia College but

with his critically-acclaimed documentary on French Quarter eccentric Ruthie Moulon, *Ruthie The Duck Girl* (1999), and infomercial-style video on Ninth Ward musician, inventor and hipster icon Mr. Quintron, *The Drum Buddy Show* (2001). His current proj-



returned to the Crescent City to produce documentary videos. "It's a visually exciting city. In my opinion, it's a documentary filmmaker's dream. We have the most amazing characters here, and a lot of fascinating stories."

Delaup has literally made a career out of chronicling the city's cast of offbeat characters and their equally colorful stories. His website, EccentricNewOrleans.com, describes him as "an independent producer on a mission to tell the true, uncensored stories of real New Orleans people," which he has accomplished artfully

with his critically-acclaimed documentary on French Quarter eccentric Ruthie Moulon, *Ruthie The Duck Girl* (1999), and infomercial-style video on Ninth Ward musician, inventor and hipster icon Mr. Quintron, *The Drum Buddy Show* (2001). His current project, *Evangeline the Oyster Girl & Other Tales of Burlesque*, will tell the stories of Bourbon Street exotic dancers from the late 1940s through the early '60s. "Unfortunately, most of the works that reach the largest audiences, via television, are made by out-of-towners who always want to cover the same topics over and over. There is much more to New Orleans than Mardi Gras, jazz, R&B, food, and French Quarter architecture," Delaup says.

Despite his success, Delaup has a reputation for being a bit of a cynic when it comes to the New Orleans indie film scene. And he's entitled to it after riding the ramparts of a not-quite-on-the-map film town like New

Orleans for a decade and a half. Most of his criticisms revolve around what he perceives as a lack of financial support for film and video artists living and working in New Orleans from the city and state funding agencies. He says local filmmakers don't enjoy the same level of patronage as their peers in other local media (i.e. music and visual arts), or get the same kind of attention as out-of-town filmmakers/producers working on local subject matter.

"All the grants [for filmmaking] are drying up. The New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC) [the oldest non-profit media arts center in the southeastern U.S., which recently folded after thirty-two years due to lack of funding] has closed their doors. There are no decent venues to screen works, the local cable access station has received lots of criticism—for not being supportive—of local producers, and the Louisiana Division of the Arts has severely cut funding to artists, yet can come up with one million [dollars] for the PBS corporate sponsored Ken Burns *Jazz* series, which was criticized by many as glossing over New Orleans. And local Louisiana filmmakers aren't even thrown a bone."

His is certainly an extreme point of view, but one that does put things into perspective. "Unfortunately, many of the talented filmmakers from New Orleans had to move away to achieve success. While, for many who have remained, you're only good for a film or two before you are forced to enter the 9-5 workplace. I have not thought about leaving New Orleans until fairly recently. I guess I'll just see how things go."

For more info on Rick Delaup, see www.eccentricneworleans.com

Zeitgeist: The Little Venue That Could

Rene Broussard, the founder and director of New Orleans' long-

New Orleans filmmakers Rick and Maria Delaup shooting *Ruthie the Duck Girl*.

running, nonprofit, alternative media arts venue Zeitgeist Multi-Disciplinary Arts Center, and a filmmaker himself, sits somewhere in the middle of the opinion spectrum when



it comes to talking about the New Orleans independent film scene. Though he's seen a lot in his seventeen years with Zeitgeist, he remains positive and determined, espousing a silver lining to Delaup's dark cloud.

"I don't know that there's a multi-

tude of resources for [filmmakers] who don't have their own systems, but now you can get a system so cheaply: editing systems, mini DV cameras, with all the money you save by living here in New Orleans on rent and utilities, you can easily buy your own system. It's a very affordable place to work. And there is a sense of community—many talented interesting artists working here in town."

As far as venues go, while there are other bigger and better (read: more comfortable, as Zeitgeist is often criticized for its plastic chairs) options for viewing independent cinema in New Orleans (first-run art-house theaters like the downtown, four-screen, Landmark affiliate, Canal Place, and the single-screen Prytania Theater), none have been more consistently committed to showcasing alternative and independent media and trying to foster

a community around it than Zeitgeist.

Since 1987 Zeitgeist has persevered, championing underground, obscure, and often controversial film, video, music, visual, and performance art in a succession of ever-improving locations; most notably the much-beloved, now-defunct second-run drafthouse theater, Movie Pitchers. Though now settled in at Barrister's Art Gallery in Center City, the all-volunteer Zeitgeist continues to struggle financially, in part due to a commitment years ago to total independence, meaning no reliance on grants or public funds of any kind.

"We decided we would try to sink or swim from our ability to generate revenue from our programming, con-

Zeitgeist founder/director Rene Broussard sits inside media artist Patrick Lichty's installation *Suburban Meditation*.

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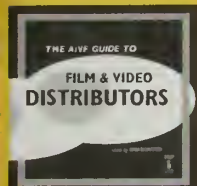
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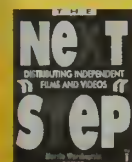
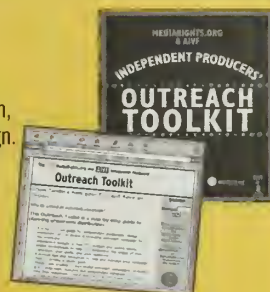
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cessions, and private donations,” Broussard says, admitting Zeitgeist didn’t want to be beholden to the moral or aesthetic dictates of arts funding agencies. “It’s a day to day struggle to keep the place open. But creatively, we’re doing incredible things with very little money.”

Zeitgeist’s alliance with the national DVD-first run film club Film Movement is one of those things. Film Movement helps create access to outstanding independent films that most likely will not receive wide release, by providing members with the DVD of the film in advance of its opening in associated theaters—like Zeitgeist. “It’s like a Book of the Month club for independent film,” Broussard explains. “It’s not doing as well as I

would like, in terms of attendance, but that’s the same with ninety-nine percent of what happens at Zeitgeist. After seventeen years in this town I still do not know the secret to getting an audience. It’s so fickle.”

“Is there an indie media ‘scene’ in New Orleans? Yes. Is it cohesive? No. Or a ‘community’ in the real sense of the word? We’re trying. But I do think there is hope on the horizon.”

www.zeitgeistinc.org

Jeremy Campbell, Ten 18 Films & Flicker: Making Things Happen

Jeremy Campbell is much more optimistic about the state of affairs in New Orleans. “I’d really say New Orleans is just thirsty for independent film. And there *are* a lot of people here doing experimental films and music videos and short interesting narrative

type work. A lot of it is more on the amateur end of things, but it’s people who really want to be better and are working to move in that direction.”

A filmmaker as well, Campbell moved to New Orleans about three years ago, interested, like Delaup, in the eccentric personalities and unique spirit of New Orleans. Since then, he has produced four critically lauded documentaries about New Orleans under the Ten 18 Films name, including *Second Line Sunday* and *New Orleans*



Flicker Underground Film Festival’s inaugural event in 2002.



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Jazz Funeral. Don't Worry Honey, I Live Here and *Sorry Mom, I'm A Drunk* are both about Mardi Gras from a locals' perspective.

About a year and a half ago, frustrated by what he perceived as a lack of appropriate venues for local filmmakers to screen their works, he started a New Orleans chapter of the nationwide Flicker network, which seeks to promote local film shorts while also screening works from other chapters. The Flicker Underground Film Festival, as Campbell bills the quarterly event at roving bar and club venues around town, functions as a distribution system that helps underground filmmakers gain a wider audience, while providing the local film-watching community with an alternative atmosphere to view the often cutting-edge material—which has been a big hit in a party town like New Orleans.

"The first time I would have been happy if three dozen people showed up. Now we're on our sixth show and every time we've had 200-plus people, so I've been thrilled with the response," Campbell says. "It may be an optimistic point of view, but, there's so much artistic talent in this city, it should be a film hub as much as it is a music hub and visual art hub. I guess it depends on what you want to achieve here, as a filmmaker. If you're interested in getting a job on a big budget film and being part of a narrative Hollywood feature, then that's more difficult. But New Orleans is wide open if you are prepared to make your own way, finance your own film, basically self-produce. Then it is a good place to be. And I see a lot of potential in the city right now." □

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Margaret Coble is a New Orleans based freelance writer, DJ, and film enthusiast. She serves on the selection committee for *Reel Identities: The New Orleans Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Film Festival*, and is the Assistant Coordinator for the Michigan Women's Music Festival's annual Film Festival.

Deutsch/ Open City Films

Jason Guerrasio interviews

Joana Vicente and Jason Kliot

Since founding Open City Films in 1994, producers Joana Vicente and Jason Kliot have earned a reputation for making unique and popular films that would probably not have received financing elsewhere. Whether they sold the film to a studio—like *Down to You* (Miramax)—or produced a gritty independent—like *Chuck and Buck* through their subsidiary, Blow Up Pictures—they’ve always found a way to get the film made with what little they have. Recently, Vicente and Kliot got the additional resources they needed to expand their company and greenlight more films.

Explain the changes that have happened to the company?

Kliot: Up until September 2003 we had Open City Films and our digital company, Blow Up Pictures. It’s now called Deutsch/Open City Films and HDNetFilms. Donny Deutsch is now our partner, which means we have someone with very deep resources who supports us in developing material. We have money to pay writers, and to option novels or plays or magazine articles, and take those and develop them with other financing partners. These are films that are going to be \$5-10 million or higher.

Vicente: The one thing that’s exciting about the partnership with Donny Deutsch is that now we have the resources to get those films to a better level before we go to any financing

sources. If you go to a studio with a project and they think it still needs work, you end up in what filmmakers commonly call “development hell.” That’s the gap that we’re filling. We



want to go to studios with finished scripts, scripts that are completely ready to go. Then we can drive a harder bargain with the studios or the equity sources that we’re going to. We can say, “This movie is ready to go. We’ll work with you, but within a few months we want you to be casting, and/or in pre-production on the film. And if you’re not doing that, we want the movie back and we don’t want any turnaround costs on it.” We want to help directors and writers leapfrog that whole “development hell” cunundrum.

Talk a little about HDNetFilms.

Kliot: In 1998 Joana and I founded Blow

Up Pictures. Blow Up Pictures was the first digital production company to make theatrical films in this country. Some of them are *Chuck and Buck*, *Lovely & Amazing*, *Series 7*, and *Love in the Time of Money*. Mark Cuban and Todd Wagner saw what we did with Blow Up, came to us and said, “We’re starting a high-definition film company; we want to make pictures up to \$2 million; we have all the money we want to make these movies; do you guys want to find those movies and put them into production?” So we have the ability to greenlight as many

movies as we want to in a year up to the \$2 million level. That’s what we’re doing with HDNetFilms, making movies that we can bring to festivals and have them sold to distributors, the way we did with Blow Up.

What types of projects do you seek?

Kliot: We’re going to focus on films we’ve always made: ground breaking, innovative, very director-driven independent films that are for theatrical distribution.

Do you attend festivals? If so, why and which ones?

Kliot: At Sundance this year we [went]

This page: Gza, Rza, and Bill Murray in *Coffee and Cigarettes*, produced by Deutsch/Open City Films. Following page: Joana Vicente and Jason Kliot.

looking for talent. We're looking for filmmakers who are established and want to develop films with us. That



could be someone who's fed up with the studio system and wants to make a low budget film. It also could be a kid who's made an ingenious short that we really love and whose first feature we want to make. We go to Sundance, Toronto, Rotterdam, and Cannes. We'll be at a few regional fests too, but it all comes down to what our schedules permit.

How do you prefer filmmakers to approach you?

Kliot: I like filmmakers to email us a synopsis of their project. That's the best way to get to us: oc@opencity-films.com.

What's the most common mistake a filmmaker makes when they approach you?

Kliot: Thinking that it's very important for them to make contact with me, to know who I am, to get my card or my address. It doesn't matter if I have met them. It'll have no bearing whatsoever on my reading their script or not.

Vicente: The real problem that occurs is people send us scripts that we would never make in our lives. We don't make slasher movies.

Kliot: You should know your basics. But sometimes I see people overshoot and focus so much on the industry and the connections. You'd be amazed how few good filmmakers know how to shmooze. I really don't believe this

business is about shmoozing. You should do your basic homework, you should know who you're going to so you're going to the appropriate people for your project. But don't let that eclipse the fact that you should be focusing on the project and making sure that if you expose your film to anybody, that it be in the best possible condition it can be in.

So filmmakers shouldn't have a keen eye on the business?

Kliot: It's important, but Joana and I are really content driven. We're really about the material. So I always say to filmmakers, don't focus so much on the business. Find someone in the industry who knows who the players are and ask their advice about who you should go to with your project. The real energy should be placed into writing an extraordinary project or finding that perfect project. Because if you have a really great script I know a lot of people who want to make that movie.

What types of projects are you working on now?

Vicente: We can't say what they are but right now we have three films we're about to make. There's a documentary, a comedy, and a very, very serious political film.

What's the biggest sacrifice you have to make when dealing with a big studio?

Kliot: I think the biggest sacrifice you make is getting your vision watered down. By nature, film studios, independent or major, are corporations that rely on a number of people working together to guarantee that the product they're making is acceptable to the corporation. Its very nature, I believe, eliminates some of the elements that can make projects unique.

Where are we in the digital revolution?

Vicente: The digital revolution has just begun. The freedom that digital production allows to independent filmmakers is a remarkable thing and it's

what's going to break open the independent barriers.

Kliot: What's exciting with high-definition films is we can make the exact same quality product that any of the big studios are making for a fraction of what they make it for. I think that the significance of that huge transformation in technology is only beginning to be acknowledged. □

Jason Guerrasio is a staff writer for The Independent.

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Will Battersby
*Head of Development,
HDNetFilms*

Jeff Fierson,
Assistant to Kliot and Vicente

The Slate:

Three Seasons, dir. Tony Bui, 1999

Down to You, dir. Kris Isacsson, 2000

The Assassination of Richard Nixon, dir. Niels Mueller, 2004

Coffee and Cigarettes, dir. Jim Jarmusch, 2004

Blow Up Pictures:

Chuck & Buck, dir. Miguel Arteta, 2000

Series 7: The Contenders, dir. Daniel Minahan, 2001

Lovely & Amazing, dir. Nicole Holofcener, 2002

Beer at Sundance

WHAT DOES A PRODUCERS' REP REALLY DO?

By Bo Mehrad

The subject of producers' reps—who they are and what they do—is one that a lot of us find confusing. And yet, most films that secure distribution during festivals, especially in recent years, have done so through the help of a producers' rep.

I decided it would be both useful and important as a filmmaker to learn exactly what it is that a producer's rep does. The following is an account of the day I spent at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival with Steven Beer—who has served as legal counsel or a producers' rep for films ranging from lesser-known independents like *Sick: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan*, *Supermasochist* to the Academy Award-nominated *Tumbleweeds*. Until recently, Beer was a co-founding partner in his own firm, Rudolph & Beer. In 2003, Beer dissolved his firm and teamed with Greenberg Traurig, one of the country's largest law firms with multiple offices across the US and Europe. He is president of the Executive Board and a member of the National Board of the Independent Feature Project (IFP).

Mid December, 2003 New York City

Following the announcement of Sundance's 2004 line-up, I arranged a pre-interview with Steven Beer at Greenberg Traurig's midtown offices in order to get a feel for what his plans are for the festival. He has brought in a team that includes former IFP/New York programmer Mindy Bond to help contact filmmakers and to select a roster of films for representation. During that preliminary meeting, I asked him about the purpose and

Imelda is one of the films repped by Steven Beer at Sundance.

necessity of a producers' rep going into a festival like Sundance.



"It's a complicated and specialized market," Beer explained. "And if you haven't done it before it would be like driving cross country without a roadmap."

He continued, "I think that there needs to be people to brainstorm with and deliberate and that's why having a rep—who could be an agent, could be a lawyer—is important. Someone who's done this before many times over and who's going to appreciate how events may or may not unfold."

When I asked him about the number of films he would be representing, he said that compared to fellow producers' reps and attorneys, the number of films he planned to take on was small. "No more than a handful. That's different than some of my colleagues who believe a mass-market approach is appropriate. On a personal level, I don't think more than a handful would be something that's respectful to the filmmakers and

would let me accomplish all my goals, which is to give every project the maximum attention."

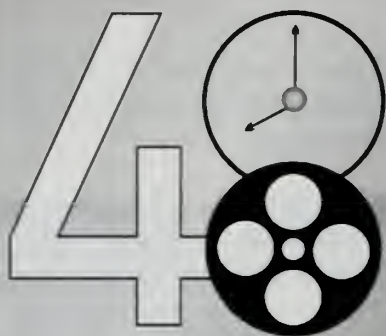
January 16, 2004 Park City, Utah

It's 8:30 a.m. on the first day of the 2004 Sundance Film Festival and Main Street is uncharacteristically quiet. I

buy a cup of coffee and make my way to the top of the street to Beer's condo, where Beer's assistant while at Sundance, Eric, greets me at the door. Eric motions me in as he continues to talk on his cell phone about various Fed Ex packages that have or have not arrived, before then disappearing into the kitchen. I stand in the front room of the condo, which is relatively modest, if perhaps more polished than the average Park City rental.

After a while, Beer makes his entrance, wasting little time in telling me that I'm ten minutes early.

The day starts with a meeting between Beer and his team, which consists of Eric, an assistant attorney, two interns, Arthur Chang, COO of Greenberg Traurig Advisory, and another Greenberg attorney, Mary Miles. As it turns out, the films that Beer is repping (*Imelda*, *Let the Church Say Amen*, *Farmingville*, and *Persons of Interest*) will



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not be screening until a few days into the festival, so Beer instructs his team on what needs to be done for the day ahead, which includes the need to "make contact" with acquisitions executives from various distribution companies.

At 10 a.m., we all head down to "Schmooze Fest"—a free coffee and bagels affair given daily by the New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television, and co-sponsored by Greenberg Traurig.

Later Beer meets with filmmakers. With *Farmingville's* Catherine Tabini and Carlos Sandoval, the discussion turns to early interest from buyers after an appearance the filmmakers made the night before on CNN's *Lou Dobbs Show*. Beer suggests that they hold off on talking to buyers until after their first official screening on Sunday. Next, Beer meets with the filmmakers of *Let the Church Say Amen*, who are concerned about their screening. Their issues seem to have little to do with selling, which is ostensibly what Beer is there to help with. But Beer handles their concerns with a calm

demeanor and offers what is clearly a necessary reality check on a situation.

In between clients, I asked Beer about this interaction and whether he sees mediation as part of his job. "Well, that's not what I signed up for. But that's a big part of this business to be accommodating and flexible in relationships [that are made here]," he says. "It's part of the fun. Everyday is an adventure at Sundance."

Around 3 p.m., Beer meets with *Imelda* director Ramona Diaz about the reality of her doc being picked up for theatrical distribution. Beer gives her an honest appraisal of the situation: For most docs, wide theatrical distribution is not a reality, but that a very healthy life exists for docs in public TV and the educational market. As he goes into detail, I realize that what strikes me the

most about Beer is his consistent ability to put his clients at ease.

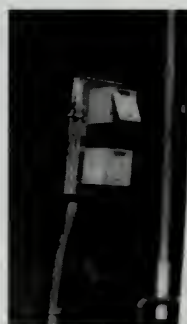
After a long day, we regroup at the condo for the first of three cocktail parties Greenberg will host throughout the duration of Sundance. I lose sight of Beer shortly after the condo begins to reach its maximum capacity, although I do notice different filmmakers that I've met throughout the day. Business cards fly. Matt Dillon makes an appearance.

January 25, 2004

Brooklyn, NY

Back at home I learn *Farmingville* has won the Documentary Jury's Special Jury award and that the doc cinematography award went to *Imelda*.

I think back to my original goal of learning the exact role of a producers'



rep, and I realize the role and subject still remain elusive. Obviously, it involves the sale of a film. But maybe it's not important to know the exact role of a producers' rep; maybe this is an integral aspect of the indie film world's natural order—filmmakers know filmmaking and reps know about repping.

None of the films Beer represented at Sundance sold during the festival, but Beer, in what I now recognize as a calling card of steadfast composure, did not seem worried. "I'm realistic about the process. [Sundance] is a presentation opportunity but a lot of the business happens after." □

Bo Mehrad is a New York based writer and director. He also edits the Festival Listings section of The Independent and works as an Information Services Associate for AIVF.

Slamdance

A DECADE UNDER THE INFLUENCE

By Susan Diane Freel

In January 1995, filmmakers united under the banner of rejection from the Sundance Film Festival and came together in Salt Lake City and Park City, Utah to do the previously unthinkable. Raising a fist in the shadow of Sundance, they called themselves "Anarchy in Utah: The Slamdance Film Festival," and not only did they proceed to screen their rejected films, they screened them within spitting distance of Sundance venues. Slamdance has since become number nine in the list of top ten film festivals worldwide, according to *The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide*, and has just celebrated its tenth year.

"That first year was pretty organized, but we were really renegades," says festival co-founder and filmmaker Paul Rachman. "We came up initially to have the whole festival at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, and we had one day of screenings. [But when] one of our [16mm] filmmakers, Liz Raven, rented a small room, a very small room, literally in the hallway leading up to the Prospector Theater—that's kind of how we started in Park City. Then the 35mm films ended up at the Yarrow the next day. What was great is Sundance had its press screenings at the Yarrow. So all the press came through. Dan [Mirvish, festival co-founder] and I would go, 'Hey, come on in!'"

"It was very renegade," echoes Peter Baxter, filmmaker and Slamdance co-founder. "It's not anything like it is

now. Basically that [first] year we helped ourselves, and now what we're doing is to try and help other filmmakers."

Filmmaker and 1995 Slamdance alum Eugene Martin adds, "The screenings were small, anywhere from twenty [people] to as little as six. We actually rented the room that we're having this interview in now, and we screened films in here. It was very



cool." The filmmakers helped each other by pooling skills and handing out more than 5,000 flyers, and there were media "taste-makers" that came around and responded to the work. For Martin, it was a process of discovery as much as of defiance. "I'm not defiant by personality," he says. "I'm just more of the idea that I work in film as an art form and that it's important to me."

"I thought it was going to be done the first year," says Mirvish, "and I was like 'OK, thank you and good night.' Surprise! What wound up happening was that Slamdance kept fulfilling a niche that Sundance, to this day, doesn't really serve." Mirvish

and Baxter recall that in 1997, Sundance expressed concern over the Slamdance presence at the Yarrow. "Sundance really didn't want us in their hallway," explains Baxter. So they moved the operation to its current home at the Treasure Mountain Inn on Park City's Main Street. One of the reasons that Slamdance has continued and succeeded despite the obstacles is that the actual physical size of the festival hasn't changed since that first year. They had a dozen shorts and a dozen features and they had two venues in Salt Lake City and two venues in Park City in 1995. The same holds true in 2004.

Neither has its mission changed.

Slamdance still champions first-time filmmakers with low-budget films in their competition line-up. Films are chosen by programmers who are themselves filmmakers and the festival jury is made up of peers from the indie community.

"We still fill that valuable niche of supporting and nurturing new talent," says Mirvish. "The similarity between the type of filmmaker that was in the first year and the type of filmmaker in this year's festival is really just the same," explains Baxter. "It's just that it's organized a little bit differently and we know a few more things now that we did in 1995. We're able to have more filmmakers in the festival and we've also grown up as a year-round organization." Slamdance now has on-the-road events, a screenplay competition, a website, \$99 Special Screenings, and brand-name recognition. "We're really concentrating on growth outside [of] Park City," says Baxter.

Eugene Martin, Dan Mirvish, Paul Rachman, and other 1995 alumni had films at Slamdance 2004 as part of the anniversary competition and non-competition line-up. Martin's *The Other*

Facing page: *Let the Church Say Amen*. This page: *The Lab of Madness*.

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America, about homeless teenagers, opened the festival and Dan Mirvish's *Open House*, an intimate sung-on-camera real estate musical starring Sally Kellerman, received a special screening later in the week. Paul Rachman's work was shown during a \$99 Special Screening in the Gallery.

Meanwhile, new Slam dancers in 2004 including Jeremy Saulnier, whose *Crabwalk* won the Grand Jury Sparky Award Winner for Best Short Narrative, kept things old-school style. Shooting on regular 16mm, rather than mini-DV, cinematographer/director Saulnier received a concussion capturing a scene on film while riding backwards on a waterslide. *Memron*, winner of Slamdance's Audience Narrative Feature Award, was shot with a specially modified camera rig that allowed director/writer Nancy Hower to be in the middle of the improvised action with her PD150. Shot on a SAG Experimental Contract without permits or pay, the producer's role was typical for an independent low budget. "We did this one day when at the end of the day, I [realized I] hadn't sat down. Evie [Peck, producer] had acted in the movie all day, had cooked three meals for all [fifteen] actors, and cleaned the kitchen," says Hower.

Memron producer Robert Hickey, another 1995 Slamdance alum with his film *The Bicyclist*, explains further. "Nancy came to me and said, 'You know it's really hard. I wish we could just buy the actors some food or have a bathroom trailer.' And I said to Nancy, 'That would be the worst possible thing for your film. The whole feel of this thing is because you're out there with that boom mike [and] with that rig you made. All the actors are close-knit friends. If you put money into it, it would change the dynamics.'"

So what's next for Slamdance? Another ten years? "We'll come back and do this [again]," says Rachman. "That's pretty inevitable." While the original mandate of independent film within the industry at large may seem to many as though it has changed dramatically, Slamdance continues to champion the films made by filmmakers in their own way with their own decisions. "And we do think that people still want to see those films, and they can be successful in the marketplace," says Baxter. "That's one of



the reasons this year we have done expansion into Salt Lake. We realize that is a great general audience. We took on the Madstone [theater] and people down in Salt Lake are responding to it. That's part of our next step, sort of a third phase. First we were a festival, then we were a year-round organization, and now we want to go this next step to try and provide a commercial opportunity to some of our filmmakers."

Gibson Frazier, who attended Slamdance in 1999 with his film *Man of the Century*, sums up the still insurgent, if now more established, festival: "Slamdance exists in the fact that it's rebelling against this bigger thing. We're the ones with the big middle finger, and that's OK." □

Susan Diane Freel is a New York based filmmaker and freelance writer.

Irene Longshore and Tobias Segal in Eugene Martin's *The Other America*.

Work to Watch For

By Jason Guerrasio

Television:

The Kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt

Dir. Victoria Bruce and Karin Hayes
(Cinemax, February 23)

For the last forty years, kidnapping has been a major problem in Colombia. One of the most intriguing cases was the 2002 abduction of presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt—which occurred before filming started on what was supposed to be an “uplifting” documentary about Columbia.

Three months before election day, in an attempt to resolve the kidnapping crisis, Betancourt arranged a meeting with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—a guerrilla group rapidly gaining power via drugs and political kidnappings. The FARC meeting turned out disastrously, and nine days later Betancourt was kidnapped while driving through FARC territory.

Earlier in the year, filmmakers Victoria Bruce and Karin Hayes met Betancourt in the US and decided to film her during her run for presidency. “Things that I have seen about Colombia have always been focused on drugs and violence,” said Hayes who saw the film as “a chance to tell a story that I had never seen told before.”

After Betancourt’s kidnapping, however, their project became a lot more challenging. Although they continued to pursue their original ideas for the doc, Bruce explains, “Everything became unknown. As journalists we had to go and follow the story and find out what happened.”

The documentary begins soon after the kidnapping when Betancourt’s

family is in shambles. Her husband, Juan, has taken over the reigns of the campaign, keeping a cardboard cutout of his wife by him at all events. The film then follows the family on an emotional journey as they overcome sudden loss and band together for a common cause. “We hoped to put a positive spin on Colombia by showing



Ingrid doing something about this [kidnapping] tragedy that 3,000 people a year go through [in Colombia],” says Bruce. “By showing her family and their fight and struggle, we still show a positive side of Colombia—people trying to work it out.”

Multimedia:

Los Cybrids (www.cybrids.com)

Los Cybrids is a group of “cultural diggers” who critique today’s latest technology through artistic activity. “We do

panels, performances, and public art works to confront these issues . . . in a way to battle the mythologies about technology and the effects from them,” explains John Leños who, along with Praba Pilar and René Garcia, founded the group in the late 1990s.

“The dot com boom and high tech boom is taking over,” says Leños. “We’re looking at some of the ways it’s affecting our culture.” In an ironic twist they accomplished this by creating a website that critiqued the internet’s dominance of communication.

But the internet isn’t their only voice. Recently Los Cybrids did a series of investigations into how technology influences and affects political, social, and environmental issues. At the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, the group unveiled their examination of post-humanism with a piece entitled “Humaquina: Manifest Tech-Destiny.”

As part of the museum’s “Picarte: Photography Beyond Representation” exhibit, the piece (which will be up through the exhibit’s run) explores how advances in technology and studies of the human body have provided the military with the means to create the “ultimate cyborg.” A digital mural (a 10x24 foot billboard) shows a person of ethnic descent having different parts of the body replaced with robotic versions. “I think [audiences] were awed by the size of the wall piece and interested in the whole notion of big brother is watching you,” says Robert Buitron, guest curator of Picarte, who had heard about the group’s views while putting together the exhibit and felt compelled to include them. “I think that they’re addressing some really crucial issues and brought a different type of message to people’s attention.” ■

Picarte highlights some of the up and coming Hispanic artists on the West Coast and will be featured at the Heard Museum through March 14. For more information, see www.heard.org.

The digital mural from the Los Cybrids’ “Humaquina: Manifest Tech Destiny” exhibit in Arizona.

Jason Guerrasio is a staff writer for The Independent.

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Michael Wiese Productions (2004)

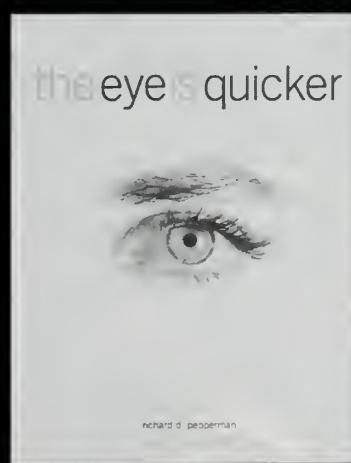
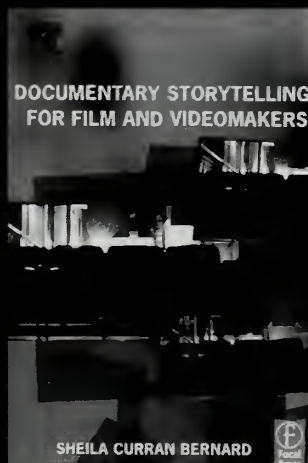
There is a scene in *Good Will Hunting* in which Matt Damon's character tells a pretentious, know-it-all grad student from Harvard that he could acquire the same knowledge and Harvard edu-

The point is that learning is an active process, and no amount of instruction can account for, or trump, a fire in the belly—the motivation to seek out knowledge on one's own. In fact, some of the most innovative work in film, and the art world in general, is done by those with little or no traditional training or education; those who work because they must, because they can't imagine doing anything else. For those filmmakers interested in supplementing their raw skills and inherent passion, though, three new books offer refreshing insight into the art of directing, documentary filmmaking, and film editing.

Like most film schools, many how-to film books focus mainly on theory or are intended for readers with firm foundations in rudimentary filmmaking.

second or third films, and to spend time focusing on the challenging enough task of directing one entire feature. An associate professor at Chapman University and an experienced director, Bettman provides a straightforward directive without sounding too preachy or self-aggrandizing. And for those who have a little more experience and just want a refresher, Bettman includes chapter summaries in convenient bullet-point form, which will make the book useful as a quick on-set reference as well.

But probably the most refreshing aspect of *First Time Director* is Bettman's use of movies that most everyone has seen instead of referencing obscure foreign directors or art house flicks (which, of course, have their own place in the landscape of film guidebooks). When Bettman discusses camera blocking in Chapter 3, he uses the "Jack Rabbit Slims" scene from *Pulp Fiction*. While stills from the film will help to remind readers of the scene, most are probably already



cation for no more than a buck-fifty in late fees from the public library. An exaggeration perhaps, but one that nonetheless yields to a certain measure of truth—a truth, I'm sure, that has made more than a few self-serious scholars of all disciplines squirm in their seats.

ing. These new books focus on filling in some of the gaps.

Gil Bettman's *First Time Director: How to Make Your First Breakthrough Movie* has essentially one goal: to help you get the job done. Bettman tells his readers, vis-à-vis aspiring directors, not to worry about awards until their

familiar with the movie and can easily recall its significance. Like most how-to books, there are passages in *First Time Director* that can be skimmed or simply skipped, but Bettman's conversational style and clean prose make it a pretty enjoyable read.

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Videomakers, by Emmy and Peabody Award-winner Sheila Curran Bernard, could be considered the nonfiction version of Bettman's book, though will probably be more helpful to seasoned filmmakers. Documentaries can be trickier than features, as they don't have the advantage of artifice or plot to engage the audience; the director must prove to the viewers that this subject is not just important, but interesting. Bernard walks her reader through the various stages of the filmmaking process—from exposition to research and interviews, to narration and post-production—but some of her most insightful advice is about storytelling itself.

While documentaries are nonfiction, they are certainly not objective, and even the smallest choices in writing, filming, interviewing, narrating, or scoring can drastically alter the perspective of the film, and in turn, the audience. Bernard is keenly aware of the power of persuasive images, and her insistence on complexity and integrity is a consistent theme throughout the book. She, like Bettman, also uses well-known films like Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* and Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* for clear explications of her points. Bernard also includes a series of interviews with filmmakers including Ric Burns, Jon Else, Susan Froemke, and Sam Pollard, among others, all of whom offer a wealth of varying perspectives. Pollard, who has edited several films for Spike Lee, talks about searching for the story arc of Lee's *4 Little Girls* in raw footage alone. And Ric Burns reminds readers that the research must end at some point—that there should remain "an oscillation between obsessiveness and decisiveness, and you can't abandon either."

Finally, editor and School of Visual Arts professor Richard Pepperman lends his editing insight and experience in *The Eye is Quicker: Film Editing: Making a Good Film Better*, which compliments both of the aforementioned

works. Pepperman's title counters the adage "the hand is quicker than the eye," his premise being that even with all of the new digital editing technology, bad cuts in film are still just as distracting to the eye, pulling the viewer out of the film in a "mental hiccup." Editing is more than stringing together a set of scenes. An editor must be aware of the jarring effects of cutting, which also involves lighting, focal points, movement, and angles.

Pepperman states that editing should remain simple, though it isn't easy to keep it as such, and his book heeds its own advice. The writing is concise and straightforward, and his anecdotes are well-chosen. Pepperman sets out to explain the mindset and acquired skills necessary for an editor, and then takes his reader through the various techniques. While examples from films (both Hollywood and student features) comprise the bulk of the text, Pepperman includes bolded tips and hints throughout, so a discerning or hurried reader can skip around.

Though he is familiar with all of the latest technology, Pepperman is a traditionalist at heart. Editing can be a tedious process, and so can reading about it, but to Pepperman's credit the book's tone keeps pace at a steady, linear clip, and the illustrations by Mark Pacella elucidate many of Pepperman's finer points, while at the same time providing some nice eye candy. *The Eye is Quicker* is not just a book for editors, it is a book for filmmakers. Pepperman's sensibility might easily lend itself to directors looking to compose a shot or to writers trying to make a clean transition.

While each of these books has something distinct to offer, the real value is in their collective, bottom-line accessibility to a variety of filmmakers. Without using alienating jargon or theory, all are geared toward getting the job done—as simply and skillfully as possible. ■

Alyssa Worsham is a freelance writer living in New York City.



The IDFA Forum

By Christine Schomer

Every November, most of Europe's and many of the world's commissioning editors converge upon the city of Amsterdam for the International Documentary Film Festival (International Documentary Film/Festival Amsterdam) and its adjunct event, the Forum. The IDFA Forum is known by its Dutch acronym (though pronounced "Idfah" not "I.D.F.A."), and has a reputation among filmmakers as being the place where you can make or break not just a film project, but also potentially your entire career.

The IDFA Forum is the United Nations event of documentary film—a three-day pitch-fest where knock-kneed filmmakers pitch their projects to a packed and daunting room of commissioning editors who can publicly eviscerate the weaker projects with as much vigor as they can endorse (and ultimately finance) the best of the bunch. And while you can point to a few other smaller, similarly-minded filmmaker/producer/broadcaster tete-a-tetes

(HotDocs and IFP No Borders Market among them), the Forum has arguably done more to spur the next wave of financial and artistic collaboration in the field of documentary filmmaking in the past ten years than any other venue of its kind.

Unfortunately, while the Forum has good international attendance (boasting the largest gathering of commissioning editors and independent producers in the world), it has extremely limited access for American filmmakers, and is not particularly welcoming to American broadcasters, either. Which is not to say that an event that focuses on European rather than American filmmaking falls short of a best-case scenario, but it does box out Americans from an arena of funding that would be a great benefit in terms of independent producing. Money for European documentary filmmakers comes from the European Union's public broadcasting units as part of a much broader social mandate for arts and culture funding than the US will ever

have. Film financing for doc filmmakers in the US, largely from private broadcasters, doesn't come through until a bona fide revenue opportunity is in evidence. So for now, American filmmakers can only press their noses up against the glass at this half-Eden (money, money, everywhere), half-Ayn Rand paradise (but only the best films will get it), with the hope of one day being granted more access.

The rules are simple, and have remained almost unchanged since the Forum's inception in 1993. First of all, projects have to be invited—no just showing up and pitching your mother's life story as a French resistance leader. Projects are required to have at least twenty-five percent but no more than seventy-five percent of their



budget in place. Films attend with a commissioning editor attached (that editor lends a certain legitimacy and commitment to the project, and is allowed to participate in the pitch process). Project representatives have seven minutes to pitch their film—video presentations are allowed—and eight minutes to answer questions. During the pitch process, forty broadcasters sit around a U-shaped table with two moderators (who are also commissioning editors) to lead the dialogue. The filmmaker sits in the hot seat opposite the table to make for a scenario that one producer summed up as “*The Weakest Link* meets the UN.”

Over one hundred observers (producers without projects in the Forum can observe for a fee, but no general observers are permitted) take in the pitch proceedings, many with an eye for content, but many, too, who enjoy an occasional crash-and-burn presentation as much as a good botched triple-quad at the winter Olympics. Contrary to what one might think, though, it's not just about being prepared. “There were some people I felt really bad for. They had clearly rehearsed and then they had a computer problem and they were just lost,” recalls Claire Aguilar of ITVS.

Nick Fraser of the BBC is known at the IDFA for his sharp

tongue, succinct thinking, and his seemingly merciless lack of interest in unworthy projects. While he takes mild offense to this characterization, he explains that he also has fifty-two slots to fill a year on BBC's *Storyville*, and does not suffer fools gladly. Though he is willing to recognize a good project behind a bad pitch: “Let's say you have five minutes of wonderfully shot material,” Fraser says. “Even if you're really quite inarticulate when you go up, you know if the project is good you're going to get money anyway.”

Dallas Brennan, a producer from Big Mouth Productions (see page 40), represented the sole American project attending the 2003 Forum. She and her project's co-directors, Katy Chevigny and Kirsten Johnson, pitched *Deadline* (formerly titled *Life After Death Row*), which documents Illinois Governor George Ryan's crisis of conscience and subsequent repeal of the state's death penalty. At the time of the Forum, Brennan's project was twenty weeks into editing, with \$90,000 spent, and no more money in sight. “We kind of had no good options on the fire at that point, so we were going there with a tiny bit of desperation,” she says. “We had heard these things like they don't like Americans, or if you say one thing that hits a nerve, you're cooked . . . we were scared straight.”

Brennan and her colleagues went into their pitch session very prepared, and focused on creating a cohesive pitch with an international appeal. “We didn't want to be pigeonholed as American filmmakers making an American story about an American issue,” says Brennan. “We were trying to broaden it into a universal issue of political responsibility, crisis of conscience, human rights, and ethics.” The filmmakers cut a 4:20 presentation tape, and rehearsed every sentence of their pitch down to its most essential and economic delivery. But even then they fretted. “We're all people who exist behind the camera. None of us are born performers and somebody had told me that it's really a performance piece, and what you need to do is perform your film,” Brennan explains. “This was not something that any of us were too terribly excited about.”

Brennan says that the first moment of interior panic she endured was when the one-minute bell went off while their presentation tape was still running (and they had 2:40 worth of explaining left to do). Further panic ensued when the moderator, Films Transit founder Jan Rofekamp, elicited the first response from Fraser. Brennan recalls the instance: “That was kind of like a sink or swim moment. What we saw over and over again was if Nick said, ‘I don't know, I've seen this project a million times and I'm totally uninterested,’ or ‘It could have been a great film but you

This page: *Deadline*'s subject George Ryan, former Governor of Illinois. Facing page: left to right, Kirsten Johnson, Co-Director; Dallas Brennan, Producer; Katy Chevigny, Producer & Co-Director of *Deadline*.

really took it in a wrong direction,' . . . then everybody else would say, 'Yes, I have to pass . . .'" Fraser told the filmmakers: "I hate the title, like the film," and from there, not only did *Deadline* come away from the event with commitments for the remaining sixty percent of financing, they also picked up an aggressive international distributor—Mette Hoffmann Meyer of Denmark's TV2.

The Forum commissioning editors do have some sympathy for the intense pressure of the environment, but ultimately agree that the scenario is good for business and good for filmmaking. As Fraser explains, "It seems like the craziest way to raise money for documentaries, but in fact there doesn't seem to be any alternative." The event also brings together broadcasters in a new configuration for both Europeans and Americans. For the Europeans, the past decade of IDFA has meant a greater sense of communication and the evolution of cross-continental and global co-producing. Says TV2's Hoffmann Meyer, a ten-year veteran of the event, "If you work together a lot and you go to the same places, you produce together and you get to know each other."

For her part, Hoffmann Meyer has coordinated two projects that are a result of the cultivated camaraderie the Forum provides—one, a series that involves thirteen commissioning editors and thirty-eight films from African directors about living with AIDS and HIV, and more recently, *To Live is Better Than To Die*, a documentary about a rural Chinese family ravaged by AIDS. Hoffman Meyer is quick to explain, however, that this sort of project may not always be the priority of TV2 per se, but that *To Live* raised the bar somewhat. "It's a very emotional and heartbreaking film, and sometimes you feel you have to do a little bit more."

Fraser delivers a more blunt interpretation of IDFA's collaborative benefits: "No doubt about it, there's a certain joint commissioning or co-commissioning that wouldn't have ever existed throughout Europe if it hadn't been for these pitches. Not only eight years ago did the BBC not show any foreign documentaries, it wouldn't have dreamed of sharing its so-called sovereignty with all these other people. When you tell people with the BBC, 'Oh, we did this film with eight co-producers,' they fall off their chairs. They aren't used to working that way."

But while Hoffmann Meyer feels that it's most appropriate for IDFA to serve the EU countries, Fraser feels that the system as a whole won't function optimally until the Americans are full partners both as filmmakers and commissioners, citing that for now, "the Americans are sort of half in and half out of the system." But it's not only by internal design that Americans are on the outside looking in. ITVS's Aguilar explains that, for example, ITVS participation at the Forum is limited in part by their own internal mandate to fund American independents, not foreign ones. Still, she says that while the atmosphere as a broad-

caster was "collegial," she found it "shocking" that only one American film was pitched at the venue.

The American commissioning editors for the most part have less to complain about than American filmmakers, because while the collaboration level may not be as integrated, they get the best access to the current foreign slate



of projects. "For us," explains HBO Vice President of Original Programming and IDFA attendee Lisa Heller, "we look at it as a wonderful opportunity to hear about the wide range of work that already has some support, and see it at various stages and start tracking it."

Increasing American participation would almost certainly alter the flavor of the event, but Fraser, for one, feels that when it comes to quality, the more the merrier. "On the whole, what is amazing to me is how wonderful American documentaries are with no subsidies. If you think of the subsidies in Europe, it's kind of shocking because they ought to be better than American documentaries and they're not. Americans manage to make the best documentaries with no money at all."

It's a nut that may not crack, which is unfortunate, because the pitch system at the Forum has been created in a way that not only lends itself to certain strengths in American style—salesmanship and the art of the pitch—but that also spreads the wealth to worthy projects that ought not be penalized precisely because of the organic shift towards collaboration among commissioning editors.

For filmmakers and broadcasters alike, this well-run, well-organized, well-attended event would almost definitely continue to thrive if it threw the doors open and let the rest of the world in. ■

Filmmakers looking to participate in the 2004 IDFA Forum can visit www.idfa.nl/professionals/forum/iprof_foru_prfl_intr_fr.htm for more information about submissions.

Christine Schomer is a freelance writer and television producer in New York City.



The “F” Factor

WOMEN: WHERE IT'S AT

By Erin Torneo

This is the first and last “Women In Film” article filmmaker Julie Talen wants to be in. She’d rather talk about multi-channel film narratives, a form she studied in-depth before using it to tell the story of a family’s fracturing in her recent debut feature *Pretend*. And you can see why. In the film, she pushes the form far beyond what filmmaker Mike Figgis attempted in *Time Code*, creating a visual symphony of multiple frames sliding back and forth, triptychs offering different simultaneous points of view, and audio channels overlapping—none of which has anything to do with her being a woman and everything to do with our “more, more” multi-windowed world and the possibilities of the digital medium.

After all, it’s been thirty years since the tumultuous gender politicking of the late 1960s and 1970s, and no one is naïve enough to expect that there’d be gender parity in the movie industry when it doesn’t yet exist anywhere else. But how far have women come in film? In a *New York Times* article earlier this year, Elvis Mitchell suggested that while unfortunate to have to point out, 2003 was a good year for women in film, because of such notable films as *Lost in Translation*, *Monster*, *Something’s Gotta Give*, *Thirteen*, *Whale*

Rider, and the co-directed *American Splendor*. Let’s reconsider that: A strong year—for women—because five and a half films out of how many hundreds of studio, specialty, doc, and foreign films released were directed by women?

And that’s exactly Talen’s point. “The assumption is that women are a strange subset and that the real people who are doing it are male,” she explains. Call it the “F” factor, but a lot of women in the biz don’t want to identify themselves as “female filmmakers” for fear of being called a feminist (industry translation: “man-hater”). “I understand that in some way [the characterization as female filmmaker] takes away from their accomplishment as filmmakers,” says Women Make Movies’ Executive Director Debra Zimmerman. “But it’s affirmative action in a way.”

So what’s the view from the trenches? There are certainly plenty of women out there making films independently. How does the “F” word affect them? “I don’t want to be exoticized because of my ethnicity or because I’m a

Left to right: Tanya Steele, writer of *Parachute Factory*; filmmaker Kelly Duane; still from Annamarie Jacir’s *Like Twenty Impossibles*. Bottom: *Escuela* by Hannah Weyer.

LEFT TO RIGHT: SEITH MANN, ANA HOMONNAY, ANNAMARIE JACIR; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF WOMEN MAKE MOVIES



woman,” says Annemarie Jacir, director of the 2003 award winning short *Like Twenty Impossibles*. “It’s a dangerous zone because you don’t have the same opportunities, but I don’t want to be given opportunity because ‘Oh, you’re a Palestinian and a female director, and we don’t have enough of that, so here’s your role. We support you not because of the work you’re doing, but because of where you come from.’” Zimmerman acknowledges that this kind of boxing in is a huge problem, as with Sundance ’91 alum Julie Dash, who became the first African American woman to have a general theatrical release with *Daughter of the Dust*, and since then, says Zimmerman, “she’s had every kind of ‘girls in the hood’ screenplay sent to her.”

Does being called a female filmmaker, or an African American female filmmaker, or being part of a “Women in Film” issue ghettoize the women who are making films? Not according to Zimmerman, who still sees a need to highlight female filmmakers in an effort to counter their gross under-representation in the marketplace and at festivals. She points out that in the last three years, for example, the New York Film Festival included just two films by women per the twenty-five programmed each year, or fewer than ten percent. Sundance, on the other hand, offers more hopeful numbers, which Zimmerman attributes in part to programmers Shari Frilot and Caroline Libresco. This past January, she notes, if films co-directed by men were included, women filmmakers accounted for fifty percent of the competition films at Sundance, but in the features women directed just two out of twenty-two, with dismal figures from world cinema and world documentaries. At Toronto last year, in the main section excluding Canadian films, just

two-and-a-half percent of the features were by women, while in documentary that statistic rose to twenty-five percent.

Likewise, Holly Taylor, a Seattle-based cinematographer who shot Sherman Alexie’s *The Business of Fancydancing* and is in development on Alexie’s forthcoming *What You Pawn I Shall Redeem*, explains that as long as the facts are facts—such as the Academy of Arts and Sciences having yet to recognize a female director or cinematographer—sexism is alive and well. “It seems like things have changed because everyone uses politically correct language, but in fact, I don’t think it’s changed much at all,” Taylor says.

It is important to note, though, that women have historically had a much easier time assimilating the low cost, less commercial realm of documentary film. For Melissa Lohman (*Grandpa’s Apartment*) and Kelly Duane (*See How They Run* and *Monumental*—premiering this month at the Smithsonian), two



documentarians very early in their career, being female has never been an issue. Their struggles are simply those of anyone trying to make documentary films—"less a gender dilemma," as Lohman puts it, "so much as an artist's dilemma." She and Duane, along with Jacir, have never felt that being female should be primary to their work. Their projects are developed without any sense of obligation to tell "women's stories." Interestingly, though, Jacir mentions that someone once questioned her about why she wrote stories with male protagonists. She explains: "Because of the way things are, when I write a female character, the fact that she's a woman becomes the point of the story. And I just want to write the story."

As Gini Reticker's and Lesli Klainberg's documentary *In the Company of Women* (airing this month on IFC) charts, it was the first wave of women making films in the 1970s and 80s who really considered themselves female filmmakers. They mostly showed stories about women's lives, in part because they had never really been seen before. And their work opened up the floor to future generations like Jacir, Lohman, and Duane, as well as Kim Peirce, Lisa Cholodenko, and Nicole Holofcener, who no longer feel they have to make films about women, much less identify themselves as female filmmakers.

Ironically, such progress has backfired somewhat in that it prevents some women from being eligible for funds available to female filmmakers if their work is not about women or from a particularly female point of view. While Women Make Movies is the largest distributor of film and videos by and about women, Zimmerman is quick to point out that their production assistance program is open to all women, irrespective of the type of films they are making—their distribution criteria, she says, are both "a political act as well as smart marketing strategy." For thirty years, the non-profit organization has fought for getting forgotten women's stories out there, and in doing so has established a successful niche for itself. But as Zimmerman puts it,

"our biggest success would be if organizations like WMM went out of business because we were no longer needed."

But whether or not women filmmakers identify themselves along gender lines, motherhood, if they choose it, is an irrefutable gender impasse. "My generation really thought that you'd get married at twenty-eight, and at twenty-nine you could have a baby strapped to your back calling 'Action!'" laughs Talen. The physical realities of



childrearing, of course, are much more limiting. "I was dealing with a huge shift in my identity, the very real physical demands—sleepless nights, breastfeeding, 'wearing of the baby,' and of course, falling in love with my child," recalls Hannah Weyer, whose daughter was born while she was in post-production on *La Escuela*, the second of her two acclaimed documentaries about the migrant Luis family.

Likewise, both Klainberg and Reticker are moms, with Klainberg expecting her second child this June. "I've never been scared to talk about [having children], never scared I would lose a job," she says. "Actually, having a child is an incredible time-management tool. I mean, if you thought you were organized before..." In their film, *In the Company of Women*, many filmmakers, including Jodie Foster, talk about motherhood being a valuable contribution to the work they do. But like any working women, those in film must grapple with how to find a balance between professional ambitions and personal family desires. Reticker, however, feels that film may actually be more forgiving than other industries because it allows you to go in and out on a project basis.

For Reticker then, motherhood isn't the barrier. "Our biggest barrier is getting funding for the kinds of stories we want to make." Klainberg agrees, suggesting that the barriers are set up around executives' perceptions of the audience—what it wants to see—and who the so-called audience for "women's films" is. Part of Zimmerman's advocacy is to dismantle



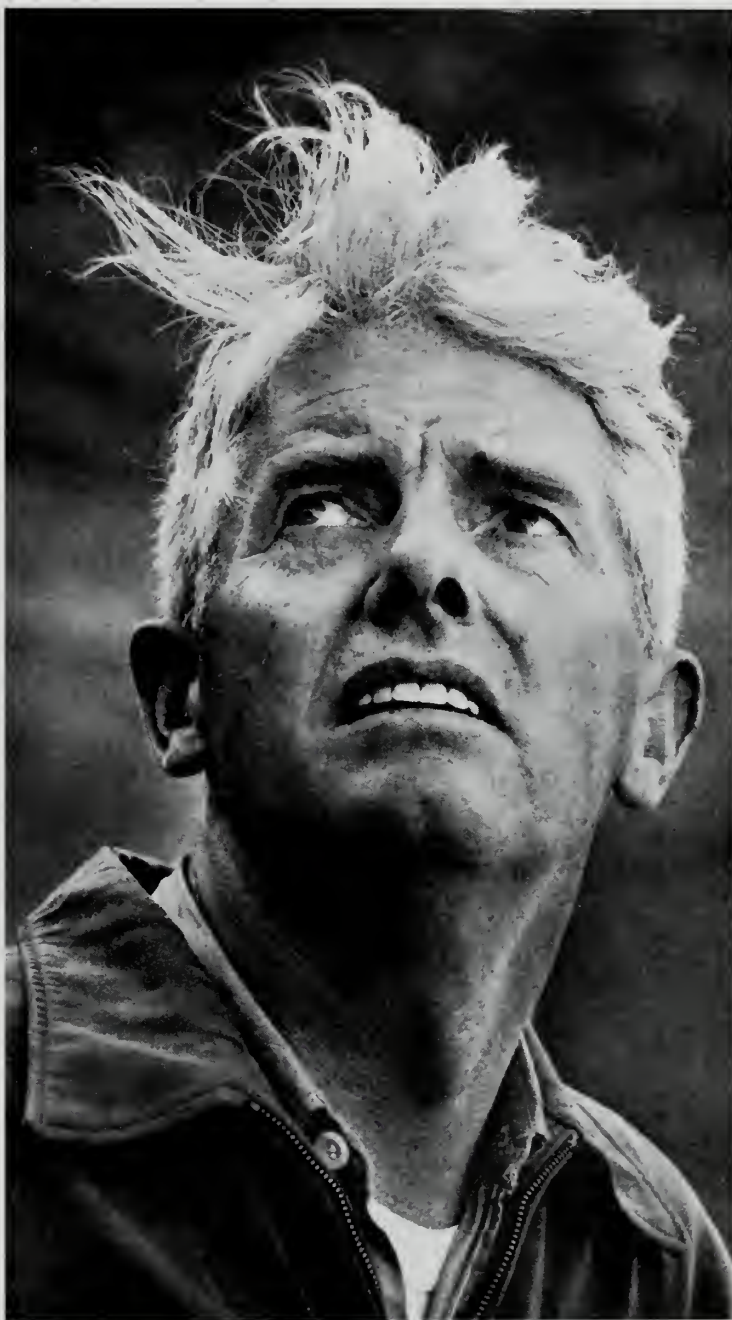
THIS PAGE: (L TO R) CYNTHIA STEWART, LARRY ESTES; FACING: KELLY DUANE

these myths about the audience, particularly in the export/ancillary markets like Asia, which have become so crucial to a film's viability. "The top four grossing pictures in the Philippines were by women," she argues. "Women went out in droves to see these films."

But there's also a lot of myth about what "women's films" are. You wouldn't call Tanya Steele's screenplay *The Parachute Factory*, which won the IFP Emerging Narratives Award last year and placed second at Slamdance, a chick flick. For one, it's an indictment of violence—a story exploring how the Civil Rights movement was relevant to victims of domestic violence. "It deals in a lot of traumas and horrors that I think liberal folks might think they can't take on in black characters because it might be too scary," she says. But is her brand of violence somehow different because a woman writes it? "I don't know. But I do know that the violence is rattling to some people because it isn't gratuitous. It's almost justified, so they can't dismiss it."

Similarly, the onscreen sexuality through the eyes of women can make men uncomfortable or even frightened, says Zimmerman. She cites Toronto 2003 films like Jane Campion's *In the Cut*, Sue Brooks' *Japanese Story*, Isabel Coixet's *Life Without Me*, and 2001's *Baise-Moi*. "They are all in some way about women being in control of their sexuality, or representing the way women explore their sexuality, in a way that I think men are actually afraid of." In our visual culture, of course, this is because women's sexuality has traditionally been controlled through objectification. So what do women want to see as an audience? Reticker points to Frances McDormand's character in *Laurel Canyon*, directed by Lisa Cholodenko: "To see a woman just own her sexuality, and she's not necessarily good or bad. One of the things Lisa says about it is that she wasn't worried about portraying a good or bad woman, just an interesting one. And that feels like a real evolution."

There's no denying that the issue isn't a lack of women making good films. Just look at Sundance, long a measure of the state of American filmmaking: In 2002, Rebecca Miller's *Personal Velocity* took home both the grand jury award as well as the cinematography award for Ellen Kuras' work; in documentary, Lourdes Portillo's *Senorita Extraviada* took a special jury prize, and Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco won the grand jury prize for *Daughter from Danang*. Last year, Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini's *American Splendor* took the dramatic grand jury prize, while the directing award went to Katherine Hardwicke for *thirteen*, and Niki Caro's *Whalerider* received



the audience award in world cinema.

But for all the attention women filmmakers may get at the rarefied atmosphere in Park City, in the larger world, there's still a ways to go. Not only by rewriting the way women are viewed on screen, but also in being free from the myths about the kind of movies women make. What it means to be a female filmmaker, then, is less about meeting a quota or leveling the playing field. Says Reticker: "It's not that women want equal footing with men so much as they want their stories equally valued in the marketplace." ■

Erin Torneo is a Brooklyn-based writer.

Facing Page (left to right): Director Julie Talen with actor Danielle Freid on the set of *Pretend*; Holly Taylor, DP, (left) on the set of Sherman Alexie's *The Business of Fancydancing*. This page: *Monumental* by Kelly Duane.

The Girl Team

JOINING FORCES TO DO IT THEMSELVES

By Elizabeth Angell



Big Mouth Productions

Katy Chevigny and Dallas Brennan

Katy Chevigny and Dallas Brennan sit at desks only six feet apart in their loft-like office space at Big Mouth Productions on 14th Street in New York City. They are separated by a large bookcase laden with the usual small-office paraphernalia: haphazard piles of books and tapes, folders, and binders labeled by hand. They have little privacy and though, as partners, they run Big Mouth, their corner of office real estate is not particularly awe-inspiring. Chevigny, thirty-five, and Brennan, thirty-one, could be any harried young women at the helm of a fledgling business.

But it is this very arrangement—the office, the desks, the trappings of entrepreneurship—that makes Big Mouth such an unusual engine for documentary production. “A lot of people make documentaries out of their living rooms,” says Brennan. “It’s more feasible financially, but the burnout factor is much higher. They make one or two films and then they can’t face it again.”

Chevigny and Brennan work hard to carry the overhead of an office and staff because they want to be more than just independent producers who work project to project. “We wanted a certain continuity of staff across time and films,” says Chevigny, who founded Big Mouth with her friend and college classmate Julia Pimsleur in 1997. She had begun her career as a social worker, and then moved on to film production in Chicago. At Big Mouth, she and Pimsleur produced a series of social issue documentaries together. When Pimsleur left two years ago, Brennan became a senior producer. Big Mouth’s sixth film, *Deadline*, premiered earlier this year at Sundance.

Big Mouth’s longevity is a sure sign of success, but Chevigny and Brennan still struggle to find funding for their films. “It doesn’t necessarily get easier,” says Brennan. “You don’t have too many laurels to rest on. Of course, we

While there are alarmingly few women helming movies these days, there are more and more behind the scenes. The role of producer is one that seems increasingly open to the industry’s women and here, *The Independent* profiles female production teams who are changing the industry, one little movie at a time.

This page: Kathleen McInnis, Fly Films. Facing (left to right): Roland Park Pictures’ Xan Parker and Elizabeth Holder.

also don't have to ask ourselves 'did we sell out?'" Adds Chevigny, "The moral high ground is definitely ours."

They do see signs that the market for documentaries—especially serious-minded ones—may be changing. 2003 was a big year for documentaries, and distributors are much more interested in the medium. When Chevigny and Brennan sent out the press release for *Deadline's* Sundance premiere, they were flooded with phone calls from agents and publicists. That had never happened before. "They must think they will be able to make money on documentaries," says Chevigny.

Despite their still-chronic lack of funds—for now a fact of life for all documentary producers—the Big Mouth strategy must be working. Chevigny and Brennan don't appear burnt out. They'll still fill in as boom operators or craft services on a shoot, and they'll spend weeks traveling with their film. They often find themselves doubling up in inexpensive hotel rooms on the road. That, says Chevigny, may be the biggest difference between Big Mouth's partners and their male counterparts: "Controlling for all other factors, guys in our level in the business are not as willing to share a bed."

Roland Park Pictures

Xan Parker and Elizabeth Holder

A few months ago, Xan Parker sent her mother a rough cut of the documentary she had made with producing partner and co-director Elizabeth Holder. Mama Parker called back, surprised by what she had seen. "She said 'Wow! This is like a real movie. I thought it was going to be like Xan and Elizabeth do a play on the landing of the stairs,'" remembers her daughter, laughing.

Parker forgave her mother for underestimating how her first film might turn out. After all, she and Holder, both thirty-four, had met in the first grade, twenty-eight years earlier. They really did get their start performing plays on the staircase landing. The women lost touch after the fifth grade, but ran into each other again in New York after college. They were both working in film and they became close again. Parker spent eight years working with legendary documentary filmmaker Albert Maysles as an associate producer, eventually heading up distribution and development for their classic documentaries. Holder began her career as a PA on the set of John Waters' film *Hairspray*, when she was a teenager. She has directed plays, two shorts, a feature, and the children's television show *Blues Clues*. In 1999, the two founded Roland Park Pictures, named for the Baltimore neighborhood where they had both grown up.

Roland Park's first project was a documentary called *Risk/Reward*, which will premiere on the Oxygen television network on March 14. Their film profiles four young women who work on Wall Street, and chronicles their struggles for success and balance in the ultra-competitive,

male-dominated world of finance. Both Parker and Holder see an obvious parallel in the path they have chosen. There are few female filmmakers and most of the money is controlled by men or male-dominated institutions. The



women in *Risk/Reward* had to look to alternative sources and encouragement—just what many female directors and producers presumably do as well.

"Women's networking is actually something that interests us a lot," says Parker. "On Wall Street, women did not have an informal, old boy's network in place and so what a lot have done is to create and build formal women's networks."

Despite their interest in feminist issues, neither Parker nor Holder wants Roland Park to produce only "women's films." Like every woman interviewed for this article, they wanted to be seen as filmmakers first, women second.

To that end, they have three very different documentaries in the hopper after *Risk/Reward* is wrapped, as well as a documentary they will produce for another director, a fiction feature, and a television pilot. Though Parker has never worked in features or television, she is confident Holder's experience will get her through—just as her documentary experience got *Risk/Reward* off the ground.

Her Roland Park partner feels the same way: "I don't want to do a movie without Xan. I just don't, no matter what it is," says Holder.

Exit 5 Entertainment

Diana Williams and Melissa Bradley

Neither Diana Williams nor Melissa Bradley, partners and co-founders of Exit 5 Entertainment, say they've experienced a lot of overt sexism. Nor have they noticed much obvious racism, although they are both African American and one of the few female producing teams of color in either independent or studio filmmaking.

Of course, both forms of discrimination pop up in more subtle ways.

"The one thing that is very prevalent is the expectation that you're going to do soft little girlie films," says Williams. "And there are some women who only want to do Nora Ephron movies. But that is just not my thing. Also, being black, people assume all I would want to do are 'in the hood' films. But I grew up in the suburbs near a farming community in New Jersey." Williams would rather develop comic book and horror projects. She isn't oblivious to these stereotypes, but she isn't particularly concerned that they'll get in her way either. "Jerry Bruckheimer did *Veronica Guerin*," she points out. "And he's not a chick, he's not a journalist, and he's not Irish."

Williams honed her just-make-good-movies approach in LA working as an assistant director on studio features. She learned how to interpret what a director had described into shots they could get. "That kind of translation is also a big part of producing," she says.

In 1994, Williams produced her first film, a documentary. Soon after, she produced a short feature which she took on the festival circuit and quickly met directors who sent her scripts. "I kept thinking I'd go back to assistant directing or development for a studio, but after my sixth film, I thought 'Huh, maybe I'm a producer.'"

After almost a decade of working film to film, Williams began to discuss the idea of launching a full-fledged

production company with her college friend Melissa Bradley. She and Bradley had both studied finance at Georgetown and Bradley had continued to work as a consultant. "My goal is to focus on the deal," says Bradley. "It helps keep the creative separate, and helps me function in a

world that's very business-oriented, but doesn't always feel like that."

Their partnership is now more than a year old and it has only increased the slate of films that Williams is able to devote her energies to. There are between ten and fifteen ESE projects in the pipeline. "It sounds like a cliché, but we want unique voices and unique talent," says Williams. "But if a film is too personal, it's just going to be for you and your ten friends. I want to make films that communicate to many people."



GreenHouse Pictures

Selina Lewis Davidson and Nancy Roth

Many production companies take the eclectic approach. Their slate includes a couple of features, a documentary or two, a smattering of shorts, and maybe a television pitch. Often, these producers are even making corporate videos on the side to pay the bills. But not the newly formed GreenHouse Pictures. Partners Selina Lewis Davidson and Nancy Roth wanted to spend their time exclusively on documentaries.

Between them, Davidson and Roth, both thirty-seven, have almost twenty-five years of filmmaking experience. Davidson got her start in TV production in LA, then attended NYU film

school, and then went on to edit and produce. Roth spent ten years in narrative features and began making documentaries in 1999, after attending the Hunter College film program. They first worked together at Mixed Greens, a production company that works in a variety of genres. Their new venture is now the documentary arm of that company.

Though GreenHouse is only a few months old, Davidson and Roth already have a full docket. The 2002 film *Escuela* is about Mexican American migrant farm workers; another timely documentary, *Dreamland*, is about post-war occupation in Iraq. "There are so many stories that aren't covered and that's why we make documentary films," says Davidson. "We're interested in stories that are new, that aren't being told and need to be told."

Unlike many documentary producers, neither Davidson nor Roth is a director. They didn't get into the business of producing to fund their own ventures. Both are dedicated to finding good filmmakers and enabling them to make their movies. "We want to use our efforts on stories that we think need to be told, and rather than spend five years on a project that the two of us will direct, as producers at GreenHouse we hope we can make several movies in five years," says Roth. "Our goal is to try and create a safe place for creativity to happen," adds Davidson.

It is perhaps this sensibility that is their most feminine. Though both Davidson and Roth say they became partners because of matched sensibilities and similar temperaments, they concede that their supportive style might set them



Left: Diana Williams, Exit 5 Entertainment. Right: Greenhouse Pictures' Nancy Roth and Selina Lewis Davidson.

apart from a co-ed or all male enterprise. "We're very nurturing producers," says Roth. "We joke sometimes that we've fallen to the role of Moms a bit too much," adds Davidson.

Ironically, as a female duo, they don't have to worry about traditional gender relationships corrupting their partnership. Both have worked extensively with men—and still do, forming outside production agreements frequently. But with each other, the partnership seems naturally equal.

Fly Films

Kathleen McInnis and Amy Lillard

Kathleen McInnis sometimes wonders why she has stayed in Seattle. Why not just get it over with and move down to LA? After all, as a film producer, that would be the natural place to set up shop. Then she takes one of her monthly trips down the coast to California for a meeting and she remembers. LA feels like a bigger fishbowl with more people judging your every effort.

McInnis and her partner, Amy Lillard, produce films in Seattle and have no plans to relocate to the movie meccas of LA or New York. Though they make sacrifices to be in a smaller market, they like the collegial, supportive atmosphere of the Seattle film community. And they get to focus on new talent, making small low-budget films without the excessive pressure to ramp up commercially that they might experience in LA. "Seattle is a great place to start your career as a filmmaker. People take risks and stretch themselves," says McInnis. "And I get to work with all these people who are technically proficient but willing to jump off the edge. [In Seattle] we have that frontier feeling of all the things we can try."

McInnis also believes that Seattle is a better place to be a woman producer. In LA, she frequently feels like the only strong female voice in the room, but in Seattle, she says, "it's much more 50/50. I end up being in social circles with a lot of female filmmakers, so I end up making relationships that lead to more projects."

McInnis, forty-five, began her career as a stage actor. She quickly moved on to writing for film magazines and hosted a radio show about movies. She worked in programming and publicity for film festivals and traveled around the world following the festival circuit.

In 1995, McInnis began Fly Films. She liked being her own boss, but the pressures of being the only person keeping an enterprise afloat were considerable. "I could never just enjoy the job that I had because I knew that right after that I had to have another one."

Two years ago, she met Lillard, thirty-one, while working as a programmer at the Seattle Film Festival. They clicked and McInnis suggested Lillard become her producing partner. As she had hoped, the partnership let her get twice as much done, but it also added an element to producing which McInnis had not anticipated. "We got this rhythm going [as

partners]; her input just increased my ability to think creativity, to perceive creatively," says McInnis. "We had the ability to go back and forth with new paradigms and we had new opportunities."

Today, Fly Films, the series they annually produce for the Seattle Film Festival, has several projects on its slate, including two features that they are casting now. Both McInnis and Lillard are still heavily involved in their hometown's film festival and they produce the Fly Filmmaking Challenge for that event. Every year, ten young filmmakers produce a short film, which becomes a permanent part of the series.

Salty Features

Eva Kolodner and Yael Melamede

To many directors and producers, independent filmmaking is all about being the scrappy outsider. Unlike the studio system, there aren't many institutions with established track records where a young producer can break into the business. You just kind of attach yourself to a promising movie project and hope it goes somewhere. Eva Kolodner, however, is the rare exception to that rule. She cut her teeth as Christine Vachon's assistant at Killer Films, where she spent five years. She worked her way through the producing hierarchy, putting in time on such indie all-stars as *Kids*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, and *Safe*. In 1999, she developed *Boys Don't Cry* with Kimberly Pierce.

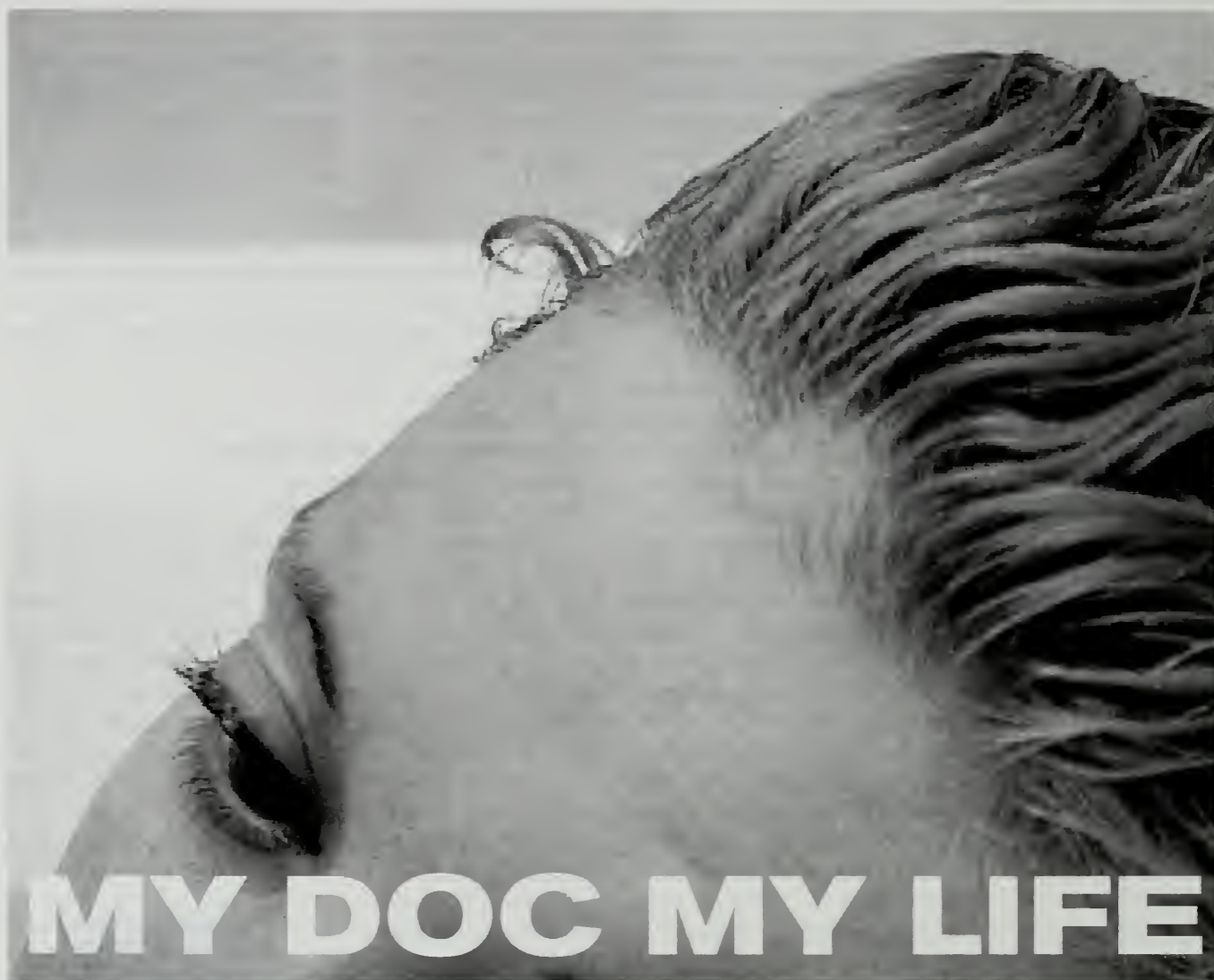
At that point, Kolodner decided she had learned enough from Vachon and was ready to move on to Madstone Films, where she could have her own stable of directors. It was there that she hired Yael Melamede as a production supervisor. Melamede had trained as an architect at Yale, where both women also got their undergraduate degrees, though they did not know each other at the time. Melamede moved into the film industry in 1996, working extensively in post-production.

At Madstone, Kolodner and Melamede, who are both in their early thirties, became close friends and creative allies. "We got together every Friday for breakfast for six months and talked about starting our own entity," says Kolodner. "We just got more and more excited."

They launched their partnership, Salty Features, in January 2003, and they premiered their first Salty film at Sundance this year, a movie called *Evergreen*.

Though both women relish their newfound creative independence, neither regrets their time at bigger, more established production outfits. And while neither Kolodner nor Melamede feel that gender plays a significant role in either their artistic or business choices, they both hope they can act as mentors to women coming up the ranks. "Just by looking more seriously at female directors, we're already the exception, not the rule," says Kolodner. ■

Elizabeth Angell is a New York based freelance writer.



FOUR FEMALE DOC-MAKERS DISCUSS REMAINING LOYAL TO THEIR SUBJECTS AND THEMSELVES

By Nancy Schwartzman

These days, if you're a woman making a film about women, the odds are very often stacked against you—even more so if you choose topics that are “unpleasant,” like race, sex, gender, or violence. And if you weave your own story of gender, race, discrimination, or sexual violence into these larger narratives, you put yourself on the line emotionally and get blamed for delivering the bad news.

For this piece, I asked four women filmmakers with films in various stages of progress to describe in their own words what it's like to tackle “unpleasant” topics in their work, while remaining loyal to themselves and the stories they are telling.

Aishah Shahidah Simmons, *NO!* (In-Progress)

Aishah Shahidah Simmons' forthcoming film, NO!, a nine year work-in-progress, examines the issue of intra-racial rape in the African American community from the perspective of a black feminist lesbian. Shahidah's previous work includes two shorts, Silence Broken and In My Father's House, both of which explore the subjects of race, misogyny, and homophobia.

Since she began production on NO!, the Philadelphia-based Shahidah, herself a rape survivor, has spent weeks at a time touring the United States and Europe, visiting universities, churches, and community groups in order to help educate people on the issue of intra-racial rape.

I am a survivor of rape who knows too many black women and girls who are victims/survivors of incest, rape, sexual assault, and other forms of violence. I made *NO!* because there is a collective silence in the non-monolithic black community when black women and girls are raped or sexually assaulted by black men and boys. I believe that intra-racial rape and sexual assault against women and girls perpetrated in the black community are issues that must be addressed locally and nationally in the black community by members of the black community.

The number one obstacle [in making the film] has been, and continues to be, funding. I could write a treatise on ageism, racism, sexism, and homophobia—they've all been used to silence me—but economic censorship is the name of the game, even among the so-called "allies!" I was told that I cannot be an objective filmmaker because I am a survivor of rape. The director of a major cable network told me that most people don't care about the rape of black women and girls. I've had potential funders say to me that given I'm a lesbian—what's my axe to grind?

I had one prominent black funder write in a grant rejection letter to me that the film has "a strong point of view and the concept is good, however, the example of Mike Tyson and the indifference from the black community might be due, in part, to the moral point of view that one does not go to a man's room in the early morning. That opinion cannot be ignored . . ." The safest subjects for the black community to address in film are those that deal with slavery and race, and the favorite filmmakers are those that can be controlled. I'm a loose canon—I'm a feminist and a lesbian trying to challenge more than just race.

The most common stereotype [in society at large] is the black male rapist who rapes white women. Historically, this racist stereotype resulted in countless lynchings and murders of innocent black men. Yes, it is true that black men rape and sexually assault white women. However, the overwhelming majority of black men are raping black women. I hope that *NO!* will help to put intra-racial sexual violence on national and local agendas everywhere, and that it will also help move people beyond discussion to concrete action that will end all



forms of violence against women and girls. And in the nine years that I've been on the road with *NO!* in an effort to raise money and raise awareness in order to finish the film and get it out in the world, I have begun to notice a slow increase of resources that specifically address rape and sexual assault in the black community, and that more and more black women are willing to speak out.

Because of my deep and profound concern about how black men are portrayed in the media, at times I feel like I'm walking a tightrope with *NO!*—I often find myself enraged by the inherent racism of the media and its detrimental role in not just the lives of black men, but in the lives of black women, too. So I have to be careful how I treat black men in my work. But my overall goal with the film, and in my general commitment to activism, is to encourage black people to fight against sexism in all of its violent manifestations.

Grace Poore, *The Children We Sacrifice* (2000)

There is perhaps no topic more taboo than incest. Few subjects make people more uncomfortable, more disgusted, more self-righteous, and more fearful, than incest. There is also no crime more universal. The Children We Sacrifice, a three-year-old film by Grace Poore, which was shot in India, Sri Lanka, Canada, and the United States, is still prevalent and powerful today, and offers an unflinching look into the incestuous sexual abuse of South Asian girls.

A native of Malaysia and a tireless activist of various social issues on an international level, Poore runs her film production company, Shakti Productions, out of Silver Spring, Maryland. She has lived in the United States for twenty years.

With this film I wanted to confront the many layers of social and cultural resistance to dealing with incest in the South Asian community—there's denial that incest happens in the South Asian community, there's denial that it occurs in educated South Asian families, there's denial that it is a widespread problem, and there's denial that it causes long-term harm or that young children will remember the abuse when they become adults. These layers of denial contribute to the silencing that shrouds the sexual abuse of children within their spheres of safety. I also wanted to address the gap between the number of South Asian women who are willing to speak out against all kinds of injustices—from economic oppression to police brutality to racism to homophobia—and the number of women who are silent about their own sexual abuse suffered as children.

I wanted the video to provide a forum for women to share their stories—a place where they could choose to be in front of the camera, off camera, in shadow, facing the camera, or with their backs turned. The point was to have South Asian women convey to a South Asian audience that the problem of incest is happening to us, within our own homes, by people we know and love and respect. And pretending that it doesn't happen allows the abusers to carry on unchecked.

In making and presenting the film, I have been met with various oppositions. I have experienced resentment from some people who feel the documentary focuses too much on middle and upper middle class families, and who believe that incest mostly happens in rural communities and poor families. These are concerns that I believe are based on myth, denial, and classist stereotypes. But the most surprising oppo-



sition has come from South Asian fathers with young daughters. Some of these fathers assume that the video was putting out a message that men should not touch their girl children, and that all girl children will inevitably become victims of sexual abuse. In my opinion, this perception is driven by panic because they feel threatened—the film challenges them as fathers, as well as challenging their ideas about what constitutes both safety and abuse. The film made these fathers face the real possibility of not being able to protect their children. And instead of asking how to help protect them, they preferred to reject the video as a whole and get angry with me for making them feel helpless and vulnerable.

The most difficult conflict came from some of the South Asian service-providers who work with battered women, and who felt that the video unfairly blames mothers who did not or could not protect their daughters from incest. I find this reaction interesting because I took great pains to not make it seem that I was holding mothers responsible for failure to protect their daughters, and I tried to bring depth to the issue of guardianship by looking at it from different points of view. But these people didn't even want to raise the question about a mother's responsibility because they feel that battered women cannot be held accountable for actions that damage someone else. This position is problematic because it reduces battered women to 100 percent victims incapable of acting in defense of those more powerless than them. And perhaps more importantly, it negates the need to identify and remove the barriers that keep women from being interventionists.

Some older generation South Asian immigrants living in the United States were concerned about how the community would look in the film to non-South Asians, and that existing

negative stereotypes would worsen. For that reason, I added a statement at the end of the documentary to remind viewers that while this video chooses to focus on the South Asian community, incest cuts across all races and cultures. The fact that this statement was even necessary speaks to how racism adds another reason for communities of color to bury this issue and avoid dealing with it.

I made this film to give a voice to those adult survivors who have suffered in silence, to raise awareness about the long-term effects of this kind of abuse, and to provide parents and families with some sense of what to look out for in terms of inappropriate adult-child behavior. Opposition or no opposition.

See www.echosoul.com for info on *NO!* and *The Children We Sacrifice*.

Anat Zuria, *Purity* (2002)

In Purity, Israeli filmmaker Anat Zuria examines the role of Tharat Hamishpaha (ancient laws of family purity) in the lives and sexual identities of women in the Orthodox Jewish community. Zuria, a mother of five children who lives in Jerusalem, is herself an Orthodox Jew. According to her culture and Jewish law, among the last things she should be doing is making films. But with no background in film, and no money to finance a project, Zuria says Purity was an important experiment. It is an experiment that has since gone on to win several awards in Jerusalem and many other international festivals.

Purity is a film that combines two points of view—the inner point of view, because I am part of these rituals and laws, and an outsider's point of view, because I am more loyal to my freedom and independence than to my responsibilities as a religious Jewish woman.

When I first started this film, the topic of Tharat Hamishpaha was not talked about or filmed in my culture. It was completely taboo. I'm part of the Orthodox religious community and the rituals are designed and taught to you in the Orthodox way—by men. We were told that there are certain laws of the female body, and that we do not design the laws for ourselves.

I made this film from a very lonely place.

People in Israel told me this was not a universal subject or a "real" topic. Meanwhile, every time I screen the film, I am



flooded by women who tell me about their culture's purity rituals—millions of Indians, Asians, and Muslims observe similar practices! My religious community insists that in

order to be considered a “good Jewish woman,” there is only one way to relate to the religion’s rituals— and that way is to accept them as wonderful. Surprisingly, a lot of the antagonism I experienced came from religious women who placed the blame on me for pointing out their own unhappiness. As far as support—I had to starve to make this film. It seems that “women’s issues” are not considered important in Israel. Wars are what are important. But had I not made this film, I would have betrayed myself, and others who have felt abused by these laws.

Since the film came out, support group dialogues about women and women’s identities have started to happen more often, and these dialogues are empowering the religious community to deal with issues openly. Many rabbis saw the film and had to talk about it—they felt they couldn’t ignore it anymore.

This was my first film. It was an experiment. And this is only the beginning. I’m working on a trilogy, each film’s subject is explored within the context of the Orthodox Jewish community in Israel—*Purity* is the first, the next will be about divorce, and the final film will look at motherhood.

Ebtisam Mar’aana, *Paradise Lost* (2003)

Paradise Lost, a film by Arab Israeli filmmaker Ebtisam Mar’aana, is a poignant look at issues of national identity and womanhood within the limitations of a traditional Arab village called, in Arabic, Fareidis, and in English, Paradise. The film marks Mar’anna’s debut effort as a film director, and despite the difficulties this process brought about, she still calls the village of Fareidis/Paradise her home.

Every step of my filmmaking process there was opposition. The problem is not with the Palestinians or the Israelis, but the number one problem is being a woman in the Arab community. My problems started at home when I asked my mother and father a simple question. I realized then that it is not the question that matters, it is the difficulty in accepting a woman asking questions. As an adult, nothing surprises me; I live in a difficult situation all the time. Being a filmmaker has never been easy. It started off difficult and then became more painful.

It is so difficult to express myself—I was always tested by my family and the people around me. It is impossible to clearly define myself when my family and my village can swallow me up. People are eager to categorize me. If I am an Arab woman I am supposed to get married, have children, and stay home. When I leave the Arab community the Israelis label me as less qualified, less talented, and less open-minded. People are shocked that I am Muslim, and they label me a feminist. I am not a feminist!

If I call myself a feminist or someone calls me a feminist,

then I am supposed to behave in a certain way. In these categories there is no room for a complicated identity. As an Arab woman director, I am supposed to have a clear, radical, and opinionated film. I am a Palestinian filmmaker so I should be waving the flag throughout my film. But I am a Palestinian, I am an Israeli, I am a woman, I come from a village—there are so many factors.

I did not want to be naive and think that this film will change the world or solve the conflict. But I did want to raise awareness within my family and my community. Since the film, my family and I can live in harmony together in the village. My mother and I are so different [Ebtisam’s mother is a devout Muslim], but now we understand and accept each other. It is not just that she understands me, but now I can accept her way.

I was loyal to myself and to others in making this film, and that is why I am not afraid of anybody. I was honest. I did not betray anybody. By making this film, I proved to my mother



and father that I can break through the barriers that they told me I could never break through.

I’d love to travel the Arab world [with the film], but having an Israeli passport doesn’t help me at all! The film did show in Cairo, but my producer didn’t have money to fly me there! An Egyptian producer that we had met in Europe took a big risk by showing this film. It was almost censored, but the audience responded very emotionally to it. Amsterdam didn’t take the film because they said it was too pro-Israeli, and the Arte channel in France didn’t take it because they said it was too pro-Palestinian.

I lose because I am in the middle. ▣

See www.wmm.com for info on *Purity* and *Paradise Lost*.

Facing Page: (left to right) Grace Poore’s *The Children We Sacrifice*; filmmaker Anat Zuria. **This page:** filmmaker Ebtisam Maraana, *Paradise Lost*.

Nancy Schwartzman is a documentary filmmaker currently working on a film about Jewish-on-Jewish violence and restorative justice in cases of rape. She is Creative Director of Heeb Magazine.




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Courting Public Funds

HOW AND WHY TO APPEAL FOR ARTS FUNDING

By Matt Dunne

The past few years have been challenging ones for the arts. Private foundation grants have dried up along with the economy, and wealthy patrons of the arts have become much more conservative with their resources. For many in the arts community, the advent of a Republican-controlled White House and Congress, and state budgets flowing with red ink, seemed a sure harbinger

Arts Agencies, gave out over \$700,000 to film projects last year. "All we are doing is responding to a strong indie community."

Now, more than ever, public funding for the arts makes up a crucial piece of the funding pie. This funding comes in many forms—direct support for particular projects, support for festivals, support for distribution vehicles (PBS), and support for industry communication and

councils on the whole have had to reduce expenditures by nearly twenty-three percent from last year, also reported from the NASAA.

The good news, though, is that a closer look at the numbers reveals wide discrepancies in spending between states. There isn't really a correlation between states in budget crisis and states that have slashed funding for the arts. The correlation is between states that have level funding or increased spending and states that have strong advocacy for the arts.

While California has slashed spending for the arts, taking a nearly eighty-seven percent cut, states like Indiana and Illinois have basically maintained



When thinking about how to get some of this money into your community, realize that film and politics can go hand in hand.

of funding Armageddon. Add to that the budget crises taking place in almost every state in the union, and a lot of creative artists were getting ready to close up shop.

But instead of the Armageddon that those in the arts were expecting, the real picture has been much more complicated. There have been winners, and what they all have in common is their willingness to advocate for themselves and to look for new opportunities in unexpected places. In short, don't assume the Republicans are your enemy, and don't assume you have to be in New York or LA to secure public funds.

"Over the past 30 years, filmmakers have created a community of advocates for making media accessible to everyone," says Encarnacion Teruel, Acting Director of Visual Arts, Media Arts, and Multidisciplinary Arts at the Illinois Arts Council, which, according to the National Assembly of State

idea sharing (including this magazine). As for where this money comes from, there are three main sources of funding: The National Endowment for the Arts, a government agency that funnels federal dollars to groups and projects around the country; The National Endowment for the Humanities; and state arts councils which award grants to artists working in the state.

For those artists smart enough to go after public funds, there's good news and bad news.

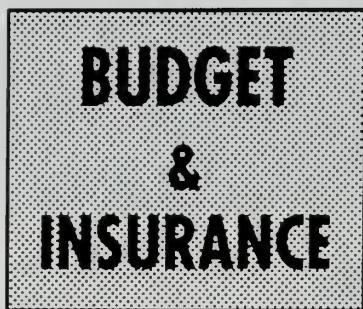
The bad news is that many states faced with budgetary crisis are choosing to cut arts council budgets and allocations for film and video. Arts councils across the country cut back funding for film and video by ten percent from 2001 to 2002, according to the most recent detailed data available from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). And further cuts are virtually assured since arts

level funding. More surprising, arts agencies in states including Connecticut and Maine even received double digit increases despite drastic reductions in overall state spending. The states that have increased spending have strong communities of artists who have made the connection between a vibrant creative scene and a strong local economy.

"We changed the way we do business," says Alden Wilson, Executive Director of the Maine Art Commission. "We started collaborating directly with communities and economic development teams. Folks recognized that we weren't going to attract large industrial employers, yet the mills were still closing. We pitched the importance of the creative economy and it resonated across the business community."

There's more good news on the national front. After hitting an all time funding low in 2000, the NEA has experienced consistent increases

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over the last three years, including a nearly seventeen percent increase since the beginning of the Bush administration and a six percent increase expected for 2004 alone.

Arts advocates across the country are beginning to realize that it isn't always Democrats who stand up for the arts. Republican members of Congress like Chris Shays of Connecticut and Jim Leach of Iowa should be commended for their work in increasing funding for the arts. Their efforts, and particularly the unexpected support from a Midwestern Republican like Leach, were critical to the success of the legislation that increased NEA funding. Film and video projects have fared very well under the Bush administration and can be projected to do better with these increases. Despite a flat NEA budget from 2002 to 2003, film and video grants increased by nearly twenty-three percent.

(The NEH also has been a constant funder of film projects, although the amount of grants has varied over the last few years, and in 2003 hit a five-year low of \$3.2 million, dipping below NEA funding for film and video for the first time in years.)

So what does all this mean for you?

It means that now more than ever, film and video artists, and those who advocate for them, must become politically savvy in order to secure public funding for their work. Despite the cheering gains at the NEA, the states are still the best source of arts funding. They give out more money on an aggregate basis than the NEA, and they have tremendous capacity to give more, even in tough budgetary times.

One way to get in the running is by building coalitions with like-minded artists. Advocacy groups that can support Arts Council funding have been very successful. Indianans for the Arts, for example, pushed strongly for a "buck-a-hoosier" campaign to increase funding in the state to one

dollar per capita. While they didn't quite reach their target, it did lead to a significant increase in the state arts council budget.

When thinking about how to get some of this money into your community, realize that film and politics can go hand in hand. As calculating as it sounds, there is an allure to film projects that will attract the interest of any politician. Having your state featured in a film—regardless of the size of the production or the film's audience—brings tourism and business dollars into the state. And the work of nationally recognized economists now backs up what we've known all along, that the independent film and video industry is good for economic development.

Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class*, and a new study by the National Research Council Committee on Information, Technology, and Creativity, quantifies the economic benefits to communities that support the arts. Read up on research in this area and learn to talk to your state legislators and community leaders about the economic importance of a film industry. Find out what other states have done and suggest new models for funding the arts in your own state. The National Association of State Arts Agencies (www.nasaa.org) can provide you with comparisons of funding between states, as well as lots of other information.

Most importantly, put yourself on the radar screen of those who are making the decisions. If you can stave off cuts during difficult budgetary times by staying in touch with your elected representatives, you'll be at the top of the list for funding when times are better. Look also to the new NEA funds for further opportunities. A large percentage of the new funds will go to support the Challenge America program. The program targets regions of the country that do not have a lot of arts activity. Filmmakers and video producers who are working with

underserved populations will have more success in securing funding than they have in the past.

Coalition building works at the federal level as well. The NEA tends to prefer to support organizations that can fund the work of many filmmakers, hence its affinity for film festivals. Explore opportunities to partner with other professionals and organizations that can provide resources and economies of scale that support a large number of professionals (space, equipment, training, presentation, distribution). And if you're lucky enough to get some NEA money, make sure to reach out to the Congressman or Senator who helped you get it—even if he or she is a Republican who you don't naturally think of as a patron of the arts. Invite him or her to a screening or to visit the set. Stay in touch with his or her office and send notices about honors or awards made possible through the grant.

Remember that 2004 is an election year. Political candidates want the support of the arts community. Use that to your advantage by pressing presidential candidates and Members of Congress to support projects that will affect their district.

So as you read the dire stories about cuts in funding for the arts, don't despair. The public funding universe offers lots of new opportunities, but independent filmmakers have to learn how to advocate for themselves. The money's there, it's just a question of making a case (perhaps in a new economic development framework) that investment in independent film and video is in the best interest of all Americans. ■

National Arts Advocacy Day is March 31.
See www.americansforthearts.org

Matt Dunne is the Democratic state senator of Vermont, and the founder of Vermont Film Commission. Previously, he served two-and-a-half years as National Director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and four terms as a Vermont state representative.

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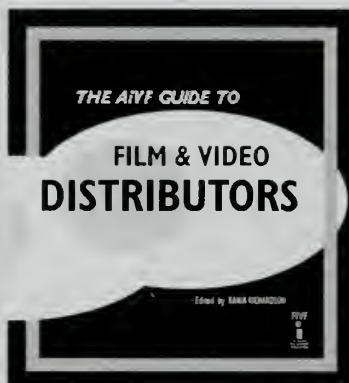
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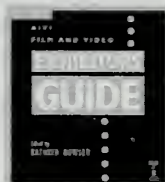
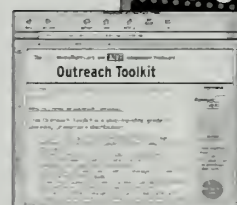
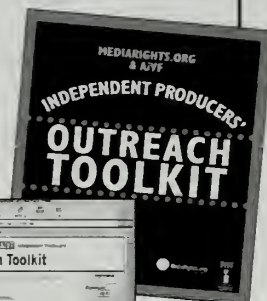
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About AIVF

The oldest and largest national moving-image media organization, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AIVF offers a broad slate of education, information, and resource programs for members and non-members alike.

Information Resources

AIVF workshops and events cover the whole spectrum of issues affecting the field. Practical guides on festivals, distribution, exhibition and outreach help you get your film to audiences (see other part of this card).

The Independent

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*, a national magazine filled with thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on legal, technical, and business matters—all geared to the working independent. Plus the field's best source of festival deadlines, exhibition venues, and funding opportunities, as well as AIVF member activities and services.

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Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring resource listings and links, media advocacy information, web-original material, discussion areas, and the lowdown on AIVF services. Members-only features include interactive notices and festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, and reports on indie media scenes across the country. SPLICE! is a monthly electronic newsletter that features late-breaking news and highlights special programs and opportunities.

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The Name Actor Negotiation

By Robert L. Seigel

In an ever-growing and competitive marketplace, independent producers and directors are recognizing that a solid script and good performances are often only the starting points when producing a motion picture feature. To break through the clutter of independent projects produced each year, filmmakers are beginning to acknowledge the economic need for casting name talent in a project. Name talent can make the difference in whether a project is funded at all, and if funded, how it will be marketed and distributed.

For the purposes of this article, there should be an assumption that filmmakers will be engaging the services of name performers who are members of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) or other performers unions, and will explore the various union programs for lower budgeted projects. For example, SAG's programs include Experimental, Limited Exhibition Agreement, Modified Low Budget, and different forms of the Low Budget Agreement.

For many talented actors, a role in an independent, low-budget project is an opportunity to play a role against type, or to play the lead rather than a supporting role. This is especially true of women, who are often limited in the quality and quantity of roles found in studio financed features—although many actresses have found that working in both independent and studio projects is the perfect balance. Earlier this year, at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, evidence of such a balance was in effect with several well-known actresses, who are also better recognized for their more commercial work, appear-

ing in lead film roles—Mary Louise Parker (*The Best Thief in the World*), Courtney Cox-Arquette (*November*), Laura Dern (*We Don't Live Here Anymore*), and Elizabeth Perkins (*Speak*).

Before filmmakers pick up the telephone or start writing queries to name performers and their representatives, they should establish certain basic economic parameters concerning their project, and prepare a budget to ascertain how much money is required to take a project from pre-production through principal photography, and post-production up to

Filmmakers should also prepare a payment and repayment schedule that takes into account factors such as the satisfaction of liens from entities like unions and laboratory facilities; repayment of loans—investors' recoupment of funds and payment of a premium (e.g., ten to thirty percent; any finishing fund scenarios; the payment of deferments and the allocation of profit participation by the project's investors and production team, cast, crew, and other third party profit participants). These schedules should indicate if there are any limitations on the amount of loans and deferments permitted under the project's financial parameters, and what the procedure would be to alter those limitations (e.g., producers' consent and the consent of all or perhaps a majority in interest of the project's investors).

Unless filmmakers establish the

For many talented actors, a role in an independent, low-budget project is an opportunity to play a role against type.

the project's final format. This process is especially important if a filmmaker acknowledges that a project will not likely be financed and "packaged" through a studio, a foreign sales agent, or such "end users" as cable services and home video/DVD companies (which is more the exception than the rule in producing these projects). In evaluating a project's budget, filmmakers should take into consideration and discuss with their legal and financial advisors not only how much funding a project will require, but also the manner of financing used for a project—private equity, loans and/or deferments for cast, crew, and other third parties. When determining the methods of financing, filmmakers should establish how much and in what order the various parties will be paid and/or repaid.

project's financial foundation with some degree of flexibility, they may discover that their negotiations with performers and their representatives will drive and alter the project's economic parameters, causing a project's budget to balloon and filmmakers to raise their budget and cash repayment schedules often to the detriment of the project's appropriate production scope and investors. For example, if a project's budget is less than \$1 million, filmmakers may believe that they can offer SAG minimum plus ten percent to the performers' representatives—except for a name performer, who would be paid significantly more (e.g., \$100,000-\$250,000+). This strategy forces filmmakers to reconfigure a project's budget in a way that results in negative economic effects which also damages the "spirit" of the project, for which all are working at less

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their usual rates to begin with.

Filmmakers have to determine who will be responsible for soliciting initial interest from performers and their representatives, and how negotiations will be conducted between the parties. Filmmakers may engage the services of a casting director, who often has pre-existing relationships with performers and their representatives. Depending on their reputation and resume, casting directors can lend credibility to a project. However, filmmakers should be candid with their casting directors in regard to the projects' budget, especially concerning monies allocated to cast.

There should always be a clear line of communication between the filmmaker and the project's casting director and attorney prior to and when soliciting interest from name performers. If it is the casting director who will be making the preliminary inquiry and approach to performer's representatives, then the terms of the initial proposal must be clear to all concerned parties (e.g., "start date," role, compensation, credit, length of the performer's working period, nature of performer's services which shall be required, etc.), and should also outline the casting director's authority within the limitation of the filmmaker's approval.

When they are ready to make an offer to a performer, filmmakers should understand that it is customary within the motion picture and television industry to make an offer to only one performer at a time for any given role. This matter of protocol is especially important since a filmmaker or a casting director may have made inquiries to several performers' representatives to determine if their clients are available or interested in a role. The offer should include a date by which the performer's representative must respond regarding whether his or her client wishes to accept the offer and the role. Many filmmakers will make multiple offers concerning a

role to different performers simultaneously. If one or more performers or performers' representatives discover that a filmmaker has been making multiple offers, such performers and their representatives may become offended and withdraw the performer's name from consideration. In an even worse case scenario, the filmmaker's reputation and the project's progress may be damaged when other performers and their representatives learn about this practice. Filmmakers should make one offer at a time and be prepared to withdraw the offer if a performer's representative does not accept the offer in a timely manner or attempts to alter the offer by making it subject to certain conditions such as knowing who will be hired to play another role in the project.

Assuming that a filmmaker and a performer's representative can work out the scheduling logistics for when a performer would be available to render services on a project, the parties are ready to begin to negotiate the key terms for securing the services of a name performer. The major deal points include compensation and its various forms—fixed or upfront monies, deferments, and profit participation. Besides the compensation issue, one of the most significant issues in talent negotiations is a performer's credit, while other issues include a performer's travel and accommodation arrangements, and dressing facilities; how performers will deal with the selection of hair, make-up, and wardrobe personnel; dubbing and doubling; restrictions and approvals concerning the use of a performer's name, voice, or likeness concerning a project; and arrangements for a performer's attendance at a project's festival and/or commercial premieres. ■

Robert L. Seigel (Rlsentlaw@aol.com or rseigel@cdas.com) is a NYC entertainment attorney and a partner in the law firm of Cowan, DeBaets, Abrahams & Sheppard LLP.



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Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1st for Nov. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.

INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL LISTINGS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, June 14-18, FL. Deadline: April 9 (features, docs); April 15 (shorts). The fest (formerly Acapulco Black Film Festival) is a celebration of the cinematic work of Black filmmakers and artists, showcasing independent Black cinema from around the world. The fest, relocating to the U.S. in June 2002, provides an intellectually charged environment to support independent filmmaking and to facilitate networking among Black professionals in the film industry. The fest offers panels, live entertainment, screenings of around 35 shorts and features, live entertainment, and the Film Life Movie Awards, a gala event honoring independent films and Hollywood Black talent. Founded: 1997. Cats: Feature, Short, doc. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30. Contact: Festival, c/o Film Life, P.O. Box 688, New York, NY, USA 10012; (212) 966-2411; fax: 966-2497; abff@thefilm-life.com; www.abff.com

BRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL, April 17, NY. Deadline: March 29. Featuring films by middle- & upper school students at Quaker schools worldwide. The goal of the fest is to promote value-based filmmaking on topics that our children & communities grapple w/ regularly, such as integrity, non violence, social conscience & political justice. The fest is not looking for films about Quaker philosophy but rather films that depict Quaker ideals in action. From the participating schools, finalist films will be chosen & will be screened & awards are given based on both the quality of filmmaking & content. Entries

may be up to 12 min. in length. Cats: doc, Nature, Comedy, Drama, Animation, music video, student, short. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$50. Contact: Andy Cohen, 375 Pearl Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201; (718) 852-1029; fax: 643-4868; acohen@brooklynfriends.org; www.brooklynfriends.org/bridgefilm/index.html.

BROOKLYN INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, June 4-13, NY. Deadline: Nov. 15; March 15 (Final). Annual fest (formerly The Williamsburg Brooklyn Film Festival), held at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, incl. Q&A sessions, panel discussions & live broadcast over the Internet. Founded: 1997. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short, animation. Awards: \$50,000 in services & cash. Formats: All formats accepted, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS, Beta SP, super 8, 8mm, Hi8, DV, DVD, Beta, CD-ROM. Preview on VHS (non-returnable). Entry Fee: \$30; \$50 (final). Contact: Mario Pego, 180 South 4th St., Ste. 2 S, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-4306; fax: 599-5039; mario@wbff.org; www.wbff.org.

CONNECTICUT GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, June 4-12, CT. Deadline: March 31. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DVD, Video. Entry Fee: \$10 (US); \$15 (non US). Contact: Dan Millett, Film Alternatives, PO Box 231191, Harford, CT 06123; (413) 618-9312; glff@yahoo.com; www.ctglff.org.

DA VINCI FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 16-18, OR. Deadline: Jan. 15; Feb. 28; March 30. Fest is looking for original works not exceeding 30 min. in length (documentaries

category. Formats: film, video, digital. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry Fee: college/indie \$20, \$35, \$50; K-12 \$10, \$15, \$20. Contact: Sue Queisser, 2015 SW Whiteside Drive, Corvallis, OR 97333; (541) 752-5584 / 757-6363; fax: (541) 754-7590; davincifilmfest@aol.com; www.davincidays.org/filmfestival.

DANCING FOR THE CAMERA: INT'L FEST OF FILM & VIDEO DANCE, Jun. 10- Jul. 23, NC. Deadline: Mar. 1. Solicits dance-related work for juried public screenings at American Dance Festival, Durham, NC. Founded: 1996. Cats: doc, short, experimental, student. Preview on VHS. Fee: None. Contact: American Dance Festival, 1697 Broadway, Rm. 900, NY, NY 10019; (212) 586-1925; fax: 397-1196; adfny@americandancefestival.org; www.americandancefestival.org.

GEOGRAPHIES OF IDENTITY FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 21, Hampshire College, Amherst MA. Deadline: March 20th (final). "Geographies of Identity: Contemporary Films of Migration and Diaspora" this film festival aims to present new, formally challenging works on exile, migration and diaspora. Festival seeks short film/video entries (30 min. or less) all genres, all formats accepted. Non-competitive. Preview on VHS NTSC. Entry fee: \$20. Contact: Veronika Bauer, Hampshire College, Box 698, Amherst MA 01002-5001; vbauer@hampshire.edu

HAWAII OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL, Spring, HI. Deadline: April 1. Fest features films about marine environment, ocean recreation & our cultural connections to the sea. Cats: fea-



Hot Stuff

Superstar docmaker Ken Burns calls the thirteen-year-old Hot Springs Doc Fest "a guileless festival." "There's no attitude here," he explains. "People come together. They're interested in the content of the films and in each other." Last year's festival screened over ninety films and continued its focus on education with the Middle School Screening Program and the technical workshop, CyberDocs. This year, the ten-day festival, hosted by The Hot Springs Documentary Institute, continues its mission to increase awareness of this often under-appreciated genre. See listing.

can only be a max of 50 min.) Submissions in three main cats: K-12, college & independent. Founded: 1988. Cats: short, any style or genre. Awards: Awards given in each

ture, doc, short, student, youth media. Fee: \$10. Meli Sandler, P.O. Box 1228, Hanalei, HI 96714; (808) 826-4581; h20film@yahoo.com; www.oceanfilmfestival.com.

HOLLYWOOD FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 12-18, CA. Deadline: March 31. Annual fest seeks to bridge the gap between emerging filmmakers & Hollywood. Founded: 1997. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Awards: Winners get access to buyers, cash, & VIP passes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$55. Contact: Carlos de Abreu, 433 N. Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1882; fax: 475-0193; email awards@hollywoodawards.com; www.hollywoodfestival.com.

HOT SPRINGS DOC FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 22-31, AR. Deadline: March 26; April 23 (final). Annual fest accepting nonfiction film submissions for one of the country's premier nonfiction film celebrations. Noncompetitive fest honors films & filmmakers each yr. in beautiful Hot Springs Nat'l Park, Arkansas. More than 85 films are screened, incl. the current year's Academy Award nominees in nonfiction cats. Special guest scholars, filmmakers & celebrities participate in forums & lectures. Founded: 1992. Cats: doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", DVD, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Melanie Masino, HSDFI, 819 Central Ave, Hot Springs, AR 71901; (501) 321-4747; fax: 321-0211; hsd fi@docufilminst.org; www.docufilminst.org.

HYPEFEST, July 23-25, CA. Deadline: Feb. 16; April 1. Fest accepting short films (50 min. or less), commercials, music videos & promos for competition screening. Only works completed in the current or previous yr. eligible. Cats: short, music video, commercials. Preview on VHS (NTSC) or DVD. Entry Fee: \$20 (student w/ ID), \$35; final: \$45, \$30 (student). Contact: Festival, 5225 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 403, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (323) 938-8363; fax: 938-8757; info@hypefest.com; www.hypefest.com.

INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL OF BOSTON. April 29-May 2, MA. Deadline: Oct. 31, Jan. 31, March 1. Fest was created to discover unknown filmmakers, incl. students, first-timers, & int'l directors. Festival specializes in films still seeking distribution. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Awards: Best Fiction Feature & Short, Best Doc Feature & Short, Festival Filmmaker, & Audience Choice. Formats: 35mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$45. Contact: Festival, 44 School Street, PMB 385, Boston, MA 02108; (857) 891-8693; info@iffboston.org; www.iffboston.org.

INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST FILM FESTIVAL, April 11, NY. Deadline: March 26. All genres accepted. Panel of judges decide what is surreal and will send a written critique to all entrants regardless of acceptance. Live organist will be present for silent films, if filmmaker desires. Founded: 1989. Cats: any style or genre, feature, short. Awards: Grand prize of A 16mm Bolex film camera. Prizes and categories will be decided after judges see all films. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, Mini DV, super 8, DV, Hi8. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35. Contact: Paul F Yates, Box 10718, Stamford, CT 06904; (203) 425-9809; oniongod@ix.netcom.com; www.oniongod.com

LUNAFEST, September-October, CA. Deadline: April 30. Fest seeks films by women, for women, or about women. Areas of interest can incl. culture, diversity of people, adventure, sports, the environment, spirituality, inspiration, challenges, relationships & breaking barriers. Program will tour up to 100 venues. Proceeds from fest will benefit The Breast Cancer Fund to assist their efforts to promote awareness & education of women's health. Films should be no longer than 40 min.. Cats: short, doc, feature, student, family, animation. Awards: Cash prizes. Formats: Beta, S-VHS, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 made payable to The Breast Cancer Fund. Contact: Allison Levy, c/o Clif Bar, 1610 5th St., Berkeley, CA 94710; alli son@aspiringheights.com; www.lunabar.com.

MADCAT WOMEN'S INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. CA. Deadline: March 29; May 21 (final). MadCat showcases innovative & challenging works from around the globe. Fest features experimental, avant garde & independent works by women of all lengths & genres. Works can be produced ANY year. It is the fest's goal to expand the notion of women's cinema beyond the limitations of films about traditional women's issues. Founded: 1996. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2", Mini DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$30 (sliding scale, pay what you can afford; int'l entrants disregard entry fee). Contact: Festival, 639 Steiner St., San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 436-9523; fax: 934-0642; info@madcat filmfestival.org; www.madcatfilmfestival.org.

NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-20, MA. Deadline: April 16 (film); March 19 (screenplay competition). Fest focuses on screenwriters & their craft, presents feature films, short films, docs, staged readings, Q&A

w/ filmmakers, panel discussions, the "Morning Coffee With" series, Late Night Storytelling, Teen's View on NFF Program & NBC Screenwriter's Tribute. Fest's goal is to "foster a creative film industry community of screenwriters, filmmakers, directors & producers where partnerships are formed & deals are made." Cats: any style or genre, script, short, feature. Awards: Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting Competition, Moby Dick Award for Best Screenwriting in a Feature Film & Short Film, Audience Awards for Best Feature & Short Film, Best Storytelling in a Doc Feature & Teen's View on NFF Short Film Award. Formats: 35mm, Video, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (features); \$25 (shorts, 35 min. or less); \$15 (5 min or less). Contact: , 1633 Broadway, Ste. 14-334, New York, NY 10019; (212) 708-1278; ackfest@aol.com; www.nantucketfilmfestival.org.

NEW JERSEY INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, June & July, NJ. Deadline: April 2. Annual fest showcases the best in independent film & video, featuring premiere screenings of award-winning works, seminars, panels discussions & guest appearances. Max. film age is 24 months, no repeat entries. Founded: 1996. Cats: animation, short, experimental, feature, doc, any style or genre, children, family, youth media, student, music video. Awards: Over \$4,000 in cash & prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta SP, Hi8, 1/2", S-VHS, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35-\$65. Contact: Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC, 72 Lipman Drive, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.njfilmfest.com.

NEW YORK INT'L LATINO FILM FESTIVAL. July, NY. Deadline: March 5. Festival presents the works of Latino artists & people of Latin American descent. The fest's goal is to "braid together Latinos in Hollywood & independent film industry, along w/ aficionados & students of film & the arts." Founded: 2000. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20. Contact: Festival, PO Box 72, New York, NY 10023; (212) 726-2358; fax: 307-7445; info@nylatinofilm.com; or see the website at www.nylatinofilm.com.

OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL, June 3-6, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 1; April 1 (final). Fest offers filmmakers 50% of ticket sales. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, student. Preview on VHS. Fee: \$25-\$50. P.O. Box 1839, Absecon, NJ 08201; (609) 646-1640; admin@oceancityfilmfestival.com; www.oceancityfilmfestival.com.

OUTFEST: THE LOS ANGELES GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, July 8-19, CA. Deadline: Jan. 30; March 12 (final). The mission of Outfest is to "build bridges among audiences, filmmakers & the entertainment industry through the exhibition of high-quality gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender themed films & videos, highlighted by an annual fest, that enlighten, educate & entertain the diverse communities of Southern California". Fest also offers a weekly screening series yr. round, as well as a screenwriting lab. Founded: 1982. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Animation, Experimental, script. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: Features (over 60 min.): \$25, \$35 (final); Shorts: \$15, \$25 (final); Screenwriting Lab \$25 (1/31 only). Contact: Festival, 3470 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 1022, Los Angeles, CA 90010; (213)480-7088; fax: 480-7099; programming@outfest.org; www.outfest.org.

PHILADELPHIA VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 26-27, PA. Deadline: April 15; April 26 (final). No media shot on film will be accepted; works must be shot on video or digital video. Founded: 2003. Cats: feature, doc, music video, animation, experimental, short. Formats: DVD, 1/2". Preview on VHS or Mini-DV. Entry Fee: \$25; \$35. Contact: Festival, 19 Lawrence Ave, Barrington, NJ 08007; mike@phillyvideo fest.com; www.phillyvide ofest.com.

REAL TO REEL FILM FESTIVAL, July 22-24. Deadline: March 30, April 30 (final). Fest encourages Independent film artists of all genres & skill levels to submit their work to this int'l competition, which allows students, amateurs & professionals a chance to exhibit their work. Founded: 2000. Cats: doc, short, animation, feature, student. Awards: Best of show in all cats. Formats: 1/2", DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 (over the age of 18) \$15 (18 & under); Late: \$50 (over 18) \$25 (18 & under). Contact: Paul Foster, Cleveland County Arts Council, 111 S. Washington St., Shelby, NC 28150; (704)484-2787; fax: (704) 481-1822; ccarts@shelby.net; www.real toreelfest.com.

RESOLUTIONS, Oct. 22-24, NY. Deadline: April 5; May 3 (final). Fest celebrates Hallwalls' return to downtown Buffalo w/ a focus on original media & performance work that highlights the experimental & resolutely unique. Cats: short, installation, online. Awards: Most Resolute Award. Formats: 16mm, DVD, CD-ROM, DV-cam, Web.

Preview on VHS, mini-DV, DVD. Entry Fee: \$10; \$20 (final). Contact: Joanna Raczynska, Hallwalls, 2495 Main St. Ste. 425, Buffalo, NY 14214; joanna@hall walls.org; www.hallwalls.org.

ROUGE TALENT FILM FESTIVAL, May 28-30, UT. Deadline: April 1. Founded: 2004. Cats: feature, short, doc, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$15 shorts; \$25 features. Contact: Adam Smoot, P.O. Box 150205, Ogden, UT 84415; (661) 755-9631; roguetalentff@msn.com.

RURAL ROUTE FILM FESTIVAL, July (dates TBA), NY. Deadline: March 25. Festival has been created to highlight works that deal w/ rural people & places. Works that incl. alternative country, country western & folk music are encouraged. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta, mini-DV, DVD. preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$15 shorts; \$35 features. Contact: Alan Webber, PO Box 3900, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; (718) 389-4367; film

fest@ruralroutefilms.com; www.ruralroute films.com.

SAN ANTONIO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, June 25-27, TX. Deadline: April 23; April 30 (final). Fest w/ a "light hearted" seeks features & shorts out of the mainstream. Cats: any style or genre, doc, short, feature. Awards: Grand Prize: Lowrider Bicycle!. Formats: VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20; \$30 (late). Contact: Adam Rocha, 8030 Callaghan Rd. #611 PMB, San Antonio, TX 78230; (210) 977-9004; info@safilm.com; www.safilm.com.

SEATTLE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, May 20-June 13, WA. Deadline: March 1. SIFF is the largest film fest in the US, presenting more than 200 features & 80 short films to an audience of over 150,000 filmgoers each year. Fest is one of five N. American film fests in which presentation will qualify a film w/out distribution for submission to the Independent Spirit awards. Founded: 1976. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: Best American Independent Film, Best New Director (Int'l), Best Short Film & audience-

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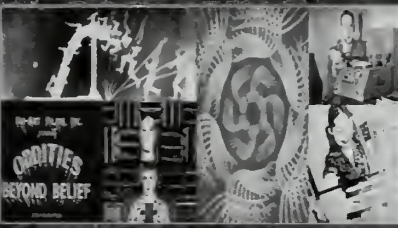
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SHRIEKFEST FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 11-12, CA. Deadline: March 12; May 28; July 23 (final). Shriekfest, the annual Los Angeles Horror Film Festival at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood. The fest focuses on horror films & the work of filmmakers 18 & under. The fest "screens the best independent horror films of the year." Cats: feature, doc (about the horror genre), short, script, Young Filmmaker (under 18), youth media. Awards: Best Young Filmmaker; Best Film; Fan Favorite; Scariest Film; Best Screenplay; Best Make-up; Best FX. Entry Fee: \$20-\$55. Contact: Shriekfest Film Festival, PO Box 920444, Sylmar, CA 91392; email@shriekfest.com; www.shriekfest.com.

SILVERDOCS: AFI/DISCOVERY CHANNEL DOC FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-20, MD. Deadline: Jan. 30; March 5. Cats: doc. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (short), \$30 (feature); \$30 (short, final), \$35 (feature final). Contact: Festival, 8633 Colesville Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20910; (301)495-6776; fax: 495-6777; info@silverdocs.com; www.silverdocs.com.

SPROUT FILM FESTIVAL, May 22-23, NY. Deadline: March 8. Festival created to showcase film & video related to the field of developmental disabilities at screening at the NYU Cantor Film Center. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short. Entry Fee: \$15; \$25 (over 30 min.). Contact: Anthony Di Salvo, 893 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025; (212) 222-9575; anthony@gosprout.org; www.filmfestival.gosprout.org.

SUBMERGE INT'L ART & ENVIRONMENT FESTIVAL, May-Oct., NY. Deadline: April 1. Fest mission is "presenting film, video & photography which reflects our concerns about our fragile aquatic environments". Fest is presented each yr. at various venues incl. outdoor & theatrical screenings, Gallery Exhibits & Public Art Installations. Founded: 2002. Cats: any style/genre. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20. Contact: Festival; urbandivers.org; www.urbandivers.org.

TAKE BACK DEMOCRACY FILM FESTIVAL, May-Oct., CA. Deadline: March 31. A traveling film fest organized by grass roots & activist groups as well as independent media centers in dozens of cities across America. The purpose is to educate the public on U.S. economic, political & social policies & to get out the vote. Founded: 2004. Cats: doc. Formats: Beta SP, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: c/o Independent Media Center, P.O. Box 1107, Santa Monica, CA 90406; (310) 458-6566; fax: 458-6566; sekler@earthlink.net.

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST 2004: call for entries. A unique festival/seminar dedicated to the spirit & advancement of independent film/videomaking & screenwriting. Final deadline: May 31, 2004. Entry fee: Varies, depending on length of piece and date entered. Contact: Telluride IndieFest 2004, 1107 Key Plaza #136, Key West, FL 33040 (mailing address until May 1); (305) 293-7698; festival@tellurideindiefest.com; www.tellurideindiefest.com

VIDEOGRAPHER AWARDS, April, TX. Deadline: March 26. Event is an awards program to honor talented individuals & companies in the video production industry. Cats: any style/genre. Awards: Awards given for video production & special events video. Formats: S-VHS, DVD, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, Beta SP, CD-ROM. Entry Fee: \$40. Contact: VA, 2214 Michigan, Ste. E, Arlington, TX 76013; (817) 459-0488; fax: 795-4949; info@videoawards.com; www.videoawards.com.

WOODS HOLE FILM FESTIVAL, July 31-Aug. 8, MA. Deadline: April 1; May 1 (final). A showcase for indep. film w/ special emphasis on regional filmmakers & cinematography. Founded: 1991. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, script. Awards: Best of Fest, Best feature: drama, comedy, doc; Short: drama, comedy, animation, doc, experimental; Director's Choice Award for Cinematography. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Fee: features: \$40, \$50 ; shorts (under 40min.): \$20, \$30 (final). Contact: JC Bouvier, PO Box 624, Woods Hole, MA 02543; (508) 495-3456; info@woodsholefilmfestival.org; www.woodsholefilmfestival.org.

INTERNATIONAL

COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 25-28, Canada. Deadline: March 19. The fest showcases

films & videos that have received the support of foundations & corporate giving programs, & encourages other grantmakers to use media to advance their philanthropic goals. Cats: Works may be of any length, from feature length to brief public service announcement. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Evelyn Gibson, 1828 L St. NW Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036; (202)467-0471; fax: 785-3926; gibse@cof.org; www.cof.org.

FESTIVAL INT'L DU DOCUMENTAIRE (MARSEILLE), July 2-7, France. Deadline: March 15. Festival is open to every form, past & present, of doc film. Cats: Doc. Awards: Grand Prix (Feature length) 30,000 FF, Prix de la compétition française 15,000 FF, Prix de la Critique (First film) 10,000 FF, Prix Planete, Prix Georges de Beauregard, & the Prix des Cinemas de Recherche. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Michel Tregan, President, 14 Allée Léon Gambetta, Marseille, 13001; 011 33 (0)4 9504 44 90; fax: 9504 44 91; welcome@fidmarseille.org; www.fidmarseille.org.

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS, June 13-19, Austria. Deadline: April 1. All noncommercial films & videos qualified to participate. Please enclose short description of film. Film/video must be completed w/in the last two years. Duration of film is limited to 30 min. Films rated by int'l jury. Cats: any style or genre, short, length from 3-30 min. Awards: "Ebenseer Bear" in gold, silver & bronze. Special Award for the "Best Film" in the competition; Special award for best short under 3 min.; special award for best experimental film. Formats: 1/2", S-VHS, DV, DVD, Mini DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Erich Riess, Gaumbergstr. 82, Linz, Austria A-4060; 011 43 732 673 693; fax: 011 43 732 666 2 666; eva-video@netway.at; www.8ung.at/filmfestival.

FUKUOKA ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL, early July, Japan. Deadline: March 31. Most popular fest in Japan welcomes Asian directors, & directors of any nat'lity if they are working w/ Asian themes. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation, experimental, student, music video, any style/genre. Awards: non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 1/2", 3/4", S-VHS, Beta SP, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. No Fee. Shu Maeda, Hirako bldg., 4th fl., 2-4-31, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka, Japan 810-0041; 011 81 92 733 0949; fax: 81 92-733-0948; faff@gol.com; www2.gol.com/users/faff/en_glish.html.

GALWAY FILM FLEADH, July 6-11, Ireland. Deadline: April 24. The foremost fest for presenting new Irish films alongside cutting edge int'l cinema. Over 60 features & 80 shorts screening over six days w/ int'l critics from Variety, Film Comment & other publications. Founded: 1988. Cats: Short, Feature, Any style or genre, doc. Awards: Best Irish short, best first short, best doc, best animation (all must be directed by Irish filmmakers) & best first feature, best Feature doc (Feature open to Int'l Competition). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: 15 euro. Contact: Cluain Mhuire, Monivea Rd, Galway, Ireland; 011 353 91 751655; fax: 011 353 91 735831; gafleadh@iol.ie; www.galwayfilmfleadh.com.

INT'L ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, June 1-6, Spain. Deadline: April 1. Cats: feature, doc. Contact: Festival, Apartat de Correus, PO Box 185, Barcelona, Spain 08850; 011 34 936 336 852; fax: 936 336 852; ficma@ficma.com; www.ficma.com.

INT'L FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS, Sept. 22-26, Hungary. Deadline: March 31. Fest presents film & video works of various genres, which are somehow related to science: they deal w/ scientific work & achievements, or science plays an important part in their plot, language or manner of interpretation. The fest is accompanied by a conference called The Digital Challenge to discuss recent developments & their possible effects on the film industry. Festival provides free accommodations for accepted filmmakers. Cats: doc, short, experimental, animation. Preview on VHS PAL. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Istvan Demeter, Managing Director, Tisza Mozi, Ltd., Templom u. 4., Szolnok, Hungary 5000; 011 36 56 511 270; fax: 36 56 420 038; festival@tiszamoz.hu; www.tiszamoz.hu.

INT'L FILM FESTIVAL INNSBRUK, June 9-13, Austria. Deadline: March 31. IFFI presents films from & about Africa, South America & Asia. Submitted films must be Austrian premieres. Founded: 1992. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Animation. Awards: Tyrol Award (5,000 E); Audience Award (1,000 E); French Cultural Institute's Francophone Award (1,000 E). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS PAL. No Fee. Raimund Obkircher, Museumstrasse 31, Innsbruck, Austria 6020; 011 43 512 57 85 00 14; fax: 57 85 00 13; info@iffi.at; www.iffi.at.

INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL Hamburg, June 9-14, Germany. Deadline: Feb. 15

(shorts & no budget); April 1 (3 minute "Quickie"). Annual Festival is a forum for presenting diversity of int'l short films & providing a meeting place for filmmakers from home & abroad. Consecutively run w/ the Hamburg Children's Film Festival. Shorts must be under 20 min., except for Three-Minute Quickie entries (must be under 3 min.). Founded: 1985. Cats: short, children, any style or genre. Awards: Hamburg Short Film Award, No Budget Award, Audience Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, S-VHS, Beta SP, DVD, 1/2". Preview on VHS. If previews are not in German or English, please enclose text list. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg e.V., Friedensallee 7, Hamburg, Germany D-22765; 011 49 40 39 10 6323; fax: 3910 6320; festival@shortfilm.com; www.shortfilm.com.

MELBOURNE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, July 21- Aug. 8, Australia. Deadline: March 19 (shorts); April 16 (features). Established in 1952, the fest is the oldest established Film in the southern hemisphere & one of Australia's oldest running arts events. Screened in some of Melbourne's most celebrated cinemas & theaters, the fest comprises an eclectic mix of outstanding filmmaking from around the world, encompassing fiction, documentaries, animation & experimental films w/ a program of more than 350 films from over 40 countries. Highlights incl. the Int'l Short Film Awards, spotlights on filmmakers, genres & retros. Founded: 1952. Cats: feature, doc, animation, exp., student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (shorts only). Brett Woodward, Program Coordinator, Box 2206, Fitzroy Mailing Center, Fitzroy, Australia 3065; 011 61 3 417 2011; fax: 417 3804; miff@melbournefilmfestival.com.au; www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au.

MILANO INT'L GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, May 26-June 1, Italy. Deadline: April 20. The largest public screening of lesbian/gay films in Milan. Founded: 1985. Cats: feature, doc, short, exp. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta (PAL only), U-matic (NTSC/PAL), 1/2" (NTSC / PAL). Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL or SECAM). No Fee. Giampaolo Marzi, C/O MBE 209, Via Del Torchino 12, Milano, Italy 20123; 011 39 023 319 118; fax: 39 0272 002 942; marzig@energy.it; www.cinemagaylesbico.com.

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MOONDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL aims to promote & encourage women screenwriters, playwrights, short story writers & women who make independent films, in any genre, including feature films, animation, documentaries & short films, & to allow those women to have the opportunity for their work to be viewed & accepted by the powers that be, within the international film community. Entry Fee: \$60 US (August 1st); \$75 US (Oct. 1st). The Columbine Award: For the film, screenplay, stage play or short story that best depicts problems or conflicts solved in a non-violent manner. Other awards: \$1,000 each for best original feature screenplay, stage play, short story, animation screenplay, feature, doc, short film, or animation film. Deadline: March 15, 2004. Send screenplay, stage play, or short story in standard format, or VHS video of film to: Moondance International Film Festival, 970 Ninth Street, Boulder, CO 80302; (303) 545-0202; mermaid7cs@aol.com; www.moondancefilmfestival.com

NETHERLANDS TRANSGENDER FILM FESTIVAL. May 21-25, Netherlands. Deadline: March 1. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Kam Wai Kui, c/o Stichting T-Image, PO Box 15650, Amsterdam, The Netherlands 1001 ND; 011 31 20 636 3727; fax: 31 20 636 3730; info@transgenderfilmfestival.com; www.transgenderfilmfestival.com.

ODENSE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. August 9-14, Denmark. Deadline: April 1. Annual Festival is organized by city of Odense and Danish Film Institute to present unusual short films w/ an original & imaginative sense of creative delight as found in the works of Hans Christian Anderson. Films must not exceed 45 min. & must have been completed on or after March of previous year. Educational, advertising & tourist films are not eligible. Founded: 1975. Cats: experimental, feature, short, animation. Awards: Grand Prix, most imaginative, most surprising & special jury prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, Vindegade 18, DK-5000, Odense C, Denmark; 011 45 6613 1372 x.4007; fax: 011 45 6591 4318; off.ksf@odense.dk; www.filmfestival.dk.

PESARO FILM FESTIVAL, June 25-July 3, Italy. Deadline: April 30. Annual fest's "New Cinema" program. Production req. Italian premiere, completion after Jan. 1 of previous year. If not English or French spoken or sub-

titled, enclose dialogue list in either language. Founded: 1964. Cats: feature, short, doc, experimental, animation features. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Betacam, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Fondazione Pesaro Nuovo Cinema, Via Villafranca 20, Rome, 00185, Italy; 011 39 06 445 6643; fax: 49 11 63; pesarofilmfest@mcclink.it; www.pesarofilmfest.it

PLANET FOCUS: TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 28-Oct. 3, Canada. Deadline: April 1; May 3. Fest pays special consideration to works that push the boundaries of the accepted notions of 'environment'; works that present cultural perspectives that are under-represented in Canada & works that will have their world or Canadian premiere at fest. Cats: any style or genre. Entry Fee: \$15/\$20(final). 517 College St., Suite 405, Toronto, ON, Canada M6G-4A2; (416) 531-1769; info@planetinfocus.org; www.planetinfocus.org.

SPLICE THIS! THE TORONTO ANNUAL SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL, June 19-21, Canada. Deadline: March 31. Non-competitive fest for small gauge films, showcasing a work by first-time filmmakers & seasoned super-eighters. All entries must be shot on Super 8. Video screened only if original print isn't avail. or if the film was edited on video. 16mm blow-ups of super 8 films are also considered. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: super 8, silent super 8, super 8 w/ live accompaniment, super 8 w/ sound, super 8 w/ audiocassette. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$5. 92 Borden St., Toronto, Ontario M5S2N1; splicethis@yahoo.com; www.splicethis.com.

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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices and screening opportunities are listed free of charge as space permits. Commercial notices are billed at classified rates. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., April 1 for June issue). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending.

DISTRIBUTION

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS, the leader of documentary films that focus on health & powerful life challenging situations is seeking additional programs to add to our award winning collection. Our strong, targeted marketing program & film festivals will help increase awareness for you. We look forward to previewing your film. Please send your film to Aquarius Health Care Videos, 18 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770. (888) 440-2963.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; gcrowdus@cinemaguild.com; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR seeks videos on violence, drug prevention, mentoring, children's health & parenting for exclusive distribution. Our marketing gives unequaled results! Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS 20+ years as an industry leader! Join more than 100 award-winning film & video producers. Send us your new works on healthcare, mental health, aging, disabilities, and related issues. (800) 937-4113; www.fanlight.com.

INDIE-UNDERGROUND seeks offbeat, edgy features and doc features for foreign/domestic distribution. Gross % on Internet sales. Established track record, fast response. Visit our submissions page at www.IndieUnderground.com and send us your show.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and videomakers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your profits while working within a remarkable community of committed activist filmmakers, then New Day is the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and within the media we represent. Explore our films at www.new-day.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at (650) 347-5123.

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK distributes only youth-produced videos. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Educational videos in all subjects and 10+ years experience. 1 (800) 639-5680. www.noodlehead.com.

PASSION RIVER: Arthouse films & docs wanted for domestic & international distribution. For

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENING

CAFE NUBIA in Denver, Colorado, is a monthly arts and social change venue featuring indie film and videoworks by filmmakers of color, spoken word, performance art, and political prose. Non-mainstream, guerrilla films, queer, and hip-hop creations desired. Seeking 5-to-45 min films. Visit www.panafricanarts.org <http://www.panafricanarts.org>; email BluBlakwomyn@yahoo.com; or 303-832-3190. Submit work, VHS/DVD (NTSC) with contact info and support materials (no entry fee) to Pan African Arts Society, 700 E. 24th Ave. Ste 9, Denver, CO 80205.

CAPE COD FILM SOCIETY SCREENING SERIES of Brewster, MA, seeks experimental, doc & fiction films & videos. Any length, genre or style, but we are particularly interested in works by filmmakers willing to present in person on Cape Cod. Some travel assistance may be available as well as an honorarium for works screened. Please send work on VHS, DVD, or mini-DV w/ filmmaker bio, publicity materials (if available), and a statement or synopsis. Also indicate your availability to appear with your work for Q&A. Include SASE



X-rated Access

Over the eight years that the "2droogies," (Edmund Varuolo and Brian Powell) have been producing *Industrial Television* for Staten Island Community Television (SICT), they have made it their mission to show nothing but the most bizarre and cutting-edge films and videos that they can get their hands on. In the early days, the show featured industrial training films, (hence the name); today, it's "Z-grade movies," exploitation, sex tapes, animation, stripper loops, unseen news footage, drive-in ads—all accompanied by "visual commentary" from the hosts. After 131 episodes, the show has become the number one program on the station, and it is constantly looking for submissions. See listing.

consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

THE WILLIAM BONNEY PICTURE SHOW. A Festival That Shares the \$!!! * Detailed Feedback on Every Submission * Low Entry Fees * Run by Filmmakers * A Roaming Festival of Kicke Asse Movies www.williambonney.org.

for return. Send to: Rebecca M. Alvin, Cape Cod Film Society Screening Series, PO Box 1727, Brewster, MA 02631-7727. capecodfilm@yahoo.com or 866-235-8397.

DREAM SERIES: Seeks challenging social-issue documentaries that promote frank community discussions about issues of racial prejudice and social injustice that fall under the Martin Luther King, Jr, legacy. Selected works are screened for this ongoing monthly series at

the MLK National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA, and promoted, listed, and reviewed in local print. Formats: VHS, Beta. Send non returnable VHS screeners to Mark A. Smith/ DREAM, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW, Suite N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; mark@imagefv.org.

ECHO PARK FILM CENTER seeks submissions for weekly cinema events. We screen documentary, animation, experimental, and short narrative films & videos. We do not screen feature length narratives. Filmmakers receive an honorarium. Contact: Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., LA, CA, 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.echoparkfilmcenter.org.

FILM BLITZ, a new screening event that will take place in spring 2004, is now accepting submissions on a rolling basis in all categories. No fee. Download application form at www.filmblitz.org; send submissions with completed form to: Teatro La Tea, 107 Suffolk St. 2nd Fl. New York, NY 10002.

FLICKER NYC is a bi-monthly show of new Super 8 and 16mm films by local filmmakers held at the Knitting Factory. Each show features new films, vintage Super 8 reels, home-made cookies, raffles for Super 8 stock, T-shirts, and Flicker Super 8 guides. Submissions are ongoing and there is no submission fee. Website: www.flickernyc.com.

LESBIAN LOOKS of Tucson, AZ, seeks narrative, doc, exp. & mixed-genre work of all lengths for 2004 season. DVD & VHS NTSC only. Fee paid for all works screened. Deadline: June 1, 2004. Send VHS previewtape, brief synopsis, artist bio & electronic stills to Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, bseckinger@u.arizona.edu; <http://w3.arizona.edu/~lgbcom>.

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE a monthly microcinema screening program of int'l short films, videos & digital works, seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Submit VHS (NTSC/PAL) or DVD/Mini-DV (NTSC only) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema

International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; 415-864-0660, www.microcinema.com.

NEWFILMMAKERS HOWL at New York's Pioneer Theatre seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. Form available on website; \$25 submission fee. Send a VHS copy of your film or video with form/fee to Thomas Bannister, NewFilmmakers, PO Box 4956, New York, NY 10185. For more info, visit www.newfilmmakers.com.

SHORT FILM GROUP seeks shorts (under 45 min.) throughout the year for its quarterly series of screenings in Los Angeles. The group is a nonprofit organization created to promote short film as a means to itself. For more information & an application form, visit www.shortfilmgroup.org.

SHOW & TELL, Highlighting everything from film, video, music & poetry, this event provides a venue to show works in a nonconventional location. Seeking 1 to 20-minutes film/videos on VHS. (Submissions are non-returnable) SHOW & TELL, c/o Black Robb 535 Havemeyer Ave #12H, NY, NY 10473; (718) 409-1691; blackrobb@netzero.net.

TINY PICTURE CLUB seeks Super 8 films for quarterly, theme-based programs. Films will screen on Super 8 & be accompanied by live music. Tiny Picture Club is especially interested in work from the Portland area. Send VHS tape to: Tiny Picture Club, 109 NE Holland St. Portland, OR 97211; www.tinypictureclub.org.

VIDEOTHEATRE, NYC is New York's never-ending DV festival! Currently seeking all kinds of original films on DV formats. Monthly deadlines. Year-round submission. Weekly programming in two AC theaters located on Manhattan's downtown theater row. VideoTheatreNYC@aol.com; www.videotheatre NYC.com.

ZEHN STUCK (ten pieces), an emerging microcinema in NY, seeks submissions of short films/videos for monthly screenings. S8/16mm/mini DV formats accepted for screening. Entries should not exceed 15 minutes in length. jomarcine@hotmail.com for app. and standard release, or with inquiry.

GALLERIES • EXHIBITIONS

ARC GALLERY reviewing videos for Media Room. View Media Room Prospectus at

www.arcgallery.org or send SASE for Media Room prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 734 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL or call (312) 733-2787 for info W-S 12-6, Sun 12-4.

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY historic site in PA seeks artists for exhibition at the site. Some funding avail. for media arts. Proposals are reviewed annually each fall. See website for information and deadline. To request an application, or schedule an orientation tour, contact Brett Bertolino at (215) 236-5111 ex. 12, or at bb@EasternState.org, or visit www.easternstate.org.

TOURING PROGRAMS

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT: a tour of 6 artists who travel to 6 sites in the Southeast, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & \$20 entry fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor any works-in-progress. Note: Some circuit sites are limited to VHS projection. After pre-screening 4. Contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; sleonard@arts.state.sc.us; www.southcarolinaarts.com.

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is ongoing hitting major cities & cultural centers on a global level. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip-Hop culture and connect with other mediamakers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com; email Info@HipHopFilmFest.com, or 415 225-1583.

BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

BROOKDALE TELEVISION is a progressive educational access channel in Monmouth County, NJ, reaching over 79,000 households at the Jersey shore. We are currently seeking independent works for cablecast. All lengths and genres considered. Nonexclusive rights release upon acceptance, no payment but promotional and contact info will be provided on air and through our office. VHS for preview, BetaSP, MiniDV, SVHS, and DVD accepted for Cablecast. Roger Conant, BTV, Brookdale Community College, 765 Newman Springs Road, Atec Rm. 112, Lincroft, NJ 07738; (732) 224-2467; rconant@brookdalecc.edu.

FASTSHOOTERS is accepting short feature films, animations and videos to assemble in a TV-broadcast-length collection for pitch to networks. All mediums and genres. For more information: www.fastshooters.com.

FILMFINDS, KSC-TV's new showcase of independent films, now seeks work for broadcast in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Only feature-length narrative films considered. Work must have played in at least 2 juried film fests & cannot have had a wide release or previously been broadcast on network TV. For info & a downloadable appl, visit www.mnfilm.org; filmfinds@mnfilm.org.

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show in its 8th year, is looking for experimental, humorous, quirky dramatic, erotic, horror/sci-fi, animated and underground works. Controversial, uncensored and subversive material is given priority. We guarantee exposure in the NYC area. DVC Pro, mini-DV, SVHS, VHS, 3/4" SP, 3/4", Hi-8. Contact: Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; ed@2droogies.com; www.2droogies.com.

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-60 min. for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, (415) 553-2218; sdwyer@kqed.org.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY TV STATION in Chappaqua, NY, with a potential viewership of over 100,000, invites new and seasoned video/media producers to cablecast their projects. Preference given to N. Westchester but all Westchester residents are welcome. For more info contact NCCTV@hotmail.com.

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Seek public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Prof., Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-2534; efreedma@fau.edu.

SHORT LIST: Showcase for int'l short films, airs on PBS. Licenses all genres, 30 sec. to 20 mins. Produced in association w/ Eastman Kodak & Cox Channel 4. Awards 5 Kodak product grants annually. Submit on VHS, DVD, or CD. Appl. form avail. on www.theshortlist.cc. Contact: fax: (619) 462-8266; or email shortlist@mail.sdsu.edu.

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to Short Films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. For submission/details, www.shorttv.com, or call: (212) 226-6258.

SUB ROSA STUDIOS seeks video & film productions for ongoing Syracuse-area TV programming & VHS/ DVD/TV worldwide release. Shorts or feature-length nonfiction productions in all areas of the special-interest or instructional fields, cutting-edge documentaries & children & family programming. Also feature-length fiction, especially horror & sci-fi. Supernatural-themed products wanted, both fiction & nonfiction, especially supernatural/horror fiction shot doc. style (realistic). Ron Bonk, Sub Rosa Studios, (315) 652-3868; webmaster@b-movie.com; www.b-movie.com

ZOOM: ZOOM is a kids-only series on PBS, featuring kids plays, films, games & more. ZOOM is seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta, digital formats. Age: 5-14. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gunther, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; marcy_gunther@wgbh.org.

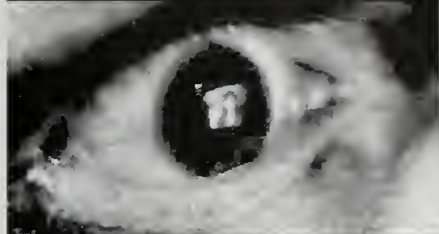
WEBCASTS

TURBULENCE is a project of New Radio and Performing Arts, Inc. (NRPA), a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) org. that commissions netart works by emerging and established artists. To be considered for year round commissions, see our guidelines at <http://turbulence.org/guidelines.html> To receive announcements about specific competitions, please go to <http://turbulence.org> and click on "Subscribe" in the table of contents. Contact: turbulence@turbulence.org. More information: <http://turbulence.org>.

WIGGED PRODUCTIONS is an Internet based arts organization dedicated to making new and innovative art more accessible through broadcast and online presentations. Seeking recently completed videos less than ten min in length that interpret dance, music, poetry or visual art by cinematographic methods. Selected videos will be streamed over the Internet at www.wigged.net. Deadline: ongoing.

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FREQUENCY DISCOUNT: \$5 off per issue for ads running 5+ times.

Ads exceeding the specified length will be edited. Place ad via www.aivf.org/independent/classifieds or type copy and mail with the check or money order to: FIVE, 304 Hudson St., 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013. Include billing address, daytime phone, # of issues, and valid member ID# for member discount. To pay by VISA/MC/AMEX include card #, name on card and expiration date.

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FOR SALE Bolex camera model H 16 RX-5, 3 "C" mount lenses. Excellent condition. \$3,900.00 Includes accessories (1 lense, 1 tripod, 1 cable release). glyfada@cox.net/ Subject: BOLEX or Call: (571) 217-6932.

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ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER/CONTROLLER: Experience in both corporate & nonprofit sectors. Hold MBA in Marketing & Accounting. Freelance work sought. Sam Sagenkahn (917) 374-2464.

ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com.

ARE YOU STUCK? FERNANDA ROSSI, script & documentary doctor, specializes in narrative structure in all stages of the filmmaking process, including story development, fundrais-

ing trailers and post-production. She has doctored over 30 films and is the author of "Trailer Mechanics." For private consultations and workshops visit www.documentarydoctor.com or write to info@documentarydoctor.com.

BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography for feature films and shorts. Owns 35mm Arri BL 3, Super 16, 24p, complete lighting pkg. and a Tulip Crane. Best Cinematography Award for "Final Round" and other film Awards at Sundance, Berlin, and Raindance. Call for more info at: (212) 208-0968 or www.dpFlynt.com email: bcflynt@yahoo.com.

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JAY SILVER: Director of Photography, Owner/Operator of: Aaton XTRprod S16/ R16 & Arri35 BL3. Experience shooting features, commercials, music videos & docs. Credits: Wendigo, Persona au Gratin, Eurotrash. (718) 383-1325 jay.silver@verizon.net

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NEED PRODUCER BUT THINK YOU CAN'T AFFORD ONE? Experienced professional Line Producer for Budget (detailed/top-sheet), Script Breakdown, Schedule, Day-out-of-Days. Specialty low budget but high quality AnnettaLM@aol.com for rates/references.

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OPPORTUNITIES • GIGS

50 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR VIDEO BUSINESS. FREE REPORT. Grow a successful video business in Legal, Wedding, Corporate, TV and more. <http://videouniversity.com/50web.htm>

DIRECTOR/EDITOR for short documentary series about issues affecting teens across racial and class lines. Project popped on the radar last year with invite from Toronto and interest from large educational distributor. Fresh ideas needed to structure trailer while creator concentrates on fundraising and source development. Check out www.ghettoamerica.com. jrwilliams90@hotmail.com.

INDEPENDENT FILM AND DESIGN company is looking for a uniquely talented production associate to be involved with image research and lighting on an upcoming film on the: Future of the City. For more insight call Chris at: (610) 346-9164.

PREPRODUCTION

BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE:

Experienced Line Producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. Credit cards accepted. Indie rates. Mark (212) 340-1243 or LineProducerNYC@aol.com.

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POSTPRODUCTION

AUDIO POST PRODUCTION: Full service audio post-production facility. Mix-to-picture, ADR, voice-over, sound design & editing. Features, shorts, docs, TV & Radio. Contact Andy, All Ears Inc: (718) 399-6668 (718) 496-9066 andy@allearspost.com.

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PRODUCTION TRANSCRIPTS: Verbatim transcription service for documentaries, journalists, film and video. Low prices & flat rates based on tape length. www.productiontranscripts.com for details or call: (888) 349-3022.

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ENTRY FORMS and FESTIVAL INFORMATION ONLINE

30:02:00

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Notices

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., April 1 for June issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending anyone anything.

COMPETITIONS

BRITISH SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION, presented by Kaos Films, seeks original, short, unpublished, unproduced & unsold screenplays (5-15 minutes) from all over the world. Winning script will be produced by Kaos Films & premiere at the British Academy (BAFTA) to an audience of agents, producers, directors, film sales agents & fellow writers. Deadline: May 28, 2004. Entry fee: £25 (US \$39.95). info@kaosfilms.co.uk; www.kaosfilms.co.uk.

CYNOSURE SCREENWRITING AWARDS, presented by BroadMind Entertainment, is open to feature-length screenplays in two categories: scripts w/ female protagonists & scripts w/ minority protagonists (male & female). Works must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced & must be registered w/ the WGA or US copyright office. One \$2,500 award issued in each category. Entry fee: \$40 early (postmarked by March 13); \$45 regular (postmarked by April 10); \$50 late (postmarked by May 8). Tel.: (310) 855-8730; cynsoure@BroadMindEnt.com; www.BroadMindEnt.com.

KAY SNOW WRITING AWARDS: aim to encourage and support beginning and emerging writers. Non-published, non-produced short or partial scripts, 10 pages or less. Submissions must be original and unpublished. Scriptwriting must be ten

pages maximum from any portion of a script, or a short script under ten pages in its entirety. Finalists will be notified by mail in August. (Entry fee: \$10, waived for students through grade 12). Awards: \$300 first place, \$150 second place, \$50 third place. Student prizes are \$50 for first place in each age division. Deadline: (May 15, 2004). Contact: Kay Snow Writing Awards, Willamette Writers, 9045 SW Barbur Blvd, Suite 5A, Portland, OR 97219; (503)-452-1592; wilwrite@teleport.com; www.willamettewriters.com

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION 2003 seeks original short & feature screenplays that must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced (see entry form for other rules). Prizes incl. cash, passes to next year's Slamdance, plus exposure to a major literary agency & major studio. Any genre. Entry fee varies. Early entry: April 19, 2004; late deadline: June 20, 2004. For more info, call (323) 466-1786; screenplay@slamdance.com (slamfi@xeolux.com for sci-fi entry questions); www.slamdance.com.

THE ANNUAL IDA AWARDS COMPETITION, sponsored by Eastman Kodak, recognizes & honors distinguished achievement in nonfiction film & video. Winners honored at the Awards Gala at DocuFest. Early deadline: May 16 (\$55 for IDA members, \$75 non-members); final deadline: June 23 (\$75, \$125). Entry forms available at www.documentary.org, or contact IDA at (213) 534-3600 x7446; idaawards@documentary.org.

THE GREAT LAKES FILM ASSOCIATION SCREENPLAY COMPETITION is currently accepting submissions. The screenplay competition is open to all genres. Must be feature length (20 pages or more). Prizes will include cash, awards and the top 15 screenplays will be passed along to an industry professional agency. Critiques will be available. Final deadline: April 30, 2004. Fees: \$30 (postmarked by March 28 2004), \$40 (postmarked by April 30, 2004). Contact Steven M. Opsanic; 814-873-5069; screenplay@greatlakesfilmfest.com. Entry form and rules at: www.greatlakesfilmfest.com

"WE DARE YOU TO MAKE THAT FILM" CONTEST, for women directors and screenplay writers who are working on their first feature film. Winning screenplay and director will have their films produced by the festival; applicants can submit both screenplays and directors'

tapes for review. For more information contact Rosalind D'Eugenio at (203) 325-8772 X13.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

DEVELOP YOUR SCRIPT AND SKILLS IN EUROPE: Top European development & training center for professionals, Amsterdam's Maurits Binger Film Institute, is accepting applications from American screenwriters, directors & producers who wish to develop a feature film script & polish their skills in screenwriting, script editing & feature film directing. In an intensive 4 month laboratory, a select group of 15 filmmakers from around the world work in creative teams under the guidance of top international industry professionals to enhance their skills & bring their projects closer to production. All sessions are held in English. Deadline: March 15, 2004. Contact: info@binger.nl; www.binger.nl

DV EXPO & CONFERENCE July 14-16, 2004: the world of broadcast, web video, 2D, 3D graphics & animation, sound, & data are coming together in ways that require new skills & new ways of doing business. Build those skills & explore cutting edge ideas, trends, & technologies. www.dvexpo.com

INPUT 2004 International Public Television Screening Conference will be held in Barcelona, Spain on May 23-28, 2004. The US Input Secretariat is accepting applications for CPB Professional Development Fellowships to assist U.S. producers/directors with airfare to the INPUT 2004 conference. For more information on how to apply, go to www.scetv.org/input or contact Terry Pound at 803-737-3434, pound@scetv.org or Amy Shumaker 803-737-3433, shumaker@scetv.org

INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION WORKSHOPS offer hands-on training with the latest equipment in a total immersion atmosphere under the guidance of leading professionals. In addition to the campus in Rockport, Maine, workshops, courses, photo and film expeditions are offered in Tuscany, Provence, Mexico, Cuba, Martha's Vineyard, Greece, Norway & Peru. Contact: International Film & TV Workshops, Box 200, 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581; fax: 236-2558; info@TheWorkshops.com; www.TheWorkshops.com

PUBLICATIONS

A CLOSER LOOK, A yearly anthology of case studies of media arts organizations, has years. 2000-2003 available from National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC). 2003 focuses on youth media. Free to members. and available for purchase at www.namac.org.

DIGITAL MEDIA TRAINING SERIES: DMTS is the premiere training series for film, television & web developers. The series provides award-winning training video, CD-ROM and DVD training tools that improve productivity & creativity for the end-user. DMTS training episodes feature the latest topics & technology, giving viewers access to working professionals & experts that they would not have in a traditional classroom setting, at a fraction of the cost. Featuring the latest education on Final Cut Pro, Avid, Flash, etc, this series is designed for filmmakers and has been sponsored by the leading media software companies. With our "try it before you buy it" program, you can try out any of the Limited Edition training programs for free. Contact: Rafael, (877) 606-5012; info@magnetmediafilms.com; www.digitalmediatraining.com.

LE BOOK 2003 EDITION: The international reference for fashion, photography, graphic design and production. Contains thousands of images that give a complete overview of all the latest creative trends. Provides easy access to all businesses with a listing of over 50,000 names, addresses and phone numbers. To find out more call 212-334-5252 or lebookny@lebook.com, www.lebook.com.

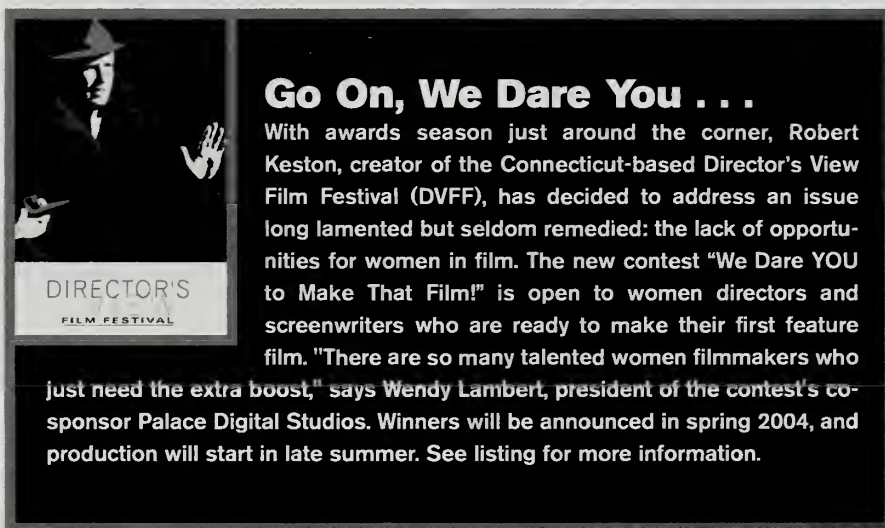
RESOURCES • FUNDS

ACADEMY FILM SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences is looking for 2 film scholars to grant \$25,000 each. Program was created to "stimulate & support the creation of new, innovative & significant works of film scholarship." Proposed projects may be for books, multimedia presentations, curatorial projects, electronic disks or Internet sites & must be in English. Only established scholars, writers, historians & researchers will be considered; grants are not available to students. Deadline: Aug. 31 (postmarked). Contact: Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences, (310) 247-3010; www.oscars.org/foundation/filmscholars

CAMARGO FOUNDATION in France is a center for the benefit of scholars who wish to pursue studies in the humanities and social sciences related to French and francophone cultures. Foundation also supports creative projects by visual artists and photographers. Foundation offers at no cost 11 furnished apartments, a reference library and artists studio, a composer's studio and a darkroom. Application deadline is Jan 15 for the following academic year. For informational brochure and application form write to: The Camargo Foundation, Mr. William Reichard, 125 Park Square Court, 400 Sibley Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101-1928.

of the application deadline. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. 2004 Deadlines: Feb 3, May 4, August 3, Nov 3. Contact: The Durfee Foundation, 1453 Third Street, Ste. 312, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 899-5120; fax: 899-5121; admin@durfee.org; www.durfee.org

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers completion grants, technical assistance & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations in New York State. Programs provide partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; Deadlines: vary with program. Contact: Program Dir., ETV, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607)687-4341;



Go On, We Dare You . . .

With awards season just around the corner, Robert Keston, creator of the Connecticut-based Director's View Film Festival (DVFF), has decided to address an issue long lamented but seldom remedied: the lack of opportunities for women in film. The new contest "We Dare YOU to Make That Film!" is open to women directors and screenwriters who are ready to make their first feature film. "There are so many talented women filmmakers who just need the extra boost," says Wendy Lambert, president of the contest's co-sponsor Palace Digital Studios. Winners will be announced in spring 2004, and production will start in late summer. See listing for more information.

CREATIVE CAPITAL FOUNDATION accepting proposals for its 2004-05 grant cycle supporting work in the visual arts and film/video. Grants for performing arts and emerging fields will be available in 2005. To apply, artists must submit an Inquiry Form, available on the foundation's website February 16, 2004; deadline for Inquiry Forms is March 15, those invited to apply will be notified in June 2004. www.creative-capital.org; info@creative-capital.org.

DURFEE FOUNDATION'S ARTISTS' RESOURCE FOR COMPLETION GRANTS provide short-term assistance to artists living in LA County who wish to enhance work for a specific opportunity that may significantly benefit their careers. Artists in any discipline are eligible to apply. Applicant must already have secured an invitation from an established organization to present the proposed work. The work must be scheduled for presentation within 6 months

etc@experimentalvcenter.org or download applications and guidelines at www.experimentalvcenter.org

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR VISUAL ARTISTS: The awards honor visual artists who live & work in California, Oregon, & Washington & whose work demonstrates high artistic merit for 20 yrs. or more. The next awards cycle is 2005/2006. Five artists from CA and five from OR/WA will be selected to receive unrestricted grants of \$25,000 each. Applicants should work in the disciplines of fine arts or craft media & have sustained a 9-months-per-year residency in CA, OR, or WA for the last three yrs. Artists cannot be of current national renown. To receive application information, mail, fax, or email your contact information (name, address, telephone #, email) with a request to be placed on the mailing list. Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Artists, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100,

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FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILM-MAKING: offers grants up to \$50,000 for completion of original doc films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress addressing critical issues, can be completed within 1 year of award & have broadcast potential. Deadline: March 4, 2004. Contact: Kim Bistrong, Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500 x. 205; Kbistrong@Jewishculture.org; www.jewishculture.org

GRAND MARNIER FILM FELLOWSHIPS are awarded to graduate film students enrolled in an educational institution in the U.S. (excluding CA and TX) for work in filmmaking, video, or critical writing. Three awards of \$5,000 each will be given to students who excel in either film, video or critical studies. Award to be presented at the New York Film Festival. Forms online (www.filmlinc.org) or contact: Grand Marnier Film Fellowships, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., 4th., N.Y., NY 10023-6595.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS) funds and presents independently produced programming for public television (PBS). ITVS seeks projects that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. All genres are eligible, including documentary, drama, animation and innovative combinations. For details on our 2004 funding initiatives, visit www.itvs.org/producer/funding.html.

NAATA ANNUAL OPEN CALL FOR PRODUCTION FUNDING: Application and guidelines available now. This round of funding is for applicants w/public television projects in production &/or postproduction phases. Projects in research & development or script development phases are not eligible to apply. Awards will average \$20,000 to \$50,000, though exceptions may be made. Deadline: July 25, 2004, 5 p.m. (receipt, not postmark) For application & guidelines, go to www.naatanet.org, or email mediafund@naatanet.org or call (415) 863-0814 x22 w/ your name, mailing address, phone, fax & email to be added to our mailing list. There is no deadline for completion funds.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of production; film & video projects in preproduction or distribution stages only. Grants range from \$3,000-\$8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Trinh Duong, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

THE VIDEO MAKER AWARD 2005 call for entries is announced by BAVC. Formerly known as the Artist Equipment Access Award (AEA), The VideoMaker Award is BAVC's in-kind equipment and education access grant for innovative video/ new media projects in their post production phase. Awardees receive a grant of \$3,500 worth of access to BAVC's state-of-the-art media facility and education programs. \$2,500 can go towards suites and services and \$1,000 can go towards BAVC classes. BAVC takes special interest in artists working on projects in association with community groups or about community issues and groups of artists working in collaboration. Deadline: August 27th, 2004. Contact: Laurel Frank at (415) 552-2120 or laurel@bavc.org; www.bavc.org

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival), and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program, including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

WRITER'S FILM PROJECT: Sponsored by Paramount Pictures, the WFP offers fiction, theater & film writers the opportunity to begin a career in screenwriting. Up to five writers will be chosen to participate & each will receive a \$20,000 stipend to cover his or her living expenses. Deadline is May 15, 2004. Applications must be sent by mail only. Contact: Chesterfield WFP, 1158 26th St., PMB 544, Santa Monica, CA 90403; 213-683-3977; www.chesterfield-co.com.

WWW.AIVF.ORG

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March

DOC DIALOGUE:

CORPORATE FINANCING

when: Thurs. March 11, 6:30-8:30p.m.

where: AIVF

cost: \$10 members/\$25 general

Join guest speaker Dan Sherret, CEO of EVENT TV, to learn how to navigate the Inc. world in search of film dollars. Hosted by filmmaker and Documentary Doctor Fernanda Rossi.



IN BRIEF:

PRODUCTION LEGAL ISSUES

when: Tues. March 16,

6:30-8:30p.m.

where: AIVF

cost: \$40/\$25 AIVF members.

Advanced purchase is highly recommended. www.aivf.org/store or call 212/807-1400x301.

The AIVF Producers Legal Series is moderated and co-produced by entertainment attorney Innes Smolansky, who is joined by a panel of industry professionals. These small group sessions answer common questions and connect producers to individuals and resources. This session deals with the financial and business structure of private placement deals, securities laws, and disclosure documents.



AIVF CO-SPONSORS:

NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

when: March 5-11

where: Anthology Film Archive

The New York Underground Film Festival returns to Anthology for its

11th year, featuring premieres of documentaries, features, shorts, experimental works, installations, live music & multimedia shows. www.nyuff.org

AIVF CO-SPONSORS:

SXSW FILM FESTIVAL

when: March 7-15

where: Austin Convention Center

With groundbreaking films, panel discussions, and a comprehensive trade show, SXSW Film Festival is for anyone with a passion for movies.

www.sxsw.com

AIVF CO-SPONSORS:

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN CINEMA ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL 2003

when: March 4-6

where: Tribeca Film Center

The AAWIC Film Festival is devoted to fostering continual awareness of minority women in cinema. The festival showcases features, documentaries, shorts, and animation by African, Latino, and Asian Diaspora women. www.aawic.org

AMC MEDIA DEMOCRACY WEEK

when: March 14-20

The Alliance for Community Media is designating March 14-20, 2003 as Media Democracy Week. Access centers around the country will join in reaching out to the communities through various activities to educate and advocate on behalf of media democracy. www.alliancecm.org

AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:

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AIVF members may attend select series at a discounted rate—just \$5 per ticket. Bring your membership card to the box office! www.filmlinc.com



AIVF'S MASTER CLASS SERIES

AIVF presents our narrative film workshop. Each session includes an in-depth glimpse into a specific, independent film as relayed by the producers and directors who created them, followed by break-out sessions with attendees.

See www.aivf.org for details.

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hours: Wed. (3rd of every month)
11-9, or by apt. to AIVF members
Tue. & Thur. 11-6.

The AIVF office is located at
304 Hudson St. (between Spring &
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2-5 p.m.

By internet: www.aivf.org;
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The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country.

Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY: Upstate Independents

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY
Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café
553 Amsterdam Ave.
Contact: Mark Smith, (404) 352-4225 x12
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Boulder, CO:

"Films for Change" Screenings

When: First Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Boulder Public Library
1000 Arapahoe
Contact: Michael Hill,
(303) 442-8445 x100; boulder@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or
Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH:

Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette
Gillota, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays
Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.
Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-Monthly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: 1519 West Main
Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.
Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St.,
Santa Monica
Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140
Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre
Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop
Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly
Where: Media Arts Center, 921 25th
Street
Contact: Ethan van Thillo
(619) 230-1938; sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders
(650) 271-0097; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-Monthly
Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts
Center
Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

Upstate Independents

This past year has been very eventful for our salon. We started out the year with guest speaker Michael Ellenbogen of Focus Features. In February, Len Clayton, art director of *Station Agent* spoke with us. Both Clayton and Ellenbogen have ties with UI because they started their careers in Albany. Our membership is a steady one hundred and fifty and we now have about three to four film events a month—many of them indie productions—which was unheard of ten years ago. The state film office is now working on a Regional Film Commission, which is very exciting and very much needed in an area so full of aspiring filmmakers and media makers.

Deb Shufelt

Upstate Independents
Membership Chair

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



The Academy Foundation
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What Your Mother Taught You

By Jessica McDowell

She taught you how to speak, to walk, and, hopefully, how to chew with your mouth closed, but what role did your mother—for most of us, the first female influence in our lives—play in how you think about film? In this issue, *The Independent* asks filmmakers to describe what their mothers taught them about film.

As a teenager, I traveled with my mother, sister, and brother [filmmaker Ira Sachs] to Europe several times. For hours we would wander these cities and towns that seemed to flaunt their history like an aging Hollywood diva that looks good in any light. My mother would guide our gaze to a cracking cobblestone sidewalk or castle rampart just before the sun went down, and somehow I would begin to see abstract beauty within the frame of my 35mm camera. She would wonder what stories those buildings might tell if they could speak. Years later, I continue to look and listen, knowing that it was she who sparked my curiosity.

—Lynne Sachs, Filmmaker, *Investigation of a Flame*

I told my mother I was gay. Then I told her I wanted to be a filmmaker. That was a double whammy! But she recovered by becoming the official archivist of *Trembling Before G-d*. She is now on Volume 3 of newspaper clippings. Jewish moms need bragging rights.

—Sandi DuBowski, Director, *Trembling Before G-d*

Sadly, nothing for my mom, who isn't much interested in film. Definitely from my dad, though—he bought a new Super 8 camera the day I was born to take pictures of me, and spent the time in the waiting room reading the manual for the camera as he anticipated my arrival. He later gave me the camera when I was a film student in college, which I used for my thesis. My film was called *Baby Movie*, about how being born and raised is mediated, measured, and recorded with technology.

—Melanie Crean, Director of Eyebeam's Moving Image Studios

I come from a line of women who love to tell stories around the kitchen table. My mother and her sisters taught me about drama and what truly makes an interesting story. I come from a large family in which everyone talks at the

same time—so, when you get your opportunity to speak it better be interesting. I guess they taught me about sound-bites, loglines, and pitches too. They also gave me enough material to keep me making films for the rest of my life.

—Elisha Maria Miranda, Filmmaker and Co-Founder of Chica Luna Productions/Chica Sol Films, LLC

My love of film comes from my grandmother Virginia. Growing up, we would see two or three films during a good weekend. She even sneaked me into my first R-rated double feature: *Dog Day Afternoon* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

—Marc Henry Johnson, Executive Producer, Colorvision Co-Producer, *Brother to Brother*

For a period in the early 1970s, I would occasionally go to the movies with my mother. In that era, it seemed like there was a vein of dark, Hollywood “social commentary” films that managed to reflect the despair of the times without depicting any of the idealism. My mother would patiently sit through these heart-wrenching affairs but at the end would invariably shake her head and say, “I don't know why they can't make happier movies.” At the time, I thought this was hopelessly naive of her.

As a middle-aged filmmaker, I've come to see her point. Portraying despair without a glimmer of hope, sin without the redemption, just doesn't interest me as a filmmaker. Where's the uplift? Where's the rallying cry? Where's the celebration? My mother passed away almost ten years ago. I bet she'd be surprised to see how much I've focused on “her themes” in my work—faith, community, creativity. Just like she used to want to see.

—Beth Harrington, Filmmaker, *Don't Forget This Song: The Story of the Original Carter Family* (in-progress)

Jessica McDowell is an intern at The Independent.



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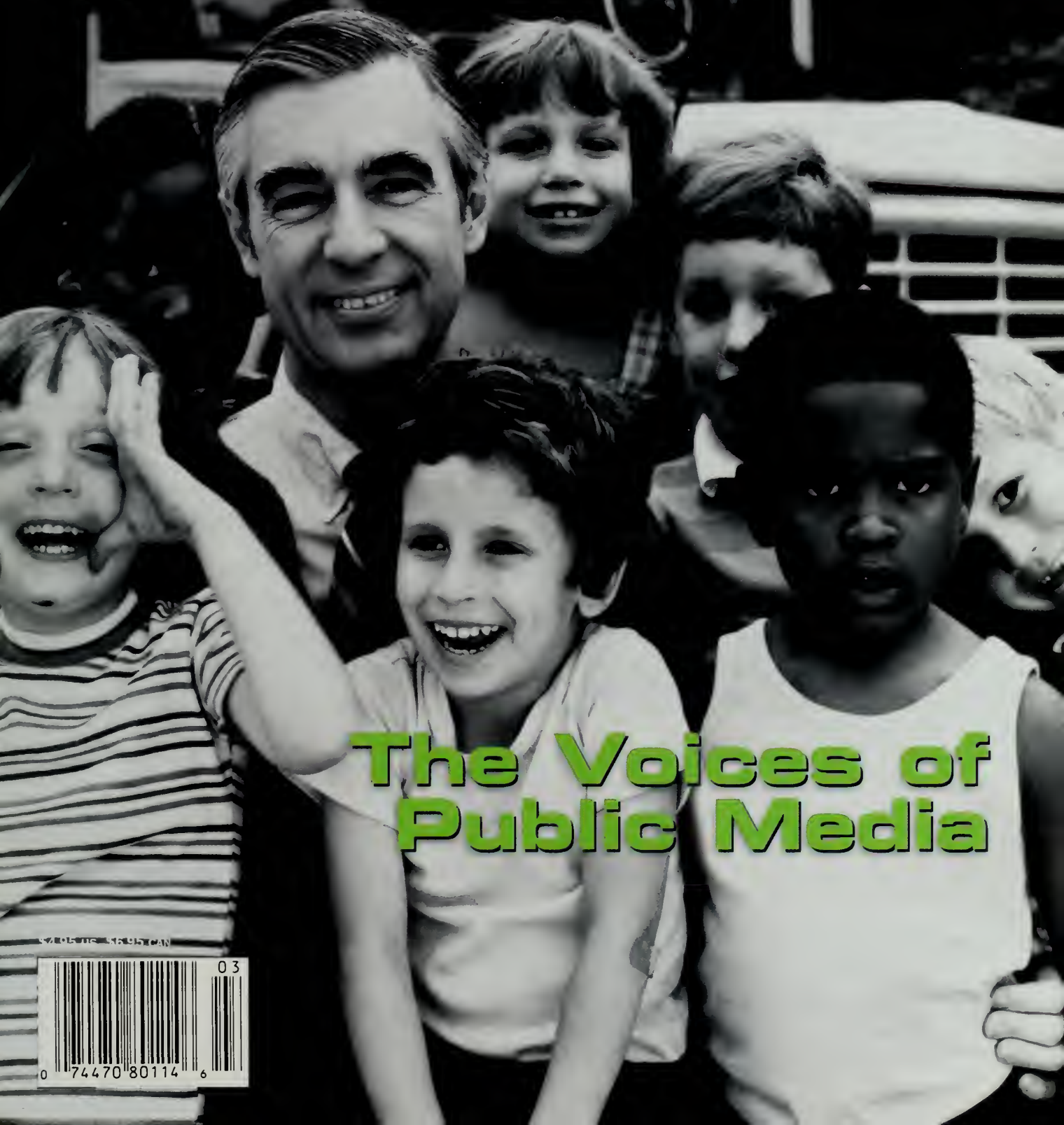
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04



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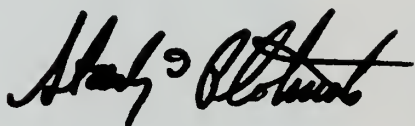
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After over thirty years of programming, what's happening to public T.V.?
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Errol Morris discusses Robert S. McNamara and the politics behind *The Fog of War*.
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Photos: PBS President and CEO Pat Mitchell, playwright/activist Eve Ensler, POV Executive Director Cara Mertes (courtesy of PBS); filmmakers Jim McKay & Effie T. Brown (Jeff Vespa/WireImage.com); *Fog of War* director Errol Morris (Sumaya Agha, courtesy of Sony Pictures Entertainment, Inc.).

Page 5 photos: Orlando Bagwell's *Citizen King* premieres on PBS on the 75th anniversary of Martin Luther King's birth (Flip Schulke/Corbis); "Having a Ball" by Carrie Mae Weems, whose videos are showing at MoMA this month; the Meatrix's anti-factory webtoon parodies *The Matrix* (Free Range Graphics); *The Spirit of Gravity* screened at the 2004 Black Maria Film and Video Festival (Victor Bellamo and David Pace).

On the Cover: *Mister Rogers Goes to School* was an Emmy award-winning week of programs from *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* which aired on PBS in 2002 (Walt Seng).

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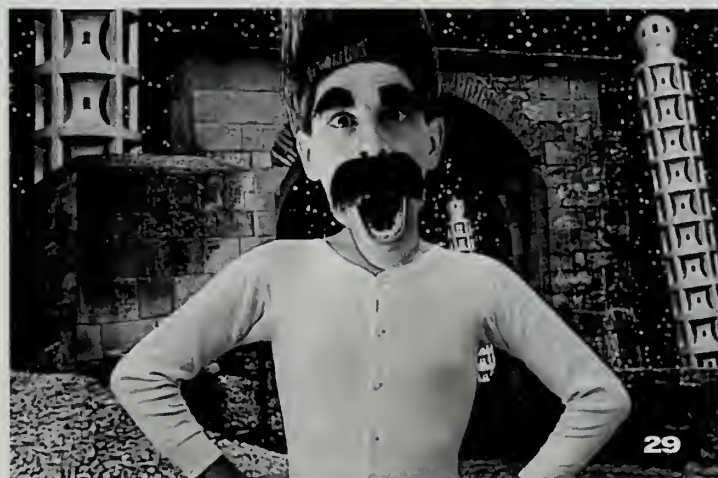
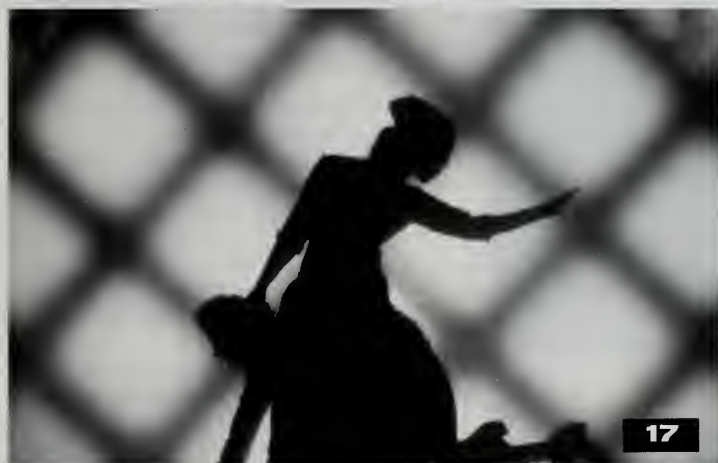
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Editor's Letter

I almost lost my mind the first time I saw Easy Reader on *Electric Company*, which was my favorite PBS show when I was a little girl. I

liked *Zoom*, too. And *Sesame Street* was cool. But *Electric Company* was just crazy. Like a lot of hippy kids (though my parents would insist to this day that they are not and never have been hippies; despite the fact that they are artists with long hair who pretty much live in the wilderness), the focus was never on television when I was growing up. We did have one, although I don't remember watching it all that much. What I do remember is that when Rita Moreno screamed, "HEEEEEEY YOU GUUUUUUUYS!" I would sit there absolutely transfixed, waiting for Easy Reader to glide across the screen.

Easy Reader, played by the very suave but then little-known actor Morgan Freeman, was, I decided, my birthfather. I was adopted, you see, and my parents told me that I had a white birthmother and a black birthfather. Aha! There he is! Duh. Of course he would be some cool cat pimping books and the benefits of reading. His skin was the color of bittersweet chocolate and he wore dark sunglasses, a black turtleneck, and a light-colored jacket with matching suit pants. He was almost obscenely graceful, and looked like he was walking on water as he quietly chanted, "Easy Reader, that's my name."

I could go on about Easy Reader, which would include the sad news that he was, in fact, *not* my birthfather. The point is that *Electric Company* and PBS had a profound impact on my life. Before Easy Reader, I can remember drifting off to sleep in my mother's arms while she and my father

watched Masterpiece Theater's *I, Claudius*. That dude was crazy. And mean. Even though I was so young at the time, I can still clearly recall how things looked on that show—the tall and bellowing men, yellow-haired women, togas and green crowns of vine, the sharp accents and personal conflicts.

This issue of *The Independent* looks not just at PBS, but public and independent media in general—the concept, construct, and obligation of it to us, and us to it. What does it mean to make a documentary about the former Secretary of Defense—the guy who was in charge of making big decisions that involved guns and defending the citizens of America against the rest of the world? Writer Livia Bloom asked Errol Morris about the making of his latest work, *The Fog of War*.

Freelance writer Deirdre Day-MacLeod looks at the history, mission, progress, and future of public television as an entity, while Angela Tucker profiles four different diversity initiative programs in order to find out what it is they do, how and if they benefit minorities, and what is the notion of "diversity" in general. John Pavlus reports on the double-consciousness of the film program at the University of Texas at Austin.

Independent policy columnist Matt Dunne addresses the future of the CPB under Republican rule, and Thirteen/WNET Executive Producer John DeNatale gives a first-person account of his experience coming up through the ranks and trenches of public television. Profiles include Orlando Bagwell, the newly-appointed program officer of Media, Arts and Culture at the Ford Foundation, and brilliant photographer cum video/filmmaker Carrie Mae Weems.

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
The Independent,
Rebecca Carroll
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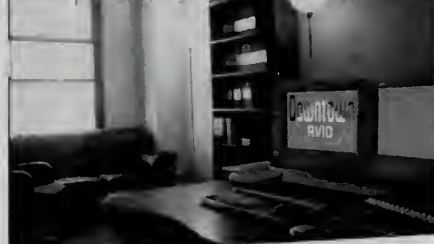


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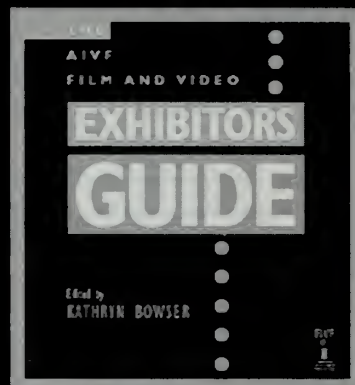
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By Alyssa Worsham



Independent Television Service (ITVS), which funds and presents documentaries and dramas on public television, is currently accepting submissions for its LInCS 2004 initiative. The program is designed to give local public TV stations and independent producers a chance to work together by helping “the producer and station come to an even point and [to] communicate effectively,” says Robby Fahey, LInCS production manager. “We insist that producers maintain editorial control of their projects, and stations are more willing to allow that because ITVS is involved.”

According to the initiative, “LInCS funding ranges from \$10,000 to \$75,000 and may be matched in-kind as well as with a producer’s secured cash—from grants, underwriting, individual donors, and/or out-of-pocket cash contributions to the produc-

tion.” Projects in any stage of development are eligible, and while series are not permitted, all genres are. And, unlike other ITVS funding programs, like Open Call, the LInCS initiative receives fewer submissions—last year they received fifty-three applicants, out of which eight were funded.

Elizabeth Meyer, program manager, adds, “Stations have other invaluable resources for filmmakers. A station in Texas recently loaned LInCS producers some hi-def cameras and access to their video editing equipment as an in-kind service. These programs also can provide an entrée into the PBS system, especially when you have a station advocating your show.” But the producers are not the only beneficiaries of this arrangement. Because many stations are being asked to cut back on productions, independent producers can provide that extra creativity, without the station having to incur anything more than in-kind cost. While the programs must be of national or universal interest, produc-

ers are encouraged to expand upon regional stories, which would appeal to the local station’s viewers.

William W. Marcus, of KUFM TV, Missoula, Montana, says, “The principal advantage to Montana PBS was the opportunity to have specific training from ITVS on the many requirements for national productions. As a small, rural station we had little experience in these matters. The LInCS program gave us the confidence that we could do work on a national level.” ITVS tries to make this exchange as smooth as possible for both sides. “It’s the ITVS support system,” says Fahey. “We are there throughout the process, every step of the way, through all the paperwork and into production.”

“As independent producers, we benefited from a ‘brain trust’ created by working with our production funders,” says Louis Diamond, co-producer of performance documentary *Brotherman*, by filmmaker Demetria Royals. “The collective insight, expertise, and guidance gained by working with WQED, ITVS, and NBPC was invaluable in both shaping and guiding the project to completion and bringing it to the national PBS audience.”

Launched in 1999, LInCS has continued to promote regionally and culturally diverse projects from a variety of perspectives. Previous LInCS programs include *Death of a Shaman*, *Stranger with a Camera*, *Sun River Homestead*, and *The Weather Underground*—which has been nominated for an Academy Award this year, and will air on PBS as part of ITVS “Independent Lens” on April 27, 2004.

The deadline for LInCS 2004 applications is May 26. For more information visit www.itvs.org.

Scenarios USA

Scenarios USA, a nonprofit organization devoted to helping kids make smarter decisions about sex, announced the two winners for their “Whar’s The Real Deal” contests on February 6, 2004. The contests, which took place in south Texas and in

Rebecca Lee, in *Sun River Homestead*, a past LInCS program.

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Miami, encouraged kids ages twelve to twenty-two to submit stories or scripts about the problems they face at school and at home.

After reviewing over 200 proposals, a national review board composed of 300 teachers, filmmakers, teenagers, and even a Supreme Court justice, narrowed the pool down to twelve finalists. Then a select panel of twenty judges, including teenagers and adults, hotly debated the winning two. One group of five seniors—Gladys Sanchez, Kristal Villarreal, Amanda Ramirez, Laura Coria, and Juan Carlos “Charlie” Ramirez—from Mission, Texas, won for their script about sex and relationships, and Katrina Garcia, from Miami, also a senior, won for her script about bulimia. Actress Carrie Anne Moss (*The Matrix*, *Memento*) personally called the contestants to inform them of their awards. They will see their short films made by established directors, and they will get to participate in the process.

But these awards are not just for the kids who wrote the scripts. Because Scenarios USA wants the films to be used as teaching aids in schools, they involve the entire community in the production. Maura Minsky, co-founder of Scenarios USA, explains, “On the panel, everyone has their own agenda. The kids have one opinion, the adults have another. But what we find is that once the decision is made, the schools allow the kids to push the envelope—they are not censored. The entire class gets involved, and they are mentored on the set. Because we want them to use the films in the schools, they are filmed in the communities where they are set. We listen to the kids.”

Ben Younger (*Boiler Room*, *Prime*) will direct the south Texas film, called *Someone’s Sorrow*, in the spring. “My

politics are very much in line with Scenarios’,” he says. “*Someone’s Sorrow* is about teen choices—the choices about sex, before and after; whether to use contraception, whether to have a baby. Sometimes they don’t even have a choice. One girl on the panel thought abortion was illegal in Texas. This is a film that needs to get made.”

Someone’s Sorrow focuses on two female best friends who deal with their relationships in different ways. One couple uses contraception correctly and talks about their problems, while the other couple is less communicative and does not take birth control seriously. “Teen pregnancy is a common problem in south Texas,” says Minsky. “The Rio Grande Valley is the largest growing metropolis in the country, but it is also one of the poorest. The script was chosen because high pregnancy rates and AIDS are serious problems in that community, but also because the dialogue is so clever and funny.”

Jamie Babbit (*But I’m A Cheerleader*, *Popular*) has agreed to direct the Miami film, *A Memoir to My Former Self*. “Body issues are a big deal in Miami,” says Minsky. “And this is our first film to deal with the subject. We thought it was important for the community and beyond.”

The directors work on a volunteer basis, and have about two days to shoot. Approximately one week is devoted to pre-production, and one week to two months for development. Once the films are finished, the contestants are flown to New York City and their films are given a proper debut. “Sometimes I think that’s what the kids are most excited about,” laughs Minsky. This December, the Texas and Miami films will premiere with the winner from the Scenarios New York City contest, which is still in progress. A national contest will take place in 2006.

Scenarios USA stems from Scenarios from the Sahel, a West African program created by a French

organization working to fight AIDS. The 3,000 Scenarios Against a Virus contests were held in Africa during the 1990s, and in 1998, the films were broadcast during the World Cup, most likely reaching one hundred million Africans. Scenarios USA has



adopted a similar approach. In addition to being used as teaching aids in schools, their films have been seen on Showtime, ABC’s *World News Tonight*, PBS, NBC, MTV, and Oxygen.

For more info, visit www.scenariosusa.org or contact info@scenariosusa.org; 866-414-1044.

Alyssa Worsham is a freelance writer in New York City.

Bill Moyers Exits PBS

After a successful thirty-year run in public broadcasting, Bill Moyers announced that he will retire from PBS. Moyers, who currently serves as host and executive director of the weekly PBS series *NOW*, will step down after the presidential elections.

President and CEO of PBS Pat Mitchell said, “Bill Moyers is one of America’s most respected journalists. Bill and Judith Moyers have produced some of PBS’s path-breaking television, including *Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth*, *Close to Home*, and *Becoming American*. The list goes on and on.” Mitchell further spoke on behalf of PBS in expressing the network’s gratitude for Moyers’ most recent series work. “We would like to thank Bill for his marvelous contribution to *NOW* and wish him well as he

Scenarios USA winners from Texas (left to right): high school students Gladys Sanchez, Laura Coria, Juan Carlos Ramirez, Amanda Ramirez, Kristal Villarreal, principal Janie Connelly and superintendent Jackie Dyer.

moves into this next phase of work," she said, noting that the future of the program is undecided. "We are in dis-



cussions with the executive producer, John Sicheloff."

Moyers' PBS programs have addressed a wide variety of topics that encourage both public awareness and creative thinking. He has received over thirty Emmys, the Erik Barnouw Award, the George Foster Peabody Award, the Gold Baton, and has been recognized by the *Television Quarterly* as one of the top ten journalists to make a notable impression on television news. Following his departure in November, Moyers will work on a biography of Lyndon B. Johnson.

—Cynthia Kane

PBS Seeks Removal of FCC's Simulcast Requirements

The Washington-based Association for Public Television Stations (APTS) is lobbying the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to remove the simulcast requirement that is part of the transition timeline for commercial and non-commercial stations to go digital. At press time for this article, the FCC still expected Digital Television (DTV) licensees to simulcast seventy-five percent of their analog schedule by March 1, 2004—a rule which mandates stations to broadcast their channels simultaneously on digi-

tal and analog signals.

Last April, the FCC granted a six month extension to public television stations that were unable to meet the earlier fifty percent simulcast requirement. This year, while there has been no apparent movement to change the date, public television stations are asking that the requirement be annulled.

John Lawson, President and CEO of APTS, a nonprofit organization supporting the development of public television programming in the US, is convinced that the rule is counter-productive to the FCC's goal of increasing viewer adoption of DTV. "We think it's bad policy," Lawson says of the simulcast rule. "Requiring us to simply digitalize our analog programming is doing the opposite of what is necessary to drive consumer acceptance of this new technology."

DTV is replacing the fifty-year-old analog transmission system that is qualitatively inferior to the over-the-air transmission offered by digital services. DTV technology allows much higher resolution for images, wider screen format, and CD-quality surround-sound through compression techniques unavailable in analog. DTV can also "multi-cast" by offering consumers several viewing options simultaneously at a lower resolution.

Stations against the simulcast rule say it hampers their ability to do new and innovative high definition programming, which is one of the main reasons for the switch to DTV in the first place. They are driven by a philosophy of change that involves discontinuing old channel broadcasting techniques in order to force the conversion on an analog-comfortable public. The FCC instated the rule to ensure that consumers don't lose their service.

"The theory," says Rick Chessen, Chair of the FCC's DTV Task Force, "was [that] it would be more difficult to turn off the analog signals if people couldn't find their favorite program on the digital channels." But pressure from a frustrated public television lobby has

brought the issue to the discussion table. Chessen says that a proceeding is currently underway at the FCC to discuss whether or not the simulcast rule should be modified or abolished, but he is unable to hint at what the outcome will be.

The FCC licenses 373 public television channels (these include religious stations), of which 251 have already gone digital, while others have been hampered by issues ranging from funding and zoning laws, to equipment problems, to obtaining international clearances. The FCC is concerned with increasing the DTV viewer adoption rate, which is on the rise as set prices come down. Lawson believes that the reason for slow consumer acceptance is "that there is a lack of awareness that high definition is available free. We haven't done a very good job of building consumer awareness." This is partly because public stations have struggled to meet the other requirements for the transition, but Lawson attributes it mainly to poor marketing strategies and lack of collaboration between stations and other entities like DTV product vendors and the consumer electronics industry.

APTS has been encouraged by developments in the UK, however, where the government made the decision for digital conversion at the same time as the US. In the UK, an aggressive marketing strategy succeeded in quickly converting the public to the new technology.

The FCC hopes to arrive at a decision on the simulcast rule sometime early this year but Chessen has made it clear that, for now, DTV licensees "are expected to meet the seventy-five percent requirement unless the FCC makes a decision otherwise." ■

—Sonya Fatah

Sonya Fatah and Cynthia Kane are editorial interns at The Independent.

CORRECTION: In the March Doc Doctor column, we neglected to properly identify Cathryn Smith as the filmmaker who shot her film in Mali.

What's News?

BEHIND THE DESK OF A PUBLIC TV PRODUCER

By John DeNatale

1983: I am an intern ripping wire copy from the AP machine and bringing it to Robin MacNeil's office at *The MacNeil/NewsHour*. I read the copy as it comes in. The blue ink spits out one storyline and then another. My palms are sweaty with excitement as I rip and read, sort and distribute multiple copies to producers on the news team, and watch as they are dispatched to follow up on certain stories.

Throughout my summer internship, I deliver urgent news reports like the attack on the Marines in Beirut and the downing of commercial flight 007 over Soviet airspace. I have the information before anyone else, and I enjoy that.

The news machine springs into action to produce a 6pm feed. In 1983, most Americans got their news for the first time from TV or radio at the end of a workday, six hours after it broke.

1987: I am in charge of the News Desk at *The MacNeil/NewsHour*. AP BULLETIN: SPACE SHUTTLE MALFUNCTION. I run to see the CNN live shot of the plume. The show's Deputy Executive Producer Linda Winslow reacts in horror while MacNeil stares in silence. The NASA announcer's voice: "There appears to be a major malfunction at this time." MacNeil turns on his heel back toward his office where he picks up the telephone. As the newsroom shifts into high gear, News Director Dick Hunt—an avuncular journalist who was covering wars before I was born—turns to the Executive Producer and says in an understated tone, "Well Les, there's your lead."

CNN, which old-timers like Dick used to refer to in its messy start-up year as the "Chicken Noodle

Network," has now become the first responder to the news and has transformed the newsroom forever.

Over the next decade as a reporter and then Senior Producer at the *NewsHour*, I experience the rush of covering big news on dozens of occasions. I am in the control room when the Gulf War breaks. I cover the stock market crash. I enjoy making choices to present a story and then capturing its nuances and significance. Simultaneously, like everyone in the industry, I am a witness to the changing process technology continues to take us through, and the dramatic new ways and means to get closer to personal stories highlighting the major news events of our times.

But technology and industry transformations have brought risks as well as benefits. Americans now expect instant information and analysis, and commercial demands for selling news and creating drama and first-person stories have altered the landscape and playing field for journalists.

On September 11th, 2001, I watched the first tower crumble from the street near my apartment in Brooklyn. Within an hour, all of America and beyond had seen the video coverage, while email and web news circulated the internet. In evidence of how we now get information through various mediums simultaneously, that morning in September 2001 I learned from the television that the President on Air Force One is hop-

ping across the Midwest trying to avoid a phantom risk just as I receive an email saying that our neighbor's firefighter husband is missing.

I produced a story for the *NewsHour* about the impact of 9/11 on one Brooklyn neighborhood firehouse, and not long after I was asked by Thirteen/WNET to work on developing a series with Bill Moyers about the psychological and spiritual aftermath of 9/11. The series is called *New York Voices*, and with a small team of staff

and freelance producers, we successfully launch a weekly half-hour program as well as a small documentary unit (three producers with hand-held cameras) to film the response of one small community to the damaging effects of 9/11. Our budget was miniscule by network standards, but on September 11, 2002,

Thirteen aired *Lessons of September: One School Remembers 9/11*.

That documentary is not something we could have made in 1983, certainly not with such a low price tag, and the advancements in technology that allow us to cover unique and extraordinary stories continue to surprise me.

Today, I am sitting in my office at Thirteen with an independent producer who is making his fourth trip to Iraq. He has assignments from several news organizations with vastly different agendas. The budget constraints on *New York Voices* are a day-to-day concern. Yet, here I am with "my man in Iraq," as my old friend Dick Hunt would have called him, because his story about a New York police lieutenant training Iraqi police outside of Baghdad is ideal for the "day-in-the-life" vignettes that make *New York Voices* what it is. It will cost me the price of his airfare. He himself is subsidizing it with four or five other



WNET Executive Producer John DeNatale.



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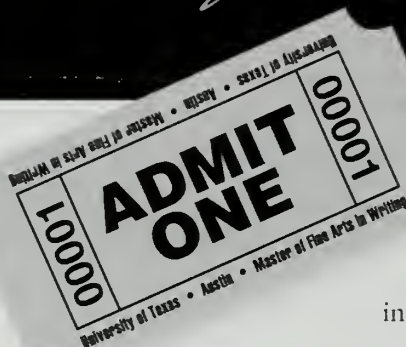
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Through working for public television I've learned how important it is to get as much value as I can from new technologies while still being supported by the public television environment that allows me to make my best judgments as a journalist. But it's the independent producer who really sits on the horns of the dilemma that public television faces like cost-cutting and lowering standards. Commercial and cable networks frequently slip into the need to hype up the news in a hard sell. Many independents like my man in Iraq say they enjoy working for public television because without those commercial demands, they can concentrate on the integrity of the story. They often add, "You should see what I have to do to make real money." Of course, when it comes to public television, the complaint is always about the money.

The increased number of channels across the board has fragmented its audience and provided corporations with more advertising opportunities, and that drains public television sponsorship money. I'm not sure if Americans get more insight and perspectives through the multitude of outlets, and I do worry as a journalist that "news" is a term now often used to refer to dramatic and sensational versions of what an audience wants to see. But I'm basically still optimistic about how things have progressed since I started in the business.

Despite media consolidation, fragmented audiences, and the current attacks on PBS, there continues to be a lot of good journalism on public television, and network television for that matter. I chose to stay at public television because I wanted to make a difference in people's lives and did not want to have to make news into entertainment. I feel fortunate to have been able to ride these industry rapids in an environment that nevertheless puts the journalist and the story first. ■

John DeNatale is Executive Producer of New York Voices on Thirteen/WNET.

Orlando Bagwell

READY FOR HIS CLOSE-UP

By Erin Torneo

After twenty years behind the lens, Orlando Bagwell is putting down his camera. But his recently Sundance-screened *Citizen King* is not his swan song. Rather, as the producer-director quickly interjects, *King* is merely his “most recent” film—and the last to emerge from his Roja Productions before the fifteen-year-old company goes on indefinite hiatus, and Bagwell takes his seat as the newly appointed program officer of Media, Arts and Culture at the Ford Foundation.

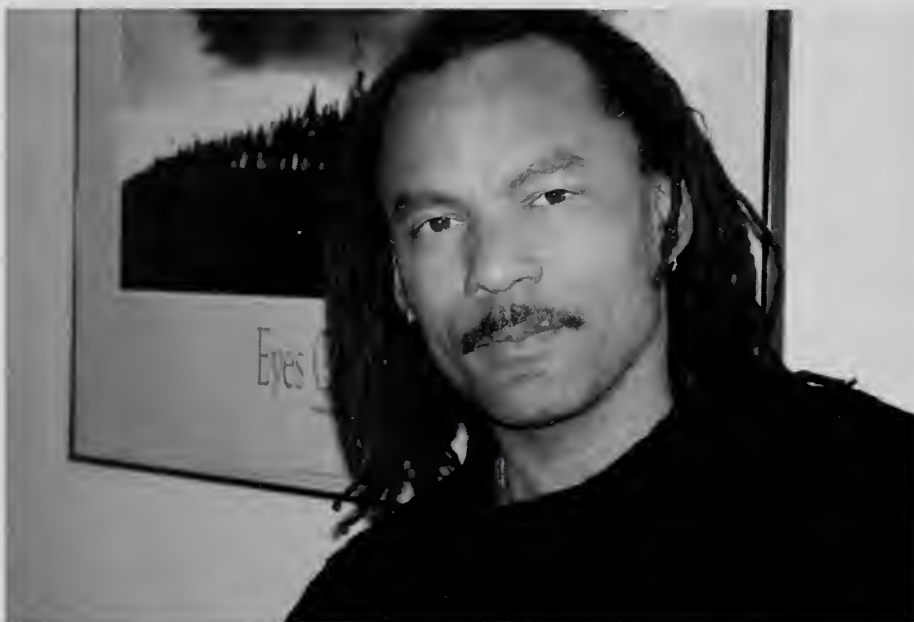
The veteran filmmaker is no stranger to the grant application process, of course. It's been an integral part of his documentary career, during which he has made a name for himself as one of the preeminent chroniclers of African-American history. Bagwell's award-winning filmography includes *Matters of Race*, *Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery*, and *Roots of Resistance: A Story of the Underground Railroad*, in addition to profiles of such seminal figures as Malcolm X, Frederick Douglass, Alvin Ailey, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Citizen King (which premiered on PBS in January) revisits the last five years in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., while offering a distinctly different glimpse of Dr. King from that which has become popularized by the words “I have a dream . . .” Prompted in part by the recognition of Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday in 1986, and also by his work on *Eyes on the Prize* as part of the production team at Henry Hampton's Blackside Productions, Bagwell began to think about the ways

King had been presented. “That national commemoration effort causes us in some way to see him somewhat narrowly,” Bagwell explains. “People tended to see him at the moment of the

films often portray the forgotten or little-seen sides of men caught in greatness, portrays the final journey of King as an often-lonely one, and one that took a tremendous toll. As the film notes, Dr. King died when he was just thirty-nine years old, yet his autopsy revealed that he had the heart of a sixty-year-old man.

The value of media as a place where unseen worlds and lives can be represented is a recurring theme in Bagwell's



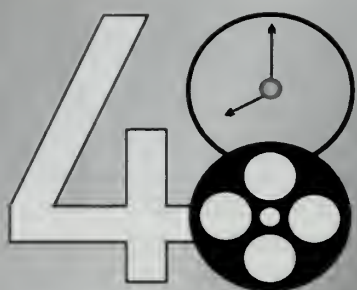
March on Washington, and to remember him as the spokesperson for the Montgomery bus boycott.”

During one segment of Bagwell's film, the camera lingers over photos of King with his wife and children. The images slowly colorize and for a few brief moments, you could almost be looking at any old family photos. But then the images return to black and white and once again, King becomes the man as seen through history's eyes. As King has himself said, “history has seized me.” Toward the end of his life, he was shouldering an enormous responsibility, leading the civil rights movement as it struggled to define itself against the backlash of Vietnam and the raging poverty and violence in homeland ghettos. Bagwell, whose

career. The Baltimore native moved with his family to New Hampshire while he was still in high school. There, he says, he realized that many of his classmates had no insight into the world he had come from, in large part because it was without representation anywhere. Later, while at Boston University, Bagwell taught an after-school program at a community center, helping youths to create real documents of their own experiences, whether it was b-ball on the playground, or just hanging out with friends. Even when he turned to historical documentaries, Bagwell's belief in representing the under-portrayed comes through.

“There was a really rich story of a Dr. King that we may have missed for a

Filmmaker and newly appointed Ford Foundation officer Orlando Bagwell.



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while, and that we needed to be reminded of," says Bagwell. Moreover, King's story "offers a real strong lesson on the notion of leadership and the difficulties of being that person people expect you to be as a leader."

At this junction, the notion of expectations and responsibility weigh heavily on Bagwell. When we spoke, he was just a week into his new gig at the Foundation, where he will oversee the funds given away annually to support various media projects. (The Ford Foundation in fact largely underwrote *Citizen King*.) The fifty-two-year-old-filmmaker is soft-spoken and pauses frequently—as if scanning the scope of his career when answering questions. So why leave a celebrated career after all this time?

"I've been so involved in production day in and day out, one production after another, at times I thought the industry was moving faster than I was," he says. "I had been wanting to take some time to step back and take stock of it all, to look not only at where things have changed, but think about where they might go."

Some of the biggest changes of course, are the internet and cable television—the brave new media world where many documentaries now find a home and an audience. "There are lots of possibilities for landing space now for documentary, but you also find the potential for all the research and elements that go into making docs emerging in new media form, and finding an audience and a way to reach them through online and broadband. The business and marketplace has changed dramatically," says Bagwell. "In order to exist as a viable company—a company that started in 1988 needs to change to thrive in a much more competitive, diverse industry. So part of stepping away is to think about those things and how a company like Roja and the mission that we like to believe that we're about find a space in the new market and new media."

The opportunity at the Ford

Foundation offered him just that: "These kinds of considerations and thought are actively a part of the environment. And it's also a way to stay involved in the work of the media makers and to have the chance to learn from them and to consider the work that I do as a filmmaker by watching people tactically confront the same problems that I was confronting." But while remaining intimately involved in media, will it be tough on Bagwell to not be behind the camera?

"It's one of my big fears right now," he concedes. "I think I will miss it tremendously. I know that at the core I'm a filmmaker—I love the process from beginning to end. I'm very much aware of the long days on the road and the editing and the sacrifices it takes on your everyday life. But in all these years, it's the place where I found myself. It was an energized space that fed me a lot."

He's quick to mention, however, that the caliber of ideas and discourse exchanged at Ford recall times around the production tables at Blackside Productions (legendary Henry Hampton-helmed outfit responsible for such groundbreaking work as *Eyes on the Prize* and *I'll Make Me a World*) as well as Roja. It's too early for Bagwell to have a vision for the work he will do at the Foundation. For now, he's adjusting to the new culture, looking back on his own career that has taken him from history back to the future.

Bagwell knows that attention is focused on him now—in the same way he trained his camera on so many subjects—and that there is an expectation for him to help lead emerging voices and ideas in media. So what will capture Orlando Bagwell's attention? Broadly, says Bagwell, "well thought out projects with the potential to be completed and a vision for how the work might somehow energize ourselves as citizens of this nation, and of the world. If media can do that, then it's media you have to pay attention to." ■

Erin Torneo is a writer in New York.

Carrie Mae Weems

TRANSPORTING HER STILL LIFE TO VIDEO

By Theresa Everline

People from the beginning have always asked me when I was going to make a movie," says Carrie Mae Weems, the noted African-American photographer and installation artist who has recently turned her attention to making video projects. So far in her career Weems has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, and other major art museums. Talking from her home in Syracuse, New York, she says that she doesn't feel as if she's making a particularly big change in medium by taking up a video camera. "I think of it as a way of extending the vocabulary of my work," she explains. "It's a way of combining and activating the levels of media that I've been very interested in."

Coming Up for Air, the working title of her forthcoming video series, is a collection of vignettes that Weems began a year-and-a-half ago with support from the Checkerboard Film Foundation, which usually sponsors projects about, rather than by, artists. When asked to describe her video work, Weems lets out a soft chuckle, as if she herself is trying to figure it out. "I guess it's sort of a hodgepodge in a way," she says. Then she begins break-

ing down the subject matter that she has tackled in her hodgepodge.

One vignette, she explains, is about love—"both the public and the private aspects of love"—specifically, the relationship between Winnie and Nelson Mandela. "To have your love played out on a world stage must be quite enormous—to have it scrutinized like that," she notes. Exploring this



theme led Weems to consider the social responsibility of love, its different possible meanings and qualities. As Weems sees it, Winnie Mandela understood that she was essentially marrying a movement, and then waited for Nelson—at least in form—for the twenty-five years he spent in prison, after which he had to denounce her. "I wonder what *that* private conversation was like," muses Weems.

But the piece extends beyond these two public figures. "Because I'm sort of completely narcissistic," says Weems, with a sly note of self-deprecation in her voice, "it begins with my relationship with my father." Within these various arenas, whether dealing with well-known political figures or the nuanced give-and-take between a parent and a child, arise questions about desire. Or, as Weems so aptly puts it, "Coming to understand desire as the source of all great anxiety."

Born in 1953 in Portland, Oregon, Weems studied at the California Institute of the Arts (where, she points out, she first created video works), then received an MFA, and later went on to the graduate program in Folklore at the University of California, Berkeley. She has garnered acclaim for such quietly riveting work as *The Kitchen Table Series* (1990), twenty photographs and thirteen text panels that reveal a woman's life as it occurs around her kitchen table, and *The Jefferson Suite* (1999), an installation that explores Thomas Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemmings and the role of genetics in society.

One of her most interesting installations, *The Hampton Project* (2000), was commissioned by the Williams College Museum of Art in Massachusetts. The basis of the work was a series of photographs that Frances Benjamin Johnston took in 1900 of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University), a Virginia institution devoted to the education of African-Americans and, at one point, Native Americans. Johnston's photos have

Carrie Mae Weems in her photo from the *Kitchen Table Project*.

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their own storied history: they were celebrated at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris, then lost, then recovered and exhibited at MoMA in 1966; Weems had several of these images scanned onto muslin or canvas in large-scale format, many of which she hung from the ceiling; then she added text and a voice soundtrack. "She's a master appropriator," Vivian Patterson, the exhibition's curator, says of Weems. "She came up with this very dramatic installation." Patterson was particularly taken with the exhibition's audio soundtrack, consisting of narration intoned by Weems herself. "She lures you in with the beauty of her pieces and her voice," explains Patterson, "and then the text and the theme blindsides you. It's a punch. So it becomes that much more interesting and alluring, but on several different layers."

The banners throughout the gallery were a way for Weems to physically engage the viewer. In Patterson's estimation, it added up to "a forest of information in a sort of benevolent way, until you really started to look. When you started to look closely there was all this history that made you think of complicity and responsibility." The exhibition was supposed to move on to Hampton University, but the institution refused to host it on the grounds that the exhibition didn't acknowledge the advances Hampton had made, and the university further objected to the fact that Weems didn't identify the people in Johnston's photographs.

Weems' current video work shares the same sort of sly power as her installations, according to Laurence Kardish, senior curator in MoMA's Department of Film and Video. "Their simplicity is only apparent," Kardish says of the vignettes that make up *Coming Up for Air*. "Much of her work refers to a past that is still somewhat present."

All of this could give the impression that Weems' work might sag with heavy seriousness—an impression

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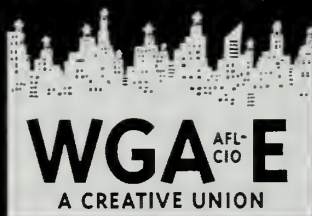
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that's further enhanced when Weems offers two examples of filmmakers she admires: Chris Marker, who made the haunting post-nuclear drama *La Jetee* (1962), and Maya Deren, whose *Meshes*

with scrims that ask the viewer to move through them—scrims that are the size of a [movie] screen almost, and with sound pulling you through, creating these spaces so that hopefully you're pulled in, so you literally travel through a pictorial history along with the narrator—that voice that sends

form of witnessing," she admits. "Maybe I'm asking the audience to operate as my witness in this case, but I'm not necessarily asking them to operate as participant/observer, as in *The Hampton Project*, where you become a part of the work. In video, there's a great deal of distance—that black-box experience is something entirely different."

In the end, though, she says, she continues to be mesmerized by the image,



of the Afternoon (1947) is one of the prime film-studies examples of non-narrative visual poetry. But there's another, lighter side to Weems that comes out in her new work. For example, one of *Coming Up for Air's* vignettes featuring a woman dancing plays off both the James Brown song "If I Ruled the World" and the celebrated scene from *The Great Dictator* of Chaplin-as-Hitler dancing with an inflatable globe. "I'm in love with humor," Weems states simply. Also earning her affection is Fellini, whom, she says, "I love, love, love."

Coming Up for Air has given Weems a chance to enlist the help of fellow artists—composers, choreographers, actors, and the like, including DJ Spooky, who plays the young Nelson Mandela, and the Jackie Robinson Marching Band from Brooklyn. As an artist, Weems finds the appeal of large-scale installations like *The Hampton Project* or *The Jefferson Suite* to be in the all-encompassing effect they have on the viewer. "The entire room is filled

you through beginning, middle, and end."

It makes sense that an artist so engaged with narrative would experiment with the possibilities of video. Weems even finds in the video editing process something similar to the choices she makes when putting together an installation. "I think it's really not so terribly different," she states. "It's the same process, just dealing with considerably more material."

Her video work clearly does not break sharply from the concerns she explores as a still photographer. As MoMA curator Kardish observes, the ease of videomaking allows Weems "a more fluid approach to her themes, but does not necessarily expand her range of subjects." Kardish notes that videomaking is "a more relaxed and informal art" than still photography, with its more rigorous set-up and technological demands. Weems, however, is less certain about the role of the viewer in the end product.

"I don't know how video fits in as a



pure and simple, regardless of the medium. "This clip—does it render that same singular moment as a photograph? How closely can I get it to do that?"

In Fellini's films, says Weems, there's "a beautiful crystallization—there's a lot of noise, but ultimately there are these vast and deep moments of crystallization. Those images live in my head endlessly. I think that's a very interesting idea." And then she laughs a deep, resonant laugh and adds, "Which makes me think that maybe I should just be making still photographs." ■

Weems will present vignettes from her video work-in-progress series at 8:15 p.m. Monday, April 5 at the Museum of Modern Art.

Theresa Everline is a New York based freelance writer whose work has appeared in GQ, The Oxford American, Filmmaker, The Yale Review, and other publications.

Left to right: Weems' installations *Jefferson Suite* and *Hampton Project*.

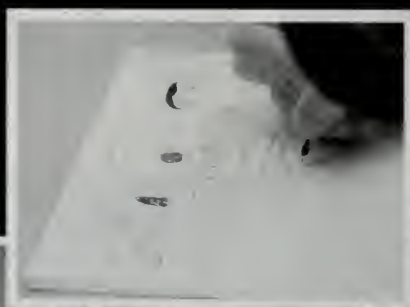
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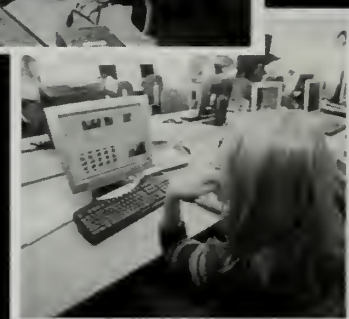
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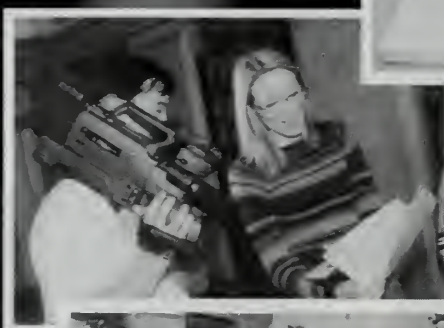
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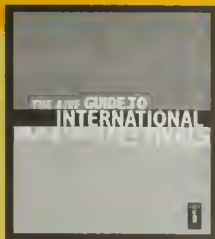
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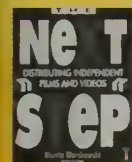
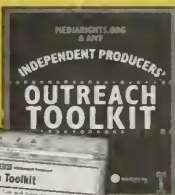
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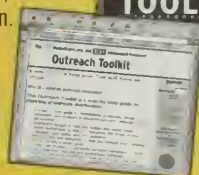
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Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

My film is a documentary best suited for public television, but the outlets I have tried turned it down. Does that mean the life of my film is over?

Rejection can be a wonderful thing after you have recovered from that initial sucker punch of a form letter that says "No" in three painstakingly long paragraphs. Some deal with it by taking a deep breath; others scream. Others burn their rejection letters. Regardless of your coping method, it's important that you assign yourself a deadline to stop focusing on the rejection, because then you will begin to see other possibilities emerge.

Such was the case with Juan Carlos Zaldivar, an award-winning filmmaker whose feature-length documentary *90 Miles* depicts the sea journey from Havana to Miami made by Cubans who opted for exile, and the ways in which the rift between the US and Cuba has shaped relationships within Zaldivar's own family. "Had I known the journey I would embark on after POV turned me down, I would have called it '*20,000 Leagues under the Sea*,'" Zaldivar says.

Although *90 Miles* was perfect for public television because of its style and subject matter, Zaldivar was more interested in the outreach opportunities POV could provide. POV agreed with him, but still said no. Because their rejection had nothing to do with whether or not they liked the film, but

rather with other programming circumstances, Zaldivar was invited to reapply the following year. He did reapply, and in the meantime he took matters into his own hands.

First he bought a book about using HTML, which helped him to build a simple website that featured information about the film and instructions for interested parties on how to organize screenings in their communities. Some invitations from film festivals followed, which then led to screenings at universities and other venues. When the year was up, again POV said no, though again extending Zaldivar an invitation to reapply.

During this two-year period, Zaldivar screened his film in fifty different venues and festivals to more than 10,000 viewers. Most importantly, he demonstrated his commitment to both the film and Cuban community. On his third submission, POV said yes.

90 Miles finally broadcast, but Zaldivar's work didn't change. With the help of POV, he continued what he had already started on his own—an outreach campaign to generate debate about immigration and exile. The only difference was this time he would be reaching a few million viewers.

So, read that rejection letter again. It might actually be an invitation.

Dear Doc Doctor:

If public television stations have such low or sometimes non-existent acquisition fees, and grants are so competitive, are there other ways to get my PBS-type documentary financed?

Do the words "Brought to you by . . ." ring a bell? The credits of a documentary harbor numerous secrets. With a skilled approach at reading them, you can figure out the entire fundraising

plan of a film. It is true that grants are limited and highly competitive. Individual donors can keep projects going for a while, but they also serve only as a limited resource. Pre-sales and/or acquisition fees are not always an option—especially in public television. But there is still one more door to knock on, and it's one that is generally ignored by independent filmmakers: corporate financing.

Receiving money from a corporation in exchange for listing that corporation's name in the credits used to be known as "corporate sponsorship." But Daniel Sherrett, a corporate fundraising agent with Event TV Branded Entertainment, says it's now about partnerships. "Decision makers at corporations are generally turned off by 'Sponsorship Opportunities,' as their experience has been a lot of money out for very little return. Instead 'corporate partnership' or 'branded entertainment' has become a more viable way for companies to help producers finance new film and television projects."

The types of deals and packages through corporate financing are both specific and varied—from educational strategies within the company to customer relations and website outreach, to product placement. You should consult the PBS website which publishes standards for corporate funding (www.pbs/producers/guidelines).

Still, there are, of course, the obvious ethical concerns to consider. You don't want your documentary to appear biased by who your partners are. That is, if your film is about the problems around drilling for oil in Alaska, and it is sponsored by an oil company . . . well, you might lose credibility as a filmmaker.

The trick is approaching the right corporation in the right way—not to beg, but to negotiate. ■

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com.

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National Center for Outreach

Jason Guerrasio interviews Maria Alvarez Stroud

Public television stations have always been dedicated to airing programs that help their communities. But after the programs have aired, how can inspired community members actually take up the cause? For three years, the National Center for Outreach has tried to help expand public TV's mission by orchestrating community activities with local and national stations. But the NCO isn't only a service for sta-



tions. As many filmmakers have learned, it doesn't hurt to have an outreach plan when pitching to public television.

What are some of the ways you encourage stations to engage in their local communities?

Let's say a station shows a film on Alzheimer's Disease. That's a great public service, but if you combine that with a local phone bank where experts on Alzheimer's answer the phones, that extends the impact of the broadcast because it helps people get in touch immediately with the resources that they need.

Organizers discuss agendas at the National Center for Outreach's 2003 annual conference.

What was the precedent for NCO?

Years ago it was called The Public Television Outreach Alliance. It was five television stations that got together to encourage people to do something around the broadcasts they aired. They were the pioneers of what we do today.

Do you try to get the filmmakers involved?

We really seek out organizations in three broad ways. Obviously, there's the public television stations: PBS, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Beyond that we work with producers who are thinking about what kind of impact they want to have with their broadcast. And we work with national organizations to find out how they can partner with the public television stations. We're pretty much the catalyst of those three groups coming together. With producers, they work on getting their show on the air and then there's this afterthought of what should happen around the show so it's not a one-night stand. We work really hard so that's not the case. And now funders are saying, "It's a great idea you want to do a show on say, suicide, but we want to know how that's going to have an impact on the community."

So, if a producer has a plan for outreach to go along with his/her film, it's more intriguing for stations?

It's a huge selling point.

Is most of the effort to increase awareness made by the public television stations or the filmmakers?

It's a little bit of both. And with national community organizations

like United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, the American Library Association, and museums, there's great symmetry in what those community organizations are trying to do and what we want public television to be on a local level. We have the most contact with the public television stations, but we have an annual conference every year and that's where the producers that are doing outreach for their broadcasts come and present their videos and their plans to all the outreach managers in public television. It's sort of the kickoff to the next year. Outreach people tend to work about six months ahead [of the broadcast]. The show can still be in production and outreach folks are already working in the community to build the partnership. It's very much on the front end of production that a lot of the work happens, and it often culminates the night of the broadcast and then continues on.

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What are some of the reasons public television stations should be involved with NCO?

We're a free resource [laughs]. We provide consultation and we even travel to stations that are having a hard time trying to figure out how to build stronger ties to their community. The typical question from stations is, "Well, how much is this going to cost us?" And we're like, "Nothing."

We also provide training on how to connect and be a better partner on the local level. We try to keep people informed about what's going on nationally; being a clearinghouse is a major function of what we do. And then, in addition to that, we also provide funding to public television stations with a granting program.

Can you explain these grants?

We've really honed in on the connector grant which is focused on a particular issue in a community and then building a campaign using broadcast as one of the components. It could be phone banks, or print material, or classroom presentations, or a leadership organization. Beyond that we do some special grants. This next year we're going to be rolling out a grant encouraging stations to do local leadership summits where local leaders in the communities go into their stations and listen and work together on how the stations can be better for their communities.

Are there different dollar amounts for the grants?

The leadership summit grants are going to be small, probably a couple thousand. The connector grant is \$14,000.

What are the deadlines?

January and July.

What's the process a station has to go through in order to get involved with NCO?

It's on varying degrees, but we basically provide services to every public

television station. We send out newsletters; everyone's invited to come to our conference. Stations can request for us to come and do things with them, so it's not like it's a member organization.

What is the NCO Outreach Pipeline?

The Pipeline is a tool for all the broadcasts that want to see some kind of outreach activity happening around them. It provides information about the suggested activities, about the resources that are available, and if there are any grants that will be awarded. It's something that we update four times a year. At our conference we have a Pipeline session, and



everyone at the conference gets a videotape of all the Pipeline shows so that they can go back to their stations and show everyone. We also do a monthly newsletter that mentions the Pipeline.

What is the greatest benefit that National Center for Outreach has provided?

We're getting stations to think in a different way about what it means to be a public television station, and making the word "public" stand out in public broadcasting. ▣

*Jason Guerrasio is a staff writer for
The Independent.*

Maria Alvarez-Stroud, the Executive Director of the National Center for Outreach, giving the opening talk at the 2003 NCO Annual Conference.

The Meatrix

WHERE MEAT MEETS ITS MAKER

By Michael I Schiller

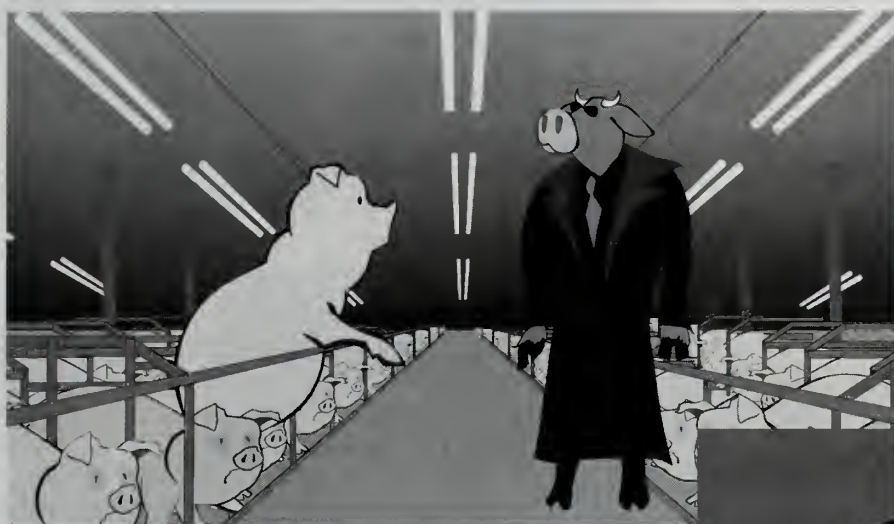
There's a website out there that's bound to make you set down that chicken wing, and think twice before biting in to another slab of beef. The Meatrix (www.themeatrix.com) is a website that uses a colorful animated

what it is—a dreary factory farm where animals are abused and exploited in horrible and disease ridden conditions until their inevitable death for human consumption.

The Macromedia Flash cartoon is the work of Free Range Graphics, and

three million hits. The success of this short web-toon can be attributed to a number of factors. The Meatrix falls into a category that rapper KRS 1 coined as “edu-tainment”—media that is equally informative and entertaining. The Meatrix provides its form of “edu-tainment” by avoiding the pitfalls of some activist media campaigns that scare people away by being dreadfully boring or shockingly graphic.

I remember (in the pre-web days) watching a grainy 16mm film that was shot inside a factory farm and released by an animal rights group. The images of chickens having their beaks cuts off so they wouldn't peck each other to death, and pigs penned in spaces so tight that they could not even turn around, were enough to make me quit eating meat for several years. The absolute horror of witnessing those conditions is not something I would rush to share with my friends and neighbors. The Meatrix, though, represents the exact same images but in a way that is softened



parody of *The Matrix* to address its social agenda, playfully mimicking the art direction of the sci-fi martial arts trilogy.

After logging on, the trademark glowing green, horizontal text scrolls down the screen as the flash movie loads. The animated film begins with a pig named Leo (think Keanu Reeves' “Neo”) lapping up slop on an idyllic country farm. Leo is approached by a cow in a trench coat named “Moopheus” (a cartoon stand-in for Lawrence Fishburne's “Morpheus”) who offers Leo the choice of two pills—one red, one blue. By passing up the blue pill of continued denial and swallowing the bitter red pill of truth, Leo sees the world around him for

is the brainchild of the media collectives' director of operations, Jonah Sachs, who says he was inspired by the first *Matrix* film, particularly the

scene where Neo wakes up in the catacombs of the human factory. Sachs saw the parallel between the lie Neo told himself about his happy world and “the lie we tell ourselves about where our meat comes from,” says Sachs.

The words “viral” and meat are almost never a good combination, but for this group of animators it has translated into a total success—their “viral” campaign has generated The Meatrix web site an unprecedented



and made, well, digestible, even humorous in a disturbing way. The cartoon aesthetic is strangely appealing, enough to inspire hundreds of thousands of people to email a few thousand of their closest friends.

Free Range's Director of Strategy, Tate Hausman, provides insight as to why the cartoon has resonated so well with the public: “It piggy-backed, no pun intended, off the popularity of *The Matrix* in a hilarious way. It spoke

Leo and Moopheus in *The Meatrix*.



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that language of established pop culture, but with a really funny twist. Without the humor and spoof of *The Matrix*, it would have been another anti-factory farming diatribe. And



without the hard-hitting, meaningful information, it would have been just another silly *Matrix* spoof."

The site stays true to the creator's intentions of education and raising awareness without being rabidly anti-carnivore. In fact, it provides a link (pun intended) to the Eat Well Guide (eatwellguide.org), which helps shoppers find organic and responsible meat products. It was that same link that caused a rumor to circulate on a vegan message board that claimed The Meatrix was actually created by a front group of the meat industry.

Au contraire. The Meatrix is a product of Free Range Graphics' first ever Free Range Flash Activism Grant. In February 2003 Free Range put out an offer to the progressive nonprofit community, and offered to produce one of their signature Flash activism films for the most compelling social justice campaign. More than fifty groups applied. GRACE, the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment, won the grant for its factory farming campaign.

The Meatrix took one animator, Free Range co-founder Louis Fox, about a month to produce. That included all character and set creation, animation, and soundtrack. In all, they estimate that The Meatrix would have cost about \$17,000 to produce. That does not include distribution costs, which were also provided for free, and could have easily amounted to another three to four thousand dollars.

Obviously, these costs are a miniscule fraction of what it cost to produce a film like *The Matrix*, let alone what it would take to do legal battle with an entity of that size. Fortunately for the site's creators, they have never been ordered to cease and desist with their spoof. The only person to contact The Meatrix from *The Matrix* camp was one of the assistant directors who worked on *The Matrix 2 & 3*, Kevin McNamara. His email to Free Range had the following subject line: Brilliant.

Clearly, this animated short has reached far and wide. However, the question remains, can web edutainment have any palpable effect on society, or is a cartoon like The Meatrix just another amusing quick fix to be forwarded and deleted? According to Free Range's Hausman, the site is effective. "The Meatrix introduced the idea of the downsides of factory farming to many thousands, maybe millions of people who had never thought about the issue before. That kind of consciousness shift is hard to measure in isolation, but is the ultimate goal of strategic communications work," says Hausman.

"It gave hundreds of thousands more people who already knew about factory farming an appealing, understandable way to think about the issue and discuss it with their friends and family, and it raised GRACE's profile tremendously within the responsible food community. Those are the kind of results you can spend millions of advertising dollars to create. GRACE

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spent nothing."

While the animated short certainly deserves credit for propelling GRACE's cause to fame and racking up media attention from *USA Today*, CNN's *Headline News*, and NPR, among other outlets, it is important to remember that the cartoon is only one part of a fairly extensive website. Once you've been hooked by the animation, there are links to relevant actions in the US and abroad, facts about family farms, and links to organizations and information about the hazards of factory farming. The flash animation is the teaspoon of sugar to help the medicine go down. In the words of the late great Lenny Bruce, "Once you get people laughing, you can tell them anything."

Flash animation is a perfect medium for web streaming, with none of the clumsy stuttering and painfully long loading time of movies shot on film and video compressed for web viewing. Tate Hausman and the folks at Free Range work exclusively in the animated medium, and they have confidence in their message.

"The power of online Flash movies is only starting to take off, but its history so far shows that it's not terribly effective for advertisers trying to sell a product, but is powerful for social justice campaigners trying to inspire action. People respond to non-commercial, meaningful opportunities to do the right thing, to help save the environment, stop corporations from seizing too much power, reform our government, whatever. But they don't want to be sold more crap," says Hausman. "That's why movies like *The Meatrix* will always outperform even the slickest most expensive commercial Flash ads." ■

Michael I Schiller is the Senior Editor of Heeb magazine, and a co-founder of the independent film production company, Freed Pictures.

His writing has appeared in Dwell, The Villager, and The New York Times online. His work as a film director/producer has aired on MTV, PBS, and at festivals worldwide.

Black Maria

ON THE ROAD WITH THE SIXTY CITY FEST

By Derek Loosvelt

When you make a film you hope it's going to be seen by a diverse group of people, and not just by the converted," says Black Maria Film and Video Festival director John Columbus. "We reach all kinds of people, even rural, 'off-the-beaten-path' audiences."

Now in its twenty-third year, the Black Maria (pronounced Ma-RYE-ah) shuns the single-venue, one-to-eight-day screening format, opting instead to showcase its collection of animated and live-action shorts in a sixty-city tour from January to June. "Rather than letting the audiences come to us," says Columbus, "we go to them."

Perhaps as unorthodox as the festival's approach to distributing work is its approach to accepting it. The Black Maria doesn't have any categories or genres. "No pigeon-holes," says Columbus. "Each film is judged on its own merit." Columbus admits, though, the Black Maria tends to have more poetic, less dialogue-driven work. "We're strongly interested in visually-oriented, experimental pieces, and human revelation documentaries—when what happens unfolds, rather than being scripted or driven by pre-ordained ideas."

The Black Maria's own unscripted story starts in New Jersey, where Columbus grew up in the shadows of the New York skyline and, as a kid, visited the historical site of the world's first motion picture studio, the Black Maria, built by Thomas Edison in 1893. Edison named his West Orange,

New Jersey studio after the old police vans that carried criminals off to prison. Columbus says his first visit to the studio launched his quest to become a filmmaker.

After receiving his master's degree in film editing from Columbia University in 1975, Columbus went

showed at three venues, all in New Jersey—the Edison site, Montclair Art Museum, and Newark Museum, where Columbus worked at the time as an exhibit designer. The following year, a colleague of Columbus' at Cornell University wanted to bring the festival to Ithaca. The word also spread to Syracuse and Colgate. Columbus says, "After expanding the festival to all three schools, I thought, 'This works.'"

Up from 100 submissions in its first year, the Black Maria now annually selects winners from some 700



entries, screening between fifty to sixty shorts at various schools, museums, libraries, and theaters from Alaska to Alabama. Big-city stops include the Smithsonian in DC, the Millennium in New York, and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Smaller destinations include Boulder, Savannah, and Cincinnati. Past festivals have also gone to Mexico and Korea, and this year, for the second time, the Black Maria takes its show on the road to Rome.

"The traveling element definitely gives filmmakers access," says Thomas Torres Cordova, who's one of just a handful of Black Maria employ-

off to teach at South Jersey's Richard Stockton College, where he started a tiny film festival. The fest fizzled when Columbus left the school five years later, but after moving to West Orange and revisiting Edison's studio, Columbus says, "A light bulb literally went off in my head. I missed the festival I was running and thought, 'Why don't I propose one to the historical site?'"

In its first year, the Black Maria

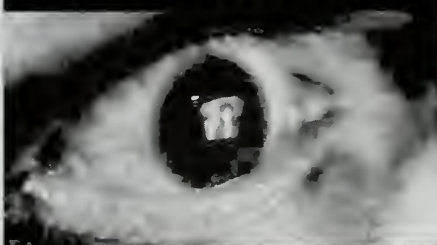
Fast Film won a Jury's Choice Award in the 2004 Black Maria Festival.

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ees. He's also a past participant in the festival. Torres Cordova's *White Dwarf* traveled to Monterrey, Mexico, with the Black Maria in 2001. "There was a great response down there," he says, "and it helped a lot. I built connections with people I wouldn't have otherwise met, and people saw my film who normally wouldn't have been able to." In addition to giving films a wide audience, the Black Maria provides an outlet for those underserved filmmakers interested in cinema as an art form and using the language of cinema in unconventional ways. "There aren't many avenues for filmmakers who do this type of work," says Torres Cordova, who adds, "But we don't glorify filmmakers. We're about celebrating work that's extremely strong and using that work as a dialogue."

On January 30, the Black Maria kicked off this year's tour at New Jersey City University, its home, with an afternoon screening followed by a public roundtable discussion that ended up focusing on the similarities and differences the filmmakers used in approaching their subject matter, as well as the relationship between camera and subject. On hand were a few of the films' directors, including Julie Haslett and Chelsea Guest Perez, both first-time Black Maria artists. New York City-based Haslett was there to support her eight-minute film *Flooded*, which follows a middle-aged couple's response to a flash flood in their quiet London suburb. Chicago-based Guest Perez attended to speak about her Black Maria entry *Walking In His Sleep*, a twenty-three-minute video recollection interspersing memories of her grandfather and newspaper accounts of his mysterious death.

Haslett, whose previous work has appeared in the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Rooftop Films' short film series, and IFC Buzz Cuts, lauds the Black Maria for "providing opportunities to meet fellow

filmmakers and to discuss my work in a substantive way." She adds that the festival "takes its role as an advocate of independent film and video very seriously, which is reflected in how they treat and appreciate their film-

Going to Extremes

Black Maria festival director John Columbus on various audiences around the US

Anchorage, Alaska: "People are pretty political in Anchorage, and they're hungry for something other than the standard fare. They tend to like a broad cross-section of what's happening in the media film world." **Chicago, Illinois:** "The city has some of the most rigorously demanding avant-garde audiences, who are extremely knowledgeable about experimental film. It would be a bit awkward to show them some of our more traditional, human interest, narrative films."

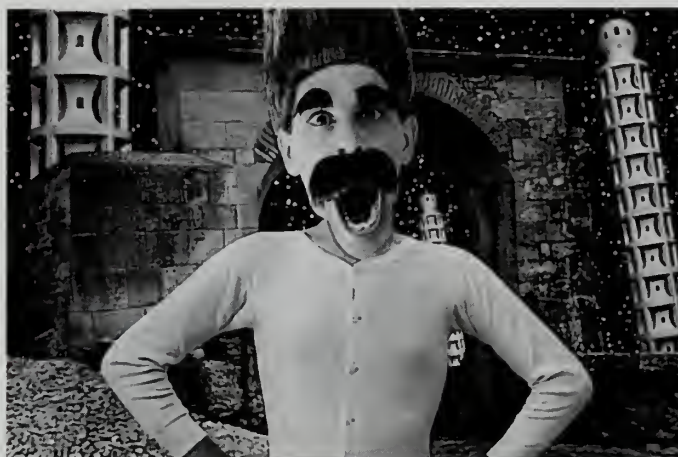
Montgomery, Alabama: "With such a big Air Force base, you might think you'd find this very conservative community, but they're actually looking for something unpredictable. Last year we had a really intellectual discussion about some of the films we showed, and from the audience feedback, I learned things about our films that I didn't even know before."

Savannah, Georgia: "It's fascinating, and it's not your typical southern city—the second Jewish synagogue in the US was built there, which is something you wouldn't quite expect in the Baptist South. And there are kids going to college there from all over the US who are very interested in experimental work, but maybe not in the most hardcore work—they tend to like more playful, experimental work, and grunge work. They want to get a sense of what's happening versus what they're doing."

makers.” Guest Perez, whose previous film showed at the Toronto Short Film Festival and Chicago’s Director’s Film Festival, agrees. “Everyone involved with the Black Maria gave me

asm, energy, and time he devotes to the festival,” says Morrison. “The tour is mind-boggling, both in its number and geographic range of engagements.” Morrison also points out that Columbus knows how to take care of his artists: Each

never seen before); and Hollywood-based Chris Hinton’s animated short *Nibbles* (an insane trip across America with a family of fast food feasters), which was one of two Black Maria films nominated for an Oscar this year. The other piece to grab a nomination was *Asylum* (a Ghanaian woman’s struggle against



encouraging and intelligent feedback, and then helped me to network and started to promote me—just because they loved my work. They wanted to do anything they could to help my new career along.” A former painter, Guest Perez only recently shifted her focus to film.

Among the shorts screened on the night of January 30, after the forum, was Bill Morrison’s *Light is Calling*, a hypnotic eight-minute piece constructed from damaged footage of *The Bells*, a film made in 1926 by James Young. *Light is Calling*, which played at Sundance this year, among other fests, is Morrison’s seventh Black Maria film. In 1993, the Black Maria became the first festival to program Morrison’s work, and since then he has exhibited films in more than ninety others. “The Black Maria is like my film festival family,” says Morrison. “They’ve nurtured me over the years. And I hope, in a small way, I’ve done the same in return.” Morrison helped jury the festival in 1998.

Like others who’ve worked with Columbus, Morrison praises the festival director’s dedication. “I’ve always been amazed at the tireless enthusi-

winning filmmaker who is programmed receives a check between \$100 and \$250. “That’s almost unheard of,” says Morrison.

A filmmaker himself, Columbus knows how expensive and time-consuming independent production can be. Recently, he finished a film about growing up in New Jersey called *Corona*, which has screened in several festivals from England to Seattle. “It’s done nothing but cost me money,” says Columbus. “I haven’t made a penny on it. I haven’t even received my VHS copies back.” Of course, Columbus realizes this is part of the process, but he also knows that filmmakers appreciate getting something in return, thus the payout to each artist. “I know it’s not much,” he admits, “but at least it’s a couple of nice dinners out in New York.”

Other films screened on opening night included New Jersey-based filmmaker Jim McNutt’s *Softee* (a three-minute ride inside the mind of an ice cream man); Berlin-based Jeroen Offerman’s *The Stairway St. Paul’s* (Zeppelin karaoke like you’ve



female circumcision), by Boulder-based filmmakers Sandy McLeod and Gini Reticker.

As an Academy-Award nominating festival, the Black Maria can recommend three films for Oscar consideration each year—one in short subject documentary, one in live-action short film, and one in animated short film. Over the years, several Black Maria films have landed Oscar nominations and a couple have even taken home statues, including Joan C. Gratz’ *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase* (1993) and Jessica Lu’s *Breathing Lessons* (1996).

Another film that lit up the screen opening night was *Selma to Montgomery*, by the late documentary filmmaker and scholar Stefan Sharff, whom Columbus studied under at Columbia. As part of a Black Maria annual tradition of paying homage to notable contributors to independent film who have recently passed away, the Black Maria revived Sharff’s documentary on the famous 1965 voting rights march prompted by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In addition to Sharff’s

Director’s Choice Award 2004 *Spirit of Gravity*, an animated mini-musical.

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piece, the festival is currently displaying works by legendary filmmakers Stan Brakhage and Jules Engel, who both passed away in 2003.

On the road, each Black Maria program changes according to venue, so



the festival becomes a sort of ongoing curatorial process. "But we don't just present the films," says Columbus, "we talk about them." To spur discussions and Q&As, which is tantamount to the festival's mission, Columbus and his team curate shows with theme or style in mind. Often, this is dictated by the venue hosting the festival. "If they tell us they're particularly interested in animation," explains Columbus, "then we can focus on that. Or if they're interested in women's issues or social justice or fine art, we can do that, too." Grunge work, humorous satire, and even overlapping thematic ideas—such as grunge pieces in a more poetic style—are other alternatives.

"Finding these synergies is what's interesting about running the festival," says Columbus. "We're like a seamstress or tailor, threading all these films together." ▣

For a screening schedule and other info,
www.blackmariafilmfestival.org.

*Derek Loosvelt is a Brooklyn based
freelance writer.*

*Zamboni Man won a Director's Choice
Award 2004.*

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Doing the Math

A FILMMAKERS' GUIDE TO BUSINESS PLANS

By Amanda Doss

Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents, Fourth Edition, by Louise Levison
Focal Press (2004)

To business plan or not to business plan, that is the question. Or so it seems to be among many independent filmmakers. I can't begin to count how many times I have heard a filmmaker say, "Business plans aren't necessary." Several seasoned producers have told me that they have never even written a business plan. And what's more, I have been hired to prepare budgets for many filmmakers who have no intention of ever writing a business plan.

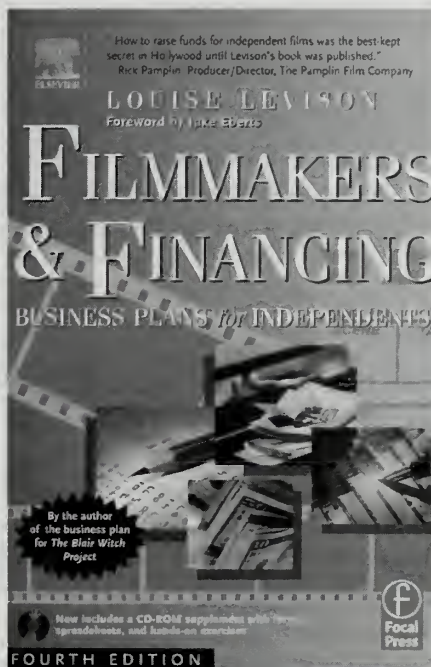
Of course, no one *wants* to write a business plan. We are filmmakers. We are Artists. We create. A business plan, for us visionaries, represents boring, busy-work and hours of solitude in front of a computer writing dry, stuffy material that hints of the annoying term papers we got C's on in high school. I confess that the last plan I wrote was not what I would classify as fun. It took me six months to write it: four months thinking about writing it, one month of research, and one month to actually write it. So, naturally, if someone tells us we don't need one, chances are we're not writing one.

To that end, why, pray tell, has Louise Levison dedicated her life to teaching and writing business plans for filmmakers? And why has her book *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents* just been released in its *fourth* edition?

Obviously, Louise Levison believes in business plans. Not only does she make a living at teaching and lecturing on the subject, she also writes business plans for filmmakers, films

(notably, for the *The Blair Witch Project*), and film-related companies. Business plans are Levison's livelihood, and so her arguments in favor of writing them are not without merit.

In her book, Levison lays out each step and section of the business plan



in friendly, simple terms. (When it comes to reading books on the business side of filmmaking, we filmmakers like small words). Her introduction tells the reader exactly what they will get out of the book: a guide to writing a business plan, no more and no less. She doesn't promise you will get the money you need or that you will be guaranteed distribution. She also makes it clear that you can have a great plan, but if you aren't actually ready to commit yourself to making the product, it won't happen.

Each chapter is named for a section that might appear in a professional business plan: Executive Summary,

Company, Product, Marketing, etc. Levison goes over what filmmakers should know about each section, and suggests additional exercises and resources to learn more. She backs up most of her ideas with anecdotes of successes and failures, and sometimes brief histories of the film industry. At the end of the book she includes a sample plan for a fictitious company for ongoing reference.

Aside from updating many of her examples and a few quotes she uses as headers in each chapter, the main differences between the fourth edition and the others are few, but significant. First, she has given "Risk Factors" its own chapter instead of including it under the "Financial Plan." Next, she has added a section on short film distribution and has deleted the section on internet business plans that appeared in the third edition. Most importantly, she has inserted a CD-ROM supplement that contains worksheets, sample contracts, forms, and reference websites. The CD-ROM also offers a step-by-step guide on how to do projections (particularly useful for us non-math wizards).

After reading this fourth edition of Levison's book, I went back to my trusty third edition to compare notes. I had forgotten how much I had used the book. While writing my last plan, I went back to the book again and again, and I have also used it as recommended reading for some of my workshops and at consultation sessions. The new edition is even more helpful because, in addition to the CD-ROM, all the films and companies referenced are current.

Don't get me wrong, though, Levison's book does have its flaws. Levison touts the "less is more" line, but then goes on to estimate twenty to fifty pages for an average plan, which seems far longer than most of my associates might want to read, let alone write. It is also not entirely clear where the separation is between Levison's thoughts and what should actually go into

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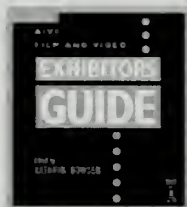
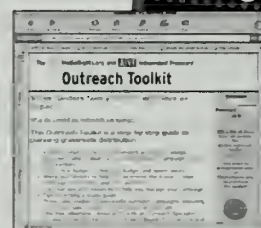
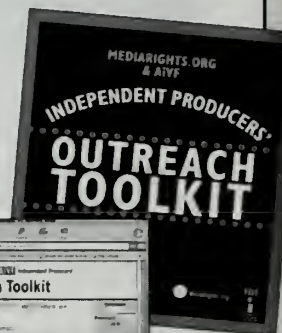
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the plan and what she is trying to teach her readers as common film industry knowledge. For example, in the "Industry" chapter, she tracks the revenues from the box office report down to what filmmakers might actually see. Some of the information can appear disheartening and, if not pre-

business section of things and go straight to the creating part. But unfortunately, filmmaking is a business and to make films, in the end, we need some business savvy. My lawyer always tells me: "You are not only a producer, you are also the manager of this company and this company is a

**A business plan, for us visionaries,
represents boring, busy-work and hours of
solitude in front of a computer.**

sented correctly, might easily turn investors off. She also slightly glosses over the potential cost of accumulating research. Many filmmakers may have to pay upwards of \$300 - \$1,000 for research. For indie filmmakers, that can be a major financial hardship. Although the CD-ROM has several worksheets that help to facilitate putting together projections that will save time, it doesn't save money.

I know filmmakers who don't care for Levison's book—most hold MBAs, are lawyers, or have experience writing business plans for non-film ventures. The consensus critique is that her layout and order of topics doesn't always make sense or flow well for a business plan. Still, all agree that if you haven't written a plan before, Levison's book is a good beginner's manual.

Remember, however, that it is never wise to use only one book as your sole reference. Consider other books, like *Film and Video Financing*, by Michael Weise; allow for business-minded friends to read your plan, and get as much feedback as possible. Don't go it alone. I had at least a half dozen people read my last plan before it was done. In its final version, it only vaguely resembles the first draft I wrote based on Levison's outline. Use her book as a jumping off point, but also use your common sense and gut instincts.

For filmmakers, writing a business plan is daunting. We want to jump the

business. Filmmaking is a business." And people in business need to know how to write a business plan. And once you understand that, you'll see that a business plan is to an investor what a script is to potential talent.

Before I had even finished my plan, several potential investors were asking to see it, but rarely have any asked to read the script it is meant to serve. I have used sections of the business plan for various grant and financial applications, and to show financial investment firms looking for film projects for their clients to invest in. What this means is that when someone shows an interest in your work, you don't spend endless nights slapping together half-baked information. It's already written. And it will help you to answer any questions a potential investor has within seconds, which will make you look like a genius! Who doesn't like that?

When all is said and done, *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*, Fourth Edition—if only for the CD-ROM—is essential reading for anyone about to embark on the journey of filmmaking, because as Levison says in her book: "You never know what opportunities may come your way." ▣

Amanda Doss is an independent film producer currently in development for a feature, Diamond Days. She also works as a budget and development consultant for filmmakers.



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Public television in America was born as something of a brilliant problem child—part rebel, part straight-A student. Now at thirty-something years old, the stalwart media enterprise, still principally driven by its deep-rooted sense of community and moralistic integrity, faces the challenge of an indeterminate future while trying to honor and learn from its past.

What is commonly termed “public television” is actually an ecosystem of three separate entities: the CPB, which provides funding for program production and station operation; PBS, an organization that services its dues-paying member stations with programs, promotion, and structure; and stations—347 broadcasters licensed to provide certain mandated programming. This ecosystem and its agility to respond to local communities is what gives public television

the FCC issued licenses to appropriate broadcasters. As the televised representation of the Great Society, public television basked in an initial three-year glow before the Nixon administration launched its first of many attacks. Nixon failed to eliminate public television entirely, but succeeded in decentralizing the system and removing power from the centers of production in New York and Washington. This plan, which was called “localizing” by its perpetrators and “neutering” or “balkanization” by its detractors, ensured that unlike the commercial networks that exert a great deal of control over local operations, public television would serve its affiliates, providing them with programming and answering to their requests.

Today, this also means that what programming is available to viewers depends very much upon where you live. Without a fixed nationwide schedule there can also be no

Beyond Sesame Street

TUNING INTO PUBLIC TV—30 YEARS LATER

By Deirdre Day-MacLeod

the strength to compete against national networks.

The monetary and structural problems for public television are ongoing and familiar ones, but a decline in audience share, an ever-expanding menu of competitors, and a dearth of sponsors newly compound these problems. A recent financial analysis found that PBS revenues have fallen at a rate of 2.6 percent per year, as a growing number of critics on both the left and right have started to boldly question the relevance of the public network. Though, with much respected and seemingly tireless PBS president Pat Mitchell having just signed on for her second term, and a host of options in the digital arena and even in the real world (not MTV's version), this is also a time of guarded hope for PBS and public television as a whole.

PBS's original mission, as articulated in the Carnegie Report of 1967, which exudes idealism and promise, was, in part, an exercise in rectifying the Communications Act of 1934, which essentially gave the television airwaves away free of charge to commercial interests. Lyndon Johnson reclaimed a small portion of public air space and designated it for the purpose to “instruct, inspire, and uplift,” and

fixed national promotion emphasizing the date and time of a program, unless a show manages to merit “common carriage” which can unify the television nation, but disrupt the local broadcast schedule. And with only sixteen out of 347 PBS affiliate stations able to afford to produce and broadcast local news, sometimes the local stations seem only to exist in terms of the banks of phones lined up during the dreaded pledge drive week.

Beyond the structural problems inherent in PBS's make-up, the financial means of living up to the initial promise was never wholly provided. Instead of having an independent trust, PBS is beholden to the current administration for the precious crumbs that fall its way. Only eleven percent of the PBS budget emerges from government coffers and yet the legislative strings are constantly being pulled and manipulated.

Jerold M. Starr, Executive Director of Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting, points out, however, that it's not just the usual suspects who can be blamed as the bad guys. “PBS suffers under Republicans and is ignored by Democrats,” he says. In the 1990s, well-known

Republican Newt Gingrich called PBS a “cultural welfare program,” but one that benefited the richest rather than the poorest.

Conflicting views persist when it comes to the question of ratings for public television. According to Laurie Ouellette’s cultural analysis of public television, *Viewers Like You?*, ratings both are and are not an issue for PBS. With too large a mass audience, PBS could become indistinguishable from the networks and no longer serve as an alternative to the often egregiously commercialized mass culture, thus prompting the government to question funding the enterprise in the first place. Yet if no one watches public television at all, then how democratic is it anyway?

Of all the programming PBS offers, it’s kid shows, most notably *Sesame Street*, that have been the clearest representation of the original PBS mission statement. And part of

most preferred to watch MTV rather than PBS programming. Addressing this sort of generation gap has been a problem for PBS.

Former PBS programming executive Alan Foster, frustrated by bureaucracy and a lack of attention to the needs of independent filmmakers, left PBS to found the Executive Program Services, a program distributor and consultant for public television. Foster sees PBS as a timid and sluggish place addicted to its own inner workings and cushioned from the world. He suggests that in the early 1990s PBS was well poised to capitalize on what has now become the biggest wave on television—Reality TV. And R.J. Cutler, veteran political documentary maker (*The War Room*, *A Perfect Candidate*), thinks Reality TV came directly from the PBS womb: “It was born there.”

When Fox dropped Cutler’s documentary series



Sesame Street’s success, says Ouellette, is that it incorporates aspects of the mainstream rather than distancing itself from popular culture altogether. By incorporating pop cultural references—“brought to you by the letter W,” game show maven Guy Smiley, and even *Monsterpiece Theatre*—*Sesame Street* demonstrates its sense of humor and lack of pretension. However, some feel that certain PBS children’s programming has come to draw too heavily on corporate underwriting—“brought to you by the letter Z” (as in Zithromycin, an antibiotic for ear infections), prompting Ralph Nader to level a charge several years back of “commercial child molestation,” suggesting that *Sesame Street* rename itself “Huckster Alley.”

In the 1990s, when Nick, Jr. and other cable channels for kids hit the airwaves, PBS lost its monopoly on educational children’s television fare. And as the kids who were weaned on Mr. Roger’s cardigans grew into young adults,

Left to right: *The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer’s* aired on PBS along with resources; David Fisher’s *Love Inventory* on PBS in April; from *The Weather Underground*, Bernardine Dohrn with her son in San Francisco, 1977.

American High in 2000, two weeks after the series premiere, it was PBS who picked up the banner. The show, then, aired both on network and public television with only the ad campaign changed—Fox focused on the more voyeuristic elements of the series, while PBS served up *American High* as an educational program to help understand the needs of teenagers. To Susan Murray, a professor of culture and communication at New York University’s Steinhardt School of Education, and author of *Reality TV: Re-making Television Culture*, PBS’s rescue of *American High* was an “attempt on the part of PBS to meet the center without sacrificing quality.”

Still, there are three thriving PBS series devoted entirely to the work of independent filmmakers: P.O.V., which focuses on nonfiction films; Independent Lens, which airs documentaries, dramas, and shorts; and Frontline, dedicated to current event documentaries. Director Sam Green, whose 2004 Oscar-nominated documentary *The Weather Underground* will air on Independent Lens in April, says he felt nurtured by PBS from the beginning, and very much protected from the corporate structure. “Independent Lens

is a natural outgrowth and a real step in the right direction," Green says. Although HBO had initially expressed an interest in Green's project, producers there wanted concessions he was not willing to make.

Likewise, Steve James, director of the critically acclaimed 1994 documentary *Hoop Dreams*, says of his experience with PBS, "I think that the first support [from PBS] was vital. It was a struggle for them to help too, because they are basically a threadbare operation, and the political situation with them having to answer to Congress leaves them beholden to Congress for further support." James's latest work, *The New Americans*, a series on the immigrant experi-



ence, has successfully avoided the two major pitfalls of the PBS experience: it has no corporate underwriting and it will receive common carriage, airing at the same time on the same day throughout the country.

Lois Vossen, producer and curator of Independent Lens (which is produced by the Independent Television Service), seems almost a throwback to the early Carnegie Report days, untouched by the postmodernist cynicism. "Quality first," she says, in regard to her daunting task of winnowing down the near 600 submissions to the twenty-nine she can present each year. She is quick to add, though, that the selection process "can't just be quality, there has to be something for the member stations to hook into." Vossen singles out *The Weather Underground* as a perfect example. "It's an emerging filmmaker and a social issue," she says. While Vossen concedes to an active consideration of how the member stations can use and market the work, noting such opportunities as Black History Month and Women's History Month, she maintains a diehard faith in her audience.

"At PBS we can assume certain intelligence in our audience and we can bring issues forward, turning a light on in

some dark corner," she says. "There are always problems. In fact if there aren't then perhaps they aren't doing the job they are setting out to do. Perhaps that is the crucial difference here—we want people to change, we have outreach and a desire to get into the lives of people to improve. Whereas commercial television is about reinforcing what is already there and being comfortable."

Depending upon how you look at it, says Jerry Starr, localism—sometimes categorized as public television's biggest weakness—could easily be its greatest strength, and maybe even its saving grace. "With roots in the community, it is like the Ma and Pa shop." Programming stays responsive to community mores. Connections forged by region have the power to transcend the limits of the television screen. For example, the recent airing of the documentary *The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer's* is remarkable in that it was accompanied by a host of local resources for people dealing with the disease. And many PBS shows come with free lesson plans, others evoke local community discussion groups, and others still provide the simple yet invaluable offering of public hotlines.

Polls have shown that the main PBS website is among the most visited "dot-orgs" on the internet, and with plans for real-life educational play spaces across the country and a new digital public affairs channel called Public Square in the making, John Wilson, Chief Programming Executive at PBS, reminds us that, perhaps most importantly, "The thing to remember about PBS is that what you see on air is actually the top of a pyramid."

Alyce Myatt, Executive Director of OneWorldTV.com and a former producer at PBS, says she is not nostalgic for the PBS mission of the 1960s and blames neither the government nor PBS itself for any past, current, and future problems the enterprise may have. She blames the viewer. "The public needs to refuse to accept less. When was the last time you marched on your local public TV station? How many independent producers are members of their local station? I want it to be better, but we are in a dangerous time right now and we need people speaking truth to power."

By celebrating PBS and public television's localism, and challenging individuals to speak out, Myatt's criticism renders the possibility that localism and independence can continue to come together, poised against the large and impersonal, to foster a unique experience and perception of the world. Rooted in community rather than estranged from mainstream, there is no denying the continued relevance of PBS. ■

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In one episode of *The New Americans*, Naima pauses to consider her new life in Chicago.

Double Vision

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS'S PROGRESSIVE FILM PROGRAM

By John Pavlus

The so-called “Film Brat” generation of the middle to late 1970s has been blamed for, or credited with, many things regarding independent filmmaking—from sparking off a studio-sanctioned Golden Age (Scorsese, Coppola) to ushering in a studio-sanctioned Dark Age (Lucas, Spielberg). But whatever the myths or merits of that motley band, there’s no denying one salient detail: collectively, emphatically, they put film school on the cultural map. What before were seen as havens for dilettantes and theoreticians—if they were seen at all—suddenly looked like *auteur* factories. Indeed, in each decade hence, another muscular corps of industry players and indie visionaries seemed to spring fully formed from the film school godhead, from Spike Lee and Robert Zemeckis in the 1980s, to Robert Rodriguez and the Coen Brothers in the 1990s. And hundreds more hopefuls could point to these examples to validate their own film school ambitions, in perpetuity.

They should know better. There was no factory then and there isn’t now. (Spielberg and Rodriguez, tellingly, both dropped out of their respective programs.) But regardless of geographic location, equipment resources, or faculty expertise, many film schools try to be all things to all students—trade school, industry launch pad, artistic incubator. Few succeed on all fronts, and even the top programs in the country acquire reputations for unofficial specialties that highlight their strengths and downplay their weaknesses.

Then there’s the University of Texas at Austin. Nestled in the heart of a city recently deemed the “best place in the US to live and make movies” by *Moviemaker* magazine, UT’s RTF (Radio, Television, and Film) program is angling to match its nationally renowned documentary reputation with a unique drive to teach commercial narrative filmmaking—all within the auspices of an affordable state school.

Oh, and its production and post equipment is top-shelf, too. UT may not be all things to all students—yet—but it might be the closest any film school has come thus far.

Let’s start with what the school already does well: grassroots documentary. As with other top film schools, the graduate program at UT sets the standard for the RTF department as a whole. Dr. Thomas Schatz, Ph.D., author of seminal film studies texts like *The Genius of the System*, and a mainstay on the RTF faculty for nearly three decades (he served as department chair several times), has closely



tracked the program’s growth. “This MFA program is ten years old,” he says, “and I’d say we really began to hit our stride when we hired Paul Stekler.”

Stekler, a Peabody and Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker with a Harvard doctorate in government, joined RTF as head of the production program in 1997 and immediately set about reorganizing the MFA program, hir-

Dr. Thomas Schatz, director of the UT Film Institute and an undergraduate student in one of UT’s editing rooms.

ing a slew of renowned documentarians (such as Andy Garrison, Ellen Spiro, and Richard Lewis) and setting up a new student fee structure to fund expanded equipment purchases. The result has been a steady stream of student accolades including three student Academy Awards, a David L. Wolper Student Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association, and a regional Emmy.

While Stekler insists that “there is no philosophic orientation toward any particular kind of filmmaking” in his



program, he acknowledges that “it’s a lot easier in some ways to have student success be seen in documentary work.” Sean Cunningham, an RTF undergraduate who says he “fell in love” with nonfiction filmmaking partly because he couldn’t afford the costs of celluloid, shares this assessment. “If you talk to any of [the faculty], they don’t just know about documentary—they’re very well versed in a lot of other aspects of filmmaking,” he says. “But I think that the way the department is structured right now sort of lends itself [to documentary]. It’s cheaper to have classes offering a digital experience, and all the instructors are working heavily in documentary, so those two factors in combination do slant the department in that direction.”

In fact, the program’s documentary reputation is so strong that it often attracts students who might have otherwise focused on fictional narrative—if they were even filmmakers to begin with. Take Ryan Polonski: after graduating from the University of Montana with an English degree, he applied to both the RTF and the Journalism departments because he “didn’t have a lot of experience as far as what went into filmmaking.” He’s now a third-year MFA student working on a thirty-minute documentary thesis film.

“My application was full of short stories and poems and this one [undergraduate] narrative film, and some of my profs thought that I was going to be a dramatic narrative filmmaker,” he recalls. “But I was impressed by the documentary filmmakers that were here, and when it came time to decide what stories I wanted to tell, they always ended up being documentary stories.”

Even Cunningham, who has lined up some promising post-graduate job prospects in editing, says he’s seriously considering continuing into the MFA program. “We sometimes shared class time with Paul Stekler’s graduate class,” he says, “and we really got to see the quality that exists at that level.”

Still, not every UT film student wants to be the next Morris or Maysles—in fact, Stekler admits that the majority don’t. “We have close to 700 kids in forty classes doing production each semester,” Stekler says. “That’s a gigantic program, and considering that most of our students want to have something to do with narrative filmmaking, it would be irresponsible of us not to help them come out of here with skills that will help them if they go to L.A.”

Matt Ryan is one of those students, or at least was. Although he was never fully admitted into the RTF department, he says he “took all the classes I could before you have to be in the major.” He dropped out of UT last semester to, as he puts it, “explore other options”—like interning on local Austin shoots and producing indie work through his own company, Mister Films. (He’s completed two features and a handful of shorts since 2001.) “I met a lot of people who were in [the department],” Ryan says. “I don’t know anybody in RTF who graduated and went right into the film industry, which is what I’d like to do.”

In fact, UT alumni (like Warner Brothers director/producer Thomas Schlamme and Newmarket Films president Bob Berney) have risen to the upper echelons of The Business—but Tom Schatz agrees with the basic essence of Ryan’s sentiment. “We’re doing okay in terms of narrative, and we won a Student Oscar two years ago [for Helen Haeyoung Lee’s film *Sophie*], but it’s still not at a level we’d like, in terms of the student work or the quality of the program.”

As a result, Schatz says, UT-Austin is often referred to as “the best film school between the coasts”—faint praise enveloping an implicit comparison to well-known narrative/industry powerhouses like NYU and UCLA. Schatz hopes that the recent creation of the UT Film Institute will remedy this situation and send the RTF program to the top of the narrative filmmaking heap.

Five years in the making and officially launched last September, the Film Institute—according to Schatz, its principal architect—is “an add-on to the existing MFA program,” and meant to fuse conservatory-style film school pedagogy with “real world” feature film production. Burnt Orange Productions, a private for-profit production company formed expressly for this purpose, will partner with the Institute to produce “eight to ten high quality, low budget independent feature films during its first three years of operation,” according to a UT press release.

This page: Thom Mount at the UT Film Institute’s launch in September; facing page: documentarian Paul Steklar helped form the staff of the Institute.

Working either as apprentices to professional department heads or as department heads themselves, RTF graduate students who wish to specialize in one of six production areas (producing, directing, editing, cinematography, production design, and sound) can collaborate on these features to receive credits in both senses of the word: toward a graduate degree *and* on a professional feature. Schatz oversees the initiative's academic side as the Film Institute's Executive Director; Carolyn Pfeiffer, former vice chair of the AFI Conservatory and a successful independent producer, manages the commercial angle as President and CEO of Burnt Orange (which opened up shop in October).

"It's clichéd to say, but this is a classic example of a paradigm shift," Schatz asserts. "This will have a conservatory dimension to it akin to an art school, but at the same time, without question, it's moving toward an architecture school, and particularly a medical school, model. In certain aspects of higher education, particularly in science and technology, this whole idea of commercialization of resources is not an issue. In the arts and humanities we've not learned to think that way at all; but a film school is a different breed of arts/humanities education. We are not a trade school, period. But we *are* a professional school."

The presence of two such ambitious production programs under one roof raises questions about the respective philosophies behind narrative and documentary filmmaking in an educational setting. How distinct are they, and how will such distinctions affect RTF faculty and students? Schatz says that the Film Institute's apparent status as a separate entity (UT technically designates it as a "research unit") stems mostly from legal considerations and that "it will have a very fluid relationship with the [RTF] department." At the same time, Schatz adds that its mere presence "implies a fundamental difference" between the two forms of filmmaking.

Other faculty members, like Richard Lewis, who teaches graduate-level producing and screenwriting courses (and has been involved in generating ideas for new Film Institute-related classes), believe the difference is more skin-deep. "For a successful documentary you need much of the same stuff that you need in a fictional film," says Lewis, who has worked both as a Hollywood story analyst and a producer for PBS and National Geographic television. "It sounds crass to say, 'OK, where are your turning points,' but when you pitch something to A&E, they're going to want to know, 'When we go to commercial, what are we ending on?' To me, storytelling is storytelling and that's what I stress in the classes I teach."

Besides, he adds, the culture in the RTF department already fosters a good amount of overlap between the two orientations. "We make a conscious effort to split the incoming MFA admits [into] half narrative and half documentary-oriented," he says. "In the years which follow, it's

amazing to see how many of the people we bring in as documentary filmmakers end up doing narrative and vice versa. It's happened time and time again."

Ryan Polomski attests to this intradepartmental cross-pollination first-hand. "I bring along my narrative film colleagues into the field to shoot for me," he says, "and I helped a fellow classmate write the script for his narrative thesis film."

In the end, Austin itself will continue to unify the RTF department's production priorities, as it has for the past decade. Whether they're documentary or narrative, commercial or grassroots, UT filmmakers are universally passionate about connecting with their community. For the



past two years, Andy Garrison has been using his "Introduction to Digital Documentary" course to forge a link between UT students and the underprivileged minority community of East Austin. Twice a year he and his undergraduate students collaborate with East Austin citizens on a number of intimate documentary shorts, which are then screened for the public in their own neighborhood.

Garrison recently secured funding to archive these "East Austin Stories" on video and furnish them for sale and checkout at a local community center.

"If you're going to make documentaries in a place, it's important that you're there the next day and people can come to you if they have some issue with what you've made," Garrison says.

As for Burnt Orange and the UT Film Institute, Carolyn Pfeiffer says that "if we are a window to anywhere else in the world where people want to go and make films, fabulous; but we're really an Austin-based program, and the emphasis is really on working with the community and sustaining the crew base here."

With its documentary and narrative programs looking more solid each semester, the difference between UT and its better-known coastal competition may soon be merely geographical. And that alone may still be enough to tip the scales—although perhaps not in the direction you'd think. After all, Austin needs its film school just as much as the film school needs Austin. Specialties and Student Oscars aside, that gives it an edge that the coasts just can't claim. ■

John Pavlus is a Brooklyn based freelance writer whose work has appeared in Salon, American Cinematographer, and other magazines.



Diversity Initiatives

ARE THEY REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

By Angela Tucker



The Sundance Film Festival hosted a record number of attendees this year. Up double from last year, 40,000 people came to watch or show films, participate in panel discussions, and network. Apart from the invariable increase in ticket sales and overall profit and general notability, the upsurge in festival-goers this year also yielded an increase in the people of color who attended, and twenty-five percent of the films in the festival were directed by filmmakers of color, another remarkable boost from last year.

Among the panels at this year's festival, several addressed issues surrounding diversity within American film. One in particular, "The New 'New' Black Film," focused specifically on the state of black filmmaking in America today. A virtual Who's Who of black cinema appeared on the panel, including Mario Van Peebles, Kasi Lemmons, and Effie Brown, many who spoke of different paths that filmmakers are taking—can or should take—in order to find success. A recurring theme on the panel was the concept and development of diversity initiatives launched by various profit and nonprofit organizations within the film industry.

While several such initiatives exist for the sole purpose of showcasing the work of filmmakers and artists of color, there still seems to be something of a disconnect between that work and what sustains the public conscience. For this piece, we looked at four of the diversity initiatives in the independent film and public television arena—three established, and one newly launched—to see what it is they do, how successful they have been, and whether or not they are truly making an impact on the actual number of projects by people of color that end up seeing the light of day.

The National Black Programming Consortium

In 1979, eight independent black producers created The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) in response to the lack of black programming on PBS. Nine years later, NBPC is one of the biggest funding supporters of media by and about African Americans, giving six million dollars to media projects in the last thirteen years. NBPC funds eighty percent documentaries and twenty percent narrative films. Among NBPC-funded projects are the recent critically acclaimed documentaries *The Murder of Emmett Till* and *Two Towns of Jasper*.

NBPC is financed by The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), and falls under an umbrella organization called the Minority Consortia—a group comprised of five additional grant-giving organizations for artists of various races, and which includes The Native American Public

Telecommunications, Latino Public Broadcasting, and Pacific Islanders in Communications. The mission of NBPC, according to its founding president Mabel Haddock, is "to become a major provider of black programming worldwide," and to work with PBS and independent producers to achieve that mission.

This year, NBPC funded films that screened at Sundance included *Chisholm 72*, a one-hour documentary about Brooklyn Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and her campaign for the Democratic party presidential nomination in 1972, and *Brother to Brother*, a feature-length drama that follows the journey of an eighteen-year-old gay black artist as he discovers the hidden legacies of the Harlem Renaissance. ITVS, viewed by many in the field as the model diversity initiative program, further funded the projects of Lynch and Evans after the filmmakers received their initial funding from NBPC. The NBPC application process is so selective that receiving additional project funding from PBS after being granted funds from NBPC is not uncommon.

Funding from CPB stipulates that all NBPC films find a life on PBS. And because PBS has such a limited venue for narrative works, finding a matching home for these projects can prove difficult. Still, Haddock maintains that, "PBS is one of the major venues that is open to change." *Independent Lens*, a PBS program in its second season, features narrative and documentary films, both short and long, and serves as a forum for work by independent filmmakers taking creative risks. *Brother to Brother*, which was honored with the Sundance Special Jury Prize, will be featured on the program next season.

NBPC also feels a strong allegiance to documentary films, something that many grant-giving programs cannot claim. And with the rapidly growing interest in documentary films, the program sustains a certain level of focus on getting more and more documentaries on the air.

When asked about the criticisms she fields about the program, Haddock mentions that some people believe funds are awarded primarily to experienced producers. Although *Chisholm's* Shola Lynch was a first-time filmmaker, Lynch had the cache of having worked for several years with Ken Burns. Still, Haddock insists that NBPC does and is very much willing to take chances on emerging filmmakers.

"Experience is just one of the criteria we look at out. We also look for a good distribution plan, what other money is in place, the approach to the work."

See www.nbpc.tv/ for more information.

The Sundance Institute's Native American Initiative

The Sundance Institute, launched twenty-one years ago by Robert Redford, is a hallmark of the independent filmmaking community. And since the program's inception, the Institute has forged a strong and lasting commitment to

Facing page, top (left to right): filmmaker Shola Lynch (*Chisholm 72*) and *New York Times* critic Elvis Mitchell at the Sundance 2004 New "New" Black Film panel; Effie T. Brown and Nelson George at the *Everyday People* premiere; bottom: cast and crew of *Everyday People* at the premiere.

supporting Native American film. The Institute's Native American Initiative is a multi-tiered program that invites four to six Native fellows each year to attend the Sundance Independent Producers Conference, which features panel discussions and small group sessions, and the opportunity to network with independent film industry leaders. The program also provides funding for two to four projects annually, and hosts the Native Forum program during the Sundance Film Festival.

The Native American Initiative was introduced to help counter inaccurate portrayals of Native Americans in contemporary film, and to encourage creative control for Native and Indigenous filmmakers. "Through the molding and teachings of craft to indigenous filmmakers," says Kamira Kipp, a staff associate at the Native American Program, "[We hope to] get a message out to indigenous filmmakers to think outside the box as far as content, [and] to move more into a modern and contemporary way of telling stories."

Among the most successful projects to emerge from the program is *Smoke Signals*, written by Sherman Alexie and directed by Chris Eyre. Developed through both the Sundance Screenwriting Lab and the Director's Lab, *Smoke Signals* took home the 1998 Sundance Film Festival's Audience Award, Filmmaker's Trophy, and the Grand Jury Award. "All [program] included filmmakers have had their films shown at the festival for many years and keep returning with new works," says Kipp. The initiative was recently honored at The Producer's Guild of America's 2nd Annual Celebration of Diversity for their commitment to cultivating Native producers in the film industry.

N. Bird Runningwater, director of the Native Initiative, who was unavailable for comment, travels all over the world to spread the word about the program and to seek out works by Native filmmakers. Still, says Kipp, it is difficult to find a caliber of work that meets the standard of other Sundance projects. "The hope for the future of the program is to bridge the gap that exists in the quality of craft in the works that are being submitted to the program," Kipp says. "Native and indigenous film still stands at one of the lowest rates of craft and quality. Through nurturing and helping prepare writers, directors, and producers to apply to our various selection of filmmaking labs here at the Institute. That is where the first step begins."

Kipp believes that a lack of resources prevents many Native and indigenous artists from learning the craft of filmmaking. To that end, this year the Native Institute sponsored a private screenwriters lab at the festival, with three Native writing fellows and one producer fellow, during which industry professionals gave feedback on scripts and projects written and presented by the fellows.

See <http://institute.sundance.org> for more information.

The Tribeca All Access Program

In December 2003, the Tribeca Film Institute announced a new program called Tribeca All Access. Set to debut at the 2004 Tribeca Film Festival, the objective of All Access is to create networking opportunities and visibility to filmmakers of color, and to act as a bridge between US based filmmakers of color and the film industry at large, with the goal of acquiring representation and/or financial backing that will assist their projects from development to production. Nancy Schaffer and David Kwok, programmers for last year's 2nd Annual Tribeca Film Festival, launched the program after noticing a shortage of films submitted to the festival by American filmmakers of color.

The program will select twenty projects—ten documentaries and ten narratives—culled from an open call to filmmakers of color. Each selected project and its filmmaking team (which can consist of writers/producers/directors) will be given meetings with representatives and development executives from production companies such as Focus Features, Sony Pictures Classics, and Think Films; US and international sales agents, literary agents, and equity financiers. At the end of the program, one narrative and one documentary project will be selected to win an award for an undisclosed amount.

Beth Jason, manager and co-director of the program, says, countering the oft-made criticism that these sorts of programs are launched to appease white liberal guilt, that the initiative is "not from the big white man who wants to be benevolent to people of color." Indeed, one of the founders, David Kwok, is Asian American, and the submissions evaluation committee is made up largely of people of color from the industry—Warrington Hudlin, founder and president of the Black Filmmaker Foundation; David Henry Hwang, writer and playwright; and Carlos Sandoval, producer of recent Sundance award-winner, *Farmingville*.

By spreading the word through various listservs, community based media programs, colleges and universities, All Access hopes to reach filmmakers of color who might otherwise not read about festival competitions or pick up the latest issue of *Variety*. All Access also offers a reduced submission fee for applicants who are members of various media organizations such as AIVF, Cinevision, and DVRepublic, among others.

In creating the program, Hanson said, and from looking at other diversity initiatives, it became clear that many diversity programs try to do too much. By focusing on filmmakers who are in pre-production, All Access hopes to give filmmakers the help they need to make their projects come to fruition.

See www.tribecafilminstitute.com for more information.

IFP/New York presents the No Borders Market, an international collaborative venture that brings together mid-career and documentary filmmakers with potential financing partners. See www.ifp.org.

IFP/Los Angeles Project Involve

Created in 1993, the IFP/Los Angeles Project Involve is a mentorship, training, screening, and job placement program designed to promote cultural diversity in the film industry. Through one-on-one mentorships and filmmaking workshops, aspiring filmmakers gain practical experience, the opportunity to hone their craft, and the chance to make valuable contacts. Candidates can apply to either the spring or fall cycle—each run four months long, and accept twenty participants of color—and in several categories that range from directing and writing to costume design and film programming.

The main goal for the program, says Pamela Tom, Project Involve Director, is for the participants to “create a community amongst themselves,” in an effort to encourage a cross-discipline, cross-cultural buddy system. The program, Tom emphasizes, is as good as its mentorships. And although “it

this year’s Sundance panel on “New Black Film.”

“IFP, Sundance, all these organizations are supportive. Many people of every color fail because they want to be artists without trying to learn the building blocks to get the job done,” Brown said.

The IFP/New York also runs a Project Involve program. See www.ifp.org for details.

While all four of these initiatives stand out in their efforts to help filmmakers of color, it will be a long time before we will be able to see their impact and that of others like them. Though it is important to note that because each program was started by organizations well respected in the film industry, participants will benefit merely by association.

There are many elements to consider when assessing the advantages of individual diversity programs. A large part of getting anywhere in the film industry is knowing the right



is hard to guarantee twenty great relationships,” she says, Project Involve continues to attract great talent and directors to serve as mentors, including John Singleton and Alexander Payne, and actor/director Forest Whitaker. Last year, 2003 mentee Beanie Barnes was paired with *thirteen* director Catherine Hardwicke. They hit it off so well that Hardwicke hired Barnes to be her assistant on her next film. Tom maintains that stories like this are not uncommon and are, in fact, what the program is all about.

After leaving the program, mentees are provided with career training workshops, individual career counseling, and access to quality job listings and referrals. While it may always be difficult to find work in the field, Project Involve has its fair share of success stories. Effie Brown, a producer of *Real Women Have Curves* and Jim McKay’s latest feature, *Everyday People*, and an alumnus of Project Involve, praised the program and other similar diversity initiatives during

people who can help you to get your projects made, and so while the names of IFP and Tribeca might be more helpful knocking down doors and accessing certain must-know people, NBPC provides one crucial thing that all filmmakers need to get their projects done: cash. And Sundance, both its Native Program and its overall mission, provides a little bit of everything but with special attention to aiding the improvement of filmmakers’ art.

Finally, these programs and the funding they provide cannot guarantee audiences for the work of filmmakers of color, nor can they convince executives to take chances or spend money. But they are steps in the right direction, and combined with the personal perseverance, drive, and flat out luck required of any filmmaker, no matter what race, nationality, or ethnic background, diversity initiatives may change the face of American filmmaking in ways as yet unimaginable. ■

Scenes from Stanley Nelson’s acclaimed *The Murder of Emmett Till*, a NBPC-funded documentary.

Angela Tucker is a Brooklyn based filmmaker and producer. She works at Big Mouth Productions, a social issue documentary production company.



ERROL MORRIS ANSWERS FOR HIS FILM

By Livia Bloom

Questions of personal responsibility and public accountability lie at the heart of *The Fog of War*, the latest work from celebrated documentary filmmaker Errol Morris. In the film, Morris uses his satiric wit, his multi-lensed Interretron, and his fascination with morality, intelligence, power, and politics to profile former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. (The Interretron is the “teleprompter/camera” Morris designed to capture direct eye contact with a subject on film. Etymology: “interview” plus “terror.”)

Once the icon of American corporate and military might, McNamara, now eighty-six, discusses America’s military action and policy during his career in an effort to finally set the record straight.

The result is a layered and complex documentary that deftly reveals the violence, power, and scope of McNamara’s experience, and exposes the various shades of meaning beneath the former Defense Secretary’s words—their implications, subtext, idiosyncrasy, and their shocking relevance today.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in *The Fog of War*.

Lesson Plan

Livia Bloom: Mr. Morris, I'm delighted to talk to you about your film *The Fog of War*. Can you tell us how you got involve with . . .

Errol Morris: Why did you like it? Let me ask you.

LB: Why did I like it? Well, hmm . . . can I tell you at the end?

EM: No!

LB: No? I have to tell you now?

EM: Yeah. I'm curious. (laughs)

LB: Well, I thought *Fog of War's* organization around "McNamara's Eleven Lessons" was appropriate. [A more traditional documentary might be structured chronologically but here, inter-titles periodically give numerical "Lessons," which in turn are detailed by footage from McNamara's interview.] For me, it fits the way that McNamara corrects himself throughout the film, saying, "Oh wait, let me go back . . ." Did you structure the film to suit the often "revisionist" nature of history?

EM: The lessons came into the movie very late in the game. In this movie, like every movie that I've done, the deck has been shuffled and reshuffled. McNamara himself at the very beginning of the film says, "Learn the lessons and pass them on." So I started to think, "What are the lessons?" as a way of focusing the film.

People have complained that [the lesson structure is] somehow a simplification. I don't look at it that way at all because I don't think that the lessons in any way summarize the film. They have, if anything, an ironic, absurdist quality that leads you from one step to the other. At Lesson Eleven, you end up with: "You can't change human nature"—the lesson that tells you that all the other lessons don't matter. We can't help but repeat what we do no matter what!

LB: One of McNamara's lessons is: "Never answer the question asked of you, answer the question you wish you had been asked." Did you find it

difficult to get him to give you straight answers?

EM: It's never clear what a "straight answer" might be. Questions and answers are very peculiar. They're often interesting when the answer actually has nothing whatsoever to do with the question.

LB: So if he didn't answer, did you look at it from an almost anthropological perspective?

EM: McNamara is a person who's been interviewed by literally, I would imagine, tens of thousands of journalists over the years, so not everything is original [to the film]. But I've never really believed in that style of interviewing where you're supposed to coax some kind of answer out of your subject—particularly the answer that someone doesn't want to give. People will tell you interesting things no matter what, if you give them the opportunity to do so. And that was certainly true in this case. I was told many surprising things by McNamara, and as usual, he told me things that I could never have asked questions about, simply because I didn't know enough to ask them.

The firebombing of Japan is a perfect example of McNamara telling me a story that no one really knows about. There have been several full-length biographies of him—he has appeared in countless books as a major character, if not the central character. Yet there is no mention in any of those of the firebombing of Japan, or the role he played with [General] Curtis LeMay both in Europe and in the Marianas. So that was something altogether unexpected and really, really interesting.

Also, it was within five or ten minutes of the beginning of my first interview with him that he said: "Our side won . . . or else we would have been considered war criminals." This is the kind of thing you expect to hear after the twenty hours of interviewing, not the first five minutes—but there it was.

LB: McNamara says in the film that his earliest memory from the end of World War I is of "a city exploding with joy"—at the same time Woodrow Wilson believed we had "won the war to end all wars." McNamara told that story, in the same words, in at least seven different places . . .

EM: Really? You know it's interesting that you researched those lines. I think it's a good thing to do, and an interesting thing to do, and most people don't do that sort of thing.

LB: Among the times he told that story were two ECAAR (Economists Allied for Arms) Japan symposia. He said the same thing in 1995, and then again in 1998 to the same group of people!

EM: (Laughs.) You know, James and Janet Blyte, who have written two books now with McNamara, actually had [the phrase]: "It was a city exploding with joy" printed on a cup!

LB: McNamara has been called "Mr. I Have All the Answers," and he certainly has an amazing understanding of how to draw significant conclusions from statistical data. How did you prepare yourself to speak his language?

EM: Well, I tried to do my homework. He told me that I was one of the very, very few people who he had talked to that had actually read his books—and I *had* read them. I researched lots of stuff he talked to me about. On the firebombing of Japan—we actually went to various archives and found (I think we're actually the first people to look at this stuff in sixty years!) his work product from World War II. We found the actual documents that he wrote advising that the accuracy of the B29s bombing from high altitudes was such that the bombing was ineffective. [These documents led directly to an increase in the "efficiency" of the campaign (i.e. the use of firebombs dropped from *lower* altitudes) and had what McNamara considers a "disproportionately devastating" effect on Japan.]

I also was able to give McNamara the transcript of [several telephone conversations] between he and Johnson—or even the actual recordings—and asked him: “What was Johnson really saying here? What were you really saying here? What was going on between you two?”

LB: Had McNamara heard the tapes before?

EM: A few of them he had accessed with Ladybird’s permission while he was in the process of writing his book, *In Retrospect*, but most of them he had not heard, and many of them have still not been released by the Lyndon Johnson Library.

LB: Here’s good preparation: you used to be a private detective.

EM: One of the funny things about my private detective work, when I was an out-of-work filmmaker, is that I wasn’t doing anything different from what I was doing all along: just talking to people, getting them to talk to me, and trying to remember stuff.

LB: Many Americans, in describing McNamara, mention *In Retrospect* as the place where he admits regret for some of the decisions he made as Secretary of Defense. Why does *Fog of War* not mention his decision to write *In Retrospect*, or what some see as his “change of heart”?

EM: Hmm, *that* is a very complex question. I got interested in interviewing McNamara after I read *In Retrospect*, which came out in 1995. I read the book, and it struck me as very strange—it still strikes me as very strange. Then I read reviews of the book, and I remember feeling [that] almost all of the reviews got it wrong. There was only one review—it was Christopher Lehman-Haupt’s in the *New York Times*, which said something to the effect of: “You know, this book really isn’t a *mea culpa*.” Which it isn’t—it was written about endlessly as a *mea culpa*. Instead, [Lehman-Haupt] said, “This book is far crazier than that.” And it is.

A *mea culpa* is: You say, “I did some-

thing wrong,” “It was my fault,” and “I’m sorry.” To be a *mea culpa* as I understand it, you have to have all three of these basic ingredients.

But McNamara does not say “I’m sorry;” McNamara does not say, “I did something wrong.” Instead, he says, “The war was wrong.” And you could call it an evasion . . . I don’t even think that that is quite right. I think it’s someone really tortured by his own past. As if by going through a detailed recitation of what happened, somehow he could figure it out.

I actually find [that] more powerful than a *mea culpa*. I once told my son that when you say, “Excuse me” and “I’m sorry,” it doesn’t give you license to do anything you want. You can cut someone’s head off with a battleaxe and then you say, “Excuse me” and “I’m sorry,” and then supposedly it’s okay? I think what [McNamara has] done is far more interesting. It’s not about redemption. I think it’s one of the things that disturbs people—and infuriates people. It’s about trying to understand, what the hell happened? Or, what the hell happened to *me*?

It’s very easy, to sort of imagine the [David] Halberstam view of McNamara: Best and the Brightest, Number-Cruncher, Statistician, Guy Who Couldn’t Relate To People, Devoid of Human Values, Ethical Sensibility, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la. I don’t think it’s true of McNamara. I think the disturbing thing is that this was a man with real ethical dimension who did something terrible—something that *never* will be redeemed.

I’m not a great believer in redemption. I mean, part of the ugly truth is that you do bad things and they remain bad things forever! No matter what you do.

The Grand Illusion

EM: It goes back to my lessons again. There was an element of my favorite writer, Nabokov, in structuring the

film around those lessons—an element of his circularity, of ending up where you started, where Lesson #11 tells you to “Ignore all the other lessons.” And what is his first lesson? Well, it’s not enumerated in the film as such, there’s not a Lesson #1, but the “city exploding with joy” is McNamara’s first memory. It’s this memory of people cheering in the streets. But the memory is clouded by the memory of a flu epidemic in which millions of people were dying! So you see the people cheering in the streets, wearing these gauze masks. And then, he tells you, as if that’s not enough of a harbinger of things to come, he tells you that it was Wilson’s “War to end all wars.” The war that ushered in the worst violence in human history! And I think that’s at the center of the story. If at the end McNamara tells you that he’s come back to where he started, that’s where he started.

This would be the sad element for me. [McNamara] started with what Renoir called “The Grand Illusion”—that there ever could be an end to war, that human behavior in some sense is tractable, and can ever be ameliorated. A very simple theme: We’re fucked.

EM: You know, today, we have the new version: it’s not called “The War to End All Wars” anymore, it’s called, “Preventive War: The War to Prevent All Wars.” A lovely thought, don’t you agree?

LB: Since you ask, I disagree. War may *not* be inherent to human nature. I believe war occurs when we allow our creativity and ingenuity to fail.

EM: Really? Hmm. Well, there’s always the Three Guineas Approach.

LB: I’m sorry?

EM: Blame the men. □

Livia Bloom is a New York based writer and an active member of both the film and design communities.

Own Your Art

A RE-PRIMER ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

By Monique Cormier

Making and producing independent films is a heady and exhausting business—there are a million and one things that you have to constantly keep in check. And because it's an art form, it can be easy to forget that there are rules to be followed. This article is a

intangible work products. These intangible work products, generally referred to as “works of authorship,” include moving pictures (films), audiovisual works, literary works (which includes screenplays), and dramatic and musical works.

Copyright protection arises automatically at the time a creative work is

that your copyright is infringed.

Once established, copyright protection for works created by individuals lasts for seventy years after the death of the author, and for works created by corporations (called “works for hire”), ninety-five years after publication of the work or 120 years after the work's creation, whichever is earlier.

As the holder of a copyright in your work, you have the sole and exclusive right to make copies of your work, distribute copies to the public, adapt the work, display the work publicly, and perform the work publicly. You also have the right to



Not taking proper care of your own intellectual property rights and not adhering to the rules protecting others' intellectual property could very well come back to haunt you later.

brief overview and refresher of the basic law of intellectual property—which most filmmakers know exists but might not be able to readily define in simple terms—focusing primarily on those aspects of the law that filmmakers and screenwriters will almost certainly encounter during their careers.

When you get beyond the inherently ostentatious sounding term “intellectual property,” its definition is fairly simple: the ownership of creative work. For the most part, intellectual property law regards the creator of a work as its owner, and generally encompasses three separate but related legal doctrines: copyright law, trademark law, and patent law. For the sake of space and immediate relevance, this piece will focus on the doctrine that is most applicable to filmmakers—copyright law.

Broadly speaking, copyright law establishes a system of property rights for the creators of certain types of

fixed in a “tangible medium of expression”—examples of which might include a filmmaker's audio or film tape, or an artist's canvas. Copyright protection for a work does not depend on complying with formalities such as registering the copyright with the US Copyright Office, depositing copies of your work with the Library of Congress, or using copyright notices on copies of your work. Nevertheless, you should consider following these formalities as they may confer additional protection for your works.

For example, a registered copyright establishes a public and searchable record of your copyright claim, which puts others on notice of your rights; it secures your right to file an infringement suit in the US courts (assuming that your work was created in the US); and it provides you with a more comprehensive range of remedies, including statutory damages and attorney's fees, in the event

authorize others to take advantage of those exclusive rights, either in whole through a sale of the work itself or in part through a license.

License agreements typically include provisions for such things as royalty payments (similar to paying rent), duration of the license, the scope of the license i.e., geographical or media, the manner in which the work may be used by the licensee, termination circumstances, and the name to be carried on the notice of copyright (if one exists). Licenses can be either exclusive or non-exclusive. An exclusive license means that once the author has transferred the rights to the other party, the author may not transfer those rights to a third party. A non-exclusive license means the author is free to transfer those rights to more than one party.

Whether a copyright owner sells or licenses a copyright to another person, the terms of the transaction should always be memorialized in a



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written agreement between the parties so the parties can enforce their rights in court. Although oral contracts for non-exclusive licenses are enforceable in some cases, proving the facts in court in the absence of a document that indicates the understanding of the parties can prove quite difficult and expensive.

There are limitations on the exclusive property rights enjoyed by the author of a copyrighted work. The copyright law doctrine of "Fair Use" makes it lawful to use a copyrighted work without permission, based upon specific criteria. This means that in certain circumstances, for instance when copyrighted portions of your work are used for criticism, news reporting, social commentary, or teaching, others may utilize parts of your work without infringing on your copyright. Copyright law also provides for joint ownership of a work, in which case each of the contributing authors to the copyrighted work has the right to use or license the work without requiring permission from the other.

As important as it is to protect works that you create against unauthorized use by others (often referred to as infringement), it is equally important to protect yourself from claims made against you for infringing the intellectual property rights of other parties.

Filmmakers should not rely too heavily on the "Fair Use" doctrine discussed above, as it has only been applied very narrowly by courts considering the question. The best rule for using the copyrighted materials of others is to clear the rights beforehand. As with all rights clearances, filmmakers should never assume that permission to use the material would be granted. The rule is the same with releases: get them. When you find yourself in one of the legal gray zones, it is always advisable to get the opinion of experienced legal counsel.

Not taking proper care of your own intellectual property rights and not adhering to the rules protecting others' intellectual property could very well come back to haunt you later. While engaging a lawyer might be expensive, it could be a whole lot more expensive to go back to the drawing board in order to fix an agreement that wasn't done right the first time.

Now that people use the internet for just about everything, the tenets of US copyright law are being stretched to cover many circumstances for which they were not initially intended. There are many legal and policy challenges to copyright resulting from the increased usage of digital technology, which makes the copying and manipulating of copyrighted works much easier than it once was. Many feel that, while the US copyright system was designed to encourage innovation and the sharing of works with the public, it is now being used to squelch innovation via the imposition of more stringent intellectual property laws. One thing is for sure, copyright holders—authors, filmmakers, musicians, and others—will only be able to take full advantage of the internet as a powerful distribution channel if their creations are appropriately protected. ■

To learn more about copyright law and copyright registration procedures, or if you are interested in new and pending copyright legislation, review the information provided by the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov. You can also request copies of documents and copyright registration forms from the Copyright Office, Acquisitions and Processing Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559.

More information can also be found at www.piercelaw.edu/tfield/ipbasics.html and www.copyright.umich.edu/law.html.

Monique Cormier is a New York based corporate attorney.

Station Agents

HOW WILL THE REPUBLICANS HANDLE PBS?

By Matt Dunne

When PBS viewers turn on their televisions in June they'll find an unfamiliar face: Tucker Carlson, the conservative pundit and partisan star of CNN's *Crossfire*, who is being brought in to host a new program called "The Tucker Carlson Show." He won't be the first Carlson conservative to echo the PBS airwaves. Carlson's father, Richard W. Carlson, a journalist who currently contributes to the *Weekly Standard*, Christian radio, and the *Washington Times*, was head of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting under the first Bush administration. Tucker's new show, according to PBS affiliate WETA's press release, will offer "the keen insight and wry humor" of Carlson. Its programming is part of an effort to bring more conservative faces to public television, and to make the Corporation for Public Broadcasting more palatable to conservative Americans.

Such changes, however, aren't just happening onscreen. They're happening off screen, too. Some new appointments to the CPB's board of directors have many supporters of public television and independent film and video feeling mighty nervous these days.

Recently appointed board members Cheryl Halpern and Gay Hart Gaines have lots of board experience. Halpern has served on the Board for International Broadcasting and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Gaines has served on the boards of the Best Friends Foundation, the New York City Ballet, and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. That all sounds fine. What doesn't sound so fine is that both women have strong partisan connections.

Halpern has also been in leadership roles on the boards of the International Republican Institute and the Republican Jewish Coalition. And Gaines is the former chairwoman of GOPAC, Newt Gingrich's GOP political action committee. To make matters worse, both Halpern and Gaines are in the very top tier of political contributors—their families personally gave a total of \$816,000 to Republican causes over the last decade and a half.

So what is actually wrong with that? CPB board members are political appointees, so it's only natural that they reflect the political persuasions of the current administrations.

While a look at both Halpern and Gaines' donations to the Republican party raise concerns about whether the CPB board membership is for sale (an

Public Broadcasting) on the CPB board. There was a time when conservatives wanted to do away with the CPB, and Republican appointments to the board were made with an end to starving the station. But when the Gingrich Congress tried to dismantle the CPB in the mid-1990s, the public outcry was intense. Viewers who had grown up on *Sesame Street* and other public television shows of the late 1970s and early 1980s contacted their congressional representatives, asking them to save the station. Arts groups and advocates for children spoke up. The CPB was saved.

The new approach is to stop trying to kill the CPB and to start trying to make it work for the new conservative agenda. The Bush administration has two goals: to more aggressively control content for conservative benefit, and to redirect resources away from national programming and toward locally produced (and usually less political) shows. If there was any doubt that the Bush administration has such an agenda, Halpern's testimony at her confirmation hearing in



The new approach is to stop trying to kill the CPB and to start trying to make it work for the new conservative agenda.

issue also raised by Clinton nominations in the early 1990s), the more critical issue is how these latest appointees are part of the Bush administration's plan to enact political change.

Halpern and Gaines join chairman Kenneth Tomlinson, former editor-in-chief of *Reader's Digest* and the Director of Voice of America during the Reagan Administration, and Katherine Milner Anderson, whose husband is the former chief of staff to Sen. Trent Lott (a consistent critic of the liberal bias of

November should have made things crystal clear, when she said she approves of CPB Board members exercising more control over the program content, and suggested that the board impose accountability and penalties for broadcasts it deems unbalanced. Later, in a public hearing, she agreed with Sen. Trent Lott's statement that Bill Moyers is "the most partisan and nonobjective person I know in media of any kind."

If the additions to the CPB board

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give the Bush administration new power over content allowed on public television, then the upcoming reauthorization of the Public Broadcasting Act, slated for this year, looks likely to get ugly. During the reauthorization process, the Republican majority in Congress could push through any number of policy changes that would fundamentally alter the CPB. Any efforts to introduce censorship of content by the board will be fought by supporters of public television, but having voices like Halpern's advocating for greater board control will make the administration's task easier in Congress.

And the new conservative majority isn't waiting for reauthorization to start reshaping the face of public television, either. Even without the authority to censor programming considered politically biased, the new board is already getting involved with introducing more conservative programming like Tucker Carlson's show. The new board also seems likely to further devolve the power of the CPB.

When the CPB Future Fund was set up six years ago, the board made \$8 million available to local stations. The idea was to encourage the stations to build long-term capacity and sustainability. The fund helped stations set up major giving programs, make investments in technology such as digital archives, and create shared master control facilities. But on January 26, 2004, with the new board in place, board members felt these resources reflected too much centralized control and decided to cut the fund in half, redirecting \$4 million directly to stations throughout the country.

The new board is already creating a stir in the broadcasting world, with many traditional supporters of CPB concerned about the new oversight. But the implications for the independent film community remain to be seen.

The potential down side, however, is much more frightening. How far

could the board go in "balancing" political views it deems too biased? If program funding is reduced, the board will be making decisions about which programs to cut and which to keep. Knocking Bill Moyers off the air might be too obvious, but the twelve-year-old POV program, which has also raised conservatives' hackles, has fewer defenders. As POV is one of the major national outlets for independent film documentary makers, losing it would be a tremendous blow. Furthermore, the board could start policing local programming. Making content approval a prerequisite of federal funding to local affiliates could be next, limiting localism to the board's choice of voice.

Those who care about the continued survival of CPB should be watching the upcoming reauthorization very closely. Conservatives in Congress could hold out for increased programming control for the board, or implement any number of changes that could alter public television's mission. Equal attention should be focused on the budget priority decisions under the current control of the board and the new president. Even before lawmakers have the opportunity to formally remove the buffer between Congress and content on PBS (the role CPB was charged to play at its inception), the new board may put changes in motion through new programming, and it may force cuts in the name of devolution and localism.

If the new board gets its way, independent film may lose a critical outlet or be forced to compromise content. As bad, we may end up with the Fox version of "Fair and Balanced" on our public airwaves. ■

Matt Dunne is the Democratic state senator of Vermont, and the founder of the Vermont Film Commission. Previously, he served two-and-a-half years as National Director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and four terms as a Vermont state representative.

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Avid Xpress Pro

AN EXEMPLARY EDITING PACKAGE

By Greg Gilpatrick

Avid's editing products have been a fixture of the nonlinear editing world for over a decade. Historically, their products have been expensive "turnkey" systems made from souped-up computers with expensive proprietary add-ons. Usually, an Avid system costs many thousands of dollars. The emergence of software-only editing systems like Final Cut Pro, however, has challenged the dominance of turnkey systems, and much of the editing world's attention has turned away from Avid. Avid Xpress Pro is the product that should make editors turn back around and take notice again.

Avid Xpress Pro, a new software-only editing program, offers much of the power of Avid's high-end editing systems for less than \$2,000 in a package that can be run on a variety of Mac and PC computers. Betting that Avid wouldn't ship a buggy editing product, I edited a short film with Xpress Pro for six weeks nearly non-stop. And after using the program, I feel confident in saying that Avid Xpress Pro is an exemplary editing package that provides the power of Avid's turnkey systems in an affordable software-only package that makes only a few compromises, proving that Avid understands the new market for affordable professional software-only editing packages that run on standard desktop computers.

Previously, Avid catered to the inde-

pendent market with Avid Xpress DV, which lacked several of the features of Avid's higher-end products. Unlike Xpress DV, Xpress Pro allows for the capture of uncompressed analog video (via the optional Mojo device), the mixture of different resolution media in the same timeline, support for 24P DV cameras, and full support for generating film negative cut lists. Probably the most important aspect of Xpress Pro is the program's inter-

gram opens, to the Media Tool and Project Window, all the familiar Avid tools and windows are in Xpress Pro. However, with the familiarity comes the annoyance of some Avid interface features as well—such as the way in which a sequence or clip closes whenever the bin window that contains it is closed.

As comfortable with Xpress Pro as those familiar with Avid will be, editors unfamiliar with Avid will be uncomfortable with Xpress Pro. Unlike Final Cut Pro or Premiere, Avid has a relatively strict editing workflow. I like to compare editing with an Avid to shooting on film—film cameras are not easy to learn and operate, they force you to think about and plan for what you are



face and workflow. Avid has been making editing software for a long time and their knowledge and experience shows in the program's polish. For instance, Xpress Pro's support for editing content shot on film that needs to be finished on film is built directly into the program, while Final Cut Pro uses an external program called Cinema Tools that feels clumsily integrated with the editing program. Avid's solution feels like a natural extension of the whole program.

For editors familiar with the Avid interface and workflow, Xpress Pro should be a welcome sight. From the Select Project window when the pro-

gram opens, to the Media Tool and Project Window, all the familiar Avid tools and windows are in Xpress Pro. However, with the familiarity comes the annoyance of some Avid interface features as well—such as the way in which a sequence or clip closes whenever the bin window that contains it is closed.

When working on a big project, there are times when an edit is made too hastily or unintentionally. The strict nature of the Avid interface min-

Avid Xpress Pro with Avid Mojo.

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minizes the chance of such a mistake. I find, much like I am a better filmmaker when I shoot on film, I am a better editor when I edit with Avid.

The Xpress Pro interface can be intimidating for the uninitiated. Even if you have editing experience with other editing applications, expect a steep learning curve with Xpress Pro. The manuals that come with Xpress Pro are not bad, but they also don't really address the needs of users new to the Avid interface. Sam Kauffmann's excellent book, *Avid Editing: A Guide For Beginning and Intermediate Users*, 2nd edition (Focal Press), should be standard issue for any new Avid editor. In less than 400 pages, Kauffmann explains just about everything you need to know about editing with an Avid. The book was published before the release of Xpress Pro, but I found the book to be compatible with the new program.

In many ways, Avid put together the ideal package of features in Xpress Pro, offering just about everything one might want in a desktop editing application. It is the first Avid editing product that offers certain features without forcing you to purchase more expensive Avid hardware. Among such features is an optional breakout box called the Mojo that can capture uncompressed standard definition analog video and play it back to a video monitor as you edit.

The Mojo connects to the host computer through a standard FireWire cable, so it can be used with laptop computers as well as desktops. Unfortunately, Avid couldn't provide me a demo Mojo so I can't describe what it's like to use, but from the materials I've seen and read, it looks like a valuable addition for people who need to edit analog video. Without the Mojo, Xpress Pro can still import DV video captured from a camera or deck through a standard FireWire port on the computer. I was disappointed, though, to discover that Xpress Pro doesn't support the DVCPRO50 stan-

dard that allows for high quality video to be captured through a Firewire port like regular DV.

While I am generally a Mac user, I often consider buying a PC as my next editing system. While Final Cut Pro and Premiere Pro are stationed on opposing sides in the Mac/PC battlefield, Avid has stayed reassuringly neutral. Avid Xpress Pro ships with both the Mac and PC versions in the box. If you buy it for a Mac and then decide to switch to PC (or vice-versa), you don't need to worry about buying and learning a new editing program. This leaves Avid as the only editing software maker that develops for both Mac and Windows.

Avid Xpress Pro combines the best of both worlds. It is an inexpensive software-only editing system similar to Avid Xpress DV, but with features borrowed from Avid's higher-end editing systems. It probably provides the best support for editing film projects in a software-only editing system today. One especially great advantage Avid has over other software makers is its established place at the high end of the post-production market. Avid Xpress Pro projects can be transferred to Avid Media Composer, Symphony, and Pro Tools systems with a higher degree of compatibility than other editing systems.

Strictly speaking, Avid Xpress Pro is a new product, but it also builds on the previously available Avid Xpress DV, which is still available for about half the price. The new features available through Xpress Pro include interface improvements and minor features borrowed from Media Composer, like the "focus" toggle on the timeline that zooms timeline to where you are. Xpress Pro also supports the 24P Advanced Pulldown used by the Panasonic DVX100 in 24P mode.

Avid Xpress Pro also comes with a nice array of extra software, including the impressive Sorenson Squeeze Compression Suite—a program that makes it easy to produce high quality

video for the internet. Sorenson is the company that creates the compression technology used for Quicktime and Flash videos on the internet. Squeeze includes a special version of that technology that will make videos look great at half the normal file size. The Squeeze Compression Suite costs \$450 on its own but is included for free with Xpress Pro.

My only major complaint with Xpress Pro concerns the process of importing and exporting video clips. Like all Avid products, Xpress Pro encodes its video media with Avid's proprietary Meriden technology. When somebody exports a Quicktime clip from Xpress Pro, the default is to leave it compressed with the Meriden codec. This means that anybody creating content for you in a separate application needs to have Avid's codecs installed on their system. Also, many compositors and designers feel that Avid's codecs (the file that defines the way a Quicktime or AVI file is saved) don't look as good as other standard ones. I think they look fine, but it is a valid consideration for graphics or effects-heavy media.

At a suggested retail price of \$1,699, Avid Xpress Pro may be too expensive for many independent filmmakers, and a lot of the same features can still be found in the cheaper Avid Xpress DV. For further guidance, Avid's website (www.avid.com) has a chart that compares the features of each product.

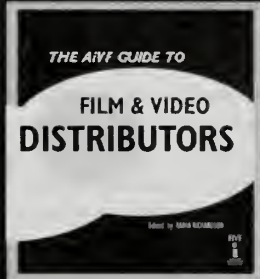
Bottom line—if you need to edit film content and generate film cut lists, or if you want to capture and edit uncompressed analog video with the Mojo device, edit 24P video from the Panasonic DVX100 camera, or finish your project on an Avid finishing system, Xpress Pro will be the Avid product for you, especially if you are already familiar with the Avid interface and workflow. ■

Greg Gilpatrick is a Brooklyn based filmmaker and consultant.

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Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1st for Nov. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.

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DOMESTIC

1 REEL FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 3-6, WA. Deadline: May 15. Fest is held during Seattle's Bumbershoot Arts Festival & welcomes all styles & genres of films up to 30 min. Over 100 films screened in four days. Entries must be under 30 min. & should have been completed no earlier than January 1 of the prior year. Founded: 1996. Cats: doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, student, family, children, commercials. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Warren Etneredge, Curator, 1725 Westlake Ave. N., Ste 202, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 281-7788; fax: 281-7799; filmfest@onereel.org; www.onereel.org.

AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, July 14-18, FL. Deadline: April 9 (features, docs); April 15 (shorts). Founded: 1997. Cats: Feature, Short, doc. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30. Contact: Festival, c/o Film Life, P.O. Box 688, New York, NY, USA 10012; (212) 966-2411; fax: 966-2497; abff@thefilm.life.com; www.abff.com.

A TASTE OF ART SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 1-9, NY. Deadline: April 15. Held at a contemporary art gallery/cafe located in the heart of Tribeca, concurrently with the Tribeca Film Festival. Works can range between 5 to 30 minutes. Founded: 2004. Cats: short, any style or genre. Preview on DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, 147 Duane St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 964-5493; info@atasteofart.com; www.atasteofart.com.

BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-14, MA. Deadline: May 1; May 15 (final). Founded: 1989. Cats: feature, experimental, animation, doc. Formats: Beta SP, 35mm, 16mm, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$15; \$25 (final)-no fees for international submissions. Contact: Festival, 1001 Watertown Street, West Newton, MA 02465; (617) 244-9899; fax: 244-9894; program@bjff.org; www.bjff.org.

BRAINWASH MOVIE FESTIVAL, July / August, CA. Deadline: May 1; May 10 (Final). Annual fest provides the opportunity to show "odd & obscure shorts, performance videos, works made for TV & out-of-genre efforts." Independent shorts & features from across the globe. Founded: 1995. Cats: TV, feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (shorts, under 13 min.); \$30 (final, shorts); \$50 (features); \$75 (final, features). Contact: Shelby Toland, Box 23302, Oakland, CA 94623-

honorarium awarded. Formats: Beta, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: UCI Human Rights Film Festival, 1200 N. Alvarado St., Irvine, CA 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.polyesterprince.com.

DAHLONEGA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 2-5, GA. Deadline: May 15. Festival offers underexposed film & videomakers in emerging digital formats a higher profile venue. Cats: 15 cats (see website). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV, DigiBeta, DVD, Beta, Mini DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$50. Contact: Barry Norman, Executive Director, 661 Windcroft Circle, Acworth, GA 30101; (404) 885-4410; fax: 885-0700; info@diff.tv; www.diff.tv.

FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, Sept. 16-19, CT. Deadline: May 1; June 1 (final). Film Fest New Haven is committed to supporting the creativity of independent filmmakers. Founded: 1996. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation,



Hamptons Rising

It may seem difficult when recovering from the depths of winter to think about October, but the Hamptons Film Festival is certainly something to look forward to. The five-day event takes place on the East End of Long

Island. Founded twelve years ago to celebrate American independent film, the slate can be eclectic—from Hollywood premieres (Jon Favreau's *Elf* premiered in the 2003 festival), to true-to-the-core indies like last year's Golden Starfish winner *Screen Door Jesus*. This year's fest boasts a large collection of world cinema and fresh films focused on challenging a legacy of war and conflict. See listing.

0302; (415) 273-1545; shelby@brainwashm.com; www.brainwashm.com.

CINEVEGAS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, June 11-19, NV. Deadline: April 9. Cats: feature, doc, short, student. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Contact: Festival, 2290 Corporate Circle, 1st floor, Henderson, NV 89074; 702.992.7979; fax: (702) 898-5191; info-cinevegas@cenevegas.com; www.cinevegas.com.

CITY OF IRVINE HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., CA. Deadline: May 1. Annual fest is seeking films dealing with human rights or international relations issues. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Awards:

experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25/\$30; \$30/\$40 (final). Contact: Nina Adams, Artistic Director, Box 9644, New Haven, CT 06536; (203) 776-6789; fax: 776-4260; info@filmfest.org; www.filmfest.org.

HAMPTONS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-24, NY. Deadline: May 14 (shorts); June 4 (final shorts); May 14 (feature/doc) June 18 (final feature/doc). Annual fest for features, shorts & documentaries created to provide a forum for filmmakers around the world who express an independent vision. Founded: 1993. Cats: feature, short, doc, world cinema, films of conflict & resolution,

student, youth media, family, children. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: shorts \$35/\$50; features, docs \$50/\$75. Contact: HIFF, 59 Franklin St. Ste 208, New York, NY 10013; (212) 431-6292; fax: 431-5440; programming@hamptonsfilmfest.org; www.hamp tonsfilmfest.org.

IFP MARKET, Sept. 19-24, NY. Deadline: May 10: narrative scripts, works-in-progress (doc and narrative), shorts, docs; May 28 (final): shorts, docs, works-in-progress. Annual event is the longest-running U.S. market devoted to new, emerging film talent. Market filmmakers receive access to these industry executives via targeted networking meetings, pitch sessions, screenings, and more. Cats: feature, doc, work-in-progress, short, script. Awards: More than \$150,000 in cash and prizes awarded to emerging artists, including two \$10,000 Gordon Parks Awards for Emerging African-American filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, DigiBeta, . Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$50 application fee; Registration fees (paid on acceptance only): \$200 - \$450. Contact: Wendy Sax, 104 West 29 St., 12 fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200 x203 (Market), x206 (No Borders); fax: 465-8525; marketinfo@ifp.org; www.ifp.org.

INT'L BUDDHIST FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 20-24, NY, CA. Deadline: May 15. Non competitive fest of films about, inspired by or related (even vaguely) to Buddhist cultures, places, personalities, issues & experience. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, youth media, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video, digital. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC), DVD. Entry Fee: \$25 (shorts); \$45 (features). Contact: Festival, P.O. Box 9617, Berkeley, CA 94709; (510) 985-1805; fax: 985-0185; cfe@ibff.org; www.ibff.org.

LA CINEMA FE - LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK, July 7-14, NY. Deadline: April 30. Fest's mission is to promote a wider and deeper understanding of the roots, life and diverse cultures of the Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities in Latin America, the United States, Spain and Portugal. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, Beta. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, 90 Convent Ave., Ste. 42, New York, New York 10027; (212) 281-5786; lacinemafe@yahoo.com; www.lacine-mafe.org.

LESBIAN LOOKS, Sept./Oct., AZ. Deadline:

May 15. Fest seeks work of all lengths. Fee paid for all works screened. Incl. synopsis, brief artist bio & electronic still(s) w/ entry. Founded: 1993. Cats: short, doc, feature, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry Fee: \$10. Contact: Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, U. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721; (520) 621-1239; fax: (520) 621-9662; bseckinger@u.arizona.edu; w3.arizona /edu/~lgbcom.

LOS ANGELES LATINO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 16-25, CA. Deadline: April 15. A competitive fest, LALIFF establishes a platform to accomplish many goals, the most important of which is giving filmmakers an opportunity to meet potential distributors or other prominent members of the industry, network with studios and their writing programs or script lab. Founded: 1997. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (shorts & docs), 1/2" (shorts & docs), Beta (shorts & docs), DigiBeta, Beta, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (features); \$10 (Docs and shorts). Contact: Marlene Dermer, 6777 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 469-9066; fax: 469-9067; mdermer@earthlink.net; www.latinofilm.org.

MAINE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, July 9-18, ME. Deadline: April 30. A leading New England regional film fest w/ an exceptional emphasis on int'l productions. Festival seeks features & shorts "shot in Maine or w/ a significant Maine focus." Founded: 1998. Cats: Feature, Short, doc. Awards: Audience Award (Best Feature). Formats: 35mm, 3/4", Beta SP, 16mm, S-VHS, 1/2", Beta, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35; \$40 (final). Contact: MIFF, 10 Railroad Sq., Waterville, ME 04901; (207) 861-8138; fax: 872-5502; info@miff.org; www.miff.org.

NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-20, MA. Deadline: April 16 (film); March 19 (screenplay competition). Formats: 35mm, Video, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (features); \$25 (shorts, 35 min. or less); \$15 (5 min or less). Contact: 1633 Broadway, Ste. 14-334, New York, NY 10019; (212) 708-1278; ackfest@aol.com; www.nantucketfilmfestival.org.

NEW ORLEANS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-14, LA. Deadline: May 9; June 13 (final). Annual fest features premieres, retros, discussions & galas. Entries of all lengths/ genres, incl. music videos welcome. Founded: 1990. Cats:

Any style/genre, Anim., Doc, Experimental, Short, Feature, Student, Music Video. Awards based on jury selection. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", 35mm (by invite only), Beta, 35mm, DVD. Preview on VHS. Fee: \$35; \$45 (final). Contact: NOFF/Competitive Division, 843 Carodelet Street, #1, New Orleans, LA 70130; (504) 523-5271; fax: (208) 975-3478; incompetition@neworleansfilm fest.com; www.neworleansfilmfest.com.

NEXTFRAME: UFVA'S TOURING FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FILM & VIDEO, Oct., PA. Deadline: April 30; May 31 (final). All entries must have been created by students enrolled in a college, univ., or graduate school at time of prod. & should have been completed no earlier than May of previous 2 yrs. Founded: 1993. Cats: Doc, Experimental, Animation, Feature. Formats: 16mm, Beta SP (NTSC), Beta SP. Preview on VHS (PAL/SECAM okay for preview only), DVD. Entry Fee: \$25; \$20 (UFVA members). Free for int'l entries. Contact: Festival, Dept. Film & Media Arts, Temple University 011-00, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 923-3532; fax: 204-6740; nextfest@temple.edu; www.temple.edu/nextframe.

OUTNOW: KANSAS CITY GAY AND LESBIAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 25-July 8, MO. Deadline: March 20; April 16 (final). Largest LGBT film fest in the Midwest accepts films/videos of all types and lengths. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: Shorts: \$15, \$25 (final); features: \$25, \$35 (final). Contact: Festival, c/o LGCC-KC., 207 Westport Rd Ste 212, Kansas City, MO 64111; Email lisaevans@kcgayfilmfest.org; www.kcgayfilmfest.org.

PHILADELPHIA INT'L GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, July 15-27, PA. Deadline: April 30. Competitive fest screening int'l features, documentaries, & shorts, w/ cash prizes for both jury & audience awards. Cats: feature, short, doc, children. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: No Entry Fee; Send media kit & screener.. Contact: Festival, Philadelphia Film Society, 234 Market St., 4th Flr, Philadelphia, PA 19106; (215)733-0608 ext. 249; fax: (215) 733-0668; email rmurray@phillyfests.com; www.phillyfests.com.

RESFEST DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. - Dec., CA, DC, IL, NY. Deadline: April 16; May 14 (final). Annual nat'l/int'l touring fest seeks short films/videos exploring the dynamic interplay of film, art, music & design. The Fest

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showcases the best of the year's shorts, features, music videos, & animation along w/ screenings, live music events, parties, panel discussions, & tech demos. The underlying guideline for submissions is Innovation. Cats: Doc, Experimental, Feature, Animation, music video, short. Entry Fee: \$20 (early), \$25 (final). Contact: Festival, 601 West 26th Street, Suite 1150, New York, NY 10001; filmmaker@resfest.com; www.resfest.com.

RHODE ISLAND INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 10-15, RI. Deadline: May 15, June 1 (final). Fest takes place in historic Providence, RI & has become a showcase for int'l independent filmmakers & their work. Fest is a qualifying fest in the Short Film category w/ the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Founded: 1997. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student, youth media, family, children. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, S-VHS, 1/2", DV, DVD. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$40. Contact: George T. Marshall, Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 861-4445; fax: 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org.

ROXBURY FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 18-22. Deadline: April 30; May 31 (final). Fest's goal is to "celebrate works written, produced, & directed by filmmakers of color." Founded: 1998. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP, DigiBeta. Entry Fee: \$20 student; \$30 independent filmmaker; \$40 industry; \$25 late fee. Contact: c/o ACT Roxbury Consortium, 2201 R. Washington St., Ste. 300, Roxbury, MA 02119; (617) 541-3900 x. 222; fax: 541-4900; csilva@madisonpark.org; www.roxburyfilmfestival.com.

SAN DIEGO ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL, October 13-17, CA. Deadline: April 15; May 30 (final). Annual competitive fest presented by the Asian American Journalists Association of San Diego seeks short-to feature-length narratives, docs, experimental, animation & mixed-genre works made by or about Asian & Pacific Americans. Entry form avail. from web-site. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, animation, mixed genre works, short. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry Fee: \$20; \$30 (final). Contact: SDAFF, 11171 Camino Ruiz #57, San Diego, CA 92126; (858) 699-2717; entries@sdaff.org; www.sdaff.org.

STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL, July 21 - 31, NY. Deadline: May 1. Eleven days, 50 screenings ranging from most exciting for-

eign, art & popular films to world & US premieres of best independent cinema from the U.S. & abroad. Cats: Feature, Short, Doc, Animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (shorts up to 30 min.); \$40 (features over 30 min.). Contact: Patrick Kelly, Stellar Arts Center, Stony Brook University, Rm 2032, Stony Brook, NY 11794; (631) 632-7234; fax: (631) 632-7354; filmfestival@stonybrookfilmfestival.com; www.stonybrookfilmfestival.com.

VISIONFEST, June 23-27, NY. Deadline: April 20; March 31 (Screenplays). Formally Guerilla Film and Video Festival. Fest's mission is to spotlighting emerging talent and exclusively promoting domestic filmmaking. Founded: 2001. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, any style or genre; no music videos. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, DigiBeta, DV, 1/2". Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 (shorts); \$40 (features). Contact: Bruno Derlin, PO Box 280223, Brooklyn, NY 11228; (718) 837-5736; domanivision@aol.com; www.domanivision.org.

ZEITGEIST INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, June 14 / July 12 / Aug. 9, CA. Deadline: April 30. ZIFF is an irreverent film/video fest, held in San Francisco in the backyard of the Zeitgeist Bar (seats 300). Works can be in any category/genre "that can hold the attention of the average bar patron". Cats: short (15 min or less). Formats: 16mm, 1/2", DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: B Berzins, 199 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 786-9967; ikooking@yahoo.com; www.overcookedcinema.com.

INTERNATIONAL

ANTIMATTER: FESTIVAL OF UNDERGROUND SHORT FILM & VIDEO, Sept. 17-25, Canada. Deadline: April 16; May 31 (final). Films must be under 30 min. & produced w/in last two years. Founded: 1998. Cats: any style or genre, short. Formats: 1/2", 16mm, DVD, Mini-DV, Super 8. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$10; \$15 (final). Contact: Todd Eacrett, Director, 1322 Broad St., Studio F, Victoria, B.C., Canada V8W-2A9; (250) 385-3327; fax: 385-3327; rogueart@islandnet.com; www.antimatter.ws.

AVIGNON FILM FESTIVAL-FRANCE, June 22-27, France. Deadline: May 1. Celebrates European & American independent film w/ new films, retros, roundtables on pertinent issues, interviews w/ filmmakers & daily receptions. Non-French-language films must

be subtitled in French. Founded: 1984. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short. Awards: Jury awards for features, shorts, screenplay & cinematography. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Jerome Henry Rudes, 10, montee de la Tour, Villeneuve-les-Avignon, France 30400; 011 33 4 90 25 93 23; fax: 90 25 93 24; jhr2001@aol.com; www.avignonfilmfest.com.

EDINBURGH INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, August 18-29, Scotland. Deadline: April 20. Fest of discovery, celebration of cinema, centre of debate, & catalyst for new directors & first films. Showcases about 110 new features & 120 new shorts each yr; shows live action & animated shorts before every film in every section. Founded: 1947. Cats: Feature, Short, Animation, Experimental, doc. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: £10-£80. Contact: Shane Danielsen, Director, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ, Scotland, UK; 44 131 228 4051; fax: 229 5501; info@edfilmfest.org.uk; www.edfilmfest.org.uk.

HUNGARIAN MULTICULTURAL CENTER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 18-23, Hungary. Deadline: April 20. Annual fest accepts film is dedicated to promote cultural expansion of the visual arts between Hungary & the United States. Work must be under 30 min. in length & been completed in past 2 years. Cats: Animation, Feature, Short, Doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC), incl. SASE for return. Entry Fee: US\$35. Contact: Hungarian Multicultural Center, Inc., PO Box 141374, Dallas, TX, US 75214; (972) 225-8053; fax: (972) 308-8191; bszechy@yahoo.com; http://hungarian-multicultural-center.com.

INT'L FILM FESTIVAL CINEMA JOVE, June 14-21, Spain. Deadline: April 15. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Rafael Maluenda, Festival Director, Calle Jeronimo de Monsoriu, 19, Valencia, Spain 46022; 011 34 96 331 10 47; fax: 331 08 05; cinemajove@ivaj.gva.es; www.gva.es/cinemajove/.

JERUSALEM INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, July 8-17, Israel. Deadline: April 18. Annual fest will screen over 175 films in various cats. Must be Israeli premieres. Founded: 1984. Cats: Feature, Short, Retro, Jewish, Doc, Exp. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Lia van Leer, Director, Box 8561, Derech Hebron, Jerusalem, Israel 91083; 011 9722 565

4333; fax: 565 4333; festival@jer-clin.org.il; www.jff.org.il.

NICKEL INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 23-27, Canada. Deadline: March 15; May 1 (final). The fest dubs itself as a "fest created by filmmakers for filmmakers." In addition to screenings of films & videos, the fest stages actor's workshops, Q & A periods w/ filmmakers, showcases local theatre pieces & features local music & readings between screenings. Founded: 2001. Cats: feat, doc, short, music video, any style/genre. Formats: Beta SP, 16mm, 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC), DVD. Fee: shorts \$10, features \$20. Contact: Roger Maunder, 118 Gower St., St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada; (709) 722-3456; nickelfestival@yahoo.ca; www.nickelfestival.com.

PLANET FOCUS: TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 28-Oct. 3, Canada. Deadline: April 1; May 3. Fest pays special consideration to works that push the boundaries of the accepted notions of 'environment'; works that present cultural perspectives that are under-represented in Canada & works that will have their world or Canadian premiere at fest. Cats: any style or genre. Entry Fee: \$15; \$20 (final). Contact: Festival, 517 College Street, Suite 405, Toronto, ON, Canada M6G 4A2; (416) 531-1769; info@planetinfocus.org; www.planetinfocus.org.

ST. JOHN'S INT'L WOMEN'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, October 20-24, Canada. Deadline: May 31. Festival seeks films & videos made by women. Founded: 1989. Cats: Experimental, Animation, Feature, Doc. Awards: Non-competitive. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. VHS. Entry Fee: \$15. Contact: Program Committee, PO Box 984, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1C 5M3; (709) 754-3141; fax: 754-3143; womensfilmfest@nfd.net; www.womensfilmfestival.com.

VILA DO CONDE INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 3-11, Portugal. Deadline: April 16th (for int'l competition), or May 17th (for the nat'l). Annual fest accepts films under 60 min. made in the last 2 years. Cats: Short, doc, animation, any style/genre. Great Prize in each category; Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No fees. Contact: Mario Micaelo, Auditorio Municipal, Praca da Republica, Vila do Conde, Portugal 4480-715; 011 351 252 646 516; fax: 351 252 248 416; festival@curtasmetragens.pt; www.curtasmetragens.pt.



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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices and screening opportunities are listed free of charge as space permits. Commercial notices are billed at classified rates. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1 for Sept. issue). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending.

DISTRIBUTION

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS, the leader of documentary films that focus on health & powerful life challenging situations is seeking additional programs to add to our award winning collection. Our strong, targeted marketing program & film festivals will help increase awareness for you. We look forward to previewing your film. Please send your film to Aquarius Health Care Videos, 18 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770. (888) 440-2963.

ARTHOUSE FILMS & DOCS WANTED for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, Greene Street Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL distributes videos for social change, including such collections as the Library of African Cinema and African American Perspectives. 500 Third Street, Suite 505, San Francisco, CA 94110; phone: 415-284-7800; fax: 415-284-7801; contact@newsreel.org, www.newsreel.org.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; gcrowdus@cinemaguild.com. Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS VIDEOS on guidance issues such as violence, drug prevention, mentoring, children's health & parenting for exclusive distribution. Our marketing gives unequalled results! Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS 20+ years as an industry leader! Join more than 100 award-winning film & video producers. Send us your new works on healthcare, mental health, aging, disabilities, and related issues. (800) 937-4113; www.fanlight.com.

INDIE-UNDERGROUND seeks offbeat, edgy features and docs for foreign/domestic distribution. Gross % on Internet sales. Established track record, fast response. Visit our submissions page at www.Indie-Underground.com; send us your show.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and video makers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your audience while working within a remarkable community of activist filmmakers, New Day is

PASSION RIVER: Arthouse films & docs wanted for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

REINVENTIONS is now accepting films of any genre that depict a transformation for our film festival and other programs. Reinventions is a newly formed not-for-profit film studio dedicated to presenting provocative stories of non-fictional and fictional transformation. For further info, www.ReInventions.org. To submit work visit www.ReInventions.org/howtosubmitfilm.html.

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENING

BASEMENT FILMS of Albuquerque, NM, is a mobile, volunteer-run venue for experimental, underground & other under-represented forms of small-gauge (8mm, 16mm) film & video making. To screen your film work with us, send a VHS preview tape with a S.A.S.E. & any written material about it and yourself to BASEMENT FILMS, P.O. Box 7669, ALBQ, NM 87194. We pride ourselves on screening work

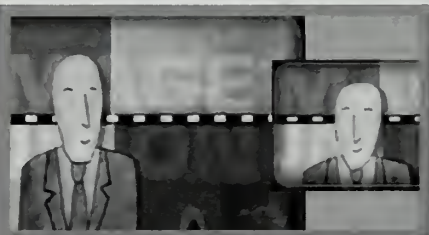


Image Union

Since 1978, Chicago-based public TV station WTTW has been hosting what is now considered the longest running independent film and video showcase in America. The Emmy

Award-winning series, *Image Union*, is a thirty-minute program showcasing "everything from animation and documentaries to narratives and experimental films," which the *Chicago Tribune* called "some of the most vibrant work in the field." The program accepts submissions on a year round basis. Check out www.wttw.com/imageunion for more information on how to submit and when to tune in.

the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and the media we represent. Explore our catalog at www.newday.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at join@newday.com or (650) 347-5123.

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK distributes only youth-produced videos. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Educational videos in all subjects and 10+ years experience. 1 (800) 639-5680. www.noodlehead.com.

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CAFE NUBA in Denver, Colorado is a monthly arts and social change venue featuring indie film and video by filmmakers of color, spoken word, performance art, and political prose. Organizers are cultural activists, filmmakers and educators seeking to promote diverse images of urban culture and creativity. Non-mainstream, guerrilla films, queer, and hip-hop creations desired. Seeking 5-to-45 min films, any genre. For info www.panafricanarts.org or

BluBlakwomyn@yahoo.com; 303-832-3190. Submit work, VHS/DVD (NTSC) with contact info and support materials (no entry fee) to Pan African Arts Society, 700 E. 24th Ave. Ste 9, Denver, CO 80205.

CAPE COD FILM SOCIETY SCREENING SERIES of Brewster, MA, seeks experimental, documentary & fiction films & videos. Films can be any length, genre or style, but we are particularly interested in works by filmmakers willing to present in person on Cape Cod. We look for works which are innovative and thought-provoking—creatively, politically, and/or intellectually - to facilitate audience discussion. Some travel assistance may be available as well as an honorarium for works screened. Please send work on VHS, DVD, or mini-DV w/ filmmaker bio, publicity materials (if available), and a statement or synopsis. Also indicate your availability to appear with your work for Q&A. Include SASE. Rebecca M. Alvin, Cape Cod Film Society Screening Series, PO Box 1727, Brewster, MA 02631-7727. For more info: capecodfilm@yahoo.com or 1-866-235-8397.

CINEMARENO is a nonprofit film society featuring monthly screenings showcasing independent films & videos. Focusing on new, undistributed works. Formats: 16mm, Beta-SP, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry fee: \$20; fee waived for AIVF members. Entry form & instructions at www.cinemareno.org. Contact: Cinemareno, PO Box 5372, Reno, NV 89513; cinemareno@excite.com.

DREAM SERIES: seeks challenging social-issue documentaries that promote frank community discussions about issues of racial prejudice and social injustice that fall under the Martin Luther King, Jr. legacy. Selected works are screened for this ongoing monthly series at the MLK National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA, and promoted, listed, and reviewed in local print. Formats: VHS, Beta. Send non returnable VHS screeners to Mark A. Smith/ DREAM, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW, Suite N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; mark@imagefv.org.

ECHO PARK FILM CENTER microcinema seeking submissions to screen for weekly cinema events. We screen documentary, animation, experimental, and short narrative films & videos. We do not screen feature length. Filmmakers receive an honorarium. Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., LA, CA, 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.echoparkfilmcenter.org.

FLICKER NYC is a bi-monthly show of new Super 8 and 16mm films by local filmmakers held at the Knitting Factory. Each show features new films, vintage Super 8 reels, homemade cookies, raffles for Super 8 stock, T-shirts, and Flicker Super 8 guides. Submissions are ongoing and there is no submission fee. www.flickernyc.com.

FREIGHT FILM SALON seeks submissions for its Monday Night Shorts showcase series. Work can be any genre, 20 min. or fewer; must be on VHS or DVD. Will screen on 6' screen, 2 plasma screens & four monitors. Email FreightFilmSalon@yahoo.com for additional info, or visit www.FreightNYC.com.

LESBIAN LOOKS of Tucson, AZ, seeks narrative, doc, experimental & mixed-genre of all lengths for 2004 season. DVD & VHS NTSC only. Fee paid for all works screened. Deadline: June 1, 2004. Send VHS previewtape, brief synopsis, artist bio & electronic stills to Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, bsecking@u.arizona.edu; <http://w3.arizona.edu/~lgbcom>.

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a monthly microcinema screening program of int'l short films, videos & digital works, seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Submit VHS (NTSC/PAL) or DVD/Mini-DV (NTSC only) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; 415-864-0660, www.microcinema.com.

NEW FILMMAKERS at New York's Anthology Film Archives seeks submissions for weekly screening series. No entry fee or form. Send a VHS copy of your film or video w/ a brief synopsis to David Maquiling, New Filmmakers, Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, NY, NY 10009. www.newfilmmakers.com.

NEW FILMMAKERS HOWL at New York's Pioneer Theatre seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. Form available on website; \$25 submission fee. Send a VHS copy of your film or video with form/fee to Thomas Bannister, New Filmmakers, PO Box

4956, New York, NY 10185. For more info, www.newfilmmakers.com.

THE REVIVAL HOUSE a sixty-seat independent cinema located in Westerly, Rhode Island is seeking submissions for its ongoing film program. The venue is in a building on the National Register of Historic Places and is interested in showcasing the best cinema available. Shorts, features, independents & docs. We pay too! Formats are VHS, 3/4" & DVD. For more information visit our website: www.revivalhouse.net.

SHOW & TELL, a film, video & music event that provides a venue to show the works and talents in an unconventional location. Seeking 1 to 20-minute film/videos on VHS. (Submissions are non-returnable) SHOW & TELL, c/o Black Robb 535 Havemeyer Ave #12H, New York, NY 10473; (718) 409-1691; blackrobb@netzero.net.

TIMEBASE, in Kansas City seeks innovative short films, videos, installations & web-based projects. No entry fee. Rolling deadline. Send VHS, DVD, or CD-Rom: Timebase, 5100 Rockhill Rd Haag 202, KC MO 64110. (816) 235-1708; www.time-base.org.

TINY PICTURE CLUB seeks Super-8 films for quarterly, theme-based programs. Films will screen on Super 8 & be accompanied by live music. Tiny Picture Club is especially interested in work from the Portland area. Send VHS tape to: Tiny Picture Club, 109 NE Holland St. Portland, OR 97211; www.tinypictureclub.org.

VIDEOTHEATRE, NYC is New York's never-ending DV festival! Currently seeking original films on DV formats. Monthly deadlines. Year-round submission. Weekly programming in two AC theaters located on Manhattan's downtown theater row. Video Theatre NYC @aol.com; www.videotheatrenyc.com.

GALLERIES • EXHIBITIONS

ARC GALLERY reviewing videos for Media Room. View Media Room Prospectus at www.arcgallery.org or send SASE for Media Room prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 734 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL or call (312) 733-2787 for info W-S 12-6, Sun 12-4.

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE in PA seeks artists for exhibition at the site. Some funding avail. for media arts. Proposals are reviewed each fall. See website

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TOURING PROGRAMS

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT: a tour of 6 artists who travel to 6 sites in the Southeast, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & \$20 entry fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor any works-in-progress. Note: Some circuit sites are limited to VHS projection. After pre-screening 4. Contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; sleonard@arts.state.sc.us; www.southcarolinaarts.com.

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is an ongoing event hitting major cities & cultural centers on a global level. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip-Hop culture and connect with other mediamakers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com: Info@HipHopFilmFest.com, or call 415 225-1583.

BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

BROOKDALE TELEVISION is a progressive educational access channel in Momouth County, NJ, reaching over 79,000 households at the Jersey shore. We are currently seeking independent works for consideration for cablecast. All lengths and genres considered. Nonexclusive rights release upon acceptance, no payment but promotional and contact information will be provided on air and through our office. VHS for preview, BetaSP, MiniDV, SVHS, and DVD accepted for Cablecast. Contact Roger Conant, BTV, Brookdale Community College, 765 Newman Springs Road, Atec Rm. 112, Lincroft, NJ 07738; (732) 224-2467; rconant@brookdalecc.edu.

DUTV is a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia that seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. Will return tapes. Beta SP, DV, S-VHS & DVD accepted for possible cablecast. VHS for preview. Contact: Debbie Rudman, DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St, Bldg. 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia,

PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org.

FASTSHOOTERS is accepting short feature films, animations and videos to assemble in a TV-broadcast-length collection for pitch to networks. All mediums and genres. For more information: www.fastshooters.com.

FILMFINDS, KSC-TV's new showcase of independent films, now seeks work for broadcast in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Only feature-length narrative films considered. Work must have played in at least 2 juried film fests & cannot have had a wide release or previously been broadcast on network TV. For more info & a downloadable appl., www.mnfilm.org; filmfinds@mnfilm.org.

FILMS/VIDEO WANTED: For weekly Experimental Video-art TV program on Time Warner Networks/broadcast in Manhattan & Brooklyn 800,000 viewers. Snack on Art, PO Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; www.snackonart.org; snackonart@yahoo.com.

INDUSTRIALTELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show now in its 8th year, is looking for experimental, humorous, quirky dramatic, erotic, horror/sci-fi, animated and underground works for the new season. Controversial, uncensored and subversive material is encouraged & given priority. We guarantee exposure in the NYC area. We accept: DVC Pro, mini-DV, SVHS, VHS, 3/4" SP, 3/4", Hi-8. Contact: Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; ed@2droogies.com; www.2droogies.com.

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-60 min. for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, (415) 553-2218; sdwyer@kqed.org.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY TV STATION IN Chappaqua, NY, with a potential viewership of over 100,000 people, offers the opportunity for new and seasoned video/media producers to cablecast their projects. Preference given to Northern Westchester but all Westchester residents are welcome. For more info contact NCCTV@hotmail.com.

P.O.V. PBS's award-winning showcase of independent, non-fiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of indep. nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31 (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov.

PBS INDEPENDENT LENS: The PBS Programming Department is seeking submissions for the 2004 fall season of its independent film and video series, INDEPENDENT LENS with a deadline of September, 2004. Offering filmmakers a national broadcast venue for their works, INDEPENDENT LENS accepts completed works of all genres and lengths. Fiction, nonfiction documentaries or live short action works are welcome. For further information on submissions call the PBS Programming Department at 703/739-5010 or go to www.pbs.org/producers.

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Seek public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-2534; efreedma@fau.edu.

SHORT LIST: Showcase for int'l short films, airs throughout North America on PBS stations. Licenses all genres, 30 sec. to 20 mins. Produced in association w/ Eastman Kodak & Cox Channel 4. Awards 5 Kodak product grants annually. Submit on VHS, DVD, or CD. Appl. form avail. on www.theshortlistcc.com. Fax: (619) 462-8266; shortlist@mail.sdsu.edu.

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to Short Films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. www.shorttv.com, (212) 226-6258.

SUB ROSA STUDIOS seeks a variety of different video & film productions for ongoing Syracuse-area TV programming & VHS/DVD/TV worldwide release. Seeking shorts or feature-length nonfiction productions in all areas of the special-interest or instructional fields, cutting-edge documentaries & children & family programming. Also seeking feature-length fiction, all genres, especially horror & sci-fi. Supernatural-themed products wanted, both fiction & nonfiction, especially supernatural/horror fiction shot documentary style (realistic). Ron Bonk, Sub Rosa Studios, call (315) 652-3868; or email webmaster@b-movie.com; www.b-movie.com.

WOLFTOOB: local New York City TV show is looking for short films and music videos from

1-17 min. Wolftoob is watched by thousands. Contact: info@wolftoob.com.

ZOOM: ZOOM is a kids-only series on PBS, featuring kids plays, films, games & more. ZOOM is seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta, digital formats. Age: 5-14. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gunther, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; marcy_gunther@wgbh.org.

WEBCASTS

TURBULENCE is a project of New Radio and Performing Arts, Inc. (NRPA), a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has as its core mission the commissioning of netart works by emerging and established artists. To be considered for year round commissions, please see our guidelines @ <http://turbulence.org/guide> lines.html To receive announcements about specific competitions, please go to <http://turbulence.org> and click on "Subscribe" in the table of contents. Turbulence@turbulence.org.

WIGGED PRODUCTIONS is an internet based arts organization dedicated to making new and innovative art more accessible through broadcast and online presentations. Seeking recently completed videos less than 10 minutes that interpret pieces of art such as dance, music, poetry or visual art by means of cinematographic methods. Selected videos will be streamed over the Internet via Wigged's homepage. www.wiggged.net. Deadline: ongoing.

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Deadline: First of each month, two months prior to cover date (e.g. May 1st for July/August issue). **Contact:** (212) 807-1400, x241; fax: (212) 463-8519; classifieds@aivf.org.

PER ISSUE COST: 0-240 characters (incl. spaces & punctuation): \$45 for nonmembers/\$30 for AIVF members; 241-360 chars: \$65/\$45; 361-480 chars: \$80/\$60; 481-600 chars: \$95/\$75; over 600 characters: Call for quote, (212) 807-1400, x241.

FREQUENCY DISCOUNT: \$5 off per issue for ads running 5+ times.

Ads exceeding the specified length will be edited. Place ad via www.aivf.org/independent/classifieds or type copy and mail with the check or money order to: AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013. Include billing address, daytime phone, # of issues, and valid member ID# for member discount. To pay by VISA/MC/AMEX include card #, name on card and expiration date.

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EQUIPMENT RENTALS FOR LOW BUDGETS: Production Junction is owned & operated by a fellow independent. Cameras, Lights, Mics, Decks, etc. Call Chris 24/7 (917) 288-9000 or view equipment & rates @ ProductionJunction.com.

FILMMAKING E-BOOK "MAKING SHORT FILMS." Mainly digital; mainly minimalist; mainly for beginners. Learn the art of film through hands-on experience. Download PDF version you can print. By Jim Piper, long-time professor of filmmaking. Visit www.makingshortfilms.com.

KEEP IT DIGITAL! Digibeta deck for rent (Sony A-500) \$400/day, \$1200/week. Also dubs to/from Digibeta to Beta-SP, VHS, DVcam, mini-DV, etc. Uncompressed Avid suite, too. Production Central (212) 631-0435.

LET'S MAKE YOUR MOVIE. We have a 24' grip truck and a 14' truck with lighting, electrical etc. Also have a 60kw generator mounted on a separate truck, a tulip type crane and elmack dolly and car trailer. Also have a ARRI 16mm camera and DAT sound system. I am a very experienced actor looking for the right role and deal, in which case I would be willing to offer all of the above on a deferment basis. Contact Danny at (770) 540-6729.

OFFICE FOR RENT IN SUITE OF INDIES. Large windows, great view. Midtown 7/24 building. Short or long term sub-lease. Tel: (212) 947-1395.

PR FOR YOUR FILM: Open City Communications provides high-impact PR support for film & video releases, webcasts,

festivals, online sites, books, special events, creative artists & other entities in need of media attention. Opencity@aol.com.

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ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER/CONTROLLER: Experience in both corporate & nonprofit sectors. Hold MBA in Marketing & Accounting. Freelance work sought. Sam Sagenkahn (917) 374-2464.

ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com.

ARE YOU STUCK? Fernanda Rossi, script & documentary doctor, specializes in narrative structure in all stages of the filmmaking process, including story development, fundraising trailers and post-production. She has documented over 30 films and is the author of "Trailer Mechanics." For private consultations and workshops visit www.documentarydoctor.com or write to info@documentarydoctor.com.

BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography for feature films and shorts. Owns 35mm Arri BL 3, Super 16, 24p, complete lighting pkg. and a Tulip Crane. Best Cinematography Award for "Final Round" and other film Awards at Sundance, Berlin, and Raindance. Call for more info at: (212)208-0968 or www.dpFlynt.com bcflynt@yahoo.com.

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elliotsoko@aol.com.

COMPOSER: Established film scorer, classically trained, awards, 100s of commissions, complete recording facility available for film soundtracks. Tell me what's in your head. (215) 487-9446. www.johnnavarese.com.

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Notices

By Jessica McDowell

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1 for Sept. issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending anyone anything.

COMPETITIONS

ACTION/CUT SHORT FILM COMPETITION:

This competition will showcase new indie filmmakers and their work from across the world, recognize the most talented with multiple awards & career services, and open access doors to the Hollywood film industry. Cats: fiction, doc, animation; prizes: \$25,000 in cash, career services, and sponsor awards, including career advisory meetings with industry players and exposure at film festivals, distribution deal offers, and promotions throughout the biz and the web. Deadline: May 15, 2004. Visit: www.actioncut.com or call (800)815-5545.

BRITISH SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION,

presented by Kaos Films, seeks original, short, unpublished, unproduced & unsold screenplays (5-15 minutes) from all over the world. Winning script will be produced by Kaos Films & premiere at the British Academy (BAFTA) to an audience of agents, producers, directors, film sales agents & fellow writers. Deadline: May 28, 2004. Entry fee: £25 (US \$39.95). Info: info@kaosfilms.co.uk; www.kaosfilms.co.uk.

CYNOSURE SCREENWRITING AWARDS,

presented by BroadMind Entertainment, is open to feature-length screenplays in two categories: scripts w/ female protagonists & scripts w/ minority protagonists (male & female). Works must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced & must be registered w/ the WGA or US copyright office.

One \$2,500 award issued in each category. Entry fee: \$40, early (postmarked by March 13); \$45, regular (postmarked by April 10); \$50, late (postmarked by May 8). Tel.: (310) 855-8730; cynsoure@BroadMindEnt.com; www.BroadMindEnt.com.

IFP MARKET CALL FOR ENTRIES: The only selective market in the US where filmmakers present new film and TV work in development directly to the industry. More than \$150,000 in cash and awards. Sept. 19-24, New York City; applications at www.ifp.org; marketinfo@ifp.org; 212.465.8200x207. Submission: \$50; students attend free.

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION

2003 seeks original short & feature screenplays that must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced (see entry form for other rules). Prizes incl. cash, passes to next year's Slamdance, plus exposure to a major literary agency & major studio. Any genre. Entry fee varies. Early entry: April 19, 2004; late deadline: June 20, 2004. For more info, call (323) 466-1786; screenplay@slamdance.com (slamfi@xeolux.com for sci-fi entry questions); www.slamdance.com.

THE ANNUAL IDA AWARDS COMPETITION,

sponsored by Eastman Kodak, recognizes &

accepting submissions. The screenplay competition is open to all genres. Must be feature length (20 pages or more). Prizes will include cash, awards and the top 15 screenplays will be passed along to an industry professional agency. Critiques will be available. Final deadline: April 30, 2004. Fees: \$30 (postmarked by March 28, 2004), \$40 (postmarked by April 30, 2004). Contact Steven M. Opsanic; 814-873-5069; screenplay@greatlakesfilmfest.com. Entry form and rules at: www.greatlakesfilmfest.com.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

DV EXPO & CONFERENCE July 14-16,

2004: the world of broadcast, web video, 2D, 3D graphics & animation, sound, & data are coming together in ways that require new skills & new ways of doing business. Build those skills & explore cutting edge ideas, trends, & technologies. www.dvexpo.com.

INPUT 2004 International Public Television

Screening Conference will be held in Barcelona, Spain on May 23-28, 2004. The US Input Secretariat is accepting applications for CPB Professional Development Fellowships to assist U.S. producers/ directors with airfare to the INPUT 2004 conference. For more infor-

VersusMedia

The LA based company, founded in 1999 by Ryan Vinson, is a film scouting service that

connects independent filmmakers with musicians. It provides filmmakers looking for soundtrack options with a database showcasing the music of thousands of emerging musicians, both in the United States and overseas. Contract details are worked out directly between filmmakers and musicians. **VersusMedia projects have screened at Sundance, Cannes, and other international film festivals, and the company has found the music for films in India, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S. See listing.**

honor distinguished achievement in nonfiction film & video. Winners honored at the Awards Gala at DocuFest. Early deadline: May 16 (\$55 for IDA members, \$75 non-members); final deadline: June 23 (\$75, \$125). Entry forms available at www.documentary.org, or contact IDA at (213) 534-3600 x7446; idaawards@documentary.org.

THE GREAT LAKES FILM ASSOCIATION SCREENPLAY COMPETITION is currently

accepting submissions. The screenplay competition is open to all genres. Must be feature length (20 pages or more). Prizes will include cash, awards and the top 15 screenplays will be passed along to an industry professional agency. Critiques will be available. Final deadline: April 30, 2004. Fees: \$30 (postmarked by March 28, 2004), \$40 (postmarked by April 30, 2004). Contact Steven M. Opsanic; 814-873-5069; screenplay@greatlakesfilmfest.com. Entry form and rules at: www.greatlakesfilmfest.com.

PUBLICATIONS • DIRECTORIES

A CLOSER LOOK, a yearly anthology of case studies of media arts organizations, has years 2000-2003 available from National Alliance

for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC). 2003 focuses on youth media. Free to members and available for purchase at www.namac.org.

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM: is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 20,000 visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites free to read: www.nofilm.com.

VERSUS MEDIA puts indie filmmakers in touch with indie musicians with a 24/7 database filled with musicians seeking to work with video and film developers, biweekly e-mail containing 10 of the latest musician profiles & the option to post your latest projects where musicians can answer your needs. View <http://www.versusmedia.com> or email info@versusmedia.com.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

ACADEMY FILM SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences is looking for 2 film scholars to grant \$25,000 each. Only established scholars, writers, historians & researchers will be considered. Deadline: Aug. 31. Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences, (310) 247-3010; www.oscars.org/foundation/filmscholars.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE administers the Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. A total of \$28,000 in awards is available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of \$100,000 or less which have 501(c)(3) status or Charities Bureau Registration. Deadline: late fall. Contact: NaRhee Ahn, Program Director (212) 941-9208 for application details and deadlines. info@aaartsalliance.org; www.aaartsalliance.org.

ASTRAEA provides grants up to \$10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Our U.S. Grants Fund utilizes a community-based activist grantmaking panel to review proposals and to make funding decisions. Check website after March 2004 for deadlines. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321, www.astraea.org/grants.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 1 St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov.

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR VISUAL ARTISTS: The awards honor visual artists who live & work in California, Oregon, & Washington & whose work demonstrates high artistic merit for 20 yrs. or more. The next awards cycle is 2005/2006. To receive application information, mail, fax, or email your contact information (name, address, telephone #, email) with a request to be placed on the mailing list. Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Artists, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100, Pasadena, CA 91103; fax: (626) 585-0011; FFAVA@flintridgeFoundation.org.

GRAND MARNIER FILM FELLOWSHIPS are awarded to graduate film students enrolled in an educational institution in the U.S. (excluding CA and TX) for work in filmmaking, video, or critical writing. Three awards of \$5,000 each will be given to students who excel in either film, video or critical studies. Forms online (www.filmlinc.org) or contact: Grand Marnier Film Fellowships, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., 4th, N.Y., NY 10023-6595.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS) funds and presents independently produced programming for public television (PBS). ITVS seeks projects that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. All genres are eligible, including documentary, drama, animation and innovative combinations. For details on 2004 funding, www.itvs.org/producer/funding.html.

LATINO PUBLIC BROADCASTING: LPB supports the development, production, acquisition & distribution of non-commercial educational & cultural television programming that is representative of Latino people or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans. Funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, LPB funding averages between \$5,000 & \$100,000. LPB is looking for proposals that give thoughtful consideration to the program's target audience as well as wider appeal. Deadline: June 2, 2004. Contact: Latino Public Broadcasting, 6777 Hollywood Blvd. Ste 500, Los Angeles, CA 90028; www.lpb.org.

NAATA ANNUAL OPEN CALL FOR PRODUCTION FUNDING: This round of funding is for applicants w/public television projects in production &/or postproduction phases. Projects in research & development or script development phases are not eligible to apply. Awards will average \$20,000 to \$50,000, though exceptions may be made. Deadline: July 25, 2004, 5 pm (receipt, not postmark) For application & guidelines, www.naatanet.org or mediafund@naatanet.org or (415) 863-0814 x22 w/ your name, mailing address, phone, fax & email to be added to our mailing list. There is no deadline for completion funds.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS (PIC) OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUNDS are provided for the final preparations of broadcast masters of Pacific Island-themed programs intended for national public television. Categories: doc, performance, children's & cultural affairs programming. PIC is particularly interested in projects that examine & illuminate realities of Pacific Islander issues such as diversity, identity, & spirituality. Full-length rough cut must be submitted w/ application. Awards up to \$50,000. No Deadline: Proposals are reviewed on a rolling-basis. Contact: Gus Cobb-Adams, Media Fund, PIC, 1221 Kapi'olani Blvd. 6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; Tel.: (808) 591-0059 x 16; fax: 591-1114; gcobb-adams@piccom.org; applications available at www.piccom.org.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival), and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program, including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

WRITER'S FILM PROJECT: Sponsored by Paramount Pictures. Up to five writers will be chosen to participate & each will receive a \$20,000 stipend to cover his or her living expenses. Deadline is May 15, 2004. Applications must be sent by mail only. Contact: Chesterfield WFP, 1158 26th St., PMB 544, Santa Monica, CA 90403; 213-683-3977; www.chesterfield-co.com.

April

Unless noted, AIVF programs take place at our offices (see below). RSVP is required for all AIVF events: call (212) 807-1400 x301 or register at www.aivf.org.

AIVF PRESENTS: DOCUMENTARY WORKSHOPS

Led by Script & Documentary Doctor
Fernanda Rossi

DOCTORING YOUR DOC: HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR DOCUMENTARY

when: Saturday, April 24,
10 am-5:30 pm
where: Goldcrest Post,
799 Washington St., NYC
cost: \$115/ \$95 AIVF members; \$140/
\$115 AIVF members workshops pass
with Trailer Mechanics.
To RSVP and for more info:
[www.documentarydoctor.com/
workshops.html](http://www.documentarydoctor.com/workshops.html). Register by April
21th. Limited seats.

A full day experiential hands-on workshop for producers, directors, writers, editors and composers.

Stuck in the cutting room? Or maybe with lots of ideas and footage but no clue where to get started? A solid structure is as necessary to your documentary as a strong script is to a narrative film.

With hands-on exercises and analysis of films, this workshop can give you the guidelines you need to find solutions that are true to your documentary's style. Bring your work-in-progress (not required to attend). There will also be a raffle!

TRAILER MECHANICS: HOW TO MAKE YOUR FUNDRAISING TRAILER

when: Saturday, May 1;
two sections: 10 am-1 pm or 2-5 pm
where: AIVF
cost: \$60/\$50 AIVF members; \$140/
\$115 AIVF members workshops pass
with Doctoring your Doc. To RSVP
and for more info:
[www.documentarydoctor.com/
workshops.html](http://www.documentarydoctor.com/workshops.html). Register by April
29th. Limited seats.

"Can I see your trailer?" Let's face it, a trailer can make or break your film. It can get you funded or it can put you on the "passed" list.

Trailer Mechanics is a three hour workshop for producers, directors, writers, and editors about building a short trailer/demo of a documentary film. We will consider principles of narrative structure and screen, and analyze different trailers, including those of workshop attendees. Bring your footage (raw or cut) for discussion (not required to attend). There will also be a raffle!



IN BRIEF: AIVF PRODUCERS LEGAL SERIES: MUSIC IN FILM & TV

when: Tues. April 20,
6:30-8:30 pm

where: AIVF
cost: \$40/\$25 AIVF members

The AIVF Producers Legal Series addresses specific issues of concern to independent producers. Each session is moderated and co-produced by entertainment attorney Innes Smolansky, who is joined by a panel of industry professionals. These small

group sessions not only answer common questions but also connect producers to the individuals and resources that can assist them on an ongoing basis.

This session will address rights that must be cleared to use original and pre-existing music in an audiovisual project, including synchronization rights, master use rights, performance rights, and publishing rights. We will

reach AIVF...

Filmmakers' Resource Library
hours: Wed. 11-6; 1st and 2nd Wed.
of each month: 11-9; or by appt. to
AIVF members Tues. & Thurs. 11-6.

The AIVF office is located at
304 Hudson St. (between Spring &
Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City.

Our Filmmakers' Resource Library
houses hundreds of print and
electronic resources, from essential
directories & trade magazines to
sample proposals & budgets.

By phone: (212) 807-1400
Recorded information available 24/7;
operator on duty Tues.-Thurs. 2-5
p.m. EST

By internet: www.aivf.org;
info@aivf.org



discuss the different structure of composer agreements including work for hire agreement and different types of license agreements. We will also explain the PBS exemption.

**AIVF RECOMMENDS:
PORTLAND DOCUMENTARY
AND EXPERIMENTAL FILM
FESTIVAL**

when: April 15-18

where: Northwest Film Center's Guild Theatre, downtown Portland, OR

The PDX Film Festival is a four day exposition dedicated to showcasing new innovative works of film and video in an intimate space, with a focus on non-narrative works that go against the current of mainstream entertainment.

For more information: www.rodeoofilmco.com/peripheralproduce/pdxff.html

**AIVF RECOMMENDS:
NASHVILLE FILM
FESTIVAL**

when: April 26 - May 2

where: Nashville, TN



The Nashville Film Festival is a seven day celebration of independent and international film and video, with a special nod to films about music. The festival also includes panels and workshops on filmmaking and music in films, live music showcases, and other special events.

For more info: www.nashvillefilmfestival.org

**AIVF RECOMMENDS:
HOT DOCS CANADIAN
INTERNATIONAL DOC FEST**

when: April 23 - May 2

where: Toronto, Canada

Hot Docs is North America's largest documentary festival. Each year, the festival presents a selection of over 100 cutting-edge documentaries from Canada and around the globe.

Through its industry programs, the festival also provides a full range of professional development, market and networking opportunities for documentary professionals.

For more info: visit www.hotdocs.ca

**AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:
FILMS AT
LINCOLN
CENTER**

where: Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W 65th St., NYC



AIVF members may attend select series (listed below) at a discounted rate—just \$5 per ticket. Bring your membership card to the box office!

April 3 - 15 — **The 11th New York African Film Festival**

April 12, 13, 17, 18, 24 & 25 — **Conductors on Film**

April 22 — **Independents Night Presents: Farmingville**

April 16 - May 6 — **Forever Changes: Polish Cinema Since 1989**

For more information visit www.filmlinc.com.

**AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:
WOMEN MAKE
MOVIES
WORKSHOP
SERIES**

where: 462 Broadway, Ste. 500, New York, NY

WMM continue their workshop series and offering discount rates for AIVF members.



FUNDER PANEL

when: April 14, 6:30-9:30 pm
cost: \$40/\$32 discount rate

Come listen to a panel of media funders describe their organizations. Confirmed panelists to date include: Nancy Schwartzman (National

Foundation for Jewish Culture), Sheila Stowell (North Star Fund), Milton Tabbot (Radziwill Documentary Fund).

ALTERNATIVE FUNDRAISING PANEL

when: April 21, 6:30-9:30 pm

cost: \$40/\$32 discount rate

Tap into the resources of individual donors, artist colonies, and corporations! From planning an event to direct mail campaigns, learn from a panel of filmmakers how they have created a strategy for securing donations. Confirmed panelists to date include Joyce Draganosky, Allison Prete, and Ruth Sergel.

**FRANCES NEGRÓN-MUNTANER ON
DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING**

when: April 22, 6:30-9:30 pm

cost: \$60/\$48 discount rate

Frances Negrón-Muntaner is an award-winning filmmaker, writer, and scholar. Join her for an evening as she talks about how she built her successful career by looking at each film she has made.

To register, call (212) 925-0606 x302, or visit www.wmm.com.

DOCFEST/DOC SHOP

when: Reception 7 - 8 pm, Screening 8 p.m. following by Q & A with director.

where: The Pioneer Theater, 155 E 3rd St., NYC

cost: \$9

The New York Documentary Center programming continues year round with two monthly screening and discussion series: docshop and docfest monthly.

April 20 — *Shelter Dogs*, by Cynthia Wade

For info. visit www.docfest.org or call (646) 505-5708.

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country.

Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY: Upstate Independents

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY
Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café
553 Amsterdam Ave.
Contact: Mark Smith, (404) 352-4225 x12
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Boulder, CO:

"Films for Change" Screenings

When: First Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Boulder Public Library
1000 Arapahoe
Contact: Michael Hill,
(303) 442-8445 x100; boulder@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or
Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH:

Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette
Gillota, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays
Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.
Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-monthly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: 1519 West Main
Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.
Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St.,
Santa Monica
Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140
Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Nashville, TN

Where: See www.naivf.com for events
Contact: Stephen Lackey, filmmakers@captain-pixel.com

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre
Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop
Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly
Where: Media Arts Center, 921 25th Street
Contact: Ethan van Thillo (619) 230-1938;
sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders
(650) 271-0097; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-monthly
Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts
Center
Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

Nashville's Newbie

Nashville filmmakers are hopping on the AIVF salon bandwagon. The recently launched Nashville Salon, which had their first meeting in late February, is gearing up to be a regular meeting point for everyone "from no budget Hi8 filmmakers, to those who work with a budget and on film, to people who simply enjoy independent film," according to the salon leader Stephen Lackey. The salon will provide a place to share ideas, screen projects (at the Watkins Film School) and learn more about the indie film world. Current plans for the organization also include getting involved with the local Belcourt Theatre on local projects and events, and working with the Nashville Film Festival, as well as workshops on filmmaking, distribution, and festivals. See www.naivf.com for more info.

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



The Academy Foundation
 Adobe Systems, Inc.
 The Caliban Foundation
 City of New York Dept. of Cultural Affairs
 Forest Creatures Entertainment, Inc.
 Home Box Office
 The Jewish Communal Fund

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
 The National Endowment for the Arts
 The New York Community Trust
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 New York State Council on the Arts
 Panasonic USA
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We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Business/Industry Members: **AL:** Cypress Moon Productions; **AZ:** Duck Soup Productions; **CA:** Adobe Systems, Inc., Eastman Kodak Co.; Groovy Like a Movie; The Hollywood Reporter; SJPL Films, Ltd.; Ultimatum Entertainment; **CO:** Pay Reel; **DC:** 48 Hour Film Project; **FL:** E.M. Productions; **IL:** Roxie Media Corp.; Urban Work Productions; **IN:** The Storyteller Workshop; **MA:** Escape TV; Glidcam Industries; **MD:** NewsGroup, Inc. **MI:** 10th Street Productions; Grace & Wild Studios, Inc.; Michael Kuentz Communications; **NH:** Kinetic Films; **NJ:** Alternative Media & Resources International; Lumiere Media **NV:** Broadcast Productions; **NY:** All In One Productions; Analog Digital International, Inc.; Arc Pictures; Arts Engine, Inc.; Blueprint Films; C-Hundred Film Corporation; Cataland Films; Cypress Films; D. R. Reiff and Associates; DNT 88 Productions; Docurama; Downtown Avid; Film Video Arts; Forest Creatures Entertainment; Fred Siegel CPA; Free Dream Films; Getcast.com; Greenwich Street Productions; HBO; IdDigEnt; Interflax; Karin Bacon Events; Lighthouse Creative; Lightworks Producing Group; Mad Mad Judy; Metropolis Film Lab; Moxie Firecracker Films; Off Ramp Films, Inc.; Outside in July, Inc.; Persona Films, Inc.; Post Typhoon Sky, Inc.; Robin Frank Management; Roja Productions; Triune Pictures; Wildlight Productions; **OR:** Art Institute Portland; **PA:** Cubist Post & Effects; **RI:** The Revival House; **VA:** Dig Productions; Kessler Productions; **WI:** Image Pictures, LLC; Tweedee Productions

Nonprofit Members: **AL:** Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival; **CA:** East Bay Media Center, Berkeley; Film Arts Foundation; Filmmakers Alliance; International Buddhist Film Festival; ITVS; LEF Foundation; NAATA/Media Fund; The Berkeley Documentary Center; San Francisco Jewish Film Festival; USC School of Cinema and TV; **CO:** Denver Center Media; **CT:** New Haven Film Festival; **DC:** Media Access Project; School of Communication, American University; Spark Media; **FL:** Florida State University Film School; Sarasota Film Festival; University of Tampa; **GA:** Image Film and Video Center; Savannah College of Art and Design; **IL:** Art Institute of Chicago; Community Film Workshop; Community Television Network; Department of Comuication/ NLU; Kartemquin Films; Light Bound; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; **KS:** Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee; **KY:** Appalshop; **MA:** CCTV; Documentary Educational Resources; Emerson College, Visual & Media Arts; Long Bow Group; Lowell Telecommunications Group; **LTC:** **MD:** 7 Oils Production; Laurel Cable Network; Silverdocs; AFI Discovery Channel Doc Festival; **MI:** Ann Arbor Film Festival; **MN:** IFP/MSP; Walker Art Center; **MO:** DHTV; Webster University Film Series; **MS:** Magnolia Independent Film Festival; **NC:** Cucalorus Film Foundation; Duke University, Film & Video; University of North Carolina, Wilmington; **NE:** Nebraska Independent Film Project/AIVF Salon Lincoln; Ross Film Theater, UN Lincoln; **NJ:** Black Maria Film

Festival; College of New Jersey, Department of Communication Studies; Freedom Film Society; **NM:** University of New Mexico; **NY:** American Museum of Natural History; Bronx Council on the Arts; Center for New American Media; Chicks with Flicks Film Festival; Cinema Arts Centre; Communications Society; Cornell Cinema; Council for Positive Images, Inc.; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Department of Media Study SUNY Buffalo; Donnell Media Center; Downtown Community Television; Educational Video Center; Experimental Television Center; Film and Video Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Film Video Arts; Firelight Media; International Film Seminars; Learning Matters; Listen Up!; LMC-TV; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; National Black Programming Consortium; National Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New School, Dept. of Communications/Film Department; New York Women in Film and Television; Non Profit Media Group; Paper Tiger; POV/The American Documentary; Squeaky Wheel; Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; Syracuse University; United Community Centers; Upstate Films; Witness; Women Make Movies; **OH:** Athens Center for Film And Video; Independent Pictures/AIVF Ohio Salon; Cleveland Film Society; Media Bridges Cincinnati; School of Film, Ohio University; Wexner Center; **OR:** Art Institute Portland; Media Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; **PA:** DUTV Cable 54; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; Prince Music Center; Scribe Video Center; WYBE Public TV 35; **RI:** Flickers Arts Collaborative; Rhode Island School of Design; **SC:** Hybrid Films; South Carolina Arts Commission; **TX:** Austin Film Society; CAGE, Dept. of Radio and Film; Southwest Alternate Media Project; Worldfest; **UT:** Sundance Institute; **VT:** The Noodlehead Network; **WA:** Seattle Central Community College; Thurston Community Television; **Bermuda:** Bermuda International Film Festival; **Canada:** The Banff Centre Library; **India:** Foundation for Universal Responsibility; **Singapore:** Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library

Friends of AIVF: Angela Alston, Desmond Andrews, David Bemis; Adrienne Brown Ryan, Carl Canner, Liz Canner, Hugo Cassirer, Paul Devlin, Arthur Dong, Aaron Edison, Paul Espinosa, Phoebe Ferguson, Karen Freedman, Nicole Guillemet, Peter Gunthel, David Haas, Kyle Henry, Lila Jackson, John Kavanaugh, Amelia Kirby, Amie Knox, Stan Konowitz, Leonard Kurz, Lyda Kuth, Bart Lawson, Regge Life, William Lyman, Diane Markrow, Tracy Mazza, Leonard McClure, Daphne McDuffie-Tucker, Jim McKay, Robert Millis, Diane Murphy, Elizabeth Peters, Mimi Pickering, David Reynolds, Robert Richter, Hiroto Saito, Larry Sapadin, John B. Schwartz, Nat Segaloff, Robert L. Seigel, Esq., Gail Silva, Innes Smolansky, Kit-Yin Snyder, Barbara Sostaric, Miriam Stern, George Stoney, Cathy & James Sweitzer, Rhonda Leigh Tanzman, Rahdi Taylor, Karl Trappe, Cynthia Travis, Janie Wagner, Bart Weiss

PBS Moments

By Jessica McDowell

Public broadcasting distinguishes itself from commercial television by presenting a wide range of original, imaginative, and sometimes risky programming, which makes for a highly individualized, personal experience of television viewing. This month, *The Independent* asked members of the public television community to recall their most memorable PBS moments and experiences.

"One of the great things about working with PBS is the reach they have. You never know what really smart person is watching. For example, ITVS funded a documentary about Operation Baby Lift at the end of the Vietnam War. A year after it was broadcast, we got word from John Sayles that he had seen the documentary and [that] it [had] inspired *Casa de los Babys*. We love to see independent films get attention at film festivals and through theatrical distribution when possible, but with PBS everyone has access. It is the ultimate medium for filmmakers who want to influence thinking."

Sally Jo Fifer, president,
Independent Television Service (ITVS)

"My most memorable experience watching PBS was in July, 1991, when PBS aired Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*. The passionate, erotic, poetically-described relationships of African-American gay men took my breath away. As soon as it was over, I called the station to thank them for having the courage to carry the program."

Susan Fleishman, executive director,
Cambridge Community Television (CCTV)

"Most memorable for me are the PBS programs that feature Bill Moyers taking on the media. Mr. Moyers remains a persistent, reasoned, intelligent voice in the maelstrom of media mergers, and their deleterious effects on the flow and credibility of information in our society. He boldly uses the platform of television to challenge the integrity of an industry that seems to place the *public interest* beneath its corporate interests."

Kari Peterson, executive director,
Davis Community Television



"I grew up in a small, blue collar town in western Pennsylvania. The only place I ever saw children who were different from me was on *Sesame Street*. The show opened the door to the world for me. I never dreamed that I would one day work for public television, but I think I ended up here for the same reason I loved watching it as a kid."

Amy Shumaker, producer,
South Carolina ETV

"When I was just out of school (Brooklyn College) I had a miserable time finding a job in television. A former teacher of mine got me an informational interview with Bill Baker and I went up to his office to meet with him. I had absolutely no idea who Bill Baker was and spent the twenty minutes admonishing him for the lack of jobs in the industry! He took it with a smile and told me to keep at it, and ten years later I work on *New York Voices* on Channel Thirteen and I see him in the hall all the time. I don't think he remembers . . . I had a lot more hair back then."

Matthew Kells, Emmy Award-winning TV producer,
Spooky Truth Productions

"Wendy Wasserstein's *Uncommon Women and Others* was an inspiration to a fledgling writer. Orlando Bagwell's *Ain't Scared of Your Jails* (*Eyes on the Prize* first season, 1987), edited by Jeanne Jordan, was a reminder of the unmatched power of real stories and great on-screen storytellers, including an unforgettable Fred Leonard, a veteran of the 1961 Freedom Rides."

Sheila Curran Bernard, filmmaker and author,
Documentary Storytelling

Jessica McDowell is an intern at The Independent.

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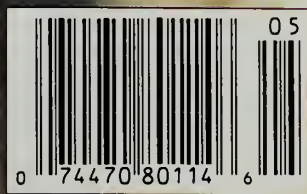
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FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

May 2004

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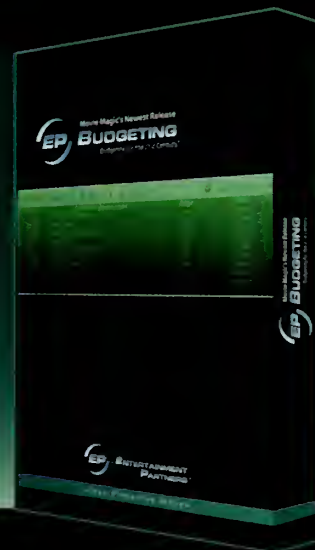
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2004

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Producer, *Lost In Translation*, *In The Bedroom*, *The Laramie Project*
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- Screenings of newly completed independent films, along with discussions about how it's done.
- Break-out sessions where you can share ideas and get your questions answered in a small group setting.
- Social gatherings where you'll have the opportunity to talk informally with other filmmakers and producers.

For more details and an application for the 2004 Independent Producers Conference, visit us at www.sundance.org

➤ To apply, submit the following materials by May 26, 2004:

- Brief, personal biography
- One-page description of a project you are currently trying to produce or get produced.
- Completed application

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE 19TH ANNUAL INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS CONFERENCE



Features

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Why do filmmakers love to hate this go-to festival?
[by Kyle Minor]

40 NETWORKING 101

Who you know and how you play it can make or break your filmmaking career.
[by Elizabeth Angell]

44 DON'T WORRY, FILM HAPPY

A new movement called "Spiritual Cinema" is quickly gaining converts.
[by Muriel Stockdale]



Photos: The *Big City Dick* crew after their sold-out screening, hosted by Jeff Bridges, at Santa Barbara's Victoria Hall: (left to right) Todd Pottinger, Scott Milam, Richard Peterson, Jeff Bridges, Ross Shafer, Ken Harder (courtesy of New Zev Pictures); Adam Nelson (CEO, Workhouse Publicity) networking with actor Seth Green at Sundance 2004; "Spiritual" filmmaker Nick Day (in black) poses with Maurizio, a member of his crew, and a friendly sadhu adorned with yellow paint in honor of Vishnu (Carole Harbard).

Page 5 photos: Aunjanue Ellis (Zora), Daniel Sunjata (Langston), and Ray Ford (Wally) in Rodney Evans's *Brother to Brother* (Constanza Mirre); Ken Burns's new documentary chronicles world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson, here battling Al Kaufmann in 1909 (Gary Phillips Collection); the Mondo Video a GoGo store in LA specializes in the obscure (Gadi Harel); Bing and Cher in *Mayor of the Sunset Strip*, which premiered at the SXSW Film Festival 2004 (George Hickenlooper).

On the Cover: Rodney Evans at the Sundance 2004 premiere of his film *Brother to Brother*, which won the festival's Special Jury Prize (Fred Hayes/WireImage.com).



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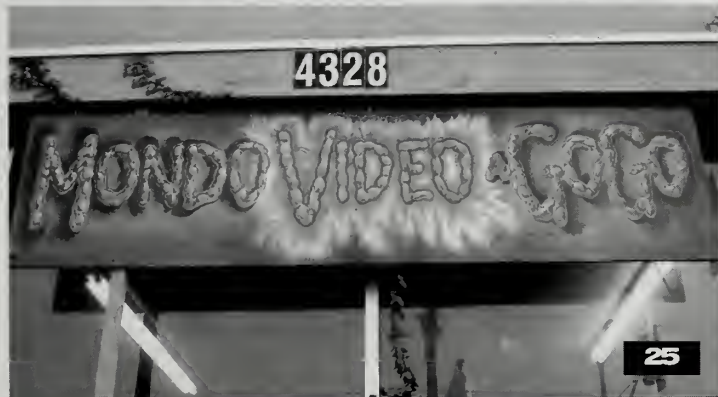
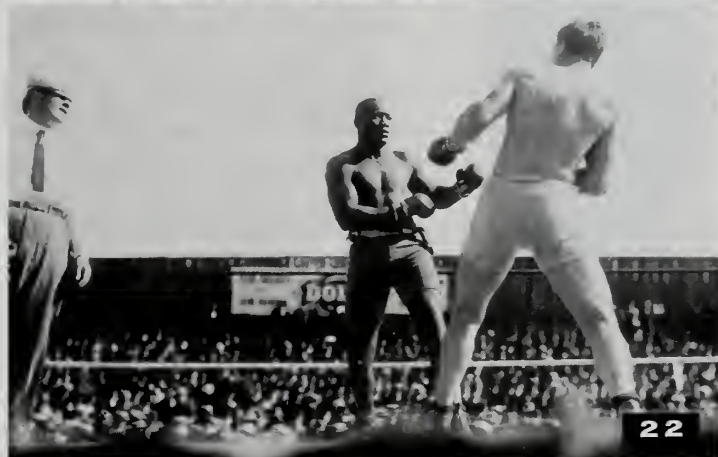


jacksonholefilmfestival

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The Jackson Hole Film Festival is an independent film festival showcasing first-run, independent short and feature films in a competitive environment. The JHFF will also be the premiere sports-action film competition, bringing together the top extreme sports filmmakers from around the world. Nestled next to the Grand Teton mountains, the JHFF is dedicated to the "original" concept of an independent film festival - where members of the entertainment industry flock to discover the best, brightest and truly independent talent.

For further information, please visit our website at jhff.org
or email us at info@jhff.org



Upfront

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Editor's Letter

I'm sort of puritanical when it comes to the subject of artistic integrity—maybe because I learned its meaning by going without

Nike sneakers and other must-have items that the other kids in school had because their parents were doctors and pilots and real estate brokers. My parents were artists.

I remember asking my dad the definition of the word "integrity." He gave the following answer: "This is what I mean. No kidding." And I remember thinking, Well, if what you mean is that I can't get a pair of Nike sneakers and you're not kidding about that, then integrity sucks.

What he really meant, though, insofar as the quality of our lives then and since, is that he and my mother were and are committed to their work as artists and therefore accept whatever level of income that commitment results in.

There is a story about my father and a painting he made for my mother. The rich acquaintance of a family friend came to the house one day, saw the painting, and offered a fairly significant chunk of change for it. My father declined the offer because he had made the painting for my mother and his gift to her, the importance of their mutual devotion to each other and the art they make, was more important than money. It's a good thing I only learned of this much later on; had I been home at the time, I would have thrown in our broke-ass car to boot.

All that is to say, artistic integrity is serious business, and finding ways to maintain it can be challenging. This issue addresses survival, independence, and artistic integrity—meaning it, no kidding. Two excellent models of integrity are profiled: veteran docu-

mentary maker and out-of-the-fray rural New Hampshire resident Ken Burns (pg. 22, by Rebecca Rule), and Rodney Evans (pg. 19, by Austin Bunn), who persisted through six years of repeated funding fall-out, among other hurdles, to make a film that ultimately went on to win the Special Jury Prize at Sundance this year.

And what about Sundance? Is it true that you've only made it once your film has screened at the Redford Shangri-la in Park City, Utah? In "Sundance Feels the Burn" (pg. 36), Florida writer and filmmaker Kyle Minor writes about the independent film community's love/hate relationship with the grand dame of the festival world.

Frequent contributor Elizabeth Angell gives the 411 on making the right connections to get your work made and out there, while staying true to yourself and your vision (pg. 40). And just when you thought it was safe to stop talking about *The Passion* comes a cinematic movement that may well have beat the forthcoming barrage of religious and spiritual themed films to the punch. Muriel Stockdale writes about "Spiritual Cinema" in "Don't Worry, Film Happy" (pg. 44).

Two new columns are introduced in this issue—Production Journal, a first-person narrative about the making of a film. And On the Scene, which will cover a recent independent film or media arts event with immediate ramifications for the independent community. If you have ideas for either new column, please email me at: editor@aivf.org.

And finally, a fond farewell to Elizabeth Peters, who left us in April after five years as both the publisher of *The Independent* and Executive Director of AIVF. She leaves behind a legacy of great faith and passion for independent media arts, and she will be missed.

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
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Rebecca Carroll
Editor-in-Chief

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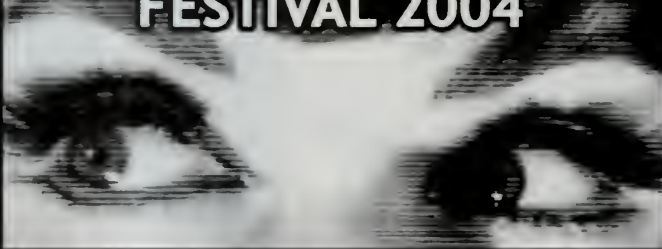
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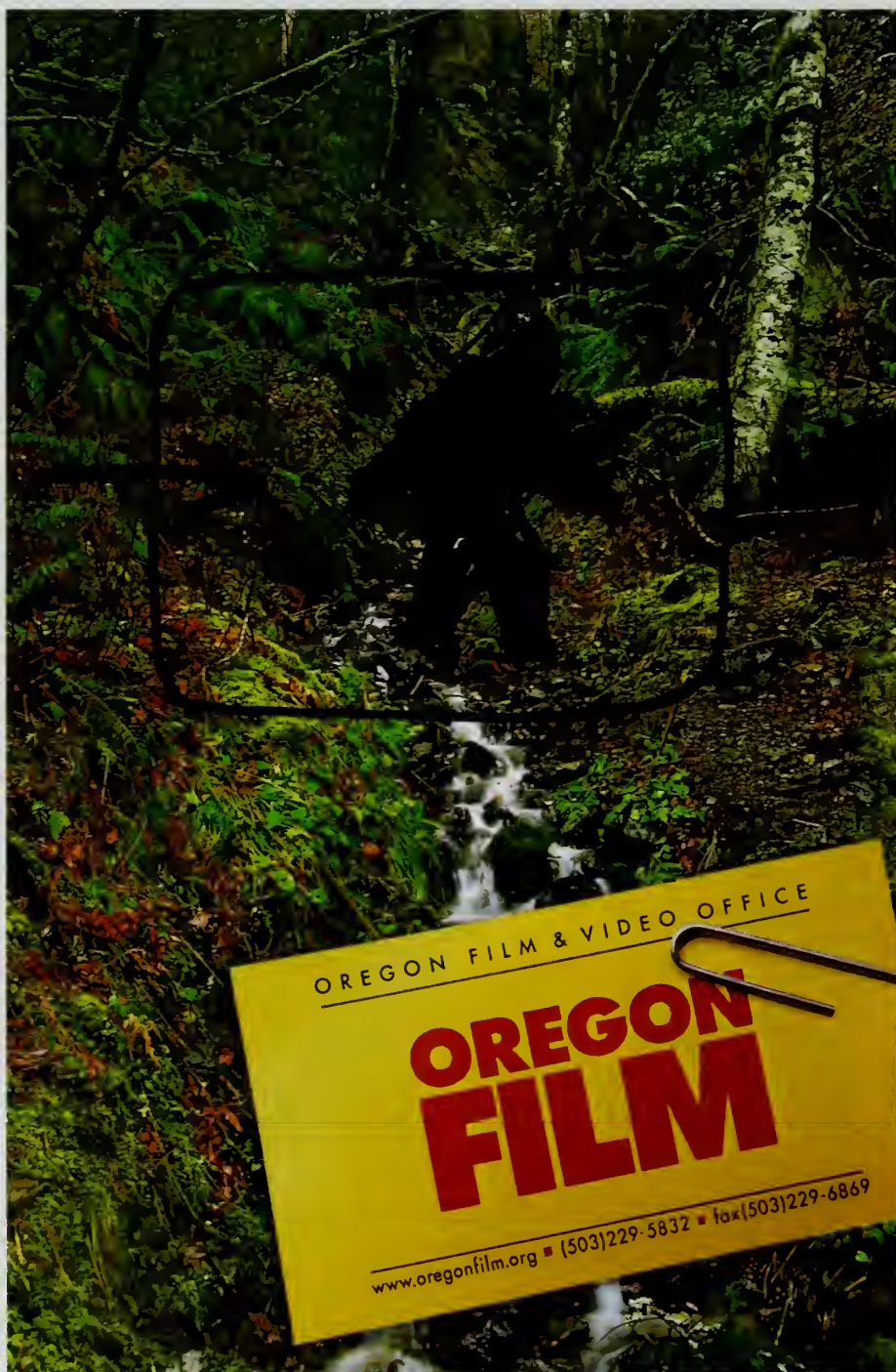
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Publisher's Farewell

Dear AIVF members
and *Independent* readers,

Many of you already know that I have stepped down from my position as Executive Director of AIVF. The AIVF board has contracted filmmaker (and former AIVF board member) Benvenida Matias to act as interim director while they continue their search for my replacement; I plan to return to the wonderful world of making media.

I'm going to use my "publisher's prerogative" to spend a little ink reflecting on how much AIVF has grown over the past five years. Highlights include increasing our support of members through establishing an Information Services help desk; publishing three important reference books for producers undertaking outreach and self-distribution (as well as overhauling our Festival and Distributor's Guides); and really building out the potential of our web resource by adding interactive directories and all sorts of resource pages. In 2001 we created our monthly email bulletin SPLICE!, which now has over 9,000 subscribers and provides a great way to stay in touch with our members.

On the programming side, many generous people have partnered with AIVF to present workshop series geared to the working independent. And our advocacy work has had a very real impact on today's media landscape, through partnerships that have helped garner achievements ranging from securing bandwidth on satellite networks to allowing the public to comment on rules affecting media ownership concentration.

When I arrived at AIVF (fresh from Texas), not a single staff member was a native New Yorker, and during my tenure we've worked hard to recognize and support the legions of independents working in smaller communities. In partnership with NAMAC, AIVF was able to visit ten communities across the country and learn more about

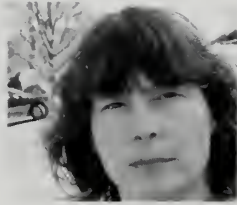
their unique character and strategies for survival. *The Independent's* "Field Report" column has extended this project by continuing to spotlight a wide variety of media communities.

If you've been reading *The Independent* for any length of time you already know how much it has grown, now with more pages and new columns such as Site Seeing, Documentary Doctor, and Production Journal. Editor Rebecca Carroll is a gem.

An achievement that I am particularly proud of is having built a strong and stable engine to drive all these programs. Retooling AIVF's internal operations (as well as its corporate structure) was not glamorous, but it has allowed us to weather particularly challenging times over the past few years. Our financial operations are clean and transparent; we've changed our staff structure and now have "manuals" for the various positions; and the board has rewritten the organization's out-of-date bylaws and is now concentrating on maturing its governance model.

One of my favorite film credit sequences comes at the head of Jim McKay's *Our Song*, when the title "A Film By" is followed by a screen crammed with the names of every person who collaborated on the production. This is so true to the spirit of how independent films are made, and it's true to how all these things have happened at AIVF while I have had the privilege (and the pain) of sitting in the corner office. I would need pages to list all the props that are due. Please consider them bestowed! Thanks to all the staff and board who have sustained AIVF, and most importantly, to the members whose dogged perseverance daily reminds us of why we work this hard.

Yours in interdependence,
Elizabeth Peters



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A filmmaker opens a copy of
The Independent and sees an ad
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The filmmaker thinks it would
be cool to go, then notices an
article about another independent
filmmaker.

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The eBay Way

FIRST FILM IS DISTRIBUTED VIA ONLINE BIDDING

By Cynthia Kane



Now you can bid on eBay for more than your favorite DVD—you can bid on global film rights to an independent feature without distribution. This unconventional yet seemingly effective way to reach out to global distributors has proved positive for first time filmmakers Alex D'Lerma and Vince Lozano. By auctioning distribution rights on eBay to their debut feature, *Alvarez & Cruz*, D'Lerma and Lozano reached out to a broader group, both demographically and geographically, than they could have with a more traditional method.

This fresh, if slightly suspect, idea benefits both buyers and sellers. Buyers get involved in the film distribution game while foregoing the spending costs of traveling out of state, while sellers extend their reach to a larger volume of potential buyers independent of the American film market.

The bidding on D'Lerma and

Lozano's film started February 25, 2004 at \$15,000 and ended on March 06, 2004 without going any higher in price. "Four distribution companies showed interest in the film and spoke with us after hearing of the opening bid on eBay, but refused to bid openly online," says D'Lerma, a former Los Angeles radio DJ, actor, and writer, whose transition to filmmaker began with this film. "Three of the four companies either suggested we pull the listing off eBay and accept a (higher) private bid than the opening minimum \$15,000 bid, or simply not accept payment at the end of the auction and negotiate a higher bid privately."

Instead, the filmmakers chose to stay true to their original intent (and eBay policy)—to sell the global rights to *Alvarez & Cruz* to the highest eBay bidder.

The production and sale of *Alvarez & Cruz*, say the filmmakers turned eBay auctioneers, was inspired by the do-it-yourself style of Latino/American filmmaker Robert

Rodriguez, whose critically acclaimed debut feature, *El Mariachi*, was made with a borrowed camera, no crew, and a budget that came, in part, from subjecting himself to medical experimentation.

Alvarez & Cruz is an eighty-eight-minute English-language crime drama that explores the relationships between two Latino renegades, Ricky Alvarez (Alex D'Lerma) and Jojo Cruz (Vince Lozano), and their deadbeat fathers. Drawn together by similar life circumstances (both were abandoned during childhood), Alvarez and Cruz hijack cars, sweet talk women and pull off insurance scams. Soon their fathers re-enter their lives causing years of pain and resentment to resurface. "Vince and I were fed up with the lack of Latino leading roles in Hollywood so our solution was to create those roles in *Alvarez & Cruz*," says D'Lerma. "We wanted the audience members, regardless of their racial or cultural backgrounds, to be touched by the father/son conflict, which is semi-autobiographical."

Since 1999, the film has screened at numerous film festivals, and in December 2003, an original score by noted German film composer Tom Batoy of Mona Davis Music/Los Angeles was added.

It is too soon to tell if other filmmakers will follow the lead of D'Lerma and Lozano. Nevertheless, a seed has been planted. Or, more aptly, a bid made.

View a trailer at www.vincelozano.com.

Government Scripted News

The general populous is familiar with movies and videos made for television, but what about scripted video clips made for television news? It has come to the attention of federal investigators that the Bush administration prepared "story packages" to applaud the benefits of the new Medicare law for the elderly, and paid people to act as

Vince Lozano as Jojo Cruz in *Alvarez & Cruz*.

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journalists for news segments. Intended for local news broadcasts, several videos show Bush being showered with cheers while signing the new Medicare Law.

The Department of Health and Human Services produced the video news releases, but have not identified the source who commissioned them. The materials were discovered last month while lawyers from the General Accounting Office were investigating the government's use of federal money for Medicare advertising purposes. All findings proved legal, but

the General Accounting Office found that federal agencies violated laws in the past by scattering government scripted articles and commentary without identifying a source. Not revealing the source of these new Medicare videos could lead to a violation of federal agency laws.

In the 1980's, major budget cuts limited stations' capacity to gather information for news segments, and forced stations to rely on pre-packaged news bites from outside sources. Although the need for compelling news is the same today as it

was in the 80's, is it fair that the media and the government are misleading viewers by using scripted segments as real news? In a *New York Times* article that appeared in March, Bill Kovach, chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists, expressed the following views on that particular question: "[The videos] to me are just the next thing to fraud," Kovach said. "It's running a paid advertisement in the heart of a news program." ■

Cynthia Kane is an intern at The Independent.

In Fond Memory

The Independent is sad to report the passing of three very important individuals in the independent film community: Larry Hall, Sarah Jacobson, Stephen Wickham, all of whom died in February after long battles with cancer.

Larry Hall passed away on February 2, after living with lymphoma for two years. Independent Television Service (ITVS) would not be here today without Hall's efforts: Hall, along with Larry Sapadin and Larry Daessa, lobbied Congress and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for the creation of a public television service for independent producers, which was chartered in 1988.

As a media advocate, Larry continued to contribute towards supporting and enriching public television. "More than anyone else, ITVS owes its existence to Larry Hall," says Daessa. "A tireless fighter for the underdog and free speech, his persistence and intuitive understanding of the Congressional process made possible the minor legislative miracle which is ITVS."

For more about Larry Hall and his contributions to the Media Community visit www.itvs.org.

Sarah Jacobson, an AIVF member, directed the 1997 Sundance entry *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*, which won acclaim at many festivals around the globe. Jacobson went on to self-distribute

the film (in partnership with her mother) sharing details of her national tour through a series of email dispatches. An ever-present voice in the community, Jacobson was also an instructor at The New School. In a bid to raise funds towards her medical care, Jacobson had curated a benefit screening of her work at Two Boots Pioneer Theater. The program, which screened after her passing, was also featured at the New York Underground Film Festival in March.

A community bulletin board has been set up (at www.amazingforums.com/forum2/SARAHJACOB/forum.html) for those who knew her to share their memories. The comments will be passed on to her partner and family.

Patrick Wickham was the Director of Contract Policy & Digital Initiatives and a former director of production at ITVS. He had been on staff at ITVS for thirteen years, joining the organization shortly after it was founded in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1991. Wickham is survived by his wife Kristi Highum; his mother, Virginia Wickham, and his grandmother, Elizabeth Carfora of Glen Ellyn, Illinois; and by his brother-in-law Paul Byrne and niece Joanna Byrne of Chicago, Illinois.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heifer Foundation at 800-422-0474 (www.heifer.org), or to Kids in Development Society at 415-885-0660.

LEFT: LEE JACOBSON; RIGHT: KRISTI HIGHUM



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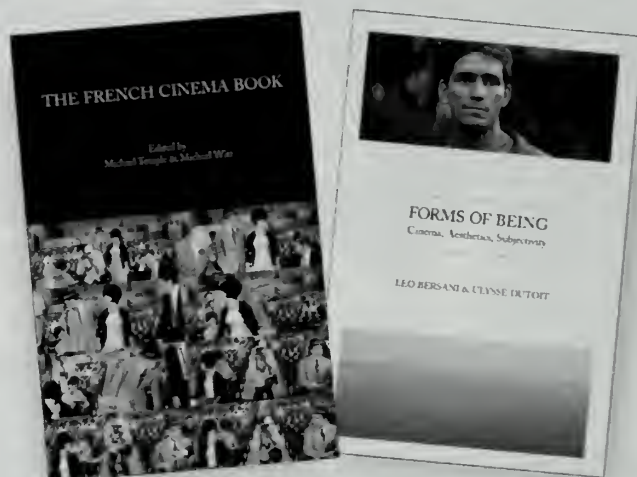
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Survival Instincts

ONE FILMMAKER'S STRUGGLE TO GO SOLO

By Tracy Heather Strain

A few months ago, the Boston Film/Video Foundation closed its doors after serving the independent film community in New England for twenty-eight years. It was the first place I took a video class, secured fiscal sponsorship, and gained an ally for a documentary project that at the time had few supporters. BF/VF was one of the earliest places I found a base for my independent goals, and I volunteered there by serving on committees and supporting events. The farewell message on its website explains that, "the continuing downturn in funding for the arts, adversely affecting non-profit arts organization across the nation, had an especially negative effect on BF/VF."

The closing of BF/VF got me thinking about how over the past several years I have watched several prominent media organizations and production companies close because of issues related to funding—organizations and companies that provided support, training, and employment for a diverse group of independent and freelance filmmakers. Certainly, the declining cost of tools to capture and edit images has made filmmaking more affordable, but the necessities of life continue to rise in cost, and compared to other artistic disciplines, making films and videos is still expensive. The closing of BF/VF also got me thinking about the direction of my own career.

Like other producer/directors, my training is in making films and keeping them on budget, not sustaining a business over time. How do we as artists balance our desire to tell stories

with our need to survive as viable businesses so that we can tell our stories? Last year, quite unexpectedly (though after working as a producer for seventeen years), I got a few small commissions, entered into a co-production agreement for a historical documen-



tary, and signed a commercial lease for an office space I share with four other filmmakers and their productions. I feel blessed with the turn of events, but since then, I've been signing a lot of invoices, credit applications, legal documents, and especially checks. Suddenly, not only do I have a film to produce, I have the added responsibilities of running a small business and office that sometimes has in it as many as a dozen people. Due to issues of privacy and access to personal information, it has been difficult for me to delegate certain tasks. I would, of course, like to begin developing my next project, but lately it feels like there just aren't any more hours left in my day.

I feel like I've bought into what I would describe as a mix of the American myth of rugged individualism, the romance of the auteur, and the single woman's superwoman syndrome. When I look back at my experiences working as a freelance producer, I realize that I had no idea how much time each company spent on basics like writing checks and processing expense reports. To say nothing of the efforts it took for the company to raise the money for my salary.

Henry Hampton, the founder and executive producer of Blackside, was a strong supporter of BF/VF, and in 1996, the organization honored him with its Vision Award. It was at that BF/VF ceremony when I first learned that he had mortgaged his house in order to meet the payroll, and so that he could keep the six-episode production of *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years* moving forward.

It was surprising to hear that Henry had faced a barrage of rejection from funders, and had subsequently put his own home on the line to finish the series. *Eyes* premiered in 1987 as a groundbreaking series on PBS and went on to win a great many awards and citations. For me, someone who has been working in the industry for all of my adult life, but is only now starting out truly on my own, the story serves as a reminder that surviving as an independent was difficult in the past and continues to be so for most people now.

At that BF/VF ceremony in 1996, Henry Hampton had made it a point to recognize that he didn't produce *Eyes on the Prize* alone. It was a point I came to understand even better when I went to work at Blackside years later. During my time there, the company employed full-time executives in development, marketing, publishing, and new media, as well as an accountant, bookkeeper, receptionist, Henry's assistant, and a part-time office assistant, in addition to the production teams, senior

Filmmaker Tracy Heather Strain.

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producers, and interns. Since leaving Blackside, I have tried to juggle many of these jobs by myself, and that has been a mistake.

As I look back at 2003, and think of all of the time I spent on administrative, managerial, financial, and operational activities, it has dawned on me that filmmakers talk about making their films, but rarely discuss how they run their small filmmaking businesses to get those films made. I can readily learn the pitfalls of shooting with one video format versus another, and I know where to go for information about grant writing, because filmmakers share that type of information. Trade publications, including this one, have inspired me as I read about filmmakers who consistently found ways to produce their documentary films independently. But how do we run our businesses?

Where do I find the stories about how filmmakers actually organize their time and divide the labor within their organizations to get things done? Most articles I read usually gloss over the details of the business operations side of the equation. When I have a chance to get together with my friends who are documentary filmmakers, the conversation invariably turns to money. One discussion gets into the challenge of giving the more-than-one-hundred percent it takes to produce, write, and direct films initiated by other people, and finding a way to successfully develop our own ideas. Like many of my colleagues, I rarely find myself working on my own documentary project, and it has been that way for years.

The long-term freelance work I landed at production companies like Blackside was meaningful, challenging, and inspiring. The jobs increased my technical know-how, improved my storytelling abilities, and expanded my knowledge of the world. And practically speaking, gratefully allowed me to pay my bills. But the days at Blackside were full, demanding, and

long. The amount of preparation required to meet the standards that Henry had set for producers meant that you knew the history you were presenting well enough to write a doctoral dissertation and successfully defend it at an oral exam. When I finally got home each night, I was completely worn out. I had nothing

with those of Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, and *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. These and Tharp's book got me thinking about the unmanaged chaos of my own life, and made me realize that I needed to make some changes. I have often talked about my desire to work on my own project,

I have been fortunate to find producing jobs when I need them, but then the cycle repeated itself again and again for years.

"You haven't made that film, yet?" people would ask in a tone that really meant, "What's taking you so long?"

left for my own project most days, but that was okay, because I was growing as a filmmaker, and producing work that brought important issues about America's past to the public.

After each project ended, I returned to my own film. Because I had been so immersed in other topics, it was practically like starting from scratch each time. By the time I'd make a little headway, my money was running thin, and I had to find something to do to pay my bills. I have been fortunate to find producing jobs when I need them, but then the cycle repeated itself again and again for years. "You haven't made that film, yet?" people would ask in a tone that really meant, "What's taking you so long?"

As a Christmas gift one year, I was given Twyla Tharp's book, *The Creative Habit: Learn It And Use It For Life, a Practical Guide*. I was impressed by Tharp's commitment to her daily routine—in a career that spans over forty years, the sixty-two-year-old dancer/choreographer has created over 125 original dances. Tharp contends that creativity is less about genius and more about disciplined work habits. Her message, though clearly different in ways, is consistent

but I was not fully committing myself to it. In his book, *Film & Video Financing*, Michael Wiese describes commitment as "perhaps the most important quality to possess" in making films, because the process is typically so long and difficult.

I decided to commit to my project in a number of ways, and have made some resolutions to make actual progress. These include finding a dependable partner to work with, delegating as much as I can afford, and making and keeping a regular appointment with myself to work on the project. In addition, I am putting out feelers about a free gathering of local filmmakers to share tips about how they manage their projects and companies, because being disciplined is no substitute for knowledge, and I plan to approach a couple of organizations about getting involved in a co-sponsorship capacity. It is the kind of event that a few years ago I would have picked up the phone and called on BF/VF for help. □

Tracy Heather Strain is a Boston based independent producer. She is the owner of Diner Media, and manager of The Film Posse, an office space for independent filmmakers.

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Rodney Evans

BRINGING BACK THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

By Austin Bunn

In the Flying Saucer café in Brooklyn, New York, Rodney Evans settles into the same chair he sat in to storyboard almost the entirety of his first feature, *Brother to Brother*. “I can’t draw,” explains Evans, “so I would sketch out these stick figures in a spiral-bound notebook, and then a friend of mine who is an artist made them look like people. The process took me two years.”

If the mood this morning feels nostalgic, Evans has proved himself a bit of a connoisseur of the feeling. *Brother to Brother*, a bittersweet paean to an overlooked hero of the Harlem Renaissance, won a Special Jury Prize at Sundance 2004 for “passion in filmmaking” with its blend of archival footage, lush (and low budget) period recreations, and spirited contemporary sexual politics. It’s a film suffused with admiration and yearning, and the prize was aptly named. “A film like this gets made because people are passionate about the material and they’re willing to work for less,” says Evans. Much less.

While in many ways the creation of *Brother to Brother* may follow the familiar indie trajectory of scrappy ambition and resilience in the face of innumerable hurdles, Evans at least had one enormous, free asset: the legacy of an artist community that has rarely been brought to life on screen. The Harlem Renaissance gave Evans personalities to burn. With such rich roles—black literary luminaries like

Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Wallace Thurman—the film’s stellar cast of theatrically-trained black actors worked for \$100 a day when “normally they’d make three times that,” says Evans. He shot the film in two parts, fashioning a trailer out of the first bits of filming in order to secure financing for the rest. (They



shot the remainder a year later.) Evans won’t reveal the exact budget because, he says, “when you attach a figure to your film, that automatically lets a distributor know what’s reasonable to pay for it.” Suffice it to say the budget was low, he concedes, “but people will make sacrifices when they believe.”

Brother to Brother follows Perry (Anthony Mackie), a gay college student and painter, struggling to make sense of a burgeoning romance with a

straight, white friend. When he meets Bruce Nugent (Roger Robinson), the last living member of a group of Harlem Renaissance rebels, he’s drawn increasingly into Bruce’s memories of the sexual adventures of the black avant-garde at “Niggeratti Manor,” a Harlem brownstone that served as the smoky, raucous meeting spot for Hughes, Thurman, and Hurston amid the roaring twenties. Jumping back and forth in time, the film draws evocative parallels between Perry’s emergent identity and Bruce’s own role in a bygone, artistic revolution.

For the past decade, Evans has been angling up to *Brother to Brother*’s tricky exploration of sexual politics by producing a handful of autobiographical, experimental shorts on 16mm. His first, *Mirage*, examined the perfect body-culture in the gay male consciousness. Later, as an assistant editor on *Gummo* and with *Upright Citizen’s Brigade* on Comedy Central, Evans became intrigued with tiny, buttonhole cameras that had been used on both productions. “I kept thinking, ‘What if you used these hidden cameras to get at something more sociological?’” says Evans. “There’s so much you can gather from people’s outlooks just from their gestures, particularly when they are not aware that they are being filmed.”

For *Two Encounters* (distributed by Frameline), Evans and a white friend strapped on hidden cameras and ventured into, respectively, a white gay bar and a black gay bar to see how the men would react to their ethnicity. “I wanted to know what it felt like to be the one black person in a super Chelsea-fied gay bar like G, or the one white guy in a black bar like Chi Chis on Christopher Street,” he says.

His most autobiographical short, *Close to Home*, became poignant (and

Rodney Evans wrote and directed *Brother to Brother*.

literal) source material for *Brother to Brother*. It threads together two narratives—a reflection about his coming out to his conservative, Jamaican parents braided with verité moments from his breakup with a Latino (and



straight) boyfriend. "I'd gotten this camera from this mentoring program at Film and Video Arts, and my boyfriend was really fascinated by it," Evan says. "So at one point he was filming me and said, 'What is your problem?' And I told him, 'You really want to know?' And this monologue just came out of me."

When Evans took the film to festivals, someone asked him if he'd ever thought of expanding the break-up segment, staging it with actors and writing dialog. "The idea intrigued me," Evans says. "And I thought, What would it be like if I lived in a different era? And that lead me to the Schomburg Center in Harlem. It's dedicated to black culture. And I found this interview tape of Bruce Nugent that was mesmerizing, because he mixed this scholarly intelligence with a street savvy that you never see combined in one person. He was like Cornel West meets Quentin Crisp meets . . . me."

After that initial encounter, Evans sought out the executor of Nugent's estate (the poet and painter died in 1987), who gave Evans thirty more hours of interview tape, and showed him some of Nugent's artwork. "I'd

always found myself attracted to this subset within the Harlem Renaissance that was this more rebellious, younger generation—Zora and Langston and Bruce," Evans says. "The executor told me that, near the end of his life Bruce

used to live illegally in an art studio on Nassau Street so that he had to break in every weekend. And then I thought, What would happen to him on the weekends he couldn't get in?"

In the script, Perry meets Bruce at a homeless

shelter where he works, and from that spark, Evans weaves together his two stories about two artists in search of community. "I wanted to make a film about the friendship between these two people of different generations, and to incorporate all the greatness of the Harlem Renaissance," says Evans. "And the break-up scene that's in there, that monologue is taken directly from *Close to Home*."

The *Brother to Brother* script took two years of writing, research, and escapes to writing colonies to complete. "It was really daunting to put words into Langston and Zora's mouths," he says. "Part of the trouble for me was thinking, Who the fuck do I think I am to do this?" He developed the script to the point where he felt he could approach grant foundations, and then, with support money from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Jerome Foundation, Evans set up a string of artist's colonies and

"disappeared for a year." In 2000, the script won the Independent Feature Project's Gordon Parks Award for Screenwriting, the signal to Evans that he was ready to shoot.

Not surprisingly, casting an explicitly black and gay film proved to be one of the major challenges. "I went to see every off-Broadway show with black actors in it for a year," says Evans. "I had this huge list of 100 people." But because the lead was a gay part, many black actors wouldn't even read the script. While Ang Lee might be able to lure Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger to play gay cowboys in his forthcoming project *Brokeback Mountain*, "it's a little more complicated for young black actors because of the hip-hop machismo mentality," says Evans. "If you have a guy's tongue in your mouth, you can't go back to your hood and get respect."

Then Evans read a *Variety* review of "Up Against the Wind," a play about Tupac Shakur that spotlighted the work of a new, young actor named Anthony Mackie. Evans was able to track Mackie down after a Julliard showcase. "At the time I was thinking of him for the part of Marcus, the friend [and a supporting role]. He took [the script] and called back a couple of weeks later to say, 'I'm really into it, but I only want to come in and read for Perry.'" It was the most interesting, complex part in the script and Mackie wanted to fight for it. "He said, 'If there is personal shit that I need to



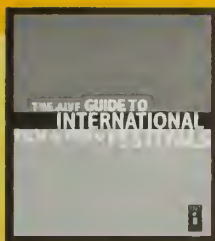
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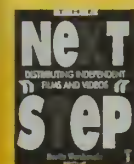
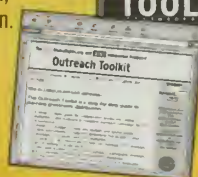
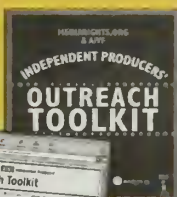


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deal with to do a gay part, well that only hones my craft,” Evans remembers. “So many actors are in it for ego reasons. When he told me that, it just really separated him out.”

With the cast in place, Evans filmed the first “chunk” in one week during the fall of 2001. “We couldn’t do the period stuff because all the costumes and design would take all the money we had,” says Evans. “So I really focused on the contemporary material and a couple of key period scenes that didn’t need a lot of design elements.” Fortunately, Harlem worked in his favor. “So much of that part of the city hasn’t changed, so we just shot up against the brownstones and put a long cigarette holder in Zora’s hand and suddenly it’s Harlem back in the day,” Evans says.

Evans edited that footage into a sample reel and sent it to 100 producers and cable channels to raise the rest of the budget. The Gay Men of African Descent, a community-based group in Harlem, organized a screening and benefit in conjunction with Lincoln Center. “That allowed us to reach a lot of people in the black gay community who were excited about the material,” says Evans, “and were willing to write checks.” ITVS ultimately came on board, as did the National Black Programming Consortium. A year later, he called up the cast and said, “We’re ready to finish the movie.”

Given the limited budget, Evans considered making the film on digital, but because the story was so suffused with period elements, he didn’t feel audiences would buy the recreations if they looked too “docu-home-movie.” “The question becomes, How do you create that world with no money? It’s not an option to fill a street in Harlem with period cars,” says Evans. “But if all that footage exists already why not blend it into what you *can* do?” Evans

and his cinematographer Harlan Bosmajian (*Lovely and Amazing*) looked for inspiration in the movies of Oscar Micheaux, widely recognized as the first black independent filmmaker in America, and then found black and white archival footage to license and fold into the contemporary material they shot themselves. Evans, having worked as an editor for years, makes the linking seamless.

Once the film was finished—and accepted to Sundance—Evans hired acquisitions vet Steven Raphael, formerly of USA Films, as a sales rep to get distributors into screenings and to conduct follow-up detail. “He just got the film,” says Evans. “It spoke to him, and he was really honest about its strengths and weaknesses. Because he comes from a marketing background—he was head of marketing for *American Splendor* and other HBO films that are coming out theatrically—he knew how we could sell it.”

Using a sales rep has become a standard part of going to Sundance. “There are like four people who represent everything. Like John Sloss and Cinetic, who had twelve projects [at Sundance],” Evans says. “You have to decide whether you want to be the least important priority on a slate like that, or if you want to go with someone smaller who has two or three films. Steven had a huge job and he was phenomenal. We’ve got four theatrical offers and we’re still sussing those out.”

It took six years for *Brother to Brother* to go from the Flying Saucer to its first broad screening. And, though Evans is still negotiating the distribution, he hopes the film will debut in theaters this fall. “There was talk of us as a summer tent pole to go up against *Spiderman 2*, but . . .” says Evans. “Somehow, I don’t think so.” ■

Austin Bunn is a New York based writer and frequent contributor to The New York Times Magazine.

Facing page: (top) Aunjanue Ellis (Zora) and (bottom) Anthony Mackie (Perry) in *Brother to Brother*.

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Going for the Burn

KEN BURNS REACHES FOR ARTISTIC INTEGRITY

By Rebecca Rule

When Ken Burns received the International Documentary Association's Career Achievement Award in 2002, IDA President Michael Donaldson said: "Some people will say Ken Burns is at a very early stage of his career to receive this recognition, and we agree that some of his best work is ahead of him. But, he has already compiled an extraordinary body of work that is certain to stand the test of time. Ken Burns has defied the odds and has succeeded with his integrity intact, and that in

about the building of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City, was nominated for an Academy Award in 1981. His early success helped in establishing his long association with public television, a "lucky accident," he says, that has since virtually shaped his career. Apart from the Brooklyn Bridge, Burns' other documentary subjects include Huey Long, the Shakers, Lewis and Clark, Thomas Jefferson, jazz, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mark Twain, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, and, of course, the Civil War. In



itself makes him a source of hope and inspiration for every aspiring documentary filmmaker."

A descendant of the Scottish poet Robert Burns, the Brooklyn-born Ken Burns has been making documentaries for over twenty-five years. His first documentary, *Brooklyn Bridge*,

1990, Burns' celebrated nine-part documentary series *The Civil War* won two Emmys, two Grammys, and earned Burns the Producer of the Year Award from the Producer's Guild. The series also attracted the largest PBS audience viewership ever. Burns' other awards include the Peabody Award for

Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Television Critics Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sports and Special Programming for *Baseball*.

Amid all the awards and recognition, though, Burns continues to focus his work on the big story of who we are and how we are—he paints on the broad canvas of American history and cares how the finished painting is unveiled. "More Americans get their history from Ken Burns than from any other source," according to the historian Stephen Ambrose. In 2003, when Burns was named an honorary



Doctor of Humanities by Howard University, the official citation praised his "unparalleled approach to challenging the 'attention span' of American viewers," and for winning over critics who "doubted viewers would sit for hours immersed in historical exploration about the human condition, life, and emotions."

Burns attributes the success of his career to an ongoing and steadfast belief in what he does and who he is as an independent filmmaker, and this specifically is where his artistic integri-

The first African American heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson is the subject of Burns's new film.

ty—"absolutely critical to my own self-esteem as an artist"—is rooted. Burns says there are three important factors that allow him to do his work the best way he knows how, starting with his relationship with PBS, who Burns remains loyal to despite, he says, "other very generous offers." While Burns certainly recognizes the advantage of his work being presented on public television without commercial interruption and influence, he is quick to fine tune what he means by that. "I do have underwriters," he says, "but there is a strong wall that blocks their ability to affect content." In fact, Burns contends, "Not once in twenty-five years has any underwriter attempted to affect [my] content." The next factor is the talent Burns chooses to work with—the writers, editors, and cinematographers. "These are the people who have, in the end, made me look good."

And the final factor is geography. "I live in New Hampshire," Burns says with conviction. The choice to live in Walpole, New Hampshire, population approximately 3600, has been critical to his work. "I made a decision twenty-five years ago to sacrifice something that I still miss desperately, the society of my colleagues, for the ability to work in solitude, free of distractions." Working in Walpole, he says, "permits us to focus entirely on what makes a better film."

Making a better film involves decisions that are driven by content, and though compromise is essential to the nitty-gritty of getting the work done, there is no room for compromise when it comes to the "central vision" of a project. "Integrity," says Burns, "has to do with every decision you make." And to Burns, integrity means refusing to be driven by "external pressures, the desire to please an audience, money... the opinions of your colleagues. None of that matters. All that matters is what makes the work better."

When Burns talks about integrity, he speaks with a passion and an intensity that makes it clear the subject is one he



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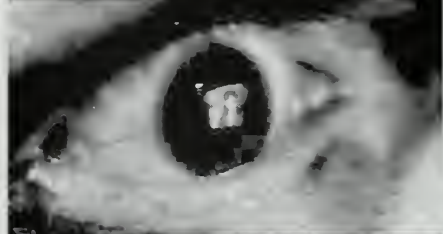
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has thought about deeply. "I have lots of friends whose work I admire who will admit that for this particular film or that particular film the studio reedited or chose a different actor," or in some way or another tainted or diminished the final product. "I have never had to make an excuse like that. Do you understand what I mean?" he asks. "I never want to stand before you and make an excuse of the kind filmmakers make continually: if we'd only had more time, if we'd only had different actors, if we'd only—"

No excuses. That, he says, is the essence of integrity. "If you don't like it, it's all my fault."

Has he ever thought about doing something crazy? Something entirely different from the documentaries on which he has built his career and reputation? Cartoons perhaps? Romantic comedy? Of course, this is a backdoor approach to the more pointed question: "Do you ever feel trapped by the formula and direction of your own very established kind of success?" Burns has been asked this question before. It is a question he believes is

grounded in the notion of risk-taking and one that wrongly implies working within a successful framework is not risky. "Some people think I was crazy to try to cover the whole of the Civil War," he says. The same could be said of his other mammoth subjects: baseball, for example, or the American West. Questions of his sanity, however, do not deter him. "[In every project] I want to bite off more than I can chew and learn how to chew it."

The late British actor Sir Tyrone Guthrie said it a little differently, and Burns has posted Guthrie's words on his office door: "We are looking for ideas large enough to be afraid of again." For Burns, this is the essence

of risk. This is the guiding principal of an artist testing his limits while being true to content, holding fast to vision. "There is a presumption in our media culture that if you've done things well, you're obligated to change. It's the Britney Spears/Madonna mentality," says Burns. "Don't you want to do something different? I don't have to French kiss somebody at an awards ceremony to be risky."

Burns also notes that the majority of his films have dealt with the issue of race in America. And although he doesn't say so directly, it is, of course, a subject that many might perceive as inherently risky, particularly for a white filmmaker. Burns' next film, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*, about the first African American heavyweight boxing champion, is due out in early 2005. He sees

making the film as a challenge, even, he adds, if "it doesn't have, perhaps, the telegenic appeal of Britney Spears and Madonna kissing."

Burns emphasizes autonomy and personal truth when it comes to the art of filmmaking.

"The important thing is to have a fierce independence, to compromise nothing for the content of the film," he says. "I have never compromised the content of a film. You have to be your own master." He does however concede that filmmaking can get complicated. "Not everybody who is drawn to film has something to say," says Burns. "The first step to successful filmmaking is to figure out in your heart of hearts whether you have something to say." Then, he explains, if you do, if you truly do, "you must persevere [until you can present] what you have to say uncompromised by the vicissitudes of life." □

Rebecca Rule is a New Hampshire based writer, and the author of two collections of short stories. Her latest, The Best Revenge, will be out in paperback this spring.



Ken Burns filming *Thomas Jefferson*.

Lost Angels

WHERE IS THE INDIE SCENE IN BIG BAD LA?

By Gadi Harel

I could just be romanticizing it now that I've moved, but in New York all the filmmakers I knew seemed to be creating by any means necessary—from Super-8 shorts to animation on their laptops while fundraising for a summer-shoot, to staging readings for a work-in-progress in between compiling documentary footage. When I moved to Los Angeles last year, I found myself at a Honda dealership working out the details of my lease agreement with Amir, a fifty-year old Iranian who preferred talking about his script for a

bumper in his paperwork, which he asked me to initial.

What crossed my mind during my drive home, in addition to thinking what a bizarre follow-up to *The Pianist* this was for Polanski, was if that's what *this* guy's up to, can there even be a real independent film scene in Los Angeles?

* * *

Q: What's the best part of being an independent filmmaker in Los Angeles?

A: The weather.

Ha ha. That's my new joke. And yet, three different filmmakers have recently given me that answer. But, you see, they were *kidding*—not



\$70 million movie to discussing the details of my Honda Civic. Polanski was interested in directing, he told me, and it was looking likely that Amir would star, opposite Ben Affleck. When I went back for maintenance after my first 5,000 miles, Amir let me know that if they could just raise another fifteen mil, they could possibly get Brad to replace Ben. He then noted a scratch on my rear

Left to right: Nick McCarthy and Paolo Davanzo of the Echo Park Film Center; filmmaker Patrick Hasson who moved to LA a few years ago; LA based filmmaker Paul Tarantino.

that I knew that. Before I could see how independent filmmakers benefited from living in LA, before I could even understand "the scene," I first had to *find* it. It exists, it's just not that easy to define and therefore not that easy to recognize right away.

As filmmaker Paul Tarantino (no relation to that other Tarantino, though, nevertheless, is currently finishing up his supernatural thriller *Headhunter*) explains, this could be "because [the independent scene] is far more integrated into the studio

scene than independent film communities elsewhere." Where the two meet is a very fuzzy line with lots of overlapping, and this offers at least one tremendous benefit. Filmmakers often need employment, and the studios can provide jobs while also offering tons of experience within, and about, The Industry.

When Paul did time at Disney, he was well aware of the underground group of filmmakers on the lot, describing it as a sort of Fight Club. "If you're working as an assistant to a creative exec., you may not be too keen on letting the word out on the street you're a closet filmmaker working on the next mini-DV masterpiece," says Paul. "You keep it on the down low, siphon what you can from the studio in terms of connections, film stock, copies, and phone calls, and work toward your goals." One filmmaker I

spoke to works as an editor, another produces specials for cable, and one guy I met has done it all—VIP Tours at Warner Bros, a mailroom stint at Disney, employee store clerk at Universal, assisted a well-known actor's agent, and played a red ape in the *Planet of the Apes* remake. And this guy will actually be shooting his second feature this summer, which, from what I heard, sounds pretty fantastic.

Another reason an independent film scene wasn't immediately obvious to me is that there isn't just one—there are (due to the enormity of this city)

Where to Go

If you're looking for a place to screen your work in LA, there's the Egyptian Theatre, home of the **American Cinematheque** (www.americancinematheque.com), which may be best known for its film series and retrospectives, but their Alternative Screen program offers filmmakers something special. Unlike film festivals, the Alternative Screen is always accepting submissions (of any length), and screens work throughout the year in the Egyptian, a renovated 1922 Hollywood landmark and (after a \$15 million refurbishing) state-of-the-art theater.

The **REDCAT** art space/theater (www.redcat.org) is brand new to downtown LA. Don't be fooled by its presence at the Frank Gehry-designed Disney Concert Hall. Its function is to serve all the arts (and coffee) with an alternative edge (and hazelnut flavoring). They have some first-rate experimental films lined up, and their Monday night screenings and discussions are definitely worth checking out.

LA also has the best video stores I've ever been to. The down-and-dirty **Mondo Video a GoGo**, specializing in the obscure, welcomes any seemingly impossible requests; **Vidiots**, often listed as a city-favorite, feels like more than just a place to rent movies and, at least during the afternoon I visited, was full of customers enjoying themselves while discussing cinema and anything else around them; **Rocket Video**, which often hosts screenings and lectures, feels a lot like Kim's in New York, but with a smile.

And finally, most of the filmmakers I spoke to were members of **IFP/West** (www.ifpwest.org), which continues to be an amazing source for everything—programs, events, advice, and support. But due to the size of this town, IFP/West may not truly be able to create the feel of a West Coast coalition of filmmakers. At the very least, you can easily meet others, share thoughts and ideas, see a few flicks, and if you're there at the right time, enjoy some free wine. And it helps, as Paul Tarantino advises, "if you're persistent and know what you want."

several "scenes," like villages. One of these scenes, a particularly thriving one, is in Silver Lake (or the "East Side") and one of its key contributors is Nick McCarthy. When Nick moved here from Boston, he, too, thought he knew what it would be like, with the studio system creating an us-versus-them environment. "But there's a great entrepreneurial spirit about the place and it attracts artists from all different backgrounds, many of whom are able to make a good living off the Hollywood machine." And of his job writing press material for a studio, Nick says, "It's the best job I've ever had because I have a lot of free time to make films. This is a situation that's much harder to have in New York."

While continuing to make his own films, Nick also acts as one of the heads of *Alpha 60, a film collective he co-created that challenges members each month to make their own five-minute short. As he explains, "You're supposed to write a short script inspired by a word or phrase, and then trade in your script for someone else's and make a movie of it. You're given a month to make something and have a guaranteed screening, no matter what you end up with. It's like a self-imposed film boot camp."

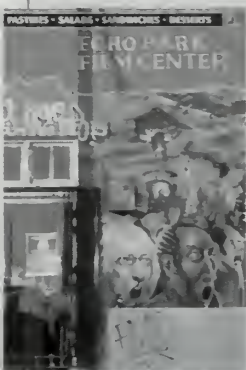
Over seventy-five filmmakers have by now created hundreds of films through *Alpha 60, many of which were screened last September at the Silver Lake Film Festival (www.silverlakefilmfestival.com). SLFF, currently in its fifth year, proudly sticks to showcasing the Silver Lake/East Side scene. Envoys of SLFF are quick to point out that before there was Hollywood there was the Silver Lake area, where past film pioneers (including D.W. Griffith and Walt Disney) built homes and studios, and where, it is entirely possible, our future film pioneers currently reside.

*Alpha 60's monthly screenings take place at the Echo Park Film Center (www.echoparkfilmcenter.org), a truly remarkable and valuable

resource, offering an intensive Super-8 filmmaking class (\$75 for adults and free for kids; digital formats and Final Cut courses coming soon), a terrific screening series, and sales/repair for all types of film equipment. If the center screens your submitted film, you actually get money from the door, and if you're a filmmaker on the road and stop in to speak and/or show your work, they'll not only give you fifty percent of the door, they'll find you a place to sleep. Not surprising that when I asked Nick McCarthy who inspired him, he was quick to say Paolo Davanzo, the center's director.

So, you've had your camera repaired at the film center, honed your skills with a few months in *Alpha 60, and want to submit something new to SLFF in the fall. Time to make a movie. Still on the East Side, I turned to Silver Lake resident, Stefan Avalos. Stefan is one of the geniuses behind the breakthrough digital landmark *The Last Broadcast*, and his latest, *The Ghosts of Edendale*, is slated for video release this August. Having shot *Edendale* entirely in Silver Lake, Stefan brings a practical indie look at the shooting situation here in Los Angeles.

"Whatever you need film-wise, it's here in LA. The coolest locations, props, tools, crews... You don't have to cobble things together," says Stefan. "The downside to being in the movie town as an indie is you can't use the novelty of movie making as a way to get certain things because here it isn't a novelty. All that aforementioned convenience comes at a price. Here, everyone, and I mean everyone, is hip to the process. There is no cool factor to movie production and you're not likely to get a location for that reason. On the contrary, you probably have to get a permit. Every 'civilian' in town knows what a pain in the ass production can be, what it costs, how much *they* should get paid for letting you shoot in front of their house. I think the biggest downside to being a filmmaker in LA is finding exterior



locations for cheap. It's tough, so don't think you're going to find a storefront, or woods, or a field, where somebody doesn't want money, generally a lot of it."

Patrick Hasson (*Waiting*) moved to LA a few years ago and agrees with Stefan's take. "Living in close proximity to Hollywood definitely has its advantages. It's amazing the pool of talent you can harness for a no-budget project with an ad on Craigslist. Plus, being so close to film companies, studios, and rental houses greatly increases the odds of cutting deals during production." While teaching filmmaking to middle-schoolers through a non-profit after-school program, as well as being a writer, director, and editor for hire, Patrick continues to shoot his own movies—his short *Dead Broke* was invited to kick off Philly Fest this April. However, Patrick just relocated to Venice, the West Side, and I'm as curious as he is to see what he'll find there. "The flip side," he is sure to remind me, "is that the LA scene seems to be a somewhat faceless entity with no true epicenter and a lack of centralized community."

For me, the West Side will have to wait. I'm going to explore the East Side a little longer. Next week I'm turning in my first five-page script at an *Alpha 60 meeting and will get another in return. The word-of-the-month is "phobic." And even though I still have another 800 miles to go before my next maintenance check-up, I know I'm going to pass the Honda lot on the way out to Silver Lake. Think I'll stop in and check up on Amir, see if he wants to come along. ▣

Gadi Harel is a Los Angeles based writer and filmmaker.

***Alpha 60:** www.alpha60films.com

Silver Lake Film Festival:
www.silverlakefilmfestival.com

Filmmakers Alliance:
www.filmmakersalliance.com

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Grassroots Media

BRAINSTORMING CREATIVE DEMOCRACY

By Alyssa Worsham

In response to increasing media conglomeration and the upcoming presidential election, the first NYC Grassroots Media Conference was held on February 27-29, 2004 at New York City's New School University. The conference featured over fifty workshops and panels sponsored by more than forty local organizations, with topics ranging from video production to radical cheerleading, and from combating institutional racism to using hip-hop as a means of social protest. Although participants could pick and choose, the seminars were arranged into three different groupings: Policy, History and Media Advocacy; Do-It-Yourself Media;

Denisse Andrade, outreach coordinator for Paper Tiger Television, which spearheaded the event. "We are trying to determine whether this could be an annual or biannual event. It really was a success—activists and media makers had a space to connect and strategize, and young people had a chance to learn from industry professionals. We started conversations, but we have to keep them up."

According to Paper Tiger, the inspiration for the conference came from the FCC's highly publicized three to two vote to endorse six major media-ownership rule changes last year. In response, an unprecedented number of Americans called, faxed, and

Independent, *The Nation*, AK Press, YMDI.org, and many other publications and organizations served as benefactors, patrons, or sponsors, while the NYU Oppositional Media Coalition, Educational Video Center, New York City Indymedia, and the Global Action Project served on the organizing committee.

The conference kicked off at the Bowery Poetry Club with a Friday evening performance by Daniel Bernard Roumain, and a pirate puppet-show by Nick Jones and Raja Azar called "Jollyship, the Whizbang." The musical, though not as glitzy as last summer's *Pirates of the Caribbean*, was a perfect introduction to a weekend devoted to grassroots media—a subtle nod that big-budgets aren't essential for creating engaging and original works. For those who didn't stay out too late after Friday's entertainment, the opening plenary began Saturday at 10 a.m., and then the workshops, seminars, and exhibitions continued late into Sunday afternoon.

The largest group of panels was Policy, History and Media Advocacy, which offered seminars like "The History of Radical Media in NYC," "Shake Your Pom Poms In the Face of Oppression: Pom Pom Making and Cheerleading Workshop," and "Dealing with Corporate Media: Can Activists Use the Mainstream Media, Or Does It Only Use Us?" AIVF presented a panel on how individuals can bring concerns to senators and representatives, and in an effort to further combat ongoing racism from all sides, two panels—"People of Color in the Media Movement: From Representation to Action," and "Looking at Racism and the Role of White Activists in the Alternative Media Movement"—met separately and then combined forces at the end



and Youth Media. In each group, participants were encouraged "to strategize on creative resistance and documentation of the flourishing protest movement against the Republican National Convention, which takes place in New York City this August."

"We expected about 500 attendees, but about 1,000 registered," says

emailed the FCC and Congress to protest. Apparently, say Grassroots event organizers, people are starting to notice that the media is governed more and more by "commercial values, rather than democratic ones." Paper Tiger was also able to rally a slew of independent media to their conference. *Democracy Now!*, *The*

A sign for the "Do It Yourself Radio Journalism" workshop; facing page: participants in a "Shake Your Pom Pom in the Face of Oppression" workshop.

to compare ideas and suggestions.

The workshop on white activism, hosted by Jamie McClelland of Paper Tiger, focused primarily on the problems of white privilege and ways in which to combat it within institutions and society at large. After coming up with working definitions of the terms, participants were divided into groups so they could effectively discuss the problems that might face media makers today: "How are issues of racism addressed within your business?" or "How can white people cover or represent people of color responsibly?" Reactions grew into conversations about affirmative action, the illusion of objectivity, and the trappings of language. While the problems of racism weren't solved in one morning, the lively discussions and the participants' willingness to engage respectfully with others boded well for future conversations about race, racism, and independent media.

For the Do-It-Yourself portion of the conference, attendees could choose between workshops on webzine-making or starting an internet radio station, among others. Shira Golding of Mediarights.org hosted a workshop on film and video distribution, exploring how to get a film "into the hearts and minds of people who will be motivated to take action," she says. While distribution is often one of the final steps for filmmakers, Golding encouraged participants to begin thinking about their potential audience long before picking up a camera, and to plan accordingly.

While all of the workshops had their appeal, some of the most interesting ideas came from the Youth Media section. In "Online Journalism 101," the teenage staff of the webzine Harlem Live instructed students on every aspect of production—from design and reporting to fundraising and administration. The "Politics of Youth and Youth Voting" seminar explored ways to get kids more involved, with the journalists of

Children's Press Line leading the discussion. Conference organizers must have been pleased with the high turnout, regardless of age, but the refreshing enthusiasm of the kids who participated was really intoxicating.

Scenarios USA hosted a screenplay-writing workshop, encouraging teens to create stories based on their experi-



ences with sexuality and the messages sent by popular media. Attendees might see some tangible results, as Scenarios is currently in the middle of their "What's the Real Deal" contest in New York City. The winner will get to have his or her script directed by an established filmmaker, and also assist in the production. Kristin Joiner, co-founder of Scenarios, Josh Lewis, "the improv guru," and Verena Faden, a former Scenarios winner, were the hosts. "The workshop was designed to get young people to think about their sexual choices through character and third person examination, rather than feeding them facts," says Scenarios co-founder Maura Minsky. "Verena spoke very passionately about the project and what it meant to her life—she saw community college as her future, but through Scenarios she was able to work in film and get a scholarship to SVA [School of Visual Arts] in New York."

Unfortunately, the short duration of the conference and the large variety of offerings made it impossible to attend all of the events of interest. In addition to the scheduled seminars, a series of films played on rotation in an open auditorium, while a youth lounge encouraged informal gatherings all day. The "Times Squared

Culture Jam and Bad Ad Exhibition" by Matt Pascarella featured hundreds of spoof ads and culture jams, and many of the sponsors set up an impromptu media fair with pamphlets, t-shirts, magazines, and books for sale. But, says Andrade, the conference is just the tip of the iceberg. "The NYC Grassroots Media website will stay up and serve as a way to continue the connections that were established at the conference. For example, we made a space for people of color to engage with white activists. They started a dialogue, but that is only the beginning. The conference can't just be it. If you want to build a movement, there's a lot of work that needs to be done. We only just started." ▣

For more information, see
www.nycgrassrootsmedia.org or
www.papertiger.org.

*Alyssa Worsham is a freelance writer in
New York City.*

Keeping it Real Weird

AUSTIN'S SXSW FEST IS LIKE NO OTHER

By Laura Nathan

Long gone are the days when Austin, Texas was merely a breeding-ground for progressive types, presidential hopefuls, and music junkies. As home to the South-by-Southwest Film Festival (SXSW), Austin has become the independent filmmaker's Eden. As first time filmmaker Allison Berg explains it, "I thought [SXSW] was one of the best festivals for my film to get into . . . I think you have maybe a more laid-back crowd, but a great attendance in getting your film going. I think everyone applies to all the big

film school to finding funding to the digital revolution. Meanwhile, SXSW helps "Keep Austin Weird" by preserving its creative, anti-corporate aura, and celebrating films that go where no filmmaker (and, in many instances, no other festival) has gone before.

For instance, in Nakajima's *After the Apocalypse* (for which he serves as writer/editor/producer/director/co-star), SXSW attendees were taken to a new realm of living. Featuring five characters' struggles to satiate their most basic needs after hazardous gases deprive them of their voices, this virtually silent black-and-white film invites viewers to imagine what life might look like if the contemporary prophecies of nuclear or chemical war came true. The world that the characters live in might not be pretty, but Nakajima's film beautifully captures human abilities to communicate even in the absence of speech.

Similarly, *Witches in Exile*, a brilliant documentary directed by Berg, introduces viewers to a land and plight that seem as foreign to the film industry as they do to most Americans. Filmed in Northern Ghana, *Witches* features interviews with four women who have been accused of witchcraft, banished from their homes, and subsequently sent to witch camps where they know no one. Winner of SXSW's Special Jury Award for a Documentary Feature, the film and its award are a testament to Berg's skill as a filmmaker, SXSW's refusal to judge solely on either experience or subject matter, and the desire of the SXSW audience to be challenged and educated.

This audience is, in fact, one of the primary reasons why Kris Lefcoe chose SXSW as the festival at which to premiere his film, *Public Domain*, a very smart satire of reality television shows. "SXSW seems like exactly my speed of festival . . . everyone is really cool. Austin and the audience here," she explained. "[*Public Domain*] is a very music-themed movie. Though the concept isn't about music, I think music fans will get a kick out of it." But like many other films screening at SXSW, that kick doesn't divorce the audience from questions about larger social issues.

Like *Public Domain*, Morgan Spurlock's hilarious but disconcerting film, *Super Size Me*, found its perfect match in an audience committed to keeping Austin weird by preventing corporate colonization of the city's independent spirit. Divulging what happened when an otherwise healthy Spurlock ate nothing but McDonald's food three times a day for one month, *Super Size Me* screened at Austin's Paramount Theater before 1,200 viewers.

While both Berg and Spurlock's publicist, Nicolette Aizenberg, likened the energy level at *Super Size Me*'s first screening in "the live music capital of the world" to that of a rock concert, Austin lived up to its name several other times during SXSW. That is, SXSW featured an abundance of highly acclaimed music documentaries, which explored genres such as pop, blues, and hip-hop. Topping this list was George Hickenlooper's *Mayor of the Sunset Strip*, which uses pop impresario Rodney Bingenheimer and his friends (ranging from David Bowie to the band No Doubt) as a case study to critique the role that fame and celebrity play in Western culture. Leaving his Austin audience deep in awe and contemplation, Hickenlooper ensured that music and film fans alike had something to chew on for some time to come.

The same could be said for the vast array of political documentaries that



ones, and I think this one, especially after last year, is getting right up there."

In its eleventh year, SXSW is in the top five on *Film Threat*'s Chris Gore's list of festivals where filmmakers and their films need to be seen. But unlike other more elite festivals, SXSW's reputation derives from its independent, friendly spirit and its interest in catering to both first-time filmmakers and veterans. Industry veterans participate in panel discussions that offer aspiring and burgeoning filmmakers like Yasuaki Nakajima advice on everything from

only election year fervor could produce. While well-made, inspiring documentaries like Shola Lynch's *Chiselm '72* and Jonathan Demme's *The Agronomist* transcended time and geography, the most highly anticipated political documentary proved to be *Bush's Brain*, which made its premiere at SXSW. Based on James C. Moore and Wayne Slater's book of the same title, the film provides critical insight on the political career that seems to be at the fore of everyone's mind: that of George W. Bush and his puppeteer Karl Rove.

Though troubled and contemplative about what they learned about Rove and Bush, the bipartisan audience seemed to be overwhelmingly impressed, even amused, by the documentary and its producers—Elizabeth Reeder, Joseph Mealey, and Michael Paradies Shoob. Given the controversy surrounding the film and the number of attempts made by Rove to prevent the film's production and screening, one might find it surprising that the film premiered in the land of its native son. But SXSW's commitment to keeping Austin weird made the location and fanfare surrounding the premiere quite fitting.

This also proved to be the case for SXSW's extensive lineup of provocative films concerning sex and sexuality. At a time when what writer/director Brian Dannelly (*Saved!*) terms "Bushism" is attempting to prescribe sexual mores, SXSW featured several films that took a stand against what *Straight-Jacket* producer Michael Warwick dubbed "the final taboo" in the film world. That film's writer/director Richard Day surmised, "If as an independent filmmaker you're trying to do something that hasn't yet been done, the largest field of unplowed snow is in the area of sexuality."

Leave it to filmmakers to plow that snow in Austin's otherwise temperate climate. Deirdre Fishel, for instance, premiered *Still Doing It*, a documentary exploring the intimate lives of women ranging from ages sixty-five to eighty-seven. And Jacob Vaughan and Bryan Poyser screened their narrative film,

actor Guy Stone must choose between his career and true (queer) love in *Straight-Jacket*, he finds a sense of belonging in a beautiful queer love story that defies sexual norms and Hollywood politics. But Stone, as I learned from Warwick and Day, wasn't the only one forced to feign het-



Dear Pillow, which examines the frank ways in which a teenage boy obsessed with his virginity, a middle-aged man who writes pornographic "stories," and a thirty-something woman infatuated with unsolicited phone sex, articulate their desires. Though both films made audiences a bit uncomfortable at times, they accomplished what they set out to do—make viewers question that discomfort.

Dannelly, meanwhile, screened his first feature film, *Saved!*, which unravels the burgeoning pro-abstinence and anti-gay movements' fantasy that premarital sex and homosexuality can simply be wished away. When "good girl" Mary (Jena Malone) becomes pregnant by her boyfriend, whom she sleeps with in hopes of "straightening" him out, her world turns upside down. Ostracized by friends and authority figures at her Christian high school, Mary finds true friendship in the most unlikely characters.

Similarly, when acclaimed 1950s

erosexuality to make it in Hollywood. At the Sundance Film Festival this year, Warwick and Day were asked *not* to market their equally queer film *Girls Will Be Girls* as such. The reason? Sundance organizers believed, according to Warwick and Day, that a queer film could not attract a broad, "proper" audience. At SXSW, "outing" their film and participating in a panel discussion about queer cinema, Warwick and Day connected with more open-minded, tolerant audiences.

This same audience made SXSW the ideal place for Louisa Achille to premiere her debut documentary, *The Naked Feminist*. Featuring interviews with several dynamic women who have worked in the pornography industry, the film counters claims that pornography oppresses women across the board. Revealing that "feminist porn star" is not an oxymoron, Achille's interviewees disclose that many women enter the profession by choice, moving their way up the ladder to

Facing page: Richard Day's *Straight-Jacket*; Above: Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me*.

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become top executives and influential activists. Winning the SXSW Audience Award in the Emerging Visions category, *The Naked Feminist*, like many other films that broach the most taboo and provocative of subjects in the most



unique of manners, seems to have been destined to thrive at SXSW.

With everyone at the festival giving to and receiving from the independent film community, newcomers and long-time attendees will almost certainly perform their own rendition of *Same Time Next Year* with SXSW, which remains committed to keeping Austin weird—no matter how large or prestigious the festival becomes. ■

Laura Nathan is the Managing Editor of INTHEFRAY magazine. She lives in Austin, where she writes regularly for Fierce magazine and freelances for others.

Louisa Achille's debut documentary *The Naked Feminist*.

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Chasing the Sunset

THE MAKING OF *THE DEVIL'S TWILIGHT*

By Michael I Schiller

Guanajuato, Mexico, Summer, 1998

I arrive by bus with a 16mm (hand-winding) Bolex camera, three prime lenses and a zoom, and 2,000 feet of film. The rest of the crew has been here for a few weeks already, preparing for the shoot. I have traveled here to shoot a low budget short. Ironically, production headquarters is a royal estate. For \$130 US dollars a month we live in a castle. Our palace in the hills above Guanajuato is made of stucco and hand painted tile, with a terrace perfect for our wide establishing shot. The whole valley is spread out before us—the town of Guanajuato, snugly tucked into the mountains slight parting at 8,000 feet above sea level, with granite peaks jutting even higher.

Sunset, the celestial crossroads, is always preceded by the cinematographer's "magic hour" of perfectly warm light. With camera in hand we chase the twilight, that ethereal space between night and day, from the valley of Guanajuato to mountains of Santa Rosa—it is an obsession, an inevitability. It becomes a theme for our production.

By daylight the valley looks like the work of some crazed cubist with an impressionist's palette, alive with buildings that are peach, lime green, cobalt blue, and yellow. By the twilight, this town (which has been preserved in almost all of its colonial architectural glory) dissolves into a sea of starry streetlights and brightly lit taco stands, colonial churches crimson in its wake. We try to capture it all, one frame at a time.

The "magic hour" is captured in *The Devil's Twilight*.

The Story

Our tale, *The Devil's Twilight* (as it is known in English), is based on a short story written by Romeulo Gallegos, the first democratically elected president of Venezuela. *El Crepusculo del*



Diablo is a simple but colorful drama that takes place during carnival. Although originally set in Venezuela, we changed the locale to central Mexico because of the director's connections there. The director, Bernardo Ruiz, is Guanajuato born and Brooklyn bred.

The Gate Keeper

We are pretty isolated here, far from any film processing labs, and I sometimes feel the pressure of no second chances. We will not be able to watch any dailies. The camera holds the precious gate—that little shutter that controls how, when, and where an image will be perceived and ultimately projected. That fluttering shutter, a tiny rectangle, is in reality what the entire production

rests on. All the time, energy, money, food, equipment, gear, planning, and plotting—all our dreams and aspirations, our vision, our rung on the ladder in the impossible hustle that is the film world, all comes down to "the gate." The tiny square that follows the Tao Te Ching principle: in the case of a vessel, a window, or a bicycle wheel—what isn't there is far more important than what is. If the gate is clear when it is supposed to be, then the cinematog-

rapher is the gatekeeper. If it is not, he topples the whole house of cards. Fortunately on this shoot, I have a co-cinematographer, Jon Fine, who is also a co-producer on the project. If something goes wrong, we can always blame each other.

Zombie

Our most important contact inside Guanajuato is a seventeen-year-old kid named Eduardo, whose friends call him Zombie. His father owns a photography studio in town and he secures us a tripod, filters, and other camera equipment. Zombie is a talented photographer in his own right. He becomes our assistant director, still photographer, and minister of transportation for the shoot, hustling us in rides whenever he can.

Day 1: Principle Photography

We prepare to shoot in front of San Roque, a church plaza. After a week of consecutively sunny days, dark foreboding clouds hang heavy over our set. Crowds form in the bleachers and drummers pound out rhythms



as the tension of our first day edges to its climax. Extras in costume stand by, we pay a local kid for the use of his donkey in the scene when our original donkey guy never shows. Arguments over the placement of extras ensue; our lead actor shows up late, drunk, and stoned. Our original donkey guy arrives, having traveled all the way from Santa Rosa, and we are obligated to pay both donkey guys with the money that the production can't afford. We roll off a hundred feet of film, reload, and then, the inevitable.

First comes the rain that sends everyone running for cover in different directions. Big fat chunks of icy hail

pelt us as people scramble to cover our equipment and props. It comes down heavy then lets up enough for us to regroup. The late donkey guy says something to Bernardo in Spanish. Bernardo translates, "The rain is good, it has been a long time and our crops need it desperately."

We reschedule the scene for the next day, and fire the actor playing the role of the young masked devil.

La Luz

The art director, Ben Fine, has taken over as stunt man for the lead devil. He is a good body-double, and plays the part well. Many of the kids in this town have never seen a movie, let alone a film crew and a cast as freaky as ours. A huge crowd of local children gathers to watch the chase scene we are filming. The kids become impromptu extras. With the devil on the run, the kids are supposed to follow him and grab rocks as if they are going to stone him. Many of the kids actually hurl their rocks at Ben, whose head is repeatedly saved by the heavy-duty devil mask.

The riled up mob we have created from these children gets out of control. One kid has a piece of wood with nails sticking out, another has a chunk of broken glass, another has pockets stuffed with rocks. When we finish the chase scene, the kids mellow out—apparently, they had been method acting. We follow them to the edge of town to an ancient graveyard, the perfect location for our final scene. The kids ask us if we are going to kidnap them and sell them in the North. We promise we won't, as long as they don't stone us to death.

Wrap

We wrap production and relax for a few days on the terrace of our villa. From the lookout of our castle we watch the sun drop behind the mountains—first past the clouds, then beyond the farthest horizon. Before the sky swallows the mountain, it

turns blue-black, then chases orange and all of the warmth down deep into the farthest western ridge line.

Adios

I head back to San Francisco to get the film processed and bring the camera package with me. The telecine transfer goes well. The gate was clear.

A few days later I talk to Ben and find out that the production headquarters was robbed. They took everything that wasn't bolted down, including the tripod. We should have seen it coming. Within days of moving in, some locals had stuffed a bird's head into the lock of our gate. I always felt I was being watched in that house. But the camera and the negs made it out. We still have a film.

Fall

Eli Wallach agrees to be in the film. Through a connection of Bernardo, we now have the screen legend and the star of countless Hollywood films (*The Good the Bad and the Ugly*) in our small independent short.

We shoot in an antique store on Smith Street in Brooklyn. The ladies who run the store are clearly smitten by Mr. Wallach, who proves to be a courteous, wonderful human being (as well, of course, as a masterful actor). DP Ben Starkman shoots the scene using an Arri SR3 with a crystal synch motor. Desire Ortiz records sound to DAT.

The other photography—B-Roll and M.O.S. flashbacks—is shot on the Bolex. In one scene, teenage kids are hanging out on the corner drinking forties. Just as we wrap the scene, police stop us and ask for film permits, which we do not have. We convince them that we are film students, and they let us go. We walk a block and are stopped by a man with a crazy look in his eye. He starts cursing at us, threatens to rob us, keeps sticking his hand into his jacket as if he has a gun. We are carrying both 16mm camera

Michael I Schiller filming *The Devil's Twilight* in Mexico.

packages and our negatives. We keep calm and the situation ends with the man threatening us with violence, then thinking better of it and walking away. We still have a film.

Post

It took us three years from principal photography to get a print made. This was a product of having no budget, literally. The picture was financed one step at a time. We all chipped in for film and processing. Production costs in Mexico were unbelievably cheap. The telecine was done by a friend of mine for free, although, he subsequently lost his job at the transfer house for helping out friends, gratis, after hours. The Avid sessions were done by editor Greg Boas on the night shift, for the cost of the room only. A NYFA grant covered the cost of the print. The film, produced by Quinta Raza Productions, officially premiered at the Latino Film Festival in New York and has continued to have a healthy life for a short, eventually screening at the National Portrait Gallery at The Smithsonian Institute, The Festival of New Latin American Film (Havana, Cuba), Quinta Jornada de Cortometraje (Mexico, DF, Mexico), and was Broadcast on the PBS/WNET13 program, *Cantos Latinos: The Latin Lens*, in 2001.

* * *

Reflecting on this project always brings me back to the classic line by Eli Wallach from a scene in *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*—if you watch *The Devil's Twilight* until the credits are over, you'll hear him say it (he did a special version for us): "If you're gonna shoot, shoot, don't talk." Spoken like a pro. ■

Michael I Schiller is a producer, director and cinematographer. He is a co-founder of Freed Pictures, an independent film production company (www.freedpictures.com).

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Sundance Feels the Burn

THE FESTIVAL EVERYONE LOVES TO HATE

By Kyle Minor

There are two Sundance Film Festivals. The made-for-television, glamorous, Los Angeles-chic Sundance can be seen on *Entertainment Tonight* and *Extra*: Hollywood stars walk red carpet lines; former Vice President Al Gore presses flesh with average moviegoers after taking in a showing of *Born into Brothels*; Paris Hilton gives an impromptu stage performance at the *Blender* party at Harry O's on Main Street; and fresh-faced auteurs are anointed with seven-figure distribution deals with ancillary rights to come.

But what about that other Sundance, the gritty, ground-level festival out in the Park City mountain cold, where the shuttle buses are packed with hot, smelly bodies, and the common filmgoer shows up three hours early to wait in line for a screening, holding a cup of coffee and a ten dollar bill (in case a ticket is indeed available)? Chances are, that lonely waitlister is carrying something to read. And at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, the book in hand was often Peter Biskind's *Down and Dirty Pictures* [see review on

page 49], an unflinching, sometimes shrill account of the parallel rise of Sundance and Miramax Films.

Biskind's book made several of my waits more enjoyable, and I hadn't yet read a single page. I heard lots of the juicy bits, though. Readers in line often called out to each other "Listen to this!" and then let fly another sad story of betrayal and innocence lost. Most of these stories cast either Robert Redford or Miramax founders Harvey and Bob Weinstein as antagonist, villain, or Scrooge. When I finally read *Down and Dirty Pictures* for myself, it became clear that the book's organizing principle was dirt, dirt, and more dirt on Harvey and the two Bobs.

There was something else, though, an underlying reason for the resentment. I heard it in whispers at Sundance venues, and in great, loud, questioning howls at Slamdance and the other concurrent, alternative festivals. Had Sundance lost its way? Had Redford's grand vision of a forum for truly independent voices in cinema been sub-



merged beneath an ocean of sponsorship and marketing and Hollywood bridge-building? Had Sundance relegated independent film to a minor league farm system from which directors, writers, and actors could be promoted to big-league studio work?

Two summers ago I produced a short film with a small crew of non-professionals. Only the director, the cinematographer, and a veteran character actor playing a supporting role had worked with actual film stock before. The crew was strictly volunteer, mostly local college students and eager tradesman recruited from the director's church. We shot nearly an hour of raw footage in two twenty-hour days, and a few months later enjoyed premiering *Stranger Things*, a sixteen-minute slapstick comedy, at a few film festivals, and, more importantly, at two special showings for the people in the small town that had provided us with

thousands of dollars worth of free products, services, and sweat equity.

Why did we make the movie? We all had our own reasons. The director and I both wanted to make features, and the short film was both cheap film school and a substantive achievement to show potential investors. The cinematographer wanted the director to hire him for paying work in direct-to-market, long-form music videos. The principal actor needed a reel. Our executive producer, who worked in the sporting goods department at Wal-Mart, simply wanted to be part of something interesting, as did our crew.

And it worked. We all got what we wanted from the film. The biggest winner was the principal actor, who used the film to enter the Groundlings system near the top rung, and there were other surprises. Our dolly grip found a new career in film and video after the cinematographer, impressed with his work ethic, began hiring him for regular work and recommending him to others in the regional film community. A man who allowed us to use his house for a location struck up a friendship with the director and together they created a direct-to-market video project, which is now in pre-production.

Stranger Things was not a Sundance film; nor was it an intentional overture to the Hollywood establishment. Independent filmmakers make films for myriad, often quite personal reasons. But the short film is done, and it has run its course through the tiny festivals and private screenings and a small self-distributed DVD printing. Now, my nearly every waking thought concerns my feature film, which begins production in June, and my wants have escalated. I want audiences, scores of them, to see this film. With limited contacts and a minuscule budget for marketing, I need a gatekeeper, a powerful one with a loud voice. I want Sundance.

According to Peter Biskind, a sort of mission creep set in at Sundance, beginning with the breakthrough commercial success of Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies, and videotape* after the director won the 1989 Audience Prize. As the festival, then known as the US Film Festival, became more prestigious, *sex, lies* went on to win Soderbergh the Palme d'Or, the highest prize at Cannes, as well as an Oscar nomination for Best Original Screenplay. And Sundance's films, thanks in part to the aggressive distribution and sales tactics pioneered by Miramax, became more lucrative for distributors. Sundance became less engaged with the fiercely regional independent spirit that had informed its early vision, and more beholden to the businessmen on both coasts whose increasing influence was making the festival more of a market with each year, and, in the eyes of many purists, less of a forum for truly independent voices who lacked the resources (and in many cases the desire) to make the kinds of films that growing distributors like

Facing page: *Dirty Work* filmmakers Tim Nackashi and David Sampliner with producer Edward Norton at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival; (above) from *Dirty Work*: Bernard and Darrell work unpleasant jobs.

Miramax were seeking.

Even in the midst of the commercial boom, ultra low budget pictures like Kevin Smith's *Clerks* and Rose Troche's *Go Fish* were given tremendous release platforms, despite gritty production values and the lack of a major star. But Biskind implies that even these victories for previously marginalized voices, especially in the case of the Weinsteins' *Clerks* acquisition, were something of a smokescreen to obscure the direction in which Miramax was leading the market—away from the nurturing of small, personal films and toward major releases featuring bankable actors and targeted toward expensive, wide releases with the potential to make the kind of money studio films had been making. At the same time, Biskind says, Miramax was engaging in business practices intended to squeeze underfunded competitors out of the business.

The studios began to catch on, starting their own pseudo-independent divisions for the purpose of producing and distributing films with low budgets helmed by directors plucked from the Sundance scene. On occasion, the studios themselves would bankroll material that previously would have been made as an underfunded independent. The predictable result was that directors like Todd Haynes, Alexander Payne, and David O. Russell began making slicker films with a more commercial sheen, and these films—*Far From Heaven*, *About Schmidt*, *Three Kings*—were often superior efforts, in some ways fulfilling the promise of a commercial cinema that brought with it many of the virtues of the independents.

Still, it is telling to note that directors like Todd Haynes, whose earliest film *Poison* was difficult both thematically and structurally and shot in black and white without the benefit of star actors, would be least likely to benefit from Sundance if they were starting out today. Consider some of the buzz films from this year's festival. *The Butterfly Effect*, *The Clearing*, *Saved!*, *Dogville*, *Chrystal*, *November*, and *Garden State* feature Ashton Kutcher, Robert Redford, Mandy Moore, Nicole Kidman, Billy Bob Thornton, Courtney Cox, and Natalie Portman respectively. *Open Water*, which benefited from a backstory involving actors ordered into shark-infested water while the producers threw bloody chum at their heads, and *Primer*, which concerns time travel, are both high concept enough that I have told you all you need to know about them in this sentence. The sole exception to the studio-friendly rule among the films that most benefited from this year's festival is Jared Hess's *Napoleon Dynamite*, a film owing enough to the sensibility of

Rushmore director Wes Anderson that one could say it has a track record to lean upon.

But is it really a problem that Sundance has empowered a group of independent filmmakers to recruit actors with name recognition to star in their films? Although there are, among the buzz films, a few pieces of studiosque drivel—the Kutcher film, for example—there are also films so challenging that even the presumably sophisticated Sundance audience did not quite seem to get them. Lars von Trier's *Dogville*, for example, was staged on a nearly bare soundstage, with white chalk lines representing a Colorado mining town's streets and walls and even the

dog. The narrative took the form of a fable, which by movie's end pretty clearly critiqued the American response to poverty and injustice, both at home and abroad. But at the film's premiere at the Eccles Theater, the largest Sundance venue, the American crowd identified so strongly with Nicole Kidman's troubled protagonist (who, ironically, was meant by von Trier to represent them) that they applauded her when she responded to the hatefulness of a near-Third World town by ordering it burned to the ground, all inhabitants to be killed. This may not have been what von Trier had in mind,

but it certainly proved his point, and *Dogville* is clearly not the sort of film that an American studio would jump at the opportunity to finance at the script stage. Its sensibility reeks of the idiosyncratic, the personal—dare it be said—the indie.

If there are poster children for what Sundance can do for young, unconnected filmmakers, they might be David Sampliner and Tim Nackashi, co-directors of *Dirty Work*, a documentary about a bull semen collector, a septic tank pumper, and an embalmer, all of whom feel pride and even passion for work that society deems most undesirable.

Nackashi had been involved in the making of music videos, and Sampliner had a background in photography, but neither had any experience in documentary or narrative filmmaking. They did things wrong by the standards of commercial filmmaking. They shot on digital video, using the 4:3 aspect ratio associated with television programming. The boom mic occasionally made unwelcome appearances in shots. "We were making this in a vacuum," Sampliner says. "In Athens, Georgia (where we made the film), there was a tremendous arts scene but no film scene."

Despite the film's technical limitations, the co-directors submitted the film to Sundance, holding out some hope that it would be accepted. "I was under the impression that



Sundance was still interested in taking films that were rough around the edges,” Sampliner says.

Dirty Work has its charms. The film is passionate, for one thing, and Sampliner and Nackashi were able to coax unselfconscious performances from three characters unlike any filmgoer had likely seen. Darrell Allen, the nearly illiterate septic tank pumper, was particularly beguiling. *Dirty Work* captures his insecurities, his deeply felt need to justify his own intellect despite his sixth-grade education; but the filmmakers also amply document the transforming power of his facility with septic tanks upon his life. The film is a remarkable study in human dignity, and its stories are unexpectedly moving. In a late night Sundance press screening, I watched an audience of skeptical writers slowly give in to the film’s gentle rhythm. We departed the theater in more open conversation than I had been accustomed after a week in Park City.

The invitation to Sundance thrilled the filmmakers. “The selling of your film becomes important if: A. You want to sell your film, and B. You want to recoup your costs,” Sampliner says. “Sundance was one of the few places we could sell our film. And it gave us a venue. People could see it. Our film is proof that they’re still honoring content. [Being accepted into the festival] felt like an important affirmation that we were a part of a larger community of filmmakers.”

Ultimately, the question of whether Sundance has sold out to the forces of commerciality and abandoned its original vision is moot. As Biskind makes clear in *Down and Dirty Pictures*, there might never have been a clear, distinct vision for Sundance, even in the earliest stages when Redford was creating the Sundance Institute and greenlighting the first incarnation of the festival. In those early days, there seems to have been only a problem: How can independent voices best be given an opportunity and a platform? The answer to that problem might be seen less in a singular Sundance vision than in a multiplicity of visions evolving over the last twenty years along with the festival. This seems in keeping with the spirit of independence so often trumpeted by independent filmmakers.

In making his case for the collapse of the Sundance dream, Biskind inadvertently praises its great successes. The studios finance and distribute more challenging films than they did in the 80s, and those films consistently find an audience broader than anyone would have expected at the outset of the Sundance experiment.

And, perhaps inspired by Sundance success stories (and by the growing availability of more affordable technologies) more independent voices are making films than ever before. Entire catalogues are now dedicated to the hundreds of film festivals exhibiting independent films, and Sundance no longer has to scrounge for films as it did in the early days. Last year alone, over 6,000 films were submitted to the festival. Around 200 were accepted, so there are (no doubt) plenty of sour grapes to go around.

But as my experience with *Stranger Things* illustrates, albeit on a very small scale, Sundance is not the only way to



build an audience for a film. Independents have been self-distributing for years, as well as taking advantage of channels of distribution like public television; cable; the direct-to-video, educational, and foreign markets; and the hundreds of festivals, which can be an end unto themselves. A brief accounting of the last few years yields non-Sundance gems (and this list could be twenty times as long) like Aviva Kempner’s *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, Christopher Nolan’s *Following*, and this year’s *Big City Dick*, directed by a trio of unknown filmmakers from Seattle, which won the Audience Award at Slamdance and is clearly destined for a future as an underground cult classic. But there is no denying that Sundance, for American independents at least, is the most prestigious way to begin reaching that audience. ■

Kyle Minor lives in Orlando, Florida, where he is at work on a feature film. As a writer, his “Dispatches from the 2004 Sundance Film Festival” appeared earlier this year in McSweeney’s online, and he is a regular contributor to the Antioch Review.

Facing page: Michael Champion as a taco-wielding tow-truck driver in *Stranger Things*; above: Brian O'Halloran and Jeff Anderson in Kevin Smith's *Clerks*.



Networking 101

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING CONNECTED

By Elizabeth Angell

Everyone knows the value of networking, right? It can get you a job, it can get you a great DP, it can get your film into the hands of a first-rate distributor. The right network can even get your movie an audience—if you're producer Gill Holland. Holland himself was an important part of the promotion strategy for *Desert Blue*, the 1998 film that he produced. Samuel Goldwyn, the film's distributor, placed an ad in New York City newspapers that read simply: "If you know Gill Holland, see this movie."

"Supposedly," says Holland, "the box office went up."

Few filmmakers know enough people to literally fill seats in a movie house, but everyone can be more strategic in making the kinds of contacts that will help to ensure their work finds its best audience. "There's the romantic notion of the starving artist who gets discovered and then everything takes care of itself," says Steven Adams, an indie producer and screenwriter. "But you have to promote your work. And you don't have to turn yourself into a whore; you can do it with dignity."

That's right—dignity. Using your network isn't code for scoring a meeting with Sony and moving to an office in Burbank. Even if you stay happily poor and creatively fertile in New York, you still need to know the right people. "It's a field dominated by strategic relationships so there's a greater premium on networking," says Stephen Beer, a prominent entertainment lawyer with the firm of Greenberg Traurig, who has worked with many independent producers and directors. "Film is a collaborative effort, and an inventory of relationships can work to advance your project."

1. It's All About the Material The most important element for effective indie networking is having the goods to back up your big talk. "You're really only as good as what you do," says Adam Nelson, the CEO of Workhouse

Filmmaker Gill Holland goes out almost every night to make career connections.

COURTESY OF GILL HOLLAND

Publicity, a PR firm that promotes indie clients. “So once you do something you’re proud of, make it successful by any means necessary.”

If you know you want to be a filmmaker, but you haven’t actually made a film yet, then attach yourself to worthwhile projects. That way, even if you don’t have a screener of your work to pass out at meetings, you can still begin to build a reputation and talk about your work when you meet Harvey Weinstein’s nephew at a cocktail party. “Networking starts with the material,” says Adams. “You have to get your ideas together. It’s all about the script or the concept, and if you’re not ready to do that yourself, you should attach yourself to people who are ready.”

2. Do the Hustle Gill Holland explains his network this way: “I got to New York ten years ago and I have pretty much gone out every night since. And I’m only sick about four nights a year.”

That’s 3,610 chances to meet new talent, find financial backing, or hear the best gossip. Holland recommends going to any screenings, panels, seminars, festivals, and parties to which you can weasel an invitation. “You start to see the same people at festivals and film events,” says Holland. “They’ll say ‘hi’ to you and the ‘hi’ becomes ‘what are you working on?’ And six months later, you’re making a film together.”

Don’t be shy about introducing yourself and talking about your work. One of the crucial differences between the indie world and Hollywood is that the vast majority of independent film producers are interested in undiscovered talent. Holland is established now—he doesn’t really need to make new friends. But he keeps going out anyway. “You have to be accessible, especially in indie film,” he says. “You’re dealing with people who are not yet famous, who don’t have people representing and promoting them. So I have to be out there talent spotting, and I have to seem open to suggestions.”

And that, says Adams, is the second big difference between independent and studio filmmaking. “The star system makes people inaccessible and [the industry] is very hierarchical,” he notes. In Hollywood, a film usually needs a celebrity to succeed—be it a well known producer, director or, of course, actor. But indie companies and film sets are traditionally more democratic.

3. Go Everywhere When you’re starting out, there’s no such thing as a bad party. “No opportunity is too small. Nothing is beneath you,” says Nelson. “I’d take advantage of every screening opportunity, every meet-and-greet, every contest.”

Just be sure to use each opportunity to its best advantage. Holland says that early in his career he was always strategic. He would work quickly to identify the key play-

ers. “At the old IFP market, it was crazy. I quickly learned that the blue badge was the important badge. They were the producers and programmers. The red badges were just the other filmmakers.”

4. Only the Best If you find the prospect of meeting half of New York or LA in the next year intimidating, Holland recommends narrowing your focus. “There are probably fifty important people to know,” he says. “That’s just not that many people.” Know exactly who it is you want to meet and then put yourself in their path. Holland suggests *The Hollywood Reporter* list of top ten production companies in New York. From there, ask around. Find out the names of the other producers they regularly work with. Pretty soon you’ll have a solid list of the names you should be familiar with.

5. Don’t Burn Your Bridges Be nice to everyone—you never know who’s going to be in charge next year. This piece of advice may seem to contradict the item above, but networking isn’t an exact science. “I’m a big believer in killing people with kindness because you never know who they’re going to become or where they’re going to go,” says Nelson. “It’s often the person you least expect from your class at film school who becomes Tim Burton.”

6. Know Who You Are Once you’ve mustered the courage to leave your apartment and head to the screening, make sure you know what you’re going to say when you strike up a conversation with the director whose work you admire so much. “Be prepared when you introduce yourself,” says Kathleen McInnis, a Seattle filmmaker and a long-time programmer for the Seattle International Film Festival. “What do you want them to know about you?”

7. Know Who They Are If you’re meeting someone whom you hope to work with directly, make sure you know enough about their work to impress them. Beer says that when he meets with a potential new client, he looks for “professionalism, preparation, and an ability to monetize my time.” In other words, he doesn’t like it when people have no idea what he’s looking for.

“It’s unrealistic for a first time filmmaker with a script to ask me to read a script and work for them for free. I work for a law firm. I have to make choices.” Beer might, however, be willing to offer some friendly advice or a reference.

8. Homework Stay on top of what’s going on in the business in general and in your specialized field in particular. “Research is incredibly important,” says Nelson. “Go to the film festivals, even if you don’t have anything. Stay on top of the trades.”

Nelson also recommends delving into the sordid world

of celebrity biography. "I read a lot of them. I find them to be incredibly helpful. They are the new mentors, I feel. And it can be great to read about other people's failures and phobias, as well as successes." Your newfound expertise in the love life of Errol Flynn could come in handy at all those cocktail parties. You're bound to run out of conversation eventually.

9. Suck Up to the Press They're the best source of gossip and they always know what's going on. They can also be crucial in making your next project a success. Nelson advises laying the groundwork early for those besotted profiles later. Even a blurb in a small trade magazine can



mean a big difference for your first film. "Even early on, Quentin Tarantino worked it," says Nelson. "He took over the room. He made those hardened journalists love him. And they dedicated page after

page and column after column to how brilliant he was. You take a biography and make it mythology and ultimately iconography."

(Full disclosure: We're pretty sure that Mr. Nelson suggested this to flatter us but it worked and we're flattered, so this pearl of wisdom gets its own dedicated spot on our tip sheet.)

10. Let Them Do the Talking Even if you're the one with a project to promote or a juicy piece of news to divulge, don't forget that everyone loves the sound of their own voice. "Let other people talk about themselves as much as you talk about yourself," recommends McInnis.

11. Birds Do It, Bees Do It Networking isn't just for the fiction crowd. Documentarians need to do it, too. Many nonfiction films can take years—sometimes even decades—to complete. It is often lonely and dispiriting to toil away on grant letters all alone. "You need the support," says Cynthia Lopez, the communications director for POV, the well-regarded PBS documentary series. "You need to interact with other filmmakers to know what the trends in fundraising are. It's really important to see other people's work, and also to learn from their mistakes."

12. It's Your Party Once you've gotten the lay of the land, try your hand at playing host. Organizing an evening

of drinking might be the best way to meet your best friend's roommate, who just got a job at Killer Films.

If you already have a project in the pipeline, Adams suggests organizing a reading of your screenplay. It can be an inexpensive and effective way to engage potential backers in your work and recruit talented friends to help with your project. "People feel like they can be part of the magic," says Adams. "Six actors in a room reading a script can get people really excited. They want to help make it possible."

You might even find you have a talent for bringing other people together—you're not just networking for yourself but playing conduit to other networks. "You get a sense of what other people do, and then you connect people who might not ever know each other," says McInnis.

13. Slave Wages Unpaid work can be the ideal way to get your feet wet. "The best way to get in a room with those people is to volunteer," says Holland. "My first job was a two week internship. Then I was at October Films for two months."

If you're not interested in the production racket, try volunteering your services on set. Your fellow grips might one day be your ticket to success. "When I started out, I did a lot of crazy weird projects that don't belong on my resume," says Adams, "but a lot of the people I worked with then are very successful now, and we took our baby steps together."

14. Use Your Youth (If you're young that is . . .) Inexperience can provide excellent cover for a multitude of things you won't be able to get away with later. If you're twenty, you can walk up to your favorite filmmaker and fawn all over her like the naïve fan you truly are. If your forty, that's just not cute.

You can also call up a big shot and ask for a meeting. Why not—you don't know any better. "I think informational meetings are great," says McInnis. "Let's say you're twenty years old, and you're moving into the filmmaking field. Why not call Miramax and ask them if you can go in and talk to them for twenty minutes? Everybody loves to help you if you're twenty."

15. Location, Location, Location

Unfortunately, where you live does matter. Most movers and shakers believe that in order to have a healthy network of friends and colleagues, you have to live in New York or Los Angeles. Others



PATRICK MCMILLAN

are not quite so exclusive—they mention Seattle, Chicago, Austin, and Miami as alternatives with healthy filmmaking communities. But most young filmmakers won't be able to make it if they stay in Topeka. It's just too hard to get noticed. "If somebody sends me a script and I know that I'm going to see them three times in the next month, I'll read that script faster," says Holland. Otherwise, he says, it will probably just languish on his desk, unread.

16. Formal Networks Parties aren't the only way to meet people. Don't be afraid to join the ranks of a membership organization. Often, these groups run workshops, host open houses and meet-and-greets, and provide forums in which you can recruit other talent, discuss fundraising, and show your work.

This can be a particularly useful strategy for people who have traditionally been marginalized by the film community. "Twenty-five years ago, institutional racism was outrageous," says Warrington Hudlin, a founder of the Black Filmmaker Foundation (BFF). "We weren't even invited [to the parties]. We were outside, walking past the building. Hudlin's organization runs a film festival and other programs (including a website, dvrepublic.org) that help black filmmakers break into the business and build an audience for their work. "We're based on the principle of self-reliance and self-promotion," he says.

In addition to the BFF, influential organizations include the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (www.nalip.org) and NY Women in Film and Television (www.nywift.org). There are also groups that can help if you live in smaller cities. AIVF hosts twenty-four salons around the country, and the IFP has sixteen chapters. The Filmmaker's Collaborative in Boston (www.filmmakerscollab.org) is only open to greater Boston area documentary filmmakers, and it aids with fundraising and production.

17. Go to School The jury's still out on whether film school is necessary for success or not. There are plenty of filmmakers who would say they made it without formal training; there are others who wish they'd had the chance to hone their skills in a classroom. But most agree that film programs are an excellent place to build your network.

18. Touring the Circuit Everyone knows that festivals can be a great place for independent filmmakers to get

their work seen, but they can also be an ideal place to expand your network. "I think filmmakers tend to be unaware of how valuable it can be to go even if you don't have a film in that festival," says McInnis. "Even if it's just to attend films and seminars, even if it's just to meet the industry members who are there."

McInnis, who regularly attends more than a dozen festi-



vals a year, recommends learning the politics of the festival circuit. It can be an illuminating window into how films are bought and promoted. "Volunteer if there's one in your city," she says. "To some degree, they're all the same. There's a certain equation about how films get in, how they're chosen and how they're screened, how filmmakers are feted, and how they're treated and introduced to the press."

19. Don't Forget Your Roots If you do manage to make it big with a film, use your network of colleagues and friends to keep you honest. There are dozens of stories of talented filmmakers who make a good first feature and then get whisked off to California with visions of beach houses dancing in their heads. They then turn out a terrible sophomore effort and are roundly denounced as one-hit wonders. Darren Aronofsky and P.T. Anderson are both held up as examples of people who still work with many members of their original team. They stayed indie—and even dabble in studio fare—without sullyng their reputations. "There's probably no way to avoid the pressure," says Nelson. "But if you keep yourself in an environment that is reminiscent of your previous environment, at least for your second attempt, you'll be truer to yourself."

20. Those Who Can't Do, Hire Once you've made it, if you still hate getting out there to meet the right people, hire someone who can do that for you. The right agent, producer, or lawyer can effectively build your network without you having to charm the cocktail-party tour. "If you know that you're not a good networker," says Holland, "then you have to have someone networking for you." ■

Facing (top): Adam Nelson (CEO, Workhouse Publicity) with actor Seth Green at Sundance; (bottom) Cynthia Lopez, (director of communications/POV, NALIP board member) and Jesse Borrego (actor/filmmaker); above (left to right) Rachel Horowitz (producer), Adam Nelson (CEO, Workhouse Publicity), Vincent Gallo (actor/writer/director) and David LaChapelle (photographer/director).

Elizabeth Angell is a New York based freelance writer.



Don't Worry, Film Happy

"SPIRITUAL CINEMA" GAINS CONVERTS

By Muriel Stockdale

After more than twenty years in the business, I decided to quit my career as a costume designer. I was profoundly depressed by the excessive violence, sex, and emptiness in the scripts I was seeing and the movies I was working on. I have long recognized the power of cinema, and I had come to realize that I no longer wanted to be part of creating entertainment that makes me and others feel hopeless. And so, I have redirected my career objective toward producing spiritually uplifting entertainment that celebrates the diversity of our culture.

When I first made this commitment I felt completely isolated—my contacts in the business did not understand my new vision, and even those who did were convinced that the idea would never fly, and that in order to survive you had to continue to conform. One successful primetime producer told me after a pitching session that I would do best to seek out others who shared my vision and to produce my idea of “spiritual entertainment” with them. So that’s what I did.

Since 9/11, I have discovered, interest in meaningful and spiritually relevant entertainment has greatly increased. People in the business are talking about it and audiences are seeking it—even though “it” is not always easy to define. To me, spiritual entertainment is the art of moving images that uplifts and empowers the audience, and is life affirm-

ing in that it conveys messages of hope. This increased and overwhelming interest in spiritual entertainment is fast becoming more organized, and I have recently found myself part of an ever growing and inspired community dedicated to making and celebrating Spiritual Cinema.

Stephen Simon, a successful Hollywood producer of dozens of films including *Somewhere in Time*, *All The Right Moves*, and *What Dreams May Come*, and who has now written a book, *The Force is With You: Mystical Movie Messages That Inspire Our Lives*, is widely recognized as the pioneer of Spiritual Cinema. His 2001 directorial debut, *Indigo*, is considered within the Spiritual Cinema community as the first official film produced under the banner of Spiritual Cinema. And *The Force is With You: Mystical Movie Messages That Inspire Our Lives* has recently inspired DJ’s Video Store in Ashland, Oregon to create the very first ever Spiritual Cinema section of a video store.

Stephen’s main message that media can inspire our lives has become a beacon calling for industry recognition of

Above (clockwise): Wodaabe men ready for the Yaake dance in Kevin Peer’s National Geographic film, *Way of the Wodaabe*; pilgrims take a holy dip in the Ganges as the dawn mists clear in *Kumbh Mela*; Kevin Peer filming the *Lost Coast*; Keisha Castle-Hughes in *Whalerider*. Facing page: Kevin Peer filming *Crater Lake Story* at Crater Lake, Oregon.

KEVIN PEER, NICK DAY, ROSA RASHALL; COURTESY OF SOUTH PACIFIC PICTURES; FACING: HELGA MOTLEY

Spiritual Cinema as a new and legitimate genre. His website, MovingMessagesMedia.com, explains Spiritual Cinema in this way: "Spiritual Cinema examines who we are and why we are here, and illuminates the human condition through stories and images that inspire us to explore what we can be as humanity when we operate at our very best. Spiritual Cinema reflects our beliefs and values and illustrates their impact upon our lives and our society. In this context, spiritual refers not to religion but to the unseen divine essence that is life force itself. History has revealed that individuals or cultures that lose their connection to this essence become devoid of love, respect and compassion."

And Stephen is not alone in his quest to examine and create spiritually meaningful work. The documentary filmmaker Kevin Peer, whose films have won over forty national and international festival awards, started his organization, The Institute for Sacred Cinema (www.sacredcinema.org), almost four years ago with the purpose of a continued mission to produce and teach the principles of "sacred cinema." The impetus of Sacred Cinema is nearly the same as that of Spiritual Cinema, and Kevin explains a distinction that lies merely between the words "sacred" and "spiritual." "'Spiritual' wasn't the word for me because it focuses more on something unseen, while 'sacred' refers to something more immediate, that which we hold dear and precious." This very concept is a major touchstone of Spiritual Cinema.

Through his work with various native cultures, including the Wodaabe and the Navajo, Kevin has been able to witness how certain cultures cultivate and embody spirituality. From the beginning of his career, Kevin says, he has been inspired by the notion that "images, sound, and story bypass the conscious mind and go directly to work in the unconscious." He further explains, "Indigenous cultures know this and use it to create culture stories that become forces of life."

For many years I have known the stage and screen actress Lonette McKee, who has appeared in numerous films including *Sparkle* and *Jungle Fever*, and in Broadway productions such as *Showboat*. And I have always known her to be a deeply spiritual performer and person. And now, she, too, has chosen to focus her attention more determinately toward writing and directing spiritually relevant films and music. She is currently preparing to direct a feature film that she has written, *DreamStreet*, which is about a successful young woman driven by tragedy to seek refuge on the fringes of society within a desperate community of misfits. "I am not afraid to explore the dark places we go to in our lives," Lonette says. "But I do feel a responsibility to show the way out of the darkness."

Different filmmakers have different reasons for creating within the genre of Spiritual Cinema. Nick Day, a documentary filmmaker who is currently in the process of seeking distribution for his film, *Kumbh Mela*, shelved another project in 2001 when he heard that the Maha Kumbh Mela gath-

ering in India would be the largest congregation of pilgrims ever to converge in one place. His interest in the nature of spiritual inclination drew him to the event. "Kumbh Mela's inclusive unity of humanity makes it captivating, [and] the spectacle is underscored with meaning," Nick explains. "[Making a film about it] is not a mission for me, but rather an invitation for audiences to have a look, to be open."

Manech Ibar, a producer of *New York City Spirit*, my documentary film about diverse spiritual expression in New York City, decided to launch his new company Vth Season so that he could better examine the connections between all people and beings on the planet. His is a global mission born from a conviction that all life forms are connected, and experience universal effects. Both Day and Ibar's projects communicate qualities of Spiritual Cinema by emphasizing freedom of self-expression, a lack of judgment, and the encouragement of inclusion, respect for and celebration of difference in human expression.

Up until now, audiences have had to discover films with spiritual resonance by word of mouth or perhaps even by intuition—films like *Ghost*, which would qualify as Spiritual Cinema, but was advertised as a love story, or *Field of Dreams*, which was marketed as a sports picture. I am not regularly drawn to sports pictures, but I was glad that I chose not to pass up the opportunity to see *Field of Dreams*. Its clear message that following your heart will lead to success—"if you build it they will come"—speaks directly to the core of Spiritual Cinema. And the recent film *Whale Rider* is what Stephen Simon calls "a metaphor for the majesty of this epoch into which we have all chosen to be born . . . a film . . . amid the clutter of summer sequels and action franchises that truly illuminates the very soul of Spiritual Cinema."

It is, of course, vital that the industry recognize the genre of Spiritual Cinema, because until that happens and the audience's desire for this kind of entertainment is well established, the money to make the films will not be available. Identifying film genres such as Horror, Romance, Comedy, or Action may be fairly easy, but identifying Spiritual Cinema might prove more elusive. For example, religious-themed films do not automatically fall under the category of Spiritual Cinema simply by virtue of their religious content. For now, though, while a clear and precise definition of the genre might elude us, advocates of the



genre are confident in the fact that we know it when we see it, and satisfied with the understanding that Spiritual Cinema is, in broad terms, about the mystical effects and personal transformation that certain films engender.

Since I was a teenager, I have been very aware of how entertainment makes me feel. Once I sewed a dress while watching a nihilistic 1960s art flick on TV, and I was so depressed by it that afterwards, I could never bring myself to wear the dress because it reminded me of that film and the feeling it evoked in me. And I'm not alone in this kind of visceral reaction to certain films and media. I recently spoke with a young couple who expressed regret for taking their fourteen-year-old son to see *Once Upon A Time In Mexico*—they both felt like they needed to take a bath after watching all the violence in the film.

Another important point within the evolving discussion of Spiritual Cinema, particularly in regard to filmmakers, is quality of life in the workplace. If we are striving to create something magical, meaningful, and uplifting we cannot suffer in the process. Stephen Simon talks about this aspect a good deal. He, like many who are both interested and not interested in Spiritual Cinema, feels the inequities in the Hollywood movie making industry can be destructive for a lot of talented artists. This, in part, is what has motivated Stephen to launch a multi-pronged campaign (via his website) that will promote awareness of Spiritual Cinema, and demonstrate new models for fundraising, development, production, and distribution within the genre. Currently, his site offers teleconferences, lectures, courses, newsletters, and even a new film distribution outlet, *SpiritualCinemaCircle.com*, which makes the work of video and filmmakers directly available through the internet.

In the last year, a diverse group of national and international professionals and interested audience members have attended Stephen's teleconference calls, which are meant to provide a safe space wherein to foster a fertile, inspired, and visionary discussion about industry politics, technology, films, and the future. Writers are encouraged to pitch all manner of ideas—either raw or well developed—that are received by a welcome and supportive audience. Producers, directors, actors, musicians, crew, and lawyers are able to connect with one another. It is a network of brainstorming and support for individual projects and for the overall community mission.

Grant provider Carole Dean, creator of the Roy W. Dean Grant (www.fromtheheartproductions.com), is a loyal supporter of Spiritual Cinema, which she believes is the most important film genre at this time. "Think of how you felt when you saw *Seabiscuit*," Dean explains. "*Whale Rider*, *The Full*

Monty, *Somewhere in Time*, *What Dreams May Come*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Wizard of Oz*—these films are all in the area of forgiveness and transcendence. We love these films and they touch our hearts each time we see them. This is what people want, to be raised from their current level of fear or anger and to be able to experience these higher feelings of optimism, hopefulness, and inspiration, even if it is only for two hours."

So how does an audience find Spiritual Cinema and venues where the genre is celebrated and embraced? As far as film festivals go, so far the only festival that focuses exclusively on spiritual content is The Damah Film Festival in Seattle, Washington. The Damah website (www.damah.com) describes its festival as "a voice for artists to describe the human experience dealing with spiritual themes." Even as there are other festivals that cater to certain disciplines, such as Christian views or the Buddhist perspective, the Damah Festival, which is now in its third year, is the only festival open to a diverse array of spiritual concepts. It is important to note, however, that the Damah only accepts short film submissions.

For longer films and other media, Tory Jay Berger of spiritualPR.com has developed the Hollywood Spiritual Film and Entertainment Festival (www.hsff.com), which kicked off in March and will continue through to September. The festival's ambitious program schedule includes regular screening events, as well as ongoing seminars, workshops, and networking opportunities.

As part of the newly formed Institute for Spiritual Entertainment, Inc. (ISE), members of the Spiritual Cinema community are gathering in person to create dozens of active ISE associated communities around the world. The LA community is already vigorously engaged with hundreds of members, and is building a website, looking for funding, and considering joint production projects. But there is still much work to be done. Media has always been used effectively for purposes of propaganda and to sell product. Imagine the power of media, film specifically, as a tool to create harmony and empower individuals or groups in an optimistic way. ▣

Muriel Stockdale has created costumes for film, television, and theater productions presented by Disney, NBC, PBS, ABC, The Public Theatre, and dozens of US and European regional theaters. She is currently writing and directing her first documentary film, New York City Spirit.

Sensei Kanjuro Shibata is the subject of Kevin Peer's National Geographic Film Master Archer.



Down & Dirty

BISKIND EXPOSES THE DEALS BEHIND THE DEALS

By Nick Charles

Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film, by Peter Biskind (Simon & Schuster, 2004)

At one point in Peter Biskind's exposé of the independent film world, someone describes Harvey Weinstein, co-chairman of Miramax, as having the same chilling, grotesque effect as that of Ben Kingsley's bullying character, Don Logan, in the film *Sexy Beast*. "We could be in a meeting waiting for Harvey to get there, and the people in the room were telling you eight ways they're gonna tell him no," one-time VP of marketing at Miramax, Stacy Spikes, is quoted as saying. "And he arrives, and they leave saying yes."

But in *Sexy Beast*, after the other characters have been summarily cowed and humiliated, they reclaim a measure of id preservation and blow the bastard to kingdom come. It is more telling of the film community that no one has found the guts, the balls, or the minerals to figuratively bury Weinstein or his equally intimidating brother, Bob. The Weinsteins' oversized frames and egos dominate *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film*, as character after character, on and off the record, weigh in or whine about the Weinsteins' way of doing business. Throughout the book, Biskind himself wastes little opportunity to take a turn at the brothers: "Harvey and Bob were like the little girl in the Mother Goose tale: when they were good they were very, very good, but when they were bad they were awful."

Though the book purports to be about Miramax and the Sundance Institute and Festival's influence on

independent film, it clearly devolves into a reckoning of Miramax's unarguable impact on the world of independent film. Save for a nominal weaving in of clipped quotes from Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford and assessments of his flawed character and management skills by some who worked for him, and discourse on where and when Sundance betrayed its mandate, Redford remains a shadow. That may be attributed to the fact that Redford would not speak with Biskind, but in an attempt at spin control, bless his heart, Harvey Weinstein did a sit-down with the author.

To be sure, the brothers do not come away as likable in the least. Each chapter teems with anecdotes about the psychopathic behavior and humiliations they have inflicted on those who work for them and those whom they compete against. There is a particularly nasty episode involving the legendary Bernardo Bertolucci and his ill fated *Little Buddha*. "He's a snob," says Bertolucci of Harvey. "Snob means *sine nobilitate*, 'without nobility'—he is a snob because he has no nobility, so he wants nobility, and maybe he likes to go after movies that can make him look more noble. But then in my case it was to punish the thing that can make you better."

After the film flopped, even after Bertolucci acquiesced and made cuts that Harvey "Scissorhands" wanted him to make, he swore he would never work with him again. "I wouldn't offer a cup of coffee to Miramax. I wouldn't trust Harvey. He's like a little Saddam Hussein of cinema."

But as harsh as they come across, the Weinsteins also come across as supremely effective, and in a universe fraught with visionless bean counters and those unwilling to pull the trigger on deal after deal, the Weinsteins, guns blazing, are a gale of fresh air. It's as if George Steinbrenner decided to make movies and then cloned himself. In one of the more trenchant observations, about the release of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, Biskind offers:

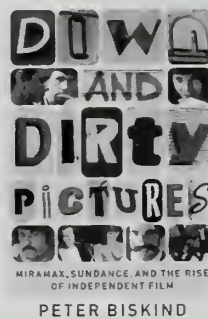
"*Pulp* kicked open the door of the indie hothouse and allowed a fresh breeze to agitate the languid petals of the exotic orchids within. Oddly enough, the Weinsteins' ambitions—art films for the multiplex audience—were not that different from

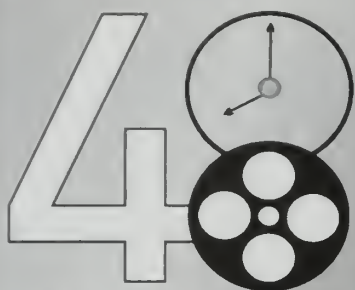
Redford's. Sundance, too, tried to broker the marriage of indie and mainstream, but it didn't work, because Redford was so culturally puritanical that he more or less consigned films with any commercial elements whatsoever to the outer darkness. Miramax had no such inhibitions, and Tarantino

fulfilled Redford's dream, a melding of art and commerce that yielded a financially successful indie film."

The prose in *Down and Dirty* may at times be purple, and that scent you smell wafting around you, as contempt for the Weinsteins elevates off the pages, is the jealousy and self-loathing of the Weinsteins' critics. Many come across as pusillanimous hypocrites who, while detesting the Weinsteins double-dealing, double-crossing, and bloodletting, in their cowardly souls wish they could be as decisive.

"The tenacity of Bob Weinstein is such that you really don't have any choice in the matter," Matthew Robbins, an original co-writer on *Scream* is quoted as saying. "He is all willpower and no originality. People in Hollywood are very susceptible to the exercise of will, because most of





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them are too timid to have an opinion." And it is notable that the Weinsteins do also have their defenders, though they are more likely to be directors and actors, in other words the talent, like Kevin Smith and Matt Damon, and not the executives they outmaneuvered when acquiring films. "The mainstream sucks, and it always will, is the bottom line," Damon tells Biskind. "Because [mainstream executives] don't understand how to make movies they went to Wharton. They're selling widgets. The thing I love about working for Harvey is that it's like the old studio system. He tells you right to your face to go fuck yourself."

A former colleague of mine, Jim Farber, the music writer at the *Daily News* in New York, once told me that the biggest difference between white musical artists and black musical artists is the way in which they talk about making their music. The white artists, with few exceptions, he told me, will sanctimoniously say it's about "the music" and their "art." While black artists will invariably and without pretense say it's about "the money." When it is not about the money? And in terms of the independent film world—independents want financial success, but they don't want to be seen as sellouts, because that would be too vulgar. But while the Weinsteins can claim that what they do is about making serious films and finding original voices—having launched the careers of, among others, Steven Soderbergh, Tarantino, and Billy Bob Thornton, and marketed and promoted the hell out of the Oscars, they have a point—but make no mistake about it, they are all about the loot.

As heinous as the Weinsteins appear, though, I suspect *Down and Dirty* will only serve to burnish their reputations. Whereas, the credibility of Sundance and Redford takes a direct hit. The Weinsteins are entrepreneurs, businessmen, wheeler-dealers; Sundance was founded on the

premise of offering a haven where new voices, outside voices, could come and find instruction and be nurtured. It has not failed entirely, but Redford, who is rarely seen except when he swoops in to wrangle a choice project from an unsuspecting director or



writer, is completely out of touch. He apparently hates confrontation and has been known to slip out the back door to avoid his own staff.

The advent of Miramax coupled with the existence of Sundance fueled the indie world throughout the 1990s. Once Miramax got in bed with Disney, or "Team Rodent" as author Carl Hiassen so wonderfully described the company, it signaled the beginning of the end for independent cinema as it was conceived. Biskind, whose book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* examined filmmaking of the 1970s, does a fine job of letting us in on the deals behind the deals that brought some of the most important films to the fore. There are factual errors, apparently more than two dozen, according to a source at Simon & Schuster. But that doesn't negate its worth. After all, at this year's Sundance Film Festival, the staff ran around telling anyone who would listen how horrible the book was. Biskind must have done something right. □

Nick Charles is a Brooklyn based journalist and writer whose work has appeared in The Los Angeles Times, The Village Voice, and Essence.

Russell Crowe, Nicole Kidman, and Harvey Weinstein at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

After finishing my doc shoot, I'm finding it very hard to commit myself to the edit. I can't understand why because I really love this project. What can I do?

Independent filmmakers have the extra task (in addition to figuring out the story they want to tell) of coming up with a disciplined work structure, and of then building their own infrastructure. Producers working for hire at TV networks, on the contrary, work with a procedure already in place that they can follow without having to worry about how it works. Having worked in both film and television, I can assure you that the grass is not greener, television producers just get to mow it more often. And that's a lot of work, too.

The transition from shooting to editing is not an easy one no matter how much you like the project. Shooting is expansive, interactive, and above all very crowded. It requires multitasking and diverted attention. One eye is in the viewfinder, while the other is looking around to make sure that nothing is missed. You need to move from one location to the other: physical versatility becomes second nature. Multiple scenes unfold in front of you and all storylines are, at that moment, possible and perfect.

Editing, on the other hand, is contractive, quite lonely, and extremely

focused. Both eyes are fixed on the screen. Your behind is glued to the chair. Physical versatility gives way to mental versatility as you jump from one scene on the monitor to the other. All those possible scenes have to now come together to make one film.

Understandably, if you had a great time during the shoot because the process was more akin to your personality, you will dread the editing until you adjust to it. Conversely, if you couldn't wait for the shoot to be over, editing will be an anticipated respite.

Underlying the natural shock of

I assume that by the "right" people you mean those who can finance, fund, or buy your film. There are many ways to connect with these people. Conferences and markets are one way—an expensive way, in some cases, but well worth it if you get what you are looking for.

You are smart to be cautious about which conference to attend and also to be concerned about the costs. Unlike producers at networks who are sent to most conferences and markets courtesy of their companies, independent filmmakers have to make those hard-earned dollars stretch for the life of their films.

The first thing to consider is when to attend. Mitchell Block, from Direct Cinema Ltd, who has attended numerous international conferences and markets over the past thirty years, says, "Filmmakers should attend con-

But after doctoring over fifty films, please believe me when I say that there is ALWAYS a story, and finding that story is a lot of fun once you give yourself to the process.

changing gears abruptly, there is the fear that when all is said and done, you may not have succeeded in capturing a story. But after doctoring over fifty films, please believe me when I say that there is ALWAYS a story, and finding that story is a lot of fun once you give yourself to the process.

Being aware of these challenges might help you fight the resistance you are experiencing. Ultimately, though, you should probably go with the Nike wisdom: Just do it.

Dear Doc Doctor:

Are film conferences and markets good places to meet the right people? Are they really worth the time and travel expense? If so, which ones should I attend?

ferences and markets before they start production of their documentaries. It's far better and easier to make a deal before a program is made than when it's finished. Sell it before you make it."

Once you have a project package, a good pitch and, if at all possible, a trailer, you can start pondering which conference to attend. There are plenty of conferences and markets worldwide and year round. Many only feature panel discussions and workshops, while others offer pitch sessions. And this is when you can start evaluating the money/return ratio. As Block puts it, "If the commissioning editors or buyers end up financing your project, whatever you paid to attend the conference will be covered."

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TOTALLY INDEPENDENT

If the prospect of meeting your film's financial savior doesn't inspire you to part with what little you might have in your wallet, there is still hope. Every conference and market requires large amounts of personnel for things to run smoothly, many of whom are volunteers. Call around and see if there are positions available. It is important that you keep in mind, however, that while many conferences and markets might happily waive the fee, they are unlikely to cover your travel and accommodation expenses. Further, should you choose the volunteer route, make sure that your arrangement allows for enough time to attend events and doesn't disqualify you from submitting your project to pitch sessions.

If you are reluctant about attending as both filmmaker and volunteer, you can also check to see if the conference or market offers scholarships. Scholarships are not often available, though, and when they are, be aware that they are granted to filmmakers from within a very competitive pool. NALIP, the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, is an exception. For their most recent conference (in Santa Barbara, March 2004), they issued 160 scholarships, which amounted to forty percent of their conference attendees!

Hopefully, you'll be able to work something out with the conference you want to attend. But even if you don't, remember that the fee is probably nominal compared to your overall budget. □

Want to ask the Doc Doctor a question for a future issue of *The Independent*? Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com.

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script documentary doctor. She also leads the bimonthly Documentary Dialogues discussion group offered by AIVF. For more info, visit www.documentarydoctor.com

Sound Check

CLEARING THE RIGHTS TO SONGS FOR FILMS

By Monique Cormier

What's a film without a soundtrack? Think about it. Clearing music rights, though, as most filmmakers know, can be a tricky, tedious, and expensive process. And if the process can't be made less tricky, tedious, and expensive, here's at least some legal advice on how to do it right.

Generally, film producers are responsible for acquiring the legal rights to secure the clearance and/or right to use musical material in a film

under dialogue to help set the mood or tone on screen. Specific works that have copyright protection are songs, lyrics, and musical recordings, and that protection allows its owners to decide how and if their musical compositions and/or recordings will be used, as well as the fees that will be charged for the usage.

There are potentially two copyrights in a musical work—that of the musician who composes the music or writes the song, and that of the producer, who makes the sound record-

Before you contact the rights holder of the music you want to use, you should have thought through, and answered, the following questions: How long do you want to be able to use the music (this is usually limited to a term of years, but you should always try to get rights that last “in perpetuity”)? Where will your film be shown (will you release it in the US and Canada only, or do you want worldwide rights)? Will your film be distributed and where (full theatrical release, art movie houses, cable TV, festival only)? Where will the music go in the film, or the particular song you're negotiating a license for or the right to use (opening title sequence, background, trailers, or closing credits)? It's also smart to determine whether you'll



Remember that the failure to properly obtain and document licensing of music rights could easily prevent you from securing a distribution deal for your film (or prompt the imposition of a court injunction blocking the film's distribution altogether).

or video project. The process of obtaining those rights—known in industry terms as “music clearance”—involves copyright law issues that any independent filmmaker should be familiar with. Although in most cases, music is among the last major element to be added to a film, a producer should not leave it until the end lest he/she be caught unprepared and royally screw the production.

Broadly speaking, as is fairly well known, copyright refers to ownership of certain materials (written, visual, audio). For movie purposes, music materials can include anything from classic songs from the 80s, to Top 40 music in current radio rotation, to what's called sound design, which means any melody that is played

ing of a musician's work. This means that the musician is the author of the musical work, and the producer is the author of the sound recording of that work. So chances are, the filmmaker or film producer will need to obtain at least two rights for each piece of music: publishing and performance.

Proper music clearance requires that you determine first who owns the copyright to the musical material (remembering that there can be more than one copyright owner) that you want to use, and then negotiating a license agreement with the copyright holder(s). The agreement outlines the parameters for your use of the musical material, and with regard to the territories and media in which you intend to distribute your film or video.

need home video/DVD release rights for the song.

The type of music clearance that filmmakers will most likely need to obtain is called a synchronization right, or a “synch right,” which grants the filmmaker the right to use a recording of a musical work in an audiovisual form (film), and allows the filmmaker to bundle the licensed music together in sequence with visual images. Synch rights are licensed by the owner of a copyright (usually the music publisher) to the producer of a film or video.

Remember that the failure to properly obtain and document licensing of music rights could easily prevent you from securing a distribution deal for your film (or prompt the imposi-



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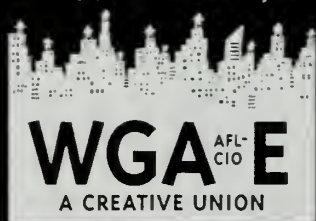
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tion of a court injunction blocking the film's distribution altogether). And then there is also the very real possibility that you would be required to re-edit the finished work to remove the unlicensed material. Furthermore, anyone who makes an unauthorized copy of a recording potentially infringes two distinct copyrights (the musician's copyright and the producer's copyright), leaving the filmmaker potentially liable for two infringement actions, which involve legal fees and penalties for each infringement. No one is talking about jail time here, but let me remind that legal fees, however small the action, are never cheap.

For most independent filmmakers, staying within budget is key, and because obtaining music rights can be a slow process, often taking months to negotiate and document, I urge you to begin the process early on—not after the festival deadline. Ideally, I would suggest that you contact an experienced entertainment attorney and/or a music clearance organization in the first few months of production.

Always start by finding out who owns the work you want to use. CDs usually list the names of songwriters, and you can also try to get contact information for a music publisher through organizations—often referred to as “performing rights societies”—like the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), and SESAC. Almost all US songwriters and music publishers belong to one of these organizations, and almost all of these organizations have websites, which will generally provide the name and address of the individual or entity that can grant a synch license. Here are some links to help you get a move on, and good luck. □

ASCAP: www.ascap.com; BMI: www.bmi.com;
SESAC: www.sesac.com.

*Monique Cormier is a New York based
corporate attorney.*



THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

TO SUCCEED AS AN INDEPENDENT you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through our service and education programs, the pages of our magazine, our web resource, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

About AIVF

The oldest and largest national moving-image media organization, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AIVF offers a broad slate of education, information, and resource programs for members and non-members alike.

Information Resources

AIVF workshops and events cover the whole spectrum of issues affecting the field. Practical guides on festivals, distribution, exhibition and outreach help you get your film to audiences (see other part of this card).

The Independent

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*, a national magazine filled with thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on legal, technical, and business matters—all geared to the working independent. Plus the field's best source of festival deadlines, exhibition venues, and funding opportunities, as well as AIVF member activities and services.

AIVF Online

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring resource listings and links, media advocacy information, web-original material, discussion areas, and the lowdown on AIVF services. Members-only features include interactive notices and festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, and reports on indie media scenes across the country. SPLICE! is a monthly electronic newsletter that features late-breaking news and highlights special programs and opportunities.

Insurance & Discounts

Businesses across the country offer discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members are eligible for discounted rates on health and production insurance offered by providers who design plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers. Members also receive discounts on classified ads in *The Independent*.

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AIVF supports dozens of member-organized, member-run Regional Salons across the country, to strengthen local media arts communities.

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AIVF has been consistently outspoken about preserving the resources and rights of independent mediamakers. Members receive information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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Healthy Spending

CAN INDIES AFFORD MEDICAL INSURANCE?

By Matt Dunne

It seems you can't turn around these days without hearing people moan about the high cost of health insurance. Whether it's presidential candidates duking it out in television commercials, small business owners worried about paying for insurance, or average Americans buried by the cost of prescription drugs, paying for health care is on everybody's mind.

The moaning is not without good reason, particularly for very small businesses, which often include those in the indie community. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey, the smaller the business the larger the

to get beyond the rhetoric and figure out what option is best for you?

First, a little background. While health care is being talked about as an issue for the federal government this year, it's actually more complicated than that. The federal government may provide the resources, but most health care regulation and program design happens at the state level. So coverage and cost can vary widely from state to state. Not good for nomadic filmmakers and video producers.

There are three major factors that come into health care policy: what is covered, who pays for insurance, and the cost of services. There's currently

the nose in another. In some states, Medicaid has been expanded to cover lower income workers and particularly their children, which is casting state government in the role of insurer.

The final issue is the cost of health care. You'd have to be Rip Van Winkle not to know that prescription drug costs have risen dramatically in recent years, as have fees for services. Looking at those three factors together, it's clear that things aren't going to get better unless there's real change in the system.

Most members of the independent film community fall into one of two categories: union workers who are members of organizations such as SAG, the Director's Guild, or IATSE; and self-employed individuals working on contract or project-to-project who can purchase insurance through professional associations. Let's look at union members first. Historically, unions have been able to negotiate good health insurance rates for their members because they represent a large number of people. Because of their strength in numbers, they engage in collective bargaining that forces production companies to purchase good quality health care for workers.

One of the most successful at negotiating good coverage and good rates has been the IATSE's Motion Picture Pension and Health Plan, which covers union members that are generally cinematographers, grips, food service, truck drivers, etc. Workers must put in a minimum number of hours on an approved union shoot to qualify and must continue to work a minimum number of hours every six months. Tom Zimmerman, director of the MPPHP said that IATSE has been able to negotiate for excellent coverage that includes low co-payments and does not require the participant to pay part of the premium. The MPPHP represents 40,000 active individuals, 10,000 retirees, and another 50,000 family members.



**For the self-employed,
the choice is often between
no health care and health
care you can't afford.**

increase in premiums. While companies with over 200 workers saw a 13.2 percent premium increase last year, smaller companies saw premiums rise 15.5 percent, and individuals buying health insurance on the open market saw the largest increase.

With health insurance on everyone's list of top public policy issues in the upcoming election, solutions are a dime a dozen. Republicans are proposing solutions that would allow more self-employed individuals and small businesses to afford health insurance, and Democrats want to overhaul the system from the top down. But how is the health care crisis affecting members of the independent film community, and what can you do

wide variation in what must be covered. In many states, legislators have implemented "community rating," which requires that insurance companies must cover everyone—and every health ailment. They're not allowed to "cherry pick" healthy people with few illnesses. In other states, mental health coverage or chiropractic services are required for all health insurance policies. (Which of course makes premiums go up.)

As far as who has to pay for insurance, employers and employees are constantly juggling the costs associated with health care: sharing premium costs, co-payments and deductibles. But chances are that if you get a break in one area, you'll be paying through

But even Zimmerman has real concerns whether the good coverage will continue. He worries about the high cost of health care and notes that other industry unions (SAG, Director's Guild, etc.) have not been so fortunate at the bargaining table. "It's getting more and more expensive to provide benefits to members," said Pam Fair, deputy national executive director of SAG. SAG recently had to introduce a premium—it's only \$600 a year, but it's still a sign of the times."

For the self-employed, the choice is often between no health care and health care you can't afford. Increasingly, self-employed film and video producers are joining professional associations such as AIVF and the Freelancers Union that are able to provide discounted rates. In limited numbers of states, associations have been allowed to create their own self-insurance programs further reducing premium costs. Even with these discounts, though, premiums are rising dramatically and now start in excess of \$280 per month per person—beyond the resources of many in the independent community.

Priscilla Grim, who is the membership director for AIVF, said that her association has seen a steady increase in the number of freelancers looking for health care through her organization. Stephanie Buchanan from the

Freelancers Union has seen a 300% increase in membership in the last year alone.

For those in the self-employed category, there was some good news this year. Starting with fiscal year 2003, health care insurance premiums are 100 percent deductible for self-employed individuals. Last year, premiums were only seventy percent deductible, so this represents a real helping hand for many in the independent community. Deductions are nice, but you still need the money up front to pay for the premiums.

The Bush Administration has continued to focus on allowing self-employed people to get health insurance. The administration will put in place a combination of new tax credits for people who buy insurance and a reduction of onerous state regulations that apply to associations who want to provide their own self insurance plans. This approach is endorsed by a large number of small business groups, including the National Association of the Self Employed. Concern, however, has been raised over the lack of regulation and the possible instability of these self-insurance programs, particularly since some of them are allowed to maintain much lower cash reserves than standard insurance companies. If there was a public health crisis or a sudden

spike in health care costs, the insurance companies could go bust, leaving association members with no coverage at all.

Likely Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry's approach is much more comprehensive and, potentially, expensive at least in the short run. Kerry wants government to take on the role of insurer, to cover all children in America and give Americans the opportunity to buy into the same health care plan to which the President and Members of Congress subscribe.

Neither approach addresses the real problem: The US Government has refused to set up structures in order to negotiate for lower prices for health services for all Americans. For independent filmmakers, as the cost for insurance continues to rise, the pressure goes up to be part of a union shoot or get a non-film job that provides health insurance. It's just going to get more expensive to stay independent. ■

Matt Dunne is the Democratic state senator of Vermont, and the founder of Vermont Film Commission. Previously, he served two-and-a-half years as National Director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and four terms as a Vermont state representative.

Resources

AEA: Actor's Equity League Pension & Health Trust Fund

www.actorsequity.org;
(212) 869-9380
Site has plan descriptions; eligibility requirements (click on Frequently Asked Questions); downloadable medical, dental, and prescription forms; and a search engine for network providers. Additional contact numbers: (800) 344-5220, (323) 634-8980, (312) 641-2090.

AFTRA: American Federation of Television & Radio Artists

The Health & Retirement Fund
www.aftra.org; (212) 499-4800
Comprehensive explanation of AFTRA benefits with downloadable claim forms.

AIVF: Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

www.aivf.org/resources/health;
(212) 807-1400
AIVF members are eligible for discounted group insurance plans.

ATPAM: Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers

www.atpam.com; (212) 719-3666
Under the heading Pension and Health, click on HIPAccess I Plan Summary for information about ATPAM's health plan.

DGA: Directors Guild of America Producers Pension & Health Plan

www.dga.org; (877) 866-2200
Information on health plans with downloadable forms.

Freelancers Union/Working Today

www.workingtoday.org;
Link to health benefits on homepage.

IATSE Local One: Theatrical Stage Employees

www.iatse.com; (212) 333-2500
Information on health plans available online to union members only.

International Cinematographers Guild Local 600

www.cameraguild.com;
NY (212) 647-7300,
LA (323) 876-0160
Health insurance benefits available to members by login at site.

National Writers Union UAW Local 1981 AFL-CIO

www.nwu.org; 212-254-0279
The NWU health plan is available only to members and associates living in the state of New York. The dental plan is available nationwide. The plan is administered by Alicare. Call (800) 725-9213.

Producers Guild of America, Inc. Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plan

www.producersguild.org;
(888) 369-2007
See site for eligibility requirements and benefits.

SAG: Screen Actors Guild Pension & Health Fund

www.sag.org; (800) 777-4013
See site for eligibility requirements and benefits.

Writers' Guild of America East

www.wgae.org; (212) 767-7800
In addition to the Guild's health plan, members have access to health insurance through TEIGIT (www.teigit.com). Writers Guild East members also have detailed health and pension information available at a members-only website.

Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1st for Nov. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.

INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL LISTINGS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE INDUSTRY FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., OH. Deadline: May 15. Fest's mission is to screen & promote work that differs in form, technique, or content from what Indie has become & that challenges commercial expectations. Founded: 1999. Cats: youth media, short, music video, feature, doc, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$5 Shorts (10 min. or less)/music videos; \$10 (10-45 min.); \$15 (45 min. & over). Contact: Festival, PO Box 91781, Cleveland, OH 44101; info@20000leagues.org; www.20000leagues.org.

AMERICAN JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., IL. Deadline: June 15. Festival celebrates 350 years of "American Jewry" w/ a focus on Jewish life in America. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre, animation, experimental. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Reeltime, c/o Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., Evanston, IL 60201; (847) 866-0312; fax: 866-0313; filmvideoforum@yahoo.com; www.reeltimeevanston.org.

ANNAPOLIS FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 4-8, MD. Deadline: June 18. A four-day fest showcasing independent films & documentaries produced by local & nat'l filmmakers. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 shorts (under 30 min.); \$35 features. Contact: Festival, PO Box 591, Annapolis, MD 21401; (410) 263-2388; fax: 263-2629; info@annapolisfilmfestival.com; www.annapolisfilmfestival.com.

CALIFORNIA FINE ARTS, Aug. 20-Sept. 6, CA. Deadline: May 28. Formerly California Works, fest is part of the California State Fair, seeks short films & videos under 5 min. Open to all media, California artist ONLY. Cats: short, any style or genre. Awards: Cash (totaling \$14,500) plus special awards. Formats: 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$13. Contact: California Fine Art/California State Fair, Box 15649, Sacramento, CA 95852; (916) 263-3146; fax: 263-7914; entryofice@calexpo.com; www.bigfun.org.

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 18-24, IL. Deadline: May 1; June 1 (final). Largest Midwest showcase for Underground, experimental & independent films & videos. Cats: Feature, Doc, Experimental, Short, Animation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, S-8, Super 8, Video, Mini DV, 1/2", Beta. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$30; \$35 (late). Contact: c/o Bryan Wendorf, 167 North Racine, Chicago, IL 60607; (773) 327-FILM; fax: 327-3464; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org.

CHICKS W/ FLICKS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Aug. 17, NY. Deadline: May 18. Fest is a one-day film event in NYC that showcases the works of independent women filmmakers, and encourages indie filmmaking

CINEMATexas INT'L SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-26, TX. Deadline: May 21. Annual fest continues tradition of exploring the short film as a laboratory for cinema. Founded: 1996. Cats: Short, Experimental, animation, youth media, installation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, Super 8, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30 (early); \$35 (final). Contact: Laurel Row, Dept. of Radio/TV/Film, CMA 6.118, Univ. of Texas, Austin, TX 78712-1091; (512) 471-6497; fax: 471-9220; cinematexas@cinematexas.org; www.cinematexas.org.

DC ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FILM FEST, Oct. 7-16, DC. Deadline: May 16; June 1 (final). The fest's mission is to "bring attention to the creative output from APA communities and encourage the artistic development of APA films in the greater Washington DC metropolitan region." Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Betacam. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$10 (shorts & features); \$20 (final). Contact: Festival, P.O. Box 18405, Washington, DC 20036; gene@apafilm.org; www.apafilm.org.

DAHLONEGA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 2-5, GA. Deadline: May 15. Festival offers underexposed film & videomakers in emerg-



On the Rhode

The eight-year-old Rhode Island International Film Festival is much more than a five-day festival in August. The RIIF, one of New England's largest and most visible festivals, also hosts the KidsEye, a summer film camp for kids, as well as a series of master classes and production workshops, which festival director George T. Marshall describes as "the stuff they don't teach you in film school." Produced by the Flickers Arts Collaborative, the fest screened over 180 films last year, and is one of a handful of domestic festivals that serve as a qualifier for Best Short Film (Live Action) by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. See listing.

as well as generates an audience for women filmmakers. Films must be 20 min. or less. Founded: 1999. Cats: any style or genre, short (under 30 min.), short, doc, animation, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20. Contact: Yhane Washington, 188 Norfolk St., #6G, New York, NY 10002; (212) 533-7491; yhane@chicksw/flicks.com; www.chicksw/flicks.org.

ing digital formats a higher profile venue. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV, DigiBeta, DVD, Beta, Mini DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10-\$50. Contact: Barry Norman, Executive Director, 661 Windcroft Circle, Acworth, GA 30101; (404) 885-4410; fax: 885-0700; info@diff.tv; www.diff.tv.

FESTIVAL CINE LATINO, Sept. 15-19, CA. Deadline: May 31. Organized by San

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Francisco-based Cine Acción, fest seeks film & video works that reflect the experiences & diversity of Latino, Latin American & Caribbean communities. Film & video works by and/or about Latinos in the United States as well as works from Latin America & the Caribbean encouraged for submission. Founded: 1992. Cats: feature, documentary, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$30 (incls. membership to organization). Contact: Meira Blaustein, 2940 16th St., Suite 107, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 553-8135; fax: 553-8137; info@cineaccion.com; www.cineaccion.com.

HAMPTONS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-24, NY. Deadline: May 14 (shorts); June 4 (final shorts); May 14 (feature/doc) June 18 (final feature/doc). Founded: 1993. Cats: feature, short, doc, world cinema, films of conflict & resolution, student, youth media, family, children. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: shorts \$35/\$50; features, docs \$50/\$75. Contact: HIFF, 59 Franklin St. Ste 208, New York, NY 10013; (212) 431-6292; fax: 431-5440; programming@hamptonsfilmfest.org; www.hamptonsfilmfest.org.

IFP MARKET, Sept. 19-24, NY. Deadline: May 10: narrative scripts, works-in-progress (doc and narrative), shorts, docs; May 28 (final): shorts, docs, works-in-progress. Cats: feature, doc, work-in-progress, short, script. Awards: More than \$150,000 in cash and prizes awarded to emerging artists, including two \$10,000 Gordon Parks Awards for Emerging African-American filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$50 application fee; Reg. fees (paid on acceptance): \$200-450. Contact: Wendy Sax, 104 West 29 St., 12 fl., NY NY 10001; (212) 465-8200 x203 (Market), x206 (No Borders); fax: 465-8525; info@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

INT'L BUDDHIST FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 20-24, NY, CA. Deadline: May 15. Non competitive fest of films about, inspired by or related (even vaguely) to Buddhist cultures, places, personalities, issues & experience. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, youth media, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video, digital. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC), DVD. Entry Fee: \$25 (shorts); \$45 (features). Contact: Festival, P.O. Box 9617, Berkeley, CA 94709; (510) 985-1805; fax: 985-0185; cfe@ibff.org; www.ibff.org.

JACKSON HOLE WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 19-24, WY. Deadline: June 1. Fest seeks films dealing w/ natural history, wildlife, conservation & related topics. Entries must have been completed w/in the past two years. Cats: natural history programming, doc. Formats: HD, DigiBeta, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$75. Contact: Laura Johnson, Box 3940, 125 E. Pearl St., Jackson Hole, WY 83001; (307) 733-7016; fax: 733-7376; info@jhfestival.org; www.jhfestival.org.

LABORFEST: INT'L WORKING CLASS FILM & VIDEO, July 5-31, CA. Deadline: June 15. Fest organized to commemorate the 1934 San Francisco General Strike through cultural arts of working people. Founded: 1994. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, script, music video, student, youth media. Formats: 16mm, Beta, 1/2", 8mm, Hi8, DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, Box 425584, San Francisco, CA, US 94142; (415) 282-1908; fax: 695-1369; laborfest@laborfest.net; www.laborfest.net.

MADCAT WOMEN'S INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., CA. Deadline: March 29; May 21 (final). MadCat showcases innovative & challenging works from around the globe. Works can be produced ANY year. Founded: 1996. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2", Mini DV, S-VHS. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$10-\$30 (sliding scale, pay what you can afford; int'l entrants disregard entry fee). Contact: Festival, 639 Steiner St., San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 436-9523; fax: 934-0642; info@madcatfilmfestival.org; www.madcatfilmfestival.org.

NEW ORLEANS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-14, LA. Deadline: May 9; June 13 (final). Cats: Any style or genre, Animation, Doc, Experimental, Short, Feature, Student, Music Video. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", 35mm (by invitation only), Beta, 35mm, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35; \$45 (final). Contact: NOFF/ Competitive Division, 843 Carondelet Street, #1, New Orleans, LA 70130; (504) 523-5271; fax: (208) 975-3478; incompetition@neworleansfilmfest.com; www.neworleansfilmfest.com.

OJAI FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-24, CA. Deadline: May 1; July 1 (final). Theme: "Enriching the Human Spirit Through Film." Films & videos on all subjects in any genre are welcomed. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, student, any style or genre. Formats:

35mm, Beta SP, DVD, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS (NTSC), DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 (35mm); \$30 (all other formats); \$20 (student, any format); add \$10 for final deadline. Contact: Steve Grumette, Artistic Director, 10942 Encino Dr., Oak View, CA 93022; (805) 649-4000; filmfestival@ojai.net; www.ojaifilmfestival.org.

RHODE ISLAND INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 10-15, RI. Deadline: May 15, June 1 (final). Fest takes place in historic Providence, RI & has become a showcase for int'l independent filmmakers & their work. Fest is a qualifying fest in the Short Film category w/ the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Founded: 1997. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student, youth media, family, children. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, S-VHS, 1/2", DV, DVD. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: \$40. Contact: George T. Marshall, Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 861-4445; fax: 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org.

SAN DIEGO FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 29-Oct. 3, CA. Deadline: June 1; July 1 (final). Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC), DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 (features/docs); \$25 (shorts); \$45 (features final); \$35 (shorts final). Contact: San Diego Film Foundation, 7974 Mission Bonita Dr., San Diego, CA 92120; (619) 582-2368; fax: 286-8324; info@sdf.org; www.sdff.org.

SEATTLE LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 15-21, WA. Deadline: May 31; July 2 (final). The Pacific Northwest's premier queer film fest, committed to screening the best in lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender film/video. Founded: 1995. Cats: Feature, Short, Experimental, doc, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10; \$15 (final). Contact: Jason Plourde, 1122 E. Pike St., #1313, Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 323-4274; fax: 323-4275; program@seattlequeerfilm.com; www.seattlequeerfilm.com.

SIDEWALK MOVING PICTURE FESTIVAL, Sept. 23-26, AL. Deadline: May 15, June 25 (final). Program of over 60 films in three days, plus seminars & panel discussions. Fest's motto is "new films for a new audience." Founded: 1999. Cats: Feature, Short, Student, doc, animation, experimental, any style or genre, youth media, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta

SP, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25-\$55. Contact: Erik Jambor, 500 23rd St. South, Birmingham, AL 35233; (205) 324-0888; fax: 324-2488; info@sidewalkfest.com; www.sidewalkfest.com.

STREET MOVIES! OUTDOOR FILM SERIES, Aug. 2-28, PA. Deadline: May 15. Presented by Philadelphia's Scribe Video Center this free outdoor film series, tours Philly neighborhoods throughout August and offer a program of independent cinema that is often inaccessible to the general public. Fests encourages submissions of work that address social issues and can be used to start a meaningful dialogue. Works must be under 60 mins and will receive an honorarium if screened. Founded: 1997. Cats: animation, experimental, doc, short, any style or genre. Formats: 1/2", DV, preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Phil Rothberg, Program Coordinator, Scribe Video Center, 1342 Cypress St., Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 735-3785; stmovies@scribe.org; www.scribe.org

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST, Sept. 2-5, CO. Deadline: May 31. Fest dubs itself as "an int'l event showcasing the world's best indie films & screenplays, high in the mountains". All genres. Screenplays should not exceed 120 pgs. Cats: feature, doc, any style or genre, script, short. Formats: Beta SP, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40-\$55. Contact: Michael Carr, Box 860, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 745-8101; fax: 292-4178; festival@tellurideindiefest.com; www.tellurideindiefest.com.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-24, CA. Deadline: June 1. Int'l film fest held at Stanford University, showcases doc films & videos dealing w/ UN-related issues: human rights, women's issues, environmental survival, war & peace, etc. Founded: 1998. Cats: any style or genre, doc, feature, short. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", 35mm, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (up to 30 min.); \$35 (longer than 30 min.). Contact: Jasmina Bojic, Stanford Univ., Main Quad Bldg. 40, Stanford, CA 94305; (650) 725-0012; fax: 725-0011; info@unaff.org; www.unaff.org.

WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-17, NY. Deadline: May 15; June 28 (final). Annual nonprofit fest fosters an intimate, reciprocal relationship between indie filmmakers, industry reps & audience mem-

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, OR. Deadline: June 6. Young People's Film & Video Festival is an annual juried survey of outstanding work by K-12 students from the Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT, UT, AK). Entries must have been made w/in previous 2 yrs. Founded: 1975. Cats: Student, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, S-8, 3/4", 1/2", Hi8, CD-ROM, S-VHS, Super 8, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Kristin Konsterlie, Festival Coordinator, Northwest Film Center, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; kristin@nwfilm.org; www.nwfilm.org.

YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAM AT THE HAMPTONS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., NY. Deadline: June 16. Presented by Children's Media Project, seeking outstanding original video & film work produced by young people across the country & the world. Young video-makers must be 19 years or younger at time of video completion. Cats: youth media, student, short, doc, experimental, animation, PSA, narrative. Formats: mini-DV, Hi8, 16mm, Super 8, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Emily Bennison, Children's Media Project, Lady Washington Firehouse, 20 Academy St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (845) 485-4480; fax: 559-0005; info@childrensmediaproject.org; www.childrensmediaproject.org.

INTERNATIONAL

BEIRUT CINEMA DAYS, Sept. 15-25, Lebanon. Deadline: June 15. Founded: 2001. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS (PAL). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Eliane Raheb, Hania Mroueh, P.O. Box 116-5118, Beirut, Lebanon; 011 961 1 293212; beirutdc@inco.com.lb.

BLACK SOIL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 26-30, Netherlands. Deadline: June 15. Fest is the first hip hop film fest in Europe, held in Rotterdam. Cats: feature, doc, short, anima-

tion. Preview on VHS (PAL / NTSC) or DVD. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Sasha Dees, Stichting Black Soil, 207 W. 102nd St. #5A, New York, NY 10025; (212) 864-5921; deessasha@cs.com; www.blacksoil.com.

FEMINALE INT'L WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-10, Germany. Deadline: June 1. Feminale is a biannual int'l women's film fest. All films/videos should be directed by women. Founded: 1984. Cats: any style or genre. Awards: Feminale Debut Award for Best Debut Feature Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Jennifer Jones, Maybachstr. 111, 1. Floor, Köln/Cologne, Germany 50670; 011 221 13 00 225; fax: 13 00 281; info@feminale.de; www.feminale.de/english.htm.

GIFFONI FILM FESTIVAL, July 17-24, Italy. Deadline: June 5. Annual fest showcases "film & short films of high artistic & technical value linked to the problems of the pre-adolescent world." Formats: 35mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: c/o Cittadella del cinema, Via Aldo Moro 4, Giffoni Valle Piana, Salerno, Italy 84095; 011 390 89 8023 001; fax: 390 89 8023 210; info@giffoniff.it; www.giffoniff.it.

IMAGE & NATION, Sept. 23-Oct. 3, Canada. Deadline: June 15. Montreal's Int'l Lesbian/Gay Film & Video Festival is the oldest & largest queer fest in Canada. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry Fee: \$10. Contact: Katharine Setzer, 4067 Blvd St. Laurent, Ste. 404, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 1Y7; (514) 285-9466; fax: 285-1562; info@image-nation.org; www.image-nation.org.

INVIDEO, Nov. 10-14, Italy. Deadline: June 18. Formats: Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: A.I.A.C.E./INVIDEO, Via Piolti de Bianchi 19, Milano, Italy 20129; 011 39 2 761 153 94; fax: 752 801 19; info@mostrainvideo.com; www.mostrainvideo.com.

KINOFILM/MANCHESTER INT'L SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct 27-31, England. Deadline: June 1. Entry is open to anyone in the film making community incl. first time film makers. Founded: 1993. Cats: Short, Animation, Experimental, music video, student, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-VHS, Beta, Beta SP, super 8, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: 5 pounds UK (5 Euros or US

\$10). Contact: John Wojowski, Fest Dir, 42 Edge St, Manchester, England M4 1HN; 011 44 161 288 2494; fax: 161 281 1374; kino.submissions@good.co.uk; www.kino.film.org.uk.

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August 4-14, Switzerland. Deadline: June 15. This major Swiss cultural/cinematic all-feature event, is known for its innovative programming & support of alternative visions from independent directors. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Preferences for all sections given to world or European premieres. Founded: 1948. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Irene Bignardi, Festival Director, Via Luini 23, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; 011 41 91 756 2121; fax: 41 91 756 2149; info@pardo.ch; www.pardo.ch.

MENIGOUTE INT'L FESTIVAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FILMS, Oct. 27-Nov. 1, France. Deadline: June 1. Annual fest shows about 40 films concerning ornithological subjects, as well as all wildlife (wild mammals, reptiles or swimming creatures). Entries must be French premieres. Founded: 1985. Cats: wildlife/environmental, doc, short. Awards: Cash awards. Formats: Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Marie Christine Brouard, B.P. 5, Menigoute, France 79340; 011 33 5 49 69 90 09; fax: 33 5 49 69 97 25; mainate@menigoute-festival.org; www.menigoute-festival.org.

MONTREAL INT'L FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA & NEW MEDIA, Oct. 14-24, Canada. Deadline: June 1. Recognized for its bold, eclectic programming, the fest is a multidisciplinary happening that fuses mediums & genres. Founded: 1971. Cats: experimental, animation, feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, CD-ROM, Video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Festival, 3530 Blv. Saint Laurent, Bureau 304, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V1; (514) 847-9272; fax: 847-0732; info@fcmm.com; www.fcmm.com.

OVNI: OBSERVATORI DE VIDEO NO IDENTIFICAT (UNKNOWN FRAME OBSERVATORY), Jan., Spain. Deadline: June 15. OVNI takes place every 18 months at the Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, showing nat'l & int'l video projects & works around video & new media. Formats: Beta SP, Digital, 3/4", 1/2", DV, DigiBeta.

Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: No entry fee. Contact: Joan Leandre, Toni Serra, Rosa Llop, Montalegre 5, 08001 Barcelona, Spain; 011 34 93 306 41 00; fax: 011 34 93 306 41 13; ovni@desorg.org; www.desorg.org.

ST. JOHN'S INT'L WOMEN'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, October 20-24, Canada. Deadline: May 31. Festival seeks films & videos made by women. Founded: 1989. Cats: Experimental, Animation, Feature, Doc. Awards: Non-competitive. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. VHS. Entry Fee: \$15. Contact: Program Committee, PO Box 984, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1C 5M3; (709) 754-3141; fax: 754-3143; womensfilm.fest@nfld.net; www.womensfilmfestival.com.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, September 9-18, Canada. Deadline: June 11 (int'l entries). One of most important fests in North America and the second largest fest in the world. Sales & Industry Office facilitates meetings between buyers & sellers & 3-day Business of Film symposium provides delegates access to influential people in the international film & TV industry. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Fest does not accept unsolicited shorts (under 49 min.) from outside Canada. Films must not have been released commercially in Canada prior to fest. Founded: 1975. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Contact: Piers Handling, Festival Director, Toronto Int'l Film Festival Group, 2 Carlton St., Ste 1600, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 1J3; (416) 967-7371; fax: (416) 967-9477; tiff@torfilmfest.ca; www.bell.ca/filmfest.

ZIMBABWE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 28-Sep. 11, Zimbabwe. Deadline: June 14. Festival is an annual project of the Zimbabwe Int'l Film Festival Trust (ZIFFT), a non-profit arts & cultural trust registered w/ the Nat'l Arts Council of Zimbabwe. The fest provides a platform for filmmakers to launch new films & for audiences to watch films they would not normally get the opportunity to see. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, Beta, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival, 2 Canterbury Rd., Kensington, P.O. Box A4, Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe; 011 263 4 730 361; fax: 793 502; zimfilmfest@zol.co.zw; www.ziff.co.zw.

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COMPOSER Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate-docs, features. Lost In La Mancha, Scout's Honor, Licensed To Kill, Pandemic: Facing Aids, Peace x Peace, Heart of the Sea & more. (310) 398-5985 mir.cut@verizon.net. www.miriamcutler.com.

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COMPOSER Quentin Chiappetta Music in any style-orch to electro. Credits-Travel Channel, Nat. Geo. PBS, NFL, Sundance & festivals worldwide. Great refs, pro Studio, Eastman grad. Budget conscious! (718) 782-4535; medianoise@excite.com.

COMPOSER SARAH PLANT Original+ licensed music. Arr., flutes: Ang Lee Oscar-nom. Eat Drink Man Woman. Scores: PBS, Bravo, Canal+, Nat. Hist. Museum. Classical, contemp, int'l. Acoustic+digital studio. www.sarahplantmusic.com. (845) 657-8454.

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER Shawn Onsgard is experienced with creative and avant-garde productions. MA in composition from Wesleyan, CT. Recent clients include: Pierre Huyghe, KNME-TV, Mollie O'Brien. (917) 553-2064; sonsgard@earthlink.net.

DP WITH FILM, VIDEO & LIGHTING/GRIP PACKAGES Extensive documentary & independent project experience. Well-traveled, multi-lingual and experience field producing as well. Call Jerry for reel/rates: (718) 398-6688 or email jryrisius@aol.com.

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JAY SILVER Director of Photography, Owner/Operator of: Aaton XTRprod S16/R16 & Arri35 BL3. Experience shooting features, commercials, music videos & docs. Credits: Wendigo, Persona au Gratin, Eurotrash. (718) 383-1325 jay.silver@verizon.net.

LOCATION SOUND Over 25 yrs sound exp. w/ timecode Nagra & DAT, quality mics & mixers. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. Harvey & Fred Edwards, (518) 677-5720; (819) 459-2680; edfilms@worldnet.att.net; www.edwardsfilms.com.

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50 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR VIDEO BUSINESS. FREE REPORT. Grow a successful video business in Legal, Wedding, Corporate, TV and more. <http://videouniversity.com/50web.htm>. The premiere resource for finding directors of photography and videographers.

CAMERAJOBS.NET is a free job bank for the production community. Producers can place announcements of jobs openings, or browse for DP/videographers.

WELL-ESTABLISHED FREELANCE CAMERA group in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

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CERTIFIED FINAL CUT PRO INSTRUCTOR offering small workshops for FCP 4, and private tutorials for FCP 3 & 4. For more information: call (917) 523-6260; email Hinoonprod@aol.com or log on to www.HighNoonProd.com.

POST-PRODUCTIONS RENTALS Avid Xpress Pro, Beta & Dvcam decks. Also Panasonic DVX-100 24p camera. Delivery available in the LA area. Digitalrents.com, 323-668-2552.

PRODUCTION TRANSCRIPTS Verbatim transcription service for documentaries, journalists, film and video. Low prices & flat rates based on tape length. www.productiontranscripts.com for details or call: (888) 349-3022.

THE PREMIERE RESOURCE FOR FINDING Editors and Visual Effects Artists, EDITJOBS.NET is a free job bank for the post-production community. Producers can place announcements of jobs openings, or browse for editors.

Notices

Cynthia Kane

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1 for Sept. issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending anyone anything

COMPETITIONS

ACTION/CUT SHORT FILM COMPETITION This competition will showcase new indie filmmakers and their work from across the world, recognize the most talented with multiple awards & career services, and open access doors to the Hollywood film industry. Cats: fiction, doc, animation; prizes: \$25,000 in cash, career services, and sponsor awards, including career advisory meetings with industry players and exposure at film festivals, distribution deal offers, and promotions throughout the biz and the web. Deadline: May 15, 2004. Visit: www.actioncut.com or call (800)815-5545.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES offers summer seminars & institutes for college & univ. teachers. Seminars incl. 15 participants working in collaboration w/ 1 or 2 leading scholars. Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, historical periods & ideas for teachers of undergrad humanities. Info & appl. materials are avail. from project directors. Deadline is March 1st every year. Contact: (202) 606-8463; sem-inst@neh.gov; www.neh.gov.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and

video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival), and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program, including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information-call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

PUBLICATIONS • DIRECTORIES

BOOKLET AVAILABLE to help individuals obtain money from the government. 48 page booklet gives info on how & where to get free money, free advice, & free services from the government. Send \$5 to cover the cost of printing, postage & handling to: Free Enterprise Institute, Government Giveaway Booklet Offer, Dept. GGB-407-1, Box 96071, Washington, DC 20090-6071; www.FreeEnterpriseInstitute.org.

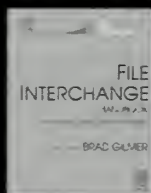
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NEWENGLANDFILM.COM: provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 20,000 visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites free to read: www.nefilm.com.

THE FILE INTERCHANGE HANDBOOK-

The only book that gives a complete breakdown of all file formats for the transfer of images, sound and metadata. Written by the leading thinkers and innovators of the field. Copyright 2004, Focal Press Publishers. For more information, please see www.focalpress.com www.focalpress.com, or call (800) 545-2522.

OTHERZINE. the e-zine of Craig Baldwin's Other Cinema, seeks written works fewer than 2,000 words in length, including interviews, filmographies, alternative histories of obscure or marginalized work, criticism &



From the Files

As professional film and television industries move away from conventional media—because of the high cost and lag time—and toward computer-based production and distribution, file formats have become a key enabling technology. According to

Brad Gilmore, the editor of the *File Interchange Handbook*, users are aware that they need to move to networked teleproduction, and that various file formats are available, but they don't have a clear understanding of their advantages and disadvantages. Gilmore's handbook gives a complete breakdown of all file formats for the transfer of images, sound, and metadata. See listing.

Resources Exchange, seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info, contact Roselly Torres, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., NY, NY 10014; (212) 243-4804; rosellytorres@lavavideo.org.

FELIX is a journal of media arts & communication; it encourages exchange within the media arts community, analyzing questions of aesthetics and current political issues, and furthering the development of radical and experimental images. Felix is published by the Standby Program, Inc. Order by phone: (212) 219-0951; www.e-felix.org.

theory. Previously published work welcome, though work previously published on the internet is not eligible. Text formats: MS Word, ASCII text & HTML. Submit to: noellawrence@sprintmail.com; www.othercinema.com.

VERSUS MEDIA puts indie filmmakers in touch with indie musicians with a 24/7 database filled with musicians seeking to work with video and film developers, biweekly e-mail containing 10 of the latest musician profiles & the option to post your latest projects where musicians can answer your needs. View www.versusmedia.com or contact info@versusmedia.com.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

ARTHUR VINING DAVIS FOUNDATION provides funding for completion of major educational series assured of airing nationally on PBS. Trustees prefer series with lasting educational value. The contribution to teaching in grades K-12, higher and continuing education is a consideration in evaluating proposals. Children's series are of particular interest. Consideration will also be given to innovative uses of public TV, including computer online efforts, to enhance educational outreach in schools & communities. Funding for research and preproduction is rarely supported. Recent production grants have ranged from \$100,000 to \$400,000. Proposal guidelines available on website. Contact Dr. Jonathan T. Howe, Executive Director, Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, 225 Water St., Suite 1510, Jacksonville, FL 32202-5185; arthurvining@bellsouth.net; www.jvm.com/davis.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE administers the Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. A total of \$28,000 in awards is available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of \$100,000 or less which have 501(c)(3) status or Charities Bureau Registration. Deadline: late fall. Contact: NaRhee Ahn, Program Director (212) 941-9208 for application details and deadlines. info@aaartsalliance.org; www.aaartsalliance.org.

ASTRAEA provides grants up to \$10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Our U.S. Grants Fund utilizes a community-based activist grantmaking panel to review proposals and to make funding decisions. Check website for deadlines. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321, www.astraea.org/grants.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 1 St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov.

EMEDIALOFT.ORG CREATIVE PROJECTS GRANT: Ongoing fee support for 8 artists a year who will work 30 hours using digital video to produce/post produce with our edi-

tor/ videographer. Creative projects originate in the artist's imagination or technology; documentaries, political, and promotional tapes are not covered by this grant, but low rates and discounts for all work are available. There is no self-use. Send 250-500 word project description, resume and SASE to Bill Creston and Barbara Rosenthal, eMediaLoft.org, 55 Bethune St. #AAA-628, NY, NY 10014-2035.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP FOR FILMMAKERS: Film Forum, a nonprofit cinema, efficiently administers filmmaker grants, retaining 5% of all monies from foundations, corporations, individuals (but not government sources). Budget must be a minimum of \$100,000 & filmmaker must have a track record. Send brief project description to: Film Forum Fiscal Sponsorships, 209 W. Houston St., New York, NY 10014. No calls, faxes, emails.

FORD FOUNDATION supports public broadcasting and the independent production of film, video and radio programming; and supports efforts to engage diverse groups in work related to the media and to analyze the media's effect on society. A letter of inquiry is advisable to determine whether the foundation's present interests and funds permit consideration of the request. For more information and guidelines, contact Pamela Meyer, Director, Media Arts and Culture, Ford Foundation, 320 E. 43rd St., New York, NY 10017; web: www.fordfound.org/grant/guidelines.html.

JEROME FOUNDATION'S MEDIA ARTS Program offers production grants from \$10,000 to \$30,000 to emerging NYC artists w/ works budgeted to \$200,000. Narratives, docs, new media & experimental works, as well as radio, interactive formats, online programs & virtual reality experiments considered. The foundation does not support education, exhibition, broadcast or distribution. Contact program officer Robert Byrd; (651) 224-9431; or in NY or MN only; (800) 995-3766; fax: 224-3439; www.jeromefdn.org.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides support to selected docs/series intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on one of the foundation's 2 major programs (human & community development; global security & sustainability). Send 2-3-pg letter. John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org.

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LOCAL INDEPENDENTS COLLABORATING WITH STATIONS (LinCS) FUND is a funding initiative from Independent Television Service (ITVS) that provides matching funds (up to \$75,000) for collaborations between public TV stations & indie producers. Projects may be in any stage of development and all genres are eligible. Only single shows, 26:40 or 56:40, are eligible-no series. Programs should stimulate civic discourse & find innovative ways to explore complex regional, cultural, political, social, or economic issues. Indie film & videomakers are encouraged to seek collaborations w/ their local public TV stations. Deadline: May 26, 2004. Guidelines and applications at www.itvs.org, or call Elizabeth Meyer (415) 356-8383; eliza_beth_meyer@itvs.org.

NAATA ANNUAL OPEN CALL FOR PRODUCTION FUNDING: Application and guidelines available now. This round of funding is for applicants w/public television projects in production &/or postproduction phases. Projects in research & development or script development phases are not eligible to apply. Awards will average \$20,000 to \$50,000. Deadline: July 25, 2004, 5:00 pm (receipt, not postmark) For application & guidelines, www.naatanet.org or email mediafund@naatanet.org or (415) 863-0814 x22 w/ your name, mailing address, phone, fax & email to be added to our mailing list. There is no deadline for completion funds.

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM AND TELEVISION is the preeminent entertainment industry association for women in NYC dedicated to helping women reach highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. NYWIFT produces over 50 innovative educational programs & events each year, & their membership is more than 1,300 women & men working in all areas of film, TV & new media industries. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film organizations worldwide, representing more than 1,300 members. For info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 East 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; info@nywift.org; www.nywift.org.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS in communications open door completion funds are provided for the final preparations of broadcast masters of Pacific Island-themed programs intended for national public television. Categories: doc, performance, children's & cultural affairs programming. PIC is particularly interested in projects that examine & illuminate realities of Pacific Islander issues such as diversity, identity, & spir-

ituality. Full-length rough cut must be submitted w/ application. Awards up to \$50,000. NO Proposals are reviewed on a rolling-basis. Contact: Gus Cobb-Adams, Media Fund, PIC, 1221 Kapi'olani Blvd.6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; Tel.: (808) 591-0059 x 16; fax: 591-1114; gcobb_adams@piccom.org; applications available at www.piccom.org.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council provides funding for IL nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts to communities. Each residency ranges 5-30 hrs. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (up to \$1,000 plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50%) plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for avail. of funds. Special Assistance Grants also avail. for Illinois artists & Illinois non-for-profit organizations. Contact: IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; (312) 814-6750; 814-1471; www.state.il.us/agency/iac.

SUNDANCE DOCUMENTARY FUND, formerly the Soros Documentary Fund, supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Development funds for research & preproduction awarded up to \$15,000; works-in-progress funds for production or postproduction up to \$75,000 (average award is \$30,000). Email sdf@sundance.org, or visit www.sundance.org.

TEXAS FILMMAKERS' PRODUCTION FUND is an annual grant awarded to emerging film & video artists who are residents of Texas, for regionally produced projects of any genre. In Sept. the Fund will award \$50,000 in grants ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000. Deadline: July 1. Appl. avail. at Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund, 1901 East 51st St., Austin, TX 78723; (512) 322-0145 or www.austinfilm.org.

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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Cynthia Kane

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DISTRIBUTION

ARTHOUSE FILMS & DOCS wanted for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL distributes videos for social change, including such collections as the Library of African Cinema and African American Perspectives. 500 Third Street, Suite 505, San Francisco, CA 94110; 415-284-7800; fax: 415-284-7801; contact@newsreel.org, www.newsreel.org.

FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS 20+ years as an industry leader! Join more than 100 award-winning film & video producers. Send us your new works on healthcare, mental health, aging, disabilities, and related issues. (800) 937-4113; www.fanlight.com.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and video makers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your audience while working within a remarkable community of activist filmmakers, New Day is the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and the media we represent. Explore our catalog at www.newday.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at join@newday.com or (650) 347-5123.

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK distributes only youth-produced videos. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Educational videos in all subjects and 10+ years experience. (800) 639-5680. www.noodlehead.com.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; GCROWDUS@CINEMAGUILD.COM; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENING SERIES

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepts entries for its ongoing thematic shorts program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send 1/2" VHS viewing tape or DVD, press kit (any written background materials), cover letter w/ contact info & self-addressed stamped package if you would like the materials returned to: Andrew P. Crane, The Alternative Screen, 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. Tel.: (323) 466-3456 x115; fax: 461-9737; www.americancinematheque.com.

BASEMENT FILMS of Albuquerque, NM, is a mobile, volunteer-run venue for experimental, underground & other under-represented forms of small-gauge (8mm, 16mm) film & video making. Send a VHS preview tape with a S.A.S.E. & any written material about it and yourself to BASEMENT FILMS, P.O. Box 7669, ALBQ, NM 87194. We pride ourselves in screening work in unique locations. Contact: (505) 842-9977, www.basementfilms.org.

CELLULOID SOCIAL CLUB is a monthly screening series in Vancouver featuring the best in independent provocative short & feature films & videos followed by fun & frolic. Hosted by Ken Hegan at the ANZA Club, #3 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC. No minors. Prizes galore. For more info call (604) 730-8090; info@celluloidsocialclub.com; www.CelluloidSocialClub.com.

CHICAGO COMMUNITY CINEMA offers the excitement of an annual film festival with a monthly extravaganza of a networking fest and movie showcase. On the first Tuesday of each month short films, trailers, music videos, commercials, student films, and features, of all genres are showcased to an audience of industry

professionals. Evenings begin with a cocktail hour to showcase local organizations and allow for a strong social networking atmosphere before the screenings. Submission form on website. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: Ongoing. Chicago Community Cinema, 401 W. Ontario, Suite 150, Chicago, IL 60610; 312-462-4222; www.ChicagoCommunityCinema.com.

CINEMARENO Monthly screenings showcase independent films and videos. Formats: 16mm, Beta-SP, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry fee: \$20; fee waived for AIVF members. Entry form & instructions at www.cinemareno.org. Contact: Cinemareno, PO Box 5372, Reno, NV 89513. www.cinemareno.org.

DAHLIA'S FLIX & MIX a weekly showcase of new film & music held on Tuesdays at NY's Sugar, is seeking submissions. Showcases fresh and previously undistributed film & video work, as well as DJs spinning great music. No guest list, cover charge, or submission fee. For info, dsmith@independentfilm.com or stop by Sugar any Tuesday evening (doors open 7pm, screenings begin 8pm). To submit your film, please send a VHS or DVD copy and a brief synopsis to: Dahlia Smith, c/o SUGAR, 311 Church St., New York, NY 10013.

ELECTRIC EYE CINEMA of Madison, WI, is a monthly venue for independent documentary video features. All net profits from screenings redistributed back to participating filmmakers. Looking for 30 to 90 min. works that are creative, witty, or politically conscious. Also looking for shorts 10 min. or fewer, any genre, to be screened at our Open Reel Hour at the beginning of each monthly program. Send VHS tapes, summary of film & filmmaker bio to: Prolefeed Studios, Brian Standing, 3210 James St., Madison, WI 53714; www.prolefeedstudios.com.

FREIGHT FILM SALON seeks submissions for its Monday Night Shorts showcase series. Work can be any genre, 20 min. or fewer; must be on VHS or DVD. Will screen on 6' screen, 2 plasma screens & 4 monitors. E-mail FreightFilmSalon@yahoo.com for additional info, or visit www.FreightNYC.com.

NEW FILMMAKERS at New York's Anthology Film Archives seeks submissions for weekly series. No fee or form. Send VHS of your film or video w/ a brief synopsis to David Maquiling, New Filmmakers, Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, NY, NY 10009. For more info, visit www.newfilmmakers.com.



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REINVENTIONS is now accepting films of any genre that for their screening series. Reinventions is a newly formed not-for-profit film studio dedicated to presenting provocative stories of non-fictional and fictional transformation. For further information, please visit www.Reinventions.org.

THE TANK seeks submissions of all lengths and genres for its biweekly screening series TankFilm. The Tank is a new performing and visual arts space on 42nd St in Manhattan. Formats: 16mm, DV, DVD, VHS. Contact Randy Bell: rbell@lbdlb.com or www.thetanknyc.com.

TIMEBASE in Kansas City, seeks innovative short films, videos, installations & web-based projects. No fee. Rolling deadline. Send VHS, DVD, or CD-Rom: Timebase, 5100 Rockhill Rd. Haag 202, KC MO 64110. (816) 235-1708; www.timebase.org.

WORLD'S SMALLEST FILM FESTIVAL continuously, showcases cutting-edge content on mobile phones. Visit www.BigDigit.com for info on how to submit your films.

GALLERIES • EXHIBITION

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE in PA seeks artists for exhibition at the site. Some funding avail. for media arts. Proposals are reviewed annually each fall. See website for information and deadline. To request an application or schedule an orientation tour, contact Brett Bertolino at (215) 236-5111 ext. 12, or at bb@EasternState.org, or visit www.easternstate.org.

TOURING PROGRAMS

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT: a tour of 6 artists who travel to sites in the South West, now accepting application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) Send resume, press materials & \$20. South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St,

Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; sleonard@arts.state.sc.us; www.southcarolinaarts.com.

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is an ongoing event hitting major cities & cultural centers. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip-Hop culture and connect with other media-makers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com for more information, email Info@HipHopFilmFest.com, or call 415-225-1583.

BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

DUTV is a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia that seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. Will return tapes. Beta SP, DV, S-VHS & DVD accepted for possible cablecast. VHS for preview. Contact: Debbie Rudman, DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St, Bldg. 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org.

FILMS/VIDEO WANTED For weekly experimental video-art TV program on Time Warner Networks in Manhattan & Brooklyn 800,000 viewers strong. For info: Snack on Art, PO Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; www.snackonart.org; snackonart@yahoo.com.

P.O.V., PBS's award-winning showcase of independent non-fiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of independent nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31 (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov.

INDEPENDENT LENS offers filmmakers a national broadcast venue for their works, and accepts completed works of all genres and lengths. Fiction, nonfiction documentaries or live short action works are welcome. Deadline is September, 2004. For future information on submissions call the PBS Programming Department at 703/739-5010 or go to www.pbs.org/producers.

WOLFTOOB: local New York City TV show is looking for short films and music videos from 1 min. to 17 min. Wolftoob is watched by millions, or at least thousands. Contact: info@wolftoob.com.

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Deadlines

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Shorts & Works-in-progress
Early >> May 10
Final >> May 28

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A financing forum for established producers with 20% financing in place.

Deadlines

Narrative Scripts
Final >> May 10

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The IFP Market is supported by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

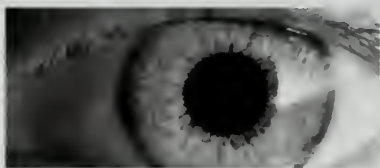


Building Bridges for Independent Filmmakers

aivf

Unless noted, AIVF programs take place at our offices (see below). RSVP is required for all AIVF events: call (212) 807-1400 x301 or www.aivf.org.

AIVF'S FILMMAKERS WORKSHOPS:



FILMMAKERS JOURNEY: SUSTAINING YOUR VISION

AIVF's Filmmakers Journey is a three-part workshop intended to examine and understand how accomplished, narrative filmmakers have maintained their independence throughout the production process, and how they have been able to present their work to their intended audiences. Participants will learn by listening as experienced feature film producers, directors, and creative teams share their triumphs, untold tactics, and war stories. Three case studies will demonstrate how producers can maintain creative vision through technique, craft, and a little business savvy.

For times and dates, please visit www.aivf.org.

MEET AND GREET:



SENIOR PROGRAMMING STAFF AT PBS

when: Thursday, May 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
where: AIVF, 304 Hudson Street, 6 Fl.
cost: \$20/ \$10 AIVF members.
Register on-line at www.aivf.org/store

or call 212/807-1400 x301.

Don't miss this opportunity to find out how PBS works with independent producers and what they look for in film content. Here is your chance to get your questions answered in person! Confirmed panelists include Gustavo Sagastume, VP, Programming, PBS; and Cara Mertes, Executive Director, POV.



IN BRIEF: DISTRIBUTION DEALS-NARRATIVE FILMS

when: Thursday, May 13
where: AIVF, 304 Hudson

Street, 6 Fl.

cost: \$40/ \$25 AIVF members.

Register on-line at www.aivf.org/store or call 212/807-1400 x301.

AIVF Producers Legal Series addresses specific issues of concern to independent producers. Each session is moderated and co-produced by Innes Smolansky, an entertainment attorney, who is joined by a panel of industry professionals. These small group sessions not only answer common questions but also connect producers to the individuals and resources that can assist them on an ongoing basis.

This session will address distribution deals for narrative films including gross split/net profits and royalties for distribution deals for theatrical, TV, video, and DVD.

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

when: May 1 - 9
where: Tribeca, NYC

The 3rd annual Tribeca Film Festival will continue to screen a broad range

of noteworthy features and shorts in both film and video formats. The range of films will cover many different styles and genres, including fiction, documentary, animated, and experimental work.

For more info: www.tribecafilmfestival.org.

MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL

when: Launch May 19

where: www.mediatthatmattersfest.org

MediaRights' fourth annual Media That Matters Film Festival presents a unique lineup of high-impact shorts to millions of Americans through innovative distribution and events all year long, starting May 19, 2004. The films stream online, screen around the country, broadcast, and reach

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hours: Wed. 11-6; 1st and 2nd
Wed. of each month: 11-9; or by
appt. to AIVF members Tues. &
Thurs. 11-6.

The AIVF office is located at
304 Hudson St. (between Spring &
Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City.

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thousands of teachers and activists as a DVD compilation.

This year the festival features a special program called the Just Media Project. This program highlights policy reform by honoring the work of two media democracy pioneers with awards, profiles, films, and a resource guide.

To watch the festival online, go to:
www.mediathatmattersfest.org.

AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:



**FILMS AT THE
LINCOLN
CENTER**

where: Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 West 65th St., NYC

AIVF members may attend select screening series (listed below) at a discounted rate—just \$5 per ticket. Bring your membership card to the box office!

May 7 - 27- **Joseph Losey**

Retrospective

May 28 - June 10 - **Open Roads:**

New Italian Cinema

For more information visit: www.filmlinc.com.

AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES
WORKSHOP SERIES**

where: 462 Broadway,
Ste. 500, New York, NY

WMM continues their workshop series, offering discount rates for AIVF members.

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AIVF
association of independent
video and filmmakers

visit us at www.aivf.org

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country.

Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY: **Upstate Independents**

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY
Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café
553 Amsterdam Ave.
Contact: Mark Smith, (404) 352-4225 x12
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Boulder, CO:

"Films for Change" Screenings

When: First Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Boulder Public Library
1000 Arapahoe
Contact: Michael Hill,
(303) 442-8445 x100; boulder@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or
Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH:

Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette Gillora, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays
Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.
Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-monthly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: 1519 West Main
Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.
Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St.,
Santa Monica
Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140
Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Nashville, TN

Where: See www.naivf.com for events
Contact: Stephen Lackey,
filmmakers@captain-pixel.com

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre
Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop
Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly
Where: Media Arts Center,
921 25th Street
Contact: Erhan van Thillo
(619) 230-1938;
sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders
(650) 271-0097; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-monthly
Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts
Center
Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

The Atlanta Report

Since IMAGE Film & Video Center began holding monthly salons in 1997, their membership has been consistently growing. The most popular salons of 2003 included "Getting on the Same Page," which inspired an annual film community meet-and-greet. Another successful, and now yearly, event is the "Georgia Lawyers for the Arts" salon, which addresses questions regarding entertainment law. Upcoming salons include: "Got Film?" (a hands-on look at Kodak's new film stocks); a SAG panel Q&A on acting; "Writer's Block: The ABC's of Scriptwriting." The salon recently relocated to a more central art center, which will hopefully boost the overall exposure they give to the local filmmaking scene.

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



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We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Business/Industry Members: **CA:** Action/Cut Directed By Seminars; Eastman Kodak Co.; Groovy Like a Movie; The Hollywood Reporter; Jungle Software; San Diego Asian Film Foundation; SJPL Films, Ltd.; Ultimatum Entertainment; **CO:** Pay Reel; **CT:** Anvil Production; **DC:** 48 Hour Film Project; **IL:** Roxie Media Corp.; Urban Work Productions; **IN:** The Storyteller Workshop; **MD:** Brownpenny Films; NewsGroup, Inc.; Grace & Wild Studios, Inc.; Michael Kuentz Communications; **MA:** Escape TV; Glidecam Industries; **NV:** Broadcast Productions; **NH:** Kinetic Films; **NJ:** Alternative Media & Resources International; Chica Luna Productions/Chica Sol Films; Lumiere Media; **NY:** 25th Asbury Shorts of New York; All In One Productions; Analog Digital International, Inc.; Arc Pictures; Blueprint Films; C-Hundred Film Corporation; Cataland Films; Code 16/Radical Avid; Cypress Films; D. R. Reiff and Associates; DNT 88 Productions; Docurama; Downtown Avid; Film Video Arts; Forest Creatures Entertainment; Free Dream Films; Getcast.com; Greehouse Pictures; Greenwich Street Productions; IdDigEnt; Interflx; Lightworks Producing Group; Mad Mad Judy; Metropolis Film Lab; Missing Pixel; Moxie Firecracker Films; Off Ramp Films, Inc.; The Outpost; Post Typhoon Sky, Inc.; Robin Frank Management; Skanfo, Inc.; Triune Pictures; Wildlight Productions; **OR:** Art Institute Portland; **PA:** Cubist Post & Effects; **RI:** The Revival House; **VA:** Dig Productions; Kessler Productions; **WI:** Image Pictures, LLC; Tweedee Productions

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Nebraska Independent Film Project/AIVF Salon Lincoln; Ross Film Theater, UN-Lincoln; **NJ:** Black Maria Film Festival; College of New Jersey, Department of Communication Studies; Freedom Film Society; Princeton University, Program in Visual Arts; **NM:** University of New Mexico; **NY:** American Museum of Natural History; Arts Engine; Bronx Council on the Arts; Center for New American Media; Cinema Arts Centre; Cornell Cinema; Council for Positive Images, Inc.; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Department of Media Study SUNY Buffalo; Dutchess Community College; Educational Video Center; Experimental Television Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Firelight Media; Hourglass Group; International Film Seminars; LMC-TV; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; Melted.org; National Black Programming Consortium; National Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New School University; New York Women in Film and Television; Nonprofit Media Group; Paper Tiger Television; POV/The American Documentary; School of Visual Arts, Film Department; Squeaky Wheel; Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; Syracuse University; United Community Centers; Upstate Films; WaxFactory; Witness; Women Make Movies; **OH:** Athens Center for Film And Video; Independent Pictures/AIVF Ohio Salon; Media Bridges Cincinnati; School of Film, Ohio University; Wexner Center; **OR:** Media Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; The Oregon Film and Video Foundation; **PA:** DUTV Cable 54; Prince Music Center; Scribe Video Center; WYBE Public TV 35; **RI:** Flickers Arts Collaborative; Rhode Island School of Design; **SC:** Hybrid Films; South Carolina Arts Commission; **TX:** Austin Film Society; CAGE, University of Texas at Austin; Southwest Alternate Media Project; **UT:** Sundance Institute; **VT:** The Noodlehead Network; **WA:** Seattle Central Community College; Thurston Community Television; **Bermuda:** Bermuda International Film Festival; **Canada:** The Banff Centre Library; **France:** The Carmago Foundation; **India:** Foundation for Universal Responsibility

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When I Grow Up . . .

By Cynthia Kane



This issue explores the struggles and triumphs of indie filmmaking, so *The Independent* decided to ask some established and emerging filmmakers: “If you couldn’t be a filmmaker, what would you be?” Here are their amusing and somewhat startling answers.

“I think I’d like to be a horse. If I had to remain human, then I’d like to be an astrophysicist. It’s so exacting but at the same time deals with wildly unimaginable things.”

—Enid Zentelis,
writer and director, *Evergreen*

“I would like to be NBA player Latrell Sprewell. Passionate, irreverent, and in the zone as much as possible.”

—Deborah Kampmeier,
writer and director, *Virgin*

“If I weren’t a filmmaker, I’d either be a rancher or a film festival programmer. A rancher because I love fixing fence, ‘working water,’ and chopping wood; a programmer because I’m a celluloid junkie. Put me in a meadow or a dark movie theater and I’m happy.”

Alex Smith,
—co-writer/co-director, *The Slaughter Rule*

“I would be a rock star . . . or an archeologist.”

—Rosario Garcia-Montero,
director, *Are You Feeling Lonely?*

“I would love to be a full-time athlete, playing for the US women’s rugby team . . . and would probably make just as little money, and get just as little notoriety for doing what I love, as I do now.”

—Amanda Micheli,
director of *Double Dare* and *Just for the Ride*

“Wait, we were supposed to have a backup?”

—Shane Carruth,
writer and director, *Primer*

“I would want to be a conceptual artist and create multimedia interactive installations that include sound, poetry, photography, and (of course) moving images.”

—Jennifer Elster,
writer and director, *Particles of Truth*

“I certainly would have been a marine biologist. Jacques Costeau was my hero. I always wanted to swim with the sharks.”

—Brad Anderson,
filmmaker, *The Machinist*

“I would have been a high-rise window cleaner in Tokyo.”

—Yasuaki Nakajima,
producer and director, *After the Apocalypse*

“If somebody hadn’t put a Bolex in my hand thirty-some years ago, I’d probably be a disgruntled philosophy professor, or perhaps a failed novelist. Now it’s hard to imagine a life not making images, but if I had to choose a satisfying alternative life, it would probably be some kind of social activism or work with indigenous peoples, either in Central America or elsewhere in the Third World.”

—David Lebrun
director of *Proteus* and founder of Night Fire Films

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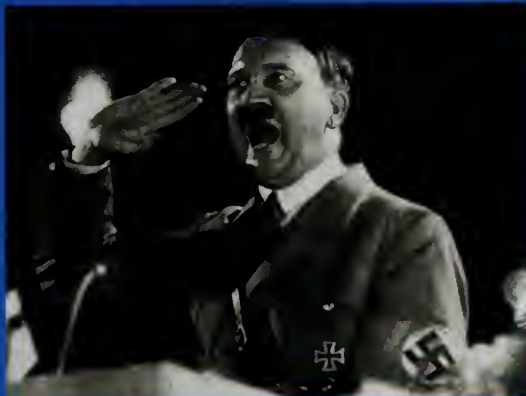
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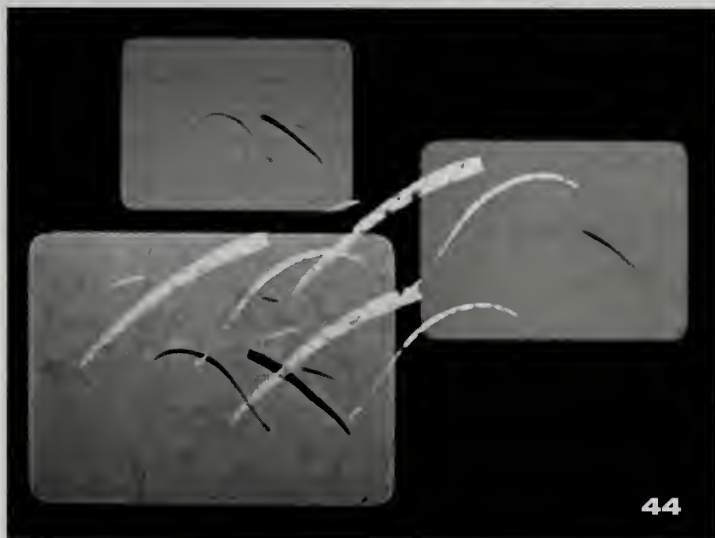
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Page 5 photos: Saul Rubinek and Mario Van Peebles in Melvin Van Peebles *Baadasssss!* (Michael O'Connor/Sony Pictures Classics); *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Brien); Bruce "Sarge" Fleskes filming a commercial in Portland, Oregon (Lisa McQuade); Rudy Burckhardt's "Curb, New York, 1973" (© Estate of Rudy Burckhardt).

On the Cover: The wigs and hat salesman (Fritz Donnelly).

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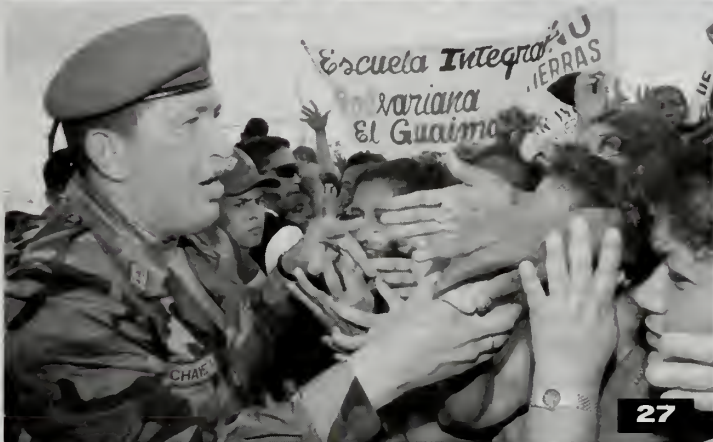
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Editor's Letter

When I started thinking about how to assign this issue, my first thought was: Where are all the weird filmmakers? They'll know

what's important to feature in an issue about "experimental" film. But as I started to cast lines out, I realized that it's not necessarily about weird so much as about boundless imagination, enormous originality, and, conveniently enough, true independence. You think you're an independent filmmaker? Try chatting with Fritz Donnelly for five minutes (First Person, pg 13).

Still, it's hard to tell what exactly passes for experimental with a capital "E" these days. *Slate* technology columnist Paul Boutin turned up three impressive models of experimental-as-I-want-to-be film/media that, as Boutin writes, "continue to probe the accepted relationships between artist, medium, and audience, and seek to break them." That may sound easy, or even commonplace, to some independent media-makers—but probing and breaking conventions in a genuinely thoughtful, self-aware, and meaningful way? That's hard.

A filmmaker friend turned me on to "the godfather of experimental film," Nathaniel Dorsky. Am I the last person on the planet to find out that the bag-blowing-in-the-wind scene from *American Beauty* was taken (most likely) from a scene in Dorsky's film, *Variations* (1992-98)? Writer Lisa Davis looks at Dorsky's "Devotional Cinema" (the filmmaker's theory on film, and the title of his recently published book), and with his help, deftly translates the concept into something real, and genuinely poetic (Like a Prayer, pg 40). It's tremendously inspiring to read how Dorsky talks of his hope for the best of film, a medium he so clearly loves, as

being "an evocation of spirit."

Our second installment of the new Production Journal column comes from documentary filmmaker David Sampliner (Coming Clean, pg 33), whose debut film (with Tim Nackashi), *Dirty Work*, has been making the festival rounds to great acclaim since its premiere at Sundance earlier this year. The story behind the story is as compelling as the film itself, if oddly so—the subjects are a bull semen collector, an embalmer, and a septic tank pumper. Enough said.

This month's Field Report takes a look at Portland, Oregon, home of the Portland Documentary and Experimental Film Festival, which, sadly, ran after the deadline for coverage in this issue. Portland also boasts headquarters for the Peripheral Produce Invitations and The Cinema Project, both experimentally inclined. Portland based writer Brian Libby acts as our resident man-on-the-indie-scene from the City of Roses. Outstanding profiles of somewhat experimental and definitely hip documentary filmmakers Joey Garfield and Steven Okazaki are both very appealing and insightful; and Matthew Smith reports on the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in North Carolina.

I am delighted to report that Beni Marias has joined us as interim executive director for AIVF and publisher of *The Independent* while we continue to search for a permanent hire to succeed Elizabeth Peters, who left in April. Marias is a founding member of NALIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers), as well as a former coordinator for that organization, and a former executive director of the Center for Arts Criticism in Minneapolis. When she is not with us she will continue work as a producer on the documentary *For The Record: Guam & World War II*.

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
The Independent,
Rebecca Carroll
Editor-in-Chief



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Stu-Stu-Studio

BROOKLYN'S NEW STEINER STUDIO WILL RIVAL LA

By David Alm

The Steiner Equities Group, a Roseland, New Jersey based commercial development firm, has found the perfect use for the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a sprawling industrial park along the East River: a studio complex to rival the mega-facilities of LA.

Scheduled to open this summer, Steiner Studios will be a fifteen-acre, full-service production center with 100,000 square feet of unobstructed soundstages (including the largest, at 27,000 square feet, east of Los Angeles), a state-of-the-art technical infrastructure, full grid and catwalk systems, and 170,000 square feet of additional space for offices, dressing, and make-up rooms. Steiner Studios will also include a 100-seat screening room, a fitness center, commissary, and accommodations for lighting, grip, and other expendable departments. Finally, in classic LA fashion—and quite unusual for New York—inside the studio's gates will be an enormous parking lot capable of accommodating hundreds of cars.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard was established in 1801 by the US government. It was at peak activity during the Civil

War, employing 6,000 people, and was decommissioned in 1966. The 300-acre site now houses more than 200 tenants besides Steiner Studios. And with many of its original buildings still standing, the complex will offer excellent "backlot" opportunities.

Once complete, Steiner Studios expects to provide 1,000 new production jobs. Jay Fine, President and CEO of the new facility, says that expansion plans are also underway through other New York-area production centers. Run by father and son team David and Douglas Steiner, the Steiner Equities Group manages ten million square-feet of commercial space in fourteen states. This is the firm's first New York project.

Columbia Alums Receive a Healthy Grant for First Feature

This spring two young filmmakers from Columbia University's School of the Arts received the largest grant ever offered to students or recent alumni of that program. Mikki del Monico and Randall Dottin, both 2003 graduates of the SOA, won the first of two \$100,000 awards from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for their first feature film, *Indelible*. Del Monico and Dottin, along with producer Melanie Williams

Oram (SOA '04), plan to begin shooting in Harlem next summer.

Dedicated to scientific research and advancement, the Sloan Foundation has been awarding production awards to filmmakers from the SOA interested in addressing scientific concerns in their work since 1998. The grants allow filmmakers to work closely with scientific advisors and thus help to bridge the gap between science and the arts.

Written by del Monico, who also received an Alfred P. Sloan Screenwriting Award for the script in 2002, *Indelible* follows a tradition of films with a social conscience and strong female leads such as *Erin Brockovich* and *Whale Rider*. It tells the story of an African-American female scientist who desperately tries to find a cure for a mysterious, deadly disease that killed her husband and also threatens her teenage son.

The film will address a complicated dilemma: how does a mother tell her son he *will* die if she doesn't do something about it—especially after he pleads, "I don't care whose life you save, I need my mom." Thus the mother must choose between two opposed impulses that, in fact, both stem from the same maternal instinct: to protect her child at all cost.

"What attracted me to the script was the paradoxical circumstance," says Dottin. "And when I thought about what I might do, and how hard of a decision it really is to make, I knew I had to direct the film."

Del Monico chose to set the film in Harlem not only because she was living there when she wrote the script, but because it held for her precisely the kind of "awesome presence" she wanted in order to convey both the "vulnerability and volatility inherent in the definition of home."

Roughly twenty percent of their projected budget, the Sloan grant is seed money that del Monico and Dottin hope will generate the remaining funds from investors who might not be so inclined to support a film by two rela-

The projected vision for the exterior of Steiner Studios in Brooklyn.



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tively unknown filmmakers. "With this award and the Sloan name attached to the project, it'll be a lot easier to get the film made," says Dottin.

Though he has never made a feature film, Dottin has gained critical acclaim for shorter projects. His thesis at Columbia, *A-Like*, won Best Short at the Roxbury Film Festival in Massachusetts and screened at the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival. *A-Like* premiered on HBO in December and that network has licensed the film for the next two years. Additionally, Dottin was named Best African-American Filmmaker by the Director's Guild of America in 2003, took second place in the National Board of Review for Motion Pictures Awards, and was a finalist in the HBO Short Film competition at the American Black Film Festival.

Del Monico, who has written five feature film scripts, has been equally prolific. In addition to the Sloan Screenwriting Award, she won Faculty Honors for two scripts in the 2003 Columbia Film Festival. The Robert M. MacNamara Foundation in Maine awarded her a writer's residency in 2002, and last year she served as the festival coordinator for 25 Years of Women Calling the Shots, a festival for women film- and video makers at Lincoln Center. She has worked on several short videos, many in collaboration with choreographers and musicians in New York City, and she has edited two feature films. As recipient of a Digital Media Fellowship, 1999-2001, she served as the editing technician for thesis candidates at Columbia University.

Dottin says that releasing *Indelible* in theaters is their "first priority," and though he and del Monico plan to produce the film independently, he adds, "if we get a [studio] offer we're definitely willing to look at it."

Making an Impact for Media-Makers

Last year Melissa L. Bradley decided to use her extensive background in busi-

ness and finance to further one of her most heartfelt causes: supporting minority media-makers. Her new book, *Introduction to Media Investing for the Creative and Investment Communities*, was released in May and represents the bulk of Positive Impact, a new initiative she launched at Sundance in January to "promote diverse voices and visions within the media." Describing Positive Impact more as a process than an endpoint, Bradley says she hopes to establish an industry imperative for leveraging and promoting diversity for the sake of industry strength, integrity, and longevity by collecting, documenting, and then promoting the achievements of media-makers of color.

Representing just one but nevertheless vital aspect of Positive Impact, Bradley's book is designed to serve two communities at once: the investors interested in supporting minority media-makers and the media-makers themselves. Bradley believes the former group could use a central resource for understanding the concerns of musicians, filmmakers, writers, and other media-makers, while the latter needs to learn the business principles that stand behind potential funding opportunities. Such knowledge, she says, will only benefit both groups by taking much of the guesswork out of both funding and grant-making processes, and by encouraging an open exchange between investors and the artists who seek their support.

Furthering that goal, Bradley intends to use proceeds from book sales to assist media-makers of color who wish to participate in training and professional development programs through cash awards up to \$1,500. These awards will pay travel and entry costs for conferences and other networking opportunities that the media-makers would not likely be able to cover on their own.

For Bradley, thirty-six, who graduated with a BA in finance from Georgetown and received her MBA from American University, Positive

Impact represents a combination of her two professional tracks as well. Having founded and managed both a nonprofit for entrepreneurial development, entitled TEDI, and a for-profit financial consulting company, New Capitalist, Inc., Bradley possesses the rare ability to analyze both sides with intimate knowledge of each. And this not only informed her approach in writing the book, which is targeted by turns to the two groups she intends to reach, but was also the impetus behind writing the book in the first place. "There were three motivating factors," she says. "First was knowing lots of filmmakers and musicians and their struggles to get their work out. Second was the FCC ruling last year that would further marginalize independent and minority media-makers by allowing media consolidation. And third was my own experience and knowing how little communication there is between the nonprofit and business communities."

Because business principles do not change much over time, Bradley does not intend to make major changes to the book in future editions. Instead, she says she will include case studies that describe how the book has helped media-makers and investors achieve their goals. ▣

For more information on Positive Impact, or to purchase a copy of the book, visit www.newcapitalist.com/pi.

David Alm writes about contemporary art, film, and the media for several magazines in New York and California. He currently lives in Chicago, where he also teaches college courses in literature and film.

CORRECTIONS

We regret a mistake in our April issue's article *Courting Public Funds*, which states that NEH funding for film reached a five-year low of 3.2 million in 2003, when in fact the NEH put over 4.8 million into film/television projects in fiscal year 2003.

The introduction to the obituary section in the May issue incorrectly names Patrick Wickham as Stephen Wickham. We apologize for this oversight.

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Cool School for Indies

HOW TO FIND AND PROMOTE YOUR GREATNESS,
OR DISTRIBUTION IN THREE EASY STEPS

By Fritz Donnelly

You want more people to see your film. You think: I need a better script and more believable characters. You're wrong. Keep your shaggy script and those doggerel characters the way they are. What you need is to be a better person, a cooler person, more yourself, and more exaggerated. Once you read about this collection of degenerates, you'll see that you too can appeal to millions under the right lighting.

First, before we go on, you should decide whether you are making movies for one or all of the following reasons:

- a.) fame
- b.) to make the world a better place
- c.) just for fun
- d.) fortune

You can't make movies that make money unless you already have money, so throw out "d." Otherwise, use this article to get the most fame in the best world while having the most fun.



FRITZ

To the Hills: 24 Short Independent Films (2002, DV, 100 min.)

Logline: Films about dreamers, hustlers, yoga-dancers, secret agents, people like you and me.

Street Peddling: Prince & Greene Streets in SoHo, Manhattan

Gross to date: \$12,000 (1,100 sold)

Debt: \$9,000 (camera, microphones, editing system, DVD replication)

I have just signed my first distribution deal, at gunpoint, and believe that it will make me the wealthiest, wisest, independent filmmaker in history. Or at least that's what I tell myself now. This was the argument that warmed me up to this pact of blood: "If you were in the manufacturing business and you built a new factory for each new style of shoe, people would think you were crazy. If you also changed the name of your brand after every production cycle, your marketing team would walk out. And yet this is how independent filmmakers operate. I'm offering you the chance to consolidate your manufacturing process, your marketing effort, and your distribution outlets without losing any creative control."

And everything Omar said is true. Rather than promote the movies, Omar told me, "We promote each other." Actually he said, "You promote me."

The next time I went down to Prince Street to sell my movies, I noticed Omar had replaced my bag of *To the Hills* DVDs with his own *Desert Nomad: the Premovie*.



OMAR

Desert Nomad (2004, Super 8, 16mm, 88 min.)

Logline: Who needs water when you've got love?

Theatrical Release: Premiere in London Fall 2004.

Gross to date: \$5,000
(Twenty screenings)

Debt: \$40,000
(insurance, movie "van")

I had been waiting for three hours on the hot Arizona pavement. At first I thought no one was picking me up because I hadn't shaved or cut my hair. Omar picked me up but because he was running out of gas, he was afraid to turn off the engine. So I jumped in the back while the automobile was still moving. I jumped with my bag in hand because I could tell that if I threw the bag in first he would speed away without me. The first instinct you have about a person is usually the right one—I wish I had sacrificed my bag so that today I might still have my soul.

I stared at the back of Omar's head, obscured mostly by the turban he wore, and listened to his girlfriend and their three children sing. Around me were shifted stacks of chairs and an enormous projector. I was only the latest addition to Omar's movie limousine.

Omar Shabat and his partner Disraeli Sadat rove the American West and Southwest in their limousine setting up chairs and projecting their

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movies to small audiences. They charge \$3-\$5 admission, and sell beer at a 100 percent mark up. Usually about fifty people show and afterwards Omar and Disraeli rap. The primary influence on their filmmaking is *Battle for Algiers*—"stupid movie," chimes Disraeli. Their musical influence? "Double double, trouble, trouble!" (Double Trouble was a rap duo in the early eighties.)

"So where's Disraeli now?" I ask. Omar pulls a card down from the sun visor. The only evidence of their partnership is a postcard of the Hoover Dam with two eyes drawn on the front. On the reverse, an inscription: "Can't stop the flood. Send my residuals. —DS."

Omar is many things—a singer, "electro-dancer," a sniper's cousin—but foremost he is a filmmaker. When I first met Omar, he showed me the gun that has become his trademark, and the logo for his film company. He has been shot nine times. Twice by Elyse, his current girlfriend.

"You got too many kids to be a director," Omar shouted at Elyse, a magnanimous woman and the visionary behind all his films. "I'm the director," he says. In point of fact, Elyse directed their last film; Omar and Disraeli were co-producers. It's because of Elyse that I'm looking forward to my collaboration with them. We're producing a DVD of short "foreign-language" action films.

Omar uses a gun the way the surrealists intended. Not as a means of self-defense, but as a way of throwing a crowd into a state of panic and rupturing their sense of reality. His film persona and cinematography style reflect this surrealist bent. "No bullets, only guns," he says of his films. He is perhaps more interesting than his movies, or maybe his movies are better after having met or heard about him.

At first I didn't understand why he took the driver's seat while Elyse and Disraeli, by far the more talented, lurked in the background. "He's my queen of England," explains Elyse. "I

don't want to give interviews. Omar loves to talk, and he loves to dance. He's the perfect representative for our vision," she says. "He has an answer for everything, but because of his attention span he can't ruin the suspense by telling you the whole story." Disraeli feels differently. "Omar is no good," he tells me. "He wants aggrandizement."

When Omar and Disraeli shoot a movie, each wields a camera, and both call "action" and "cut," even though the actors don't move until Elyse gives a hand signal.

For all his faults, Omar is an outstanding cinematographer—a kind of idiot savant for whom a camera penetrates this thick crust of inanity. I saw this transformation occur on the scene of *Must*, Omar's unfinished remake of Finnish filmmaker S. Pael's final masterpiece. The main character in Omar's version is played by SURF, the last member of our newly formed cartel. I have never been able to reconcile SURF's deliberate, calculated acting style with the rest of his personality.



SURF

All Day Full Night (2004, DV-excellent, 24 hours)

Logline: Tune in at the right time for the fine, fine wine.

Medium: Internet stream

Gross to date: \$0

Debt: \$0 ("I am nothing, I need nothing.")

"You don't need to know me. The lesser the better," says SURF, who is full of this kind of jargon, a way of talking that I originally proscribed to California.

I've just received the contract back from Omar and SURF. Though he claims to have never learned how to read, SURF has crossed out the word "net" and replaced it with "gross" in the profit sharing section. In the folder with this updated contract are the photos of our group. These are a crucial element to our coordinated branding effort.

I'm required by contract to print SURF's name in capital letters, and to choose from the following adjectives when describing images of him: "endearing," "boastful," or "toned." Believe it or not, SURF's major contribution to our cartel is business acumen. Thanks to him we have a website: www.filmcartel.com. SURF also uses a number of calculations to determine how to spend his time, which usually yield "sit around" or "go to the beach."

Omar, SURF, and myself have banded together to form a distribution company. Each of us has a different approach to getting our films seen. I distribute by hand and on TV; Omar believes in theatrics and the cinema; and SURF's films are free on the internet. Rather than a company, what we have is an institutionalized argument. Our sole point of agreement is the inspiration for this article, and may be of use to you in your work: It is easier to promote one another than it is to promote our movies—none of which any of us like or have time to watch.

The key is to first think about your filmmaker persona. Some of the tips and exercises to the right will help. In the meantime, start by taking something you don't like in someone else and apply it to yourself; once you've achieved detachment, you can objectively add any other traits you want. Try it for a year. Take some pictures. And when you're bored with that, shoot your movie. You're the star. Who's the star? Say, "I'm the star."

Scenes from Donnelly's *To the Hills*: 24 Independent Short Films.

Build Your Own Filmmaker Persona

SURF's formula to determine whether or not to make a movie: Divide the number of hours people will spend watching your movie by the number of hours you will spend making it. The result should be greater than one. For example, if only five people watch your one-hour film, that's five viewing hours, so SURF would spend less than five hours making the film. His film probably wouldn't have very many cuts, no sound FX, maybe no music. Or SURF would just take someone else's movie and recut it—he's done that to my movies.

Some questions to answer in the privacy of your own home:

1. Which of your eccentric behaviors is beneficial to your filmmaking?
2. What has made you laugh hardest in recent memory?
3. What article of clothing or accessory would you feel most comfortable wearing all the time?
4. Which of these words best describes your personality (the way you interact with other people) obnoxious, anxious, or aloof? Another way of stating this question: Are you moving toward the world, toward yourself, or toward the abstract?

The only characters that are truly memorable are fallible ones with exaggerated features. Answer the above questions honestly. I'll do me:

1. I make strange noises and do the same inane thing over and over when I'm really tired.

2. My girlfriend said something obnoxious to me just like the obnoxious things I say to her. A couple days later she moved out. We both laughed. 3. A scarf. I wish I could say a wet suit, or even a thong, or better, earrings. 4. Obnoxious.

Take your eccentric behavior and combine it with your hard laugh—this is your filmmaking "style." Now pick out your definitive article of clothing—this is the basis of your "costume." The last question is left entirely up to you—only you know, in a manner of speaking, if you're the singer, the sound engineer, or the bass guitar.

Although SURF should have said it, I'll say it: What is nonsense now is money later. And keep an eye out for our "foreign-language" action films. We are a cartel, or a den of thieves, with nothing in common with you but our cold blood. ■

Fritz Donnelly is a New York based filmmaker, currently working on a how-to action feature. His other films can be viewed at www.tothehills.com.



BAADASSSSS REDUX

THE BLACK CINEMATIC FRATERNITY RECONVENES

By Nick Charles

Quick, count the number of African Americans who by 1970 had directed studio or independent films. (Oscar Micheaux and his pioneering ilk don't count.) Well, of course, Gordon Parks did *The Learning Tree*, and Isaac Dixon helmed *Nothing But A Man*. Ossie Davis had a hit with *Cotton Comes To Harlem*, and Melvin Van Peebles made a notable splash with *Watermelon Man*. Now, fast-forward thirty-four years, when three of

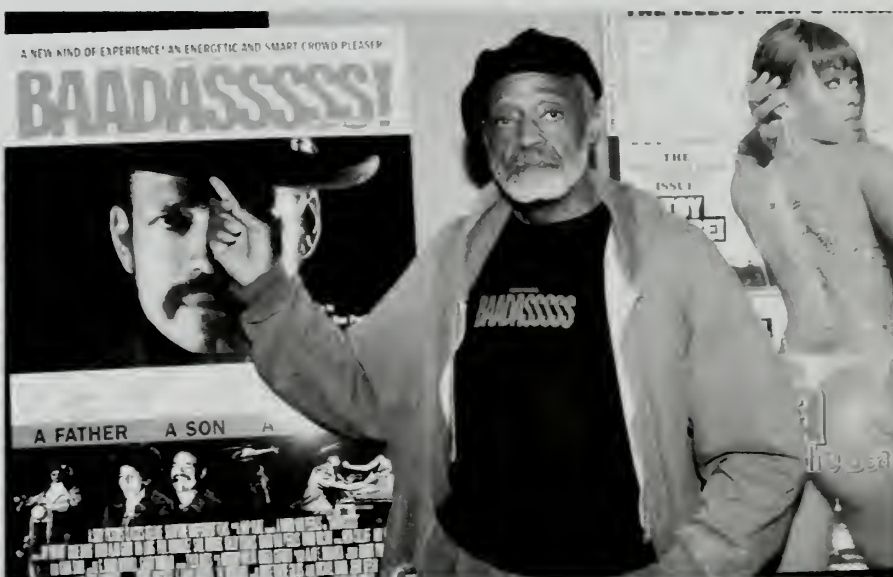
recognizable as the titans of African American artistic achievement that they are. Parks, with his turban of silver hair crowning a now frail form, though his aged flesh and bone always embalmed in the nattiest of suits, doesn't blend in—rather, he radiates inordinate amounts of sagacity and light. Davis moves slower these days, an unhurried stride that gives him an even more erect majesty—the Gods will not be rushed pace. This inspirational trinity—Parks as Father, Davis

Melvin skirted Hollywood and film conventions of the day to make his film. Mario gets to fulfill any and every Oedipal impulse he might have ever harbored about his father, as he portrays him, and Davis shows up in the film as Melvin's father. Prominent in the story is how Bill Cosby lent Melvin money to finish and edit the film, and the real Cosby is seen at the end of the film talking about what Melvin's film meant.

Held at the Sony building on Madison Avenue in New York, the invite-only, laid-back affair attracted African American film insiders, African American members of the press, a few B-list black celebs, money-men from Sony Pictures Classics who bankrolled the film, some choice hors d'oeuvres and two full bars. Held in conjunction with the Black Filmmakers Foundation, its president Warrington Hudlin served as MC.

Invoking guerilla stratagems, Mario and Hudlin both spoke of how the event and screening were attempts to get word of mouth out about a film that might otherwise not show up on the regular film-going radar. "You are all deputized to go forward and tell everyone you know about this film," charged Hudlin. This was not to be treated as just another film by just another filmmaker of color; it was must-see history of how to beard "the man" and win. Somewhere Spike Lee is waiting for a royalty check.

For those who've never seen *Sweetback*. . . a little history is needed. As a follow-up to his mildly successful *Watermelon Man*, Melvin wanted to eschew another race manners comedy and do something more dramatic and pertinent—something that reflected where African Americans stood as the turbulent 60s closed. He decided on the story about a priapic drifter who runs afoul of the law but ultimately, triumphs. "You bled my poppa, you bled my momma, won't bleed me," is the film's cryptic refrain. Noteworthy for the underground and underhand-



that fraternity find themselves at the center of a promotional event for a contemporary film that lionizes one of them. But not the one you might think.

Feral and mischievous Melvin Van Peebles slips into a room, unlit stogie wedged between full lips, hat cocked to the side, looking forever like the most irregular regular guy. You can't place him at times but you know he's somebody, and somebody not to be fucked with. Gordon Parks and Ossie Davis on the other hand, are instantly

the Son, and Van Peebles the Holy Ghost—lent their auras to a private screening in March, of the new Mario Van Peebles independent film *Baadasssss!* (a.k.a. *Gettin' the Man's foot outta your Baadasssss!*)

As the title suggest, the film is related to the elder Van Peebles' seminal and forever controversial *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, which bowed in 1971 and is credited (or blamed—unfairly so), for siring the Blaxploitation flicks of the '70s. Indeed, *Baadasssss* is a fact-based fictionalized recount of how



ed tactics Melvin employed—it was purposely promoted as a porno flick before production started so as to avoid the rabid gaze of the then all-white skill unions—it was also praised for the diverse and integrated cast of characters behind the camera. Its soundtrack, composed by Melvin and a then-unknown band, Earth, Wind, and Fire, was also lauded.

Even though it was rated “X” and initially played in only two movie theaters across the country, it turned a hefty profit and has become a cult classic of how-to movie making for some. But the film’s hyper-masculinity did and continues to rub some the wrong way, and they dismiss it as sexist and an exercise in male-ego masturbation. With that as a context, it was somewhat startling to see the patriarchy of Parks, Davis, Peebles pere and fil, taking center stage in the Q & A session. If indeed the event was playing out as a passing of the torch and coronation of sorts, had nothing in fact changed in thirty-four years? Brothers up front and sisters behind, if they are at all visible.

It was left to Mario, whose career has been a laundry list of B-movie roles and less than stellar directorial turns, dotted with the occasional gravitas-weighted work (*New Jack City*, as *Malcolm X* in

Ali), to mention the “sistahs.” But aside from that aside about how all young filmmakers of color were beholden to the black cinematic Mount Rushmore assembled, the absence of female participation hung thick in the air.

No one in the audience, the author of this piece included, said anything about it. There were the usual testimonials about the greatness of Parks, Davis, or Van Peebles senior and how much they had influenced the person substituting soliloquy for interrogation. But what the scene provoked was rumination of how little had really changed since Parks, Davis, and Van Peebles did their first films. There is still no one of color at a major, or major independent, film studio that can greenlight a film.

Directorial lists are still dominated by men, particularly when it comes to African Americans. Let’s not even explore the paucity of roles for women, despite Halle Berry’s Oscar. To be fair, the roles for African American women in Mario’s film are as meaty as can be expected in a film about the vision of one driven man’s manliness. Looking at Parks, Davis, Melvin bearing witness to their struggles and spiritually anointing Mario as a member, if not leader, of the next generation of African American artists, left one a bit queasy if not downright uneasy. ▣

Nick Charles is a Brooklyn based journalist and writer whose work has appeared in The Los Angeles Times, The Village Voice, and Essence.

Opposite page: Mario Van Peebles at the *Baadasssss!* screening; this page: Rainin Wilson, Karimah Westbrook, Mario Van Peebles and Kate Krystowiak in *Baadasssss!*



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Beating the Cheat

STEVEN OKAZAKI CUES HIS OWN TRUTH

By Ariella J. Ben-Dov

Make it a rule – don't ever watch six Steven Okazaki films in a row. It started at around 9 am when I hunkered down and suddenly found myself on a journey led by stories of Japanese American survivors of internment camps; stereotypes of Asian men in America; big businesses displacing native Hawaiians in their homeland; and weary heroin addicts in San Francisco.

These dense, often controversial, and opinionated films have come to define Okazaki's work and his

International Asian American Film Festival, Steve Yamane, Okazaki's longtime employee, tells me it wasn't always about film for his boss. "He used to be a musician, you know," Yamane said, and with a smirk, tells me to ask him about it.

"I am a really mediocre musician," Okazaki answers, as we sit down for our interview. "I played in rock-and-roll bands from junior high until I was about twenty-seven, and then thought I should do something else—because I am not very good." As a teen Okazaki often strayed from the "in" crowd—

HBO documentary follows five poor and displaced young adults on a downward spiral of addiction. Cat Power is also featured on the soundtrack of Okazaki's new HBO film, *Rehab*, which tracks another group of drug addled youth, but this time as they struggle to get clean. Regarding his use of music, Okazaki says, "I'm uncomfortable with music that just sort of works you [over] unconsciously."

In ways similar to narrative film, Okazaki's documentaries are ripe with musical cues that lead the viewer on emotional journeys, which seem at odds with the cinema verité style of his more recent work. In *Rehab*, for example, two characters are shown in a hotel room shortly after completing their drug program. As they meticulously prepare their needles, shoot up, and talk of getting clean, a mournful Cat Power song swells. The music is a direct comment on the characters' demise and creates more drama in the scene.

"I am fearful of the cheat," he says. "I like [the music] to be more obvious. If music upsets people or makes them feel something, that's great." This idea of being a "cheat" is a recurring theme for Okazaki, perhaps as the demon that haunts him or the fear that drives him to work so hard—"In everything I do, I want it to be how I experience it."

Rather than employ common modes of personal documentary such as a voice-over linking the maker to the subject, Okazaki inserts himself with a subtlety that his audiences might not realize. His musical choices are the most recognizable personal touches and provide a thinly coded commentary about his subjects.

Some of his early films rely heavily on voice-over to introduce characters and provide historical context. In the past, he used traditional documentary conventions, such as talking-head interviews with experts and B-roll of related footage. In his later work, though, Okazaki catches verité



Berkeley, California-based production company, Farallon Films. His documentaries are both inviting with their intimate portraits and distressing with their overwhelming sense of loss, paralysis, and sorrow.

As I enter Video Arts, the upscale post-production house in downtown San Francisco, a shock of cool air hits me before I am greeted by the serene focus and warm smile of Academy Award-winning director Steven Okazaki. Some weeks earlier, at the opening of the San Francisco

while other bands played the Beatles, his covered the less mainstream Kinks.

Perhaps owing to his musical beginnings, Okazaki's films are filled with rich and sometimes overpowering soundtracks—as if the music is another character—in some instances interrupting the scene rather than pushing the story forward. These soundtracks regularly incorporate contemporary music with punk and rock roots. The melodic, leathery, and sultry voice of Chan Marshall, lead singer for Cat Power, is used in *Black Tar Heroin* (1999). This

Filmmaker Steven Okazaki in 2003.

moments on screen, which become the truth of his films. As audience members, we assume these scenes are accurate depictions of his subjects' personalities and experiences. "I don't think I am trying to get the truth. I am trying to get as real a representation of what I am experiencing [as I can]," he says. "[My films] are personal, they are not pieces of journalism. If a subject wants to hide something, it's not from me; it's from the person watching. And if they can get away with it, then they can."

Okazaki's desire for truth holds a blatant contradiction. While he ventures to attain the fly-on-the-wall status of "true" verité filmmaking, he clearly also fears the potential of manipulating his audience. He prefers to be palpable with his music choices and insidious with his images. In *Black Tar Heroin*, Okazaki films Jessica standing across a busy street, fidgeting awkwardly as cars pass by—in voice-over she reveals that she is working as a prostitute to fund her addiction. As she talks, a melodic yet droning guitar riff accentuates her tragic tale. While the camera is indeed exposing a verité moment, the music intercepts and in turn inserts Okazaki's opinion in the form of music. His intentions to represent reality as he experiences it, and to use music that does not "cheat," seem inherently at odds. His method assumes the elements of a documentary are experienced or consumed separately. But these conflicting goals and the tension they create are what make Okazaki's films so intriguing.

When Okazaki takes his images to the edit room, he addresses the limitations in his quest for reality by breaking out of realism through the music cues he inserts. In the opening sequence of *Rehab*, a woman shoots up into her wrist as a soundtrack of violins and a slow-motion effect underscores the scene, reminding the viewer of the constructed nature of filmmaking.

Okazaki approaches the filmmaking process organically. He does not

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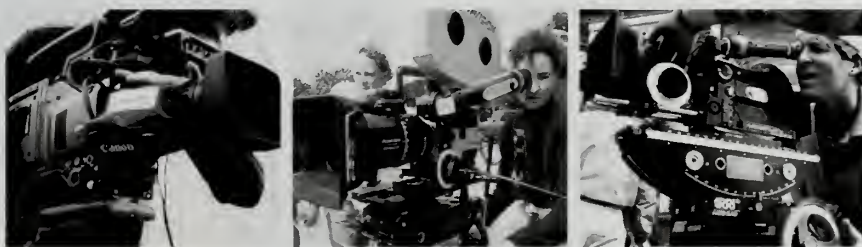
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prepare fully for an interview by learning all he can about a topic. Instead he brings his curiosity, his empathy, a yearning for knowledge, and his desire to gain access to different individuals and communities. His subjects find his soft voice and calm aura inviting, and he concedes to genuine shyness. Filmmaking, he says, gives him "license to ask subjects all kinds of questions and to get an exchange going. Ideally, as I am getting to know them, the audience is [too]." It is as if the audience is getting a sneak peak at the pre-interview process. What results is unrehearsed and can be a startlingly candid exchange in the controlled setting of an interview.

Tracey, a subject in *Black Tar Heroin*, recalls thinking [of Okazaki], "what a cold callous bastard. Don't you care that I'm sitting here killing myself and you're there filming it? I thought it was some Fellini-esque touch—everything falling apart in front of the camera." Tracey has since gone through myriad emotions about her participation in the project. She stopped using heroin shortly after filming ended and was initially angry and confused by Okazaki's decision not to include this fact. (The film leaves the viewer with the bleak feeling that none of the subjects will ever get off heroin.) Now Tracey understands. "As a piece of art," she explains, "that's like Picasso completing a painting and then a year later coming back and adding a brush stroke." She believes the harsh reality of drug addiction that *Black Tar* reveals is what makes the film so powerful. In the end, Tracey knows Okazaki does indeed care. "I never realized he was nice until the movie was over."

Okazaki has clear ideas for himself about the rules of documentary filmmaking. He literally cringes at the likes of Errol Morris. "I just find his early films really cynical. It seems like East Coast intelligentsia showing us how irritating and dumb people from the south and poor people are." Okazaki strives for some sort of purity in his

ability to document events accurately. He encouraged Tracey and all his subjects to take control of the process and reveal only what they chose to.

Okazaki grew up in Los Angeles and began his artistic career as a painter. He stumbled into filmmaking when the art department at San Francisco State University was full. "The registry office called and said, 'Pick another major.' And I said, 'Now?' I got the catalogue, started at the A's and stopped at Film, and thought, 'Huh. That might be good for me.'" As a painter,



he recalls that his life felt very solitary. "Film," he explains, "provided this connection to the outside world that I really wanted."

He began by making children's documentaries, and later went on to direct historical documentaries, which launched a ten-year relationship with PBS. He received his first Oscar nomination in 1985 for *Unfinished Business*, about three Japanese Americans who challenged their internment camp incarceration. In 1991, he went on to win the Oscar for *Days of Waiting*, a documentary short about the life and artwork of Estelle Ishigo, a white woman who was placed in an internment camp with her Japanese American husband during World War II.

Even as he became successful and garnered awards, Okazaki considered giving up documentary filmmaking. "I was really frustrated with PBS programming," he says. "The Ken Burns kind of thing—the interview cut to photos and experts standing in front of bookcases. I just felt it was a trap—PBS is so conservative." Okazaki speaks freely of this much-disputed topic, a subject many filmmakers will only speak about off the record. "When you produce programs for PBS, often they don't care how good the program is," he says. "No one says, 'You can make this better.' To make a program where the broadcaster doesn't really care how good it is, is frustrating and disheartening."

In response to his own dissatisfaction, Okazaki made a leap and left behind the research and the experts required by PBS, and went directly to the source for his next film, *Black Tar Heroin*. Before locking down any money, Okazaki simply dove into shooting and hoped someone would be interested in funding it. After learning about the project, HBO bit and his career has been changed ever since. He has gone 180 degrees, from fact-based historical documentaries with a heart, to shocking, improvised images of people struggling to live.

Cameras inevitably change a story with their mere presence, but Okazaki (along with many *verité* filmmakers) has to believe his work is utterly authentic. Documentaries are constructed representations of reality, and as soon as the first scene is framed, a filmmaker is manipulating the story. Instead of seeming naïve or misdirected, Okazaki's search for truth is inspiring. "I am the vehicle for getting the story—if I can't get it, we don't have it. My failures are part of the process." ■

Ariella J. Ben-Dov is a San Francisco based writer and the founder/curator of the MadCat Women's International Film Festival.

Above: Tiffani and Josh in Okazaki's *Rehab*.

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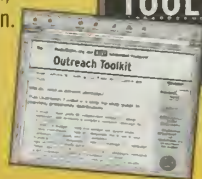
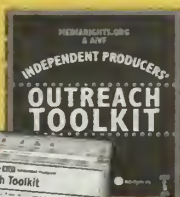
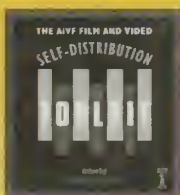
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Deep Breaths

JOEY GARFIELD'S STEADY CULTURAL BEAT

By Penny Vlagopoulos

When Joey Garfield was making his film *Breath Control: The History of the Human Beat Box*, he realized that to do justice to the topic at hand, he would have to look beyond conventional strategies of filmmaking. His understanding of the nuances of method is the source of his brilliance as a documentary filmmaker. Responding to an early criticism of a particular shot, Garfield explains, "I got it. I got something," is testament to the largely uncharted territory of the subject matter as well as its propensity to disallow adequate conditions for staging scenes.

Breath Control, finally released in 2002 after six years in production, went on to win numerous awards, including the Festival Choice Award at the New York Underground Film Festival, and even scored internationally, winning such accolades as Best of Fest at the Adelaide Film Festival. The film, running at just over seventy minutes and skillfully edited by co-producer Jacob Craycroft, combines rare archival footage with recent interviews of beat boxers. On one level, it is a history of the science of the form, explaining the technique in cartoon vignettes that are interspersed along the film and narrated by the voice of a

that can really do it like that. It's another language."

The film is also a kind of historiography. Garfield began the project as an homage to pioneer beat boxer Darren "Buff" Robinson of the Fat Boys. He initially set out to write an article on Buff for the Beastie Boys' magazine *Grand Royal*. When Buff died in 1995, however, Garfield realized that "I have to do this more than ever now because hip-hop is getting older and a lot of the pioneers aren't going to be around." *Breath Control* traces the major players of the movement, from Buff, Biz Markie, and Doug E. Fresh out of the Old School, to Rahzel and Scratch from The Roots and Marie Daulne from Zap Mama today. He also includes lesser-known figures, such as Click Tha Supah Latin and Chris Jung, and even incorporates international beat boxers. With the passion of an artist witnessing a cul-



Documentaries of this nature, he explains, make themselves: "You have to be there in the open to catch it, which is great. It's like Jacques Cousteau style—I love it."

Joey Garfield shooting barns in the field; Garfield and Kami making *Barnstomers*.

man called "Professor X." The film stresses the high level of skill required for beat boxing, defined by one artist as "the art of using your mouth to make sounds that are usually generated by machines." As Doug E. Fresh puts it, "Beat boxing is kinda like jazz. There's only a rare few people

cultural revolution, Garfield describes his project in characteristically selfless terms: "I thought, we gotta get this word out because it hasn't been documented well. What can I do to give back to hip-hop what's been given to me?"

It is Garfield's personal commit-

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ment to this marginalized segment of history that makes his work so resonant. Born in 1969 outside of Chicago in Evanston, Illinois, he was part of the generation that experienced the birth of hip-hop culture, which gave him a movement he could identify with: "I'm part of this," he explains, detailing why it was so personal for him. "I understand it. I get it." This sense that he had found a home permeates his film. Documentaries have to navigate the fine line between pandering to the cross-section of experts and aficionados that accompany its subject matter and trying to make it accessible and interesting to the less informed. What makes Garfield's film something more than a snapshot of a zeitgeist is his ability to capture both the enthusiast's sense of the beat boxing world and the regenerative egalitarian spirit of the form. He stresses that he wanted to give viewers the tools to feel confident as beat boxers



themselves, calling his film "edutainment." He says, "If I can bring this element into people's lives, then it's been a successful film. And if I can have it be fun and have people learn history in an alternative way, then I've done more than my job." To historicize a movement, to do justice to its complexities, to break it down for the neophytes, to revise accepted cultural histories, and finally, to create a new art form in the process—Garfield mentions that it is a "hip-hop album that you can see"—is no small feat.

Such an intense level of commitment to both content and form pro-

pelled Garfield from the start. After attending film school in Chicago, he moved to New York in 1991 and began juggling projects. He worked as a boom operator, one of his most valuable experiences, which allowed

Style Wars II, that was my payment. I hit the jackpot working on the film that inspired me to make a film." The bonus DVD consists of interviews shot in the summer of 2002 with the artists who were originally featured in



him to study the various lines of communication between directors, actors, and cinematographers. Between 1992 and 1994, he worked for music video production company Hex, which produced the videos of such artists as House of Pain, Cypress Hill, and Brand Nubian. During his stint there, he met the Beastie Boys who gave him an outlet to begin his work on Buff.

When he began to work on *Breath Control*, it was *Style Wars*, the seminal 1983 documentary on subway graffiti culture, that served as his inspiration. In the serendipitous fashion so common to this interior world, director Henry Chalfont saw *Breath Control* and asked Garfield to film the extras for the *Style Wars* bonus DVD. "I'll never make my money back from *Breath Control*," Garfield says, "considering how much the music and archival footage cost. But when Henry called and asked me to work with him on

Style Wars. Far from diluting the force of the earlier film, the extras solidify its importance by ensuring the bombers (slang for graffiti artists) are both saved from obscurity and celebrated as artists once the threat of their co-option has come and gone. In the words of Mare 139, a bomber who is still an artist in New York, "We lost the trains and gained the world. We said 'okay, we're going to morph into your structured society and still make our mark.'" As Garfield explains it, "In the 80s, we witnessed jazz over again. It was jazz on the train. It was jazz in the park. When you use a train as your canvas and it travels the city, that's art, moving art."

The search for living, almost biological art, is at the crux of the philosophy undergirding Garfield's work: redefining art, recharging it with urban energy, and capturing the vanguards of a future framed in the rawest varieties of expression. Continuing his work on subcultures, Garfield has a film in a traveling

Left page: Iz the Wiz in *Style Wars II*. This page: Self Portrait with Bird.

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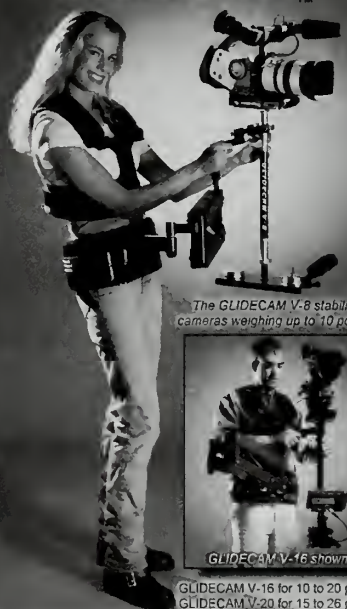
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exhibit entitled *Beautiful Losers*, which opened last month in Cincinnati, and is curated by Aaron Rose, director of the now defunct Alleged Gallery in New York's Lower East Side. Rose built eight installations of videos, including works by Mike Mills, Harmony Korine, and Spike Jonze. Garfield's *Head Rush* is a nine-minute film documenting the LES art scene between 1992 and 1994. The "beautiful losers" depicted in the film are, according to the description of the exhibit, "state-of-the-art bohemian poets, underground music heroes, revolutionary skaters, graffiti kings and queens, as well as artists."

Garfield's understanding of these artists seems intuitive; his work combines the meticulousness of a historian with the exuberance of an artist in such a way that the lasting import of his subjects is clearly articulated. This talent is explicitly expressed in one of his current projects, a feature-length film about the Barnstormers, a group of thirty artists from New York who make an annual pilgrimage to Cameron, North Carolina to paint graffiti-inspired murals on tobacco barns scattered around the countryside. Garfield, a Barnstormer himself, has been documenting the improvisational painters in action. SECCA (Southeastern Contemporary Center for Art) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina will be hosting a Barnstormer retrospective in late July of this year. A space where urban vitality meets a rural sense of community is an appropriate landscape for Garfield's larger enterprise as a contemporary filmmaker, which is removed from the conventional solipsism of the artist and relies instead on a realm of meta-art made equally for the people who inspire him as for the gallery. As he explains it, "*Breath Control* was a visual record and the film I'm showing in *Beautiful Losers* is a moving painting. In *Barnstormers*, I'm also making a piece of art about art."

Garfield's current projects include a documentary on Steve Powers, also known as ESPO, an underground graffiti artist who is now entering the above-ground art world. The film is a comment on what it means to succeed as an artist, and will be part of ESPO's art show at Deitch Projects in Soho, New York this month. Although Garfield's works all encode criticisms of art, he is, like the bombers of another era, unabashedly



idealistic about why he creates: "I think the key for everyone in life is to figure out how to express themselves. Once you can learn how to express yourself openly, you're free." During the filming of the *Style Wars* extras, he realized how lucky he was "to sit with these guys who helped me build my culture and my identity. They didn't even know that they did that for me. So if I can do that for others . . ." Garfield is the kind of artist who shifts cultural tides and won't even know that he did that for us. ▣

Penny Vlagopoulos is a writer in New York.

Joey Garfield with the late John Ritter at the 2002 CineVegas *Breath Control* screening.

Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

I was trying to find an original angle that would make my documentary stand out among others, but now people are telling me that it's too experimental. Should I go back to the original cut?

It's interesting that in your search for an "angle" you ended up with an experimental documentary. More interesting, though, is that people are calling it "too experimental" as if that were a bad thing. This scenario brings me to my favorite pairing: The process and the results—the filmmaker and the others.

There are those who focus on the process and don't pay too much attention to whether or not there is a place in the world for their work. And then there are those who obsess first over who will watch their films, and second over what those people will think about their films. Both concerns are relevant. The trick is to know when to change tracks from one to the other, and to avoid going to extremes.

I encourage filmmakers in the early stages of development to shut out all outside opinions, feedback, and comments—however well intended they may be. I support you in your search to find an original voice, but not in trying to make the film stand out in an overcrowded market. If you find your voice as a filmmaker, the film you make is inherently original by

virtue of the fact that there is only one of you in the world.

However, once you do find your voice and make a film, it's time to find your place in the world. Not to compromise your vision and twist it to fit conventional demands, but to learn how to position your project more effectively and to avoid false expectations.

If your process was sincere, you won't flinch when the hordes of viewers say "too" experimental or "too" long or "too" flat. You will know why it is so, and you will know if those comments merit an answer, a polite smile, or a re-cut.

Dancer Martha Graham, an innovator whose search brought her to many discoveries, said in a letter to Anges DeMille: "There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all

matter how many years you have worked on it, or how much you cared about it. Shelve it, toss it, burn it and move on!" Many filmmakers approach me hoping I will utter these words of liberation. They call me asking for permission to give up, as if I or anyone else has the authority to do so.

Generally speaking, this plea to be relieved of the curse and responsibility as an artist is a symptom of fear or anxiety. Sometimes it's fear about the next step, often created by a lack of knowledge on how to approach that next step. Other times it's fear of rejection or sometimes, just plain burnout from shooting or editing for too long or in extreme conditions.

After considering which of the above is tempting you to quit, you should be ready for some good news: There *is* a market for experimental documentaries. It might not be the market you envisioned, and it may take more strategizing than the average film, but there is hope.

Film Forum in New York has a track record of showing those documentaries that may be considered too daring for the Cineplex or the small

If your process was sincere, you won't flinch when the hordes of viewers say "too" experimental or "too" long or "too" flat.

time, this expression is unique. . . . It is not your business to determine how good it is; not how valuable it is; nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly, to keep the channel open."

Dear Doc Doctor:

I made an experimental documentary and was quickly told there's no market for it. Should I shelve it and move on?

"Oh, yes! Forget your film forever no

screen. Most recently, they showed *Los Rubios* (The Blonds) by Albertina Carri, distributed by Women Make Movies. Museums, like the Guggenheim in New York, which has an experimental film series, are also a likely venue for experimental documentaries.

Martha Sanchez, Theatrical and International Sales Manager for Women Make Movies, admits, "Unfortunately given the direction the industry is taking, there are less and less venues and opportunities to show

end.

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these works. A few specialized initiatives like Flaherty Film Seminar, Pacific Film Archives, the Black Maria Film Festival, and the Visions of the Avant Garde program (within the New York Film Festival) are loyal to the genre."

Women Make Movies has a commitment to the genre, and

**There is a market
for experimental
documentaries.
It might not be
the market you
envisioned . . . but
there is hope.**

because their distribution of works by and about women is part of their mission as a nonprofit media arts organization, they can afford to take on these works knowing that financially the venture may not be particularly lucrative. Martha says, "We love art and risk, and experimental work is a combination of both. They are the last truly independent genre. It is a challenging task, but extraordinary fulfilling."

Experimental films are the rare jewels of filmmaking. Cinema Studies departments at universities buy some, and often grants are awarded upfront. But in the end, experimental films are, and probably always will be, a labor of love. ■

Want to ask the Doc Doctor a question for a future issue of The Independent? Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. For more info, visit www.documentarydoctor.com

Full Frame: Reel to Real

DOCS QUESTION HOW "TRUTH" GETS MADE

By Matthew Smith

This year's Full Frame Documentary Film Festival was, more than anything, a study of the power of media and its ability to represent different worlds to us. Although each of the many remarkable and diverse films exploring this subject brought a distinct point of view to this question, one theme emerged: there is no absolute truth that media—even documentaries—can reveal to us.

In *Monster Road*, Brett Ingram and Jim Havercamp give us a tender and insightful account of the power of media to provide a sense of safety, as well as one of escape. The film depicts the life of reclusive animator Bruce Bickford and his senile father who, each for different reasons, recognize that it is impossible to document Reality-with-a-capital-R. For Bruce, the world is layered with myth and artifice. For Bruce's father, the world is shrouded by his diminishing memory and cognitive capacities. Neither father nor son, though, appears to be any more out of touch than the rest of us. Because each embraces his specific limitations, they paradoxically are capable of making sharp and honest observations. Midway through the film, Bruce sums up his view of our power as storytellers: "You can make a story out of anything, and anyone who thinks they can't—that's their problem." Bruce's point seems to be that *everything* is fiction, even stories that claim to represent the truth.

The Grand Jury Winner, *The Control Room*, deftly explores a similar notion of world perceptions. Filmmaker Jehane Noujaim (you may remember

her from *Startup.com*) and her crew spent much of early 2003 in and around Dohai, Qatar. Using digital video and a straightforward verité style, they produced a remarkable film about journalists and producers at Al Jazeera, and a lieutenant at the US military's main media center, all desperately trying to create simple, coher-

The film's counter-narrative reaches its zenith when an Al Jazeera producer expresses shock that the US military overran Iraq in a matter of weeks and with such ease. ("Where is the Republican Guard?" she asks with obvious disappointment.) Just as many Americans came to think of themselves as liberators, many Arabs thought of Saddam's Iraq as a mighty resistance to the US. Neither reality is less manufactured than the other; both are beamed as the unvarnished truth to the respective masses.

What ultimately made *The Control Room* so gripping was its study of sev-



ent news stories about one of the most heavily spun wars in history.

Among the most revealing scenes are those that expose both the US military's bald effort at manufacturing a rosy narrative about the war, and the US journalists' dutiful transmission of this narrative as fact back to the pliant American masses. The sword—or should I say pen—cuts both ways, though: we also are exposed to Al Jazeera's effort to produce and disseminate a counter-narrative that simultaneously confirms both the Arab world's resistance to new-jack Western imperialism, and their seemingly endless supply of conspiracy theories.

eral characters who grow increasingly ambivalent as to whether there is even such a thing as a "true" situation to present. The army lieutenant candidly questions the possibility of any objectivity at all, while an Al Jazeera journalist castigates fellow Arabs for blaming everything—from wars to broken water pipes—on an Israeli conspiracy.

This tenor of ambivalence was absent in the skillfully produced agit-prop film, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*—the filmmakers were saved from making an absurd, fawning biopic about Venezuela's socialist president Hugo Chavez when they found themselves literally in the mid-

The short film *A Procession of Them* uses stills to create a scary portrait of a Mexican insane asylum.

dle of a US-sponsored coup against Chavez. The film contains remarkable footage of Chavez and his entire cabinet trapped in the Presidential Palace, as coup leaders threaten to bomb



them in the event that Chavez refuses to resign. The film breathlessly chronicles Chavez's subsequent kidnapping and the popular uprising that ultimately resulted in his return to power.

Although it is clear from the film that confusion and disinformation

reigned, the filmmakers confidently distill the explanation of the coup down to blind greed and deception perpetrated by privately owned mass media. The state-run media and the masses in support of Chavez, on the other hand, are shown to have a pure commitment to democracy and a clear-eyed vision of the truth. There were several points at which it was hard not to feel that the filmmakers were guilty of being manipulative in exactly the same ways that they charged the private Venezuelan media as being manipulative. I left the film feeling both righteous and used—in full recognition that I had capitulated to the film's overblown claims of having access to truth and knowledge of justice.

In her sentimental film *Born into Brothels*, filmmaker and do-gooder Zana Briski documents what happens when cameras are given to children growing up in Calcutta brothels.

Briski's film bears a bleak life in sharp contrast with the rich, gorgeous photographs taken by the children. A principle joy of the film is how gracefully it leads us into the world represented in the children's photographs. Unfortunately, while Briski's cameras helped the children to show us the beauty they see within the Calcutta slums, the cameras did not, despite best hopes, allow many of the children to escape their squalor. Briski is successful, however, in unveiling that the horrors these children experience do not prevent them from being able to see and appreciate whatever beauty surrounds them. So in the end, perhaps the film locates and condemns a spiritual blindness in our wealthy, modern world as much as it condemns anything else.

Two short films, the striking *A Procession of Them*, and the sentimental *A Thousand Words*, use non-narrative

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footage to reconstruct two distant scenes that most of us cannot and likely do not want to comprehend fully. Employing photographic stills, *A Procession of Them* is a frightening representation of a Mexican insane asylum. *A Thousand Words* uses old Super 8 footage from the Vietnam War to piece together (or rather to demonstrate how one *cannot* piece together) tiny scraps of a narrative about that war. Both films help to show that it is only by telling a story that we come to have a sense of what actually occurred. It is in the telling, and not in its simply *being* that some event or state of affairs becomes more than myth. Absent the telling, bits and pieces of our worlds are easily lost in shadowy forgotten corners. The two films in particular, therefore, reaffirm the importance and recognition of documentary filmmaking as an important and powerful form of *story-telling* that, incidentally, challenges the very premise behind the dominant form of documentary: the HBO-ready *verité* documentary.

The makers of all these films were fully cognizant that by representing how things are, all media supplies us with a reality. We learn from these films that the story we are told is just a beginning—something that bears license to make further judgment about the world and how it ought to be. Perhaps the strongest take-home message from Full Frame this year, then, was that we lack a representation of what documentary filmmaking has become and will be in the future, and that the most important question facing documentary filmmakers today is not what they will be filming, or even how they will be making the films. But rather: What will be the *role* of documentary films in American society in the future? At

least at Full Frame, all evidence suggests that documentary filmmaking is fast becoming a delicious commodity—something that we consume simply because it tells us a good story.

Meanwhile, the Michael Moore-esque *Supersize Me*, by Morgan Spurlock, screened in a smaller than average sized theater in order to create more buzz, thereby not diminishing the number of potential attendees for its May theatrical release. (Later, for the same reason, it was not re-screened when it won the festival's MTV-sponsored award). For the first time at Full Frame, there were no student 16mm shorts—the festival was loaded with celebrities and muckety-mucks like D.A. Pennebaker, Harry

provincial, and whitewashed village, succeeded in mainlining documentary as both a commodity and an art form. An undertaker, one of the subjects in the documentary *Dirty Work* (by David Sampliner and Tim Nackashi, see pg 33), which was screened on a Friday afternoon during the height of the Festival, summed it up best in regard to documentary-as-commodity when he looked at the camera and said, “I give people a false sense of reality,” and later added, “I’ve created some peace for them.”

Maybe independent filmmakers should cede this territory to the *verité* documentaries presented by HBO and the mockumentaries, uh documentaries, shot by Michael Moore, so that



Shearer, and the super-sized one himself, Michael Moore. The end-of-festival party and awards ceremony, advertised as “southern barbecue,” was in fact a laughable yuppie, nouveau-cuisine buffet that would likely have made many native North Carolinians mutter something about Yankee idiocy.

In the end, Full Frame, which this year more than ever seemed to transform the predominantly African American working-class city of Durham, North Carolina into a small,

these films can take their stately places next to inbred kin like CNN and Fox newsmagazines. Then, independent documentary filmmakers might take inspiration from other remarkable films screened at this year's festival and continue to manipulate the documentary form in a way that challenges the commodification of an original art form. ■

Matthew Smith has lived and worked in North Carolina for six years. This fall he will be an assistant professor of philosophy at Yale University.

Opposite page: *The Control Room* documents Al Jazeera. This page: Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*.

Portland, Oregon

AN INDIE SCENE UNCLOUDED BY HOLLYWOOD

By Brian Libby

Legend has it that when settlers came west by covered wagon more than 150 years ago, those seeking fame and fortune headed south to California, while people seeking seclusion and autonomy ventured north to Oregon. So while movie fans in the rest of the country may associate Portland with its most famous director, Gus Van Sant (or to a lesser extent transplanted indie auteur Todd Haynes), the heart of the city's filmmaking community is comprised of proudly independent

Rebecca Rodriguez, and the documentary-making trio known as archipelago. Local filmmakers, especially those devoted to more unconventional fare, have created a sense of community in the Rose City, screening each other's works and helping out on one another's productions. "You realize when you go to other cities, even New York, how psyched people are about Portland," says McCormick, who in addition to making acclaimed shorts like *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* and *The Virotonin Decision*, has



artists charting courses far removed from the radar of Hollywood.

Portland is the city where internationally acclaimed video and performance artist Miranda July got her start, as well as noted experimental and documentary filmmakers like Matt McCormick and Vanessa Renwick, not to mention up-and-coming artists such as Nick Peterson, Trevor Fife,

for years operated the Peripheral Produce screening series. "We're all part of this self-generated machine, and that's the thing that transcends Portland."

Besides filmmaking, McCormick coordinates the Portland Documentary and Experimental ("PDX") Film Festival, which has attracted artists from around the world to Portland,

some of whom compete in the corresponding Peripheral Produce Invitationals, named for McCormick's longtime screening series of the same name. In addition, both short and feature-length works by a variety of independent artists both local and international are screened annually at the Longbaugh Film Festival (www.longbaugh.com), sponsored by local alternative weekly newspaper *Willamette Week*. There's also the Northwest Film and Video Festival, offered by the Northwest Film Center (www.nwfilm.org), which is easily the biggest resource for film students and watchers of eclectic art films. And Zonker Films, an independent collective of filmmakers and performers, puts on the Portland International Short Short (PISS) Film Fest.

Despite the acclaim and interest the PDX Fest has garnered, McCormick may be even more excited about ramping up his line of Peripheral Produce DVD releases (www.peripheralproduce.com). The last several years have been a period of significant creativity for underground film and video artists, but only a smattering is easily accessible for purchase on video. McCormick envisions Peripheral Produce acting like a small, iconoclastic, indie music label such as Dischord Records or K Records, only for visual artists: a kind of brand name that people can trust to provide content of a certain personality, integrity, and stimulation. And as those who have attended past Peripheral Produce shows in Portland or on tour elsewhere know, that personality walks a careful tightrope between challenging and entertaining fare. "You usually don't say avant-garde and fun in the same sentence," McCormick laughs, "but that's what I want Peripheral Produce to be."

In addition to Portland's annual festivals, there are also numerous

Mike Mills' 2004 *Thumbsucker*, filmed in a Portland suburb, employed 80 locals.

screening series that happen throughout the year. Filmmaker Morgan Currie doubles as AV Alice, organizer of collective shows highlighting work by female experimental filmmakers. Local microcinema The Know (www.theknow.info) is a haven for both local and touring underground visual artists, while another microcinema, Broadcast, offers a monthly film/video version of open mike night. Same goes for DV8, a local rock club that doubles as a film screening venue. And The Cinema Project (www.cinemaproject.org) specializes in classic avant-garde fare from Stan Brakhage to Jon Jost, that one might normally find onscreen only at special venues like the Museum of Modern Art.

The Northwest Film Center also sponsors the Northwest Crossings series, presenting video and film works from local and visiting artists on a quarterly basis. Operated by the Portland Art Museum, the NWFC is a valuable source for affordable equipment rentals and also leaves one screening night each quarter open to anybody who wants to show their films. "We have a responsibility to nurture young filmmakers," says the Center's Thomas Phillipson. "It's a source of pride that the Film Center is where so many filmmakers get a camera in their hands for the first time, or learn to edit their work, or to hear from more experienced filmmakers about their work."

In recent years the fledgling economy, including the nation's highest state unemployment rate for a time, has hindered the local film scene. But because those making smaller, underground fare can take advantage of a considerably lower cost of living than other West Coast metropolises like Seattle and San Francisco, they're not as affected by the economy as businesses and middle-classes with mortgages.

What's more, as Oregon has begun to lose out to Vancouver, BC as an

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affordable place to film, government has become proactive in creating incentives for productions of all sizes. Last year Governor Ted Kulongoski made a personal appeal to the legislature not to eliminate funding for the Oregon Film and Video Office, the Arts Commission, and the Cultural Trust. Beginning next year, the state will offer a film incentive rebate bill to those who shoot here. And Portland's city council recently approved a series of \$750 grants to young artists between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-four. "The market is a lot tighter and more challenging these days," says the Oregon Film and Video Office's Liza McQuade, "but the more people feel supported, the more they'll want to be here."

Indeed, there is no shortage of films to have been made here in recent years, such as big-budget Hollywood fare like William Friedkin's *The Hunted*, Van Sant's Cannes-winning *Elephant*, and Gore Verbinski's *The Ring*—not to mention his follow-up, *The Ring II*, which recently began principal photography in Oregon. The city



also has long been a popular location for shooting car commercials, because a diverse array of geographic locales—beaches, snow-capped mountains, farmland—are all available within an hour or two drive.

The prevalence of these higher-budget productions happening with some degree of regularity allows Portland to retain a community of technicians who can call the city home year-round, resisting the more fast-

paced and higher-cost lifestyle of Hollywood while still maintaining careers in the industry. "Our crew base is excellent," McQuade continues. "Producers and directors who come here to shoot really like the fact that so many of these people have worked together so many times before and have a rapport with each other." Thus, it's possible to trust that a local crew can act as a cohesive unit, which is a precious commodity on location when millions of dollars are at stake.

What's more, the fact that local crew members can sustain enough work to make a living in Portland lends itself to the vibrancy of local artistry. It's a common occurrence for local film and video artists to earn their living working on, say, a Honda or Alpo commercial by day in order to make movies with off-the-shelf mini-DV cameras and Final Cut Pro by night.

"There's a really strong film community developing here, maybe even like what happened with music in Seattle in the early '90s," says Daniel Yost, who co-wrote Gus Van Sant's *Drugstore Cowboy* and returned to Portland two years ago after working in Hollywood for several years as a screenwriter. "I got tired of just taking money for movies that wouldn't get made or were never quite what I wanted to write as opposed to what other people wanted me to write. So I decided to start making my own movies."

Recently Yost wrote, photographed, and directed the feature *Shooting Nick*, which combines the road movie genre with the guerilla style of films like *The Blair Witch Project*. The film was made for only about \$500 and shot in four days using a DV camera and edited on his iMac. "It's almost like writing a novel these days," Yost says of the production process. "And I think it's only going to get better when eventually we get to true high definition at a consumer level. Ultimately, within a very short time, people are going to be able to go out and make movies that



compete with Hollywood for very little money."

In the year ahead, look for offerings from numerous Rose City film and video makers, such as McCormick's documentary *Tugboats: Workhorse of the River*, a feature by Miranda July (who has since relocated to Los Angeles) called *Me and You and Everyone We Know*; Renwick's years-in-the-making documentary about wolves, *Critter*; a twelve-years-in-the-making film by Bill Daniel (Renwick's frequent collaborator) called *Who is Bozo Texino*; a compendium of as-yet-untitled short films about thermodynamics by archipelago; acclaimed animator Chel White's new short, *Magda*, as well as a compilation DVD of his collected works; two new shorts from Nick Peterson; and the feature-length *Coming Up Easy* by Rebecca Rodriguez, known previously for making a series of irreverent internet shorts. ■

Brian Libby lives in Portland where he writes for publications including *The New York Times*, *Premiere*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Salon*, and *Willamette Week*.

Left: Local filmmaker Matt McCormick; Right: *The Hunted* was shot in Portland.

Coming Clean

THE MANY CHALLENGES OF MAKING *DIRTY WORK*

By David Sampliner

David Sampliner and Tim Nackashi's debut documentary film Dirty Work premiered at the Sundance Film Festival 2004 and is currently on the film festival circuit. Dirty Work follows the lives of three men—Russ, a bull semen collector, Darrell, a septic tank pumper, and Bernard, an embalmer—who passionately pursue distasteful, indispensable professions.

Do you have an idea for a film, but have no experience, no resources, no equipment, and are working a day job? Do you sort of know in your bones you can make a film, but just don't know how to do it? When someone asks you what you do, are you still embarrassed to say "filmmaker," since, well, you haven't made a film yet?

Then you're exactly where Tim and I were four years ago when we first discussed making a documentary film in Athens, Georgia about a few odd jobs and the people who do them. I was writing fiction and waiting tables; Tim was helping run an internet design business and playing in a band. Neither of us had been to film school. I had quit a Ph.D. program in US history; Tim had a Bachelors degree in painting and did graduate work in computer animation. That and a small chunk of change from my grandparents was what we brought to the documentary filmmaking table. But, in our glorious naivete, we were determined to make a film, having virtually no idea what that meant.

We did know that filmmakers start with a budget, so we drew one up, putting in the traditional "lines" for a cin-

ematographer, editor, sound person. And then there was the decisive question: What medium would we shoot on? Filmmakers shoot on film, of course. A conservative (and, in retrospect, totally unrealistic) estimate put our expenses at around \$350,000.

Where would we get that kind of cash? We had no track record, so we didn't feel like we could go to outlets like ITVS or HBO. We didn't feel like we could go to foundations since our documentary couldn't promise to



advance any particular social cause. And we weren't comfortable asking friends or family to put up money for a project directed by two unreasonably ambitious neophytes.

An old college friend now in the film industry made a pertinent suggestion: "Why don't you guys just make it yourselves?" Indeed, if we did everything ourselves, suddenly the project seemed more feasible, at least financially, because we wouldn't be paying anyone. And if we were going to do everything ourselves, then we

were going to have to embrace the digital revolution and leave aside our fantasies of learning how to shoot film. After doing some research, we bought what we considered to be a top-rate, bare-bones outfit: a Sony VX-2000, a Sennheiser shotgun mic, a Lectrasonics wireless, a G4 computer, and Final Cut Pro. We were, technically speaking anyway, in business.

The most grossly miscalculated element of our "plan" was time. We both remember thinking we'd probably finish the project in a year. But after following one subject (the bull semen collector) alone for a year, another for about four months (the septic tank pumper and his wife), we were still trying to find someone in the funeral industry. That's when we re-estimated the project would take an additional six months. Two and half years later—four years all told—we were finally putting the finishing touches on the film.

Spending over three years following your subjects and shooting over 110 hours for a fifty-eight-minute film might sound crazy to anybody other than another documentary filmmaker, but we did know from the outset that we didn't want to drop into the strange worlds we were preparing to enter and capture merely the bizarre. Because we were venturing into worlds not only largely invisible to most people but easily ridiculed, we knew we would have to live with our subjects long enough to make a film that didn't merely trade on the obviously titillating aspects of their professions. We just underestimated what "long enough" meant exactly.

Beyond the fact that it was never our full-time job, why did a fifty-eight-minute film take four years to make? In many respects, this film was our film school. We started shooting well before we knew how or what to shoot, so a lot of time was spent making rookie mistakes, then trying to correct them the next time out. Likewise, we spent about two years editing the film, a good portion of which was spent creating edits that,

The poster for Nackashi and Sampliner's film.

though we weren't aware of it at the time, were useful only as exercises in



learning what works and more often, what doesn't. At three separate points we made versions of the film, watched it, despised it, and started a new edit completely from scratch.

However considerable our technical limitations, they did not prove to be our steepest challenge. If you had asked us

what natural gifts we brought to documentary filmmaking, each of us would have trumpeted our sensitivity, our innate ability to listen and make others feel comfortable being themselves around us. Then we started making a documentary film.

With all three of our subjects we encountered resistance at various stages of the process when each became distrustful for one reason or another of what they had agreed to take part in. After an initial rush of enthusiasm

for the flattering attention to their work, each subject would eventually come to question why they were exposing themselves to two relative strangers.

Dr. Page, the bull semen collector, let us know from the very beginning that even though he would allow us to film him, he didn't fully trust our inten-

tions. We told him we wanted to make a film about unheralded professions, but he remained wary throughout that we might be moles for PETA, swooping in to get footage, then using it out of context to decry the food industry's inhumane treatment of animals.

After filming him and his work for two years, and showing him that we were equally interested in his other passion, farmland protection, he gradually conceded that our intentions might be honorable. We still never visited his home—his wife couldn't understand why he had agreed to participate in this film, and wanted no part of it.

At the end of the last day of shooting with Russ, confident we'd earned his trust, we handed him the standard release form. (We knew he would never have signed it at the beginning of the process, given his suspicions, so we had waited.) Read it, we told him, ask us any questions you'd like, and



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then sign it. A few days later I called Russ to see when we might pick up the form. His response? "I feel like you've slapped me in the face."

Russ, it turned out, ran his business with handshakes, not contracts, and felt that our asking him to sign a release form betrayed the bond of trust we had formed. We apologized profusely, and we needed to—assured that we had immersed ourselves fully and respectfully in his world, we hadn't adequately let him into ours. After an exchange of letters and several conversations, he finally agreed to sign.

In contrast to Russ, the septic tank pumpers, Darrell and Martha Allen, appeared to throw the doors wide open to us. After only the second day of shooting with them, we were invited back to their house to film Martha's birthday celebration with their extended family. Their trust, it seemed, had been won instantly.

But as we spent more time with them, we learned things weren't that simple. During one early visit, they told us a story about one of their daughters that we felt would illuminate a lot about Darrell, and that would be flattering to the family and make them much more fully rounded characters. When we told them we wanted to pursue that story further, suddenly our access to their home diminished. We tried for months to arrange a sit-down interview with them in their home, and for months they found excuses for why it wasn't convenient.

Letting us into their home and letting us into their private world, it turned out, were two different things. They eventually allowed us to interview them at home, but they wanted assurances that if they were to draw boundaries, we would respect them. We did, knowing we were losing something that would make them more

sympathetic to an audience, but also knowing that having at least part of their story was better than having no story at all.

The fiercest resistance came from our most complex character, Bernard Holston, the embalmer. When approached about the film, Bernard told us he would have no problem with us filming him immediately. "Only those who have something to hide worry about telling the truth," he said. "And I have nothing to hide." By now, though, we knew to expect that

In our recent conversations with him, Bernard has peppered us with questions about how audiences have responded to the film and particularly to him. Because audiences have received him so enthusiastically, we could easily provide him with glowing reports. At this writing, Bernard has expressed interest in rejoining the other subjects at upcoming screenings of *Dirty Work* at other festivals.

Still, this particular experience with Bernard remains a sobering reminder of the power of the documentary-



after the thrill of being in a film wore off, complicated emotions might follow. And they did.

The night of our premiere screening in Athens, Georgia was the realization of a dream we had envisioned four years before—the film's title gleaming on the Georgia Theatre marquee, our family and friends filling the seats along with the subjects, who had by then all seen the film and enjoyed it, and their extended families. Yet minutes before the screening was to start, Bernard hadn't showed. We called him, hoping he was simply late. No, he said, he couldn't make it. He wouldn't elaborate as to why. All that seemed clear was that Bernard would tolerate the film, but not embrace it. We were crushed.

making process, and of the difficulty of controlling its effects. We can only do so much on our part to assure our subjects that the filmmaking process will be safe because the truth is, a lot of times it isn't, no matter how hard the filmmakers may try to make it so.

And in the end, that may have been our sternest lesson—the inescapable burden of telling someone else's story in your own words. Did you tell it right? And were you right to tell it? Not having sure answers to these questions might be the surest sign that while we're still young filmmakers, we're not quite new anymore. ▣

David Sampliner is a New York based documentary filmmaker and writer.

Opposite page: Darrell Allen is a septic tank pumper. **This page:** (left to right) *Dirty Work* directors Tim Nackashi and David Sampliner.



What's (still) Experimental?

IN 2004, THREE PROJECTS MAKE THE CUT

By Paul Boutin



For filmmakers, being experimental isn't as easy as it used to be. Fifty years ago, tossing aside Hollywood's conventions of narrative, acting, cinematography, and format exposed plenty of directions in which to push the envelope. Maya Deren challenged viewers by confusing them. Stan Brakhage manipulated his film by hand to create images never seen in the real world. Andy Warhol simply pointed his camera at the Empire State Building and left it running.

But what counts as experimental in 2004? Ideas that once stretched the boundaries of what a movie is have become mainstream fare at the multiplex. Out-of-order scenes, found (or supposedly found) footage, montages, collages, computer-processed film, unscripted actors, even unaware actors . . . all standard stuff now in Hollywood. Cinema verité has been taken lowbrow via reality TV and amateur video clips on the net. Digital and interactive video technologies, which once amazed both producers and audiences, have lost their novelty now that DVDs and multiplayer videogames are as common as soda pop.

In search of novel approaches to the medium, we dodged the current academic and in-crowd definitions of the "experimental film/video" genre, and went in search of a different, non-Establishment kind of experimentalism: Moving images that continue to probe the accepted relationships between artist, medium, and audience, and seek to break them. We came back with three completely different works—one is a live performance act, another a movie made up of other movies, and the third a narrative piece made not with a camera, but with a videogame.

The Live Act: Tracy and the Plastics

The woman onstage sings, almost shouts, into her microphone: "The city! Apocalypse!" But the early-1980s electronic drums and keyboards backing her voice come not from live musicians, but from two women projected onto a screen beside her. Wait . . . the other two women are also the same woman, who has made no attempt to disguise herself beyond a wig and a minor change of clothes as she stabs at a keyboard in one persona, or slaps her thigh (emitting a low-tech drum machine beat on the soundtrack) in the other.

The show doesn't go smoothly, though. The onscreen drummer challenges the singer's role as leader. The keyboard player complains that the band's name, Tracy and the Plastics, "upholds the historical hierarchy of a rock band," while arguing with the drummer at the same time. At one point, both onscreen players stop working on a new song to ponder "the prehistoric myth of the always-once-was, never-actually-is lesbian."

"Tracy" is Brooklyn resident Wynne Greenwood, as are her onscreen alter egos: Nikki the keyboardist, and Cola the

drummer. Greenwood studied just enough art history, screenwriting, and video production to quit school and start her own thing in Olympia, Washington—home to Courtney Love and the neo-punk Riot Grrl rockers of the 1990s. She created Tracy and the Plastics in 2001, recording videos and CDs as well as performing live.

After relocating to New York in 2003, Greenwood found herself one of the city's neo-new-wave stars of the city's burgeoning electronic counterculture. Along with other genre-bending performers such as Fischerspooner (a combination band and dance troupe whose badly lip-synched live performances and organized crowd-surfing are part of the act), Tracy and the Plastics' shows are designed to make audience members rethink not only the performers' roles, but their own.

"I like bodies of work that build a language and then talk back to that language," Greenwood says, taking a break between performing at the Whitney Museum in Manhattan and embarking on a coast-to-coast tour of music clubs—the kind that usually feature alt-rockers wielding real drums and guitars—to promote her new release *Culture for Pigeon*, a combination CD and DVD.

Just as electric guitarists learned to incorporate sonic feedback from their amplifiers into their music, Tracy plays off the mechanics of her DVD player. "There's a part in the show where I look out and say to someone in the audience, 'Can you pause that for a second?'" The video immediately freeze-frames—actually, it's a long scene that only *looks* like one paused frame.

"I take that moment to step out of the character," Greenwood explains. "When I pause the video, it's an acknowledgement that it *is* a video. I'm not trying to keep anything a mystery from them. I'm asking people to be aware of what's going on." Greenwood then explains to the audience that she's trying to establish a relationship with them, that the performance is something they're all in together. "I truly believe that if I can do this, anyone can do this. That sets up this inherent question: Why am I up here, and why are you guys watching me? What are you getting out of this? Let's create a relationship together."

Sure, we've seen socially underdeveloped folk singers and soon-to-be ex-lovers make the same plea, shortly before either literally or figuratively storming offstage. But Tracy—er, Greenwood—is different. She's more aware of and in control of the entire relationship than her audience, at least up to that point. "MTV expects their audience will participate in the market and buy records," she says. "I expect my audience will participate in the creation of a new kind of culture and create their own art, or their own empowered way of speaking to this medium of video."

Greenwood's actual songs and videos can be hard to follow. "My work tends to be pretty coded," she admits, both in words and onscreen. "But people tell me that they have an emotional reaction to it. Emotions make more sense than statements or

Opposite page: scenes from *Value Added Cinema*.

words." Sometimes, she just makes stuff up. Her 2001 CD, *Muscler's Guide to Videonics*, is illustrated with a video screenshot containing the subtitle: "Tracy means front in some language. When people call TRACY! It's a call to the front." (Tracy comes from a Gaelic word meaning "fighter," and doesn't mean "front" in any language Greenwood is aware of.)

By contrast, Greenwood, both in and out of her role as Tracy, strives to make her commentary with the boundaries between artist, medium, and audience anything but oblique. "I think the whole project is pretty obvious," she says. "Still, there've been a couple of people who actually asked, 'Why couldn't your band members be here?'"

The Movie about the Movies: Value-Added Cinema

The shot looks familiar: A group of friends in a bar, obviously actors, raise their beers in a toast. Suddenly, the scene changes completely. It's another bar, another happy gathering, a different brand of beer in their hands, but the toast continues without losing momentum, hopping from one bar to another in a seamless chorus of good cheer, good times, good friends . . . and clearly visible beer labels. But these aren't TV ads spliced together. They're scenes from big-



budget Hollywood movies, cleverly placed and usually paid for by beer makers' publicists.

Value-Added Cinema, produced by Steve Seid, video curator at the Pacific Film Archive, and Peter Conheim, a member of multimedia pranksters Negativland, is a forty-seven-minute montage composed of nothing but product placement ads—from nearly seventy feature films, edited into one seamless piece. Seid and Conheim scanned the scenes into a computer, and then edited them so that the scenes and their soundtracks tie into one another. Rachel Leigh Cook (*Josie and the Pussycats*) opens her McDonalds-logoed shower curtain and screams as the camera cuts to Edward Norton (*Fight Club*) sitting on the toilet, reading an Ikea catalog.

"A few people have been compelled to go shopping afterwards," Seid jokes. "But for most it has a more negative impact. A lot of people are overwhelmed. For some it's

almost nausea." That's the idea, of course. "We wanted to show how it's a seamless universe of products. In a certain way, the films are taking place inside of that," rather than the other way around.

Not that product placement is a new idea. "There have been product placements in films going back at least to the 1930s, but they were done more subtly then," he says. "[Publicist] Edward Bernays would go to the studios, representing an entire industry—say, the diamond industry. He'd say, 'You're having two characters get married here. Let's make it a diamond ring.' Or, 'Let's put the people at the party in fur coats.' I think at that point in time it was just making the products available," rather than bidding for spots.

Now, with product placement parts of the budget for most big flicks, Seid and Conheim want to raise awareness of their presence and effect. "It becomes a force that compromises the narrative and other aspects of the film to make the agencies happy," Seid says. "As you go from film to film to film, you're actually in the realm of commerce rather than of narrative or film."

To make its point, *Value-Added Cinema* is deliberately long, going on and on, well after it seems the producers should have run out of steam, and product shots. After seeing the piece, it may be hard not to reflect on every identifiable label or brand name in every movie you've ever seen. Even when products artfully advance the story, as when David Lynch uses beer brands to denote his characters' social standing in *Blue Velvet*, it's impossible not to notice what could be a paid placement that wasn't in the original script.

Seid and Conheim's piece has been making the rounds at festivals and in small theaters, but PBS and other broadcast outlets have balked at the daunting task of gaining legal clearance to use all seventy clips. "We didn't feel we needed to clear them, because we felt it was all a kind of intellectual quotation, to comment on their broad impact in society," says Seid. Potentially liable parties at movie houses and TV networks haven't been so glib about the work's artistic license, though, and have passed on showing it to larger audiences. Too bad—Seid and Conheim say they've got enough material saved up for another two hours.

The Virtual World: Anna

It looks like a demo for a videogame, or perhaps a computer animation short from years past. But the story is different: Along a tree-shaded path through a forest, a small girl trips and spills a handful of glowing objects into a small clearing. A crow eats most of them, but one survives and sprouts into a small green plant. As it grows, it is threatened by a deer, by weeds, and ever-changing weather. Like a ballet dancer, the plant arches its stem and waves its pair of arm-like leaves to show struggle, despair, or joy. Finally, it blooms into a

Lauren and Tracy (Wynne Greenwood) of Tracy and the Plastics.

brightly colored yellow and purple pansy with an almost human face.

The flower's adult joy is short-lived, though. Another human comes along and plucks it, causing it to shed grief and pollen as it's carried off. It dies, slowly, sadly, drooping in a vase filled with other wildflowers. But its tears don't fall in vain: The forest clearing is now abloom with dozens of other pansies.

Katherine Anna Kang's five-minute short, *Anna*, is one of few films ever to find struggle and tragedy in the life cycle of a wildflower. But more significantly, the entire piece takes place in a virtual world, created on a computer and animated using a relatively new technique called machinima. Rather than animating one frame at a time, or waiting hours for a scene to be "rendered" by a pricey bank of computers, machinima taps into a piece of standard videogame software, called a rendering engine, installed on the PC.

To create *Anna*, Kang used special software tools to create a set of actors, scenes, and a script of who moves where and when, then fed the resulting data into the rendering engine for the popular *Quake III Arena* game, which instantly played it at full speed on the computer screen. The result was saved to video. But since the "movie" is basically computer data describing the actors, scenes, and motion, it could just as well be downloaded to a viewer's computer, letting the viewer's own rendering engine run the story on their desktop or laptop computer at the highest video resolution possible.

Paul Marino, who runs the Machinima.com website devoted to the genre, says, "What makes machinima different is that we're creating a virtual set inside the computer. It's a setting with talent that is then captured for the sake of creating a narrative. With traditional computer animation, there's a lot more preparation that's not about the talent and the narrative." By relying on installed game software to do the work, most of those pieces are already there and ready to go. Best of all for budding moviemakers, machinima scenes can be viewed in real time as soon as they're created, and then adjusted over and over, without waiting around for the individual frames to be developed.

"The great advantage is that you don't have to have a mass number of artists or rendering farms"—the expensive arrays of computers used to generate the high-resolution graphics in motion pictures. "Anyone with a PC can get something like this done. Of course it depends how much time and talent you want to put into it," says Kang.

Creating a movie on a virtual set, with virtual actors and assets, gives machinima producers room to experiment on the cheap. "It gives you the freedom to take a camera at different angles and see how the light hits the flower," Kang says. "If you don't like it, you can click and drag to move the camera." By contrast, her former work in claymation made retakes exasperating. "You might even have to recreate the actual clay if it's not reflecting correctly. Then you have to

move the clay, and refilm it, and check the results. You go to the drawing board again and again and again." Changing the shininess of an object in machinima requires clicking and dragging a slider. Press play, and the scene replays in real time. Don't like it? Try again. No construction time or expendables lost.

But it's not the ease and cheapness that makes machinima unique. It's the fact that instead of just shooting a few scenes to create the illusion of another world, the machinima producer actually creates the world, and then captures a shot of it. Kang compares the genre to J.R.R. Tolkien's novels, which seem to be histories about a world that exists inside Tolkien's head. "Whenever there's a mountain or a cave in the book, you feel like you could go peek over the mountain or under the cave, and something would be there," she says. Using machinima, it's possible to actually put something there.

For some viewers, the richness of the story's world matters more than whether or not it's done with software. "There are kids to whom a videogame character is instinctively comfortable to get a story from," Marino says, so machinima artists don't feel compelled to focus on the photorealism of their work. Yet Kang, who spent three months working part-time with two other people to create *Anna*, says she wanted her piece to take viewers' minds out of the science-fiction-and-sorcery realm of many videogames. She deliberately scripted *Anna* to be slow-paced and graceful. "There's a lot of symbolism," she says. "It symbolizes life and death, although we're following the life cycle of a flower." The movie's message fits its experimental genre: What may seem like an inconsequential part of a larger world—say, a wildflower—has its own important story, even though that story is but a part of a larger world of interacting players.

Machinima is one example of how digital and interactive technologies have taken both artists and audiences in directions other than the tech inventors intended. Ten years ago, proponents of interactive media thought fans would enjoy the ability to modify the characters, sets, and action of a movie. Maybe there would be a slider to adjust how much violence they wanted to see. But today, it seems technology is most effective when it's used to serve skilled narrators, actors, directors, and cinematographers at what they already do.

Going forward, Kang thinks there's yet another possibility for machinima: Fans of a particular work might enjoy exploring the world that surrounds the script. They might do a little virtual tourism, celebrity-stalk the digitized characters, rather than trying to play producer. Fans who've watched Peter Jackson's *The Return of the King* enough times would be able to go exploring to see what Tolkien's mind placed beyond that mountain, she says. "There's a possibility for bringing your audience into your world in a way that hasn't been done before." ■

Paul Boutin is a contributing editor for Wired magazine and a technology columnist for Slate.



Like a Prayer

NATHANIEL DORSKY'S POETIC CINEMA INSPIRES DEVOTION

By Lisa Selin Davis

Nathaniel Dorsky tells me a story. "It's a cheap shot," he says. "But it might be a good way to begin your article."

It starts with Stephen Holden's February 11, 2000 New York Times review of Dorsky's films, which he described as being, "as close as movies can come to evoking the experience of lying on your back in the grass on a summer day, gazing through leaves at the clouds and letting your mind drift into the cosmos." Holden goes on to describe what he calls a perfect moment in Dorsky's film *Variations*: "A Safeway shopping bag voluptuously inflated by the breeze and tumbling along a sidewalk."

"Three days later I get a call from this woman from Dreamworks," says the sixty-year-old Dorsky, known to his friends as Nick. The director of *American Beauty*, Sam Mendes, wanted to see a copy of *Variations*, the woman from Dreamworks explained. Dorsky didn't have a print just then—he was retiming it after the New York screening where Stephen Holden had seen it. "But I told them, you can always rent it from Canyon Cinema when it's done."

The phone call sparked a debate among his friends and colleagues in the avant garde cinema world. Jerome Hiler, Dorsky's long-term partner, whom he identifies as, "Jerry, my lifetime whatever-you-call-it," urged him not to show

Dreamworks the film, for fear they would use his images without proper compensation. "I told him, no, that's why we're always so impoverished. Maybe they want to hire me to design a montage," Dorsky recalls.

He never heard back from Dreamworks, and doesn't know if the director ever saw the film, but six months later, *American Beauty* opened, and his phone began ringing again. "I get five phone calls from around the country saying, 'They ripped you off.'"

Whether or not they borrowed from Dorsky's film (the writer, Alan Ball, swore in his Oscar acceptance speech that he saw a plastic bag dancing by the World Trade Center in 1992) doesn't matter to him, for one simple reason. "The shot is meaningless," he says. "It has no character to it."

Besides the fact that the *American Beauty* image is captured on video, which can never evoke what Dorsky sees as the spiritual intermittence of film, the shot is not what he calls alchemical. "If you saw the shot from *Variations*, my shot has all this psychological nuance. This plastic bag circling around is courting other pieces of litter. It goes up to them, alongside them, nods to them. It twirls around as if in a skating rink. It has a deeply human quality to it."

An act of alchemy occurs when film mirrors and realigns us metabolically; when vision, language, and concept are all in balance. After forty years as a filmmaker, attempting



to express these ineffable ideas in film, Dorsky has translated his thoughts on and hopes for the cinema in a quiet, forty-page manifesto titled *Devotional Cinema* (Tuumba Press, 2003). Though he's flirted with mainstream cinema throughout his entire career, much the way that plastic bag flirted with litter, this book marks the first time Dorsky has expressed his true feelings about film.

The reason he has never told the truth before? "You can't communicate with people about films," he says. "When someone doesn't like a movie you like, you almost wonder, Who is this person?" We have all had that experience of shock when a film near and dear to us fails to move a friend, but Dorsky decided he could do more than try to persuade people to love the films he finds magical. He could explain, in what he calls a sort of scout manual, how to make cinema that is transformative.

Dorsky first noticed the transformative possibilities of film when he was nine years old, wiling away six hours at the Saturday matinee. When he was released into the sunlight, he writes in *Devotional Cinema*, "everything that had been familiar to me in my hometown, all its archetypes and icons, became eerie and questionable . . . I was trying my best to recover from the giant hole that had opened up in the middle of my head."

Dorsky calls this the post-film experience, something that happens when film is "an evocation of something meaningfully human." More than ten years later, after a screening of Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage in Italy* (1953),

Dorsky had another spiritual post-film experience. "I noticed that everybody was unusually available to everybody else," he writes. "The state of vulnerability it produces in the audience, this heartbreak, this not-knowing, is the catalyst that brings forth our renunciation and connects us to devotion."

By devotion, Dorsky doesn't necessarily mean religion or even spirituality. His films do not specifically take on sacred subject matter, though they do have a meditative and divine quality to them. "Film's physical properties seemed so attuned to our metabolism that I began to think of film as a metaphor, a direct and intimate model for our being," Dorsky writes. Film can "be an evocation of spirit, and become a form of devotion." Devotion, as Dorsky uses it, means a disruption in time and vision, a looking into and beyond yourself. When film "subverts our absorption in the temporal and reveals the depths of our own reality, it opens us to a fuller sense of ourselves and our world. It is alive as a devotional form."

Much like devotional art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in which religious subject matter was painted so that the spectator was inspired into meditation and worshipped with the piece, Dorsky hopes to make films that act as altar pieces. "You're sitting in front of it, but it produces in you a state of prayer," he says. "It's there to realign you, to open your heart and inspire you."

Dorsky's book details the process of using the formal elements of film—time, light, editing, self-symbol—to create a devotional work of art. First, film must be true to itself, respectful of its corporeal properties. He points to European cave art that uses the physicality of the cave as

Shots from Dorsky's short films *Alaya* (facing page) and *Triste* (this page).

part of the story depicted, or to Mozart's symphonies mirroring the human metabolism. The film medium must be in union with its subject matter to achieve transmutation.

The next ingredient is time: both the relative time from the first shot to the last, and what he calls eternal time, or nowness. Much like the Greek concepts of *chronos*—linear time, and *kairos*—loosely defined as the quality of time,

awakens your own aloneness, he says. A poetic film is when no one is looking and you're just you.

But film does something that poems can't: it focuses and affects your vision. So for a film to be a devotional work of art, it must reenact and call attention to how we see. Film's frames of light interrupted by invisible spaces of blackness reflect our own disjointed way of seeing. Our



Dorsky believes these two types of time must be present for film to be devotional. He refers to Carl Theodore Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) to illustrate this concept. "Each shot, while part of the progression of the narrative's temporality, is nevertheless absolutely present as a deep, vertical nowness."

If this seems vaguely Buddhist, it's no coincidence. Dorsky's influences range from the modern Americana of Disney to the ancient art of Haiku. In fact, Dorsky calls himself "a poet with cinema," and says his films have more in common with poetry than with mainstream cinema. "Written poetry has to do with disrupting the surface of things in such a way that it exposes your heart. It exposes the very poignancy of our being," he says. "The juxtaposition of one phrase with another with another, which all of the sudden brings tears to your eyes: that's the difference between absorption and awareness." In film, images are juxtaposed the way phrases are in poetry. A poetic film

vision, he says, is more like montage than it is like the pan or the tilt. "When we turn our heads we don't actually see a graceful continuum but a series of tiny jump cuts, little stills joined, perhaps, by infinitesimal dissolves." Too much camera movement or a refusal to accept intermittence by over-editing makes films too solid. He calls these films "an act of rudeness."

Mr. Dorsky doesn't see many mainstream films anymore (the last one he saw was David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* in 2001, which he described as "strong, disruptive, and slightly sadistic"). "I find the experience of going to modern films unpleasant," he says. "I hate the trailers, and it's too loud." In fact, he never uses sound in his own films. "The world is so noisy now, and so crowded and complex, so full of information and stimuli," he says. "That's why my films are silent: I'm letting people just quietly reunite with their

Dorsky's *Variations*.

own heart.”

If a silent film with little camera movement and careful, slow cutting sounds potentially tedious, well, it's not. Even the most MTV-saturated teenager could be won over by the meditative quality of a Dorsky film. The book works the same way his films do. That is, it's best to let an entire Dorsky film wash over you, and not try to make sense of it shot by shot. His images are rich, poignant, powerful . . . and small at the same time. A piece of plastic clamshell packaging opens and closes like a laughing mouth; a red rope ties a boat to a dock, bouncing slightly as the waves nudge at the beam; a man and a woman stand reflected in the windows of a jewelry store, deliberating over a necklace. Some shots go away too quickly, leaving you hungry for more, and some last a wee bit longer than you might like, making you slightly uncomfortable. This, of course, is part of the plan: to force you to accept your own discomfort, and become comfortable with it.

It may not seem like a prescription for Hollywood, but Dorsky believes avant garde cinema has heavily influenced mainstream cinema, just as mainstream cinema has heavily influenced Dorsky. He cites influences from Disney to Antonioni, John Ford to Yasujiro Ozu. He even had a stint in Hollywood in the 1970s, where he shot the B-movie *Revenge of the Cheerleaders* (also known as David Hasselhoff's first movie), and won an Emmy in 1967 for a documentary on Gauguin. He attended film school alongside Martin Scorsese at NYU in the 1960's. "I might have had a different life if I was on his film crew," he says. (He sent a copy of the book to Marty, but hasn't heard back.)

There's a relationship between the avant garde and mainstream cinema that didn't exist when Dorsky was starting out, a crossover that occurs organically as the radical fringes of filmmaking are co-opted or adopted by the mainstream. "It's not unlike a Darwinian evolution," he says. "There's an oddity which then is the origin of what's to be. It's only logical that out of the very periphery of things comes the actual seed for genuineness and change."

Dorsky doesn't mind the way avant garde techniques—the jump cut so radically used by Godard in *Breathless* or Luis Bunuel's *L'Age d'Or* (1930) non-linear stories—get snatched up by music video directors and advertising executives. The avant garde filmmakers he grew up with in 1960's New York City, like Jonas Mekas and Stan Brakhage, were all pioneers whose revolutionary filmmaking techniques can be detected in any commercial nowadays. "They took the eye candy aspect of all that," he admits. "They took everything that was flashy but meaningless, and they made the avant garde have to work harder to be genuine." The more art is used to see a product and not to open up our hearts, he says, the harder he tries to be real. "The only thing worth doing is being genuinely a poet of cinema."

In fact, the plastic bag blowing majestically in *Variations* was inspired by another film. A shot in Ozu's *A Hen in the Wind* shows a sequence of newspapers flying around in the same magical way. And even if the plastic bag from *American Beauty* does not achieve alchemy, doesn't have that meaningful human quality to it, Dorsky found something to identify with in the film.

"I think I am the person who's in that movie, who goes around making films about ephemeral moments of beauty," he says. "Of course, the actual person who does that is totally impoverished. You'll live in a one room apartment and have a car with 400,000 miles on it."

And then he tells me another story, a story about the avant garde affecting the mainstream.

"When all this was going on with *American Beauty* and everyone was saying I should sue them, I told this to Stan Brakhage. And Stan said, 'Do you know that the whole birth sequence in *Superman* comes from my film *Test of Light*? But you know what, Nick? When I was a little kid, running around Denver with my cape on, if someone told me one of my movies was going to affect a Superman movie, I would have been proud.'" Nathaniel Dorsky feels the same way. ■

Lisa Selin Davis is a freelance writer in New York, and author of the forthcoming novel *Belly*.

• Nathaniel Dorsky Selected Filmography (writer, director, producer)

The Visitation (2002, 16mm, color/silent, 18 min.)

Love's Refrain (2000/2001, color/silent, 22.5 min.)

Arbor Vitae (1999/2000, color/silent, 28 min.)

Variations (1992-1998, 16mm, color/silent, 24 min.)

17 Reasons Why (1985-1987, 16mm, color/silent, 19 min.)

Ariel (1983, 16mm, color/silent, 16 min.)

Hours for Jerome (Part 1 & 2, 1980-1982, 16mm, color/silent,

21 min. & 24 min.)

Triste (1974-1996, 16mm, color/silent, 18.5 min.)

Alaya (1976-1987, 16mm, color/silent, 28 min.)

Pneuma (1977-1983, 16mm, color/silent, 28 min.)

Summerwind (1965, 16mm, color/sound, 14 min.)

Ingreen (1964, 16mm, color/sound, 12 min.)

A Fall Trip Home (1964, 16mm, color/sound, 11 min.)

Collaborations

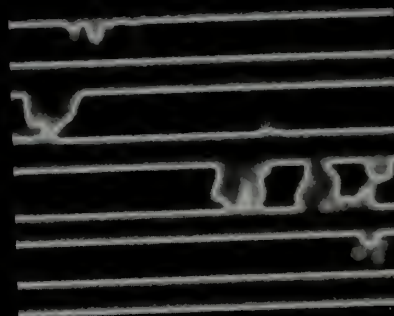
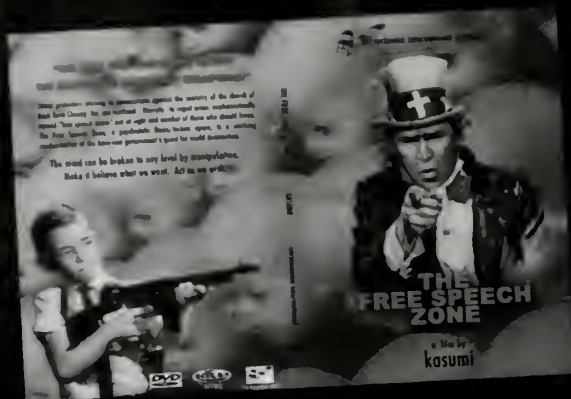
Night Waltz: the Music of Paul Bowles (2001) (cinematographer, editor)

The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg (1994) (editor)

What Happened to Kerouac? (1986) (editor)

Revenge of the Cheerleaders (1976) (cinematographer, producer, writer)

Gauguin in Tahiti (1967) (editor, cinematographer)



Abstract Asylums

EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA OUTLETS

By Margaret Coble

There are increasingly more and more local, regional, and national experimental-friendly or -focused film festivals and screening venues these days, though, admittedly, still not as many as those for more “accessible” genres of independent film like narrative and documentary work. But beyond these more traditional avenues of exposure, what other national outlets exist for experimental filmmakers? We searched high and low, and for this article have chosen to focus on three such outlets that are doing something innovative and interesting to serve the experimental film community.

The iotaCenter

Its focus may not apply to everyone working in experimental film, but for those to whom it does, the iotaCenter is an invaluable resource, advocate, and outlet. Subtitled “The Center for Abstraction in Media Art,” the iotaCenter is a nonprofit arts organization based in Los Angeles “dedicated to preserving and promoting the art of light and movement,” according to its website. Founded in 1994 by pioneering abstract computer animation artist Larry Cuba (along with film artists Sara Petty and Roberta Friedman), the Center seeks to build a community of contemporary

artists working within a wide range of techniques and nomenclature—often referred to as “visual music,” “video synthesis,” or “abstract animation,” amongst other myriad titles—which Cuba feels share a common aesthetic goal.

“Our art form is at the intersection of abstraction, animation, and music, whether that impulse is expressed in film, video, or special devices designed for live performance and installation,” Cuba explains, clarifying that the Center doesn’t deal with experimental film as a genre, per se, but rather as one of many technologies employed in the making of such art.

To accomplish its mission of promoting and supporting work of this nature as a singular art form, the Center has a four-pronged structure, which encompasses research and publication, film preservation, exhibition and distribution, and community development.

In terms of research and publication, the Center houses a study center in Culver City, California, noted as the world’s

This page (clockwise): (top) DVD sleeve art for *Free Speech Zone* by Kasumi; DVD cover for *Synesthetics* by Kasumi; *Snack on Art’s Naked for TV*; (bottom) *The Flickerflash* by Brett Simon; *Le Silence est en Marche* by Pierre Yves Cruaud. Opposite page: *Rumble* (1975) by Jules Engel.

largest collection devoted to abstraction in film, video, and performance art. Begun with materials collected in thirty years of research by Dr. William Moritz, the late, world-renowned expert in the field, the library has grown through gifts from artists, collectors, and scholars. Iota's history project continues this research by expanding the collection with new purchases of materials as well as video archival of relevant interviews and lectures on the topic. The final goal of this project is to compile and publish the historical information as an online database, accessible to all.

Most relevant to filmmakers working within this genre today is the Center's exhibition and distribution efforts. IotaCenter has curated several traveling screening series called KINETICA, which have brought the historical work of artists archived in their collection alongside that of contemporary artists working in the field to audiences around the country and the globe. KINETICA 2 was a long-overdue retrospective of influential avant-garde artist Oskar Fischinger's films; KINETICA 3 focused on the work of Hy Hirsh and other artists from the 50s; and KINETICA 4's theme was the psychedelic and spiritual films of the 60s. All of these series had contemporary components that complemented the theme and exposed new artists. And, in addition to these exhibition opportunities, the Center distributes all of the KINETICA programs as well as sells individual works from the genre via the Center's online store.

In every aspect of what it does, the IotaCenter works to foster the growth of a worldwide community—a network of people and resources relevant to the unique artform it celebrates. Its website, active listserv, and email newsletter, seem its most effective tools in this endeavor, allowing artists and aficionados of “the art of light and movement” to connect with each other, learn more of the history of the art form, and promote—as well as hopefully distribute and sell—their own works.

For more information, visit www.iotacenter.org.

Snack On Art

It's not terribly uncommon for experimental filmmakers and video artists to get their work shown on local public/cable access television in their own hometowns, but what video artist/musician/poet Constant has to offer

with his weekly Brooklyn based program is a bit larger in scale—and exclusively focused on experimental work.

Twice a week, his twenty-eight-minute “Snack On Art” show is broadcast to more than 800,000 viewers (his website claims) throughout the metropolis of New York City via public access television, showcasing nothing but experimental work from film/video artists around the country, and often, the world.

Begun in 1997, the show evolved out of the Haitian-born artist's own need to find an outlet for his work. “Growing up in New York City, in the East Village, in the 80s, spend-

ing a lot of time with that whole punk rock movement, there was that do-it-yourself ethic,” he explains. “And being an artist, I just got fed up with the gallery world.” After taking a course in video editing—which included an introduction to the concept of public access by the director of the Manhattan Neighborhood Network—a light bulb went off in Constant's head, and “Snack On Art” was born. “At that very instant my mind just went, k-bing, this is the perfect venue for this art form. And it was a great way for me to network and have contact with other people's work.”

After putting together his website—another thing he didn't know how to do until he took a course at Brooklyn Cable Access TV (BCAT)—Constant put out the call to experimental artists around the country and world to submit their short-length work to him for broadcast. “The website, that was the key,” he says. Work came flooding in from around the world, plenty to keep him busy. He'd edit it all together—“no moderator or host, video take[s] center stage,” his website proclaims—often spending six to nine hours a weekend to ready his show.

But a little over a year ago, Constant became a father, and his free time evaporated. “I just don't have the time now,” he says. “So I came up with a new concept, like a reality-TV show: reality video art. I ask the artists to make a complete episode, curate it. Some of the artists get nervous when they see the word “curate” . . . but the whole idea is to make the show flow easier, and to deconstruct TV a bit. The artists curate, get the art from their friends in their community, and I will just play the tape without touching it. And that way, it will be more exciting every week.”

Thus far, the response has been good, but Constant is looking for more participation. “I'm always looking for



other artists to get involved, who'll come on board and help with this. I'm also hoping to link up with other cable access shows around the country."

For more information, visit www.snackonart.org.

Microcinema International

Microcinema International is a multi-faceted small business that grew out of founder Joel Bachar's "Independent Exposure" touring mini-festival and his own production company, Blackchair Productions. Originally based in Seattle but now working out of San Francisco, with a branch office in Houston, Texas, Microcinema offers makers of experimental film and video an innovative exhibition and distribution framework that makes use of their extensive website.

"Our level of commitment to experimental film and video makers is 110%," Bachar exclaims emphatically. "In the early 90s, I used to make experimental films on Super 8 film and hi-8 video. The very reason we began the 'Independent Exposure' series in 1996 is that there were not enough venues presenting experimental works, and especially experimental video works."

From that original mini-cinema program in Seattle, "Independent Exposure" has grown to an international force that has screened in over forty-one countries around the globe.

Bachar then realized the need for a means to distribute and sell the work they were exhibiting. "*The Blackchair DVD Collective* is the sales/distribution medium that we use to get these aforementioned works into the marketplace." Blackchair produces and releases compilations of the "Independent Exposure" series, as well as a single-artist focused series, the Blackchair DVD Sessions. "In addition to those titles on our own label, we also are picking up many titles on other so-called micro-labels," he adds. "Ultimately, we strive to be the preeminent collection of the international moving image arts on DVD."

A lofty goal, perhaps, but one look at their website confirms they are well on their way, as it is an almost overwhelming—though thoroughly well-organized—headquarters for all that Microcinema encompasses. They offer a newsletter, a venue locating/networking page, full information about "Independent Exposure," and have even archived some interviews with featured artists. Their international database is not only a historical record of over 800 short films and videos they've screened since their 1996 inception, but also contains films and compilations available for purchase from their Microcinema label. The DVD Shop is easily searchable and offers the option of retail purchase as well as educational/library rights or theatrical/revenue-generating licensing of many titles.

Though not a co-operative, Microcinema is pro-artist. Not only are they starting to pay royalties—for screenings, TV broadcast, VHS/DVD and internet sales—but they also offer non-exclusive distribution deals. "We feel that our niche market actually benefits from non-exclusivity," Bachar says. "It lowers the risk for filmmakers and for us and allows the filmmaker great flexibility." ■

For more information, visit www.microcinema.com.

Margaret Coble is a New Orleans based freelance writer, DJ, and film enthusiast.

She helps organize Reel Identities: The New Orleans Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Film Festival, and is the assistant coordinator for the annual Michigan Women's Music Festival.

Additional Noteworthy Outlets Canyon Cinema

Based in San Francisco, this selective national distributor was founded in 1961 as a co-op and remains today a democratic, artist-run organization with 360 current members worldwide, distributing over 3,700 experimental and independent films and videos. The co-op returns more than forty percent of their gross income to the filmmakers they distribute.

www.canyoncinema.com

Film-Makers' Cooperative

Though not exclusively focused on experimental work, this New York based distribution co-op is the largest archive and distributor of independent and avant-garde films in the world with 5,000 works in their collection. Begun in 1962, they formed in protest to the selective system of other distributors, determined to be non-exclusive in their process, which they remain to this day, while still returning sixty percent of rental fees to their artists.

www.film-makerscoop.com

Video Data Bank

Founded in 1976 and operating out of the Art Institute of Chicago, VDB is a highly selective distributor of videotapes by and about contemporary artists, seventy-five percent of which are experimental or documentary in nature, and twenty-five percent of which consist of interviews with artists. Their collection spans 1,500 tapes and is available for institutional rental and purchase, as well as individual purchase.

www.vdb.org

Electronic Arts Intermix

Founded in New York City in 1971 as one of the first nonprofits dedicated to the support of video as an art form, they distribute 3,000 new and historical works of experimental media art by more than 185 artists.

www.eai.org

Peripheral Produce

"One-stop shopping for all your experimental cinematic needs." Peripheral Produce grew out of a mini-cinema series in Portland, Oregon in 1996 and now produces the PDX Film Festival. Originally a videotape distributor of selected experimental short works, they've now added DVD collections from their history to their videotape distribution.

www.rodeofilmco.com/peripheralproduce

Post Video Art

An alternative screening venue in cyberspace, Post Video Art is a film/video streaming site that "offers an outlet where artists can develop an audience, as well as connect with others in the video art/experimental filmmaking community."

www.post-videoart.com

Moving Pictures

RUDY BURCKHARDT'S IMAGES STILL RESONATE

By Lynne Sachs

Rudy Burckhardt

by Phillip Lopate, with an essay by Vincent Katz,
(Harry N. Abrams Books, July 2004)

For over twenty years, writer Phillip Lopate was lucky enough to call artist and experimental filmmaker Rudy Burckhardt (1914-1999) a friend. An afternoon visit to Burckhardt's Chelsea loft would usually include a cup of tea or a bottle of beer and a home cooked meal. In his new book, *Rudy Burckhardt*, a portrait of Burckhardt that includes over 100 of his photographs, Lopate poignantly remembers the lively conversation, the smell of good food, and the art he saw inside the quintessentially urban live-work space of this profoundly committed artist.

Lopate writes: "You might take a quick gander at a painting he was working on in the backroom, or some photographs on the wall: the long, paint-spattered table usually held an editing set-up with take-up reels for his film of the moment, with a shot list beside it and a paper-back book, face down, where he'd left off reading." For most filmmakers today, our medium is too often

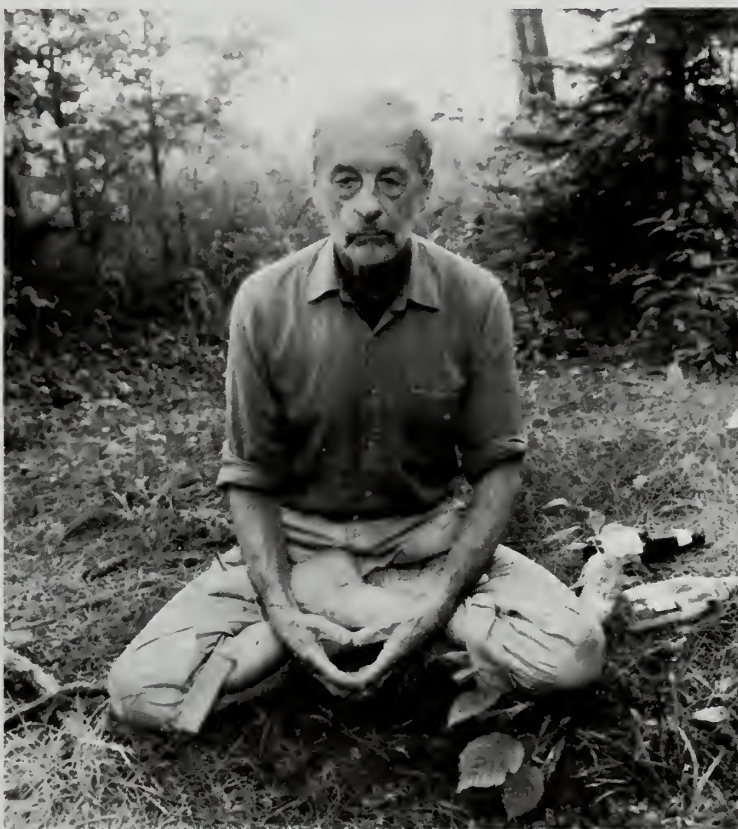
sequestered from the other arts, while Burckhardt, it seems, relished in the paint under his fingernails.

Rudy Burckhardt is an insightful, frank, and compassionate character study of this mostly unheralded Swiss-American artist. Lopate interweaves astute interpretations of Burckhardt's films and photographs with a fascinating and at times intimate narrative of his youth in Europe and his adult life

Larry Rivers, and Red Grooms. Without an in-depth study of the work of Rudy Burckhardt there would be a gap in the canon of American photography and experimental film. However, Lopate's book, he says, is "not so much spotless objectivity as the promotion of a more complex understanding of Rudy Burckhardt, by exploring a life resonant in enigmas, and by trying to interpret the rich body of images he left us."

Keeping that in mind, Lopate observes that, even as a very young artist, Burckhardt was always fascinated by both the harshness and beauty of life in a modern city. "Walking and taking pictures became inextricably linked [for him],"

Lopate writes. A nineteen-year-old in 1933, Burckhardt obediently traveled from his protected, pristine Geneva family home to study medicine in London. Quickly distracted from the classroom by the shockingly harsh realities of the Depression-burdened metropolis, young Rudy was drawn to the slums, the men and women standing in line for a meal, all the daunting signs of poverty that other members of the bourgeoisie had chosen to ignore. Burckhardt himself wrote of these times in his memoir collection, *Mobile Homes*. With camera in hand, he was prepared to witness life at



in New York City. Burckhardt, Lopate observes, was the primary photographer of the maverick 1940s New York School—one of the most celebrated artistic circles in the history of Twentieth Century American art, putting him in company with the likes of painters Willem de Kooning, Alex Katz,

its most difficult, and even made the claim of being "elated by the smell of urine."

Even with documentary filmmaking rapidly growing during and after WWII, what was then known as 'reality based' filmmaking had yet to find a definitive identity in the worlds of art, academe,

Self-Portrait, Searsmont, Maine, 1984.

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TOTALLY INDEPENDENT

or popular commercial culture. Robert Flaherty was traipsing around the sub-arctic giving earnest, perhaps deceptive, drama to the lives of its native people. John Grierson was working with the backing of the entire Canadian Film Board. And Dziga Vertov was imbuing his each and every breathtakingly graphic composition with a political imperative. In the larger American cities, it was becoming more and more common to see a photographer with a small motion picture camera tucked under his or her arm, patiently waiting for a disheveled woman to turn her face in such a way, or the light to pass across a cement skyscraper.

This entourage of committed artists, which also included Walker Evans, Robert Frank, and Helen Levitt, perceived "the street as the meeting-place of class contradictions, aesthetic anomalies and historic eras (modernism versus flea market agora)," writes Lopate. In the first of Burckhardt's impressionistic film documentaries from this time, Lopate notes, the work reveals to us an "acceptance of the obdurate, sadly loving world, an amazing facility for composition, perfect use of natural light and a tactful holding of a shot for just long enough." For Burckhardt, the evolution from photographer to filmmaker was inevitable, and in the end, he came to feel that filmmaking is what he did best.

After a series of precise analyses of Burckhardt's elegant black and white photography, Lopate turns to his movies, starting with *The Climate of New York* (1948) and *How Wide is Sixth Avenue* (1945), where Burckhardt provides a "gentle, slightly melancholy observation of ordinary people caught moving, from close-up and from far away." Reading Lopate's book inspired me to watch again several of Burckhardt's films with a new, better-informed eye. For example, watching *Under the Brooklyn Bridge* (1953), I witnessed for the first time through Rudy's lens, a gaggle of gleeful, naked

boys frolicking in the East River, with its swirling, treacherous currents.

In *Default Averted* (1975), I more clearly recognized Burckhardt's compassionate artistry in response to New York City's brush with bankruptcy. As Lopate writes: "In it we see buildings being demolished, the city under siege from snow and creditors all to the music of Thelonious Monk and Edgar Varese." Watching Burckhardt's series of Times Square films, produced during this fragile era in the city's history, gave me the chance to relish his astonishing and loving celebration of life at its most fraught, edgy, and exuberant. Even after thirty years, the colors that he captured seem as spectacular and tawdry as ever. It is this exquisite sensitivity to all things visual, especially the lines, tensions, and excitement of an urban landscape that would eventually serve as inspiration to another generation of reality-based shooters such as Peter Hutton, Nathaniel Dorsky [see story pg 40], and Warren Sonbert.

In the realm of the movies, Burckhardt's love of the image remained strictly "amateur," rarely availing him any monetary compensation. It wasn't until the 1960s, when America experienced the awakening of a transgressive, fluid, hippie culture, that Burckhardt's irreverent, bohemian oeuvre began to garner attention. Young people searching for an art form that was free and unadorned embraced his "underground, pro-sex, anti-Hollywood revolution," observes Lopate. Burckhardt was willing to stand before his own camera, boney and nude; he was spiritually bemused by the shapely beauty of a mushroom in the dark, wet soil. It was at this

point that Burckhardt began to identify with the Experimental Filmmaking movement in America that had grown out of Dada, Surrealism, and chance performances (based on the ancient theory of I-Ching).

At times raunchy, often child-like, purposefully naive, and intensely identifiable with a poetic impulse, Burckhardt's narrative experiments pushed the boundaries of expectation in absolutely every direction. Indeed his chaotic and inventive story-films integrated an outlandish selection of film tricks that hark back to the days of George Melies, the magician and pioneer of early cinema. Intensive collaborations with his poet friends Taylor Mead, Edwin Denby, and John Ashbery contributed to the feeling that Burckhardt's social life was an intricate part of his creative life.

In this rich, stimulating environment, Burckhardt's six-decade commitment to all forms of artistic expression was rigorous, disciplined, and far-reaching. Seemingly disinterested in spinning a love of the

moving image into a full-blown career, he never referred to himself as a director, but rather simply as an artist, a twenty-four-hour participant in the creative process. His wife Yvonne describes it simply in Lopate's book: "He could photograph, paint and film all in one day."

During the 1950's, he collaborated with the enigmatic, eventually renowned, Queens, New York artist Joseph Cornell on *What Mozart Saw on Mulberry Street* and *Mulberry Street*, two short film masterpieces of color and lyricism, each also a loving homage to the wonders of the city they both called home. Today, these two works along with fifty-two others are in the permanent collection at The New York Filmmakers Cooperative. Over the decades,

retrospectives of his work have been shown in museums, film festivals, and cooperatives. And with the publication of Lopate's remarkable portrait, we can only hope for a resurgence of Rudy Burckhardt film screenings.

As an experimental filmmaker with an intimate relationship to documentary, I am heartened by the life-long relationship Burckhardt had to



exploring the world around. Equally enthralled by the experience of lugging my heavy 16mm camera across town to witness the colors of the morning sun, and by the splendid collaborations I have had with other artists, I am drawn to the methods of working that were so integral to Burckhardt's process.

And now, after finishing *Rudy Burckhardt*, I find myself presented with a rather intriguing dilemma. Do I rush over to the Filmmakers' Coop to watch Burckhardt's *Haiti*, *Caterpillar*, *Square Times*, *Default Averted*, *Doldrums*, *Central Park in the Dark*, *Night Fantasies* and *Indelible*?

Or, do I pull out my Bolex and head for Times Square? ■

Lynne Sachs is a New York filmmaker and writer who produces experimental documentaries, installations, and most recently a web project (www.house-of-drafts.org).

RUDYburckhardt



Left: The book's cover; right: A View from Brooklyn II, 1953.

Godfather Godard

OVERDUE BIOGRAPHY OF A REBEL FILMMAKER

By Neil Kendricks

Godard: Portrait of the Artist at Seventy,
By Colin MacCabe
(Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2004)

Without a doubt, Jean-Luc Godard holds an esteemed spot as a true innovator in film history alongside such cinematic giants as Serge Eisenstein and Orson Welles. What is surprising, though, is that *Godard: Portrait of the Artist at Seventy* by Colin MacCabe, is the first comprehensive biography of the Swiss-born director who first drew serious attention in 1959 with his savvy noir feature debut, *Breathless*. What took so long for Godard to finally get his due? Colin MacCabe, a former collaborator of Godard, does his level best to make up for the previous oversight, regarding Godard's films as being "amongst the most important European art of the second half of the twentieth century."

Indeed, Godard is certainly among the most revolutionary filmmaker of the post-war era, with his ability to expand film grammar, artistic scope, and cinematic possibilities through various stylistic choices in *Breathless*, and his satirical vision of endless traffic jams representing French bourgeois culture gone mad—a climax of guerilla revolutionaries and cannibalism in his 1967 apocalyptic masterpiece, *Week-end*.

In his early days, Godard spun urban poetry about "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola," and today, the lasting impact of Godard's work is still being felt. Many who have marveled at the carefully concocted, existential crime narratives of *Breathless* and *Band à part* (also known as *Band of Outsiders*) can see

that Godard laid the ground work for Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, and just about every indie-minded filmmaker focused on speaking the dominant language of today's popular culture. After all, Tarantino paid the ultimate homage to Godard by naming his production company, A Band Apart.

While most devout cinephiles are in the know, many of today's film students are probably more familiar with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas than with Jean-Luc Godard, making MacCabe's book all the more vital and necessary. The author builds a convincing argument about Godard's essential contributions through much of this 432-page tome, which also features an endless stream of minutiae. Subsequently, much of it is insightful and fascinating; other parts, tedious.

The book takes its time getting to Godard's early years as a twenty-something film critic firing off a literary call to arms for a new cinema, along with

known as the "cinema of quality."

The major problem with *Portrait* is that MacCabe—who worked on two of Godard's commissioned pieces, *2 x 50 ans du cinema français* (2 x 50 Years of French Cinema) (1995) and *The Old Place* (1998), with the filmmaker and his partner Anne-Marie Mieville—is prone to going off on lengthy tangents that could have easily been condensed into footnotes or summed up in brief anecdotes. For instance, early passages of this hefty volume examine in detail the rise of Protestantism in relation to Godard's family line. Granted, the filmmaker's family history is deeply linked to his Protestant background, but what makes Godard important isn't so much his family's religious heritage as the actual work that he produced, both as a critic and film director who helped to spearhead the French New Wave movement.

Strangely enough, MacCabe sometimes reduces his mention of Godard's major works (*Week-end*) in favor of lavishing more space on lesser works (*One Plus One*, 1968). This book will undoubtedly be compared to Antoine de Baecque and Serge Toubiana's excellent 2000 biography, *Truffaut: A Biography*, though that volume had the good sense to stay

... the reader tumbles down the surreal rabbit hole of Godard's life ...

his passionate compatriots, Francois Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, and the other young Turks at the influential French film journal, *Cahiers du Cinema*. These film critics-turned-filmmakers would eventually trade the vitriolic ink of their pens for the more lyrical sweep of the camera to become auteurs with distinctly fresh, contemporary views. They were anything but the prodigy of the more traditional and heavily censored films dominating the French film industry during that period,

focused on the most compelling details of Truffaut's life and filmmaking, thereby illuminating the larger context that gave rise to the director's outstanding body of work.

Despite its perhaps not always compelling moments, the book does offer a genuinely comprehensive account of how Godard's life has always been intertwined with, if not afflicted by, art. Throughout the book, MacCabe shows Godard's creative process in a near-constant state of flux. One moment he is

inspired, the next he declares to his crew that he has no ideas at all. Likewise, his films reveal an artistic and evolving point of view and personal beliefs, particularly in works such as *Historie(s) du cinema* (1998), and 2001's critically acclaimed *Éloge de l'amour*, which mixes gorgeous black-and-white cinematography with the highly saturated color palette of digital video.

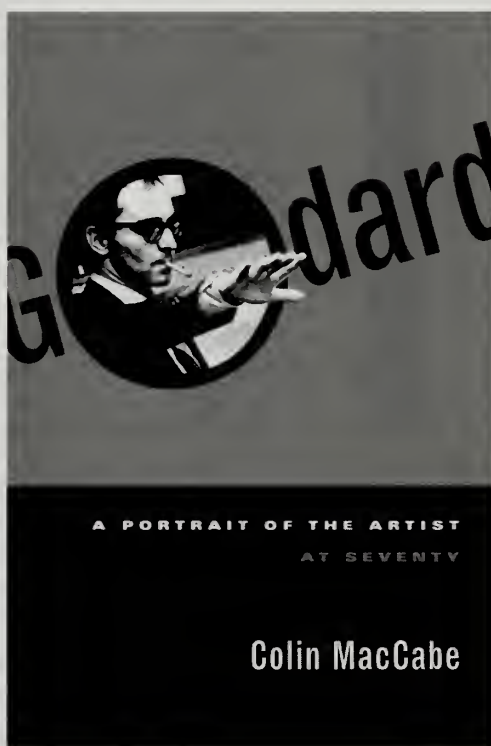
Godard's more recent experiments with moving image may not have the emotional and aesthetic impact of his prolific period during the 1960s, when he was making an average of two feature films and one short per year. But unlike many filmmakers half his age, Godard is still growing as an artist truly dedicated to his medium. To wit, MacCabe succeeds in illustrating this fact by refusing to gloss over some of Godard's more obscure, conceptually daring video pieces.

MacCabe's book does a nice job of charting the trajectory of Godard's life from early childhood and adolescence to his young adult years and beyond, which includes young Godard's chronic habit of stealing, and his reputation in school as a prankster who loved to "play the fool." MacCabe also makes short yet memorable pit stops during the years when Godard first got his foot in the film industry door, notably as a publicist for 20th Century Fox, then as an editor of short animal films for producer Pierre Braunberger. Braunberger would eventually produce Godard's 1962 film, *Vivre sa vie* (*My Life to Live*).

From there, Godard eventually went on to make a string of short films, ranging from his twenty-minute documentary of the building of a dam, *Operation béton* (*Operation Concrete*) (1955), to his first stabs at constructing fictional narratives with *Une femme coquette* (1956), and his first 35mm film, *Charlotte et Veronique, ou Tous les garçons s'appellent Patrick*, the

following year.

When the book stays on track, MacCabe paints a stimulating picture of how Godard's life unfolds as a journey from his early interests in writing and painting to his ultimate love of filmmaking. During its most engaging chapters, *Godard: Portrait of the Artist at Seventy* sheds new light on the filmmaker's influences and his fruitful collaborations, which include his tumultuous relationship with his first wife and the leading lady of many of his early films, Anna Karina (real



name: Hanne Karin Bayer). Also, his introduction to Maoist political discourse via his second wife, the actress Anne Wiazemsky, who starred in his 1967 film, *La Chinoise* and 1970's *Vladimir et Rosa*, which Godard made with his one-time collaborator Jean-Pierre Gorin. The details of his meeting and courtship of Karina, which include how they were often at war with another, are striking. The emotional fallout of their stormy marriage and a miscarriage that left Karina unable to conceive again provoked the

Danish actress—who remains the iconic face of Godard's best known films—to make several failed suicide attempts prior to the couple's eventual divorce.

It wouldn't be too far of a stretch to see the parallels between their troubled relationship and Godard's frequent themes of "death and the impossibility of love," best exemplified in *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*) (1963), his brilliant and moving look at marital breakdown against the backdrop of a film in production. MacCabe downplays this art-imitating-life connection in the book, though smartly includes a statement by Godard collaborator, cinematographer Raoul Coutard, who referred to *Le Mépris* (which starred Brigitte Bardot) as "the most expensive postcard a man has ever sent to his wife."

Regardless of their devastating conflicts as husband and wife, the director-actress partnership between Godard and Karina remains one of the most prolific and powerful collaborations in film history, leaving in its wake such masterworks as *Une femme est une femme* (*A Woman is a Woman*) (1961), the previously mentioned *Bande à part* (*Band of Outsiders*), and the futuristic *Alphaville* and *Pierrot le fou* (both 1965).

Throughout the book, the reader tumbles down the surreal rabbit hole of Godard's life, complete with cameos from Jean-Paul Sartre, Brigitte Bardot, and the Rolling Stones. But all of Godard's rich experiences eventually filter back to his work and driving passion to capture life through one film after another. At its best, *Godard: Portrait of the Artist at Seventy* provides an unprecedented and insightful look into the life and legend of one of cinema's greatest visionaries. ■

Neil Kendricks is a San Diego-based artist, filmmaker, and writer currently working on his latest short films, *Cipher* and *Duct Tape*, among other creative projects.

DVD Studio Pro 2.0

UPGRADE TO A SUPERIOR AUTHORIZING PROGRAM

By Greg Gilpatrick

Just like Final Cut Pro, Apple's DVD Studio Pro became an emblem of the independent digital filmmaker almost immediately after it was first released. Before DVD Studio Pro, the only option for professional quality DVD authoring was software that cost thousands of dollars and in most cases, could only be used through expensive DVD authoring service bureaus. DVD Studio Pro gave independent filmmakers a DVD authoring solution that worked on their Mac, but it was also difficult to learn and much of its functionality relied on other programs like Photoshop.

Now, Apple offers DVD Studio Pro 2.0, a completely rewritten version of the program. Between DVD Studio Pro's history as a trailblazing DVD program for independent mediamakers and competition from the likes of Adobe's Encore DVD, you might expect that this new version would be a more intuitive and user-friendly way to create professional DVD videos—and you'd be right.

For those unfamiliar with the terminology, DVD authoring is the process of converting video to DVD, along with additional features like interactive menus, commentary audio, and subtitles. Whereas Apple's low-cost iDVD is an authoring program with a limited feature set, DVD Studio Pro stands apart because it offers professional features like subtitles, complete control over menu design, and the mastering of files for mass duplication of DVDs. Feature-wise, this new version of DVD Studio Pro differs from the previous version (DVD Studio Pro 1.0) in its interface and ease of use.

Previous versions of DVD Studio

Pro were not designed with much ease of use in mind. For instance, they required the separate purchase of Adobe Photoshop to design menus. Subtitles had to be created in a separate application and then imported into DVD Studio Pro—a complicated,



unintuitive task. In short, previous versions of DVD Studio Pro made things difficult and complicated.

For all the problems with DVD Studio Pro version 1, it did do some things right. It cooperated fairly well with Final Cut Pro, making it relatively easy to transfer a video from Final Cut Pro to DVD Studio Pro. You could even set scene markers in Final Cut Pro that DVD Studio Pro could understand and use as chapter markers on the disk (where the video goes when you use the Next or Previous Track button on your DVD player's remote control).

Much of the DVD authoring process involves creating the opening menus of your disk. A DVD is not required to have a menu, and it is unlikely that anybody is going to watch your DVD solely to see your menus. But menus are important. The

main menu is the first thing the viewer sees when they put your disk in the player, and first impressions are always important. An attractive and easy to navigate menu may not make someone love your movie, but an ugly and frustratingly complex one may make them not want to watch your movie at all. DVD Studio Pro 2.0 doesn't make it impossible to create an unattractive or needlessly complex menu, but it does make it easy to design menus with still pictures, videos, and text. Now that menus can be designed and edited inside DVD Studio Pro, it is much easier to make aesthetic or practical menu choices and changes.

The most impressive thing about menu creation in DVD Studio Pro 2.0 is how easy it is to create a button out of a video clip. In previous versions of the program, you had to composite video clips together in After Effects and bring in the final composite video into DVD Studio Pro. The new version acts as a mini-compositing tool that allows you to layer video clips and still images together into menus. This process alone makes the upgrade of DVD Studio Pro worth the cost, and is the single most important update in the program.

As much as the menu process is improved, there is one thing I find disappointing. The menu palette lets you create text to describe each button but there is no control over font, color, size, or any other parameter you would expect from any other design-oriented program. When designing menus with text involved, you might then want to consider using Photoshop to design the text and bring that in as your background image. DVD Studio Pro 2.0 can still import menus designed completely inside Photoshop.

Importing video is more flexible in this version of DVD Studio Pro. Just like the previous versions, DVD Studio Pro 2.0 interacts nicely with Final Cut Pro. Previously, you had to

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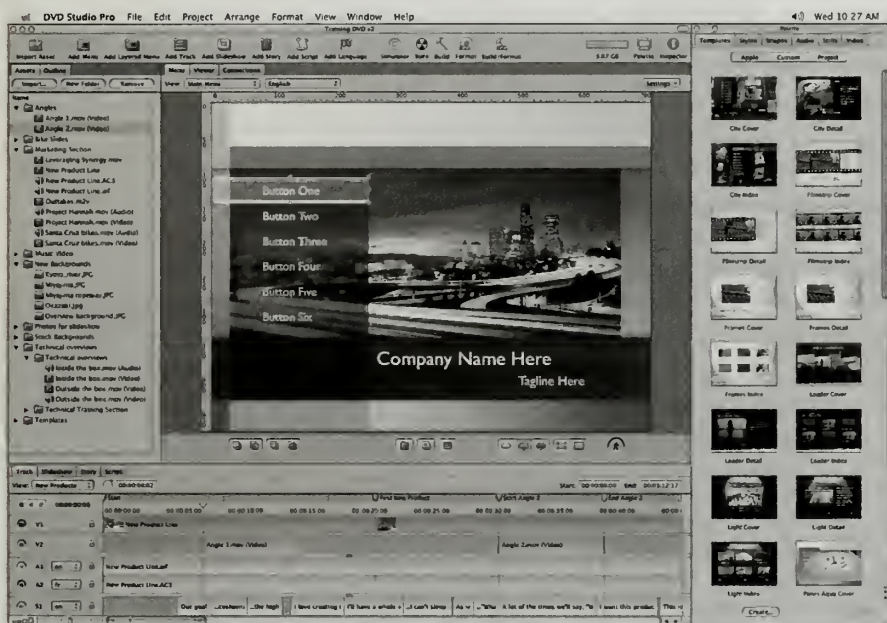
use a QuickTime plug-in to create the MPEG 2 video for your DVD. Now, there are multiple ways to bring video into DVD Studio Pro. There is Compressor, a specialized video compression program from Apple that is included with both Final Cut Pro and DVD Studio Pro. Compressor is similar to Discreet's excellent Cleaner program, with the exception that Compressor is designed only for turning video into either Quicktime format for the web, or MPEG 2 for DVDs.

Final Cut Pro has a menu option to send your edit directly to Compressor. I find Compressor a bit too slow and limited for regular creation of video for the internet, but it

Two-Pass VBR is a time-consuming process, however, and will make video encoding take significantly longer.

The alternate method for importing video into DVD Studio Pro is to open QuickTime video clips directly in the program and then convert them to DVD-playable MPEG-2's when the DVD is being formatted for burning to a disk. This is a handy method for the small clips that get used as backgrounds and buttons in menus.

DVD Studio Pro allows you to have up to thirty-two different subtitle tracks. In the previous version, all subtitles had to be created in a separate application. Not only was it annoying to work in a separate application, but I also found Subtitle Editor to be



does a fine job for the occasional DVD author—although you should expect to leave your computer alone for an hour or two when you're converting a video, that's over an hour long. One technical improvement is the introduction of a compression technique called Two-Pass Variable Bit Rate (VBR) encoding. This technique analyzes the video clip and decides what parts of the video can use less data, making space for the more complex parts of the video.

buggy and prone to crashing. DVD Studio Pro 2.0 incorporates all subtitle functionality into the main program by making subtitle tracks part of the timeline for each video track. You can place each line of subtitle text exactly at the point in time you want it to display, and program it to last as long as you want.

The final and most important part of any DVD authoring program is the process of turning all your work into an actual DVD. This can be

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done by just burning a DVD-R disk or by creating the files for mass duplication. DVD Studio Pro 2.0, as with previous versions, allows you to do both. But before you actually create your final master you want to be able to test it on the computer. DVD Studio Pro allows you to do two types of tests. The first is a DVD player emulated within DVD Studio Pro. At any time, you can click the Simulate button and see your work displayed in the way that the program thinks a DVD player would interpret it. This is especially helpful when you are designing menus. The second way is to go through the process of mastering your disk into a file on the computer's hard drive that Apple's DVD Player software can then open and play as if it were a real DVD.

For all of its technical improvements, probably the best change in this new version of DVD Studio Pro has nothing to do with the program itself. At \$499, DVD Studio Pro 2.0 costs half as much as the previous versions of the program. For existing users, the upgrade is a reasonable \$199.

For anybody interested in creating DVDs with a more professional look and feel afforded by the like of iDVD, DVD Studio Pro is a solid choice. If previous incarnations of the program looked too daunting to understand and use effectively, the interface improvements in version 2.0 are probably enough to make it usable. For those people who have been using the previous versions of the program, there is virtually no reason not to upgrade since version 2.0 keeps all the best parts of version 1 and improves upon it in many ways. DVD Studio Pro 2.0 is an excellent, win-win software upgrade. ■

Greg Gilpatrick is a Brooklyn based filmmaker and consultant.

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BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography for feature films and shorts. Owns 35mm Arri BL 3, Super 16, 24p, complete lighting pkg. and a Tulip Crane. Best Cinematography Award for "Final Round" and other film Awards at Sundance, Berlin, and Raindance. Call for more info at: (212) 208-0968 or www.dpFlynt.com email: bcflynt@yahoo.com.

CAMERAMAN/STEADICAM OPERATOR: Owner Steadicam. Arri 35 BL, Arri 16 SR, Beta SP, Stereo TC Nagra 4, TC Fostex PD-4 DAT, lighting packages to shoot features, music videos, commercials, etc. Call Mik Cribben for info & reel, (212) 929-7728.

COMPOSER: 15 years composing for film & TV. Creative, versatile, subtle & fast; music w/heart. Orchestral & ambient textures, contemporary grooves. Live action & animation. B. Music. N.E.C. Demos & details at stev.eraskin.com. (212) 229-1966.

COMPOSER Elliot Sokolov: Creative, experienced multi-faceted composer/sound designer. Credits incl. award winning docu, features, TV films, animations on networks, cable, PBS, MTV. Full prod. studio in NYC. Excels in any musical style, great refs. Columbia MA in composition. Big sound for small budgets projects (212) 721-3218 elliotsoko@aol.com.

COMPOSER: Established film scorer, classically trained, awards. 100s of commissions, complete recording facility available for film soundtracks. Tell me what's in your head. (215) 487-9446. www.johnnavarese.com.

COMPOSER MAT EISENSTEIN awesome collaborator-works in all styles-NYC Midtown studio-all budgets! Credits incl. national commercials and fest. shorts. www.mateisenstein.com (917) 863-6389.

COMPOSER Miriam Culter loves to collaborate - docs, features. Lost In La Mancha, Scout's Honor, Licensed To Kill, Pandemic: Facing Aids, Peace x Peace, Heart of the Sea & more. (310) 398-5985 mir.cut@verizon.net. www.miriamculter.com.

COMPOSER: Original music for your film or video project. Will work with any budget. Complete digital studio. NYC area. Demo CD upon request. Call Ian O'Brien: (201) 222-2638; iobrien@bellatlantic.net.

COMPOSER Quentin Chiappetta Music in any style-orch to electro. Credits-Travel Channel, Nat. Geo. PBS, NFL, Sundance & festivals worldwide. Great refs, pro Studio, Eastman grad. Budget conscious! (718) 782-4535; medianoise@excite.com.

COMPOSER AND SOUND DESIGNER Shawn Onsgard is experienced with creative and avant-garde productions. MA in composition from Wesleyan, CT. Recent clients include: Pierre Huyghe, KNME-TV, Mollie O'Brien. (917) 553-2064; sonsgard@earthlink.net.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w. Arri SR Super 16/16mm & 35BL-2 camera pkgs. Expert lighting & camerawork for independent films. Create that "big film" look on a low budget. Great prices, willing to travel. Matthew (617) 244-6730; (845) 439-5459.

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GRANTWRITING/FUNDRAISING: Research, writing, strategy (for production, distribution, exhibition & educational media projects). Successful proposals to NYSCA, NEA, NEH, ITVS, Soros, Rockefeller, Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation. Fast writers, reasonable rates. Wanda Bershen, (212) 598-0224; www.reddiaper.com.

JAY SILVER: Director of Photography, Owner/Operator of: Aaton XTRprod S16/R16 & Arri35 BL3. Experience shooting features, commercials, music videos & docs. Credits: Wendigo, Persona au Gratin, Eurotrash. (718) 383-1325 jay.silver@verizon.net.

LOCATION SOUND: Over 25 yrs sound exp. w/ timecode Nagra & DAT, quality mics & mixers. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. Harvey & Fred Edwards, (518) 677-5720; (819) 459-2680; edfilms@worldnet.att.net; www.edwardsfilms.com.

NEED PRODUCER BUT THINK YOU CAN'T AFFORD ONE? Experienced professional Line Producer for Budget (detailed/top-sheet), Script Breakdown, Schedule, Day-out-of-Days. Specialty low budget but high quality AnnettaLM@aol.com for rates/references.

STORYBOARD ARTIST: With independent film experience. Loves boarding action sequences and complicated shots. Save money by having shots worked out before cameras roll. Call Kathryn Roake. (718) 788-2755.

OPPORTUNITIES • GIGS

50 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR VIDEO BUSINESS. FREE REPORT. Grow a successful video business in legal, wedding, corporate, TV. <http://videouniversity.com/50web.htm>.

CAMERAJOBS.NET is the premiere resource for finding directors of photography and videographers; a free job bank for the production community. Producers can place announcements of jobs openings, or browse for DP/Videographers.

WELL-ESTABLISHED FREELANCE CAMERA GROUP in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

PREPRODUCTION

SU-CITY PICTURES' clients win awards, get agents, make deals! Susan Kouguel, Tufts & SUNY Purchase instructor, author *The Savvy Screenwriter* analyzes: scripts/films/treatments/queries/synopses/pitches. Over 1,000 clients worldwide incl: Miramax, Warner Bros, Fine Line. Rewrites available. (212) 219-9224; www.su-city-pictures.com.

POSTPRODUCTION

ALL VIDEO FORMATS DUBBED! Betamax to Digital. Specializing in the restoration of funky Hi8 and VHS dropout wastelands. All

dubs at the highest quality possible-component and digital. We also have realtime multicam editing. Info and pricelist on website. 201-610-1412; www.vagabondvideo.net.

AUDIO POST PRODUCTION: Full service audio post-production facility. Mix-to-picture, ADR, voice-over, sound design & editing. Features, shorts, docs, TV & Radio. Contact Andy, All Ears Inc: (718) 399-6668 (718) 496-9066 andy@allearspost.com.

BRODSKY & TREADWAY: film-to-tape transfers, wet-gate, scene-by-scene, reversal film only. Camera original Regular 8mm, Super 8, and 16mm. For appointment call (978) 948-7985.

CERTIFIED FINAL CUT PRO INSTRUCTOR, offering small workshops for FCP 4, and private tutorials for FCP 3 & 4. For info: (917) 523-6260; Hinoonprod@aol.com; www.HighNoonProd.com.

EDITJOBS.NET is the premiere resource for finding editors and visual effects artists; free job bank for post-production community. Producers can place announcements of jobs openings, or browse for editors.

FINALCUT PRO EDITING SUITE: Power Mac G4, Dual GHz, Super Drive, 20" Apple Cinema Display, Media 500 Gig FailSafe Video Drive; Runs: FinalCut 4, Illustrator, DVD Studio Pro, OS X. Optional Canon XL-1, Standard & Wide Angle Lens. Used for one major project. Excellent condition. Call/email for price. Ryan Gielen 703.431.1088. ryan@brownpennyfilms.com.

POST-PRODUCTIONS RENTALS-Avid Xpress Pro, Beta & Dvcam decks. Also Panasonic DVX-100 24p camera. Delivery available in the LA area. www.Digitalrents.com, 323-668-2552.

PRODUCTION TRANSCRIPTS: Verbatim transcription service for documentaries, journalists, film and video. Low prices & flat rates based on tape length. www.productiontranscripts.com for details or call: (888) 349-3022.

UNION SQUARE EDITING SUITE: FCP4 and DVD Studio Pro2 on a dual 2Ghz G5. DVCAM/miniDV, BetaSP, QuickTime, Nagra, DAT. \$50/hr. w/ editor, \$25/hr. rental. Call Film Friends. 212-620-0084.


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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Cynthia Kane

Noncommercial notices and screening opportunities are listed free of charge as space permits. Commercial notices are billed at classified rates. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1 for Sept. issue). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending.

DISTRIBUTION

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS, the leader of documentary films that focus on health & life challenging situations is seeking programs to add to our award winning collection. Our strong, targeted marketing program & film festivals will help increase awareness for you. We look forward to previewing your film. Please send your film to Aquarius Health Care Videos, 18 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770. (888) 440-2963.

ARTHOUSE FILMS & DOCS wanted for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; GCROWDUS@CINEMAGUILD.COM; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS VIDEOS on guidance issues such as violence, drug prevention, mentoring, children's health & parenting for exclusive distribution. Our marketing gives unequaled results! Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and video makers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your audience while working within a remarkable community of activist filmmakers, New Day is the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and the media we represent. Explore our catalog at www.newday.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at join@newday.com or (650) 347-5123.

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK distributes only youth-produced videos. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Educational videos in all subjects and 10+ years experience. 1 (800) 639-5680. www.noodlehead.com.

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENING

CAFE NUBIA in Denver, Colorado, is a monthly arts and social change venue featuring indie film and videoworks by filmmakers of color, spoken word, performance art, and political prose. Non-mainstream, guerrilla films, queer, and hip-hop creations desired. Seeking 5-to-45 min films, any genre. www.panafricanarts.org; BluBlakwomyn@yahoo.com; or call 303-832-3190. Submit work, VHS/DVD (NTSC) with contact info and support materials (no entry fee) to Pan African Arts Society, 700 E. 24th Ave. Ste 9, Denver, CO 80205.

CAPE COD FILM SOCIETY SCREENING SERIES of Brewster, MA, seeks experimental, documentary & fiction films & videos. Films can be any length, genre or style, but we are particularly interested in works by filmmakers willing to present in person on Cape Cod. We look for works which are innovative and thought-provoking-creatively, politically, and/or intellectually-to facilitate audience discussion. Some travel assistance may be available as well as an honorarium for works screened. Please send work on VHS, DVD, or mini-DV w/ filmmaker bio, publicity materials (if available), and a statement or synopsis. Also indicate your availability to appear with your work for Q&A. Include SASE for return. Send to: Rebecca M. Alvin, Cape Cod Film Society Screening Series, PO Box 1727, Brewster, MA 02631-7727. For more info: capecodfilm@yahoo.com or 1-866-235-8397

CHICAGO COMMUNITY CINEMA: offers the excitement of an annual film festival with a

monthly extravaganza of a networking fest and movie showcase. On the first Tuesday of each month short films, trailers, music videos, commercials, student films, and features, of all genres are showcased to an audience of industry professionals. Evenings begin with a cocktail hour to showcase local organizations and allow for a strong social networking atmosphere before the screenings. Submission form available at website. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Chicago Community Cinema, 401 W. Ontario, Suite 150, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 462-4222; www.ChicagoCommunityCinema.com.

ECHO PARK FILM CENTER microcinema seeking submissions to screen for weekly cinema events. We screen documentary, animation, experimental, and short narrative films & videos. We do not screen feature length narratives. Filmmakers receive an honorarium. Contact: Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., LA, CA, 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.echoparkfilmcenter.org.

ELECTRIC EYE CINEMA of Madison, WI, is a monthly venue for independent documentary video features. All net profits from screenings redistributed back to participating filmmakers. Looking for 30 to 90 min. works that are creative, witty, or politically conscious. Also looking for shorts 10 min. or fewer, any genre, to be screened at our Open Reel Hour at the beginning of each monthly program. Send VHS tapes, summary of film & filmmaker bio to: Prolefeed Studios, Brian Standing, 3210 James St., Madison, WI 53714; www.prolefeedstudios.com.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: A monthly program of first-run American films for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (with open-captioned English subtitles). Admission limited to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and those accompanying them. Presented jointly by the Film Society and Time Warner. For further information write us at The Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, NY 10023-6595 or call 875-5601 after 2 pm daily.

FLICKER NYC is a bi-monthly show of new Super 8 and 16mm films by local filmmakers held at the Knitting Factory. Each show features new films, vintage Super 8 reels, homemade cookies, raffles for Super 8 stock, T-shirts, and Flicker Super 8 guides. Submissions are ongoing and there is no submission fee. Website: www.flickernyc.com.

FREIGHT FILM SALON seeks submissions for its Monday Night Shorts showcase series. Work can be any genre, 20 min. or fewer; must be on VHS or DVD. Will screen on 6' screen, 2 plasma screens & 4 monitors. E-mail FreightFilmSalon@yahoo.com for additional info, or visit www.FreightNYC.com.

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a monthly microcinema screening program of int'l short films, videos & digital works, seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Submit VHS(NTSC/PAL) or DVD/Mini-DV (NTSC only) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; 415-864-0660, www.microcinema.com.

NEWFILMMAKERS HOWL New York's Pioneer Theatre seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. Form available on website; \$25 submission fee. Send a VHS copy of your film or video with form/fee to Thomas Bannister, NewFilmMakers, PO Box 4956, New York, NY 10185. For more info, visit www.newfilmMakers.com.

REINVENTIONS is now accepting films of any genre that depict a transformation for our film festival and other programs. Reinventions is a newly formed not-for-profit film studio dedicated to presenting provocative stories of non-fictional and fictional transformation. For further info, please visit www.ReInventions.org. To submit your work now, please visit www.ReInventions.org/howtosubmitfilm.html.

SHORT FILM GROUP seeks shorts (under 45 min.) throughout the year for its quarterly series of screenings in Los Angeles. The group is a nonprofit organization created to promote short film as a means to itself. For more information & an application form, visit www.shortfilmgroup.org.

SHOW & TELL, a film, video & music event. Highlighting everything from film, video, music & poetry. This event provides a venue to show the works and talents in a nonconventional location. Seeking 1 to 20-minutes film/videos

on VHS. (Submissions are non-returnable) **SHOW & TELL**, c/o Black Robb 535 Havemeyer Ave #12H, New York, NY 10473; (718) 409-1691; blackrobb@netzero.net.

SPRINGVILLE CINEMA seeks films/videos of any length for regular screening series in rural Western New York. Prefer docs, animation or short fiction. Net profits redistributed to the filmmakers. Save the postage and email information on your film first. info@colonelsystems.com. (716) 592-0151.

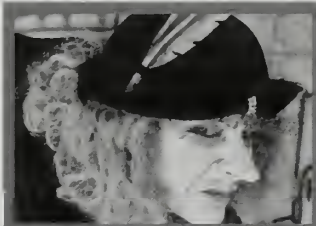
THE CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY is seeking original fiction/non-fiction films in 16mm, VHS, or DVD formats for potential screenings throughout 2004 (especially during Spoleto-related events). To submit material, please send a non-returnable preview copy (VHSS/DVD) of the film and a cover letter to Kevin Crothers,

of short films/videos for monthly screenings series. S-8/16mm/mini DV formats accepted for screening. VHS for consideration only. Entries should not exceed 15 minutes in length. e-mail mailing address to jomarcine@hotmail.com for an application and standard release, or with inquiry.

GALLERIES • EXHIBITIONS

ARC GALLERY reviewing videos for Media Room. View Media Room Prospectus at www.arcgallery.org or send SASE for Media Room prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 734 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL or call (312) 733-2787 for info W-S 12-6, Sun 12-4.

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE in PA seeks artists for exhibition at the site. Some funding avail. for media arts.



REEL NY

Since the premiere of Reel New York in 1996, **THIRTEEN/WNET** continues to expose the cutting edge of the creative film scene with this series of independent films presented exclusively by, for, and about New Yorkers. The seventh

season kicks off in June and includes *Fat Feet* (pictured), *First Person 911*, *New York Diary*, *Scenes from an Endless War*, *Homeland Security*, *Brooklyn Promenade*, *A Month's Mind*, *Searching for Sense*, *71 West Broadway* and *Chinatown Post 9/11*, among other provocative films. See listing.

Audio-Visual Head, Main Library, 68 Calhoun St. Charleston, SC 29401. Email crothersk@ccpl.org for more information.

TINY PICTURE CLUB seeks Super 8 films for quarterly, theme-based programs. Films will screen on Super 8 & be accompanied by live music. Tiny Picture Club is especially interested in work from the Portland area. Send VHS tape to: Tiny Picture Club, 109 NE Holland st. Portland, OR 97211; www.tinypictureclub.org.

VIDEOTHEATRE, NYC is New York's never-ending DV festival! Currently seeking all kinds of original films on DV formats. Monthly deadlines. Year-round submission. Weekly programming in two AC theaters located on Manhattan's downtown theater row. VideoTheatreNYC@aol.com; www.videotheatre.nyc.com.

ZEHN STUCK (ten pieces), an emerging microcinema in New York, seeks submissions

Proposals are reviewed annually each fall. See website for information and deadline. To request an application, or schedule an orientation tour, contact Brett Bertolino at (215) 236-5111 ex. 12, or at bb@EasternState.org, or visit www.easternstate.org.

TOURING PROGRAMS

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT: a tour of 6 artists who travel to 6 sites in the Southeast, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & \$20 entry fee. South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; sleonard@arts.state.sc.us; www.southcarolinaarts.com.

BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

BROOKDALE TELEVISION is a progressive educational access channel in Monmouth County, NJ, reaching over 79,000 households at the Jersey shore. Seeking indie works for consideration for cablecast. All lengths/genres. Nonexclusive rights release upon acceptance, no payment but promo and contact information will be provided on air and through our office. VHS for preview, BetaSP, MiniDV, SVHS, and DVD accepted for Cablecast. Roger Conant, BTV, Brookdale Community College, 765 Newman Springs Road, Atec Rm. 112, Lincroft, NJ 07738; (732) 224-2467; rconant@brookdalecc.edu.

FASTSHOOTERS is accepting short feature films, animations and videos to assemble in a TV-broadcast-length collection for pitch to networks. All mediums and genres. For more information: www.fastshooters.com.

FILMS/VIDEO WANTED: For weekly Experimental Video-art TV program on Time Warner Networks/broadcast in Manhattan & Brooklyn 800,000 viewers strong. For more info: snack on art, PO Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; www.snackonart.org; snackonart@yahoo.com.

IMAGEMAKERS is a half hour program airing in San Francisco (PBS) that features the best shorts from around the world. Prefer shorts between 2 -25 min, shot on 35mm, 24p or in letterbox. Submit on vhs.. No experimental or docs. Send to Scott Dwyer, KOED-TV, 2601 Mariposa St., San Francisco, CA 94110. www.kqed.org/imagemakers.

INDUSTRIALTELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show now in its 8th year, is looking for experimental, humorous, quirky dramatic, erotic, horror/sci-fi, animated and underground works for inclusion in the new season. Controversial, uncensored and subversive material is encouraged & given priority. We guarantee exposure in the NYC area. We accept: DVC Pro, mini-DV, SVHS, VHS, 3/4" SP, 3/4", Hi-8. Contact: Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; ed@2droogies.com; www.2droogies.com.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY TV STATION in Chappaqua, NY, with a potential viewership of over 100,000 people, offers the opportunity for new and seasoned video/media producers to cablecast their projects. Preference given to

Northern Westchester but all Westchester residents are welcome. For more info contact NCCTV@hotmail.com.

PBS Call for entries submission deadline for the 2005 season is June 30, 2004! Public television's premiere showcase for independent, nonfiction film and video seeks programs from all perspectives to showcase in annual national PBS series. All subjects, styles, and lengths are welcome. Unfinished films and videos may be eligible for completion funds. For guidelines and to apply online visit the P.O.V. website: www.pbs.org/pov/callforentries or call 1-800-756-3300 ext. 380. [Please note: the information in the May issue's listings was incorrect.]

POV: Your Point of View: Seen by Millions! Submission deadline for the 2005 season is June 30, 2004! Public television's premiere showcase for independent, non-fiction film and video seeks programs from all perspectives to showcase in annual national PBS series. All subjects, styles and lengths are welcome. Unfinished films and videos may be eligible for completion funds. For guidelines and to apply online visit the P.O.V. www.pbs.org/pov/callforentries or call 800-756-3300 ext. 380.

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Seek public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-2534; efreedma@fau.edu.

REEL NEW YORK presents its seventh season series devoted to works by, for, and about New York City. Beginning June 7th and running every Friday night on Thirteen/WNET at 10pm until July 26th. Repeats late Sunday nights at 12:30am. Films include: First Person 911, New York Diary, Scenes from an endless war, Homeland Security, Brooklyn Promenade, A Month's Mind, Searching for Sense, 71 West Broadway, In the Spirit of Peace, To the Workers of the World, Take a Look: New York City Chinatown Post 9/11, The Bicycle Path, 5 Minute Break and September 10, 2001, Uno Nunca Muere La Víspera.

SCAN (Seattle Community Access Network) A public access cable television non-profit organizational network that offers airtime for

videotapes on SCAN Channel 77/29 as well as training and equipment for production of videos to be cablecast on SCAN. Open to King County residents.

SHORT LIST: Showcase for int'l short films, airs throughout North America on PBS stations. Licenses all genres, 30 sec. to 20 mins. Produced in association w/ Eastman Kodak & Cox Channel 4. Awards 5 Kodak product grants annually. Submit on VHS, DVD, or CD. Appl. form avail. on www.theshortlist.cc. Contact: fax: (619) 462-8266; shortlist@mail.sdsu.edu.

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to Short Films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. For submission for and details, visit www.shorttv.com, or call: (212) 226-6258.

SUB ROSA STUDIOS seeks a variety of different video & film productions for ongoing Syracuse-area TV programming & VHS/DVD/TV worldwide release. Seeking shorts or feature-length nonfiction productions in all areas of the special-interest or instructional fields, cutting-edge documentaries & children & family programming. Also seeking feature-length fiction, all genres, especially horror & sci-fi. Supernatural-themed products wanted, both fiction & nonfiction, especially supernatural/horror fiction shot documentary style (realistic). Contact: Ron Bonk, Sub Rosa Studios, (315) 652-3868; webmaster@b-movie.com; www.b-movie.com.

WORK WANTED / OTHER

IEWASHOW accepts DVDs and VHS tapes of various types of shows. These films go through a preselection screening process. (We look for potential audience acceptance, visual and professional quality, story and/or content value; basic categorizing, outline; and rating.) Those selected are sent to out to our Viewers Club members for evaluation. Reviews are posted online as they are completed. Filmmakers can stay informed about the response to their work at all time. (315) 768-3977 Fax: 768-3978.

Notices

By Cynthia Kane

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1 for Sept. issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending anyone anything

COMPETITIONS

ONE IN TEN SCREENPLAY COMPETITION promotes the positive portrayal of gays & lesbians in film. The competition is open to all writers and offers cash awards & industry contacts to winners. Deadline: Sept. 1, 2004. Complete rules & entry forms available at website or by sending S.A.S.E. to Cherub Productions, One In Ten Screenplay Competition, Box 540, Boulder, CO 80306; (303) 629-3072; cherubfilm@aol.com; www.screenplaycontests.com.

REEL INSPIRING FILM CONTEST seeks uplifting, heartwarming five minute movies that show the good in the world today. Stories that inspire the best in us! Top 20 promoted on the Winners' Tape to be screened at Reel Visions Filmmakers Conference and other venues. First prize: cash and free admission to conference. Entry fee: \$20. Deadline August 2, 2004. Contact reelinspiration@hotmail.com or call (520) 325-9175 for more information.

VIDEO CONTEST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS, sponsored by the Christophers, is now in its 17th year & seeks films & videos relating to the theme "One Person Can Make a Difference." Entries must be 5 min. or fewer & submitted on VHS (NTSC). Deadline: July 11, 2004. Cash prizes totaling \$6,500 will be awarded. Winning entries will be aired nationwide via the Christopher Closeup TV series. Contact: 12 East 48th St, NY NY 10017; (212) 759-4050; fax: 838-5073; youth

@christophers.org; www.christophers.org/contests.html.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT & MEDIA SUMMIT 2004: New York City: April 3-4; Los Angeles: June 12-13. A lively and engaging forum of people with vision from the independent and mainstream music, film, video and multimedia worlds of the entertainment, media, and communications industries. People connect with people, exchanging ideas and creating projects in a context of innovation, reinvention, and possibility. Together, this community is proactively effecting new ways to achieve sustainable careers and the direction of the revolution now taking place in marketing and distribution. For more info www.globalentertainmentnetwork.com.

INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION WORKSHOPS offer hands-on training with the latest equipment in a total immersion atmosphere under the guidance of leading professionals. In addition to the campus in Rockport, Maine, workshops, courses, photo and film expeditions are offered in Tuscany, Provence, Mexico, Cuba, Martha's Vineyard,

discussions feature 21st century leadership development skills, knowledge and insights. Conference participants have the opportunity to attend thought-provoking and educational workshops and network with people interested in and committed to community leadership development. For info: www.communityleadership.org/conference/conference.html.

PUBLICATIONS • DIRECTORIES

DIGITAL MEDIA TRAINING SERIES: DMTS provides award-winning training video, CD-ROM and DVD training tools that improve productivity & creativity for the end-user. DMTS training episodes feature the latest topics & technology, giving viewers access to working professionals & experts. Featuring the latest education on Final Cut Pro, Avid, Flash, etc, this series is designed for filmmakers and has been sponsored by leading media software companies. You can try out any of the Limited Edition training programs for free. Contact: Rafael, (877) 606-5012; info@magnetmediafilms.com; www.digitalmediatraining.com.

FILM SCORE MONTHLY: The Online Magazine of Motion Picture and Television Music Appreciation is one of the leading mag-



Score!

Film music fans who have ever had a hard time finding their favorite film or video scores probably haven't checked out *Film Score Monthly*. America's leading magazine about motion picture and television music features news and information for all types

of music gurus. In addition to the monthly print version, their website offers a daily preview, an online store, resources guides, a message board, and current reviews. See listing.

Greece, Norway & Peru. Contact: International Film & TV Workshops, Box 200, 2 Central St, Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581; fax: 236-2558; info@TheWorkshops.com; www.TheWorkshops.com.

THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION, Annual Leadership Conference (June 3-6, 2004 Tucson, Arizona) The Annual Leadership Conference brings together leadership development professionals, graduates and other civic-minded individuals from across the United States and beyond to exchange innovative ideas, viewpoints and resources to help strengthen and transform communities. Keynote speakers, workshops and roundtable

azines that covers motion picture and television music. www.filmscoremonthly.com.

KINOEYE: New Perspectives on European Films-Coverage of non-mainstream European film www.kinoeye.org.

LE BOOK 2003 EDITION: The international reference for fashion, photography, graphic design and production, w/a complete overview of all the latest creative trends. Provides easy access to all businesses with a listing of over 50,000 names, addresses and phone numbers. To find out more call 212-334-5252 or lebookny@lebook.com, www.lebook.com.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

7 FUND: Awards up to \$10,000 in discretionary funds to films and videos with nonprofit status in any stage of production that are of a socially conscious nature. Preference given to projects with "scripted content intended for a broad audience." Contact: 7 Fund, 312 Second St., Sausalito, CA 94965.

ALLIANCE OF CANADIAN CINEMA TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS: ACTRA announces new, innovative program that supports indigenous Canadian productions & aims to increase volume of Canadian-made films. ACTRA represents over 16,000 film, TV and commercial performers across Canada and wishes to bring these performers to independent film. Contact: Eda Zimler, (416) 642-6717.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE administers the Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. A total of \$28,000 in awards is available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of \$100,000 or less which have 501(c)(3) status or Charities Bureau Registration. Deadline: late fall. Contact: NaRhee Ahn, Program Director (212) 941-9208 for application details and deadlines. info@aaartsalliance.org; www.aaartsalliance.org.

BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS provides in-kind investments & scholarships in return for equity investments. Our focus is on new media projects that push the limits of content and technology and arts television. Applicants must be mid-career or senior professionals w/pro development needs. Deadlines: Feb 28, June 30, Oct. 31. Contact Sara Diamond, (403) 762-6696; fax 762-6665; sara_diamond@banffcentre.ca; www.banffcentre.ca.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 1 St. Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov.

DURFEE FOUNDATION'S ARTISTS' RESOURCE FOR COMPLETION GRANTS provide short-term assistance to artists living in LA County who wish to enhance work for a specific opportunity that may significantly benefit their careers. Artists in any discipline are eligible to apply. Applicant must already have secured an invitation from established organization to present the proposed work. The work

must be scheduled for presentation within 6 months of the application deadline. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. 2004 Deadlines: Feb 3, May 4, August 3, Nov 3. Contact: The Durfee Foundation, 1453 Third Street, Ste. 312, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 899-5120; fax: 899-5121; admin@durfee.org; www.durfee.org.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers completion grants, technical assistance & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations in New York State. Programs provide partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public. Deadlines vary with program. Contact: Program Dir., ETV, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; etc@experimentalcenter.org or download applications and guidelines at www.experimentalcenter.org.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP FOR FILMMAKERS: Film Forum, a nonprofit cinema, efficiently administers filmmaker grants, retaining 5% from foundations, corporations, individuals (but not government sources). Budget must be a minimum of \$100,000 & filmmaker must have a track record. Send brief project description to: Film Forum Fiscal Sponsorships, 209 W. Houston St., New York, NY 10014. No calls, faxes, emails.

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR VISUAL ARTISTS: The awards honor visual artists who live & work in California, Oregon, & Washington & whose work demonstrates high artistic merit for 20 yrs. or more. The next awards cycle is 2005/2006. Five artists from CA and five from OR/WA will be selected to receive unrestricted grants of \$25,000 each. Applicants should work in the disciplines of fine arts or craft media & have sustained a 9-months-per-year residency in CA, OR, or WA for the last three yrs. Artists cannot be of current nat'l renown. To receive application information, mail, fax, or email your contact information (name, address, telephone #, email) with a request to be placed on the mailing list. Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Artists, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100, Pasadena, CA 91103; fax: (626) 585-0011; FFAVA@flintridgeFoundation.org.

GRAND MARNIER FILM FELLOWSHIPS are awarded to graduate film students enrolled in a US educational institution (excluding CA and TX) for filmmaking, video, or critical writing. Three awards of \$5,000 to be presented at the New York Film Festival. Forms online

(www.filmfellow.org) or contact: Grand Marnier Film Fellowships, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., 4th., N.Y., NY 10023-6595.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS) funds and presents independently produced programming for public television (PBS). ITVS seeks projects that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. All genres are eligible. For details: www.itvs.org/producer/funding.html.

MOXIE FILM GRANTS: Moxie Films was founded in 1992 to support the careers of emerging filmmakers and the spirit of the independent film, documentary and short. Learn more about the MoxieShorts Screening and Competition Series, the Moxie Docs Film Grant, and a new Digital Feature Production Grant. www.moxie-films.com.

NAATA provides funding for independent productions of new Asian-American programs for public TV. Current calls incl. annual open call for production funding (must be received by June 25th, 5:00pm Pacific Time) & open call for completion funding (no deadline - rolling). Appl. or info write: NAATA Media Fund, 145 Ninth St. Ste. 350, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814, X122; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org.

NEH SUMMER STIPENDS: Support 2 months of full-time work on projects that will make a significant contribution to the humanities. \$5,000 stipend to support faculty & staff members of schools, colleges & universities; scholars & writers working in institutions with research or educational collections; scholars & writers working in institutions with no connection to humanities; scholars & writers working independently. Visit website or email stipends@neh.gov; www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/stipends.html

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM AND TELEVISION dedicated to helping women reach highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. NYWIFT produces over 50 innovative educational programs & special events each year, & organization's membership more than 1,300 women & men working in all areas of film, TV & new media industries. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film organizations worldwide, representing more than 1,300 members. For membership & Intern/Mentor program info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 East 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; info@nywift.org; www.nywift.org

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM provides funding for IL nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency ranges 5 to 30 hrs. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (up to \$1,000 plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50%) plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starts. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs.

TEXAS FILMMAKERS' PRODUCTION FUND is an annual grant awarded to emerging film & video artists who are residents of Texas. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for regionally produced projects for any genre. In Sept. the Fund will award \$50,000 in grants ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000. Deadline: July 1. Appl. avail. at Texas Filmmakers' Production Funds, 1901 East 51st St, Austin, TX 78723; (512) 322-0145 or www.austinfilm.org.

THE ROY W. DEAN NEW YORK AND LA FILM GRANTS: Film and video grants are each \$50,000 in goods and services. Our only criteria is your film be "unique and make a difference to society." Please see www.fromtheheartproductions.com for application and guidelines. Deadlines: NYC grant closed April 30, 2004; LA grants close June 30, 2004.

THE VIDEOMAKER AWARD 2005 announced by BAVC is an in-kind equipment and education access grant for innovative video/new media projects in post production phase. Awardees receive a grant of \$3,500 worth of access to BAVC's state-of-the-art media facility and education programs. \$2,500 can go towards suites and services and \$1,000 to BAVC classes. BAVC takes special interest in artists working on projects in association with community groups or about community issues and groups of artists working in collaboration. Deadline: August 27th, 2004. Contact: Laurel Frank at 415/ 552-2120 or laurel@bavc.org; www.bavc.org.

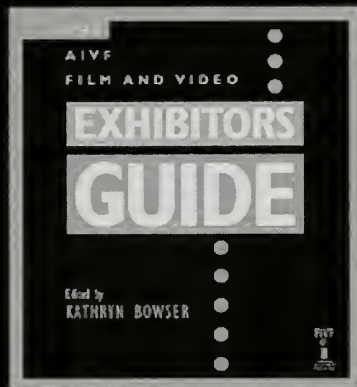
VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival). and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program, including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

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Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., July 1st for Sept. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.

**INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL
LISTINGS ARE AVAILABLE
AT WWW.AIVF.ORG**

DOMESTIC

AFI LOS ANGELES INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-14, CA. Deadline: June 4; July 1 (final: shorts); July 16 (final: features). Festival combines film programming w/ special events, capturing cultural diversity of LA while providing new filmmakers w/ avenue of exposure to film industry. Entries must be LA premieres w/ no previous local TV/theatrical exposure. Festival receives wide print coverage in trades, LA Times, etc. & is open to public. Founded: 1987. Cats: short, doc, feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video, digiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: features (over 30 mins.) \$45, shorts \$35. Final: features \$55, shorts \$45. Contact: AFI Fest; (886) AFI-FEST; fax: (323) 462-4049; afifest@afi.com; www.afi.com.

ANNAPOLIS FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-8, MD. Deadline: June 18. A four-day fest showcasing independent films & documentaries produced by local & nat'l filmmakers. Its mission is to "celebrate the capacity of independent film to move us, teach us & entertain us." Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 shorts (under 30 min.); \$35 features. Contact: Festival; (410) 263-2388; fax: 263-2629; info@annapolisfilmfestival.com; www.annapolisfilmfestival.com.

ATLANTIC CITY FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 18-23, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 1; July 1 (final). Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, student, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$15-\$65. Contact: James Doorn; (609) 646-1640; admin@atlanticcityfilmfestival.com; www.atlanticcityfilmfestival.com.

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 14-21, TX. Deadline: June 15 (early); July 15 (final). Fest is dedicated to the writer as the heart of the creative process. Founded: 1994. Cats: feature, short, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (early); \$50 (final). Contact: Lisa Albracht; (800) 310-FEST/ (512) 478-4795; fax: (512) 478-6205; barb@austinfilmfestival.com; www.austinfilmfestival.com.

BERKELEY VIDEO & FILM FESTIVAL. Nov., CA. Deadline: July 10. Film fest seeks work from independent producers completed in the past two years. Past entries are ineligible. Cats: doc, feature, short, experimental, animation, music video, commercials/psa, student, youth media. Formats: super 8, 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, 1/2", 3/4". Beta SP, S-VHS, Most digital formats. Preview in VHS or Beta SP. Entry Fee: \$30-\$40. Contact: Festival; (510) 843-3699; fax: 843-3379; maketv@aol.com; www.berkeleyvideofilmfest.org.

BIG BEAR LAKE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 17-19, CA. Deadline: April 15; July 15. Annual fest seeks independent feature films, short films, student films, documentaries, family films & digital films. This year's cultural event will showcase African American films. The fest is located in Big Bear Lake, California, nestled in the San Bernardino Nat'l Forest, just two hours outside of Los Angeles. Cats: feature, student. VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$45 Features, \$35 Student. Contact: Monika Skerbelis, Festival & Programming Director; (909) 866-3433; fax: same; bigbearfilmfest@aol.com; www.bigbearlakefilmfestival.com.

COLUMBUS INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. Mid-November, OH. Deadline: July 1. Competitive fest accepts indie & corporate productions in 14 major divisions w/ about 10 cats in each (97 cats in all). Founded: 1952. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short, animation, any style or genre, student, youth media, TV. Formats: CD-ROM, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$75 & up (professionals); \$35-\$50 (students). Contact: Judy Chalker; (614) 444-7460; fax: same; info@chrisawards.org; www.chrisawards.org.

DC ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 7-16, DC. Deadline: May 16; June 1 (final). The fest's mission is to "bring attention to the creative output from APA communities & encourage the artistic development of APA films in the greater Washington DC metropolitan region." The screenings are held at the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of

Art's Meyer Auditorium, the Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture, the Canadian Embassy, & other museums. Founded: 2000. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Betacam. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$10 (shorts & features); \$20 (final). Contact: Festival; gene@apafilm.org; www.apafilm.org.

GREAT LAKES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 16-19, PA. Deadline: March 15; July 1 (Final). Annual fest will take place in the city of Erie, PA. Fest's goal is showcasing new independent films, recognizing outstanding filmmakers. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats: Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC) or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 short, \$45 feature; Final: \$45 shorts, \$55 feature. Contact: Steve Opsanic; (814) 834-5069; fax: 734-5402; fest@greatlakesfilmfest.com; www.greatlakesfilmfest.com.

HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 21-29, IN. Deadline: May 28; June 18 (final). Fest seeks features & shorts that "explore the human journey by artistically expressing hope & respect for the positive values of life." Founded: 1991. Cats: doc, short, feature, animation, experimental, student, family, children, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$20 (under 50 min.); \$55 (50 min. & up); \$60 (final features); \$25 (final shorts). Contact: Jeffrey L. Sparks; (317) 464-9405; fax: 464-9409; info@heartlandfilmfestival.org; www.heartlandfilmfestival.org.

HOPE & DREAMS FILM FESTIVAL. October 1-3, NJ. Deadline: Jun. 30. Film & video competition. Films judged for appeal, production values & creativity. Themes which emphasize issues of hope & dreams will be given additional consideration. First time directors are encouraged to submit. Founded: 1998. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", S-VHS, Beta SP, super 8, Hi8, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40. Contact: Curator; fax: (908) 459-4681; curator@hopeanddreams.com.

LATINO FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 5-21, CA. Deadline: June 30. Annual competitive fest taking place at various location in the San Francisco Bay Area seeks works in any genre by or about Latinos in the U.S. & the int'l community. Fest showcases artistic or educational films by or about Latinos & expresses the cultural diversity of all Latino countries as a source of inspiration & empowerment. Founded: 1997.

Cats: Feature, Doc, Animation, short. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35; \$45 late entry. Contact: G.G. Geddes, Assoc. Director of Programming; (415) 454-4039; fax: 454-4613; gg@latinofilmfestival.org; www.latinofilmfestival.org.

LOS ANGELES INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL (LA SHORTS FEST), Sept. 7-13, CA. Deadline: May 17; June 17 (final). Fest dubs itself "the largest short film fest in the world." Seeks Shorts, Features & Screenplays shorts (under 40 min.) & long shorts (40-60 min.), as well as feature-length works by directors who have previously completed a short film in their career. Winning works are eligible for Academy Award consideration. Founded: 1997. Cats: Short, Animation, Doc, Experimental, any style or genre, feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35-\$70. Contact: Robert Arentz, Founder & Festival Director; (323) 851-9100; info@lashortsfest.com; www.lashortsfest.com.

MALIBU INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 17-20, CA. Deadline: July 1. The eight-day competitive fest is made possible through local support, corporate sponsorship & the blood, sweat, & tears of independent filmmakers. The fest screens over forty independent feature, short & documentary films from around the world. Founded: 1999. Cats: feature, short, doc. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$50 (fee is waived w/ valid student ID). Contact: David Katz; (310) 452-1180; info@malibufilmfestival.org; www.malibufilmfestival.org.

MELBOURNE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL, Sept. 9-11, FL. Deadline: July 4. Fest is aimed at promoting independent filmmakers & local interest in independent film. All funds raised go to charities, Unconditional Love, Inc., a local HIV treatment center & The Yellow Umbrella which helps the victim's of child abuse. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Preview on VHS (NTSC) & DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Terry Cronin, program chairman; TCRonin2@aol.com; www.3boysproductions.com.

MILL VALLEY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-17, CA. Deadline: May 31; June 30 (final). Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens films of all genres & lengths & has become a premiere West Coast event, bringing new & innovative works to Northern California audiences. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 months; industrial, promotional or

instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Interactive, Children, Animation, Experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25; \$30 (final). Contact: Zoe Elton; (415) 383-5256; fax: 383-8606; info@cafilm.org; www.cafilm.org.

MIX: NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 17-21, NY. Deadline: May 15; June 15 (final). Longest-running lesbian & gay Experimental film fest in NYC & premiere venue for emerging artists & experimental media. Feature films by request only. Installations/New Media by request only. Curatorial Proposals considered. Cats: experimental, any style or genre, short. Formats: Mini-DV, Beta, 16mm, 35mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$20; \$25 (final). Contact: Festival; (212) 742-8880; fax: 742-8882; coordinator@mixnyc.org; www.mixnyc.org.

NEW YORK EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 28, CA. Deadline: May 15; June 15 (final).

Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$20 (shorts under 15 min.); \$35 (15 min. & over); late fees are doubled; screenplays: \$40; \$60 (late). Contact: Annetta Marion & Bernadette Gillota; (216) 651-7315; fax: 651-7317; ohioindiefilmfest@juno.com; www.ohiofilms.com.

OJAI FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-24, CA. Deadline: May 1; July 1 (final). Theme: "Enriching the Human Spirit Through Film." Films & videos on all subjects in any genre are welcomed. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, student, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DVD, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS (NTSC), DVD. Entry Fee: \$35 (35mm); \$30 (all other formats); \$20 (student, any format); add \$10 for final deadline. Contact: Steve Grumette, Artistic Director; (805) 649-4000; filmfestival@ojai.net; www.ojaifilmfestival.org.

ONION CITY EXPERIMENTAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 10-12, IL. Deadline: June 25. A fest dedicated to the art of experimental film & video. Seeking works completed in the last 3 years. Cats: experimental. Formats: DV, 1/2",



Electric Avenue

In 1990, indie filmmakers involved with the "underground cinema revolution" of the 1960's started the Berkeley Film & Video Festival. Set in a cinephile landscape (at times overshadowed by the nearby San Fran scene), the BVFF is a prominent venue for indie works that challenge and confront the ever changing notions of "electronic cinema." This year's fest, which will take place on the UC

Berkeley campus over three days, continues this tradition with features, docs, commercials, music videos, and more. See listing.

Formerly the San Diego Experimental Film Festival. A fest run by underground & independent filmmakers dedicated to "supporting & encouraging creative filmmaking." Cats: short, animation, experimental, music video, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP, super 8. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: c/o Paul Holgerson; (732) 545-5864; paulholgerson@hotmail.com.

OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 7-14, OH. Deadline: June 1; July 1 (Final). Fest provides a unique networking & exhibition space for indie filmmakers & is a professional arts org. dedicated to supporting, growing & legitimizing indie filmmaking. Founded: 1994. Cats: any style or genre, feature, short, script. Formats: 16mm, S-8, 1/2", super 8, Beta SP.

16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, Super 8. Preview on VHS or film. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: c/o Chicago Filmmakers; (773) 293-1447; fax: 293-0575; programming@chicagofilmmakers.org; www.chicagofilmmakers.org.

PITTSBURGH INT'L LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, October 15-24, PA. Deadline: July 11. Festival has been providing Pittsburgh & the tri-state area w/ ten days of innovative, provocative, entertaining lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered films. Founded: 1985. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, youth media, family. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: PILGFF; (412) 232-3277; fax: 422-5829; pilgff@aol.com; www.pilgff.org.

QUITTAHILLA FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 1-3, PA. Deadline: July 1. Set in the Central Pennsylvania valley, just 20 min. from Hershey, PA. Festival holds screenings at the historic Allen Theatre, w/ additional screenings in the Lebanon Valley College lawns. Founded: 2004. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: Cash Prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DVD, Beta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Todd Klick; (717) 964-2222; todd.klick@clippermagazine.com; www.qfilms.org.

REELING: CHICAGO LESBIAN & GAY INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-11, IL. Deadline: July 2; July 12. Annual fest seeks wide variety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgendered films & videos for second oldest fest of its kind in the world. All genres & lengths accepted. Founded: 1981. Cats: Any style or genre, Feature, Experimental, Animation, Short, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVD, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 for first entry, \$15 for each additional entry. Contact: c/o Chicago Filmmakers; (773) 293-1447; fax: 293-0575; reeling@chicagofilmmakers.org; www.chicagofilmmakers.org.

REHOBOTH BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 10-14, DE. Deadline: June 19; July 16 (final). Fourth annual fest celebrates independent & foreign cinema in a picturesque coastal resort setting. Founded: 1998. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, children, short, gay & lesbian. Formats: 35mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL). Entry Fee: \$25; \$20 (students), \$5 early discount. Contact: David Gold; (302) 645-9095; fax: 645-9460; david@rehobothfilm.com; www.rehobothfilm.com.

ROUTE 66 FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 17-19, IL. Deadline: July 15. Fest seeks works that "involve some kind of journey" (physical, emotional, intellectual). Cats: feature, short, experimental. Formats: 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (features); \$10 (shorts, under 20 min.). Contact: Linda McElroy; linmcclroy@aol.com; www.route66filmfestival.com.

SEATTLE LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 15-21, WA. Deadline: May 31; July 2 (final). The Pacific Northwest's premier queer film fest, committed to screening the best in lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender film/video. Produced by Three Dollar Bill Cinema, whose mission is to provide community access to queer cinema & a venue for queer filmmakers to show their work. Founded: 1995. Cats: Feature, Short, Experimental, doc, animation.

Awards: Jury selects best feature, documentary, short, new director & female director (\$500-\$1,000). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10; \$15 (final). Contact: Jason Plourde; (206) 323-4274; fax: 323-4275; programming@seattlequeerfilm.com; www.seattlequeerfilm.com.

SIDEWALK MOVING PICTURE FESTIVAL. Sept. 23-26, AL. Deadline: May 15, June 25 (final). Founded: 1999. Cats: Feature, Short, Student, doc, animation, experimental, any style or genre, youth media, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25-\$55. Contact: Erik Jambor; (205) 324-0888; fax: 324-2488; info@sidewalkfest.com; www.sidewalkfest.com.

TALLGRASS FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 7-10, KS. Deadline: June 30. Set in the direct geographic center of the US, fest is dedicated to presenting the best in independent film to this region of the country. Cats: feature, doc, short, gay & lesbian. Formats: 35mm, DVD, Beta. Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: Shorts \$20; features \$35. Contact: Shan Jabara. www.tallgrassfilmfest.com

TAMPA INT'L LESBIAN & GAY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL. October 7-17, FL. Deadline: July 2. The Fest considers all genres of any length by, about & of interest to lesbians & gay men. Fest is "committed to presenting culturally inclusive & diverse programs" of video & film. Founded: 1991. Cats: Gay/Lesbian, Any style or genre, feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$10 shorts; \$20 features. Contact: Joe Lonsway; (813) 879-4220; fax: 875-7124; joe@tigliff.com; www.tigliff.com.

VERMONT INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 13-18, VT. Deadline: July 10. Fest devoted to presenting images & issues for social change. Categories: War & Peace, Justice/Human Rights & the Environment. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25 (shorts, under 30 min.); \$45 (feature). Contact: VIFF; (802) 660-2600; fax: 860-9555; info@vtiff.org; www.vtiff.org.

WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 13-17, NY. Deadline: May 15; June 28 (final). Annual nonprofit fest fosters an intimate, reciprocal relationship between indie filmmakers, industry reps & audience members held in "the most famous little town in the whole world". Celebrating new voices of indie film w/ semi-

nars, workshops, concerts & parties. Cats: feature, doc, short, music video, animation, student. Awards: Best feature, doc, short, animation, cinematography, film score. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25-\$50. Contact: Meira Blaustein; (845) 679-4265; info@woodstockfilmfestival.com; www.woodstockfilmfestival.com.

YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAM AT THE HAMPTONS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Oct., NY. Deadline: June 16. Submissions must have been completed since June 1st of the prior year. Young videomakers must be 19 years or younger at time of video completion. Works must not be longer than 20 min. in length. Cats: youth media, student, short, doc, experimental, animation, PSA, narrative. Formats: mini-DV, Hi8, 16mm, Super 8, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Emily Bennison; (845) 485-4480; fax: 559-0005; info@childrensmediaproject.org; www.childrensmediaproject.org.

INTERNATIONAL

BAHIA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 9-15, Brazil. Deadline: June 30 (Competition); July 15 (Market). 'Por Um Mundo Mais Humano' (For a More Humanistic World) is motto of fest & market. The Fest is open to Ibero-American prods as well as non-Ibero-American prods about Latin Amer. subjects. Market will disseminate promotional materials sent by participants. Cats: Any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (max length: 60 min.). Entry Fee: \$50. Contact: Universidade Federal da Bahia; 011 55 71 235 4392; fax: 55 71 336 1680; jornada@ufba.br; www.jornadabahia.cjb.net.

BAJA CALIFORNIA FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 28-Nov. 1, Mexico. Deadline: June 30. Fest seeks works "which contribute to the progress of the motion picture, television & video arts & encourage the development of the industry throughout the world". Fest is organized by Lamia Foundation for Film Arts. Founded: 2004. Cats: feature, short, TV, experimental, animation, music video, doc, any style or genre. Awards: "Minarete" Film award. Formats: DVD, 35mm. Preview on DVD. Entry Fee: Film \$30; TV \$15; Video \$20. Contact: Festival; 011 664 630 09 40; direct@bajacaliforniafilmfest.org; www.bajacaliforniafilmfest.org.

BLACK SOIL FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 26-30, Netherlands. Deadline: June 15. Fest is the first hip hop film fest in Europe, held in Rotterdam. Black Soil's scope is across the

board & puts Hip Hop into a broader perspective. Fest screens works inspired by the elements of hip hop: DJs, graffiti, MCs & break dancers. Also films derived from hip hop will be shown, as well as works which have served as inspiration to Hip Hop artists & filmmakers alike. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Preview on VHS (PAL / NTSC) or DVD. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Sasha Dees; (212) 864-5921; deessasha@cs.com; www.blacksoil.com.

CANADIAN INT'L ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-13, Canada. Deadline: June 30. Open to professional & non-professional productions, competitive fest, holds showings in several cities in Canada. Entrants incl. amateur & independent filmmakers & pre-professional film students. Founded: 1969. Cats: Short, Feature, Student, Doc, Experimental, Animation, most humorous, natural science, Canadian, youth media, music video. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, 1/2", super 8, Beta SP, 35mm, S-VHS, DVD, Hi8. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20-\$40. Contact: CIAFF Ben Andrews FSCCA, Festival Director; (905) 388-5840; fax: 388-5840; ciaff@canada.com; www.CIAFF.org.

CORK FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-17, Ireland. Deadline: July 4. Founded in 1956, aim is to "bring Irish audiences the best in world cinema in all its variety." Fest's program is eclectic, bringing together new int'l films w/ other forms of film art, incl. doc, short, animation & exp. film. Competitive for films under 30 min. Founded: 1956. Cats: short, feature, doc, animation, experimental, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVD, CD-ROM. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Gillian O Connor; 011 353 21 427 17 11; fax: 353 21 427 59 45; info@corkfilmfest.org; www.corkfilmfest.org.

HELSINKI INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-26, Finland. Deadline: June 30. Non-competitive fest transforms Helsinki into a moviegoer's paradise, aiming to promote artistry of filmmaking; inventive, visually stunning, controversial films & highlighting the talents of tomorrow. The Festival is a combination of different strands: Best of Young European Cinema, American Independents, Gay & Lesbian, Fantasy films, Experimental Vision plus Modern Doc & Animation. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Pekka Lanerva, Dir. of Programming; 011 358 9 684 35 230; fax: 358 9 684 35 232; office@hiff.fi; www.hiff.fi.

INVIDEO, Nov. 10-14, Italy. Deadline: June 18.

Formats: Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: A.I.A.C.E./INVIDEO; 011 39 2 761 153 94; fax: 752 801 19; info@mostrainvideo.com; www.mostrainvideo.com.

KINOFILM/MANCHESTER INT'L SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct 27-31, England. Deadline: June 16. Entry is open to anyone in the film making community incl. first time film makers. Categories include: Horror, Latino, No/Low budget, Black & Asian focus, Lesbian & Gay, Student, Digital media, Underground Cinema. Founded: 1993. Cats: Short, Animation, Experimental, music video, student, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-VHS, Beta, Beta SP, super 8, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: 5 pounds UK (5 Euros or US \$10). Contact: John Wojowski, Fest Dir; 011 44 161 288 2494; fax: 161 281 1374; kino.submissions@good.co.uk; www.kinofilm.org.uk.

LES ECRANS DE L'AVENTURE/INT'L FESTIVAL OF ADVENTURE FILM, Oct. 14-16, France. Deadline: July 15. Held in Dijon, fest is a showcase for recent adventure-themed docs. Cats: doc, children. Formats: Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL, Secam) or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Cléo Poussier; 011 33 1 43 26 97 52; fax: 33 1 46 34 75 45; aventure@la-guilde.org.

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August 4-14, Switzerland. Deadline: June 15. This major Swiss cultural/cinematic all-feature event, is known for its innovative programming & support of alternative visions from independent directors. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Preferences for all sections given to world or European premieres. Two representatives of each competition film are brought in by the Festival for 5 days. Founded: 1948. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Irene Bignardi, Festival Director; 011 41 91 756 2121; fax: 41 91 756 2149; info@pardo.ch; www.pardo.ch.

MILANO FILM FESTIVAL, September 10-19, Italy. Deadline: June 30. Annual fest invites features films & shorts (under 45 min.) from anyone who'd like to "invent, build, & destroy new ideas of cinema." Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, DV, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Festival; 011 39 02 713 613; media@milanofilmfestival.it; www.milanofilmfestival.it.

MOLODIST: KYIV INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 23-31, Ukraine. Deadline: July 1. Annual fest sets out to analyze the main trends & tendencies in the work of young filmmakers around the world; to establish & broaden creative contacts between young filmmakers & between film schools; to recognize new personalities in modern film art; to integrate Ukrainian film into the global process of cinema art & industry. Cats: student, short, feature, doc, animation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Dom Kino; 011 380 44 227 4557; info@molodist.com; www.molodist.com.

MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 26-Sept. 6, Canada. Deadline: June 19 (shorts); July 24 (Features). Features in competition must be 70mm or 35mm, DVD or Video prod in 12 months preceding fest, not released commercially outside of country of origin & not entered in any competitive int'l film fest (unreleased films given priority). Shorts must be 70mm or 35mm & must not exceed 15 min. Founded: 1977. Cats: feature, short, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 70mm, DVD, Video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Serge Losique, Fest Dir.; (514) 848-3883; 848-9933; fax: 848-3886; info@ffm-montreal.org; www.ffm-montreal.org.

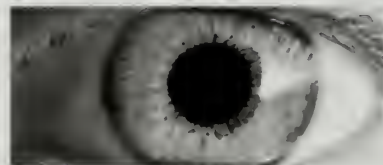
OVNI: OBSERVATORI DE VIDEO NO IDENTIFICAT (Unknown Frame Observatory), Jan., Spain. Deadline: June 15. OVNI takes place every 18 months at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, showing nat'l & int'l video projects & works around video & new media. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: Beta SP, Digital, 3/4", 1/2", DV, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: No entry fee. Contact: Joan Leandre, Toni Serra, Rosa Llop; 011 34 93 306 41 00; fax: 011 34 93 306 41 13; ovni@desorg.org; www.desorg.org.

SOUTH ASIAN DOC FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 25-28, Nepal. Deadline: June 30. Fest, located in Kathmandu, offers both competitive & non-competitive cats for docs on South Asian subjects made after Jan. 1 of previous year. Full-length docs given preference. Cats: doc. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, 3/4", DVD, mini-DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Film South Asia; 011 977 1 542 544; fax: 977 1 541 196; fsa@himalassociation.org; www.himalassociation.org/fsa.

aivf

Unless noted, AIVF programs take place at our offices (see below). RSVP is required for all AIVF events: call (212) 807-1400 x301 or www.aivf.org.

AIVF FILMMAKERS WORKSHOP FILMMAKERS JOURNEY: SUSTAINING YOUR VISION



when: Sat., June 5, 12, and 26
where: Goldcrest Post, 799
Washington St. near 13th St, NYC
(www.goldcrestpost.com/directions)

AIVF's Filmmakers Journey is a three-part workshop intended to examine and understand how accomplished, narrative filmmakers have maintained their independence throughout the production process, and how they have been able to present their work to their intended audiences.

Participants will learn from experienced feature film producers, directors, and creative teams who will share their triumphs, untold tactics, and war stories. Three case studies will demonstrate how producers can maintain creative vision through technique, craft, and a little business savvy. Independent producer Amanda Doss will moderate the workshops.

June 5—Director **Greg Pak**, *Robot Stories*

June 12—Director, **Rodney Evans**, *Brother to Brother*

June 26—TBA

Schedule subject to change. For current information, visit www.aivf.org.



IN BRIEF: AIVF PRODUCERS LEGAL SERIES: DISTRIBUTION DEALS— NARRATIVE FILMS

when: Thurs., June 3, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
where: AIVF
cost: \$40/\$25 AIVF members.
Advanced purchase is highly recommended. Register at www.aivf.org/store or call 212/807-1400 x301.

The AIVF Producers Legal Series addresses specific issues of concern to independent producers. Each session is moderated and co-produced by entertainment attorney Innes Smolansky, who is joined by a panel of industry professionals. These small group sessions not only answer common questions but also connect producers to the individuals and resources that can assist them on an ongoing basis.

This session will address structures applicable to narrative films including gross split/net profits, split royalties, etc. for distribution deals for theatrical, TV, video, and DVD.

IN BRIEF: AIVF PRODUCERS LEGAL SERIES: DISTRIBUTION DEALS— DOCUMENTARY FILMS

when: Thurs., June 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
where: AIVF

This session will address different structures applicable to documentary films including gross split/net profits, split/royalties, etc. for distribution deals for theatrical, TV, video, and DVD deals.

AIVF COSPONSORS: ATLANTA FILM FESTIVAL

when: June 11-20
where: Atlanta, GA

The 28th annual Atlanta Film Festival returns to screens in downtown Atlanta, (with additional screenings at Landmark's Midtown Arts Cinema, June 12th-17th), with a lineup featuring over sixty feature films and nearly 100 shorts. Opening night features the Atlanta premiere of Jim McKay's new independent film *Everyday People*, followed by the first of ten great parties. (Local sponsors will host parties for attendees, offering some of the best entertainment and networking in the southeast.)

For more information: visit www.atlantafilmmfestival.com or call (404) 352-4225.

reach AIVF...

Filmmakers' Resource Library
hours: Wed. 11-6; 1st and 2nd
Wed. of each month: 11-9; or by
appt. to AIVF members Tues. &
Thurs. 11-6.

The AIVF office is located at
304 Hudson St. (between Spring &
Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City.

Our Filmmakers' Resource Library
houses hundreds of print and
electronic resources, from essential
directories & trade magazines to
sample proposals & budgets.

By Phone: (212) 807-1400
Recorded information available
24/7; operator on duty Tues.-Thurs.
2-5 p.m. EST
By Internet: www.aivf.org;
info@aivf.org

**AIVF COSPONSORS:
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH
INTERNATIONAL FILM
FESTIVAL**

when: June 11– 24

where: Walter Reade Theater

Through the eyes of committed and courageous filmmakers, the HRWIFF showcases the heroic stories of activists and survivors from all over the world. The works they feature put a human face on threats to individual freedom and dignity, and celebrate the power of the human spirit and intellect to prevail.

For more information, visit www.hrw.org/iff.



**AIVF COSPONSORS:
SILVER DOCS FILM FESTIVAL**

when: June 16– 20

where: Silver Theater and Cultural Center, Washington DC

SILVERDOCS is a unique celebration of the documentary form. Capitalizing on its Washington, DC area location, the festival incorporates leaders in politics, media, arts, and culture on the stages of the AFI Silver Theatre. The SILVERDOCS Festival will feature seventy films from a competitive field of more than 1,680 entries submitted from sixty-five countries during its six-day run of screenings and symposia. The Sterling Award-winning feature and short filmmakers will receive cash and prizes totaling over \$25,000.

The SILVERDOCS International Documentary Conference, June 16 – 19, runs along side of the festival. The conference will feature three days of networking, engaging discussions and master classes, plus one-on-one access to decision makers.

AIVF members receive a \$50 discount to the All Access & Industry passes.

For more information, visit www.SILVERDOCS.com.

**AIVF COSPONSORS:
LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL**

when: June 17– 26

where: Los Angeles, CA

cost: AIVF members receive \$1 discount on screenings before 6 p.m.

The Los Angeles Film Festival, held annually for ten days in June, showcases the best of American and international independent cinema. With an attendance of over 40,000, the festival screens over 200 narrative features, documentaries, shorts, and music videos. The competitive section features recent US narrative features, documentaries, and shorts, while the International Showcase features full-length narratives and documentaries. The festival also screens high school shorts and music videos.

For more information, visit www.lafilmfest.com.

AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT:



**FILMS AT THE
LINCOLN CENTER**

where: Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W 65th St., NYC

www.filmlinc.com

AIVF members may attend select series (listed below) at a discounted rate—just \$5 per ticket. Bring your membership card to the box office!

June 1-10

Open Roads: New Italian Cinema

June 11-24

2004 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival

June 25 - July 6

Bruno Ganz: The European Friend



Your documentary can move audiences to take action for social change. The Independent Producers' Outreach Toolkit shows you how.

WHAT YOU GET

- Interactive Budget
- Resource Binder
- Case Studies
- Sample Proposals
- Interactive Worksheets
- Phone Consultation



MEMBER DISCOUNT!

www.mediarights.org/toolkit

email: toolkit@mediarights.org

New Edition!

Need Distribution?
Here is a tool to help:

The AIVF Guide to Film & Video Distributors
edited by Rania Richardson

What You'll Find:

- Up-to-date profiles of close to 200 distributors, supplemented by "how to" articles, selected reprints from *The Independent*, and in-depth interviews with over 20 distributors.
- Published to order, ensuring the most current information that's available.

Order online at www.aivf.org, or call (212) 807-1400 x 303.

\$35 / \$25 AIVF members

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country.

Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY: Upstate Independents

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY
Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 353 Means Street
Contact: Sonia Vassell, (404) 352-4225 x20
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Boulder, CO:

"Films for Change" Screenings

When: First Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Boulder Public Library
1000 Arapahoe
Contact: Michael Hill,
(303) 442-8445 x100; boulder@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or
Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH:

Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette Gillota, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays
Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.
Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-monthly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: 1519 West Main
Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.
Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St.,
Santa Monica
Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140
Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Nashville, TN

Where: See www.naivf.com for events
Contact: Stephen Lackey,
filmmakers@captain-pixel.com

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre
Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop
Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly
Where: Media Arts
Center, 921 25th Street
Contact: Ethan van Thillo
(619) 230-1938;
sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders
(650) 271-0097; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-monthly
Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts
Center
Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

House Calls

Recently the Los Angeles and the San Diego salons were treated to a visit from Doc Doctor Fernanda Rossi (see page 25), whose esteemed seminars impart priceless instruction and information for nonfiction filmmakers. Los Angeles docmaker Stephanie Swengel says Rossi helped her to "move forward with storytelling focus and not be stuck on logging, dubbing, and transcribing." Los Angeles salon leader Michael Masucci explains, "She gives you straight talk. There is an art and a science to this [documentary filmmaking], not everyone has the natural ability or the knowledge, and she communicates that in a positive way, while leading you to the skills and resources that can help. Any salon would benefit from this program." —Priscilla Grim

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

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The Experimental Experience

This month we asked a few experimental filmmakers to share their best experiences experimenting with film. The responses reflect differing notions of the genre, and suggest that the practice of experimentation has impacted other aspects of their lives and work.



"I'd say the time I covered my kitchen with a glittery pectin slime. Special fx can be quite messy sometimes. Also, scratching color negative emulsion is quite exciting for a dork like me. If you're careful you can scratch off just top layer of color and different colors come out—it's way fun. Working with post-production sound people is also very fun! Isn't filmmaking about having fun? Isn't that why we want to do this?"

—Krystina Shakti Siebenaler is a recent graduate from UT Austin working on a short sci-fi B-movie called *Golden Framboise*.

"Experimenting and experiences are not part of what I do. None of those words apply to my work or life, and ultimately I don't think the question applies to what art or true science is about."

—James Fotopoulos lives in Chicago. His films were exhibited in the 2004 Whitney Biennial.

"When I first began filmmaking, I was experimenting with the optical printer and eventually cobbled together a home-made printer from a broken S-8 viewer and camera. I used this contraption to re-photograph footage of my partner dancing. The resulting images were like pulsating,

charcoal drawings—quite unexpected and mesmerizing. I remember this as the point at which I fell in love with filmmaking."

—Ann Steuernagel, an experimental video/sound artist, is a visiting assistant professor in the film studies program at Mount Holyoke College.

"I haven't experimented with film much but repeatedly have good experiences shooting video at protests and documenting unsanctioned street art actions. It is really hard for me to shoot when there is so much state repression and police control, and when you are uncertain how events will turn. But it is in that uncertainty that I often capture powerful and unexpected moments of social interaction."

—Dara Greenwald's short experimental videos have shown nationally and internationally. She teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago, and performs with the feminist, street dance troupe The Pink Bloque.

"I have two intertwined experiences which have transformed me and my practice: 1.) creating a series of films using a pinhole camera and home-made/junk audio equipment from 1997-2002; 2.) taking those films on the road for a month-long 'microcinema' film tour with filmmaker Bill Brown in 2002."

—Thomas Comerford, Chicago filmmaker and teacher

"I never managed to achieve gratifying results with any of the 'traditional' experimental methods of scratching, burning or drowning film in chemicals. The best effect I ever encountered was with my film school pals: an in-camera fade to white. Very beautiful, effective and inexpensive. In an attempt to achieve an upgrade to German Expressionist Cinema, we just quickly moved the lights into the close up of the main character's bewildered face without adjusting exposure. So dramatic. It was the best part of the movie."

—Heiko Kalmbach, filmmaker

Scenes from Julie Talen's *Pretend*.

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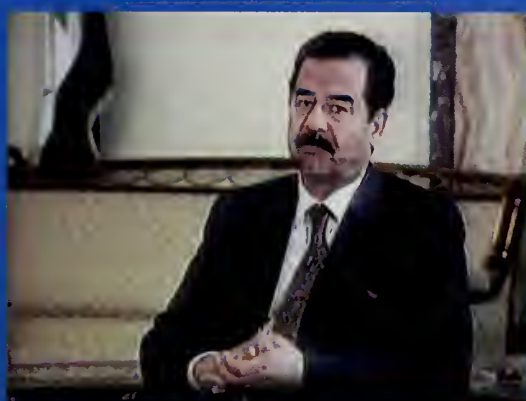
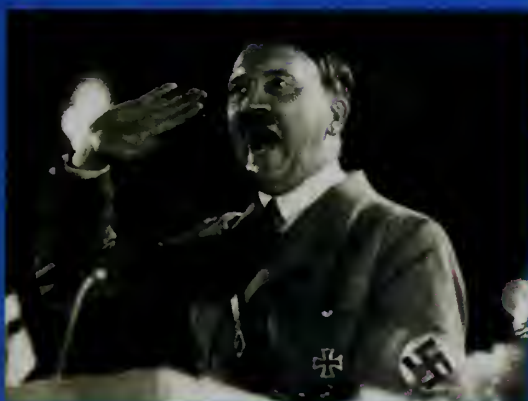
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Page 5 photos: Abbey Lincoln and Ivan Dixon in *Nothing But a Man* (New Video Group); James Caviezel as Jesus in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (© 2002 Icon Entertainment); Jim White in *Searching For the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, which screened at the Tribeca Film Festival (© Andrew Douglas 2003); director of photography Carolyn Macartney and assistant camera Arthur Ellis for Yasuaki Nakajima's *After the Apocalypse* (Francis Kuzler).

On the Cover: Spike Lee (Nancy Schwartzman).



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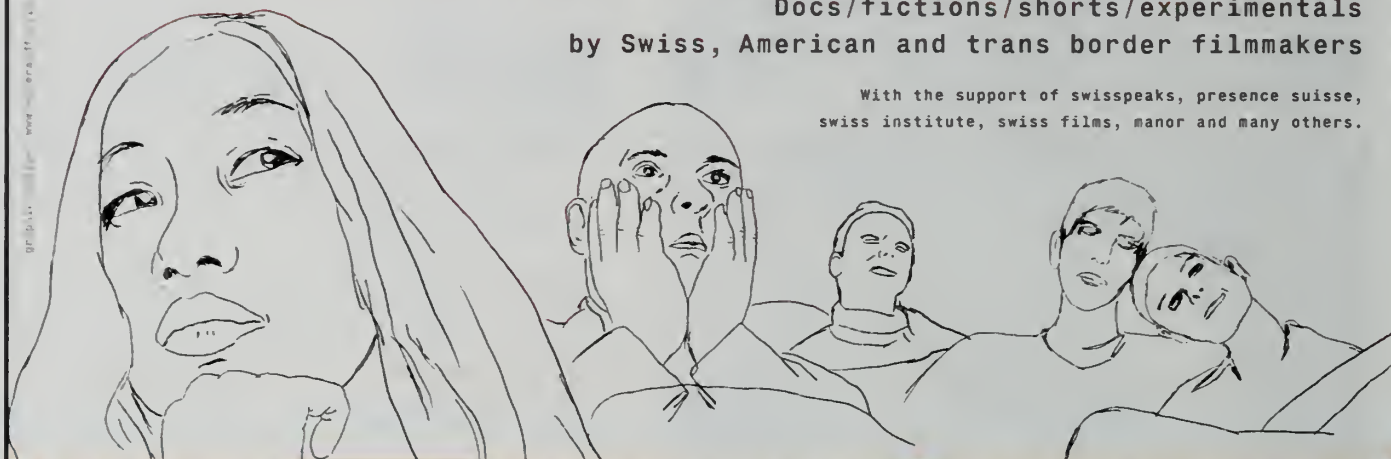
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Editor's Letter

I'm not going to lie to you, as much as I've looked forward to doing this issue, it also killed me a little. I have lived and breathed the subject of race throughout my life, both professionally and personally, and editing this issue I realized that that fact might actually be a liability in my role as editor. Early on, the material felt too close, too black/white-centric, and too self-serving.

I had to take a step back more than once to maintain some distance, and for the first time since I became editor last fall (and partly because I wrote a piece for this issue), I had a couple of former publishing colleagues read over some of the content to offer a truly objective set of eyes. In the end, though, I'm supremely proud and pleased with how the issue turned out, and I hope you will be, too.

It is true that when people think about race in America, they think, more often than not, about black and white. However, our society is changing dramatically when it comes to issues and ideas surrounding race, ethnicity, and culture, and I'm thrilled and inspired that within that change people are continuing to do great things in the world of independent film and media.

A pioneer to that end, of course, is Spike Lee, whose new film, *She Hate Me*, opens in wide release this month, and whom I have known and admired for years. It was a great pleasure and privilege for me to sit down with Spike to talk about the film and the state of filmmaking in general (page 41). *The Independent* also profiled three collaborators on Spike's new film—two long-time; composer and horn player Terence Blanchard (page 44) and editor Barry Alexander Brown (page 46), and one who has just finished working with

Spike for the first time; cinematographer Matthew "Matty" Libatique (page 20). Alexander Brown provided what I think is the best quote of the issue: "I just don't think that if you have a country that has the history of this country, you should be painting the first great black filmmaker a racist." He's talking about many people's knee-jerk reaction to Spike, but I love the unselfconscious simplicity and candor of it, and the fact that it comes from a white guy.

Filmmaker and community activist Jessica Chen Drammeh—the daughter of a first-generation Chinese mother from Taiwan and an Anglo father with Native American heritage—is profiled and talks about her work-in-progress, *Anomaly*, a documentary feature that explores topics concerning people with mixed race backgrounds.

The refreshing voice of self-taught filmmaker Yasuaki Nakajima comes through in his sweet, pure story of making his first feature film, *After the Apocalypse*, which has been receiving awards and acclaim across the festival circuit (Production Journal, page 27).

Three exceptionally cool organizations are thoughtfully featured—NALIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers), Asian Cinevision (ACV), and The Film and Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian—and we also compiled a list of resources for filmmakers of color (page 55), which I hope will be useful even if you aren't a filmmaker of color yourself. You must know someone who is, and if you don't, go meet someone who is. As the director Chris Eyre said at a panel sponsored by the Tribeca All Access program at this year's Tribeca Film Festival (which is featured in this month's Festival Circuit, page 23), when asked what he thought the solution was to bringing more people of color into the industry: "Breeding."

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
The Independent,
Rebecca Carroll



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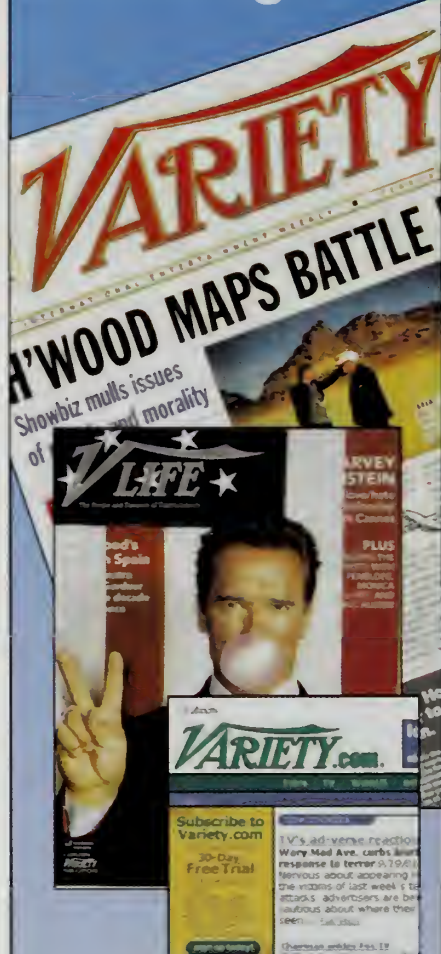
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Nothing But a Man

40 YEARS LATER, THE NEWLY RE-RELEASED FILM'S MESSAGE OF HUMAN DIGNITY REMAINS TRUE

By Rick Harrison

On September 30, 1962, the night Oxford, Mississippi exploded, two pioneering independent filmmakers plotted a powerfully subtle story about race in America.

In a restaurant that day, Michael Roemer and Robert Young, Harvard-educated creators of *Nothing But a Man* (1964), peered at the gaggle of reporters surrounding the man at the next table. The man was Gen. Erwin A. Walker, who was forced by President John F. Kennedy to resign from the army the previous year for indoctrinating his troops with conservative dogma. He was in town to plan a protest.

A federal district court had ruled that James Meredith could not be denied admission to the University of

Mississippi because he was black. Ross Barnett, the state's governor, personally barred Meredith from registering. When federal authorities escorted Meredith to the school days later, the protests escalated into an armed riot that was only brought under control the following day with the help of 30,000 National Guard troops, leaving two people dead, hundreds injured, and almost every out-of-state car burned.

"It was very tense," says Roemer, seventy-six. "We left about an hour before the town blew up."

Similar tension runs through *Nothing But a Man*, the seminal independent film and landmark in black cinema directed by Roemer and co-written and shot by Young (in Oxford that day while on a pre-production research tour through the south). "It was an underground railroad going the other way," Roemer says of the difficulties faced by two white filmmak-

ers meeting with blacks during the dangerous height of the southern Civil Rights movement. "We were passed from one black family to another, always trailed by a sheriff."

But without making overt political statements, the film is more like a riot of the soul. Heartbreaking and stirring, it portrays a young black couple in the South struggling with race, class, jobs, and fathers. The film's underlying message—true when the film was released forty years ago, when it was added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry in 1993, and now as New Video Group prepares to release it on DVD—promotes the paramount importance of human dignity with a quiet authenticity that speaks louder than any ram-paging mob of reactionary bigots.

In the film, Ivan Dixon (*A Raisin in the Sun*, *Car Wash*) plays Duff, an itinerant railroad worker who falls in love with the sweet, idealistic preacher's daughter played by jazz great Abbey Lincoln (*For Love of Ivy*). Their love battles to survive Duff's adjustment to the confines of segregated small town life in which he refuses to swallow his pride as easily as his wife's home-cooked meals, and must confront regret and responsibilities as an absentee father while trying to understand his own.

Steve Savage, president of New Video Group, resurrected the film for a video release in 1993 and has championed the planned August 24 DVD release that will feature new interviews with Roemer, Young, Lincoln, and Dixon along with biographies and liner notes. "I was struck by how fresh, stark, and compelling it looked," he says. "I felt it was something worthy of new audiences."

The film's power resides in a depiction of everyday life with an almost documentary style, achieved through a languid pace, low-key performances, and as Roemer puts it, "desperation rather than independence."

Filmed in what Roemer calls "below the Mason-Dixon line in Southern New Jersey" on a budget of \$232,000,


The railroad workers relaxing in their quarters in *Nothing But a Man*.

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in which the non-union cast was paid \$350 a week and the five-person crew \$100 a week, *Nothing But a Man* didn't bring Roemer a profit until twenty-eight years after it opened. Revenues from television broadcasts eventually helped him recoup his own \$7,000 outlay and repay his investors fifty cents on the dollar.

The soundtrack, featuring Martha and the Vandellas, Stevie Wonder, The Miracles, The Marvelettes, and Mary Wells, was acquired by a college friend of Roemer's who passed him a stack of 45s from a burgeoning Detroit record company he represented. That company was Motown, and Roemer's friend secured the rights from president Berry Gordy for a \$5,000 stake in the film. "Much of life is luck," says Roemer, "and this was pure luck."

The original theatrical release in 1964 suffered because, as Roemer explains, white audiences weren't interested in what they viewed as a depressing story about blacks in the South. And distributors were reluctant to show it to black audiences because they figured whites would then stop coming to their theaters. It was not shown to its obvious audience until a 16mm release the following year, allowing it to play in black churches and schools. "African American audiences didn't find it depressing at all," Roemer says. "In Detroit they were laughing all the way through—laughter of recognition."

It's a testament to Roemer and Young's direction and writing that the characters ring so true as they face the dehumanizing superiority of white characters, exhibit pride in ownership, endure the shame of alcoholism, abandonment, and the simple struggle to find work. The remainder of the credit goes to the brilliant acting by actors almost ideally cast for their roles.

Ivan Dixon, seventy-four, says, "Duff was the perfect character for me to play—moments of my life, really. They didn't know me, but what they wrote was me." Dixon, who was sent

to boarding school in the South as a juvenile delinquent, had lived enough to inhabit his rough and weary character while imbuing him with the requisite humor and pride.

Abbey Lincoln, seventy-three, also admits a strong kinship with her character. "It's my character," she says. "I felt that way. My mother raised me to be somebody—how to treat somebody right. It's no secret how to get along under pressure." Lincoln's ability to coax a grimace of suppressed dread out of a natural grin is just one of those facial expressions that exude from within. Along with every other incandescent moment of hers in the film, it must be felt rather than manufactured.

Roemer, a film professor at Yale since 1966, credits his childhood as a Jew in Nazi Germany as the source of his empathy. Speaking of himself and Young, also Jewish, Roemer says, "Jews and blacks have this 'we're all on the same side' feeling—a shared experience of being outsiders."

As far as filmmaking, other than Young who continues to work in Hollywood, that feeling persists for the principals of *Nothing But a Man*. Dixon's greatest success came on the television show *Hogan's Heroes*, which he understandably refers to as "a piece of junk," and after which he mostly worked directing television. Lincoln continues to enjoy a vibrant composing and singing career but only performed a handful of other acting roles.

Roemer made a total of four feature films including 1989's *The Plot Against Harry* with Young, and he continues to write scripts although he doesn't send them out. "I don't need some twenty-two-year-old in a studio to write a synopsis and send it upstairs with a note that says 'This is very well written, but it's not for us.' I'm much too vulnerable, and in this business you have to have asbestos skin."

Forty years after helming a masterpiece, in a dangerous world still more divided than united, with the value of human dignity never more vital or

precarious, Roemer can rest assured his legacy lives.

Rick Harrison is an editorial intern at The Independent.

Public-Access Network Offers Alternative Distribution **By Julie Jacobs**

Indieville, the self-proclaimed voice of independent film in New York, understands the ongoing struggle faced by independent moviemakers worldwide: how to get their projects seen by the masses. The Brooklyn-based media outlet, which airs indie news and entertainment on Brooklyn Cable Access TV and Manhattan Neighborhood Network, has found a solution to the problem right in its own "backyard." It has founded the National Film Network (NFN), a unique merger of film and television that seeks to broaden independent-movie access to small- and medium-sized towns through public-access TV.

Described as an aggressive community-level distribution project for independent film, NFN intends to create a new public-access circuit to complement the film-festival and microcinema circuits. Now in its development phase, with plans to launch this fall, NFN has garnered interest from public-access stations in major cities across the country, including New York, Chicago, San Francisco, West Hollywood, Boston, Atlanta, Seattle, and Austin.

"We're open to films of all genres and ratings for this network. What is broadcast on each public-access station ultimately will be up to the individual station managers," says Shane Snipes, executive producer of Indieville, which will serve as a primary source of movies as well as a centralized archive. "Our goal is to have films in our system that make them want to keep coming back and see what else we have to offer."

"One of our community access outreach initiatives is to incorporate more locally-produced programs on the arts,

particularly the non-mainstream fare that emphasizes the independent voice," comments Mike Roberge, director of programming, promotion, and outreach for the Seattle Community Access Network, which reaches approximately 400,000 customers. "Through the National Film Network, we hope to be able to do so."

Snipes and his colleagues currently are putting together a selection jury of well-known indie directors, producers, reviewers, and critics who will screen the films for archive inclusion, much in the same way that film festivals function. Likewise, filmmakers will undergo an application process and pay a submission fee. In turn, they will have their films seen by people in towns of all sizes across the country, as well as by distributors looking for product. The network will broadcast films for limited periods and may receive a percentage if the film is picked up.

"Filmmakers look to distribute films not only to get them seen, but also to recoup their production costs. We want to help them with this," points out Snipes. "NFN is a 'megaver-sion' of submitting to festivals."

What is particularly distinctive about NFN is that material for broadcast will be downloaded from the internet as opposed to being picked up via satellite feed. NFN will control use of the archive through passwords.

Because digital distribution via the internet, coupled with the extensive memory required for the film files, will prove to be a major expense, funding remains a key and ongoing effort of the NFN. Snipes is seeking support from foundations and private individuals, as well as from the participating public-access stations, which may be charged a fee to subscribe to the network. He also is looking at partnering with web companies with regard to hosting duties.

"We have our foundation, now we need to get word out and solicit submissions," says Snipes. "Already, we've talked to festival organizers and indie producers that are well connected to the Hollywood scene. People are curious why this hasn't been done before. NFN will undoubtedly provide independent filmmakers who can't get access to Hollywood or big distributors with a viable distribution alternative." □

Julie Jacobs is a New Jersey based freelance writer. She owns Wynne Communications, an editorial consulting firm.

CORRECTIONS

May 2004: In the profile of Ken Burns, "principal cinematography" should read "principle cinematography." In the table of contents, Michael Schiller is credited as the director of *The Devil's Twilight*. He is actually a producer and DP.

June 2004: In the table of contents, "Peggy" Vlagopoulos should be "Penny." And in news, the film *A-Like* should be *A-Like*. We apologize for these mistakes.



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Why the Passion?

RACIAL STEREOTYPES—BEYOND GIBSON'S FILM

By Peter Gelles

In light of the recent controversial uproar over Mel Gibson's "independent film," *The Passion of the Christ*, and the ensuing debate over whether or not the film is anti-Semitic, it has become painfully clear that it is time to reappraise the American response to racism in film. The question that most needs to be addressed is this: How is it that *The Passion* received such an enormous amount of media coverage over its insensitive portrayal of Jews, yet the mainstream press never seems to mention the fact that the Hollywood model was practically designed to reinforce racial stereotypes?

Every week an American-made film is released whose sins are more egregious than Gibson's, yet nary a word is said. A fine recent example is the Coen Brothers' *The Ladykillers*, which is particularly disappointing, as one would have hoped that the Coens would know better. A reevaluation is in order.

D. W. Griffith is commonly seen as one of the pioneers of what we could now call the traditional Hollywood narrative style. His use of close-ups and inserts to better clarify the actions taking place in a scene was revolutionary. Which is to say that style-wise, Griffith is something of a cinematic hero. Yet, if today's average film-going audience were to see *Birth of a Nation* (1915) within a contemporary context, it would result in an outrage. The film's heroes are the Ku Klux Klan. Griffith was, well... racist.

More interestingly, Griffith used white actors in blackface to portray the black characters in the film. His rationale was that white folks could

play black folks better than blacks could themselves. This wasn't an effect reserved solely for black roles; Griffith also used white actors to portray the Chinese immigrants in *Broken Blossoms* (1919). Luckily, today we live in a more progressive society, and we have black actors like Chris Tucker and Martin Lawrence who do a better job of playing black stereotypes than any white

ture, "The Minstrel Nigger and the Kung-Fu Chink, Hollywood ain't changed a bit: from *Birth of a Nation* and *Broken Blossoms* to *Rush Hour*."

Watching *The Ladykillers* was something of a shock. The Coens seem to have based the entire premise of the film on milking laughs from racial stereotypes. Take Marlon Wayans' cartoonish portrayal of Gawain MacSam, the gun-toting token black member of Tom Hanks' motley crew of caricatured criminals. His lines are "funny" because the grammar is improper and they are spoken through Wayans' exaggeratedly protruding lips, affected for the role. One line that seemed to be a particular



actor could ever dream of doing. That said, it isn't shocking to see a movie like *Rush Hour* (1998) perpetuate racial stereotypes for easy laughs. What is unsettling is when respected members of the filmmaking community commit even worse offenses, because it justifies and further normalizes the practice, rather than criticize or disassociate us from it.

I was once asked to lecture at CUNY/Hunter by a friend who was teaching a course on Korean American Literature. She thought it would be interesting to discuss the portrayal of Asians in Hollywood Cinema. After a lot of thought, I decided to call the lec-

highlight for the audience was his disbelief directed at the crew's demolition expert, repeated over and over throughout the scene: "You brought yo' bitch to the Waffle Hut? You brought yo' bitch... to the Waffle Hut!"

This line does serve to remind one of actual great moments in cinema, like Robert Townsend's *Hollywood Shuffle* (1987, written by Marlon's big brother Keenan Ivory), a satirical look at black men in degrading movie roles. In that film, Townsend plays Bobby Taylor, a black actor struggling to find work in Hollywood, who is offered only one role: a role not dissimilar from the character of Gawain MacSam.

James Caviezel as Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*.

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Early in *The Ladykillers*, a couple of “crime-crazed” black men attempt to rob a donut shop. Watching their overstated portrayal reminds one of Griffith’s black-faced actors. It’s almost as if the Coens are paying homage to the “Blacks in Congress” scene from *Birth of a Nation*, in which recently freed slaves allowed representation in congress jump on the tables eating watermelon, and generally behaving like animals. It’s as if *The Ladykillers* is trying to reappropriate the very same racism that *Hollywood Shuffle* and Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled* (2000) were trying to expose.

Second only to black stereotypes is Hollywood’s wholesale mockery of Asians. Tzi Ma plays a character in *The Ladykillers* known only as “the General,” an ex-Viet Cong officer inexplicably dressed as a Japanese Officer from WW II, complete with the characteristic mustache. The character is a stiff, severe, haughty, chain-smoking, avaricious assassin, who late in the film whips a wire around his head as if it were a pair of nunchucks, which shouldn’t come as a surprise, as we all know that anyone looking remotely Asian knows kung fu.

There is a consistent portrayal of Asian men in cinema as stoic and sexless (Buddha-like), kung fu masters (in dramatic films, like every American Jet Li film), or as martial arts wielding slapstick goofballs (in comedy, like every American Jackie Chan film). Ironically, the character Jackie Chan plays in American films is not unlike the characters he often played in his earlier Chinese films. But because those films were made in Hong Kong and China, and because perspective isn’t universal, his Chinese audience never saw him as a “goofy kung-fu chink,” but rather

just a character in a movie, because he looks like them (the same way we see Jerry Lewis not as a silly white man, but as just a silly man). The American audience perception of Chan’s racial alterity makes their



reaction to his characters radically different from that of his Chinese audience. Hence, the saying: “They all look alike to me.”

I’ve heard it argued that white characters are ridiculed just as much as everyone else. But let’s be realistic; it isn’t the same thing. There was never a holocaust of “dumb jocks” or “Southern gentlemen.” And though I do apologize to all the Southern gentlemen who were offended by images depicted in *The Ladykillers*, white stereotypes aren’t really offensive, because who are they threatening to? Racism inheres inside a power dynamic.

And that is precisely the point. At the very least, Jewish people have a voice in America. They have earned a sense of agency. And agency makes a crucial difference. It must be understood that my argument stems from a desire for film to undergo a larger reformation. It needs to be expunged of racism. I am not arguing for tolerance. I am just tired of hearing about *The Passion of the Christ*—in general, but also

as a primary example of racially or culturally offensive imagery.

Earlier this year, I attended a panel discussion at the South by Southwest Film Festival. The panel was a veritable Who’s Who of Indie trigger-pullers: Bob Berney (Newmarket Films), Larry Meistrich (Film Movement), Dana Harris (Variety), John Pierson (Grainy Pictures), Bingham Ray (formerly of UA/MGM), Micah Green (Cinetic Media), Eamonn Bowles (Magnolia Pictures). It was great to see all these guys on one panel. Overall the best part was witnessing Elvis Mitchell (formerly of *The New York Times*) and Rebecca Carroll (of this publication) give these guys a bit of a bender, when the question was posited: “Why do you think there are so few black faces in independent cinema?” After half an hour of hedging and backpedaling, I started to feel like I was at a George W.

Bush press conference. However, there were some interesting ideas and I don’t think anyone was really to blame for those ideas that weren’t. In the end, what really struck me was that not one of the panelists was willing to posit the notion that racism is a contributing factor.

Why isn’t there a better attempt to put forth positive and politically progressive portrayals of people of color in film? Is it a question of historical tradition? Is it that the audience actually prefers minstrelsy? Or, is it just that racism is still the dominant factor among decision makers? My guess is that it is a complicated combination of all those things. But, I don’t know.

If we really want to discuss the issue of race in American cinema, let’s not talk about *The Passion of the Christ*. Let’s talk about the general disregard and downright active attempts to continue a tradition of racist language in cinematic imagery. That would be a better place to start. ■

Peter Gelles is a writer and independent producer living in New York.

Daman Wayans and J.K. Simmons in *The Ladykillers*.



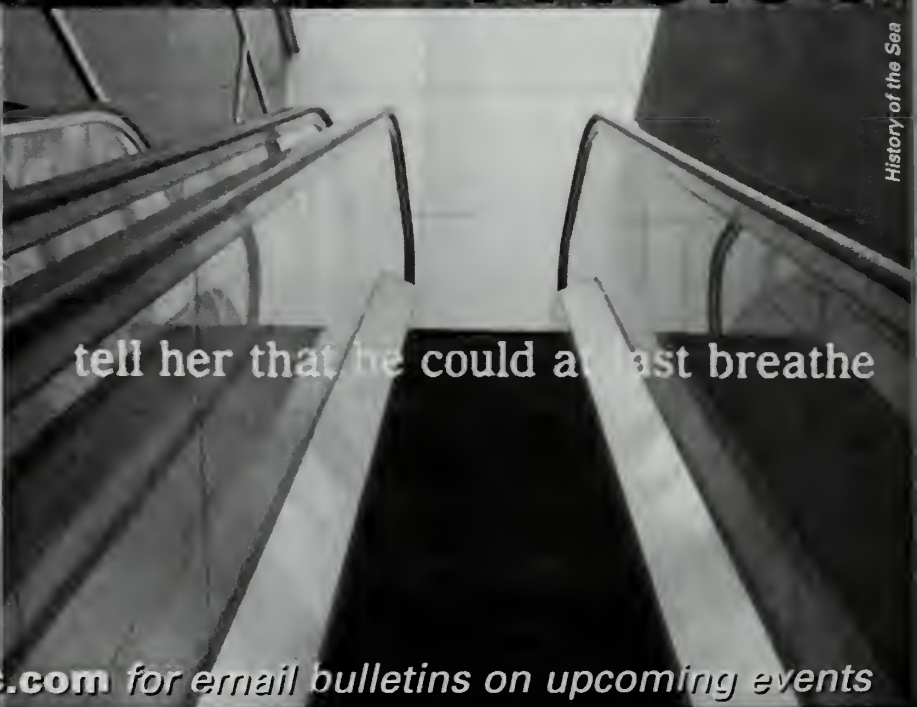
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What Are You?

JESSICA CHEN DRAMMEH ADDRESSES *ANOMALY*

By Nanobah Becker

“**T**he definition I like is: one who is difficult to classify,” says filmmaker Jessica Chen Drammeh about the word “anomaly,” which is also the title of her forthcoming documentary film in-progress. *Anomaly*, Drammeh’s first feature-length effort, looks at the process of self-identification by mixed race people through interviews, discussions, songs, and poetry. Drammeh says she hopes the film will help to shed light on the many lives of mixed race people that are all but invisible in current media.

“What are you?” is a complicated question for people of mixed race. The answer often leads to labeling that can range in terms from object to outcast. For as long as she can remember, Drammeh, the daughter of a first-generation Chinese mother from Taiwan and an Anglo father with Native American heritage, has been forced to deal with the issues surrounding her own racial identity. “I think I had very early realizations that I was [of] mixed race from the moment I went to school. When you’re growing up, you think your family’s just like every other family, and then other people start to point your differences out,” she recalls.

Drammeh remembers that in suburban West Virginia where she grew up, “there were about twenty Asian people in the whole town and about half I was related to. The other people [of color] you could count on one or two hands. Race or culture was never really talked about. It was basically like, you’re different, and you’re not one of us sort of thing.”

In high school, Drammeh partici-

pated in theater, creative writing, and music—all of that as well as a budding interest in photography brought her to New York to pursue a BFA in Film and Television Production at New York University. “With film I could combine all of those different creative disciplines and work on them togeth-



er. Film can have a lot of impact on various levels, whether it’s emotional or intellectual. It brings things to a more visceral level.” She says it’s that emotional immediacy of the medium that drives her filmmaking.

At NYU, Drammeh completed *Jimi’s Blues*, a thirteen-minute, 16mm narrative short, which earned her a Warner Bros. post-production grant and screened at festivals nationwide and on television. But it wasn’t until later, in a documentary class, that she discovered her true calling. “I picked up a book called *Half and Half*, an anthology about being biracial or bicultural [edited by Claudine Chiawei O’Hearn]. I read the book and realized there was information out there on [O’Hearn’s] experiences and the experiences of

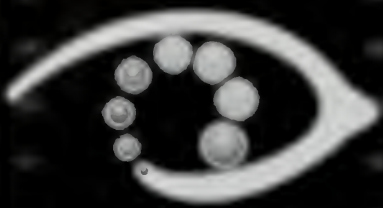
other writers, too.” Drammeh decided to explore the issue of mixed race for her documentary class project, and there the groundwork was laid for *Anomaly*, and later, her activism in the multiracial community.

After earning her degree in 2000, Drammeh revisited *Anomaly* with an eye toward expanding it into a larger production suitable for television broadcast and festivals. In researching the multiracial/multicultural community, she came across two organizations: Swirl, Inc., and EurasianNation.com. The former is a national nonprofit educational and sup-

port network serving mixed individuals, mixed families, transracial adoptees, and terracial/cultural/faith couples; the latter is an online magazine and community for people of mixed Caucasian and Asian descent. Drammeh has since partnered up with both organizations.

Traditional concepts of mixed race people in the US usually include those who are half black and half white. Drammeh has deliberately sought out a wide range of people of different ethnicities (such as Jewish and Chinese; Lebanese and Caucasian; Filipina and African American), different age groups (from five to fifty-four), and geographic locations (New York and California, West Virginia, and Georgia) to present a broader picture of the mixed race experience in America.

Anomaly logo, filmmaker self-portrait.



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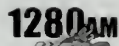
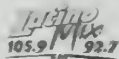
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"I'll be interested to see how *Anomaly* is received outside of a multiethnic setting. We've been doing community outreach with a trailer and a work-in-progress in community and educational forums. In those settings, people get why we need to talk about mixed race immediately." Although there are several well-known mixed race actors in Hollywood (Halle Berry, Keanu Reeves, and Vin Diesel among them), mixed race topics, such as the personal struggle for identification and acceptance, raising children in a racially or ethnically mixed family, and even political advocacy, are rarely given time in the contemporary media. Drammeh believes that this has to change. "The general American population is becoming more brown and more mixed, and we need to start having discussions about that."

Through her work on *Anomaly*, Drammeh has become more invested in community activism. She hosts a website, www.anomalythefilm.com, which not only chronicles the production of her documentary but also provides a resource for mixed race people and for those interested in further exploring the topic. The website lists news, community events, links to related sites, and information about books and academic courses on the subject.

With Jen Chau and Carmen Van Kerckhove (the founders of Swirl, Inc. and EurasianNation.com, respectively), Drammeh has started The Fusion Series, an ongoing discussion series on multiracial topics and issues that range from community organizing to media representation. "The Fusion Series provides an open and honest forum in which different communities can come together for meaningful dialogue and coalition-building." More recently, she also helped to create Mixed Media Watch, a grassroots coalition that monitors how mixed people are portrayed in film, televi-

sion, radio, and print media, and that features a blog that is updated daily.

In the spirit of coalition building, Drammeh has engaged the expertise of an advisory board that includes not only community organizers but also filmmakers and academics—among them are Phil Bertelsen, filmmaker; Jennifer Chan, adjunct professor at NYU; Thomas Allen Harris, direc-



tor/producer; Linda Nathan Marks, founder and president of The Crystal Quilt, a feminist, nonprofit organization dedicated to social justice and community building among women; Eileen Newman, executive director, Film/Video Arts; and Maria P.P. Root, clinical psychologist. "I want to have the film grounded in a social and political context so [that it is] in combination with the personal narrative plus the larger history around that. I feel like we need to do both to understand and contextualize mixed race in the United States and how it has evolved over time," Drammeh says.

Chan, the adjunct professor at NYU, teaches a course there called "Asian Americans of Mixed Heritage." Chan says that the course comes not so much out of a need for scholarship on the subject, as out of a strong desire of students to have access to information about the subject. Indeed, in recent years, discussions in college courses, student clubs, publications, and conferences are taking root across the country as the num-

Anomaly director/producer Jessica Chen Drammeh.

bers and exposure of mixed race people have increased.

Still about mid-way through production on *Anomaly*, Drammeh has garnered support for her project from the National Asian American Telecommunications Association as recipient of the James T. Yee Mentorship Award. She was selected for IFP's Project Involve, and participated in Film/Video Arts' Artist Mentor Project with Thomas Allen Harris. Drammeh says she intends to continue her focus on mixed heritage themes through nonfiction film work. "I'm not sure narrative is ready for the points of view that I would present. I like documentaries because you can talk about a lot of different social issues and the audiences are more open."

In the meantime, Drammeh notes that the film has so far taught her a lot about herself. "How I identify has changed a lot since I discovered that there's many different communities out there that you can identify with. I've discovered a people and a vocabulary to talk about our experiences."

2000 marked the first time Americans had the option of checking more than one box on the US Census to indicate their racial identity. Almost seven million people checked more than one race, and about half of those were under eighteen years old. Visibility, representation, political advocacy, education, and identity are some of the issues of the mixed race community that will become increasingly urgent to address. And as more mixed race children come of age, Jessica Chen Drammeh plans to continue providing a platform for the ensuing and inevitable discussions that come along with them. ■

For more information about the National Asian American Telecommunications Association's James T. Yee Mentorship Award, visit www.naatanet.org/community/filmmaker/mediafund/jimyee.html.

Nanobah Becker is a student filmmaker in New York City. She is originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico.



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Shooting for the Stars

MATTHEW LIBATIQUE PROVES GREATER THAN *Pi*

By Gadi Harel

Thankfully, I have the tiniest bit of self-control or else I would've pushed Matty Libatique into the pool we were sitting alongside one sunny May afternoon at a hotel in Hollywood. Jealousy, that's all. He's an intensely honest and generous guy who, though only thirty-five years old, has already

tionship that went on to include *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), and which, Matty says, was modeled after Ernest Dickerson and Spike Lee. "We used that Lee/Dickerson collaboration in the early 90s as a template for a filmmaking team," he says. "It's one of the reasons Darren and I got to a place in our relationship where we wanted to work



created a remarkable career as a cinematographer that appears to suit him just perfectly. He regularly deflects almost any praise onto others, and is comfortable enough to speak openly about everything from shooting commercials—"investment banks are the best"—and his favorite Ted Danson movie (yes, he has one, and it's *Cousins*). As Matty took a sip of his beer, noticing that his guard was down, it took everything I had not to shove him right off his chaise.

Most moviegoers were first exposed to the work of Matthew "Matty" Libatique through Darren Aronofsky's 1998 film *Pi*. Matty and Aronofsky met at the AFI (American Film Institute), and later launched a filmmaking rela-

tionship that went on to include

As it turns out, in just one year Matty went from being inspired by the Lee/Dickerson model, to working for each of them on two separate projects—DP-turned-director Ernest Dickerson's *Never Die Alone* (2004), and Spike Lee's *She Hate Me* out this month (see page 41).

"That was definitely something I had to get over," Matty says, referring to the quick change from admirer to collaborator with Lee. "Spike introduced filmmaking to an entire generation of Americans—urban Americans who didn't know filmmaking was an option for being creative. I was part of that explosion, so for me to get a call from him was astounding. He gave me

the script and I said to myself, 'This script [will have] to be the worst thing ever for me to turn it down.' Luckily, that wasn't the case. "I read half of [*She Hate Me*] and said I'm in."

Matty is the student who continues to aspire only to be a better student, and picks most projects with the goal of learning something from a production standpoint, or, more likely, from the director. Shooting for Mathieu Kassovitz (*Gothika*, 2003) taught him new ways to move the camera, and on *Never Die Alone*, Matty studied Ernest Dickerson's Zen-like focus during the inherent chaos of filmmaking. "Every day was difficult and every day was long, but Ernest had the clarity to be creative and put the camera in the right place that was like, holy shit, why didn't I think of that?"

In addition to his abundant skill, Matty's willingness to go with the flow and be part of an ego-free creative process is probably what makes him the collaborator that he is. Spike already asked him to shoot his next film (although due to scheduling conflicts, Matty had to decline). Before they began work on *She Hate Me*, Spike wanted Matty to shoot a commercial and video with him so that they could develop a relationship and language of their own. It was a useful exercise, particularly since Matty likes to first learn *how* a director shoots.

During the shoot, after losing a key location and finding a replacement, the first thing Spike wanted to know was whether or not the new space worked for Matty. When Matty nodded, the case was closed, and in telling the story he still seems a little stunned by Spike's immediate trust. "Spike said, 'This is it,' and just walked out of the place. He was saying, 'As long as you can deliver to me what I need to get done, you pick the place that's going to work for you. Spike is incredibly efficient.'"

"Spike gave me space to come up

Libatique and Lee working on *She Hate Me*.

with a palette. He gave me space to light in different ways, and create a relationship between light and shadow. He's been around long enough that he's not afraid of darkness. He's not afraid of anything. He's actually fearless. It just has to make sense to him. If it makes sense to him, he's not afraid of a goddamn thing."

Fearless filmmaking seems like a good way to describe Matty's approach to the business. "The way to make films is to attack, to use the camera as a weapon," he tells me. "People are so scared of it and they want to protect themselves in the editing room. I'm only put off when a director is making a decision against a visual concept based on protection and fear." That's the harshest thing I hear him say all day, and he's quick to add a level of understanding. "I don't have that pressure. It's not something I have to live with. I'm not going to disagree with that if they need an extra shot that is not within the visual language."

I finally get around to asking what he learned from working on *She Hate Me*. "Spike shoots in one of the most unorthodox manners in the way that he places cameras, and his reasons for it. And I didn't realize until I saw the first cut of a scene that it all makes sense. It all makes sense to him. When he's working on set, it's very jazz." Matty pretends he's Spike for a minute, gesturing around an imaginary set in a moment of inspiration—"The cameras will go here, here, here and here..."—and then suddenly recalls a documentary about Miles Davis: "To play with Miles you had to contribute. And to play with Spike, you've got to contribute."

Matty began his career with music videos and music references pop up throughout our talk. He follows that one with another, when he quotes Eric Clapton, who once said "There are things that I love to listen to, and there are things I can play." I understand what he's getting at, that Clapton doesn't have to know how to play every kind

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of music, and that's okay. But cinematographers aren't bandleaders. A cinematographer, Matty adds, "[has] to be able to play a lot of different things. You're almost a sessions musician."

If Matty is a sessions musician, then he's one that manages to make the most of the notes he's handed. Every frame he shoots seems alive in some way—weird or depressing or exciting, and always unique. But look for a pattern or style and you come up empty. *Requiem for a Dream* is full of meticulously crafted shots, from electric to downright devastating, all meant to prevent any passive viewing. But his next film, *Tigerland* (2000), comes off as casual by comparison and probably fails to leave behind a single memorable image. But what he did with that film is more expansive—it's the perfectly rendered thick summer air that remains unforgettable. And after that, he gave us the high-gloss of *Josie and the Pussycats* (2001), the indie-spirit of *Phone Booth* (2002), and the B-movie gloom of *Gothika*, (2003).

Matty makes it clear that personal style isn't what he's after, and he'll quickly brush aside the word "art," choosing instead to focus on colors or palettes, direction of light, and its density. "Things that go into creating something as a craft is what I contribute [to filmmaking]. It's a weird responsibility, because you're articulating someone else's vision. But you almost have to make it your own. Darren's vision is carved in stone and his vision becomes mine." The closest he comes to suggesting a larger stylistic role is when he adds, "My obligation is to get in a director's head, but sometimes they just need more help."

Could it be then, that that's where Marty Libatique is especially gifted? In finding someone else's singular vision and being able to express it in its own language without first needing to

translate it into his own? If it is, it's likely something he's mastered through commercials and videos, which he describes with great joy as a way of conditioning his creative stamina. He loves short-form work, and what it allows him creatively as well as the opportunity to work with so many people in so



many situations. He's content to shoot one movie per year, as long as it's the right one. And in some ways, the commercials and videos he works on are what prepare him for the right film or filmmaker and are emblematic of his core belief: "If you keep pushing what you're trying to do, sometimes it's not going to come out the way you expected it to. But because the effort is there, something beautiful will happen. The effort is there to be creative rather than be afraid. You have to approach it from an offensive standpoint, and you've got to go be aggressive."

Towards the end of our talk, Matty finally reveals one thing that has been disappointing to him in regard to his career thus far—not getting to shoot the signature Spike-Lee-dolly-shot [in *She Hate Me*]. "It was heartbreaking! Am I going to be the only guy that'll never do it? We just didn't have enough time." He sighs, and then breaks into a wide grin. "But Spike's happy with the movie, and if Spike Lee is happy with the movie, then I don't give a shit who else is." ▢

Gadi Harel is a writer and filmmaker living in Los Angeles.

Libatique filming *She Hate Me*.

Chaos Below Canal

TRIBECA'S DIZZYING THIRD YEAR SLATE

By John Pavlus

New York City: the one place on earth that may, at least in the eyes of its own citizens, come close to being all things to all people. Dizzying variety in every direction has always been at once the draw and curse of the place—and so too has it been for the annual Tribeca Film Festival, which took over its namesake Manhattan neighborhood for the third time this May. Created by Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal to be a catalyst for lower Manhattan's cultural and economic recovery in the wake of the September 11 attacks, the festival continued its tradition of unapologetically eclectic programming, offering more than 250 films in a dozen disparate categories.

To the untrained eye—hell, even some trained ones—the program schedule seemed to evince a scatter-shot, see-what-sticks approach. Indiewood mainstays like Lisa Cholodenko and Chris Eyre screened new films with studio ditz-glitz like Garry Marshall and the Olsen twins; staid Iranian conscience-dramas

played with animated children's fare. Three full programs of feature documentaries ran the gamut from gay

reading sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; and a display case containing—why not?—the original Declaration of Independence.

But for those undaunted by this tangle of apparently competing agendas, Tribeca offered its share of rewards—not leastwise in the realm of documentary film. “Docs have to be independent by default, so their qual-



marriage and prison abuse to lady wrestlers and competitive hotdog eaters. The “NY, NY” Feature Competition pitted a quasi-narrative experimental reverie (*The Time We Killed*) against an off-Broadway musical adaptation (*Tony ‘n Tina’s Wedding*) and a gritty coming-of-age story (*Cross Bronx*), while the “Restored and Rediscovered” section presented *East of Eden* alongside *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song*. And that’s just the films—other official festival attractions included a drive-in movie screen showing the final episode of *Friends*; a free concert featuring Norah Jones and The Roots; a science-themed screenplay

ity at festivals tends to be more consistent [than fiction films],” said Henry Ansbacher, who produced the short, *We Are PHAMALy*, about a troupe of physically handicapped actors. Indeed, outside of a documentary-focused festival, one would be hard-pressed to find a more enthusiastic approach than Tribeca’s to non-fiction mediamaking where cash prizes between \$5,000 and \$25,000 are awarded in half a dozen categories.

Tribeca even granted the documentary form red-carpet status with its Gala Premiere screening of *Brotherhood*, a full-immersion verité portrait of firefighters in post-9/11 New York. Director Lilibet Foster brought her cameras inside three elite rescue companies in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, as each was struggling to re-staff after losing invaluable veterans to the World Trade Center attacks. The pall of that tragedy colors every frame, but

Above: (left) *Cross Bronx*; (right) *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*.



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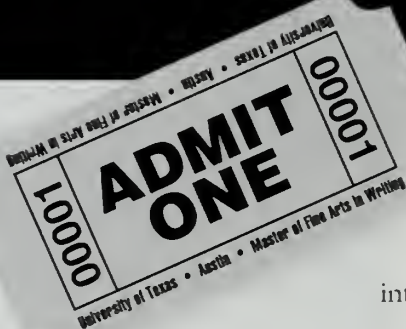
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Foster's humane understatement keeps the film from flattening into a one-note presentation. Like her stiff-lipped subjects, she knows that the oblique traces of that day—a still-empty seat at dinner, a sudden jump in company seniority—speak volumes for themselves.

Taking the opposite tack—but to equally powerful effect—is the bewitching, oneiric *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, in which alt-country troubadour Jim White leads commercial-director-cum-documentarian Andrew Douglas on a tour through the mythic contradictions of “the poor white South.” Wandering through churches, prisons, diners, and junkyards under the constant watch of a concrete Jesus statue, Douglas entwines stylized cinematography and dreamily staged musical interludes with gritty, on-camera interviews to render the peculiar Southern tension between the debauched and the divine: “Saturday night and Sunday morning.”

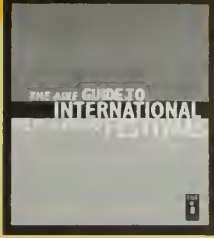
Ken Burns this ain't, and viewers interested in an objective, exhaustive cultural survey should look elsewhere. In fact, *Wrong-Eyed Jesus* doesn't deal at all with familiar touchstones of Southern ethnography such as the Civil War and racial disharmony. Instead, it takes what amounts to little more than a literary vibe—embodied here in White's haunting music—and teases its essence out of the physical landscape in a pungent melange of tangential images and stories.

Tribeca's narrative feature offerings provided just as much quality and variety. Liu Fen Dou's sexual psychodrama *The Green Hat* won awards for Best Narrative Feature and Best New Narrative Filmmaker and netted cash prizes totaling \$45,000. Competition in this category was stiff, as the contenders included some truly striking films from first- or second-time directors. The French entry, *Demi-Tarif (Half Price)*, came bearing a quite auspicious endorsement, having

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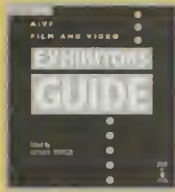
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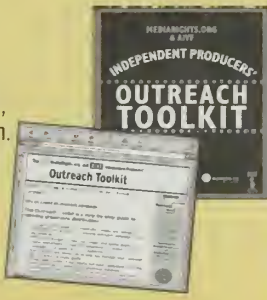
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been compared to *Breathless* by no less an authority than reclusive French documentarian/cine-essayist, Chris Marker. Controversial praise aside, the impressionistic film—helmed by twenty-one-year-old first-timer Isild le Besco—exhibits a near-unprecedented level of naturalism from its trio of child leads (two girls and a boy, aged seven, eight, and nine) as they fend for themselves in Paris following the mysterious disappearance of their mother.

"The world from a child's perspective" is almost always a sentimental cliché when applied to films made by adults, but *Demi-Tarif* inhabits that point of view with thrilling, mysterious integrity. Like a child's consciousness, the "story" has only the wispiest sense of big-picture causality; everything happens in its own singular instant, gigglingly vivid and then gone. One moment the kids are running through the city streets dressed up in Mom's clothes, shrieking, and twirling in an orgy of unmannered glee; the next, they're sobbing uncontrollably in bed, sick with fever and afraid of the dark. How does one lead to the other? Who knows? Did you back then?

Unsupervised children (albeit of the late adolescent variety) drive the drama of another impressive festival debut, *Cross Bronx*, which follows the fortunes of four pals as they move out of Westchester into an inner city apartment together during their last semester of high school. The story doesn't break any new ground—inevitably, priorities shift and relationships change, forcing each boy to go his separate way by the final reel—but the young cast's effortless chemistry and writer-director Larry Golin's sharply observed, unsentimental script both raise the bar of the material. Exceptional cinematography never hurt an indie, either, and *Cross Bronx*'s gorgeous, crisply saturated visuals generated quite a few comments in the post-screening Q&A session. When Golin revealed that the movie

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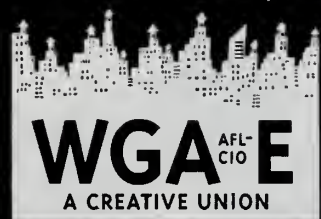
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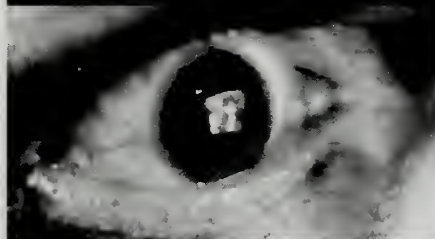
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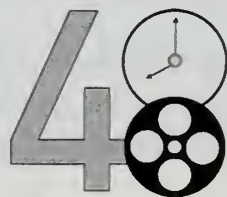
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was shot on high-definition video rather than film, the audience let out an audible gasp. After seeing *Cross Bronx*, even the most sclerotic purists will have to admit that, in the right hands, HD is indistinguishable from celluloid—and the film justifiably earned the festival's award for Best HD Technology.

"It was our maiden voyage, and it went unbelievably well," says Golin of the world premiere screening. "I always wanted to [bring *Cross Bronx*] to Tribeca. Based on the New York story that it is, and its subject matter and tone, I thought, 'Where better is it



going to go?' To be in something with Bob [De Niro] and Scorsese and those guys—that's the place for me."

Golin added that, based on the film's festival response, he's already in negotiations with a distributor. "You work your way up the ladder to the big guy, and we already have, like, ten screenings set up for different people at the studios," he said. "It's tricky because everybody has just left or is leaving for Cannes right now. But in the meantime it's kind of good for the movie, because we're getting added industry buzz from the rush."

There may not have been studio agents in the audience, but experimental films also played to packed houses throughout the festival. Under the guidance of Tribeca's experimental programmer Jon Gartenberg, avant-garde films were not ghettoized into their own category, but instead were sprinkled liberally throughout the festival's narrative and documen-

tary programs. Jennifer Reeves's *The Time We Killed* beat out more traditionally accessible competition to win the award for Best NY, NY Narrative Feature; and documentary competi-



tions included film-portraits of avant-garde figures James Benning, Grahame Weinbren, and Amos Vogel.

"It's a very deliberate idea that experimental film would be included in the larger rubric of the festival," said Gartenberg. "So I'm thrilled when there are people here who know experimental film, but also when I see the people who have not been exposed to it. These filmmakers are not telling them what to think, how to think it, or what emotion to feel at what point. And having been doing this for two years, I know there are people [in the audience] who have never seen experimental film before, but still 'get it' on a visceral level."

Indeed, visceral appeal is the one thing the Tribeca Film Festival as a whole can bank on—drawing people to suffer overbooked screenings and interminable door sales lines, scatterbrained programming, and schizophrenic weather changes. "So disorganized," was one New York couple's curt opinion of the festival after being barred at the door to an oversold screening. Still, they snuck into the theater next door, determined to see a Tribeca film. Would they come back next year? Oh yes, came the reply, which would surely make De Niro proud: "It makes us want to rent here." ▣

John Pavlus is a writer living in New York.

Firefighters in *Brotherhood*, directed and produced by Lilibet Foster.

Surprise Ending

AFTER THE APOCALYPSE'S ROAD TO COMPLETION

By Yasuaki Nakajima

After the Apocalypse is a black and white science fiction film shot on 16mm, about five survivors trying to cope with the "new world" following mass destruction in the wake of World War III.

After principal photography was done in November 1999, I spent four and a half years finishing the film before its world premiere at the SXSW Film Festival in March 2004. The reason it took so long is because I was in college full-time, and I was also doing internships at four different post-production companies in New York City to learn sound work and get access to equipment.

I created a work print to edit on a 16mm flatbed at Film/Video Arts. It was before Final Cut Pro became a sensation and Avid was still expensive. In December 1999, I spent intensive editing time at Film/Video Arts (FVA) when it was still on 12th Street and Broadway. I paid \$6.50/hour for 4-plate flatbed and \$7.50/hour for 6-plate flatbed. When FVA moved to the Wall Street area, I lost editing space. So I found a Polish guy who owned a 4-plate flatbed in New Jersey. I paid him \$50/day and kept picture cutting in his room during the winter. It was a very cold winter I remember. It was tough to go to New Jersey everyday from Brooklyn (where I lived at the time) while everyone else was having Christmas or New Year's vacation.

Once I had a rough cut, I kept editing only at night and on the weekends

at Millennium Film Workshop, because as I said, I was going to college full-time at Borough of Manhattan Community College. I only have a high school diploma and want to have a college degree from the US. I am too old to go college in Japan.

Once we locked picture, we had to move onto sound process. I believe sound design is as essential as the



picture, and considering the context of the narrative, sound plays a key role in *After the Apocalypse*. The film takes place where no modern society exists any more, and only nature's most basic elements—water, air, wind, breath, wood, fire, and earth—can be experienced. I wanted to create sound from the subjective point of

view of these five survivors, allowing the audience to experience the story through the characters' ears. I would like the audience to realize how beautiful nature can sound, as the protagonists of the film come to realize this themselves.

We shot the movie MOS, so there was no sound recorded during the production. Our locations were all in and around Brooklyn, and there were too many airplanes and trains around the tunnel where most of the story takes place, so we could not have recorded anything anyway. We had to build the full soundtrack in studio from nothing, just like sound work for animation film.

To learn sound work, I started an internship at Gun For Hire Post, which is The Shooting Gallery's subsidiary postproduction company. At the same time, I started to do another unpaid internship at a nonprofit organization called Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center, where I was able to take free ProTools classes. I worked at Harvestworks for four years, and did several other shorter internships at post-production companies in New York to keep upgrading my skills.

It was during my internship period that I met my sound collaborator, Dong Hwan Lee, who was studying film sound at NYU. Dong Hwan had access to a recording studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey, where we would work once a week. I used the Foley, ADR education I got from interning at Gun For Hire Post.

We brought tons of junk inside this tiny studio. We created everything from footstep, body movement, props, SFX, and breathing.

Traveling from Brooklyn to Fort Lee, New Jersey takes two hours. And Dong Hwan had a new baby, so he would always have unexpected conflicts. Often I ended up waiting for him in front of the studio for an hour

Yasuaki Nakajima naps on location.

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in the winter. And sometimes we would only have two hours of recording time because he had to take his baby to the hospital, or things like that. The studio was located next to a street, so if a truck passed by during recording we had to redo it. The people who lived downstairs watched a lot of TV with big sound, especially on the weekends. So we would sometimes have to wait until they stopped watching TV, because we had no right to stop their enjoyment. But I was using the studio for free, so I could not complain.

Then Dong Hwan moved to Vancouver, Canada, so I kept Foley/SFX editing and rough mix at Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center for another year. I started to mail rough-mixed versions of *After the Apocalypse* to film festivals in the fall of 2003. I received a letter from Geoffrey Gilmore from the Sundance Film Festival that said he was considering the film for the festival's American Spectrum program. Now I think I should have used that letter to look for a rep. At the time, I had no idea how to react and so I just waited for him to call me—the Sundance application guidelines stated that we should just wait. Sundance didn't call me. But Matt Dentler from SXSW Film Festival called in December asking if I could finish the film before March 2004. I told him that I could. He said, "We are just checking status of all films," and hung up without telling me if he'd seen the film or not.

A few months went by and I didn't hear anything. Then on February 7, 2004, a Saturday night after I'd gotten back from Harvestworks, there was a phone message to call Matt. It was two days before the 2004 SXSW film lineup was to be announced. I was jumping around thinking we got in. After I

calmed myself down, I called his cell. Matt said, "Your film is not selected yet, actually. But it is one of films that we are trying to program at the last moment. I'll call you Monday to let you know what's happened"

That weekend was long. Monday, I waited all day but he didn't call. I checked the SXSW website, but didn't see *After the Apocalypse* listed in the lineup. I felt down. That night, very late, I went out for Chinese takeout, and when I came back there was a message from Matt to call him. So I called him back, but he didn't pick up.

The next afternoon, I decided to call him again, expecting to hear his apology for why he couldn't find a slot for our film. I asked him, "So what's hap-



pened with our movie?" Matt said, "Oh, your movie is in!" I was like, "No! That's impossible!" And he said, "Really, you don't want?" Of course, I told him we did, and after I hung up the phone, I started jumping around and calling all my friends, boasting all afternoon.

Now we had three weeks to deliver the mixed *After the Apocalypse* master tape. I'd sent the full ProTools sessions file to Dong Hwan in Canada. He agreed to work on sound re-edit and mix, so that I could work on promotion—making postcards, phone calls, sending emails. One week later, Dong Hwan lost access to the Canada studio where he was working, and sent

A scene from *After the Apocalypse*.

YASUAKI NAKAJIMA

me back an unfinished ProTools sessions file. I was delighted to see his excellent editing technique and solved a lot of synch problems that I'd had before, but I was shocked when I found that all the rough mix I had done was gone. He needed to take all volume level out in order to smooth his editing work. All the tracks I had named in very detailed order were changed to numbers. He needed to name tracks with numbers to match his mixing console.

There were about seventy tracks, and I had no idea which tracks were what. And most of the plug-ins he used at his studio in Canada didn't work at Harvestworks. So most of his hard work for equalizing staff was wasted. I was so angry, but I could not blame him. What could I do? The reality was that I was the only person who could finish the mix for this film, and I had two weeks to do it. I went to school in the morning and came back to my room in the afternoon to get some sleep before going to Harvestworks to mix for the night. This went on for two weeks straight.

Programmers from SXSW warned me that the film would get pulled from the first night screening if I wasn't able to send the master tape by Monday, March 8, 2004. The first screening was March 12. Since I had done all the rough mixing myself and listened to the movie so many times, it was not too hard to get things back as they were before. But it was very time consuming and I felt really stupid redoing it.

And on the morning of Monday, March 8, after few hours of sleep, I ran to the Fed-Ex office with the finished film. We made it. ▣

Yasuaki Nakajima was born in Hokkaido, Japan. He is a self-taught filmmaker who moved to New York in 1996 to join the independent film community. For more information about his feature film, After the Apocalypse, visit www.aftertheapocalypse.com.



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Ask the Documentary Doctor

By Fernanda Rossi



Dear Doc Doctor:

Should I provide subtitles for the subjects in my documentary who speak Spanglish, or other "hybrid" languages in America? I heard subtitled films are harder to distribute. Is it true?

The world of languages and dialects can become quite complex in the United States, where so many nationalities converge. And it is true that in mainstream America there has been

those that are not used to it. To my surprise, we had to remove the subtitles for the American version, not because Americans understand Jamaican English better than the British, but because apparently it would be politically incorrect to subtitle African Americans and African Caribbeans."

Though at first this anecdote seemed the eccentricity of an overly cautious producer, I then remembered that it wasn't the first time I had come across such a situation. While subtitling is perhaps intended to make a film more inclusive, the subtext implies that the film that requires subtitling cannot be understood by the masses, and therefore does not belong.

As usual, I advocate the middle path for which Sandi Simcha

I would encourage this not-quite-subtitles tactic for films that include cultural slang and regional dialects. As per the socio-political aspects of what constitutes a separate language, who belongs and doesn't, and what should be officially bilingual... Big sigh! We will all have to move to Quebec and see how they manage.

Dear Doc Doctor:

I am African American, and I have several ideas for my first long format documentary film. But I feel pressured to represent the issues of my culture as a whole—both for moral reasons as well as funding and distribution opportunities. Can you help me with how to handle this situation? Cultural identity is an important area to explore as an artist. And in my experience, most first time documentary filmmakers choose to explore issues that are closer to home. If you identify yourself as being part of a particular social or ethnic group, then that exploration might make you feel compelled to try to speak on behalf of the

If you identify yourself as being part of a particular social or ethnic group, then that exploration might make you feel compelled to try to speak on behalf of the entire group.

an historical resistance to foreign (read: subtitled) films. As far as subtitling films with subjects who speak parts of a language we can understand and parts we cannot, the issue exceeds the practical and spills over to the socio-political.

For example, Mick Csáky, Chief Executive and Creative Director of the England-based production company Antelope, recalled during a co-production panel at the last Real Screen Summit: "*Bob Marley: Rebel Music* (Jeremy Marre, 2000) was subtitled for British television because Jamaican English is hard to comprehend for

Dubowski's film *Trembling before G-d* (2001) is a good example. The subjects in the film integrate religious Hebrew words and Yiddish dialect into their everyday language. Quite elegantly, Dubowski starts subtitles in English just a few words before the foreign word appears, and continues for a few lines after. At times where no direct translation is possible, the subtitles read like a mini-dictionary entry. This smart approach made the documentary accessible to all audiences and has helped to build its success in the micro-cinema circuit and grassroots/outreach screenings.

entire group. But at heart you can only ever speak for yourself.

Examples abound inside and outside communities of color, and range from the explicit personal documentary to the more detached fly-on-the-wall. In many cases, self-exploration is part of the path to establishing a career in nonfiction film.

Filmmaker Thomas Allen Harris started his career with *Vintage: Families of Value* (1995) a portrait of three African American families, and then went deeper with the very poetic and multi-award-winning *That's My Face* (2001), a self-portrait of African

American identity and spirituality. With his most recent film, *The Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela*, he continues his focus on the African Diaspora, while moving in a direction away from himself as a subject.

With her film *Flag Wars* (2003), Lynda Goode Bryant witnessed her hometown go through the process of gentrification. She is now making *The Vote*, a cinema verité look at America's 2004 presidential campaigns and primaries, representing a sharp departure from her previous film, for which she received ample funding and support.

If we don't care to have a closer look, it does feel at times that funding and distribution is ethnically earmarked, leaving "us to talk about us" and "them to talk about anything they want." While I don't intend to undermine the socio-political issues in this country, it might be more useful at this point in your creative process to understand the subtle differences and undercurrents of the situation.

In short, some organizations fund content, others fund artists and others still, fund both. For example, The National Foundation for Jewish Culture "supports the creation of original documentary films and videos that promote thoughtful consideration of Jewish history, culture, identity, and contemporary issues among diverse public audiences." On the other hand, NALIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers) has a "commitment to Latino/Latina media and filmmakers, regardless of the form or content of their work."

The path of the filmmaker might seem shaped by outside forces, but the real itinerary can only be decided by the inside force: you. ▣

Want to ask the Doc Doctor a question for a future issue of *The Independent*? Write to her at info@documentarydoctor.com.

Fernanda Rossi is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. For more info, visit www.documentarydoctor.com

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TOTALLY INDEPENDENT

Native Visions

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN
INDIAN'S FILM & VIDEO CENTER

By Sarah Wildberger



Being all things to all people may be impossible, but it's a kind of impossible that both arts organizations and minority organizations have a lot of experience with. The Film and Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian appears to be doing the impossible about once a year at its Native American Film and Video festivals.

The center, housed in the NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in lower Manhattan, is well known for its festivals—the twelfth was held in December 2003, with eighty-five productions presented. Among a selection of filmmakers who participated, barely a harsh word was said, with most praising the festivals as the best organized they've participated in, with large turnouts.

"What makes their festival different is that they have filmmakers not just from North America," says Alexandra Halkin, founder of the Chiapas Media Project, a partnership that provides media equipment and training to indigenous people in southern Mexico and whose work has been shown at the festivals. The center's mission is to serve North, Central and South America as well as Hawaii.

The festivals are also a major mixing and networking opportunity where teens at the youth and media program have a chance to ask questions of professional documentary filmmakers, for instance. Much more Q&A

Vincent Blackhawk Aamodt filming the documentary *The Ghost Riders*, which premiered at the 2003 NAFV Festival.

VINCENT BLACKHAWK AAMODT



interaction is programmed than at some other festivals, filmmakers say.

But a festival lasts only a few days a year. The rest of the time, the center fills multiple and geographically widespread missions in film, video, television, radio, and new media—ranging from housing a study collection of about 2,000 titles produced in the past twenty-five years, to daily screenings for general and family audiences in New York, to traveling film presentations, and supporting series such as the Native Cinema Showcase at Santa Fe's annual Indian Market. One of the latest in their multiple partnerships was support for screening Chris Eyre's new feature, *Edge of America*, in May at the Tribeca Film Festival's new All Access series promoting diversity.

The center's English/Spanish "Native Networks" website (www.nativenetworks.si.edu) holds a wealth of information on everything from daily programming to screenwriting competitions to archived filmmaker interviews—a few clicks can get a filmmaker access to dozens of production and distribution companies. Yet the center also has traditional museum duties, such as preserving copies of influential independent Native American films *House Made of Dawn* (Richardson Morse, 1972) and *Powwow Highway* (Jonathon Wacks, 1989). Independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch called the center asking them to investigate when he heard that the latter was a lost film, and elements of the original were tracked down in Los Angeles. Preserving languages and story through its media is another center mission.

In September, the center will open additional offices and present programming in the new National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall in Washington, DC, which will hold a 320-seat theater, as well as video screening kiosks. While the center and the festival, for now, will remain based in New York, it will have study collections in DC and in the museum's cultural center in the Maryland suburb of Suitland.

"The center's goal is always to go to people where they are," says Elizabeth Weatherford, head of the center, who was director of the first Native American Film and Video Festival in 1979 and helped found the center in 1981. "Going to Washington just fits in with that."

But the challenges in Washington are a little different from those encountered in the center's past travels. Washingtonians are watching to see if this museum, different in everything from its design to its strenuous efforts for inclusivity and fighting a legacy of what many have seen as misrepresentation and misappropriation, can now avoid, well, wonkification. Neither the cachet of the sometimes edgy New York festival programming nor community outreach programs in Mexico and the Southwest would appear to provide many lessons in how to operate in a town where, until recently, the sidewalks rolled up at 6 pm (and everyone worked until 8 pm anyway).

But it could also be an opportunity for growth in a city often starved for good and diverse films—witness the long lines for film programs at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum of contemporary art and at the Library of Congress. Weatherford says the center plans to tap into that audience, as well as the one they've built up with their own programming in Washington over the years. The center also partners with the city's popular Environmental Film Festival, and Weatherford says it will also reach out to Native Americans from Latin America living in Washington's suburban communities—a good plan considering the lack of bilingual programming in the area.

As Weatherford points out, the center's programming has been by necessity peripatetic. "Numerically, the Native

American independent film world is not a large world—just 4,000 to 5,000 people—but geographically, it's everywhere. We needed to be everywhere," she says. Add to that the need when attached to a major national museum to be diverse, offering everything from children's programming to preservation.

Native communities are widespread, with distance and isolation as major obstacles. With its offsite programming such as 2002's "Ojo del Condor/Eye of the Condor," show-



ing Bolivian productions in fifteen sites, the center has seen both audiences and opportunities for Native film and video artists build.

In the early years, Weatherford remembers, there was little point-of-view documentary, hardly any video, and most Native work was produced by non-Natives. Now, she estimates, about ninety-percent of work is done by Native producers and directors. Touring film series have proven to many communities that there is an audience for Native film, inspiring communities to start their own programming or add Native programming, Weatherford says.

Two goals pinpointed by the center are echoed by several Native American artists: keeping things contemporary and recognizing diversity.

"One of the missions of this new museum is to be sure our audiences know about contemporary Native American life," Weatherford says. Another is to promote understanding of the variety of points of view and cultural histories. This approach of recognizing differences ranges from presenting documentaries from the "Video in the Villages" project in Brazil, which puts cameras in the hands of the people of the communities, to ensuring feature film scripts have "clarity and authenticity" while they appeal to a wide audience, Weatherford says.

In communities where issues of "otherness," who's controlling the gaze, and who's doing the looking, have historically

been paramount, the individual points of view that are the sine qua non of independent film usually illuminate these questions rather than denying or dodging them. And "by us for us" projects stolidly exorcise any ghosts of ethnography.

Articulating the differences within communities is probably one of the toughest things some Native artists say they deal with. One filmmaker, who did not want to be named due to dependence on similar institutions for support for work, applauds the center's inclusive mission but adds that this can sometimes make events a little stiff: "Just because we're all indigenous doesn't mean we're all the same." Some also point to a disconnect between the way artists are grouped together as "Native" and the wrenching differences in policy, politics, and culture these same artists' works can represent.

There's more agreement on the importance of presenting contemporary views and forms. Speaking from the (relative) mainstream, Vincent Blackhawk Aamodt, an award-winning director of commercials recently breaking into features and television, whose *The Ghost Riders*, narrated by actor Benjamin Bratt, premiered in the Saturday night slot in December's festival, says his next project is simply a "contemporary New York story." In his current work, which includes an ABC-TV directing fellowship, he often throws out a question like, "Why can't this detective character be a Native guy?" he says. "I'm not saying that he has to come in with a choker and a flute. He can be just a guy."

From another artistic sphere altogether comes a similar sentiment: Last year's festival also tapped contemporary visual artist Bently Spang for a video-and-mixed-media installation, *Boutique of the Damned*. Spang, who has also had a fellowship with the Smithsonian Institution, says he was "really impressed" by the Film and Video Center, not least because in taking a chance on his contemporary artwork, it opened up opportunities for him to present it at other venues.

"The kind of work I do is fairly unusual, and a lot of the support goes to the more traditional forms of Native work," Spang says. "I think it's changing as people become more open to contemporary expressions of our experience. For us contemporary artists, there is such a demand for a kind of romantic look at the past that it's a little harder for us to make our way.

"When you look at the film world, you see the same thing. People in power think what people want to see is that past, but at the grassroots level they want to see what's happening today and hear from Native filmmakers instead of others interpreting our experience." ■

Sara Wildberger is a writer living in Washington, DC.

Evan Adams and Jan Padgett's *Kla Ah Men* (2003, 88 min., Canada) had its world premiere at the 2003 NAFV Festival.



NALIP Turns Five

LATINO MEDIA MAKERS' GROUP GROWS UP

By Lisa Selin Davis

On a recent blustery spring day in New York City, twenty-five screenwriters perched around a long table in the Starlight Ballroom of the Roger Smith Hotel, arguing politely about the synopsis before them. As wind whipped against the windows, the participants pondered whether Jade, the main character, was denying her heritage. Were there really girls out there like that, the token Latinas, who pretend to be Anglo in order to fit in?

"I've known Jade," said one writer. "I went to NYU. There were lots of Jades."

Another added, "I dated the only Puerto Rican at Horchkiss. I know what it's like."

Harrison Reiner, a story analyst for CBS and the workshop leader, tried to bring the discussion back to the mechanics of the script. Was the character sympathetic? Did the script have that all-important narrative arc? But the group kept returning to the characters: a rich, assimilated, Latina prep school girl, threatened by the arrival of a "real" Latina named Tabitha, from the 'hood. The discussion morphed into a debate on whether the new girl would be popular in a prep school setting, now that all things Latino are "in."

If this sounds a little different from the average screenwriting workshop, it's because the second annual Latino Writer's Lab is just one of the many programs conceived by the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP). The consortium of media makers, which held its fifth annual national conference earlier this year in Santa

Barbara, California, aims to change the way Latinos are portrayed in front of the camera by changing who's behind it. Their mission, "to promote the advancement, development and funding of Latino/Latina film and media arts in all genres," applies to everything from grassroots documentaries to Hollywood studio movies, and the group is slowly and steadily addressing the problems faced by the Latino media world.

The main problem, almost everyone agrees, is access, whether it's access to funding, to information, or to the gates of Hollywood. So NALIP brings writers, directors, and producers together with funders and executives. But it's more than networking. "NALIP was formed as an advocacy organization," says Kathryn Galan, NALIP's executive director. "We're bringing together communities of filmmakers and documentarians with independent and narrative makers, and we're matching emerging makers with senior mentors."

NALIP works to connect aspiring filmmakers with film schools at the beginning of the pipeline, and to connect established filmmakers with distributors at the end. They aim to promote a Latino infiltration into the largely white Writer's Guild and to increase visibility of Latino-made and Latino-themed documentaries. "It's a hybrid organization; we don't just want to speak to nonprofits," says Cynthia López, a board member and vice president of communications and marketing at POV. "It's a marriage of public and private sectors."

This utopian organization was formed from a dystopian event at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), formed in 1975, was dedicated to promoting Latino-

Nalip's fifth anniversary conference.

themed programs on public television. In 1995, the business manager of NLCC was indicted on six counts of fraud, leaving NLCC penniless and with no choice but to disband. When CPB helped reorganize the National Minority Consortia (NMC), an umbrella group that provides funding to minority producers for public television projects, they created Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) and chose actor Edward James Olmos to head it.

"It was a good thing, but the whole community went berserk," says Hector Galan (no relation to Kathryn), producer of the PBS series *Visiones* and conference co-chair of NALIP. "They anointed somebody without consulting anyone else in the field." Latino producers across the country who had worked with CPB didn't object to the formation of LPB or to Olmos's leadership; they objected to a process that excluded the very media makers LPB was poised to support.

No one knows who sent the first email, expressing dismay at the decision-making process and concern for the

National Endowment for the Arts; and more than fifty independent supporters from the Miami International Film Festival to ITVS. And each year, their annual conference grows.

Strong as the organization is, they have a lifetime of institutionalized racism and pervasive stereotypes to combat. "You learn who you are and how the culture works by the media," says Kathryn Galan. "It's not a precise science, but we know it has an enormous impact."

If we relied on the media to teach us about Hispanics, we'd know them only as landscapers, drug dealers, or thieves. In 2002, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists conducted a study of Hispanics in the media, finding that less than one-percent of news stories were about Latinos, and two-thirds of those portrayed Latinos as criminals, terrorists, and illegal immigrants. And that's just in the news media.

The problem, say NALIP members, is not only negative images of Latinos, but the rarity of any images at all.

The problem, say NALIP members, is not only negative

future, but pretty soon media makers from across genres were communicating.

"It really was a community grassroots effort. It wasn't one person saying we needed to start a NALIP," says López. "It started with an email blast going to different folks saying we need to come together. We need to see where we stand as Latino producers producing independent media." And in June 1999, about 250 Latino media makers did come together in San Francisco. They formed a steering committee and a board of directors, and began to craft their mission statement.

"Because of the frustration and anger among Latino producers about not having a voice, we were all broken up into different camps," says López. "NALIP offered an opportunity for all different makers to come together and emerge as what we wanted to [be]."

Five years later, NALIP has three full-time staffers, several special project coordinators and hundreds of volunteers, with more than 500 members. The board includes veteran producer Mocesuma Esparza (*Selena*), Warner Bros. executive David Ortiz and writer/filmmaker Frances Negrón-Mutaner, among others. They have six regional chapters, in Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, Tucson, New York, San Antonio, and Puerto Rico. They host the annual Latino Writer's Lab, the Latino Producers Academy, and publish the *Latino Media Resource Guide*, along with a regular e-newsletter, *Latinos in the Industry*. They have corporate media sponsors like CBS, HBO, and Time Warner; foundation support from the MacArthur Foundation and the

Cynthia López remembers when she saw Jesse Borrego (he played Jesse Valesquez) on the 80s TV show *Fame*. "It was the first time I saw a Latino on television besides *West Side Story*," she says. And *West Side Story*, while groundbreaking in its portrayal of a cross-cultural love affair, ultimately showed Puerto Ricans as knife-wielding, reverse-racist gang members. Some say modern images of Latinos are not much better, and that there still aren't many images at all.

"You'll turn blue in the face before you see a real brown face on TV," says Hector Galan.

"It's part of our mission to improve both the quality and quantity of representation," says Kathryn Galan. "We've seen a shift in the last few years, so you're not only seeing maids and gangbangers. It's changing, but you still have an issue of quantity."

But there has been an explosion of Latino culture in America, fueled in part by marketers' discovery of the "Latino bloc." Latinos make up the largest minority population in America, more than thirteen-percent, and spend more than African Americans on entertainment each year, according to the US Department of Labor. But their presence at the cash registers is just beginning to change the way media is made and marketed. The biggest breakthrough is that Latino culture appeals to a wider audience than just Latinos. "The taco outsells the hamburger now as America's favorite fast food," says Hector Galan.

Hispanic superstars like Christina Aguilera and Jennifer Lopez are just as popular with non-Hispanic audiences. We have the Latin Grammys broadcast on national networks,

and the Latino International Film Festival. George Lopez has a hit sitcom on ABC. John Leguizamo has made hit feature films as well as successful Broadway runs. *Mi Familia*, the first serial Hispanic drama, continues to run on PBS. *Selena* and *Real Women Have Curves* were box office hits, and Nickelodeon's *Dora the Explorer* has kids saying "Hola" all over the country. Cynthia López calls this the post-Ricky Martin America, and it has made Latino culture not only acceptable to the mainstream, but in some cases preferable.

"Years ago when my brother was modeling, the agency told him he couldn't keep his last name," she says. "Now it's okay to be a López and try and get into the commercial sphere."

"Name is not a handicap anymore," says Hector Galan. "That's changed, which is incredible." Just as the screenwriters discussed at the Latino writers lab, Hispanic is hot.

So some may wonder, what makes someone Latino in this multicultural society? For the first time in 2000, the US census broke down the category of race in a new way (including the category of "two or more races"). One could

ture *Beyond the Sea*, directed by Kevin Spacey. Comedian Joey Medina's first feature film, *El Matador*, was released in 2003, with support from NALIP. HBO has partnered with Moctesuma Esparza's Maya Pictures to produce six Latino-themed films. This list goes on and on, with documentaries, features, television shows and scripts sprouting from NALIP members. And more important than the success of individual projects is the sense of community they continue to cultivate.

"We were working in a very isolated way five years ago," says López. "Now, with the creation of NALIP, there is a place that people look forward to coming every year to discuss trends, find funding opportunities, and to share basic networking strategies."

"We've seen great strides made and major changes," says Kathryn Galan. "But the only way we can long term change the face of production is to ensure that Latinos who want to produce have equal access to information. A lot more work has to be done."

images of Latinos, but the rarity of any images at all.

identify oneself as white and of Hispanic or Latino origin, or non-white and of Hispanic or Latino origin. There might be confusion at the government level about whether Latino is a race, an ethnicity, or a series of interlinked nationalities with the same mother tongue. But for NALIP members, race doesn't matter, and neither does fluency in Spanish.

"While language affects us and how we create our history, there are many young Latinos that do not speak Spanish," says López. "But if you ask them they'll say, yes, we're Latino." Though Americans tend to lump Latinos into one group, it's a category comprising people from different geographies, nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures, bonded in part by a common struggle. López sums up the connection between disparate nationalities, ethnicities, and geographies this way: "Most Latino cultures have experienced some level of historical disadvantage, and all Latino cultures have been able to survive that level of disadvantage and progress."

So NALIP speaks to all Latinos, whether they were born in the Bronx or in Bolivia, whether they speak Spanish or not. "We're pan-cultural and proud of it," says Kathryn Galan. In fact, Latin American origin is not a requirement for membership to NALIP, as long as the member agrees with NALIP's goal to increase and improve Latino images in the media. "Anyone who wants to become a member, that has an interest in developing stories about Latino culture, can become a member," says López. "You just have to have an interest in the culture and want to contribute."

NALIP's contributions continue to grow. Writer's Lab graduate Lorenzo Carcaterra penned the forthcoming fea-

ture *Beyond the Sea*, directed by Kevin Spacey. Comedian Joey Medina's first feature film, *El Matador*, was released in 2003, with support from NALIP. HBO has partnered with Moctesuma Esparza's Maya Pictures to produce six Latino-themed films. This list goes on and on, with documentaries, features, television shows and scripts sprouting from NALIP members. And more important than the success of individual projects is the sense of community they continue to cultivate.

For now, that work will continue in NALIP's workshops, labs and conferences, as Latino media makers try to create change from the inside out. Back at the Latino Writer's Lab, a young man submitted a screenplay about a womanizer, the stereotypical Latin lover, whose philandering drives a young woman to suicide. Though most agreed that the character was not likeable, they valued the importance of investigating and demystifying that pervasive Latino cliché. "There are Latinos who are *machista*," says López. "I would not be of the vein that we should stamp out that reality in our media making. But if I had a choice, I would want to see stories that develop Latino characters that are realistic, sincere, and have integrity. If the story was about a *machista* who learns something, who comes to believe something new, I'd like to see that."

As NALIP expands, so will realistic portrayals of Latin Americans. But all involved are prepared for this change to be gradual, like all lasting transformations. "Change is like the beach: it comes in waves," says López. "You can bring in different shells but it's going to take a long time."

Kathryn Galan expects NALIP to survive and prevail for as long as it takes Latinos to make as big an impact in the media world as they have in other facets of entertainment. "Half of me would like to see us out of business in five years, that there doesn't need to be any distinction, that we're all bonded together as filmmakers, that these advocacy and development issues can be combined with other efforts," she says. "But that's a while away in coming." ■

Lisa Selin Davis is a writer living in New York.



Asian CineVision

BUILDING NETWORKS BEYOND CHINATOWN

By Derek Loosvelt

In the mid-1970s, a group of film students began to produce a cable-access television show from New York's Chinatown. Originally from Asia, the students broadcast their daily show in Cantonese, focusing on issues and protests going on in New York's Chinese community. At the same time, Asian American experimental filmmaker Tom Tam was working at New York's Millennium Film Workshop. Although Tam's work, which also included footage of various protests in Chinatown, appeared in a few group shows at the Millennium, he was frustrated by the lack of venues supporting experimental film and figured if he was frustrated, then other filmmakers must be, too.

"It wasn't that Asian American filmmakers were being excluded or that people were being racist," says Daryl Chin, critic, writer, and co-founder of the Asian American International Film Festival. "People were just programming what they thought would get an audience."

In 1976, the local cable-access show from Chinatown gave birth to Asian CineVision (ACV), a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to promoting and supporting Asian and Asian American film and video artists. Two years later, with the help of ACV's founders, Tam's frustration spawned the Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF), the first US festival to showcase works by media artists of Asian descent.

When ACV began, one of the first orders of business was to get in touch with filmmakers from all over the country. In doing so, the organization discovered how isolated filmmakers were. Says Chin, "Many were in the same city and didn't even know each other."

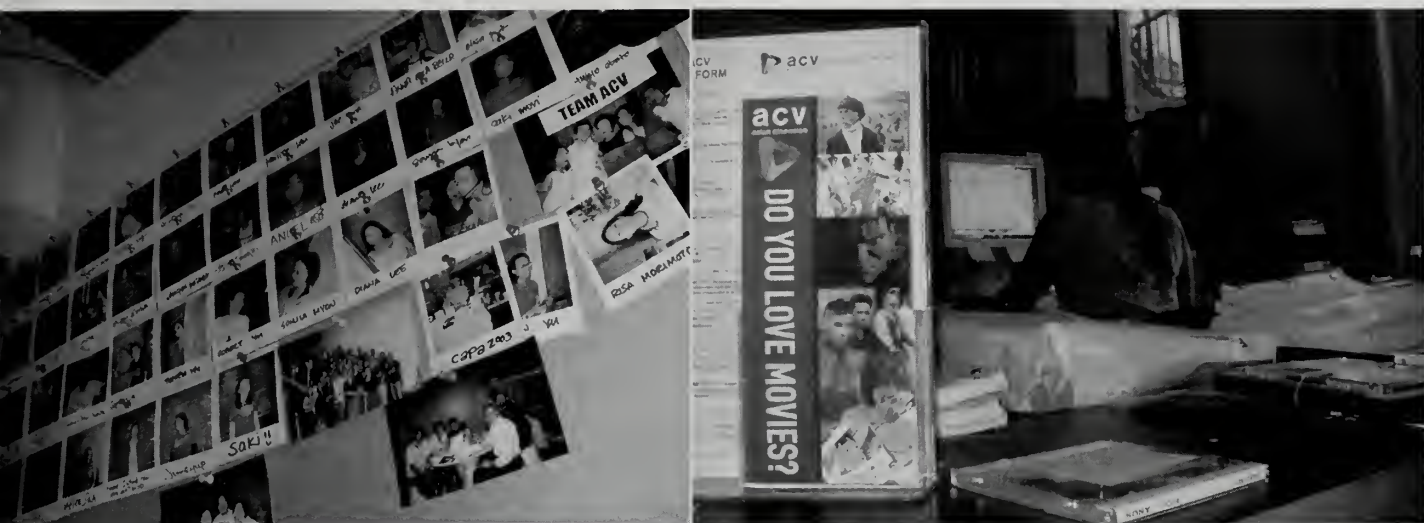
Through an early ACV networking event, then-San Francisco-based filmmaker Wayne Wang (*Smoke*, *Blue in the Face*, *The Joy Luck Club*) discovered that Curtis Choy and Christopher Chow—who were producing documentary films and had their own equipment—were also working in the Bay area. The meeting turned out to be a monumental moment in Asian American film. After Wang received an American Film Institute grant, he ended up using Choy's and Chow's equipment to make *Chan Is Missing* (1976), the feature many critics attribute to jump-starting the Asian American genre.

In addition to bringing filmmakers together, ACV and similar organizations in their early days, were directly and indirectly cultivating the next generation of Asian American filmmakers, a practice ACV continues today through workshops, mentoring programs, and exhibitions, which includes the AAIFF.

In the mid-1970s, Rea Tajiri (writer and director of

Scenes from the Asian CineVision office in New York City.

FIRST LEFT: JOHN WOO; RISA MORIMOTO



Strawberry Fields, which screened at the 1998 AAIFF) was attending high school in Los Angeles. Tajiri recalls seeing the film *Cruisin' J-Town* in an Asian American festival sponsored by Visual Communications, an LA-based sister organization to ACV. "It was the first time I had ever seen any Asian American imagery on the screen," she says. "I realized there was this whole other dialogue going on I was completely oblivious to."

In 1984, Tajiri moved to New York to go to art school and, soon after, she attended a few AAIFF screenings at the Rosemary Theater in Chinatown. (The festival has since moved uptown, to Manhattan's Asia Society.) Subsequently, along with exhibiting her work in the festival, Tajiri has served as one of its judges and participated in various ACV public roundtable discussions. She considers herself a long-time friend of the organization.

Another ACV supporter, Greg Pak (who wrote and directed *Robot Stories* (2003), a feature that has won more than thirty awards and shown in over fifty festivals in the past year) first came across the AAIFF's national tour in the 1980s while an undergrad at Yale. In 1993, Pak moved to New York, where the AAIFF became the first festival to publicly screen his work, programming a black and white short he made while at NYU. "There was a big crowd for the screening," says Pak, "which was incredibly exciting."

Of course, getting programmed is one thing; landing distribution is another. Says Chin, "One of the major problems with the development of Asian American filmmaking is finding money."

When Tajiri was looking for finishing funds for *Strawberry Fields*, she says, "There was a mistake in how the film was perceived. People were sort of thrown that it was about the American experience. Distributors wanted to know, 'Are there any Asian stars? Is this in English? Are there subtitles?'" The audience response, though, was tremendous, she says, especially overseas. "In Italy, people were just blown away. They had no concept of what Asian American culture was like."

Journalist and media consultant Gitesh Pandya recalls the public reception to *American Desi*, which he co-produced in 2001. "When we went to the UK to promote the film—mostly Indian people came out for the press coverage—the first comment we almost always received was, 'We love your American accents.'" He explains, "They had never seen Indian faces with American accents—Indian or British accents, but never American."

Pak tells a similar story about *Robot Stories*. "No matter where we show the film [in the US or abroad], inevitably somebody asks, 'So what's up with the casting?' They always want to know why we cast the protagonist with an Asian actor."

With respect to the success of *Robot Stories*, Pak admits most of the festivals the film played in overseas were science fiction festivals. "It's tough for Asian American films to get screenings overseas because you're seeing a lot of mainstream festivals there," he says. "Which is why making a genre film is really important. It's a powerful combination. If you make a genre picture you have a chance of getting an audience who would never ordinarily see an Asian American film. As a result, audiences start having to think about people with different backgrounds."

Although Pak, Pandya, and others admit the overall movement of Asian American film is becoming a bigger part of the American landscape, they say it's going to take a while to make the kinds of changes many in the community want. "The people who have the time to invest in the real movement of thought and acceptance are the ones who usually have the least amount of resources to put into it," says Pandya. "And the ones who have the money to make anything happen quickly are usually not in the business of creating the changes we want to see."

Pandya concedes that some large players are making a difference. "Universal is one company that does a lot of work with different ethnic groups," he says, citing the company's *The Fast and the Furious* franchise. "Those movies have

some of the most multiethnic casts you've ever seen. Almost every ethnicity is represented."

Pak predicts Asian American stories will be in the mainstream within twenty to twenty-five years. "The demographics will require it," he says. "And movies will be getting made solely because of an Asian American male actor." Pak notes that most movies get financed because of male stars.

In the short term, although the success of films such as *Better Luck Tomorrow* (2003), *Charlotte Sometimes* (2002), and *Robot Stories* aren't necessarily opening the door for \$100 million Hollywood movies, they are making it more feasible for Asian American filmmakers to make independent films. Says Pak, "Low budget independent, Asian American movies are now proving that they actually can draw a huge audience."

Still, it's the actors who are most visible and currently in a position to significantly impact the mainstream. As an example of how, Pandya cites a conversation he had with Kal Penn, one of the most prominent Indian American actors in the country. "Just like you would expect with almost every other ethnicity, the first wave of roles that came his way were stereotypical, which he didn't want to do," says Pandya, who worked with Penn on *American Desi*. "But if he passes, there's a hundred other guys out there lined up to take it." Pandya adds, "If he's on set doing the role, though, he actually has a chance to talk to the writers and filmmakers and offer some sensitivity. He can say, 'I think you're going a little bit too far on this,' or 'I think there's a better way to go with that.'" Also, given the paychecks associated with mainstream work, it can bankroll low-paying, more challenging independent projects.

Risa Morimoto, the executive director of ACV, agrees that now, more than ever, the line between Hollywood and independents is less distinguishable, but she stresses that ACV is a "community organization," which "predominately helps beginning and emerging filmmakers."

"Today, ACV and the festival are as important as ever," says Chin, "because every year there's a case of an independent film that gets overlooked." One such Asian American film was *Charlotte Sometimes*. Although *Charlotte* went to Sundance and South by Southwest, by the time it showed at the AAIFF, the film's producers had struck a deal with the Sundance Channel. "The release wasn't with a major company," explains Chin, "because distributors were saying, 'Why did you make the film with Asian American characters? You could very easily have cast it with white actors. And then it would've been marketable.'"

Morimoto, who's a filmmaker herself, explains that the same thing initially happened with *Better Luck Tomorrow*, the

first independent Asian American film to receive national theatrical distribution by a major company since *Chan Is Missing* in 1982. "People were saying they would finance *Better Luck* if it was cast with white actors," says Morimoto. "Of course, at the end of the day, [the director] Justin Lin used Asian Americans. And interestingly enough, MTV Films said they would never have picked it up if it was cast with white kids, because they had already seen that movie."

According to Morimoto, ACV's sister organization Visual Communications was instrumental in helping Lin get *Better Luck* made. "He basically slept in their offices and used their editing equipment." She adds that many organizations in the Asian American community, including ACV, were on board to help the film's grassroots marketing campaign.

"What was so incredible as a result of the success of a controversial film like *Better Luck*," says Morimoto, "were the discussions and debates within the Asian American community. We hadn't talked like that in a long time."

In addition to creating dialogue through film and video, ACV is also committed to working with other race-based organizations, such as dvRepublic (a project of the Black Filmmaker Foundation); The New York Production Alliance (promoting New York city and state filmmaking); and CAPE (the Coalition of Asian Pacifics in Entertainment). "Many communities are complaining about the same things," says Morimoto, who notes that

ACV and other major Asian American media organizations meet at least once a year to touch base. One of ACV's goals is to increase the frequency of these meetings.

"There's not as much collaboration among different communities and minority groups as there was in the past," says Jessica Hagedorn, a playwright, screenwriter, and longtime advisor to ACV. "It's like the South Asians have their scene, the Filipinos have their scene, etc. And sometimes they work together, but a lot of times there's enough activity so people don't have to leave their subgroup. Which, on some levels, is too bad. But it is natural."

Pandya agrees, adding, "That happens in many parts of society. Folks doing similar things in the same group—not necessarily ethnic groups—often don't realize what else is going on around them." ■

For more information on Asian CineVision and the Asian American International Film Festival (July 16-24, 2004), check out www.asiancinevision.org.

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Director Ang Lee and actress Joan Chen, members of the Asian CineVision Honors Circle, at last year's gala.



Spik(e)ing the Indie Film Punch

SPIKE LEE COMES FULL CIRCLE

By Rebecca Carroll

I met Spike Lee for the first time in the fall of 1989 at the University of New Hampshire, where I'd recently transferred from, at an event in his honor hosted by the Black Student Union. *Do the Right Thing* had come out the summer before, and I was sufficiently amped up about asking him what his intentions were surrounding the film: Exactly what kind of message was he trying to send about race in America? What did he expect audiences would take away from a film that, arguably, endorses violence as a reasonable course of action against racial discrimination?

The black student body at UNH when I was there was about thirty-five out of ten thousand, and most were male basketball players on scholarship. Subsequently, when it came to recruiting members for my vision to reconvene the university's Black Student Union, the result was a small assembly of very tall boys, and me. So there we all were, post-event—the boys clamoring around Spike to form the sort of team huddle you'd see in a locker room, hungrily exchanging tips and scores and strategies about the Knicks and other NBA teams; Spike, with loose-fitting jersey and jeans, and bright, mellow eyes, looking not much older

than the college boys who surrounded him; and me, the girl ignoring the “no girls allowed” sign, hands on hips, trying to get a word in edgewise.

Finally, I was able to squeeze my way through. “With that scene where Da Mayor is being harassed by the black youth on the block for being drunk and shiftless, and Da Mayor says: ‘Until you’ve stood in the doorway and listened to your five hungry children crying for bread, you don’t know shit,’ and one of the boys counters by telling

has weighed in, At-Large, on the issue of race in America, and it’s hard to begrudge him not wanting to talk about it during every single interview he gives for the rest of his natural born life. Spike told me that every phone with a line to reach him was literally ringing off the hook within minutes after Janet “accidentally” exposed her nipple during the Super Bowl halftime show earlier this year.

Instead, we talked about his new film, *She Hate Me*, which opens in wide release this month, his process and commit-



him he’s put himself in the situation he’s in—were you trying to imply, Mr. Lee, that black people have put themselves into the powerless economic situation that many find themselves in—that they have, in fact, brought it on themselves?”

“No. Next question.” And that was that.

Three years later, I was working as a receptionist in the Department of Afro-American Studies at Harvard when Spike began teaching a spring semester class there. We quickly developed a straightforward, easy rapport, and later that summer when I moved to New York to take a job at *Elle* magazine, we remained friendly.

When I called Spike a few months ago about doing an interview for this article, almost on impulse he said, “I don’t want to talk about [race].” As the unofficial go-to guy for Things That Concern Blacks in Film and Media, Spike

ment as an independent filmmaker, how AIVF taught him to find money as an NYU grad, where he draws the line with Hollywood (“Put it this way, I’m not gonna do a *Soulplane*.”), and finally, about race.

If not necessarily in theme, *She Hate Me* brings Spike full circle back to the beginning of his career when *She’s Gotta Have It* introduced a new style and aesthetic to independent film, in that it is, by commercial standards, non-commercial. “[*She Hate Me*] is definitely an independent film,” Spike tells me when I ask him about his particular distinction between independent and studio films. “Here’s

In Lee’s *She Hate Me*, above: (left to right) Dania Ramirez as Alex, Anthony Mackie as Jack, and Kerry Washington as Fatima; facing page: Washington with Mackie; Ramirez with Washington.

the thing,” he continues. “This is the seventeenth or eighteenth feature film, and we barely got it made. It’s a film that cost nine and a half million dollars. No studio wanted to do it. Luckily, about this time last year, Tom Bernard and Michael Barker [both of Sony Pictures Classics] were on their way to Cannes. I called them up and said ‘Let me take you to lunch,’ and I pitched them the script. I gave them the script. I paid the check. And I said, ‘Look, why don’t you guys just read this on the plane to Cannes.’ When they came back they wanted to do the film. But that was only half the money. So we still had to scramble for the other half.”

She Hate Me (and yes, the title is a reference to “the greatest sports nickname of all time”—“He Hate Me”—worn on the jersey of Rod Smart as a player in the now defunct XFL), which was shot in twenty-seven days in and around Brooklyn, is a story about “the melding of a lot of good dramatic stuff—sex, procreation, greed, money, you know, and politics,” Spike says. He points to the recent debate

teen lesbian women to the tune of \$10,000 a go.

Upon further explanation, Spike says: “The key line we’re trying to incorporate [into press for the film] is: ‘Is God your money, or is your money God?’ Because when you pray at the altar of money, then no matter how moral and upright you think you are, when push comes to shove, you’re gonna do what you gotta do.”

Spike prays at a different altar, and asserts that his goal is not and has never been money. “My goal is to continue making films,” he says. “But it’s getting harder and harder, because really, to be honest, there’s such a blur right now between independents and Hollywood.”

He acknowledges that there are and have been truly independent films being made, although *Pulp Fiction*, widely perceived as the film that set the independent renaissance into motion, isn’t one of them—“Was that really an independent film? I don’t think so.” The landscape is different now, he says. “Back in the day, you



over gay marriage, Martha Stewart, and ImClone as having influenced the script, which is based on a story by actor/screenwriter Michael Genet, and co-written by Genet and Spike.

Harvard- and Wharton-educated John Henry “Jack” Armstrong (Anthony Mackie) gets fired from the biotech corporation he works for when he informs on his bosses launching an investigation into their business dealings by the Securities & Exchange Commission. Branded a whistleblower, Jack suddenly finds himself unemployable and broke. Enter Fatima (Kerry Washington), his former fiancé, and her new girlfriend Alex (Dania Ramirez), both serious businesswomen whose biological clocks are ticking, and who are each willing to pay Jack \$5,000 for his sperm. Jack’s morals pretty much go out the window, and by the end of the film, he has impregnated upward of fif-

could tell right away what independent was.”

Spike recalls how early on, there was no cachet that went along with being an “independent filmmaker”—it wasn’t hip then, agents wouldn’t let directors near certain name-actors, and you had to find money wherever you could to get your films made. He remembers many days and hours at the AIVF resource library fresh out of NYU film school. “Back when [AIVF] was on Broadway, I used to spend a lot of time doing research, and trying to find the most obscure grants from whoever had money,” he recalls. “AIVF does a lot of things, but for me, its best purpose was that it helped me find money.”

That lesson has served him well, and though he surely recognizes that the bulk of his previous films have been produced and distributed by major studios, he does not consider himself a Hollywood filmmaker. “I’ve

always looked at it like this: I'm an independent filmmaker who gets financing from Hollywood when they want to finance the film, and when they don't, I gotta scrape."

On Race

Because Spike and I have both talked about race for years—together and in our own individual work—it seemed inevitable that we would come around to talking about it at some point in our conversation. And as usual, we kept things lively.

REBECCA CARROLL: You've said that the current gatekeepers of the film industry, who are mostly if not all white, are not ready to see black America as it really is—tell me more about that.

SPIKE LEE: It's like with *Bamboozled*, you have this white boy [a white television executive played by Michael Rapaport] who thinks that because he knows Eddie Murphy, not to disrespect Eddie Murphy, or some famous rapper or whoever, that he knows black people—that he's an expert in black culture.

ALL THAT JAZZ: TERENCE BLANCHARD SCORES SPIKE LEE

By Margaret Coble

New Orleans-based trumpeter Terence Blanchard readily acknowledges that, had it not been for his relationship with filmmaker Spike Lee, he would not be the powerhouse film composer he is today, with more than thirty film scores now under his belt. Theirs has been one of the great artistic collaborations of our time—a partnership cultivated over the past seventeen years that has brought out the best in both artists. "I've been very blessed working with Spike, because we seem to get better, picture by picture," Blanchard says humbly.

When the now forty-two-year-old, Grammy- and Golden Globe-nominated Blanchard first started working with Lee in the late 1980s, he was already enjoying a viable career as one of the new "young lions" of the recently rejuvenated contemporary jazz scene in New York, alongside hometown peers Wynton and Branford Marsalis. A graduate of the prestigious New Orleans Center of Creative Arts, Blanchard acquired his early jazz foundation from the teachings of Wynton and Branford's father, Ellis Marsalis, and Roger Dickerson. Blanchard honed his skills at Rutgers University, studying there with Kenny Barron, Paul Jeffrey and Bill Fielder, and then toured with both Lionel Hampton and the legendary Art Blakey and his Jazz Messengers, before quitting the latter to form his own quintet with saxophonist Donald Harrison, Jr. All of this varied experience contributed to Blanchard's growing reputation as a progressive musician who wasn't afraid to

draw on a wide range of styles and influences in his classical and traditional jazz interpretations.

After releasing a handful of critically lauded recordings with Harrison, Blanchard set out on his own. It was during this time that he crossed paths with Spike Lee, and his and Lee's working relationship began in 1987 when Blanchard performed as a session player on *School Daze*. That session stint led to a budding friendship and more session work with Lee, including *Do The Right Thing*, and Blanchard loves to tell the story about how his illustrious film scoring career basically began by sheer luck and a leap of faith, while working on 1990's *Mo' Better Blues*.

"[It happened] totally by accident," he chuckles, recalling the details. While on a break during pre-recording sessions on *Blues*, Blanchard sat at the piano one day and started playing a tune he had been working on in his head. It caught Lee's ear, and he liked it enough to ask to use it in the film; he had a particular scene in mind. Blanchard happily obliged him, and they recorded it as a solo trumpet piece. But Lee still felt after shooting the scene that something was missing: it needed orchestration. "Spike said, 'Can you add a string arrangement for it?'" Blanchard recounts. "And you know, I always joke about it, but it's true—it was one of those moments in your life when you can either lie or tell the truth, and I lied, and said, 'Yes.' I went back to my teacher, and said, 'I got this project, what do I do?' And he just told me, 'Trust your training.' I had studied composition

but never studied orchestration or anything like that."

Lee was so pleased with Blanchard's final composition that he called him back when it came time to begin work on his next film, *Jungle Fever*, this time asking him to score the entire film. And the rest is history. Blanchard has scored nearly every Spike Lee Joint since—eleven in all, counting the forthcoming *She Hate Me*—which, in turn, has led to scoring work with other directors. (Current projects include the score to the new installment in the successful Wesley Snipes *Blade* franchise, *Blade: Trinity*, and yet another Spike Lee project, the Showtime original series *Sucker Free City*.)

Blanchard characterizes Lee's approach to music in his films as unique among directors, one that has informed and shaped Blanchard's own style as a film composer. "Spike really loves melodic content and thematic material," he says. "Some directors want a ranging underscore for their films, where the music doesn't have any kind of melodic content, because they think it might distract from what's happening on the screen. But Spike takes the opposite view. He always says, 'It's been proven that the brain can handle more than one thing at one time.' Knowing that [about Lee] has made me develop a certain method of film scoring that's kind of different from some of the other guys because I have to deal with melody all the time."

Lee doesn't come to him with specific melodies or arrangements in mind,

RC: Right, but what would be the preferred role for white executives in the industry who do business and spend time with black people—that of deference?

SL: No, the preferred role is to have someone in there that knows black culture—not someone who thinks that black people are one monolithic group.

RC: To be fair, though, there are a lot of black folks who perpetuate that notion as well. For example, *Barbershop*, which I know you didn't like, was written by a black screenwriter.

SL: I was appalled that a black writer could write a joke that called Dr. King a ho, or a joke that says Rosa Parks didn't mean to start a movement, but that she just didn't want to lift her fat black lazy ass.

RC: There is the sense, though, that all black people should find that appalling, or find it funny—nothing in between. Either opinion has tribal implications.

SL: But the way that film was set up—in our community we give respect to the wise old man, or the griot, and the joke

Blanchard says, but rather with general ideas of how he wants it to sound. "Like, for *25th Hour*," Blanchard remembers, "[Spike] kept saying, 'I want to make sure people understand this is post-911 New York. I want to have bagpipes, Arabic percussion, or maybe a vocalist.' For *Summer of Sam*, he kept saying, 'I want the orchestra to have those low, brooding kind of strings and low brass.' On *Malcolm X*, he said, 'I need it to be big, epic.' So that sends me in a direction."

Lee is also keenly appreciative of the time involved in creating music, often approaching Blanchard well before he begins shooting a film. "That's also different than most directors," Blanchard says. "Other productions I've worked on, [the directors] look at us as just post-production people. But really, we're one of the major cogs in the wheel—music is one of the major things that you can do to influence how the story is told. And Spike understands that it's a process that should be well thought out. It takes time to conjure up these specific ideas that people are looking for in films. He gives me the time to work up an idea."

For *She Hate Me*, Blanchard was given minimal, yet specific direction. "With this film, Spike had an idea of using some music based around Miles Davis' *Sketches of Spain*. It set me in a direction of dealing with some Latin-based music with a jazz ensemble, which is something that we haven't done in a while. Most of the stuff that we've done with his films has been for major orchestra, mostly orchestral music. But with this film we got a chance to get back to my roots, musically, and have fun with it."

This most recent score mirrors what Blanchard has been doing in his perform-

ance life as well: getting back to his roots. All throughout his thriving career as a film composer, Blanchard has remained an active and passionate horn player, band leader, and recording artist, releasing a series of themed albums that have ranged from 2001's *Let's Get Lost* (a collection of Jimmy McHugh standards featuring female vocalists Diana Krall, Jane Monheit, Dianne Reeves, and Cassandra



Wilson) to 1994's *Billie Holliday Songbook*. He recently signed with the legendary jazz label Blue Note, and his latest album release, last year's *Bounce*, has been heralded as his triumphant return to the small-group format that first made him a star of the modern jazz movement.

He is also noted as a band leader that actively grooms young talent—in the mold of his mentor, Art Blakey—encouraging and allowing each of his band members to develop their own voice and signature style. This emphasis on creative develop-

ment no doubt comes from Blanchard's dedication to music education. Over the years he has held numerous positions at educational institutions around the country, including that of director of the jazz studies program at the University of New Orleans, and currently he serves at the University of Southern California as the artistic director for the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance.

Blanchard is certainly grateful for the success, opportunity, and experience that his film scoring career has afforded him, but he admits it was not something he ever envisioned for himself as a musician. "It's an interesting path to take," he says. "Musicians never study music to get to the point to create something that's going to be in the background, you know? You never really think of yourself that way. I don't know too many people who go to take piano lessons as a kid thinking they're going to write some music that's going to be the backdrop for something else."

"I always wanted to write for larger ensembles, but I thought of it in the context of being a jazz musician," he explains. "Then all of a sudden this opportunity presented itself and I went from writing for five people to writing for sixty to seventy people. I have gained a lot of experience doing it. And I've had a lot of fun doing it, too." ■

Margaret Coble is a New Orleans based freelance writer, DJ, and film enthusiast. She helps organize Reel Identities: The New Orleans Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Film Festival, and is the assistant coordinator for the annual Michigan Women's Music Festival.

about Dr. King and Rosa Parks comes from the character situated as that figure. They could've gotten away with it if they'd had one of the young hip-hop motherfuckers say something stupid like that—someone who doesn't know better, who didn't go through Jim Crow.

RC: Why do you think they wrote it that way? Who stands to gain?

SL: The movie made a lot of money. And there's *Barbershop*

2. and Latifah's spinoff, *Beauty Shop*. I love Latifah, but that *Bringing Down the House* movie she did was bordering on Aunt Jemima.

RC: But how is that different from the imagery in this Kevin Willmott film *CSA: Confederate States of America* that you exec produced (see page 49)?

SL: You see it?

RC: Yeah, I saw it. I have a lot of trouble with minstrel

THE WHITE SHADOW: FORTY ACRES' BARRY ALEXANDER BROWN

By Mosi Secret

There's a moment in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* when time stops. Right before Radio Raheem lunges two-handed for Sal's throat, and right after Sal clubs Raheem's blaring boom box to death with a Louisville Slugger, time pauses for an eternity. Viewers and characters alike are suspended in stark anticipation of mayhem. Barry Alexander Brown, veteran film editor at *Forty Acres* and a Mule Filmworks, composes these moments.

Working alongside director Spike Lee, Brown has helped to create some of the most indelible scenes in black cinema, which have redrawn popular depictions of African Americans. With Spike's outspoken insistence on working with people of color, you probably wouldn't guess that Brown is a white guy from the Deep South by way of Warrington, Cheshire, England, but the two have worked together for more than twenty years. Brown has assumed the role of co-conspirator in Lee's plot to express black culture with an ease that belies glib notions of strict racial affiliation, and a zeal that grows from his love of cinema in the grandest sense.

Brown first broke into "the business" at age nineteen with an independent documentary called *The War at Home* (1979), which features interviews and newsreel footage of the historic anti-Vietnam War protests and riots at the University of Wisconsin. Brown was in Madison during the 60s when the Students for a Democratic Society, the Committee to

End the War in Vietnam, and others took to the streets in protests that led to a bloody police crackdown, and culminated in a fatal bombing at the university's Army Mathematics Research Center.

For Brown, who had only a high school diploma and no prior film experience, co-directing and -producing the documentary was a blind stab at success. He spent years interviewing leaders and followers in the anti-war movement, and sifted through almost twenty years of archived black and white negatives on a 16mm flatbed Steenbeck. He learned the principles of editing along the way, principles that he still calls on today, like knowing exactly what the audience will focus on in each frame, and how to create new narratives based solely on the sequence of shots. He remembers the very moment, at the first screening of the film in Madison, Wisconsin, that signaled his arrival as a filmmaker.

"At the end of the movie there was a moment of black, and immediately there was a wall of applause. It hit you like a force." The film sold out that weekend. Landmark Theatres booked it at screens across the country, film festivals picked it up, and it was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary feature in 1979. Brown's career took off like a rocket. "The same thing happened to Spike, but on a bigger level," Brown says. "One day he was nobody, and then he was an icon. For Spike it was *She's Gotta Have It*; for me it was *The War at Home*."

Brown's film editing career started in 1986 with Spike Lee's second full-length feature, *School Daze*, a musical about life on a black college campus. After that, he successively cut *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Madonna: Truth or Dare* (1991), and *Malcolm X* (1992), a combination that ranged from a small Indian film to an historical epic, and spoke to Brown's versatility as an editor. (Just two of the films were Spike Lee joints). "My phone was ringing off the hook," Brown says of all the work he was offered at the time.

The average moviegoer would never know of his success; for the most part, editors and their work are invisible. A good editor's work doesn't attract the audience's attention, but accomplishes just the opposite: it creates a seamless experience that helps the audience slip away from reality into the world on screen. But Brown still finds ways to make his presence felt, if only at *Forty Acres'* Brooklyn offices. "People are behind you watching you work, so you gotta have style," he says. He developed a flair for his work at the Steenbeck, with impressive movements that were little more than show.

Summer of Sam (1999) was the last film Brown cut using the mechanical Steenbeck. Now he uses an Avid, an Apple-based editing system that enables editors to click into a film at any chosen point without having to rewind it. It makes tightening scenes, discarding others and moving shots around relatively simple. The Avid has cramped his style a bit, but

imagery in films.

SL: So you didn't like *Bamboozled*.

RC: No, I didn't like *Bamboozled* that much, because I don't find minstrel imagery entertaining, and I don't find it funny.

SL: It's not supposed to be funny.

RC: I don't find it useful.

SL: It is useful.

RC: When I saw *Bamboozled* in the movie theater, people were laughing and eating popcorn, amused and entertained. How is their reaction in 2000 different from their reaction in 1903?

SL: You have to put it into context—at the end of the film we show all those real black artifacts as a way of doing that.

RC: As a way of showing people that minstrel imagery

he appreciates the decreased intensity level that digital editing affords. With film strung everywhere at different points along the roll, mechanical editing requires total concentration. "It used to be that you couldn't talk to me while editing," he says. Now work is much more laid back.

Spike Lee has had "final cut" in his contract since *School Daze*, but even with this degree of artistic control, Brown has never felt pressured to make cuts he didn't agree with. It's not that Spike relinquished authority, but that the two have worked together so long, learned so much from each other, and developed so many things together that it's hard to say where the two of them begin and end in post-production.

Brown met Spike Lee in the summer of 1981 on the campus of Morehouse, a historically black college in Atlanta, and Lee's alma mater. In those days, Brown was still "the white guy" to Spike and Spike's friends, and he was compelled to prove he was "down" in order to earn trust—but more than two decades of friendship have proven Spike's initial protective posture irrelevant. "At some point you can't think anymore in terms of black and white," Brown says. Their relationship is now based on a mutual approach to filmmaking.

"I knew a lot of filmmakers in the early eighties, and I could have worked with any of them," he says. "Spike was really the first filmmaker that thought the way I did about film." Together they appreciate the pure entertainment value in movies—"that magic that happens on the screen"—but at the same time, want to make movies that nobody has ever made; movies that have something to say. "A sense of politics is endemic to the way Spike looks at movies,

and it's there for me, too," says Brown. That shared vision is why they have worked on so many projects together—fifteen projects in the twenty-three years that they've been friends—and why Brown focuses on editing rather than directing, which was his first ambition.

He has always worked on projects away from Forty Acres. In 2002, he directed *Winning Girls through Psychic Mind Control*, a comedy about two guys trying to break into show business. In 1993, he directed a documentary about the rock opera *Tommy*. And in 1991, he directed *Lonely in America*, a comedy about an East Indian man's search for the American Dream (with a cameo appearance from Spike Lee), which did well on the film festival circuit. But he always gravitates back toward Spike Lee.

In a sense, Spike Lee's films are Brown's films, too, and Spike's message is Brown's message. In the shadow of Spike's celebrity, Brown takes vicarious satisfaction from Spike's biggest moments. He was there when *She's Gotta Have It* opened in 1986, a moment that changed Hollywood, he says. "All Spike did was make a simple movie about black people. Nobody else was making it. Black people on screen weren't black people—not in 1986." And he's been there through the rampant criticism that Spike has received. American white people, he says, and the white press in particular, tend to overreact and lack a real ability to look at someone like Spike Lee with any perspective.

"Being a white person, I understand very well that most people's reaction to

Spike is going to be a knee-jerk, 'he hates me, so I hate him' reaction." Brown finds himself in situations with white people, who think of him as "one of their own" and express their animosity toward Spike.



And he goes off. "I just don't think that if you have a country that has the history of this country, you should be painting the first great black filmmaker a racist."

Brown has just finished editing *She Hate Me*, Spike Lee's latest film, and *Sucker Free City*, a pilot Lee directed for Showtime. He is completing his own documentary about New York's sidewalk booksellers, and has just finished a screenplay about one day in the kitchen of a restaurant. As for the longterm future, "You never know," he says. "Working with Spike is a joy. I'm working with a good friend that is one of the best filmmakers out there, on movies that I have a lot of respect for. And they pay me well. There's not a whole lot to complain about." ■

Mosi Secret is a Brooklyn based writer whose work has appeared in The Village Voice and Africana.com.

looked the same then as it does now? I don't get it.

SL: People don't understand that we are still putting on a minstrel show—half these motherfucking rappers don't know that they are repeating the same history. If somebody came down from space and turned on BET, and looked at black people in music videos, they'd think it was a minstrel



show.

RC: So you think if these rappers realized that they were repeating history then they'd suddenly stop wanting to make a ton of money?

SL: Yes. I think they would change their approach.

RC: OK. So if these rappers go to see *Bamboozled*, you think they're going to make the connection?

SL: Some might, some might not.

RC: But that would be your hope.

SL: All an artist can do is put the shit out there.

RC: But the larger point is...

SL: That we have to look at these images from our history because they're still with us, just in a slicker way. We don't have to wear black paint and red lipstick anymore, but we're still playing the roles of minstrels and coons.

RC: Let me just say, so as not to universally dismiss the film—there were some great performances in *Bamboozled*, it's just that I have a hard time with recycled imagery that seems to have not taught anybody anything in the first place. I feel the same way about that famous image of a black man during Jim Crow bending over a water fountain with the "colored only" sign above it.

SL: What a photograph.

RC: Lately I've been seeing a lot of other archival photographs being used in documentary film especially, and I feel like they are used as an appeal to white audiences—to shock or guilt or manipulate. It seems to me that it's our responsibility as artists and writers of color to find new images and ways to convey as hard-hitting a message without using the same painful, derogatory, dehumanizing images from our past.

SL: I disagree. There are so many young black people today who don't know shit about our history—they've not been taught anything by their parents or their grandparents.

RC: So how long do we have to keep looking at pictures of a black man hanging from a tree by his neck? How long until we can look at some new pictures?

SL: It doesn't have to be an either-or thing.

RC: I didn't say that.

SL: Then we should just forget about slavery?

RC: No, of course not, but I recently saw a clip from a documentary dealing with the anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education that used those kinds of images for the first ten minutes of the film. I happen to know the filmmaker is white.

SL: That's the fault of the filmmaker, then—there are more images out there to use. But I'm still thinking we need to keep seeing the original images. Young black people always want to be so quick to forget all the stuff we went through. ■

Rebecca Carroll is the Editor in Chief of The Independent. Her most recent nonfiction book, Saving the Race: Conversations on Du Bois from a Collective Memoir of Souls, was published in June from Harlem Moon/Doubleday, and includes an interview with Terence Blanchard, among other prominent black American figures.

Monica Bellucci (who plays Simona in *She Hate Me*) receiving direction from Lee.



Coon & Mammy

THE HISTORY OF THE MINSTREL SHOW

By Mel Donalson

Most independent filmmakers pride themselves on their singular vision and courage to dive headfirst into any turbulent pool of controversy. Writer/director Kevin Willmott has just jackknifed into the shallow end of such a pool with his new mockumentary film, *CSA: The Confederate States of America*, which premiered at Sundance earlier this year and will be released by IFC in 2005. In the film, the forty-seven-year-old filmmaker reconstructs American and Canadian history by coalescing news footage, fictional sequences, still photos, and the inevitable area of contention—the minstrel show.

Shot on 16mm, 35mm, and digital film on a budget of “under \$1 million,” *CSA* is positioned as a British Broadcasting System documentary that’s being telecast with commercials on the fictional Confederate Television Network, and presents an America if the South had won the Civil War—a country where slavery, racial segregation, and racial imperialism are celebrated. “One of the main reasons for making the film,” says Willmott, “was to say that slavery was the cause of the Civil War. Slavery was the Confederate American dream.”

An assistant professor in the film studies department at the university of Kansas, Willmott says he intentionally

brought together a diverse intercultural cast and crew that “shaped the consciousness of the set,” and that would help to make a film that would counter “the fact that we [Americans] have devalued history as a whole.” In many places clever and imaginative, the film’s imagery relies consistently upon the minstrel tradition, as whites don blackface and as blacks display coon and mammy antics throughout the plotline.

As early as the 1830s in American history, white performers profited with audiences by using burnt cork to blacken their faces, wearing clothing of the slave and “dandy,” assuming stylized physical behavior, and by playing banjos and singing songs in a “Negro” dialect. After the Civil War, black performers joined the minstrel act, and by the vaudeville shows of the late nineteenth century, blackface performances by both white and black actors were standard entertainment fare. When motion pictures became the new performance medium, blackface and minstrel characters emerged as acceptable cinematic depictions in numerous comedies and musicals.

From the 1903 version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* through the late 1940s, black characters have been represented by

numerous white performers in blackface, including well-known entertainers like Al Jolson (*The Jazz Singer*, 1927), Shirley Temple (*The Littlest Rebel*, 1935), Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney (*Babes in Arms*, 1939), John Wayne (*The Spoilers*, 1942), and Bing Crosby (*Dixie*, 1943). Over the years, black activists and cultural leaders have attacked blackface mimicry as a salient

example of white racism and co-optation, while other voices have attempted to defend the tradition as a theatrical, symbolic mask for evoking emotions and pathos.

In Willmott’s film, this convention is revived as Abraham Lincoln, branded a war criminal by President Jefferson Davis, flees for Canada via the Underground Railroad while wearing blackface. Within the mockumentary, a fictional feature film, *The Hunt for Dishonest Abe*, showcases a white actor as Lincoln who blackens his face for his “Negro” disguise, forced at one point to sing “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” to escape the white mob. Later, a film clip from another fictional film, *The Jefferson Davis Story*, features a white Shakespearean actor who plays, in blackface, the faithful slave, Popsy, who then advises her master to re-establish slavery in the North as a way of unifying the nation once more.

In both of these sequences, and others, Willmott connects viewers back to the manner in which blackface existed for decades in American cinema. By showing such images, the director resurrects the popular depiction that consistently haunted black and non-black audiences then and now. “The minstrel tradition comes from the fact that we [blacks] were owned. It is a reminder that it’s difficult to [re]shape those images that have been far too long a part of our history,” Willmott says.

However, it is that very resurrection of the minstrel imagery that breathes life into that representation once more, and though the context here is surely a “what if” scenario, the history and meanings of those images remain potent and odious. Is a contemporary audience prepared to process and weigh those images? The filmmaker thinks so. “We’ve got to get young people interested in history again,” he insists. Willmott says he was trying to find a new way to approach history with the film, a way “that would cut through the psychic numbness” among American youth and in society in general.

In addition to blackface, other minstrel conventions find visualization in Willmott’s film: basically, the recurring male “coon” and the female “mammy.” The coon was the black male whose antics, laziness, and dumb-witted nature intentionally entertained, delighted, and amused the white onlookers. Obviously inferior by nature, the coon devoted himself to avoiding work, chasing chickens, and/or gambling, while relishing a quick moment to sing, dance, or play the banjo. In numerous American films, black actors like Lincoln “Stepin Fetchit” Perry, Willie Best, and Mantan Moreland (the namesake for a lead character in Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled*; Lee also serves as an executive producer on *CSA*) portrayed these types in rural and urban settings. Apolitical and non-threatening to the status quo, the coon offers the image of a childish, simple-minded, black male. In a similar way, the mammy was a comforting icon with roots in the antebellum plantation lore. Committed to nurturing her white family, the mammy’s unselfish, sexless, and spiritual nature elevated her to a saintly status, while her race kept her in an inferior place. Talented performers including Hattie McDaniel, Louise Beavers, and Ethel Waters found themselves shackled to this icon which, for the first two actresses in particular, became the extent of their screen personas. The coon and



Previous page: Kevin McKinney as a black-faced Lincoln in *CSA*. Above: (left) *The Black and White Minstrel Show* aired on BBC in 1958; (right) *CSA*’s satirical look at slavery.

mammy were staples within the caricatures and song lyrics of the minstrel show, finding perpetuity during Hollywood's studio years.

CSA contains numerous examples of the coon and mammy—background characters that work, grin, and stoop obsequiously, or as the center of sundry advertisements that pepper the broadcast of the mockumentary. For example, in an ad for The Cartwright Institute, where white enrollees can learn how to be proper overseers and supervisors of blacks, learning to recognize “rascality” and other unpleasant traits. There's also the commercial for “niggerhair” cigarettes—for outdoorsy white men who enjoy the adventurous life. Then, there's the popular restaurant chain called the “Coon Chicken Inn,” where white patrons enter through a wide, laughing mouth that surrounds the doorway. Similarly, the popular pharmaceutical product of that time, “Contrari,” is a pill that can control the rebellious moods of chattel slaves.

These coon and mammy images affirm the deleterious nature of a racist Confederate regime that denies humanity as it objectifies an entire culture. Yet, once again, without an ascribed real-life historical context for the audience, these images may fail to undermine the very racist regime they seek to ridicule. While Willmott acknowledges the anger that minstrel images can evoke, he still feels certain that a younger audience can handle the implied racist notions. The director reflects: “As a whole, young people don't get many things that really challenge them. Any material out there that's entertaining *and* challenging is going to find an audience.”

Faith in finding that audience is not shared by all, though, and many would argue that the minstrel tradition has transformed itself into other egregious ways that have gained acceptance. For example, white actors in American films, without putting on blackface, have often portrayed fair-complexioned black characters, as in the cases of Jeanne Crain in *Pinky* (1949), Mel Ferrer in *Lost Boundaries* (1949), or Susan Kohner in *Imitation of Life* (1959). At the same time, white performers have often assumed or borrowed “black personas” in various entertainment formats from Elvis Presley to Eminem. Conversely, some black per-

formers have been derided for assuming coon-like professional appearances, as in the case of Jimmie Walker's “JJ” on the television show *Good Times*; Flavor Flav of the rap group Public Enemy; or the behavior of contemporary hip

hop performers like Ludacris and Nelly. The question remains: does American popular culture promote and encourage the contemplation of politically charged images, or just the non-critical consumption of those images as entertainment?

To the film's credit, beyond the minstrel images, *CSA: The Confederate States of America* attacks a number of historical and modern human indecencies. The film punctuates the racist and jingoistic treatment of Native Americans, Jews, Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, and Central Americans. The storyline directly connects the fictional “Confederate States” to the fascist movement of the Nazis, even as it follows the ongoing interracial resistance movement of the Canadian-based John Brown



Underground. The content recognizes the burgeoning women's movement against sexism, while connecting the dynamics of education, music, sports, and economics to the various attacks upon the flaws and illogical dimensions of the “what if” regime. And in the postscript, the captions and factual photos authenticate some of the actual products that inspired the mockumentary's commercials. To that end, the film delivers some provocative and insightful perspectives on American society and the inextricable connection between human rights and a “just” society.

Nevertheless, the film will open itself up for debate in regards to the threading of the minstrel conventions into its satirical fabric. Because the mockumentary begins as a genuine chronicle of the established “what if” world of southern racist rule, the film offers no framework for filtering those reflections of the minstrel show. Willmott, however, remains confident that audiences—young and old, black and non-black—possess the ability to comprehend and appreciate the one-hundred-plus years of the minstrel tradition that's shaped through a satirical approach. ■

Mel Donalson is an Associate Professor in the English Department at California State University (Los Angeles) and the author of Black Directors in Hollywood (2003). He is currently at work on his next book, Masculinity in the Interracial Buddy Film.

Kevin Willmott is the director of *CSA*.

Everyday People

A CONVERSATION WITH JIM MCKAY AND NELSON GEORGE

By John Lee

Director Jim McKay has become known for making small character-driven films with large universal themes. Nelson George is an outspoken race and media critic, whose most recent book, *Post-Soul Nation: The Explosive, Contradictory, Triumphant, and Tragic 1980s as Experienced by African Americans*, was published earlier this year by Viking Penguin. The two have recently teamed up for the first time on a new film called *Everyday People*, which premiered June 26 on HBO and runs throughout July. McKay directed, and George co-produced as well as provided the original concept for the film—a story that revolves around the intertwining lives of employees, employers, and customers in a fictional Brooklyn diner called Raskins.

Writer John Lee sat down with McKay and George for a conversation about the film, and what's going on today with everyday people in America regarding race and contemporary film and media.

JOHN LEE: How did the two of you hook up to do this project? I understand the idea for the film originated with you, Nelson?

NELSON GEORGE: Through a mutual acquaintance, Jim's name came up as the perfect guy to direct the piece. I had

initially been looking for a black director, or a woman director.

[Even though] some of my favorite films in the last few years about people of color have been made by people who aren't of color, but have been open enough to really explore that and be honest with it, and some of the worst films, or some of the films I dislike the most about people of color, have been made by black people.

There is more diversity in the black community than what [most] black films are showing. Jim was a great person for [*Everyday People*] because of his openness. He wanted to explore and be curious.

JIM MCKAY: Are there black filmmakers doing white material?

NG: Yeah, a lot now.

JM: But [is it material] that is critical or political in any way?

NG: There have only been a few films I have seen where black filmmakers deal with white reality.

JL: Remember the Asian cat [Desmond Nakano—*White Man's Burden* (1995)] who did a movie with Harry Belafonte

where reality was reversed, and black people had the power and white people were at the bottom of society?

NG: Was John Travolta in that?

JL: Yes, Travolta's character was looked down upon as a vagabond and dangerous just because of the color of his skin, and Belafonte was automatically afforded respect for the same reason. That was an interesting flip. Sometimes when you are on the outside looking in, you can obtain a unique perspective. When you are too close to a subject, you try to hide certain things and it's hard to achieve that level of honesty. It would be interesting to see what resulted from more black directors having the chance to do work that deals with their perceptions of other cultures.

JM: There is kind of an historic idea that black people know more about white people than white people know about black people. I remember when we were developing this [film], we read a book with essays on this topic, and white people don't think [about black people] because they don't pay attention. Even going back to slavery, black people were in white people's houses working and listening, checking things out, while white people either didn't care or they don't want to go there or whatever. I am sure there are a lot of black directors who have a really interesting critical view of white society.

But there is this evolution—like with queer cinema when it first started, when you are a gay director, you're going to do gay material, it's going to be political, activist, and about identity. That starts to open up, and gay directors start to do material that's not necessarily gay, which is kind of integrationist, and there is something really good about that. But what seems to happen, as time passes, is that it becomes about success and mainstreaming rather than expanding the vision. So that you get someone who makes black films to make their mark, then it's [on to] *Lethal Weapon 3* (1992) and they no longer make identity films.

NG: There are two good examples about that. [The first is] F. Gary Gray—he did *Friday* (1995), and then *Set It Off* (1996). And then his crossover film, *The Negotiator* (1998), which starred Kevin [Spacey] and Sam [Jackson], and he just did *The Italian Job* (2003). [The second example is] Antoine Fuqua, who became famous for the *Dangerous Minds* ("Gangsta's Paradise") video with Coolio (1995), then did *The Replacement Killers* (1998), which was bad, and *Training Day* (2001), which was really good. And now he just finished *King Arthur* (2004). I thought the performance he got out of Denzel Washington [in *Training Day*] was excellent. Denzel's two best performances where he [played] street was with Spike in *He Got Game* (1998), and

Training Day. I wonder how much having a black male director influenced that.

JM: *Friday* and *Set it Off* are both "black films." What I am interested in seeing is someone artistic, someone like Spike, or a guy like Rodney Evans, who made what is definitely a black film [*Brother to Brother* (2004)], do something like *The Ice Storm* (1997), which is a totally "white film," but it is also a critical film about white culture in a very specific way.

NG: I do think a lot of black filmmakers think their opportunities are so precious and few that they are afraid to take that risk, because they don't know how many films they're going to get the chance to make.

Spike, Warrington and Reggie Hudlin, Julie Dash—they all came out of this independent black film world, supported by museums and foundations grants. In the 90s, black filmmakers began to have entrée into mainstream [moviemaking]. There aren't enough black directors coming up in those old paths anymore. At a lot of black film festivals, a film by Rodney Evans will stick out, because his is truly an independent vision.

JM: Right. You've got John Sayles, Jim Jarmusch—mostly white male directors who followed this path of small art films to some degree. Spike has done that too, to some degree. Although his films are [mostly] bigger, the films have always been clearly his. I wonder why we don't have more black filmmakers who are really interested in working on a smaller scale and less on Hollywood material.

NG: Another factor is international. My impression is that Jim Jarmusch has a real big international following. Even Woody Allen, and people like that. Everyone says [international investors] are afraid of black people. I've heard people tell me things like in Japan they lighten the pictures of black actors on camera and on posters.

JM: I have heard the most racist comments made about foreign distribution, and spoken as truth with no apparent self-consciousness whatsoever. I remember with *Girls Town* (1996), which has this kind of street culture and girl power thing to it, someone telling me, an American [in the industry], about distributing it in Japan: "If it's black people they can laugh at, if it's Eddie Murphy it's okay, but otherwise they aren't interested in the lives of black people."

What a fucked up generalization to make with such aplomb! They literally don't even try. They just say they don't buy this in Japan. It's an amazingly self-defeating attitude.

NG: My impression of Europe, especially France, England,

and Amsterdam, is that number one, you have more people of color. You have issues of race. Like in Germany, you have the whole Turkish thing; in France there are the Algerians. In Europe, I feel like I am in 1975, even in the language—the government doesn't even know how to talk about race. I think there is an opportunity there for films from here since we have already gone through a lot of what they are going through now. I think the perception of race being of disinterest to Europe maybe was true in the 1980s. I don't

should. The guy or girl coming up who wants to make a film today feels like he or she has to be in the mix—they think: I have to be in this game. I have to make a big glossy music video. I wonder if white kids in film school today feel the same pressures to go that route.

JM: When you stop to think about it, though, there are good examples to look at. I mean, Cauleen Smith's *DryLongSo* (1999) is a good example of a small, homemade, black independent film, Cheryl Dunye's work, and now Rodney [Evans].

NG: My friend, Lee Davis, made this film *3am* (2001) for Showtime—Spike was an executive producer on it. Danny Glover [plays the lead], but there is a Hispanic subplot with Michelle Rodriguez, and a guy from Eastern Europe [in the cast]. There are three stories in the film, but the poster for it only features Danny Glover and Pam Grier. [Showtime] didn't put Michelle Rodriguez on the poster—they didn't emphasize the other subplots.

JM: That's funny. That's the first time [a distributor] chose the black guy to put on the poster. I was going to bring up what Miramax did with Stephen Frears' movie, *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002). It is a great example of institutionalized racism. This guy [Chiwetel Ejiofor] is the

star of the movie, and the female lead [Audrey Tautou] had a smaller role, but only she is featured on the poster. You can guess what the conversations were in the marketing meetings around that decision.

NG: I think [that choice] limited the audience. I think that if they had her and him [on the poster] it would have been better. There was a whole audience that didn't know about *Dirty Pretty Things*, because they didn't know what it was about.

JM: The more times [distributors] do that, the more it becomes the truth. Are we that fucked up and racists as a society that even the people in art cinemas wouldn't have gone to see the film because there was a black guy on the poster? That's fucking sick. ■

John Lee is a writer/director living in Brooklyn, New York.

The cast and crew of *Everyday People*: (top row) Marc Anthony Thompson, Billoah Greene, Nelson George (producer), Reg. E. Cathy, Steven Axelrod; (middle row) Thomas Dozol, Jordan Gelber, Jim McKay (director), Sydnee Stewart, Ron Butler; (bottom) Bridget Barken.



think that is the Europe of right now, and I think people need to challenge those assumptions.

JL: I think what is interesting is that some of those [American] distributors who make these comments are actually voicing their own personal opinions. They aren't personally interested so they foist that upon the market. Someone at Sony a few years back said that Denzel Washington will never be able to open a film.

NG: I remember when *The 25th Hour* (2002) was about to come out in Europe, and Spike had gone to The Berlin Film Festival to promote it. America is always very funny, but I feel in Europe he is respected more for his body of work than he is here. Here everyone has a "top 10" sensibility. If a film doesn't open big they write it off, and black people are particularly affected by that way of thinking. If the film doesn't gross a lot of money, then the director or the film must not be any good. I feel like the emphasis on the material success is really strong.

There isn't much of an art tradition right now. This generation coming up doesn't respect artists as much as they

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Contact Info: 401 Ninth St., NW, Washington, DC 20004-2129; 800-272-2190; www.cpb.org

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CPB provides the LPB with \$600,000 annually to develop minority-based programming. In addition it has an annual open call for funding projects in any genre.

Amount: Grants typically ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000

Contact Info: 6777 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-7110; www.lpbp.org

National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA)

Funded by the CPB, NAATA's mission is to present stories that convey the

richness and diversity of the Asian Pacific American experience. Two annual open call rounds. All formats are accepted.

Amount: Grants range from \$20,000 to \$50,000

Contact Info: 145 9th St., Suite 350, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC)

Devoted to the preservation, production, distribution, and promotion of videos and films about African Americans and the experiences of the African Diaspora, NBPC has a development fund that puts out an annual request for proposals. NBPC funds, commissions, acquires, and awards talented makers of quality African American film and video projects.

Amount: Grants range from \$1,000 to \$80,000

Contact Info: 145 E. 125th St., Suite 4R, New York, NY 10035; (212) 828-7588; info@nbpc.tv; www.nbpc.tv

Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT)

NAPT has an annual open call for funds used to support educational and telecommunications programs and services about tribal histories, cultures, languages and aspirations of American Indians and Alaskan natives.

Amount: Grants up to \$25,000

Contact Info: 1800 North 33rd St., Lincoln, NE 68583; (402) 472-3522; native@unl.edu; www.nativetelecom.org

National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)

NALIP has a producers academy and hosts a writers lab for Latinos.

Eligibility: Must be member of NALIP

Contact Info: P.O. Box 1247, Santa Monica, CA 90406; (310) 457-4445; info@nalip.org; www.nalip.org

Open Meadows Fund

The Open Meadows Foundation is a grant-making organization which funds projects that are designed and implemented by women and girls; projects which have limited financial access which reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of our society and promote the empowerment of women and girls; and projects for social change that have encountered obstacles in their search for funding.

Amount: Up to \$2,000

Contact Info: P.O. Box 150-607, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215-607; (718) 768-2249

Puffin Foundation

The Puffin Foundation continues to make grants that encourage emerging artists in art, music, theater, and literature whose works, due to their genre and/or social philosophy might have difficulty being aired. The Foundation does not fund large film/documentary proposals, grants for travel, continuing education, or for the writing or publication of books. Additionally, the Foundation is unable to consider grant applications outside of the United States; for general living expenses, including housing; and for those who have sufficient alternative sources of support.

Amount: Average grants are \$1,000-\$2,500

Contact Info: 20 E. Oakdene Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666-4111; www.puffinfoundation.org



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Oxnard, CA 93035

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make a contribution to society."

Amount: \$50,000

Contact Info: From The Heart
Productions, 1455 Mandalay Beach
Road Oxnard, CA 93035-2845;
CaroleEDean@worldnet.att.net

IFP/Los Angeles Project Involve

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ranging from directing and writing to
costume design and film program-
ming.

Contact Info: Dawn Hudson,
Executive Director,
8750 Wilshire Boulevard, 2nd Floor,
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(310) 432-1200
www.ifp.org

ITVS Diversity Development Fund

ITVS's program looks for minority
producers interested in developing
projects for public television. The pro-
gram seeks to assist independent pro-
ducers of color who are in the develop-
ment phase of their projects.

Amount: Awards range from
\$5,000 to \$15,000

Eligibility: Must be an independent
producer, at least eighteen years of
age, a citizen or legal resident of the
U.S. or its external properties, have
some previous film or television pro-
duction experience in a principal role,
quantifiable through the submission
of a sample tape, identify with and
belong to one of the following
communities: African American;
Latino/Latina; Asian American; Pacific
Islander; Native American/Alaskan;
or Arab American.

Contact Info: Independent Television

Service, 501 York St., San Francisco,
CA, 94110
(415) 356-8383;
mariene_Velasco@itvs.org;
www.itvs.org/producers/funding.html
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Ford Foundation

Supports efforts to engage diverse
groups in work related to the media
and to analyze the media's effect on
society.

Amount: Varies

Contact Info: 43rd St.,
New York, NY 10017
(212) 573-5000;
Orlando Bagwell:
secretary@fordfound.org;
www.fordfound.org

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and The Walt Disney Studios.
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airfare and accommodations. ABC will
award the scholarship/grants through
the participating organizations only.

Amount: Grants are \$20,000 each

Contact Info: ABC Talent
Development Program,
NAATA Media Fund, c/o Pia Shah,
145 9th St.,
Suite 350, San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 863-0814, EXT. 122;
pia@naatanet.org;
www.abctalentdevelopment.com

Guy Alexander Hanks and Marvin Miller Screenwriting Program

The fifteen-week intensive workshop
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AIVF THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

association of independent video and filmmakers

TO SUCCEED AS AN INDEPENDENT you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through our service and education programs, the pages of our magazine, our web resource, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

About AIVF

The oldest and largest national moving-image media organization, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AIVF offers a broad slate of education, information, and resource programs for members and non-members alike.

Information Resources

AIVF workshops and events cover the whole spectrum of issues affecting the field. Practical guides on festivals, distribution, exhibition and outreach help you get your film to audiences (see other part of this card).

The Independent

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*, a national magazine filled with thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on legal, technical, and business matters—all geared to the working independent. Plus the field's best source of festival deadlines, exhibition venues, and funding opportunities, as well as AIVF member activities and services.

AIVF Online

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring resource listings and links, media advocacy information, web-original material, discussion areas, and the lowdown on AIVF services. Members-only features include interactive notices and festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, and reports on indie media scenes across the country. SPLICE! is a monthly electronic newsletter that features late-breaking news and highlights special programs and opportunities.

Insurance & Discounts

Businesses across the country offer discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members are eligible for discounted rates on health and production insurance offered by providers who design plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers. Members also receive discounts on classified ads in *The Independent*.

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AIVF supports dozens of member-organized, member-run Regional Salons across the country, to strengthen local media arts communities.

Advocacy

AIVF has been consistently outspoken about preserving the resources and rights of independent mediamakers. Members receive information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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the participants appreciation for and comprehension of African American history and culture.

Amount: Although a stipend is not available, workshop participation and books will be provided free of charge.

Eligibility: Applicant must be eighteen years of age or older and not currently enrolled in a film/TV degree program at a university, college, or community college. S/he should not have been previously hired as a professional TV or film writer; or been a member of the WGA.

Contact Info: USC School of Cinema, 850 W. 34th St., GT132, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2211
(213) 740-8194;
www.cntv.usc.edu/cosby

Gordon Parks Independent Film Awards for Black Filmmakers

IFP's Gordon Parks film awards provide funding under three categories: screenwriting in the emerging narrative section, directing in either the emerging narrative or the spotlight on documentaries section, and an Eastman Kodak product grant for the winner of the Gordon Parks Directing Award.

Amount: Grants range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 based on category

Contact Info: 8750 Wilshire Blvd., Second Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90211;
(310) 432-1200;
Arleen Chikami: achikami@ifp.org;
www.ifp.org

Pacific Islanders In Communication (PIC)

PIC is a national nonprofit media organization established primarily for the purpose of increasing national public broadcast programming by and about indigenous Pacific Islanders.

PIC provides funding support for productions, training and education, broadcast services, and community outreach. The Media Fund sparks the development of Pacific Islander programming for national public television. It is comprised of the following programs: Open Call, an annual call that invites proposals for television projects in all stages of production; Completion Fund, that is designed to quickly respond to urgent post-production needs; Short Term Initiative, that encourages and builds narrative storytelling; Travel Awards, to support producers; Professional Development; Acquisitions; and Executive Productions.

Amount: Varies

Contact Info: 1221 Kapi'olani Blvd., Suite 6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814;
(808) 591-0059;
info@piccom.org;
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The Seventh Generation Fund

The Seventh Generation Fund provides technical assistance in the form of workshops, conferences, training, and grant funding for projects.

Amount: Small Grants ranging from \$600 to \$10,000 per year in assistance to seed an emerging organization, to help cover the general operating costs of an existing organization or specific project, or to cover related expenses that help a project accomplish its work and fulfill its mission in the community; Training & Technical Assistance Financial support of \$600 to \$5,000 per year to facilitate project-specific training, pay for experts/special consultants, and/or provide for other capacity building needs. (T & TA grants are also available for projects to acquire new skills through regional workshops, national forums, and spe-

cial conferences); and mini-grants are offered from \$50 to \$500.

Contact Info: P.O. Box 4569, Arcata, CA 95518
(707) 825-7640;
of7gen@pacbell.net;
www.7genfund.org

IFP/Chicago Production Fund

The 2005 IFP/Chicago Production Fund is a grant of equipment, film stock, donated post production services, and discounted equipment and services valued in excess of \$85,000 for the production of a short film shot by an IFP/Chicago member in the Midwest.

Amount: Camera equipment, film, audio equipment, grip/electrical equipment, original music discount, production vehicle rental, camera support equipment, one week of casting, budgeting and scheduling software, stunt coordinator consultation services, location scouting services, consultation with an entertainment attorney, first-look rights for broadcast by the Independent Film Channel, and a \$500 cash completion award.

Eligibility: Applicants must be IFP/Chicago members and the film must be shot in the Midwest region. The Midwest is defined as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Contact Info: 33 East Congress, Room 505, Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 435-1825;
infoifpmw@aol.com;
www.ifp.org

Sonya Fatah and Rick Harrison are editorial interns at The Independent.

More information and resource listings available at www.aivf.org.

Risky Business

CONTROVERSIAL FILMS SUGGEST A NEW TREND

By Matt Dunne

There's an old adage in the business world that you should never risk offending a client by talking about religion or politics. What to make of the film industry, then, which in recent months appears to be dispensing with that particular rule of etiquette? A series of controversial films is testing the notion that politically and religiously neutral material is required to attract large audiences. This volatile fusion between politics, religion, and success at the box office may in fact be leading to a revival of risk taking among filmmakers.

Three films in particular have recently offered fodder for everything from newspaper editorials to senate hearings: *The Passion of the Christ*, Mel Gibson's violent depiction of Christ's crucifixion; *The Day After Tomorrow*, a thriller based on a hypothetical environmental disaster brought on by massive global climate change; and *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Michael Moore's new documentary focusing on the relationship between the Bush family, Osama bin Laden, and the Saudi royals.

None of these, on the surface, would seem to have much potential for commercial success. But each film—engendering accusations of, respectively, anti-Semitism, bad science, and corporate censorship—is poised to produce fabulous returns on investment by addressing tough political issues in a country that is as politically and religiously polarized as it has ever been.

Major political figures and organizations are engaging in vocal battles over these productions, battles that used to be reserved for the stage during a political debate or a candidate's press releases. So what does this mean for film?

Many in the film community have

spoken out about the consolidation of media companies reducing the number of intellectually challenging films that actually reach audiences. Mel Gibson made a big deal out of having to fund *The Passion of the Christ* with his own resources. Michael Moore had a temper tantrum when Disney refused to distribute his film, linking Disney CEO Michael Eisner's decision to expected tax benefits from the state of Florida. Eisner, while denying such an obvious political quid pro quo, did state that his decision was made to avoid offending the broad political spectrum that makes up Disney's customer base.

The controversy over *The Day After Tomorrow*, released in May by 20th Century Fox, initially led to studio spokespeople attempting to distance themselves from the efforts of former vice-president and environmental spokesman Al Gore to attach himself to the film. The stories surrounding these blow-ups have inevitably referenced other corporate censorship decisions—including CBS's choice earlier this year to decline an anti-Bush advertisement from the nationwide grassroots network, MoveOn.org, and to pull the miniseries, *The Reagans*, after protests from family.

These issues have brought about fresh self-reflection within the industry, such as whether or not writers and directors are starting to self-censor in order to make a living. David Mamet has been quoted as saying, "We have, as a nation, become our own thought police; but instead of calling the process by which we limit our expression of dissent and wonder 'censorship,' we call it 'concern for commercial viability.'" Others, including environmentalist Robert Kennedy Jr., have likened the new steps taken by corpo-

rations to McCarthy era blacklists.

While concern over censorship, either political or corporate, is a real issue today, the recent controversy may actually be the harbinger of a renewal of politically and socially charged productions, making Gibson's and Moore's films poised to enjoy unprecedented commercial success. Many are suggesting that they are simply redefining the film industry business model to match the new polarized American audience. Gibson's private previews to religious leaders who were then sworn to secrecy suggest a sophisticated marketing strategy to prime the pump of the fiery debate that followed. In Moore's case, it has become evident that he knew that Disney would not distribute his film over a year ago, but launched his outrage just in time for the Cannes Film Festival, where he was awarded the top jury prize.

Gore, interestingly, is taking a slightly different road by attaching political meaning to a non-political enterprise—*The Day After Tomorrow*—in order to get his message out to a new audience. Regardless of the quality of the film (and the science behind it), Gore and MoveOn.org readily admit that its importance lies in the twenty million potential voters who are expected to see it, even before the added publicity. The business model makes all kinds of sense. An environmental film festival would be lucky to get an audience of 500 and would be limited to only the converted, whereas Gore and MoveOn.org can reasonably hope that all kinds of people will flock to see New York City engulfed by a giant tidal wave.

Shortly after Gore's press release announcing his efforts to hand out materials related to global warming at cinemas showing the film, the spin doctors of the Bush administration immediately ordered that no NASA scientists were allowed to comment on the film. Only after a copy of the mis-sive was leaked to *The New York Times* was the order withdrawn. Despite pub-

lic statements from the RNC dismissing Gore's antics, someone in the White House was worried it might work.

Unlike Disney, however, 20th Century Fox saw the opportunity for financial gain and moved quickly to reverse its initial statements and embrace the grassroots effort surrounding the film. In an uncomfortable moment, Kennedy was so quick to deliver a seemingly prepared speech on the irresponsibility of the corporate executives at Fox that he had not heard that the media giant was no longer resisting the partnership. Thinly veiling his delight at finding such a marketing windfall, Fox spokesman Jeffrey Godsick told *The New York Times*, "Clearly the movie is entertainment, but all of this activity creates additional interest, making it more topical. It's been wonderful."

There is another rule of thumb in business: successful business models are quickly imitated. Through the anger over censorship, we may in fact be finding a willingness and market for bringing the forces of film and politics/religion back together.

Filmmakers concerned about self-censoring their films into blandness may soon have to worry about injecting controversy in order to make them economically viable. But if this is in fact the trend, the future may at last be bright for those with a message to convey and a willingness to do so without fear. This would be good news for the best of independent filmmakers and, perhaps more importantly, for democracy.

Speak out loudly against censorship. It is the right thing to do, gets the public's attention, and might just create a market again for political film and discourse that can make America think. ■

Matt Dunne is the Democratic state senator of Vermont, and founder of the Vermont Film Commission. Previously, he served two and a half years as National Director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and four terms as a Vermont state representative.

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LECTRO

Festivals

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. **Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Oct. 1st for Dec. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org.**

INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL LISTINGS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

AFI LOS ANGELES INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-14, CA. Deadline: June 4; July 1 (final: shorts); July 16 (final: features). Entries must be LA premieres w/ no previous local TV/theatrical exposure. Festival receives wide print coverage in trades, LA Times, etc. & is open to public. Founded: 1987. Cats: short, doc, feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video, digiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: features (over 30 mins.) \$45, shorts \$35. Final: features \$55, shorts \$45. Contact: AFI Fest; (886) AFI-FEST; fax: (323) 462-4049; afifest@afi.com; www.afi.com.

AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 26 - Dec. 12, NY. Deadline: June 30 (docs, shorts); Aug. 31 (features). Noncompetitive fest presents films that depict human experience of people of color all over the world. Over 60 features, shorts, docs screened from Africa, the Caribbean, North & South America, & Europe. Filmmakers in residence participate in panel discussions. Founded: 1993. Cats: feature, short, doc. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival; (212) 864-1760; fax: 316-6020; info@nyadff.org; www.nyadff.org.

AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 6-13, CA. Deadline: August 8. Fest seeking works by or about American Indian or First Nation people produced in previous year. Founded: 1975. Cats: doc, feature, short, commercial feature, live short, animated short, public service, industrial, music video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$50. Contact: American

Indian Film Institute; (415) 554-0525; fax: (415) 554-0542; aifist@yahoo.com; www.aifisf.com.

ASHEVILLE FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 4-7, NC. Deadline: July 23. Cats: feature, doc, short, student, music video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$30; \$20 (student). Contact: City of Asheville Parks & Recreation; (828) 259-5800; fax: 259-5606; mporter@ashevilenc.gov; www.ashevillefilmfestival.com.

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 14-21, TX. Deadline: June 15 (early); July 15 (final). Founded: 1994. Cats: feature, short, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (early); \$50 (final). Contact: (800) 310-FEST; (512) 478-4795; fax: (512) 478-6205; barb@austinfilmfestival.com; www.austinfilmfestival.com.

BEARDED CHILD UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL. August 6-7, MN. Deadline: July 19. Non-conventional fest presents innovative short films that defy the traditional boundaries of the mainstream, encouraging "the experimental & bizarre". We return all fees & materials if your entry isn't programmed. Cats: experimental. Formats: 1/2", 16mm, DVD, mini DV, super 8, 8mm. Preview on VHS. Entry

Fee: \$15 (no fees for Int'l entries). Contact: beardedprogeny@hotmail.com; www.beardedchild.com.

BLACK BEAR FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 15-17, PA. Deadline: August 15. Founded: 2000. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DVD, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10. Contact: (507) 409-0909; info@BlackBearFilm.com; www.BlackBearFilm.com.

BOSTON UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 26-Oct. 4, MA. Deadline: July 31. Annual fest of the devious, depraved & defiant. Looking for films that are radical & experimental in either content or production value. Cats: doc, short, experimental, animation, feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 1/2" (NTSC & PAL), 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: early, \$45 (features, over 60 min.); \$30 (shorts, under 60 min.). Contact: (617) 975-3361; localsightings@worldnet.att.net; www.bostonundergroundfilmfestival.com.

CHICAGO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. October 7-21, IL. Deadline: July 30. Annual event is the oldest competitive int'l film fest in N. America spotlighting the latest work in int'l & independent cinema by featuring both established



Coney Island, baby

In early 2001, the nonprofit arts organization Coney Island USA aligned with indiefilmpage.com to launch an annual film festival at Coney Island. As festival director Rob Leddy puts it, "We set out to differentiate it from all other New York City film festivals by branding it with Coney's independent spirit and irreverent nature." The fest's mission is to present unique and engaging film programs at the legendary Sideshows by the Seashore and to raise funds for Coney Island USA. In addition to a full slate of shorts programs, this year's festival will screen features in the Coney Island Museum. See listing.

Fee: \$15 (no fees for Int'l entries). Contact: beardedprogeny@hotmail.com; www.beardedchild.com.

BIG BEAR LAKE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 17-19, CA. Deadline: April 15; July 15. Annual fest seeks independent feature films, short films, student films, documentaries, family films & digital films. This year's cultural event will showcase African American films. The fest is located in Big Bear Lake, California, nestled in the San Bernardino Nat'l

Forest, just two hours outside of Los Angeles. Cats: feature, student. VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$45 Features, \$35 Student. Contact: 909) 866-3433; fax: same; bigbearfilmfest@aol.com; www.bigbearlakefilmfestival.com.

9400; fax: 425-0944; info@chicagofilmfestival.com; www.chicagofilmfestival.com.

CMJ FILMFEST, October 13-16, NY. Deadline: July 16. Fest presented as part of the CMJ Music Marathon/MusicFest, which for 20 years has been one of the most innovative music & media expos in the world. The Fest recognizes synergy between music & film & seeks the best in independent features, shorts & docs w/ creative &/or effective use of music. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, animation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30 (feature & doc); \$20 (short). Contact: Donita Dooley, director; 1.877.6.FESTIVAL (877)-633-7848; fax: 425-944-8751; www.cmj.com/marathon/film fest.php.

CONEY ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 1-3, NY. Deadline: June 25; July 23 (final). Fest's mission is to raise funds for the nonprofit arts organization Coney Island USA & to present a fun & unique program of films at the legendary Sideshows by the Seashore & Coney Island Museum venues. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video. Formats: DV, 16mm, Super 8, 35mm. Preview

on VHS, DVD or Mini-DV. Entry Fee: \$20; \$25 (final). Contact: info@coneyislandfilmfestival.com; www.coneyislandfilmfestival.com.

DAMAH FILM FESTIVAL, Feb.17-20, CA. Deadline: Sept. 1; Sept. 15 (final). Fest explores "the spiritual dimension of life through the art of short film; encouraging an emerging generation of filmmakers from diverse perspectives to voice the spiritual aspect of the human experience." Cats: short (under 30 min.), any style or genre. Formats: MiniDV, Betacam, S-8, 16mm, 35mm, DigiBeta, HD, Hi8. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25; \$40 (final). Contact: (323) 939-3099; info@damah.com; www.damah.com.

DANCE ON CAMERA FESTIVAL, Jan. 7-8; 14-15; 21-22, NY. Deadline: Sept. 25. The oldest annual int'l dance film/video event in the world. Co-sponsored by Film Society of Lincoln Center, fest incl. photo exhibits, workshops & panels. Founded: 1972. Cats: Experimental, Feature, Short, doc, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, Mini-DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35. Contact: (212) 727-0764; fax: 727-0764; dfa5@earthlink.net; www.dancefilm sassn.org.

DENVER INT'L EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 8-18, CO. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest accepting experimental works of all lengths & genres produced anytime in the last 100 years. Cats: experimental, animation, short, doc, feature. Formats: 16mm, super 8, DV, S-VHS, VHS, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10. Contact: (303) 561-3647; publisher@experimentalfilmchannel.com; www.experimentalfilmchannel.com.

DENVER INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 14-24, CO. Deadline: July 15. Annual invitational expo of film presents approx. 200 films over 11 days & plays host to more than 125 film artists. Founded: 1978. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, children, short, family, student, new int'l releases, cutting-edge indie fiction films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL). Entry Fee: \$20 (students); \$35. Contact: (303) 595-3456; fax: 595-0956; dfs@denverfilm.org; www.denverfilm.org.

DO IT YOUR DAMN SELF!! NAT'L YOUTH VIDEO & FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 19-20, MA. Deadline: August 31. Fest is presented by the Teen Media Program at the Community Art



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Center in Cambridge, Mass. Works under 20 min. by youths 11-18 years of age sought for competition. Work must have been produced before the artist's 19th birthday. This fest especially encourages youth from inner city & rural areas to submit. Selected films & their makers travel to meet & show work w/ other youth producers. Founded: 1996. Cats: animation, doc, music video, experimental, youth media, installation, short. Awards: Inspiration. Formats: Mini DV, Hi8. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$15. Contact: (617) 868-7100; fax: (617) 864-4700; diyds@communityartcenter.org; www.doityourdamnsself.org.

FINGER LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, October 22-28, NY. Deadline: July 15. Formerly the Cornell Environmental Film Fest, the fest is a week long, non-competitive program of 30+ screenings. Films must be environmentally themed. All screenings incl. discussions either w/ the filmmaker or topical expert. Festival is by invitation, but submissions are encouraged. Founded: 1998. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC) or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: (607) 255-8252; fax: 255-9910; cjr20@cornell.edu; cinema.cornell.edu/fleff.

FLORIDA EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 11-13, FL. Deadline: Aug. 15. Fest seeks to be the first annual fest in the region focusing solely on experimental short films & videos. Cats: short, experimental. Formats: 16mm, Super 8, 35mm, DVD, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$10; \$20 (final). Contact: (352) 271-4265; info@flex.org; www.flex.org.

FRESNO REEL PRIDE INT'L GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 15-19, CA. Deadline: July 31. Fest is a celebration of int'l gay & lesbian cinema & has grown to become the premiere gay & lesbian cultural event in central California. Founded: 1990. Cats: short, feature, doc. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DV Cam. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Stephen Mintz, Program Director; (559) 360-9515; fax: 443-0700; Mintzworks@aol.com; www.reelpride.com.

HOLLYWOOD INT'L STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-6, CA. Deadline: Aug. 15. Fest provides "a unique venue for independent films by student filmmakers from around the world." The fest is open to students only. Participants must be undergraduate or graduate film students. Students should be registered in junior high school, high school, col-

lege, univ. or private film schools. High school students will only compete w/ other high school students. Students of all ages & academic backgrounds are encouraged apply. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DV, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35. Contact: Festival; (818) 506-1066; info@isffhollywood.org; www.isffhollywood.org.

INT'L BLACK WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Fall/Winter, CA. Deadline: Aug. 1. The fest's mission is "to bring new & classic film by and/or about Black women from around the world to a wider, general audience." The fest prides itself in bringing good cinema by women who have a unique & powerful perspective to filmmaking. Cats: feature, animation, doc, short. Formats: Beta, Beta SP, DVD, 1/2". Preview on VHS, DVD. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Adrienne Anderson; fax: (415) 680-2413; ibwff@filmfestivals.net; ibwff.filmfestival.net.

INT'L EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA EXPOSITION, Nov. 14-16, CO. Deadline: Sept. 1. Festival, hidden in the mountains of Colorado, showcases work by both new avant-garde filmmakers & well-known experimental film figures. Exclusively celluloid. Cats: experimental, installation. Awards: Luxury accommodations for entire length of expo for films accepted. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, super 8, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (10 min. or less); \$35 (10-20 min.); \$50 (30-60 min.); \$60 (60 min. or more). Contact: TECE; (719) 277-6657; cat@experimentalcinema.com; www.experimentalcinema.com.

JEWISH WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, November, NY. Deadline: July 30. Fest seeks films that focus on the experiences of Jewish women wherever & whoever they may be. The fest "provides an opportunity for filmmakers who have never shown commercially in a metropolitan area". Gender of filmmaker is of no consequence & all cats will be considered, provided they are no longer than 60 min. Cats: short (no longer than 60 min.), any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35. Contact: Annette Landau; 212-687-5030 ext. 33; aland@ncjwny.org; www.ncjwny.org/film_festival.htm.

LONG ISLAND GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, November 11-14, NY. Deadline: July 1; August 15 (final). Entry Fee: \$15; \$25 (final). Contact: Stephen Flynn; (516) 694-

2407; fax: (631) 547-6651; info@liglff.org; www.liglff.org.

MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 24, NY. Deadline: July 31. Once a yr. thousands of New Yorkers gather inside Union Square Park to watch short films. Founded: 1988. Cats: short, any style or genre. Awards: A feature film package awarded to the best short film; best documentary, best student film, best animation, best editing. Formats: DigiBeta. Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL). Entry Fee: \$35. Contact: Nicholas Mason; (201) 969-8049; info@msfilmfest.com; www.msfilmfest.com.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FILM EXPO, Oct. 15-17, NH. Deadline: July 15; Aug. 15 (final). NHFX is a community-inclusive event intended to enhance the arts & tourism aspects of NH. This is the state's largest film event, incl.: independent & student film screenings, tradeshow, young filmmaker's workshops & others. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, student, any style or genre, script. Formats: Beta SP, DVD, Mini-DV, VHS-NTSC. Preview on VHS, Mini-DV or DVD. Entry Fee: films under 30 min. \$20(early) \$30(final), 30-60 min. \$25(early) \$35(final), over 60 min. \$35(early), \$45(final); \$10 student discount w/ valid photo ID copy. Script entry fees: \$35 (early) \$45 (final), extra \$10 for Canadian applicants. Contact: (603) 647-NHF (6439); info@nhfx.com; www.nhfilmexpo.com.

OLYMPIA FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-14, WA. Deadline: Sept. 13. Annual fest now accepting entries. For 21 yrs. the Olympia Film Society has presented the finest in int'l, indie, classic & fringe features, docs & shorts. CINE-X competition is two programs of experimental shorts. Founded: 1984. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, family, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, various video, DV, 1/2", 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$10 (+ postage for return). Contact: Helen Thornton; (360) 754-6670; fax: 943-9100; ofs@olywa.net; www.olyfilm.org.

OUTTAKES DALLAS: THE ANNUAL GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, November 5-14, TX. Deadline: July 31. Dallas is home to one of the largest & most active lesbian & gay communities in the US. With this support, OUTTAKES hosts the works of filmmakers from around the world w/a series of exciting events incl. theme parties & workshops. Founded: 1999. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats:

35mm, Beta SP, DV, 1/2", S-VHS, DigiBeta, Hi8, DVD, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: festival; (972) 988-6333; films@outtakesdallas.org; www.outtakesdallas.org.

PORTLAND INT'L SHORT SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 24-Oct. 2, OR. Deadline: July 15; July 31(final). Fest will showcase films from around the globe that clock in at 10 min. or less. Fest is open to all subject matter & production formats. Founded: 2002. Cats: any style or genre, short. Awards: Jury & audience awards; prizes incl. cash & merchandise. Formats: DVD, 1/2", 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$20; \$40 (final). Contact: Zonker Films; piss@zonkerfilms.com; www.zonkerfilms.com.

PORTLAND WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, September 24-25, OR. Deadline: July 15, July 31 (final). Fest will showcase films & videos directed by women from around the US & beyond. Fest is open to all subject matter & production formats. The goal of POW! Fest is to provide a unique screening opportunity for emerging female filmmakers. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, short, any style or genre. Formats: 16mm, DVD, 1/2", Super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (shorts, under 25 min.); \$30 (feature). Contact: Zonker Films; POW@zonkerfilms.com; www.zonkerfilms.com.

PUTNAM COUNTY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 2-3, NY. Deadline: July 15; July 31 (final). This regional film/video fest celebrates community media-making. Gala Awards ceremony & dinner. Filmmakers must reside in NY State or project must have a strong connection to NY. Founded: 2001. Cats: trailers, works-in-progress, feature, doc, short, any style or genre, music video, animation, experimental. Formats: DV, Beta SP, Mini-DV, DVD, Betacam, DVCAM. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 under 59 min. \$35 over 60 min.. Maryann Arrien, Festival Director; (845) 528-7420; fax: (same); maryann@putnamvalleyarts.com; www.putnamvalleyarts.com.

REHOBOTH BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-14, DE. Deadline: June 19; July 16 (final). Founded: 1998. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, children, short, gay & lesbian. Formats: 35mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL). Entry Fee: \$25; \$20 (students), \$5 early discount. Contact: David Gold; (302) 645-9095; fax: 645-9460; david@rehobothfilm.com; www.rehobothfilm.com.

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REPRESENT THE REEL: SOUTH BRONX FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. Oct. 1-3, NY. Deadline: August 20. 4th annual fest is held at The Point, an emergent South Bronx cultural institution. Prizes will be awarded in following cats: narrative, doc, experimental/animation, films for young adults, Young Filmmakers Award (18 & under), films about the Bronx. Cats: Feature. Doc. Animation, Experimental, Children. Formats: 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20. Contact: The Point CDC: (718) 542-4139; fax: 542-4988; thepointcdc@hotmail.com; www.thepoint.org.

SAN FRANCISCO OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL. Jan. 22-23, CA. Deadline: July 30; Oct. 1. The fest honors independent filmmakers who depict the ocean as explored yet unconquered, endangered yet abundant: & the lives & lore of the people who have come to know the earth's last frontier. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, any style or genre. Formats: DVD, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Festival: (415) 563-2427; info@oceanfilmfest.org; www.oceanfilmfest.org.

SCOTTSDALE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 29-Nov. 2, AZ. Deadline: Sept. 1. Feature length films w/ the goal of entertaining, educating & stimulating new thoughts & ideas. A variety of subjects, themes, & messages are programmed. Founded: 2001. Cats: feature, doc. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Amy Ettinger; (602) 410-1074; scottsdaleIFF@aol.com; www.scottsdalefilmfestival.com.

SCREAMFEST HORROR FILM & SCREENPLAY COMPETITION October 15-24, CA. Deadline: July 15; Aug. 15. Fest is a mix of films, sketch comedy, & contests for best costume & loudest shriek. Festivities take place at the Vogue Theatre in Hollywood. Cats: feature, short, animation, script. Entry Fee: features \$40, shorts \$30 & screenplays \$35. Rachel Belofsky, festival producer; (310) 358-3273; fax: 358-3272; screamfestla@aol.com; www.screamfestla.com.

SHRIEKFEST FILM FESTIVAL. Oct. 11-12, CA. Deadline: March 12; May 28; July 23 (final). Shriekfest, the annual Los Angeles Horror Film Festival is held at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood. The fest focuses on the horror film genre & the work of young filmmakers (18 & under). The fest "screens the best independent horror films of the year." Cats: feature, doc (about the horror genre), short,

script, Young Filmmaker (under 18), youth media. Entry Fee: \$20-\$55. Shriekfest Film Festival: email@shriekfest.com; www.shriekfest.com.

SOMEWHAT NORTH OF BOSTON FILM FESTIVAL (SNOB). Nov. 12-14, NH. Deadline: Aug. 31. Cats: doc, short, feature, any style or genre, animation, children. Formats: DV, 1/2", DVD, 16mm, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS NTSC. Entry Fee: \$10 under 30 min.; \$15 over 30 min. Contact: Festival: (603) 223-6515; contactsnob@snobfilmfestival.org; www.snobfilmfestival.org.

SWISS AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 5-11, NY. Deadline: Aug. 10. Cats: doc, short, experimental, feature. Contact: Nicolas Rossier; (212) 528-3124; fax: 528-8154; info@swisscinema.org; www.swisscinema.org.

TEMECULA VALLEY INT'L FILM FESTIVAL. September 8-12, CA. Deadline: July 15. Films which have been broadcast by network or released theatrically prior to fest not eligible for Viewers Choice award. Cats: Feature, Short, Student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$25; \$10 students. Contact: Jo Moulton; (909) 699-8681; fax: 506-4193; stevemon@tal@yahoo.com; www.tviff.com.

TRUE / FALSE FILM FESTIVAL. Feb. 11-13, MO. Deadline: Aug. 15; Oct. 1; Nov. 15 (final). The fest welcomes documentaries & work that crosses boundaries between fact & fiction. Festival pays for all travel expenses of invited filmmakers. Cats: doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV cam, DV, mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None (Aug. deadline); \$15 (Oct.); \$25 (final). Contact festival: (573) 443-0881; paulsturtz@bigfoot.com; www.truefalse.org.

TULSA OVERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 3-5, OK. Deadline: May 10; July 19. Designed to inspire & showcase Oklahoma filmmakers, the Tulsa Overground emphasizes unique characters, experiences, locations of Oklahoma. Works less than 20 min. Cats: any style or genre. Formats: 1/2", Mini-DV, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Fee: \$20. Contact: (918) 585-1223; tulsaoverground@hotmail.com; www.tulsaoverground.com.

WILLIAMSBURG FILM FESTIVAL. Sept. 16-17, NY. Deadline: August 18. Festival for independent short films & video (30 min. or less). Open to all genres & formats. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee:

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WINSLOW INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, October 21-24, AZ. Deadline: July 5; Aug. 30 (final). Annual fest showcases films from all genres & subject matter. Fest also features a panel discussion of visual effects pros. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: Awards in all cats. Formats: 35mm, DVD, Beta. Preview On VHS. Entry Fee: \$35; \$40 (final). Contact: Jennifer Lee, Festival Director; (818) 219-9339; info@winslowfilmfestival.org; www.winslowfilmfestival.org.

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTORS CHAIR INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 12-21, IL. Deadline: Sept. 1, Oct. 1 (final). Annual fest is the largest & longest running women's film/video fest in U.S. Previous fests have included over 120 outstanding works from women directors around the world, int'l guest artists, diverse programming from an inter-generational queer women's video workshop to a hip-hop extravaganza. Some works may be included in year-long nat'l tour. Participants in tour receive stipend based on number of screenings. Founded: 1979. Cats: any style or genre, installation, children, family, TV, youth media, student, music video, experimental, animation, feature, doc, short. Formats: 3/4", 16mm, 35mm, Beta, 1/2", Beta SP, U-matic. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (early, WIDC members); \$30 (final). Contact: Festival; (773) 907-0610; fax: (773) 907-0381; widc@widc.org; www.widc.org.

INTERNATIONAL

AMIENS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, November 5-14, France. Deadline: July 15 (docs); Aug. 31 (features/animation). Competitive showcase focuses on films exploring cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues w/ emphasis on little-known cinema & int'l multicultural film. Works addressing identity of a people or a minority, racism or issues of representation. In competition, entries must have been completed between Sept. or previous yr. & Oct. of yr. of edition; also must be French premieres. Founded: 1980. Cats: Feature, Short, doc, animation, children. Awards: Grand Prix to best feature (fiction 7,500 euro, to promote French distrib. of the Grand Prix), Jury award, Grand Prix to best short. Screenplay Development Fund (grants of 7,500 euro). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, artistic dir.; 33 3

22 71 35 70; fax: 33 3 22 92 53 04; contact@filmfestamiens.org; www.filmfestamiens.org.

BITE THE MANGO FILM FESTIVAL, September 24-30, UK. Deadline: Aug. 6. Presented by the Nat'l Museum of Photography, Film & Television, this fest is Europe's leading fest for Black & Asian films. Films must have been completed after Jan 1, 2000. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short. Formats: Beta SP. Preview on VHS (PAL only). Entry Fee: none. Contact Irfan Ajeeb; 44 1274 203311; i.ajeab@nmsi.ac.uk; www.bitethemango.org.uk.

BOGOTA FILM FESTIVAL, October 7-14, Columbia. Deadline: September 15. This fest aims to encourage & promote local cinema of Columbia while showcasing the foreign films from all over the globe in this week long event. Film should be shown in its original version, w/ Spanish subtitles. Cats: doc, feature, short, animation. Awards: Pre-Columbian Circle Award in Gold, Silver & Bronze cats & the Pre-Columbian Gold Circle. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival; 011 (57) (1) 3417504; fax: 011(57) (1) 5415840; direction@bogocine.com; www.bogocine.com.

BRADFORD ANIMATION FESTIVAL, November 10-13, UK. Deadline: July 9. The largest animation fest in the UK, presented by the Nat'l Museum of Photography, Film & Television. At the heart of the fest are the BAF! Awards. Founded: 1994. Cats: animation, experimental, children, family, TV. Awards: Best Professional Film; Best Non-professional Film; Best TV Series; Best Film for Children; Best Promotional/Commercial Film; Best Web Animation; Grand Prix; Audience Prize; Best Newcomer. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, 16mm, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Adam Pugh; 44 1274 203308; fax: 44 1274 770217; adam.pugh@nmsi.ac.uk; www.baf.org.uk.

CABBAGETOWN SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 8, Canada. Deadline: July 27. Held as past of Toronto's Cabbagetown Festival, accepts works under 15 min. Cats: experimental, doc, animation, short. Formats: 1/2". Preview on VHS. No Fee. Contact: Old Cabbagetown Business Improv. Office; (416) 921-0857; fax: 921-8245; info@oldcabbagetown.com; www.oldcabbagetown.com.

DEAUVILLE FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILM, Sept. 3-12, France. Deadline: July 16. Fests

mission is "to increase the European audience for American cinema through an extensive presentation of new American films". Fest has three sections: Premieres; Competition (shorts & features) & Panorama (non-competitive). Cats: feature, short. Awards: Jury prize (feature); Grand prize; Short Grand prize. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: c/o Le Public Système Cinéma; 011 33 4134 2033; fax: 4134 2077; jlasserre@le-public-systeme.fr; www.festival-deauville.com.

EURO UNDERGROUND, Nov. 14-Dec. 22, Euro Tour: Poland, France, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 1. Festival seeks underground, experimental media arts/doc/short films for their fall European exhibition. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short, animation, performance video, installation. Awards: Prizes incl. post-festival exhibition in Europe, Southeast Asia, South America & America. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, PXL, DV. Preview on VHS. Fee: \$30. Contact: Festival; (312) 399-4531; info@eurowunderground.org; www.eurowunderground.org

EXGROUND FILMFEST, Nov. 12-21, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 1. Non-competitive fest seeks American independents, films from the Far East, shorts, music films, trash & more for event outside the mainstream. Competition European production & German shorts. Founded: 1990. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, super 8, 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Andrea Wink; 011 49 611 174 8227; fax: 49 611 174 8228; info@exground.com; www.exground.com.

FANTASTIK FILMFESTIVAL, September 17-26, Sweden. Deadline: July 30. Scandinavia's largest fest for fantastic film. The aim of the fest is to help stretch the limits of the imagination, & to reinforce the intrinsic value of imagination in films. Cats: feature, short. Awards: Audience Choice Award for Best Feature Film & Short Film (both Live-Action & Animation); Méliès d'Argent or Silver Méliès for Best European Fantastic Film. Formats: Beta, DV, DVD, 16mm, 35mm, 35mm - Ratio: 1:1.37, 1:1.66, 1:1.85, 1:2.35. Preview on VHS. Contact: FFF; 011 046-132 135; fax: 011 040 122264; info@fff.se; www.fff.se.

FEMALE EYE FILM FESTIVAL, March 4-8, Canada. Deadline: June 6; July 31. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVD, Mini-

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DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None.
Contact: Festival; (416) 216-1645; fax: (905) 964-7731; info@femaleeyefilmfestival.com; www.femaleeyefilmfestival.com.

FILMFEST HAMBURG, Sept. 23-30, Germany. Deadline: July 24. The Fest is Germany's major cinematic events. The programme of about 100 titles shows a distinctive mixture of mainstream cinema, art-house & films of up-and-coming directors. Founded: 1969. Cats: feature, doc, animation, digital productions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival; 011 49 399 19 00 0; fax: 49 40 399 19 00 10; office@filmfesthamburg.de; www.filmfesthamburg.de.

FILMFEST HAMBURG, September 23 - 30, Germany. Deadline: July 24. Filmfest Hamburg has become one of the most important German fests, underlining its status w/in the nat'l & int'l world of film. Filmfest Hamburg, viewing itself as a platform for cultural exchange & dialogue, is giving much attention to foreign cinema, especially Asian & European productions. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta, 1:1.37, 1:1.66, 1:1.85, Cinemascope. Preview on VHS or DVD. Contact: Festival; 011 +49 40-399 19 00 0; fax: 011 +49 40-399 19 00 10; info@filmfesthamburg.de; www.filmfesthamburg.de.

FILMS FROM THE SOUTH, Oct. 7-17, Norway. Deadline: Aug. 1. The Oslo Films from the South Festival (FFS) is a 3 continents int'l competitive film fest to increase knowledge/interest of the Norwegian film audience for films made outside Europe & the US. To incl. high quality films of current productions from Asia, Africa & Latin America, & to present them w/in a serious framework. Cats: feature, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Ola Lund Renolen; 011 22 82 24 80/81/82; fax: 011 22 82 24 89; info@filmfrasor.no; www.filmfrasor.no.

INT'L FILM FESTIVAL-GHENT, Oct. 5-16, Belgium. Deadline: Aug 10. Fest originated in 1973 w/ focus on music in film. Int'l jury selects winners from features from around the world (many of them w/out a Belgian distribution). Focuses on fiction films & to lesser extent on docs. Shorts, animation & retros are also incl. Attendance is approx. 100,000. Competition: Founded: 1973. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: Cash distribution grants (approx. EUR91,000). Formats: 16mm,

35mm, 70mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Wim De Witte c/o les Citadines; 011 32 478 20 20 02; info@filmfestival.be; www.filmfestival.be.

INTERFILM BERLIN-INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL BERLIN, Nov. 2-7, Germany. Deadline: July 16. Fest is the int'l short film event of Berlin. Films & videos no longer than 20 min. are eligible. There is no limit as to the yr. of production. Founded: 1982. Cats: doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, student, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (PAL/SECAM/NTSC). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Heinz Hermanns; 011 49 30 693 29 59; fax: 49 30 693 29 59; festival@interfilm.de; www.interfilm.de.

INT'L FILM FESTIVAL OF KERALA, December 10-17, India. Deadline: Aug. 31. Competition restricted to films from Africa, Asia & Latin America. This annual fest is produced by the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Kerala. Chalachitra literally means Motion picture, & the Academy is devoted to promoting the best in the visual medium. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation, student. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. VHS (PAL/NTSC/SECAM). Entry Fee: None. Contact: Bina Paul Venugopal; 011 91 471 310 323; fax: 91 471 310 322; chitram@md3.vsnl.net.in; www.keralafilm.com.

INT'L PANORAMA FOR INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS, October 1-9, Greece. Deadline: August 15. This fest aims to bringing together a global community of filmmakers & filmgoers. A special focus is drawn to the local community in tone & special prizes. Cats: feature, short. Awards: Best Foreign Feature, Best Foreign Short, Best Greek Feature, and Best Greek Short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta cam, VHS, DV cam. Preview on BETACAM SP Pal or VHS Pal only. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Chionidis Panagiotis; (+32310)- 252.921; fax: (+32310) - 264.281; info@independentgr; www.independentgr.

LEIPZIG INT'L FESTIVAL FOR DOC & ANIMATED FILMS, Oct. 19-24, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 2. Under theme "Films of the World-For Human Dignity," this fest, founded in 1955, is one of the oldest int'l competitive events focusing on doc & animation form. Entries for competition or info programs must not have been shown in public prior to Sept. 1

of preceding yr. About 300 productions showcased each yr. Founded: 1955. Cats: doc, animation, TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Gerol Wernes Schnabel; 011 49 341 9 80 39 21; fax: 011 49 341 9 80 61 41; info@dokfestival-leipzig.de; www.dokfestival-leipzig.de.

LES ECRANS DE L'AVENTURE/INT'L FESTIVAL OF ADVENTURE FILM, Oct. 14-16, France. Deadline: July 15. Held in Dijon, fest is a showcase for recent adventure-themed docs. Cats: doc, children. Formats: Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL, Secam) or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Cléo Poussier; 011 33 1 43 26 97 52; fax: 33 1 46 34 75 45; aventure@la-guilde.org.

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20 - Nov. 4, UK. Deadline: July 16. Run continuously since 1957, it's the largest non-competitive & invitational film fest in Europe. For several years, it has programmed one of Europe's largest forums of U.S. indie productions. Overall, 180 int'l features & 100 short films showcased. Nearly 1,000 filmmakers, buyers & media attend. Extensive media coverage & audiences over 100,000. Entries must be UK premieres, produced w/in preceding 2 yrs. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Founded: 1957. Cats: short, animation, feature, doc, any style or genre, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", super 8, 70mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Sarah Lutton; 011 44 20 7815 1322; fax: 44 20 7633 0786; sarah.lutton@bfi.org.uk; www.bfi.org.uk.

MONTPELLIER INT'L FESTIVAL OF MEDITERRANEAN FILM, Oct. 22-31, France. Deadline: July 16 (shorts, docs); Aug. 31 (fiction features). Competitive fest seeking works of fiction by directors from the Mediterranean Basin, the Black Sea states, Portugal or Armenia which address the cultural representation of the areas. Fest offers a development aid grant to a single feature-length film. Cats: Feature, Short, doc. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Video for docs & experimental. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Cinéma Méditerranée; 011 33 499 13 73 73; fax: 011 33 499 13 73 74; info@cinemed.tm.fr; www.cinemed.tm.fr.

RAINDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 1-10, UK. Deadline: June 15; July 15 (final). The fest aims to "reflect the cultural, visual & narrative diversity of the int'l independent filmmaking community" & specializes in films by first-time

directors. Cats: short, animation, experimental, doc, music video, feature. Formats: 35mm, super 8, DigiBeta, 16mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: shorts: 15 pounds, features: 50 pounds; shorts (final): \$20 pounds, features (final): 75 pounds- all payments in Pounds Sterling. Contact: Festival; 011 44 171 287 3833; fax: 011-44-171-439-2243; festival@raindance.co.uk; www.raindance.co.uk.

SHADOW DOC FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 18-25, Netherlands. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest prides itself as a "podium for creative docs". With special interest given to works in progress: rough edits & projects in development. Founded: 2000. Cats: doc, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP, DVD, mini-DV. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Stefan Mayakovsky; 011 31 206 715 982; info@shadowfestival.nl; www.shadowfestival.nl.

SHORT CUTS COLOGNE, December 1-5, Germany. Deadline: August 15. Int'l competition is the center of the fest. Filmmakers from the whole world are invited to submit their films. All formats & genres are welcome! Cats: doc, short, experimental, animation, children. Formats: Super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 1:1.33 /1:1.37, 1:1.66, 1:1.85, Cinemascope, DVD, S-VHS, VHS, NTSC, Beta SP, DV, Secam, PAL. Preview on VHS or DVD. Contact: Festival; 011 49-221-222 710 27; fax: 011 49-221-222 710 99; scc@koelnerfilmhaus.de; www.short-cuts-cologne.de.

TBILISI INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 5-10, Georgia. Deadline: Aug. 15. Fest seeks films dealing w/ problems of young people, showing the life of the new generation, selected for Int'l Competition. Sections also incl. non-competitive Forum, Film school presentation, workshops & retros. At least 60 min. & completed in last 2 years. Founded: 2000. Cats: feature. Awards: Prometheus Awards (gold & silver). Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: TIFF; 011 995 32 995 852; film@caucasus.net; www.tbilisifilmfestival.ge.

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By Cynthia Kane

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A CLOSER LOOK, a yearly anthology of case studies of media arts organizations, has years 2000-2003 available from National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC). 2003 focuses on youth media. Free to members and available for purchase at www.namac.org.

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL distributes videos for social change, including such collections as the Library of African Cinema and African American Perspectives. 500 Third Street, Suite 505, San Francisco, CA 94107; phone: 415-284-7800; fax: 415-284-7801; contact info@newsreel.org; www.newsreel.org.

DIGITAL MEDIA TRAINING SERIES: DMTS is the premiere training series for film, television & web developers. The series provides

award-winning training video, CD-ROM and DVD training tools that improve productivity & creativity for the end-user. DMTS training episodes feature the latest topics & technology, giving viewers access to working professionals & experts that they would not have in a traditional classroom setting, at a fraction of the cost. Featuring the latest education on Final Cut Pro, Avid, Flash, etc, this series is designed for filmmakers and has been sponsored by the leading media software companies. With our "try it before you buy it" program, you can try out any of the Limited Edition training programs for free. Contact: Rafael, (877) 606-5012; info@magnetmediafilms.com.

FELIX is a journal of media arts & communication; it encourages exchange within the media arts community, analyzing questions of aesthetics and current political issues, and furthering the development of radical and experimental images. Felix is published by the Standby Program, Inc. Order by phone: (212) 219-0951; www.e-felix.org.

FILMCOMMISSIONHQ.COM is the world's most current, accurate and complete online directory of Film Commissions and media support offices, allowing media professionals to find regional production expertise quickly. Commissions are listed regardless of any affiliation with us. www.FilmCommissionHQ.com.

OTHERZINE, the e-zine of Craig Baldwin's Other Cinema seeks written works fewer than 2,000 words in length, including interviews, filmographies, alternative histories of obscure or marginalized work, criticism & theory. Previously published work welcome, though work previously published on the internet is not eligible. Text formats: MS Word, ASCII text & HTML. Submit to: noellawrence@sprintmail.com; www.othercinema.com.

VERSUS MEDIA puts indie filmmakers in touch with indie musicians with a 24/7 database filled with musicians seeking to work with video and film developers, biweekly e-mail containing 10 of the latest musician profiles & the option to post your latest projects where musicians can answer your needs. View www.versusmedia.com or contact info@versusmedia.com.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

2005 IFP/CHICAGO PRODUCTION FUND offers an in-kind donation of production equipment & services valued at up to

equipment & services valued at up to \$85,000 for your next short film. Applicants must be IFP/Chicago members & the film must be shot in the Midwest region, defined as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio & Wisconsin. Deadline for proposals: Sept. 10, 2004. For an application, call (312) 435-1825, fax 435-1828, or e-mail chicagoupdates@ifp.org. The application is available online at www.ifp.org. This is a production fund not a completion grant.

ASTRAEA provides grants up to \$10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Our U.S. Grants Fund utilizes a community-based activist grantmaking panel to review proposals and to make funding decisions. Check website for deadlines. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321, www.astraea.org/grants.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers completion grants, technical assistance & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations in New York State. Programs provide partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public. Deadlines vary with program. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; etc@experimentaltvcenter.org or download applications and guidelines at www.experimentaltvcenter.org.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP FOR FILMMAKERS: Film Forum, a nonprofit cinema, efficiently administers filmmaker grants, retaining 5% of all monies from foundations, corporations, individuals (but not government sources). Budget must be a minimum of \$100,000 & filmmaker must have a track record. Send brief project description to: Film Forum Fiscal Sponsorships, 209 W. Houston St., New York, NY 10014. No calls, faxes, e-mails.

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR VISUAL ARTISTS: The awards honor visual artists who live & work in California, Oregon, & Washington & whose work demonstrates high artistic merit for 20 yrs. or more. The next awards cycle is 2005/2006. Five artists from CA and five from OR/WA will be selected to receive unrestricted grants of \$25,000 each. Applicants should work in the disciplines of fine arts or craft media & have sus-

tained a 9-months-per-year residency in CA, OR, or WA for the last three yrs. Artists cannot be of current nat'l renown. To receive application information, mail, fax, or email your contact information (name, address, telephone #, email) with a request to be placed on the mailing list. Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Artists, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100, Pasadena, CA 91103; fax: (626) 585-0011; FFAVA@flintridgeFoundation.org.

FORD FOUNDATION supports public broadcasting and the independent production of film, video and radio programming; and supports efforts to engage diverse groups in work related to the media and to analyze the media's effect on society. A letter of inquiry is advisable to determine whether the foundation's present interests and funds permit consideration of the request. For more information and guidelines, contact Pamela Meyer, Director, Media Arts and Culture, Ford Foundation, 320 E. 43rd St., New York, NY 10017; www.fordfound.org/grant/guidelines.html.

GRAND MARNIER FILM FELLOWSHIPS are awarded to graduate film students enrolled in an educational institution in the U.S. (exclud-

JAPAN FOUNDATION provides film production support to experienced independents or corporations for production of films, TV programs, or other a/v materials that further understanding of Japan and Japanese culture abroad. Contact: Japan Foundation, 152 W. 57th St., 39th Fl., New York, NY 10019; tel: 212.489.0299.

JEROME FOUNDATION'S MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM offers production grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 to emerging NYC artists w/ works budgeted up to \$200,000. Narratives, docs, new media & experimental works, as well as radio, interactive formats, online programs & virtual reality experiments considered. The foundation does not support education, exhibition, broadcast or distribution. Contact program officer Robert Byrd; (651) 224-9431 (or toll-free in NY or MN only, (800) 995-3766); fax: 224-3439; www.jeromefdn.org.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue in one of the foundation's 2 major programs (human & community development; global security &

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER

Make Sparks Fly

The Experimental Television Center, founded in 1971, continues to support the ever changing

media arts community. The mission of the center is to nurture works that use new electronic media technologies and to encourage an informed appreciation of media art. The Center helps honor the moving image by addressing the need for research, education, and preservation. See listing.

ing CA and TX) for work in filmmaking, video, or critical writing. Three awards of \$5,000 each will be given to students who excel in either film, video or critical studies. Award to be presented at the New York Film Festival. Forms online (www.filmlinc.org) or contact: Grand Marnier Film Fellowships, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., 4th., N.Y., NY 10023-6595.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS) funds and presents independently produced programming for public television (PBS). ITVS seeks projects that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and serve underserved audiences. All genres are eligible. For details on our 2004 funding initiatives, visit www.itvs.org/producer/funding.html.

sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter. Contact John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org.

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION (NYWIFT) is the preeminent entertainment industry association for women in New York City. Dedicated to helping women reach the highest levels of achievement in film, television and new media, and promoting equity for women in these industries, NYWIFT produces over fifty innovative programs and special events each year. NYWIFT's 1400 members are part of a network of forty international women in film organizations, representing more than 10,000 members world-

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gram info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 East 39th St.,
12th fl., NY, NY 10016; info@nywift.org;
www.nywift.org.

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM: is a unique online
resource that provides local film & video pro-
fessionals w/ searchable industry directory,
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discouraged. Provides camera on year-round
basis. No application deadline, but allow 4
weeks minimum for processing. Tel.: (206)
467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppcam.com;
www.oppenheimercamera.com
www.oppenheimercinerental.com.

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FUNDS** are provided for the final prepara-
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lic television. Categories: doc, performance,
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Islander issues such as diversity, identity, &
spirituality. Full-length rough cut must be
submitted w/ application. Awards up to
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Cobb-Adams, Media Fund, PIC, 1221
Kapi'olani Blvd. 6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814;
Tel.: (808) 591-0059 x 16; fax: 591-1114;
gcobb-adams@piccom.org; applications are
available at www.piccom.org.

PLAYBOY FOUNDATION supports media
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reproductive health and rights; protect and
foster civil rights and civil liberties in the U.S.
for all people, including women, people
affected and impacted by HIV/Aids, gays
and lesbians, racial minorities, the poor and
the disadvantaged; and eliminate censorship
and protect freedom of expression. Projects

must have nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to be
eligible. For more information, contact
Playboy Foundation, 680 North Lake Shore
Dr., Chicago, IL 60611; tel: 312.751.8000;
www.playboy.com/pd-foundation.

SUNDANCE DOCUMENTARY FUND,
formerly the Soros Documentary Fund, sup-
ports int'l doc films & videos on current &
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progress funds for production or postproduc-
tion up to \$75,000 (average award is
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www.sundance.org.

THE VIDEOMAKER AWARD 2005 call for
entries, announced by BAVC. Formerly
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Award (AEA), The VideoMaker Award
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facility and education programs. \$2,500 can
go toward suites and services and \$1,000
can go toward BAVC classes. BAVC takes
special interest in projects in association with
community groups or about community
issues and groups of artists working in col-
laboration. Deadline: August 27th, 2004.
Contact: Laurel Frank: 415-552-2120 or
email laurel@bavc.org; www.bavc.org.

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Films/Tapes Wanted

By Cynthia Kane

Noncommercial notices and screening opportunities are listed free of charge as space permits. Commercial notices are billed at classified rates. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@aivf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1 for Nov. issue). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AIVF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless: double-check details before sending.

DISTRIBUTION

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS, the leader of documentary films that focus on health & powerful life challenging situations is seeking additional programs to add to our award winning collection. Our strong, targeted marketing program & film festivals will help increase awareness for you. We look forward to previewing your film. Please send your film to Aquarius Health Care Videos, 18 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770. (888) 440-2963.

ARTHOUSE FILMS & DOCS wanted for domestic & international distribution. For consideration, please send tape to: Passion River, GreeneStreet Film Center, 9 Desbrosses St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10013. (212) 966-5877, www.PassionRiver.com.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; GCROWDUS@CINEMAGUILD.COM; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS videos on guidance issues: violence, drug prevention, mentoring, children's health, parenting for distribution. Our marketing gives unequaled results! Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS 20+ years as an industry leader! Join more than 100 award-winning film & video producers. Send us your new works on healthcare, mental health, aging, disabilities, and related issues. (800) 937-4113; www.fanlight.com.

INDIE-UNDERGROUND seeks offbeat, edgy features and doc features for foreign/domestic distribution. Gross % on internet sales. Established track record, fast response. Visit our submissions page at www.indieunderground.com and send us your show.

NEW DAY FILMS seeks energetic independent film and video makers with social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. If you want to maximize your audience while working within a remarkable community of activist filmmakers, New Day is the perfect home for your film. New Day is committed to promoting diversity within our membership and the media we represent. Explore our catalog at www.newday.com, then contact Heidi Emberling at join@newday.com or (650) 347-5123.

87194. We pride ourselves in screening work in unique locations, so if you have a suggestion for your work in this regard, make a suggestion. Contact: (505) 842-9977, www.base mentfilms.org.

CELLULOID SOCIAL CLUB is a monthly screening series in Vancouver featuring the best in independent provocative short & feature films & videos followed by fun & frolic. Hosted by Ken Hegan at the ANZA Club, #3 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC. No minors. Prizes galore. For more info call (604) 730-8090; info@celluloidsocialclub.com; www.CelluloidSocialClub.com.

CINEMARENO a year-round festival of films. Monthly screenings showcase independent films and videos. Formats: 16mm, Beta-SP, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry fee: \$20; fee waived for AIVF members. Entry form & instructions at www.cinemareno.org. Contact: Cinemareno, PO Box 5372, Reno, NV 89513. Entry form and guidelines at: www.cinemareno.org.



Independent Exposure

Microcinema's monthly screening series, "Independent Exposure," was established in Seattle in 1996 and moved in 2002 to San Francisco. The series shows the works of artists that would typically be ignored by mainstream media, and has aired a diverse

selection of independent films, videos, and digital art to a worldwide audience. To date, Microcinema has presented over 1,000 artists and toured forty-two countries. See listing.

NOODLEHEAD NETWORK distributes only youth-produced videos. Guaranteed exposure to tens of thousands, plus royalties to sustain your program. Educational videos in all subjects and 10+ years experience. 1 (800) 639-5680. www.noodlehead.com.

MICROCINEMAS • SCREENING

BASEMENT FILMS of Albuquerque, NM, is a mobile, volunteer-run venue for experimental, underground & other under-represented forms of small-gauge (8mm, 16mm) film & video making. To screen your film work with us, send a VHS preview tape with a S.A.S.E. & any written material about it and yourself to BASEMENT FILMS, P.O. Box 7669, Alba, NM

DAHLIA'S FLIX & MIX, a weekly showcase of new film & music held on Tuesdays at NY's Sugar, is seeking submissions. Showcases fresh and previously undistributed film & video work, as well as DJs spinning great music. No guest list, cover charge, or submission fee. For more info, contact dsmith@independentfilm.com or stop by Sugar any Tuesday evening (doors open 7pm, screenings begin 8pm). To submit your film, please send a VHS or DVD copy and a brief synopsis to: Dahlia Smith, c/o SUGAR, 311 Church St., New York, NY 10013.

DREAM SERIES: Seeks challenging social-issue documentaries that promote frank community discussions about issues of discrimination and social injustice that fall under the Martin Luther King, Jr., legacy. Selected works

are screened for this monthly series at the MLK National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA, and promoted, listed, and reviewed in local print. Formats: VHS, Beta. Send non returnable VHS screeners to Mark A. Smith/ DREAM, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW, Suite N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; mark@imagefv.org.

ECHO PARK FILM CENTER microcinema seeks submissions for weekly cinema events. We screen documentary, animation, experimental, and short narrative films & videos. We do not screen feature length narratives. Filmmakers receive honorarium. Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., LA, CA, 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.echoparkfilmcenter.org.

EMERGING FILMMAKERS series at the Little Theatre in Rochester, NY, seeks work from New York State amateur filmmakers of all ages. All genres. Maximum length: 30 min. Deadline: ongoing. No fee, no honorarium, no returns without SASE. Send VHS or DVD screener & cover letter to Karen vanMeenen, programmer, Emerging Filmmakers Series, Little Theatre, 240 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14604; ren@eznet.net.

INDIE CINEMA NIGHT, presented by the Atlanta Urban Mediamakers Association, Inc., seeks short & feature-length narrative, documentary & child-aimed works of all genres for a monthly screening series. Preview on VHS, Beta SP, or DVD. Reviews of selected works will appear in Urban Mediamakers magazine; audience evaluations solicited after every screening. No entry fee. (770) 345-8048; aumai@urbanmediamakers.com; www.urbanmediamakers.com

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a ten-year old, monthly microcinema screening program of int'l short films, videos & digital works, seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. license fees for int'l DVD and exhibition sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Submit VHS (NTSC/PAL) or DVD/Mini-DV (NTSC only) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions not returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; (415) 864-0660.

NEW FILMMAKERS at New York's Anthology Film Archives seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. No entry fee or form. Send a VHS copy of your film or video w/ a brief synopsis to David Maquiling, New Filmmakers, Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10009. For more info, visit www.newfilmmakers.com.

OCULARIS, a Brooklyn based non-profit, is calling for short film and video submissions. Ocularis is a forum for the exhibition of independent, experimental and documentary film/video and new media. Please check out www.ocularis.net for rules and to download an entry form. Note: There is a \$10 submission fee for each entry. Submissions in person at Ocularis screenings receive free admission to that night's screening.

THE FUNNYBONE COMEDY CLUB, in Pittsburgh, is looking for submissions from all independent filmmakers for their new Independent Film Night. Any length between 3 and 100 min. We prefer comedy however a quality film or short from any genre will be shown. If you are local to the Pittsburgh area, and your film is selected, you will be given passes to the show and discount passes for your friends, family, cast and crew. If you do not live in the Pittsburgh area, but may be able to make it for the evening your film is being show, please let us know. All submitted films must be in DVD or VHS format and can only be submitted by the filmmaker or legally authorized agent. Films will not be returned. Please label your film with contact information. Mail your submissions to: The Funnybone Comedy Club, 242 W. Station Square Drive, Bessemer Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (drop offs are accepted). Ongoing deadline.

TIMEBASE, a moving image series in Kansas City, seeks innovative short films, videos, installations & web-based projects. No entry fee. Rolling deadline. Send VHS, DVD, or CD-Rom: Timebase, 5100 Rockhill Rd Haag 202, KC MO 64110. Tel: (816) 235-1708; timebase@mindspring.com; www.time-base.org.

VIDEOTHEATRE, NYC is New York's never-ending DV festival! Currently seeking all kinds of original films on DV formats. Monthly deadlines. Year-round submission. Weekly programming in two AC theaters located on Manhattan's downtown theater row. VideoTheatreNYC@aol.com; www.videotheatrenyc.com.

VIEWNAPPY'S HOMEMADE MUSIC VIDEO FESTIVAL: Monthly screening parties, & final-

ists to be entered in quarterly video slams. Music based submissions, 15 min. or under. No deadline, no fee. Acceptable formats: VHS/DVD (preferred), Beta sp/digi, MiniDV, Hi-8; email formats: Quicktime, Mpeg, Flash, SWA. Include a short artist bio & label tapes with your name, title, and contact info. Send to: Viewnappy, c/o Final Cut, 118 W. 22nd St. 7th floor, New York, NY 10011. For more info, visit www.viewnappy.com; or email viewnappy@yahoo.com for more info.

ZEHN STUCK (ten pieces), an emerging microcinema in New York, seeks submissions of short films/videos for monthly screenings series. S-8/16mm/mini DV formats accepted for screening. VHS for consideration only. Entries should not exceed 15 minutes in length. e-mail mailing address to jomarcine@hotmail.com for an application and standard release, or with inquiry.

TOURING PROGRAMS

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT: a tour of 6 artists who travel to 6 sites in the Southeast, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & \$20 entry fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor any works-in-progress. Note: Some circuit sites are limited to VHS projection. After pre-screening 4. Contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; sleonard@arts.state.sc.us; www.southcarolinaarts.com.

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is an ongoing event hitting major cities & cultural centers on a global level. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip-Hop culture and connect with other mediamakers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com or email Info@HipHopFilmFest.com or call (415) 225-1583.

BROADCASTS • CABLECASTS

BROOKDALE TELEVISION is a progressive educational access channel in Momouth County, NJ, reaching over 79,000 households at the Jersey shore. We are currently seeking independent works for consideration for

cablecast. All lengths and genres considered. Nonexclusive rights release upon acceptance, no payment but promotional and contact information will be provided on air and through our office. VHS for preview, BetaSP, MiniDV, SVHS, and DVD accepted for cablecast. Contact Roger Conant, BTV, Brookdale Community College, 765 Newman Springs Road, Atec Rm. 112, Lincroft, NJ 07738; (732) 224-2467; rconant@brookdalecc.edu.

DUTV is a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia that seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. Will return tapes. Beta SP, DV, S-VHS & DVD accepted for possible cablecast. VHS for preview. Contact: Debbie Rudman, DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg. 9B, Rm. 0016, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org.

FASTSHOOTERS is accepting short feature films, animations and videos to assemble in a TV-broadcast-length collection for pitch to networks. All mediums and genres. For more information: www.fastshooters.com.

FILMS/VIDEO WANTED: For weekly experimental video-art TV program on Time Warner Networks/broadcast in Manhattan & Brooklyn 800,000 viewers strong. For more info: snack on art, PO Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; www.snackonart.org; snackonart@yahoo.com.

GIRLS ON FILM, an upcoming cable access program will showcase independent film on Manhattan Cable Access Television. Works up to feature length will be considered. We will debut this fall as a weekly series devoted to the concerns of independent filmmakers nationally. Please email: jomarcine@hotmail.com with all inquiries

INDUSTRIALTELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show now in its 8th year, is looking for experimental, humorous, quirky dramatic, erotic, horror/sci-fi, animated and underground works for inclusion in the new season. Controversial, uncensored and subversive material is encouraged & given priority. We guarantee exposure in the NYC area. We accept: DVC Pro, mini-DV, SVHS, VHS, 3/4" SP, 3/4", Hi-8. Contact: Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; ed@2droogies.com; www.industrialtelevision.com.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY TV STATION in Chappaqua, NY, with a potential viewership of over 100,000 people, offers the opportunity

for new and seasoned video/media producers to cablecast their projects. Preference given to Northern Westchester but all Westchester residents are welcome. For more info contact NCCTV@hotmail.com.

PBS INDEPENDENT LENS: The PBS programming department is seeking submissions for the 2005 fall season of its independent film and video series, INDEPENDENT LENS with a deadline of September 10, 2004. Offering filmmakers a national broadcast venue for their works, INDEPENDENT LENS accepts completed works of all genres and lengths. Fiction, nonfiction documentaries or live short action works are welcome. For future information on submissions call the PBS Programming Department at 703/739-5010 or go to www.pbs.org/producers.

WOLFTOOB: local New York City TV show is looking for short films and music videos from 1 - 17 min. Wolftoob is watched by millions, or at least thousands. info@wolftoob.com.

ZOOM: ZOOM is a kids-only series on PBS, featuring kids plays, films, games & more. ZOOM is seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta, digital formats. Age: 5-14. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gunther, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; marcy_gunther@wgbh.org.

WEBCASTS

WIGGED PRODUCTIONS is an Internet based arts organization making new and innovative art more accessible through broadcast and online presentations. Seeks recently completed videos less than ten minutes that interpret art such as dance, music, poetry or visual art by means of cinematographic methods. Selected videos will be streamed over the Internet via Wiggled's homepage. For details, visit www.wiggled.net. Deadline: ongoing.

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Unless noted, AIVF programs take place at our offices (see below). RSVP is required for all AIVF events: call (212) 807-1400 x301, or visit www.aivf.org.



AIVF COSPONSORS: DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL

when: July 7-14

where: Dallas Theater

Center's Kalita Humphreys Theater,
Dallas, TX

Since 1986 The Dallas Video Festival has specialized in fiercely independent, imaginative, unusual, provocative and sometimes description-defying electronic media.

In its sixteen year history, the festival has screened or hosted over 3,500 different programs ranging from imaginative thirty-second television commercials to mesmerizing video art, compelling documentaries, surrealist animation, innovative digital features, intelligent, kid-friendly fare, thought-provoking panels, and narrative shorts that surprise, inspire and entertain.

The Dallas Video Festival has distinguished itself nationally as a veritable vortex of video, a proverbial pantheon of pixels, a place that can make your head spin, your eyeballs ache, your heart soar, and your mind expand.

For more information, visit
www.videofest.org/2004_pre

**Our offices will be
closed from July 5 to 9.
We will reopen on July 12.**

AIVF events take a brief respite during the months of July and August. During this time we will be concentrating on developing our fall program. Be sure to check out our cosponsored programs and look for details of what's to come.

AIVF COSPONSORS: OUTFEST: LOS ANGELES



when: July 8-19

where: Los Angeles,
CA

Outfest, the gay and lesbian film festival, is the oldest and largest film festival in Los Angeles. Their 22nd fest will present more than 200 films, panels, parties, and special events. Among the festival galas are the opening night gala—D.E.B.S. and the festival centerpiece: *Brother to Brother*.

The special festival series includes "Homo Horror"—a testament to the ever-extending tentacles of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender filmmaking. These celluloid pioneers have broken new ground, set free the genre ghouls, and transported guts and gore to a ghastly new queer zenith.

Festival panels and special events include: "A Conversation with Todd Haynes" (recipient of the 2004 Outfest Achievement Award); "The Minds Behind *Queer Eye*," and "Queer Storytelling on *Six Feet Under*."

For more information, visit
www.outfest.org or call (213) 480-7088.

AIVF COSPONSORS: NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL

when: July 14-18

where: Walter Reade Theatre,
Lincoln Center, 165 W 65th St., NYC

Each summer, the NYVF explores the pleasures, both odd and profound, of the ethereal art of video: investigate the mutant media spawned by video engines, discover new artists, and watch the passionate deconstruction of music videos.

For more information, visit
www.filmlinc.com/nyvf/nyvf.htm

AIVF COSPONSORS: NEW YORK LATINO FILM FESTIVAL

when: July 22-27

where: New York, NY

The New York International Latino Film Festival is a premiere film festival presenting the works of Latino artists and people of Latin American descent. The festival brings together Latinos in Hollywood and the independent film industry, along with aficionados and students of film and the arts.

For more information, visit
www.nylatinofilm.com

AIVF COSPONSORS: THE MEDIA MIXER: A NETWORKING SALON FOR ARTISTS OF COLOR

when: July 27 and Aug. 31, 7-9 pm

where: The Sporting Club, 99 Hudson
St. (Hudson & Franklin St. in
Tribeca)

cost: Free

Co-hosted by African American Women in Cinema, Asian Cinevision, Coalition of Asian Pacifics in Entertainment (CAPE), DV Republic.org, National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), and New York Production Alliance. Underwritten by Prudential Financial.

Members of each organization are invited to present their "digital portfolios" on DVD showcasing their work as actors, writers, directors, editors, cinematographers, music composers, or in any other industry capacity. Each presenter will have an opportunity to explain how they wish to network with others in attendance. Submissions must be on DVD. Demo

reels and portfolios may not exceed three minutes. Short films may not exceed five minutes. Your DVD must be received by the 15th prior to the event to be scheduled for screening. DVDs presented at the door will be scheduled for the following month.

For more information, visit www.dvrepublish.com

AIVF COSPONSORS: LA CINEMA FE

when: August 11-23

where: New York, NY

The 3rd Annual Latin American Cinema Festival is an eight-day event showcasing Spanish and Portuguese language films from Latin America. It will include features, documentaries, and experimental work, many of which will be world premieres.

For more information, visit www.lacinemafe.org

reach AIVF...

Filmmakers' Resource Library
hours: Wed. 11-6; 1st and 2nd Wed. of each month: 11-9; or by appt. to AIVF members Tues. & Thurs. 11-6.

The AIVF office is located at 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City.

Our Filmmakers' Resource Library houses hundreds of print and electronic resources, from essential directories & trade magazines to sample proposals & budgets.

By Phone: (212) 807-1400
Recorded information available 24/7; operator on duty Tues.-Thurs. 2-5 p.m. EST

By Internet: www.aivf.org;
info@aivf.org



AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT: FILMS AT THE LINCOLN CENTER

where: Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W 65th St., NYC
www.filmlinc.com

AIVF members may attend select series (listed below) at a discounted rate—just \$5 per ticket. Bring your membership card to the box office!

July 9-13 and July 19-29
Maurice Pialat Retrospective

July 14-18
New York Video Festival

July 22
**Quatre Chiens: Un Chien Andalou
with Ensemble Ospeso**

August 13-24
Bollywood



AIVF MEMBER DISCOUNT: AIVF TRADE DISCOUNTS

The AIVF trade discount program is an opportunity for AIVF members to receive discounted services from businesses integral to movie-making. You must be an AIVF member to take advantage of these benefits. To find out more about membership, see: www.aivf.org/resources/benefits/index.html.

Recently we have added the following new companies:

Club Quarters: Club Quarters is a new, full-service, nationwide hotel concept for the exclusive use of member organizations. Offering prime

locations, greater security, and significant savings on hotel rooms and related expenses, as well as a number of free high-tech and club-like services. Locations in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Houston, and London.

zdidesign.com: Founded with one vision in mind... to create without boundaries. [zdi] is ready to jump into any project that is in need of a creative eye & solution. From a small business branding package to a feature film's poster campaign, [zdi] has made a name for itself as one of New York's finest design boutiques. Free movie poster design and pre-press for independent filmmakers.

Continental Airlines: Continental Airlines offers discounts for specific film productions and film festival travel.

FilmBUZZ Industry Report: 10% off purchase of their recent industry report—comprehensive information about the indie film and festival industry, current trends, and profit margins.

Media-Match.com: Media-match is an online database of over 25,000 film and TV professionals' resumes and availability. AIVF members receive 25% off subscription price for their web-based job referral board.

Empress Media: One-stop shopping for all brands, all formats, all the time, at competitive prices, including recycled tapes that save money and the environment. Nationwide delivery via UPS, DHL, FedEx. Express and 24-hour delivery in New York City. AIVF member-only prices for recording media.

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country.

Visit www.aivf.org/regional for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs.

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Albany/Troy, NY: Upstate Independents

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Arts Center of the Capital Region 265 River Street, Troy, NY
Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

Atlanta, GA: IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 353 Means Street
Contact: Sonia Vassell, (404) 352-4225 x20
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

Austin, TX:

Contact: Jen White, (512) 917-3027
austin@aivf.org

Boston, MA: Center for Independent Documentary

Contact: Susan Walsh, (781) 784-3627
boston@aivf.org

Charleston, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library 68 Calhoun Street
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; or Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

Cleveland, OH: Ohio Independent Film Festival

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette Gillora, (216) 651-7315; cleveland@aivf.org
www.ohiofilms.com

Columbia, SC:

When: Second Sundays
Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.
Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

Dallas, TX:

Video Association of Dallas

When: Bi-monthly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

Edison, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions, 190 Lincoln Hwy.
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

Fort Wayne, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

Houston, TX: SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where: 1519 West Main
Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

Huntsville, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

Jefferson County, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

Los Angeles, CA: EZTV

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.
Where: EZTV, 1653 18th St., Santa Monica
Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Independent Film Society

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center, 2821 North 4th, Room 140
Contact: Laura Gembolis
(414) 688-2375; milwaukee@aivf.org
www.mifs.org/salon

Nashville, TN

Where: See www.naivf.com for events
Contact: Stephen Lackey,
nashville@aivf.org

Portland, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre
Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

Rochester, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop
Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

San Diego, CA:

When: Monthly
Where: Media Arts Center, 921 25th Street
Contact: Ethan van Thillo (619) 230-1938;
sandiego@aivf.org

San Francisco, CA:

Contact: Tami Saunders
(650) 271-0097; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

Seattle, WA: Seattle Indie Network

When: Bi-monthly
Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts Center
Contact: Heather Ayres, (206) 200-0933;
Wes Kim, (206) 719-6261; seattle@aivf.org

Tucson, AZ:

Contact: Rachel Sharp, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

Washington, DC:

Contact: Joe Torres, DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

Resources To Go

New Yorkers aren't the only beneficiaries of AIVF's extensive library of educational materials—from handouts on fiscal sponsorship to sample budget proposals. Although these books, binders, and files live in AIVF's Manhattan office, all of this information is easily accessible by all AIVF members, even those who don't live in New York, and especially those in national salons. "All they need to do is contact me and I will make sure that they will get whatever they need for their salonists," says AIVF Membership Director, Priscilla Grim. "I can email or snail mail you any or all of these resources at any time."

For a full listing of the resources in the AIVF library go to:
www.aivf.org/resources/library.html

AIVF THANKS

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



Adobe Systems, Inc.
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We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Business/Industry Members: **AL:** Cypress Moon Productions; **CA:** Action/Cut Directed By Seminars; Arrowire LLC; Groovy Like a Movie; Illuminare Entertainment; Jungle Software; San Diego Asian Film Foundation; SJPL Films, Ltd.; Ultimatum Entertainment; **CO:** Pay Reel; **CT:** Anvil Production; **DC:** 48 Hour Film Project; **IL:** Roxie Media Corp.; Urban Work Productions; **FL:** Academy Leader Inc.; New Screen Broadcasting; **IN:** The Storyteller Workshop; **MD:** Brownpenny Films; NewsGroup, Inc.; **MI:** Michael Kuentz Communications; **MA:** Escape TV; Glidecam Industries; **NV:** Broadcast Productions; **NH:** Kinetic Films; **NJ:** Alternative Media & Resources International; Chica Luna Productions/Chica Sol Films; Lumiere Media; **NY:** 25th Asbury Shorts of New York; American Montage; Analog Digital International, Inc.; Arc Pictures; Blueprint Films; C-Hundred Film Corporation; Code 16/Radical Avid; Cypress Films; D. R. Reiff and Associates; DNT 88 Productions; Docurama; Downtown Avid; Film Video Arts; Forest Creatures Entertainment; Free Dream Films; Getcast.com; Greenhouse Pictures; Greenwich Street Productions; IdDigEnt; Interflix; Lightworks Producing Group; Mad Mad Judy; Mercer Media; Metropolis Film Lab; Missing Pixel; Moxie Firecracker Films; Off Ramp Films, Inc.; The Outpost; Post Typhoon Sky, Inc.; Robin Frank Management; Triune Pictures; **OR:** Art Institute Portland; **PA:** Cubist Post & Effects; Skanfo Inc.; **RI:** The Revival House; **WI:** Tweedee Productions; **Canada:** Cinecix Distribution; **Singapore:** Crimson Forest Films

Nonprofit Members: **AL:** Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival; **AR:** Henderson State University; **CA:** East Bay Media Center; Everyday Gandhis Project; Film Arts Foundation; Filmmakers Alliance; International Buddhist Film Festival; ITVS; NAATA/Media Fund; New Images Productions; The Berkeley Documentary Center; USC School of Cinema and TV; **CO:** Denver Center Media; Denver Center for the Performing Arts; **CT:** Film Fest New Haven; Hartley Film Foundation; **DC:** Gaea Foundation; School of Communication, American University; Spark Media; **FL:** Florida State University Film School; Sarasota Film Festival; University of Tampa; **GA:** Image Film and Video Center; Savannah College of Art and Design; **HI:** Pacific Islanders in Communications; **IL:** The Art Institute of Chicago (Video Data Bank); Community Television Network; Department of Communication/NLU; Kartemquin Films; Light Bound; **IN:** University of Notre Dame; **KS:** Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee; **KY:** Appal Shop; Paducah Film Society; **ME:** Maine Photographic Workshop; **MA:** CCTV; Documentary Educational Resources; Visual and Media Arts, Emerson College; **MD:** 7 Oils Production; Laurel Cable Network; Silverdocs; AFI Discovery Channel Doc Festival; **MI:** Ann Arbor Film Festival; **MN:** IFF/MSP; Walker Art Center; **MO:** DHTV; Webster University Film Series; **MS:** Magnolia Independent Film Festival; **NC:** Ocularus Film Foundation; Duke University, Film & Video; University of North Carolina, Dept. of Broadcast and Cinema; UNC, Wilmington; **NE:**

Nebraska Independent Film Project/AIVF Salon Lincoln; Ross Film Theater, UN-Lincoln; **NJ:** Black Maria Film Festival; College of New Jersey, Department of Communication Studies; Freedom Film Society; Princeton University, Program in Visual Arts; **NM:** University of New Mexico; **NY:** American Museum of Natural History; Arts Engine; Center for New American Media; Cinema Arts Centre; Cornell Cinema; Council for Positive Images, Inc.; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Department of Media Study SUNY Buffalo; Dutchess Community College; Educational Video Center; Experimental Television Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Firelight Media; Hourglass Group; International Film Seminars; LMC-TV; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; Melted.org; National Black Programming Consortium; National Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New School University; New York Women in Film and Television; Nonprofit Media Group; Paper Tiger Television; POV/The American Documentary; RIT School of Film and Animation; School of Visual Arts, Film Department; Squeaky Wheel; Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; Syracuse University; United Community Centers; Upstate Films; WaxFactory; Witness; Women Make Movies; **OH:** Athens Center for Film And Video; Independent Pictures/AIVF Ohio Salon; Media Bridges Cincinnati; School of Film, Ohio University; Wexner Center; **OR:** Media Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; The Oregon Film and Video Foundation; **PA:** DUTV Cable 54; Philadelphia Independent Film & Video Assoc. (DIFVA); Pittsburgh Filmmakers; Prince Music Center; Scribe Video Center; WYBE Public TV 35; **RI:** Flickers Arts Collaborative; **SC:** South Carolina Arts Commission; **TN:** Indie Memphis Film Festival; **TX:** Austin Film Society; CAGE, University of Texas at Austin; Southwest Alternate Media Project; **UT:** Sundance Institute; **WA:** Seattle Central Community College; Thurston Community Television; **Canada:** The Banff Centre Library; RIDM; **France:** The Carmago Foundation; **Japan:** Ayako Oguchi, Nagoya Visual Arts College

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Remarkably Real

For this issue, we asked a wide range of independent filmmakers to tell us about the last time they witnessed an accurate depiction of race and/or race relations in a film—either through story, character, plotline, or within the context of a scene. Here are some of their responses.

"Jim McKay's *Everyday People* handles the race issue with tremendous subtlety and instead of zooming in on a point of racial conflict, which explodes into the story that is the film, *Everyday* lets race issues imbue the story with tensions that never explode. In many ways, the issues of race dissolve into the more dominant and pressing issues of class. Black, white, and brown means less than family, friendship, tradition, and a sense of belonging. And it is these values that are



at risk in the face of re-gentrification of Brooklyn, where a restaurant that is home to the neighborhood for generations faces imminent closure. McKay creates a story that succeeds because it doesn't answer the questions one-sidedly, and every character (richly developed, humanity intact) confronts a challenge to their convictions."

—Richard Taylor, producer, *Save It For Later*

"*Far From Heaven* was the most vivid experience. The heroine gives away her real love (white woman in the south married to a gay) to a black man after her gay husband confesses to her about his sexuality! It's about being true to your feelings vs. the culture that you live in. Like two threads that dominate an embroidery...which do you choose?"

—Hanna Elias, Arab American filmmaker

"*Rabbit Proof Fence*: Three young mixed-heritage (aboriginal/white) girls resist a forced removal from their families in a policy of state-sponsored genocide through selective breeding. An honest portrayal of what kinds of policies are devised when nations are built on the foundations of white supremacy and colonialism. Remarkable in its depiction of mixed heritage, people who are confident, strong and connected to their indigenous culture, rather than the common stereotype of the tragic individual in a liminal position."

—Eric Escobar, filmmaker

"*Silent Waters*, a film by Sabiha Sumar, which I recently saw at the San Francisco International Film Festival. Set in late 1970's Pakistan, it depicts oppression of race, gender, and religious beliefs in a part of the world that we as Americans have very little understanding of, and therefore pre-judge. The film carries themes that are sadly universal, as we see power struggles, blind hatred, and ignorance at a level that is all too familiar today. These are issues that will continue to challenge us until we learn from our mistakes. This film helps to humanize us to a part of the world that a certain political machine would have us believe is nothing but evil.

—Mark Decena, director/co-writer, *Dopamine*

"*The City (Al Madina)*, directed by Yousry Nasrallah, explores the experience of Arab and African immigrant workers in France and the frustrations of living within a society that both exoticizes and simultaneously ignores 'the other.' A racism that is not always so obvious yet constantly serves as a reminder that little has changed for 'non-whites' in Europe and the United States."

Annemarie Jacir, writer/director,
Like Twenty Impossibles

"*Far From Heaven* did a great job illustrating the restrictions and constraints of race. You could feel the oppression although you could not see it. The Dennis Haysbert character was very realistic, a simple everyday hero. Julianne Moore's character was equally realistic in her reaction to race in the 1950s. Their scenes together were perhaps the best portrayal I have seen in revealing this racial divide. These days racism is subtle, and the film was a great reminder of how the subtleties work. It was a great film."

—Kevin Willmott, writer/director,
CSA: Confederate States of America

"*Holes*—the intersection of race, class, and gender issues explored in this children's film, was surprising and shocking. The film was quite refreshing."

—Yvonne Welbon, producer,
www.sistersincinema.com

Phillip Noyce and Everlyn Sampi on the set of Noyce's *Rabbit Proof Fence*.



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"Fahrenheit 9/11." "Bowling for Columbine." "Super Size Me." "Survivor." Metallica's "Some Kind of Monster." In the last five years, documentary films and non-fiction TV shows have become the hottest new categories in screened entertainment. The total box office for documentaries has increased six-fold in the last five years and continues to grow. Television's weekly Top 10 is littered with reality-based shows, a genre that didn't exist a decade ago. These films and programs succeed because the credibility of the documentary form has been super sized with an injection of fictional devices. Still, these programs only find an audience when the storytelling is sound. Unlike fiction films, most documentaries aren't really written before shooting begins. Instead, the writing process is an evolution that starts with the conception of an idea and continues through the entire production until it finds its final form in the editing room. The excitement of "writing" a film without a script is exhilarating and terrifying. Last year, Michael Moore won the WGA Award for "Best Screenplay" for his "Columbine" documentary. Why? Because audiences and writers now appreciate that the impact of any great film is dependent on its creator, whatever the genre. "Real Storytelling" is a must for any serious screenwriter, TV writer, filmmaker, producer and director.

DAY ONE

Introduction • The Examined Life • What is a Documentary? • A study of the Nine Genres • Ideas • Writing a Proposal • Pitching your idea • Research • Money: How to Get It (commercial and non-profit models) • Budgeting • The Production Plan • Structure • Production • Editing – Where the film is written. • A Greater Truth

DAY TWO

The Documentary Life – Integrating your life and your work • Know Thyself – Your film is a reflection of you • Story = Subject + Teller • Uniquely Qualified • Your Subject and You • Entering the Club • Goal Setting • BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE – Screening & Analysis • Conclusion

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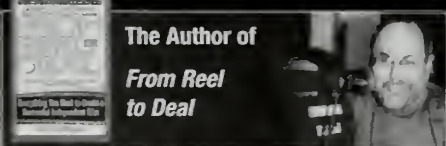
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"INSPIRATION...Why waste 4 years at a film school? I got Dov's...Film School, shot 'Reservoir Dogs,' 'Pulp Fiction,' and launched my career as a writer who controls his scripts." - **QUENTIN TARANTINO**

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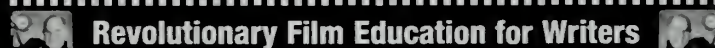
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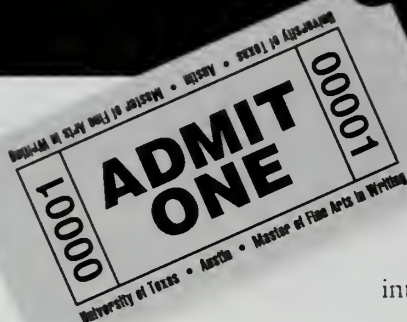
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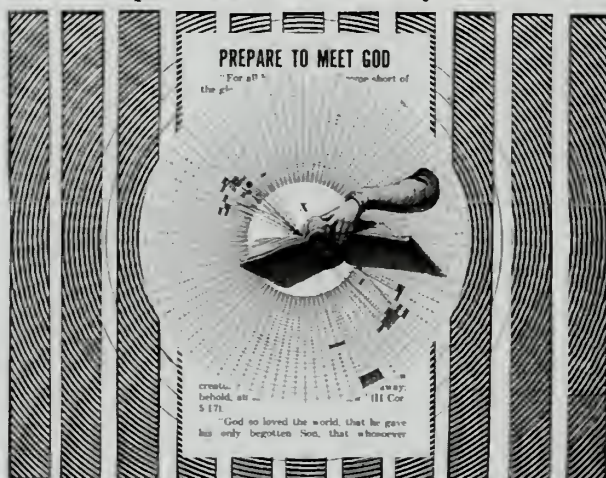
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Rebecca Carroll [Editor-in-Chief]

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Readers,

I thought it was a brilliant idea to do a whole issue on sound and the ways in which it intersects with film. It hadn't been done before at *The Independent*—I mean, sure, maybe some past articles on music and soundtracks, but I was talking about sound, cat. You feel me? SOUND. As with many of my brilliant ideas in general, I wasn't exactly sure how to make it fly. Luckily, I was saved yet again by an excellent gaggle of freelance and contributing writers who found smart things to say about sound—and music, and soundtracks.

Do you know what Foley sound recording is (you probably do, but I didn't)? Marko Costanzo is a badass Foley artist who, along with his partner George Lara, has worked on numerous films, including Mira Nair's recent *Vanity Fair*. Costanzo's account of his experience on that film will make you think, or listen, differently the next time you see a film featuring horse drawn carriages (page 27). On the other end of that spectrum, try to imagine what it would be like to not hear anything at all when you go to the movies. Chicago-based writer David Alm attended The Festival for Cinema of the Deaf, where acclaimed actress Marlee Matlin reminded attendees that whether for a deaf or hearing audience: "...the language of film is very specific. If shots don't match what is conventional, it may be that only a small handful of people will be able to appreciate the film." (page 20)

In the feature well, we've got a profile of music supervisor-turned-soundtrack producer-turned-entrepreneur, Tracy McKnight—ambitious much? Nicholas Boston talked with Tracy about her year-old development,

marketing, and production company Commotion Records (page 36). Contributing writer Lisa Selin Davis looks at the legacy of the movie musical from *Don Juan* to *Chicago* (page 40), and Brooklyn-based artist and critic Douglas Singleton pays tribute to the unforgettable sounds of Soul Cinema—need a reference point? One word: *Shaft* (page 44). San Francisco-based writer and Ireland transplant Niall McKay went balls to the wall, I'm-not-scared-of-you-Darth-Vader, and checked out the holy sound system at George Lucas's Skywalker Sound at 5858 Skywalker Ranch Road in northern California (page 48).

Also: the third edition of Chris Gore's *The Ultimate Filmmakers Survival Guide* (page 33); aloha from the independent film community in Hawai'i (page 30); and social critic Stanley Crouch on Quentin Tarantino (page 12).

And finally, in case you haven't noticed, the magazine has been undergoing some changes lately—changes that I think well represent the direction that we at the Association for Independent Video and Film, are seeking to go. With great changes, though, comes the great likelihood of making mistakes—we have made some in recent issues, and I'd like to ask for your patience as we continue to iron out the details of our redesign, the addition of new departments and columns, our proofing process, and small staff adjustments.

Enjoy, and thanks for reading
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Rebecca Carroll

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C CONTRIBUTORS



DAVID ALM teaches film history and writing at two colleges in Chicago. His writing has appeared in *Artbyte*, *Cameraswork*, *RES*, *Silicon Alley Reporter*, *SOMA*, and *The Utne Reader*. He's also contributed to books on web design and digital filmmaking, and assisted in making documentaries about architecture and garbage.

NICHOLAS BOSTON writes about media and culture for various publications. He is an assistant professor of journalism and mass communications at Lehman College of the City University of New York.



KATHERINE BRODSKY is a freelance arts and entertainment writer. Her work has appeared in *Entertainment Weekly*, *Entertainment Today*, *Forward*, *MovieWeb*, and *Stage Directions*.

MARKO COSTANZO, along with longtime partner and Foley engineer George Lara, head the Foley Stage at C5, Inc. in New Jersey. They are two of the most acclaimed Foley sound partners in filmmaking, and are widely known for collaborating on many major studio films as well as on independents such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Frida*, *The 25th Hour*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.



RICK HARRISON is an assistant editor at *The Independent*. His work has appeared in *Newsday*, *Forward*, *Our Town* and *The West Side Spirit*.



LISA SELIN DAVIS worked in the New York film and television industry for eight years before the journalism bug hit. She has written for *ReadyMade*, *Metropolis*, and *Marie Claire*, among others. Her first novel, *Belly*, will be published by Little, Brown next spring.

LEAH HOCHBAUM has spent an extraordinarily large chunk of her life doing grunt work for the higher-ups at *Rolling Stone*, *Jane*, *Us Weekly* and *Time Out New York*. When she is good, they sometimes let her write things. She will soon be a graduate of New York University's master's program in magazine journalism and looks forward to the day when the word "class" just means "elegance."



NIALL MCKAY is an Irish writer and filmmaker based in San Francisco, California. Currently, he is an associate at the Center for Investigative Reporting. He also contributes to the *The Economist*, *Wired News*, and BBC World Service Radio.



KATE SILVER recently relocated from Minneapolis to Seattle, where she is the managing editor of *ROCKRGRL Magazine*. She regularly writes about music for *City Pages* and *The Seattle Weekly*.



KONRAD NG is the Film and Video Curator for the Doris Duke Theatre at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. In between curating film programs and filming his newborn daughter, Konrad is pursuing a PhD in Political Science at the University of Hawai'i where he has also taught courses on film and politics. His dissertation examines the relationship between race, nation, and cinema.



DOUGLAS SINGLETON writes film and theater criticism for *The Brooklyn Rail*. His website, www.dispactke.com, features art, photography, music, design, and multi-media. A staged script reading of his theater piece *Kunst Soul Folk* was presented at 65 Hope Street Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn earlier this year.

FERNANDA ROSSI is a filmmaker and script/documentary doctor. For more information, visit www.documentarydoctor.com.

RENNY WALDRON is a twenty-three-year-old freelance writer. He currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

CORRECTIONS:

In the October issue we regret cutting off the final words of Nancy Buirski's article. Below is the full last paragraph of that article:

It is not about acceptance of a film, this one or any other, but about critical thinking. And if we translate that to our perception of this administration and whatever administration follows, then Moore has achieved considerably more than getting us to accept the premise of one film. He has educated a society to think for itself, and that is the strongest system of checks and balances a democracy can have.

We also regret misspelling Kirsten Johnson's name in the table of contents in the November issue. And finally, you can find the November Doc Doctor on our website, www.aivf.org.

NEWS

Canada Dry

CONGRESS KEEPS US FILMMAKERS ON HOME TURF

By Leah Hochbaum

Poor Canada. First it gets blamed for, well, everything, by the creators of *South Park*, and now, with the passage of the American Jobs Creation Act through Congress on October 11, it looks like our unfortunate neighbors to the north are going to be losing out to the United States yet again.

The act, which hopes to curb runaway production by offering tax incentives to filmmakers in return for remaining on US soil, passed the Senate 69-17, but awaits the president's signature before Americans can start reaping the varied benefits.

Directors Guild of America President Michael Apted said: "It is the DGA's hope that this ground-breaking federal tax-incentive legislation, in combination with a growing number of state and local incentives, will stem the tide of film and television productions, and the jobs they create, from going abroad. Although this legislation is an important step forward, our efforts to keep entertainment industry jobs here in the US are far from done."

Passage of the act is a major victory for the DGA, a founding member of the Runaway Production Alliance, a group that formed five years ago to try and bring filmmaking back to the Hollywoodland that started it all. Other members include the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the Producers Guild of America, the Motion Picture Association of America, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, publisher of this magazine.

If the bill passes at the executive level as expected, American businesses, including the



Michael Apted is the president of the Directors Guild of America (courtesy of DGA)

film industry, will get \$137 billion in new tax breaks. Income tax rates on domestic production are expected to drop slowly but surely—from thirty-five percent to thirty-four percent by 2006, to thirty-three percent by 2009, and to a low of thirty-two percent thereafter.

Movies would qualify for the tax break if fifty percent or more of the total cost of the production (except for residuals and participations, which can finally be written off) is spent inside the United States. This will help curtail runaway production, but will prevent studios from separately calculating profits on overseas films, DVD sales and foreign television. Studios stand to lose anywhere from \$1-5 billion a year for the next ten years if obliged to estimate profits on total sales. But the positives of the Job Creation Act—specifically the rather obvious creation of jobs—far outweigh the negatives for most people.

Jean M. Prewitt, president and CEO of the Independent Film & Television Alliance said in a statement, "Coupled with existing incentives on the state level, this represents a first step to making production in the US more financially attractive to small independent producers and can have a positive impact on keeping jobs in America."

In addition, films produced independently in the United States that cost less than \$20 million could qualify for a special credit intended to dissuade Americans from making their films anywhere but here. Canada, which in recent years has become the venue of choice for directors looking to fake America with as close to a fake America as they can get, is expected to be hit especially hard by this blow. The decidedly American *Chicago* (2002), *54* (1998), and even the Olsen twins' pre-anorexia tour de force *New York Minute* (2004), have all been filmed up where the maple leaf blooms.

In July, four of the nation's most influential governors—George Pataki of New York, Rick Perry of Texas, Jeb Bush of Florida and of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger of California (the movie biz generates a whopping \$33 billion annually for the Golden State)—banded together in an alliance to lobby the government to make bringing an end to runaway production a priority. Calling themselves "The Big Four," they wrote a letter to members of Congress asking them to endorse the bill and level the playing field for American businesses.

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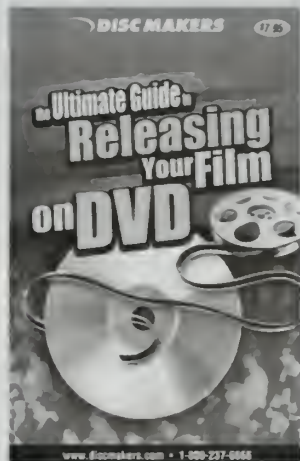
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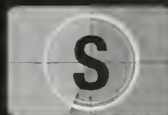
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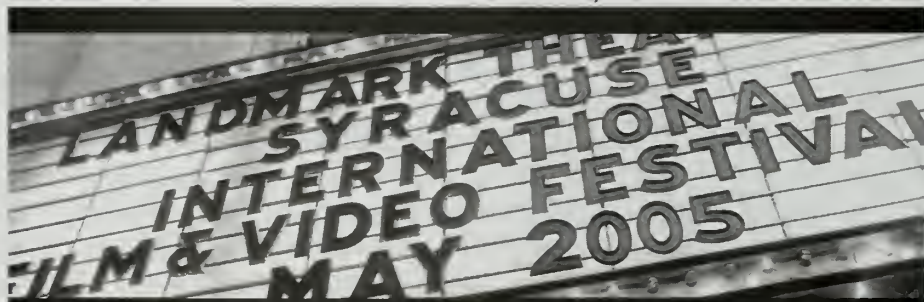


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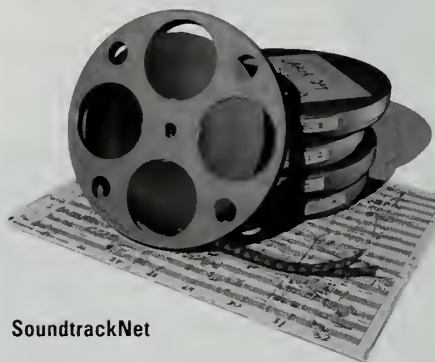
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The letter seemed to work, mobilizing members of Congress from the states most affected by runaway production—Bill Thomas, David Dreier and Mary Bono from California, and Charles Rangel from New York, and those from regions seemingly unhurt by it—senators John Breaux from Louisiana and Chuck Grassley from Iowa.

Arkansas Senator Blanche Lincoln said, "In this ever-changing global economy, our businesses must have the necessary incentives to compete both at home and abroad."

After such success with their lobbying efforts their first time out, it's pretty certain that the "Big Four," the Governor in particular, will soon "be back."



SoundtrackNet

SoundtrackNet Radio launches 24/7 web tunes

SoundtrackNet, where web surfers have gone for years to find a trusty database of even the most obscure movie music, can now listen to the tunes they love nonstop with the October 1 launch of SoundtrackNet Radio—a free, 24/7 streaming internet station for film music buffs.

SoundtrackNet Radio, which is a joint venture with internet radio network Live365, "gives audiences a taste of good music they hadn't been aware of," said Dan Goldwasser, a self-proclaimed soundtrack aficionado, who started the site in 1996 with fellow Carnegie Mellon alum and soundtrack aficionado David A. Koran. "Everyone's heard of *Star Wars*, but have they heard the cable car action cue from *Where Eagles Dare*?"

Probably not.

In the beginning, the site, which boasts over 3,000 soundtracks and a whopping 40,000 songs, was merely a place to go to for

composer interviews and agent contact information, but with the introduction of this round-the-clock radio station, Goldwasser hopes to see a big boost in visitors—up from an already not-too-shabby 188,000 unique visitors a month.

Goldwasser expects the biggest draw to be SoundtrackNet Radio's new slate of programs hosted by him and his partner.

Koran helms "1M1," which focuses on a different genre, composer or style of music each episode, and "The Other Stuff," a schizophrenic smattering of songs selected by the capriciousness of the host.

Goldwasser hosts "Play It Again," a show that takes a look at some of the best and worst that the world of re-recordings has to offer. "Some of them are better," he says of certain unique musical interpretations of famous film scores, "but I try to include a real stinker." One of his favorite such stinkers is the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra's rendition of *Glory's* "Charging Fort Wagner." "They didn't quite get it," he said, lamenting the Eastern European nation's inability to truly grasp the pain of the American Civil War. "I was not impressed."

He also hosts "The Big Pile," which features a different theme each week. One week it might be action movie music. The next it could be tunes from summer movies. Every other month, he hopes to lure a director in front of the mic to talk about his or her reasons for choosing the music for a film. His rather extensive wish list for this "Director's Corner" segment includes Ridley Scott, Paul Verhoeven, Sam Raimi, the Coen brothers, Terry Gilliam, Martin Scorsese, Mel Brooks, Brian De Palma, Robert Zemeckis, Richard Donner, and Tim Burton. He's realistic enough to know that most of these are unlikely gets for his modest website—in fact, he'd be willing to settle for any director with well, any film—but he figured it couldn't hurt to put the word out there.

"This [site] is really a labor of love," said Goldwasser, who works forty hours a week as an HTML designer in Santa Monica, California, but hopes to one day make the site his full-time gig. He expects that SoundtrackNet Radio will bring him a lot closer to this goal. "We're going to try to give people a reason to come back."



MercerMEDIA audio-produced "Film School"

MercerMEDIA adds audio to "Film School" and *Hair High*

When the Independent Film Channel realized it had less than a month to finish production on its new original documentary series, "Film School," it called upon MercerMEDIA, a full-service audio post-production studio in midtown Manhattan (and longtime advertising client in this magazine), knowing it could get the job done.

"Delivering ten mixes in a compressed time frame was a real challenge," said Alex Noyes, a sound editor and re-recording mixer at MercerMEDIA, "but it also made it exciting."

The show, which follows Alrick, Barbara, Leah, and Vincenzo, four unique New York University film students as they each grapple with the hardships of directing a short film within a ten-week period, began airing on September 10.

Produced by Academy Award nominee Nanette Burstein (*The Kid Stays in the Picture*, 2002), along with Jordan Roberts, the show offers viewers a fly-on-the-wall view of the behind-the-scenes drama that is par for the course with the making of most movies.

Before the ten weeks are done, one person's film will be torn to shreds by NYU professors, one person will drop out of school, one will completely switch careers, and the solitary one who survives with his or her sanity intact will be offered a professional directing job after the NYU Film Festival.

Though each half-hour episode is really only twenty-two-minutes of content, and a

vast majority of the tracks were repeated from one show to the next, Noyes and his colleagues spent six weeks working shifts, night and day, knowing they needed to finish and finish fast.

"We would mix a show a day," he said, before adding that also having to mix sound for the IFC promos pushed them back a little more than he would have liked. "There was a lot to do."

In addition, since the show was shot in a kind of cinema vérité style, a lot of the audio was difficult to work with. Sometimes just a camera mic was present to capture a significant moment. But, said Noyes, "with a documentary, if it's happening and you want it in there, you don't wait for the sound crew to show up. It makes sound production very tricky."

Supervising sound editor Bill Seery agreed: "We had to use every trick in the book to make all the elements come together and shine."

Up next for MercerMEDIA, which has worked on documentaries *Trembling Before G-d* (2001), *Shelter Dogs* (2003), and feature film *What Alice Found* (2003), is mixing the sound for *Hair High*, an animated feature directed by Bill Plympton. Based on the director's own high school experiences and featuring the voices of Beverly D'Angelo, Sarah Silverman, Ed Begley, Jr. and Matt Groening, *Hair High* is a cartoonish but occasionally violent look at the lives of teens. After that comes *Red Hook Justice*, which will air in May on PBS. The documentary is about a Brooklyn, New York court that seeks to rehabilitate juvenile offenders. After that, it's anybody's guess, but Noyes hopes that Mercer gets more TV work in the future. It's more of a challenge. "It's very different from the way we work on films." ☆

Q/A

Stanley Crouch

By Renny Waldron



Social critic Stanley Crouch (Martine Bisagni)

Stanley Crouch is one of America's most eloquent and original social critics. In the last three decades, Crouch has published several books and his essays have appeared in numerous national publications including *Harper's* and *The New Republic*. In 1993 he was awarded the MacArthur "genius grant" in recognition of his work.

Crouch has tackled cinema throughout his career—whether buzz-killing the party for Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* in 1989, or praising the work of the Hughes Brothers. Crouch's latest book *The Artificial White Man* (out this fall from Basic Books), includes an original and insightful seventy-page essay on Quentin Tarantino.

Renny Waldron: You have written of the "Shakespearean achievement" as that which makes "us recognize the humanity of people with whom we don't identify," and you have praised Quentin Tarantino for achieving this element in his earlier works. What do you think of his latest efforts, *Kill Bill Volumes I and II*?

Stanley Crouch: Tarantino does this kind of amazing thing. In a certain way, he seems to always be writing *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, and *Richard III* over and over—in both the plays and his films] there are extremely powerful bad guys who drive the story and who you find yourself both repulsed and intrigued by, primarily because they can surprise you. For instance, if you take the Ordell character in *Jackie Brown*, which is one of Samuel Jackson's greatest performances, you never knew what he was going to do or how he was

going to react to something. Even though he establishes himself in a certain way in the opening of the movie, [it still] doesn't prepare you for the murderer he turns out to be shortly thereafter, nor does it prepare you for his meeting with Jackie Brown in which she kind of intimidates him with her plan. The viewer is hit with all these surprises within his personality. I think that's what Tarantino's gift is—he can take these [characters] in *Reservoir Dogs*, in *Pulp Fiction*, in *Jackie Brown*, and *Kill Bill Volumes I and II*, and surprise the viewer.

RW: In your book, *The All American Skin Game*, you quote the actor Gregory Peck as saying: "The audience loves the bad guy because he will come up with a surprise." Do you think this has anything to do with the success of violent films, particularly like those made by Quentin Tarantino?

SC: Well, yeah. Except that there isn't that much surprise in the violence nowadays. Violence is successful because you don't need translation. When you see a guy get his head bitten off, it's the same thing in China, in Japan, in the US, and in Europe, so I think that might have something to do with it.

RW: Thirty years ago, the writer Tom Wolfe said, and I'm paraphrasing, that film had largely usurped shorts stories and novels, but that it could never make the audience feel like they are inside the mind or nervous system of a character the way books can. What are your thoughts on that? And do you think it's possible for

films to succeed in getting inside a character's head?

SC: In terms of what Wolfe is talking about, no. Film is really an extension of painting, and the accomplishment of any great painter is that they bring depth to the surface. Not just depth of perception but of substance. But what Tom Wolfe is talking about, no, we've never had that before [in film]. I think it could be done, but it still wouldn't have the same kind of weight that a great book has.

RW: The main character in your 2000 novel, *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome*, is a beautiful blonde jazz singer from South Dakota who falls in love with a black tenor saxophone player. If there were to be a movie of your novel and you could pick the director and some of the actors and actresses, whom would you choose?

SC: I've thought about writing a screenplay [based on the novel]. I think there are a few directors who could do it. Carl Franklin, who did *One False Move* and *Devil in a Blue Dress*, he could definitely do it. I think my wife suggested Spike Lee once, but I never thought about that. Tarantino—see, *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome* is the next level for him. It doesn't have to be my book, but what [my] book was doing is the next level for him. In other words, he would have to take his sensibility and bring it into a much bigger and more complicated world. He tends to make the world where his characters live fairly simple.

RW: You once wrote "no one should be shocked to find that the quality of art we get in black films is as low as that in all popular cinema." How do you see the state of so-called black films as compared to the rest of popular cinema today, and what role do you feel the independent film movement has played?

SC: The problem is that most [so-called black films] are so pathetically bad, even the ones with good intentions. They are just so poorly written, and the acting is so second-rate, that the films don't have the chance to pull through and make people really see the humanity in the characters. These movies are successful [because of] an audience that is notorious for having horrific taste. BET

[Black Entertainment Television] couldn't be successful and popular if black audiences had good taste. But black audiences aren't worse than anyone else, just look at the comedy shows of the 80s. Everybody is in a photo finish for who has the worst taste.

RW: In your 1990 book, *Notes of a Hanging Judge*, you wrote a scathing essay about Spike Lee and *Do the Right Thing*, criticizing Lee for his small vision and lack of subtlety. But you ended that piece on a very optimistic note. Fourteen years later, how do you view Spike Lee as a filmmaker?

SC: I think he's still developing. See, his movies never really make money, but it's not because they're too good to make money, as some people would say. I just think that even when he makes a good movie he tends to do something in it that's kind of silly, that can confuse the power of the movie. He has put himself in a category where the critical establishment views him as "the angry black filmmaker." So the reviewers aren't really very sympathetic to anything unless it fits into the ideology in those books he used to come out with for every film. Often times the ideas in [those books] would be simple-minded and rhetorical, or reductionist in a way that didn't allow his films to get the air they probably needed—the air of other people looking at them.

RW: Finally, as a critic, what would you like to see more of in film that's not already being done?

SC: To me the most rebellious thing one can do today is to affirm the higher qualities of human nature, to actually show somebody exhibit virtue or honor or courage or loyalty. See, that's hard to do. It would be interesting if we could get stories that actually took people through this amazingly varied country that we have, in realistic ways. I mean this country is amazing—we have so many different kinds of people, not just ethnically. People can be in the same ethnic group and be extraordinarily different, which, in terms of Caucasians, we have been told throughout history. If we could get that same freedom of vision, that depiction of everyone, I think we move forward. ☆

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Sound Unseen

THIS MINNEAPOLIS FILM AND MUSIC FEST HAS
BECOME A RITE OF FALL

By Kate Silver



Innovator Robert Moog is the subject of a one of the documentaries screened at this year's fest (courtesy of Sound Unseen)

The line to see *The Last Word* at the Minneapolis Oak Street Cinema snakes down the block, splitting in two directions. It's a pleasing sight, even after a week spent loitering around movie theatres. Of the numerous events I've attended, *The Last Word* (2003) screening has the highest draw. It's a locally produced independent feature, directed by Tim McCusker and starring former radio personality and Minnesota music champion Mary Lucia and acoustic-pop duo The Flops—Matt Wilson and John Munson (both ex of Minneapolis art-rock band Trip Shakespeare). The Flops will perform a few songs before the film's premiere. They're local favorites who are barely recognizable outside of Minnesota. Why is this a big deal?

Because in Minneapolis, where music is the second most popular topic of conversation—behind the weather—the Sound Unseen Film and Music Festival has become a rite of fall. The last week of September is spent highlighting the festival program like a new course syllabus. Because music is sport—dissected in every bar and coffee shop in town, even when the Twins are having a pretty good season. Commercially, Best Buy is based here, offering a plethora of cheap promos. Record geeks flock to independent record stores like The Electric Fetus and Treehouse Records to pick over vinyl. The latter, nee Oar Folkjokeopus, figured prominently in the city's mid-80s punk heyday of the Replacements, Hüsker Dü, and Soul Asylum. And though the

only regular Prince sightings are found in the new *Purple Rain* DVD, one can still visit the real First Avenue and watch live music on its now-legendary stage almost any night of the week.

And then there are the bands. You can't throw a guitar pick in the Twin Cities without hitting a musician. During the painfully long winter months, the artists have to stay occupied. So they form bands or write about them. Minneapolis is an infamous breeding-ground for music critics, with homegrown bylines regularly popping up in prominent publications like *Spin* and *Rolling Stone*. In the cinema, attendants clap for the bands onscreen with the fervency of a club crowd.

Though the festival has expanded to ten days in its fifth year, with forty-plus films shown, it remains cozy and informal—an after-party compared to the opulent Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival, which happens in the spring. Sound Unseen was founded in 2000 by former Minneapolitan Nate Johnson in an effort to bring underground music and film to Minneapolis, a city not typically regarded as a film mecca. Johnson, who now lives in northern Minnesota, handed over directorial duties to Gretchen Williams in 2002.

Sound Unseen has also scheduled small tours, which in the past



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Chad Freidrichs's *Jandek On Corwood*, about the mysterious Texas-based musician (courtesy of Sound Unseen)

have included weekend Midwestern "road trips" to Illinois and Wisconsin. At press time, a visit to Stockholm's Popcorn Festival was planned for the end of October, where Sound Unseen will present a few films. Williams is mum at the moment, as the details are still being finalized, but said via email: "[We're] checking out different cities, theaters and clubs so we can make some decisions about where our program would have the most success. We've spent about eight months researching and conversing with festivals, theaters and clubs but instead of diving in, we'd like to check it out first and go forward with a festival tour in 2005." Further European trips are in the works, including visits to Germany, Denmark, and France. "European audiences really support festivals and attendance is always high, especially for American programs which have not screened there before," she said.

Like an edgy mix-tape, Sound Unseen appeals to independent music fans of varying



Sound Unseen staff (l-r): director Gretchen Williams, and assistant directors Marisa Collins and Anne Saxton (courtesy of Sound Unseen)

tastes. The festival coordinators work with a Seattle-based programmer who specializes in unearthing unusual and rare films. Primarily documentaries, the films shown this year range from profiles of behind-the-scenes innovators Robert Moog and Robert Haack, outsider artists Jandek and Wesley Willis, the offbeat culture of song-poem stylists, and much more. There are returning favorites: The Clash documentary *Westway to the World* (2000) and *Can: The Documentary* (1999); recent international festival smashes like Finland's *Screaming Men* and classics like hip-hop mainstay *Beat Street* (1984). In between, there are a spate of visiting artists and presenters, including Mark Hosler of the California-based collective of sound and visual artists Negativland, WFMU DJ and curator of outsider music Irwin Chusid, and classical composer/hip-hop artist DBR.

Opening night's *Hop-Fu* is every bit as whip-smart as it sounds. The concept: Brooklyn-based DJs IXL and Spae provide a live hip-hop score to vintage kung-fu flicks—in this case 1982's *Superninjas*. Their intuitive production, which includes an unidentified sample shouting "The champ is here!" as the Sensei enters the picture, or IXL's slip of 808-pop techno as the gold lame-clad enemy attacks, is enough to ignore the plotline altogether. *Superninjas* kitsch-factor is reminiscent of Spike Jonze's work with the Beastie Boys. The DJs move with such precision as to

make the fight scenes look choreographed.

Since the festival is curated rather than juried, the films are artfully arranged. A few films from a collection celebrating cult heroes have found resurgence in popularity in recent years. Julien Nitzburg's low-budget video short *The Wild World of Hasil Adkins* (1993) provides an amusing snapshot of Adkins, the so-called "Father of Psychobilly" and inventor of "The Hunch"—a dance, which according to the guileful musician involves shaking "anything from the hand to the foot." Nitzburg's seemingly innocuous Saturday-night bar set-up frames Adkins as the accidental Casanova, caught in a Jerry Springer-esque catfight between two women over who gets to sit in with the musician onstage.

A Sunday-afternoon pairing of *Jandek On Corwood* and *Privilege* proved to be a great lesson in oppositional cinema. Chad Freidrich's feature on the mysterious Texas-based musician known as Jandek allows a cult of critics, indie record label owners, and college radio DJs to free-associate endlessly over the man who's toiled in obscurity, whispering painfully over an un-tuned acoustic guitar. Jandek—for those not following *Vanity Fair*'s "Rock Snob's Dictionary"—has released music from the invented "Corwood Industries" at a rate of about two per year. Jandek's choice of artwork varies between naturalistic photographs and '70s-era portraits of the artist as a young reclusive. Friederich's job in illustrating the film is

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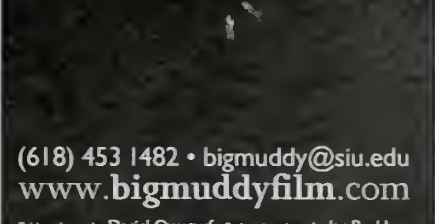
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Negativland's Mark Hosler during the Sound Unseen festival (Jon Nelson)

a difficult one, given the lack of photographic evidence and film clips. He intersperses Jandek's album art between the doc's talking heads, along with hackneyed and perverse visuals like brains and bloody sheets, suggesting that Jandek's music is so depressing as to be suicidal. Freidrich's choice of visuals is the only drawback to an engrossing film about a figure in outsider music who is the most in control of his own image and fairly successful as a complete independent in the age of digital downloads and image-making glossy magazines.

Steven Shorter (Paul Jones), of the allegorical *Privilege*, couldn't be closer to the burn of the spotlight. His image is emblazoned on every office wall and television screen like a piece of Warholian iconography. In this darkly humorous 1967 film, prescient in our era of Gawker media-manipulation, Shorter is a pop star manufactured by the British government in order to encourage Britain's rebellious youth-quakers to return to the church. Jones is effective as the subtle, doe-eyed Shorter, who's stripped of his own identity until he finally crumbles with the aid of a free-spirited painter (Jean Shrimpton). As Shorter develops

a personality of his own, he's allowed some semblance of privacy. *Privilege* is a piece of Op-Art with a brisk, newsreel-pace recalling Richard Lester adapting *Brave New World*. Even though it's fictional (one of few fictional films in the festival), *Privilege* is more telling than several documentaries featured.

Mark Hosler stares into a crowd fashioned after his own image: pale, bespectacled audio-philis. Hosler's lecture, titled "Adventures in Illegal Art," combined highlights from Negativland's twenty years spent manipulating media and testing copyright laws, beginning with childhood tape cut-up experiments inspired by William S. Burroughs and lapsing into a \$40,000 lawsuit filed by U2. "It's an amazing thing to go through," Hosler says of the suit, which the band wrote a book about. "I highly recommend it." Negativland's films commonly collage print and television clips as subversive as their recordings. *The Mashin' of the Christ*, created recently to accompany the 1991 college radio hit "Christianity is Stupid," features footage from several films on Christ, mixed and arranged into the form of a "dumb hard rock video". Appearances from sound-artists like Hosler have become a staple



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of Sound Unseen in recent years—they're presented by Minneapolis mixed-media artist Jon Nelson, a musician who records under the name Escape Mechanism and produces the syndicated radio program "Some Assembly Required" for the University of Minnesota radio station Radio K. Since 2001, Nelson has presented some of the most prolific artists in the field, from Prague's Tape-beatles to Canadian composer John Oswald, who coined the term "Plunderphonics," which has become the umbrella-definition for tape appropriation.

To the gathering of musicians and visual artists, they're the same kind of obsessives who stood behind me in line for *The Last Word*. I listened patiently as the woman behind me recounted *Off the Charts*, an offbeat look at the song-poem industry (in which ordinary people send in poems, and they're arranged, performed, and recorded). I was a little startled when she said the LSD-fueled oddity "A Blind Man's Penis" by rock critic John Trubee was one of her favorites, and someone else said he had it somewhere on a mix-tape. I wanted to turn around and tell her excitedly that Trubee was also in the Jandek documentary! And did she see it? But I kept that one to myself. ★



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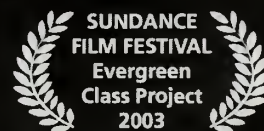
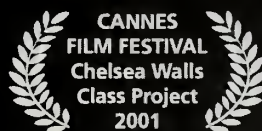
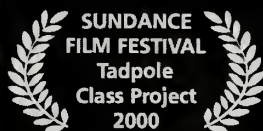
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CHICAGO CELEBRATES DEAF CINEMA

By David Alm

October sees a lot of film festivals. There's the San Juan Cinemafest, the Festival of European Cinema in Paris, the Israel Film Festival in New York and several dozen others throughout Europe, North America, and Asia. But one stands out, however small, young, and unswarming with paparazzi it may be. The Festival for Cinema of the Deaf, produced by the Chicago Institute of the Moving Image, celebrated its third—and by all accounts, best—year to date in Chicago this October.

As many of the larger festivals become ever more frantic, drawing filmmakers, journalists, producers, and a lot of hopefuls trying to get a toehold in an already saturated field, the FCD assumes a more modest form. Intimate, focused—and yes, quiet—this year's festival had only a few hundred attendees. Lasting four days, it featured shorts and feature-length films from six countries, brief talks by filmmakers and academics, a gala opening night hosted by famed deaf actor Marlee Matlin (*Children of a Lesser God* and "The West Wing"), and the US premiere of *I Love Peace*, a Japanese film from director Yutaka Osawa.

The festival's founders, Joshua Flanders and Liz Tannebaum, have the US/Canadian distribution rights for Osawa's film, which tells the story of a deaf prosthetic limb-maker (Akiko Oshidari) who forges a unique bond with a young Afghan girl who lost her leg to a landmine

in present-day Afghanistan. But business was hardly the focus of this festival. Because unlike its peers around the world, the FCD is defined more by a social mission than by glamour, fame, or contracts, and many of its attendees came as much for the festival's cause as for the films themselves, if not more so.

The cause is simple: to promote a cinema for, of, and by the deaf community—or "deaf cinema," which includes films made specifically for a deaf audience, films about deafness in some way, and films by deaf filmmakers or featuring deaf actors.

The cause also involves increasing public awareness that most films are inaccessible to deaf audiences. Flanders, who is hearing, says when they started the festival, a lot of people said, "Maybe deaf people don't want to go to the movies." His response: "Well, maybe they don't want to play golf either, but they should be allowed to." And the FCD proves that deaf people do want to go to the movies. "We, the deaf community, are tired of being isolated most of the time, of not having the opportunities to do things the hearing world does," says Tannebaum, who was born deaf.

The FCD aims to change that, and Matlin says the benefits of doing so extend far beyond the deaf community. "For the deaf community [this festival] is a chance to share film experiences. For the film community, it's a chance to explore a corner of filmmaking that

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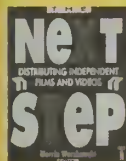
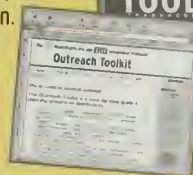
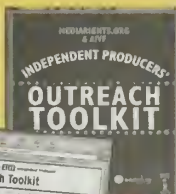
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Festival founders Joshua Flanders and Liz Tannebaum (Bob Dowey)

is not often explored. And the same goes for the general public—it's a chance to be entertained while learning something new."

With boundless enthusiasm, advocates of deaf cinema welcome newcomers with only one request: that you share their conviction to help bring cinema to the deaf and hard-of-hearing, of whom there are thirty million in the United States alone. But the mission doesn't stop there. Dr. Jon Ferguson, an ear, nose, and throat specialist who sits on CIMI's board of directors, believes that deaf cinema will change the way movies are made, and even that a Beethoven of the moving image will emerge within the near future.

The prediction makes sense. "Deaf people use sign language—a visual language," Flanders notes, adding that film is also a visual language, and anyone who communicates with sign has a clear advantage in a visual medium. "For words we have literature," he says. "For images we have film."

Charlie Chaplin understood this—he frequently cast deaf actors in his films for their natural ease with gesture and expression. In the 1920s Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein perfected montage to convey complex meanings without the aid of sound, and his colleague, Dziga Vertov, used film to create an

egalitarian, didactic art that could be understood at once by all people, regardless of their native tongue—the "international language of film," he called it. Major American films like *Baraka* (1992), *Fantasia* (1940), and Godfrey Reggio's *Qatsi trilogy* (1983, 1988, 2002), with the exception of some brief narration in *Fantasia*, don't contain a single spoken word. And great actors like Roberto Benigni and Jack Nicholson can speak volumes without opening their mouths.

Still, ever since sound was introduced to film in 1927, movies have evolved to become as aurally sophisticated as they have visually. It's hard to imagine classics like *Citizen Kane*, *The Graduate*, and *On the Waterfront*—to say nothing of more recent films—without the soundtracks that make each of those films so powerful. And thanks to the elaborate audio systems in theaters today, movie-going can be as intense an experience as an AC/DC concert at Madison Square Garden.

Such innovations, great as they are for the hearing, have unwittingly excluded the deaf from a medium that once flourished under the same limitation they experience in life. But to re-include deaf audiences, filmmakers cannot merely employ silent-era techniques, either. "There must be thought put into how shots are framed if a deaf audience is to appreciate dialogue," Matlin says. "At the same time, the language of film is very specific. If shots don't match what is conventional, it may be that only a small handful of people will be able to appreciate the film."

Clearly, much is yet to be accomplished, but the FCD's founders have a history of perseverance. Flanders was a high school English teacher when he returned to school mid-career to study literature and film at Northwestern University. There, he wrote his master's thesis on deaf cinema and then founded CIMI in 2000 with the motto "placing the spectator before the film." Later that year he was introduced to Tannebaum by a rabbi they both knew. A longtime stand-

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Flanders and Tannebaum became fast friends, started working together on the FCD, and were married soon after the first festival in 2002...Indeed, with no shortage of hugs, this year's FCD resembled a family reunion more than a marketplace.



Actress Marlee Matlin hosted the opening night gala of the FCD (Bob Dowey)

up comedian and an actor for stage and film, Tannebaum won an Emmy for her work at Chicago's Second City, and in 2000 was cast in the comedy *What Women Want* with Mel Gibson. Flanders and Tannebaum became fast friends, started working together on the FCD, and were married soon after the first festival in 2002. Tannebaum and Matlin met in Sunday school thirty-five years ago, and they've been best friends ever since. The affection this group shares for each other spread throughout the festival. Indeed, with no shortage of hugs, this year's FCD resembled a family reunion more than a marketplace.

Flanders and Tannebaum have hosted the festival in Boston and Tampa, taken films to Ireland, London, Moscow, and Maine, and this April will host another FCD in Los Angeles. They are also working with DTS (Digital Theater Systems, the company that

created surround sound), to produce and promote a CD-based program with multi-lingual captioning options that can be shipped to movie theaters along with a film print, thus availing conceivably any movie to deaf audiences worldwide at very little cost. Projectionists could simply select the appropriate language when screening a film.

Flanders and Tannebaum are also collaborating with Ferguson to build a 160-seat theater for the deaf inside Ferguson's practice in Rockford, Illinois. Each seat will be wired with bass shakers that translate sound into physical vibrations, and every film it screens will be captioned. They're even planning a potentially lucrative commercial application for the space—monitoring the physiological effects, such as heart rate, body temperature, and salivation levels—that various films, ads, and video games have on audiences. Such data would have enormous value to mediamakers, they believe, and this theater could become the flagship for a new type of market research. "Focus groups only go so far," Flanders says. "The human body doesn't lie."

Social causes and technical innovations aside, the FCD is still, of course, a film festival. And as a film festival, it should not be discounted. Highlights from this year's program include *Tricks*, a short from British director Sam Dore about an unusually edifying transaction between a deaf prostitute and her john; *Cold Blood*, a French short involving zombies and an animated crucifixion by Pierre-Louis Levacher; and *Alan's Rule*, a severe but compelling Russian film set in 1864 that shifts from a period piece about science into a meditation on the nature of deaf performance. They even screened a cap-



ASL interpreter Joe Lucas and director of *I Love Peace* Yutaka Osawa (Bob Dowey)

tioned version of Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

And no film festival is complete without an awards ceremony. During a brunch on the final day, speakers and interpreters from the United States, Japan, and Canada filled a small stage at The Green Dolphin Street, an elegant, gangster-era club on the northwest side of Chicago, to create a remarkable display of multi-lingualism—Japanese signs translated first into Japanese, then English, and finally into American Sign Language, and vice versa.

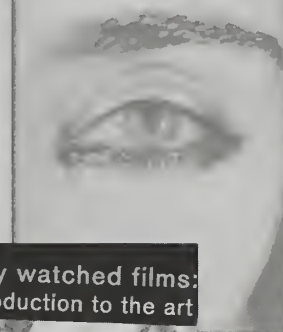
Canadian director Catherine MacKinnon received Best Short for *I'm Not From Hear*, a film set in a small Canada town where everyone is deaf except one man who struggles for acceptance. Best Feature went to Arthur Lund for his film *Golden Legacy*, an adventure story in the tradition of *Indiana Jones*. Oshidari won Best Actor for her emphatic role in *I Love Peace*. And that film's director, Mr. Osawa, won the festival's highest distinc-

tion: the "Ted Award for Excellence in Film," named for Theodore Tannebaum, Liz's father and Lakeshore Production's founder and executive producer (*Run Away Bride*, *The Gift*), who fought throughout his life to help his daughter realize her dreams. The "Ted" comes from an endowment that also funds an outreach program to teach filmmaking and acting to children at Chicago public schools, also from an initiative to provide captioning and interpreters for film events, festivals, and theaters, and a grant awarded to a given filmmaker each year to be used on a film for the following FCD.

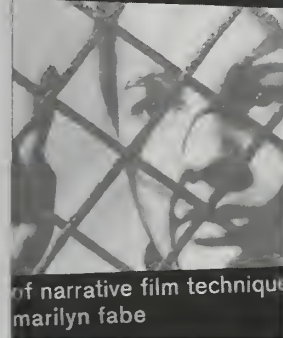
In the past three years the FCD has received, on average, seventy-five submissions, with more this year than last. And Flanders expects the number to keep growing: "Chicago now has the attention of the deaf world on it," he says. "This festival is about feeding a starving audience," he says. "And once people get a taste, they go crazy." ★

Film Talk

A Critical Cinema 4



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Mix Master

BRAZILIAN-BORN MARCELO ZARVOS SCORES AWARD-WINNING INDIES

By Katherine Brodsky

Marcelo Zarvos is scoring big in the independent film world these days. The thirty-five-year old Brazilian-born Zarvos, who has made New York his home for the past twelve years, has composed music for a handful of independent films, including *Tully* (2000), *Kissing Jessica Stein* (2001), and this year's *The Door in the Floor*—all award-winning and critically acclaimed.

Zarvos discovered his passion for music and film at the age of ten, when as a child growing up in Brazil he was given the extraordinary opportunity (the details of which

Zarvos is vague) to work as a piano player on the score for the classic 1973 film, *The Sting*. At thirteen, Zarvos started playing music professionally in local nightclubs, and a year later joined a band called Tokyo, which was signed to the CBS record label and went on to enjoy moderate success in Brazil. Zarvos's experience with Tokyo allowed him to write his own music for the first time, but unlike most boys his age he did not dream of rock stardom—he already had his heart set on pursuing a career in film scoring.

"I think the main attraction [of film scor-

ing] was the possibility of experimenting and combining a wide variety of musical styles including rock, without the constraints of a three-minute song format or preconceptions about genre," Zarvos says.

Zarvos ventured to the United States when he was eighteen to study film score composition at the well-regarded Berklee College of Music in Boston. When he first arrived, Zarvos found some obvious contrasts between the United States and Brazil: family plays a larger role in Brazil, while in the United States, work and career tend to take center

stage. Zarvos also immediately recognized the dominant social gap here, whereas in Brazil, "a larger majority of the country lives in very precarious conditions." But today, having spent nearly half his life here, America feels like home to Zarvos. Naturally, Brazil remains a very strong source of inspiration in both his music and personal life.

Rather than going to Berklee as planned, Zarvos decided at the last minute that focusing exclusively on film scoring right away might not be the best move. "I just had the feeling that I should be exposed to more types of music, and [needed to] live music more before I focused on film scores," he says.

Zarvos ended up at CalArts outside of Los Angeles, where he studied composition as well as classical music and jazz. During that time he wrote and performed a combination of classical, jazz, chamber, and Brazilian music with his band Marcelo Zarvos + Group. The group recorded three albums for MA Recording—*Dualism*, *Labyrinths*, and *Music Journal*. In 1998, ten years after his arrival in the United States, Zarvos was offered the opportunity to score his first film.

As it happened, the Brazilian director Paulo Machline had heard Zarvos play at the Knitting Factory in New York, and felt that Zarvos's style was just right for his short film, *Soccer Story* (*Uma Historia de Futebol*, 1999). That short film became a hit on the festival circuit and even went on to earn an Academy Award nomination for Best Live Action Short Film in 2001. Not exactly a bad way to start a career in film scoring.

"I was kind of feeling that one way or the other I would wind up doing film music, and that's exactly how it happened," Zarvos says.

After that, things began rather quickly to fall into place for Zarvos. Soon after *Soccer Story*, the film's editor Affonso Gonçalves approached Zarvos with *Tilly* (2000), a small independent by Hilary Birmingham that he edited, which also went on to win major accolades and awards at various film festivals.

"It was interesting," remembers Zarvos, "because [*Tilly*] was a completely independent film and he asked me if I wanted to score this film, no distribution or nothing."

Then came *Kissing Jessica Stein*, the 2001 indie darling already fast approaching cult classic status. Zarvos composed the score for that film in just ten days. Long nights and countless shots of espresso later, the film was off to the Los Angeles Film Festival where it was awarded the Audience Choice Award and picked up for distribution.

Of his scoring process, Zarvos explains, "[The film score] helps convey so much that goes beyond what's on the screen—[it's] really able to capture the sort of invisible elements that are in the film. [The composer] is one element of a large multimedia collaboration, and music can be more or less important."

"I think what music can do is express the world of a character in a way that words cannot. Great actors can do that with how they look and their body language and all of that—but with all the things that go beyond words is where music starts and does its best job."

In terms of working with directors, Zarvos feels the most important thing is that directors know in a profound sort of way, the story they want to tell. "I don't think it's essential that they tell you in very specific musical terms what needs to be done," he says. "And I don't think it's even advisable. You can talk a lot about things, but nothing beats being in the room with the director when they first [hear] something, and you just watch their reaction and their face and their body language. That can tell you a lot."

For a pivotal scene from *The Door in the Floor* where Ted Cole (Jeff Bridges) is being chased by Evelyn Vaughn (Mimi Rogers), Zarvos recalls feeling like director Tod Williams was directing him more as an actor than as a musician. In instances like this, Zarvos says, "you're not a hundred percent sure where you're going, but the director is giving you his notes and you kind of just



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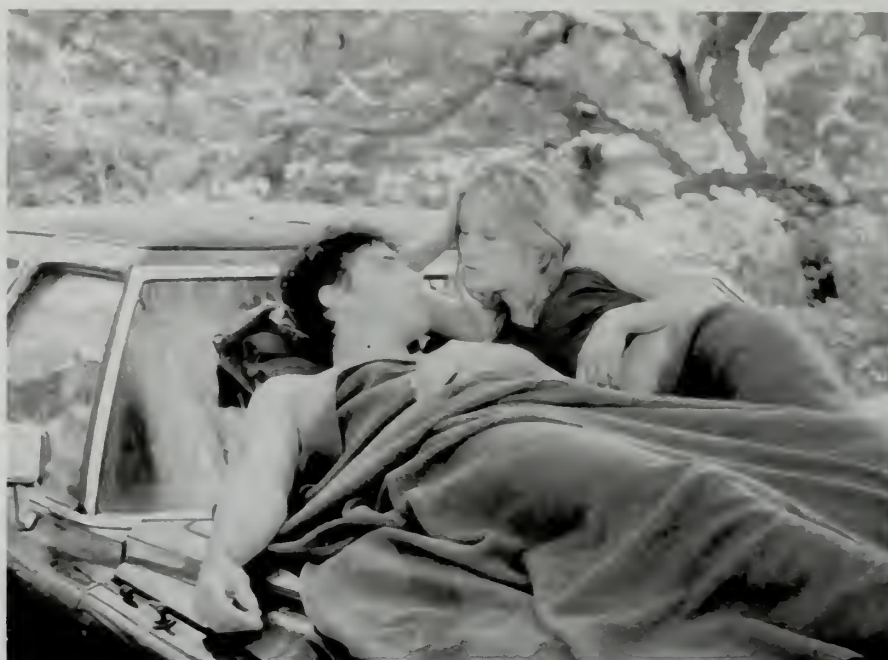
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Zarvos did the music for Hilary Birmingham's *Tully* (Small Planet Pictures)

trust." For that scene, Zarvos scored the music less to fit the action on screen than to express the way the character was feeling internally.

"[Bridges played] a total megalomaniac who is very romantic and feels that the whole world is after him," Zarvos says. "He deserves every bit of anger from this woman, but we were playing with what was inside him and not necessarily what was on the screen. [Fields] just kept saying, 'bigger, bigger, more, louder.' Until finally one day he heard the music and he said, 'Okay, that's what I'm talking about.' It was great. And then I could take a step back and say, 'Wow. He was right.' And I understood the effect he was going for, but again, it was not necessarily in very musical terms, but more about drama and texture and just size and scope."

In Zarvos's score for *Door in the Floor*, he succeeds in fashioning a bleak, melancholy world with slow and heated sounds of piano and strings, reflecting the characters' emotional journey in a world that appears to be vanishing.

One thing that Zarvos says he has learned from his experience is that every director is different. "I've been lucky to work with very bright directors and very different ones, and they all had very unique ways of talking about music," he says. For example, Zarvos learned that Michael Burke, whom he worked with on *The Mudge Boy* (2003), had his own special way to gauge how well the music worked in a scene. He called it his "gut test." Burke would

watch a score, listen to the music, and if he had a reaction, would write the letters "ER" on the sheet of paper. Luckily, Zarvos discovered quickly that "ER" did not stand for Emergency Room, but rather Emotional Response.

Inspiration, Zarvos says, comes from that collaborative aspect of filmmaking, not just in terms of partnering with a director, but also the idea that so many different media and art forms are coming together to create a film. "[Film is] all the art forms: drama, music, painting, theater, choreography, design," he says. "So I think it's the synergy of all of that that makes it so mesmerizing. Cinema is a very recent art form compared to the other classic art forms. Music has been around for a long time. I find that there's a real magic to it in how it works and why it works together."

All of Zarvos's work so far has been on independents. And while he says he'd be happy to work for a huge Hollywood paycheck (and really, who could blame him), Zarvos maintains that he is "fully committed to continue working on smaller, more personal, independent films." It's the task of evenly combining music with all those other art forms mentioned above that is especially mesmerizing for Zarvos. "I really feel that for anyone involved in filmmaking, everything is a means to an end, and the end is the film," he says. "As a film composer, you are a part of something bigger than yourself." ★



Reese Witherspoon makes some noise in Mira Nair's ambient *Vanity Fair* (Focus Features)

The Sound of Gowns

HOW FOLEY ARTISTS CREATED VANITY FAIR'S NATURALISTIC NOISES

By Marko Costanzo

I knew Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair* was going to be an interesting and challenging project. It was filmed with lots of attention to the visual details, and the sound of the Foley effects—naturalistic sounds recorded to match the action in a scene tracks—would need to be as audibly clean and meticulous as the film is visually stunning.

The production track on *Vanity Fair* (which opened in September) was in good shape when they first brought it to us—some cleaned usable dialogue, along with production effects, some backgrounds and music, all on separate tracks. As with many production sounds, embellishments from the Foley department help to sell the authenticity of what you see on the screen.

Some sound designers/editors will work on a production for several months—they will prepare many different tracks and ask us

(Foley Artists) to record Foley effects in specific areas. And some editors will rely on Foley effects for practically every sound you hear in a film. *Vanity Fair* was somewhere in between.

We recorded almost everything on camera, including horse drawn carriages, wooden trunks, fancy dresses and garments, ornate jewelry...the list goes on. Most of the hoof steps for the horses were already prepared, and the Foley team only needed to record the most upfront horse hoof steps. We also recorded all of the movement of the reins and saddles.

When my team and I first saw an early screening of *Vanity Fair*, our sound supervisor Warren Shaw and Foley supervisor Bill Sweeney were very specific with their descriptions of sounds they wanted to hear for the film, which is an 1820s English period piece. Everyone and everything in the film were

authentic looking. With so many specific props and character sounds in front of us, it appeared as if the entire contents of my prop room would be utilized. We decided that the most efficient way to record would be to break the film up into sequences, or broad sound components: clothing rustle, footsteps, horse drawn carriages, wagons, and smaller props.

Many beautiful gowns are worn in the film—made of satins, velvets, taffetas, and other types of shimmering materials. As Foley Artists, we wanted to convey a sense of elegance and refinement for each individual character. We needed to differentiate those qualities and recall them for use in each scene. Having already worked on one or two period films, I recalled into service my supply of "fancy cloth." Seeing that I only had the proper material for just one or two characters, I assigned Dave Warzinski (aka Foleyboy), the

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Reese Witherspoon and Mira Nair discuss a scene for *Vanity Fair* (Focus Features)

task of finding more varied materials. I'm not sure where he went, but he returned with over a dozen different types of materials. I was delighted to have at my fingertips access to several distinctly different sounding satin materials, velvets, and other types of weaves.

By using two or three different pieces of material for each individual character, we were able to create the sound of each person's individual movement. It was important to have varying qualities when more than one fancy dress was onscreen at the same time. Many times one character would flow into another. I was pleased that I could hear the differences in clothing quality when I screened the final mix.

As we listened through the film, we could hear many different qualities of hard heels for the women and some surprisingly sharp heels for the men as well. We normally try to match the sound quality of each footstep to the character on screen. The floor surfaces in most scenes were visible in the film and somewhat audible on the production tracks. We matched the tonal quality of the floors in each room with the characters' shoes, noting that many of the floor surfaces were marble, ceramic tile, wooden, parquet, or some similar variation. We also matched the varying degrees of room bounce (echo, reverb) on the footsteps.

The easiest way to describe room bounce is in distance to the microphone. The further away the microphone from where I make the sound, the more room bounce will be on that Foley effect. When recording footsteps in this fashion, it allows the final mixer to "slip" the Foley effects tracks into the final mix more easily than if the sound were recorded close-up. This is not a new process for recording

Foley effects, though it does require a "live" Foley stage.

My company, C5, was conceived and built with this in mind. The Foley house stage is immense, and capable of creating a bounce the size of a gymnasium. Most of the rooms in *Vanity Fair* were of a slightly larger variety than what we normally see in typical films—banquet halls, libraries, dining rooms, and bedrooms all required keeping the microphone at least four to ten feet from the source.

The posh, finer estates in *Vanity Fair* were extremely clean, so we needed to keep that in mind during recording. Grit on the floors would be kept to a minimum. In dinner scenes, dinnerware would be distinct and without extra rubs and slides. No sloppy ear-ring sounds. We used real silver cutlery for proper sounding silverware action, as well as fine china placements and crystal stemware grasps. In the quietest moments we placed soft, subtle nuances of fingertips coming off glass stemware. Background actions for servants were important for these dinner scenes as well. Much of their actions were performed off camera, while the elite ate at the table. Everything depicted on screen would get the finest, cleanest sounds possible. Except in the case of Sir Pitt Crawley and his dilapidated estate.

In the film, you must see upon first glance that Sir Pitt's residence is a filthy, disorganized, rundown mansion—books off the shelves, maps and deeds flung about. Our challenge came when transforming the sound of the Foley to match the scene in which his mansion is cleaned—when dust encrusted chandeliers transform into highly polished, beautiful fixtures. We used a combination of



Tony Maudsley and Reese Witherspoon
(Focus Features)

actual chandelier ornaments and assorted pieces of broken glasses. The tinkles were extremely crisp and clear, with a variety of tones all working together. We needed to keep in mind how diligently the servants were working—brooms sweeping across floors, chair and furniture movements, and other general cleaning sounds were recorded.

Of special concern were the many scenes inside and outside the horse drawn carriages. The sounds of the carriages were made according to the stature of the owner inside: private carriages had less rattles and creaks than the carriages used to transport the commoners. And the sound perspective of the creak would be dramatically different on the inside of the carriage as compared to the outside. We found some carriages in local barns and recorded them at their individual locations. This is a very time consuming process, and something always slows down the progress. Airplanes, lawn mowers, and automobiles often and inevitably ruin some portion of the recordings.

We listened back to these recordings and duplicated the sound in the studio, adding creak tracks by placing the microphone inside large wooden boxes and compartments. By following the rocking of the carriage back and forth, we were able to simulate the carriage movement. This turned out to be very convincing for all of the carriage movements.

Just another layer of sound in what helped to create the overall sound mix on a challenging film. ☆

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THE ALOHA STATE'S BURGEONING INDIE FILM COMMUNITY

By Konrad Ng

Although the cinematic possibilities of Hawai'i—those that lay beyond the tropical tropes of tourism and military patriotism—have always been clear to local residents of the island, only recently has there been notable validation of that truth. The sudden abundance of studio work, a new school for multimedia, and the proliferation of local film festivals, are all signs of Hawai'i developing into a vibrant place to make film and video and for local filmmakers to cultivate a strong community.

This marks significant change for a place that has always felt like a big small town. The old and prevailing attitude among locals usually had it that the best opportunities for gainful employment occurred on the mainland and in the nearby urban centers like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas—live, learn, and work elsewhere until you have succeeded, and then return triumphant. As such, the change in thinking that the real opportunities are now homegrown and based locally is vital.

One clear example of the shift in landscape is the recent parade of studio productions that has come through the island. In the past two years almost ten major films—including *Tears of the Sun* (2003) and *50 First Dates* (2004)—

were shot in Hawai'i, providing a welcome and steady stream of income to local film crews. Additionally, four major networks have opened production offices in Honolulu to coordinate and shoot four separate new television series—NBC's *Hawaii*, ABC's *Lost*, Fox's *North Shore* and the WB pilot, *Rocky Point*. Although these productions, too, have created additional and regular employment for local residents in the film and television industry, the near simultaneous shooting of four shows has also meant a shortage of crew, equipment, studio space, vendors, and a near frenzy (by Hawai'i standards) trying to meet the demand.

"Everyone was happy, but a little surprised by the sudden influx of productions," says veteran production coordinator and local filmmaker, Angela Laprete. Both Laprete and her partner, William "Chico" Powell, who works as a payroll accountant for the Hawai'i-based television show *North Shore*, have to balance their paid production work with their own independent projects, which include a film adaptation of Chris McKinney's gritty 1999 novel, *The Tattoo*. Laprete, Powell, and their *Tattoo* partner, writer/producer Bob Gookin, admit that the project will have to wait not only because of their own work on

studio and network productions, but because most if not all the talented crews and vendors in Hawai'i have already been hired out.

And then there is the competition between networks. Despite the difference in each show's premise, *Hawaii* and *Lost* were set head to head in the 2004 new fall lineup, and there is always the looming concern of being cancelled at any time. The question then, is how to best create a local film industry in Hawai'i that is self-sustaining. Especially, says Hawai'i-based filmmaker Nathan Kurosawa (*The Ride*, 2003), considering "the unique cultures, stories, and voices [that] make Hawai'i a goldmine."

The Academy for Creative Media at the University of Hawai'i has provided a great opportunity for building a self-sustaining film community. According to ACM founding chairman Chris Lee, rather than replicate the curriculum of traditional film schools on the mainland, the ACM meets the growing demands of the entertainment industry while at the same time better harnessing the cultural and geographical uniqueness of Hawai'i. Lee, who returned to Hawai'i from Hollywood in 2002 to guide the ACM from concept to reality, suggests like many others in the field, that various technologies—advanced



HIFF Jury: (l-r) Emanuel Levy, Chuck Boller (Hawaii International Film Festival Executive Director), Maggie Cheung, David Wenham. (Rae Huo and Sanford Mock)

computer software and hardware, digital video, the internet, and portable gaming and video systems—have turned film into a medium that is accessible by anyone, anywhere. By this line of thinking, Hawai'i no longer has a reason to consider itself an outsider in the film world, nor unable to nurture an indigenous film culture.

The focus then becomes on developing skills of narrative and storytelling. "The idea that you can't afford to make a movie is gone in the world of multimedia—all you need is talent and a good story," Lee says. To this end, ACM students work with digital video and video games, and create short narrative films. "The challenge is to get students to come to us, rather than go to the mainland," Lee says. "We have an opportunity to keep local talent in the islands and to give an opportunity to local filmmakers."

The ACM is off to a good start. Immediately after his arrival, Lee embraced local independent filmmakers, often lending his experience and connections to help them get their projects made, which is no small thing given Lee's background. Once the highest ranking Asian American working in the Hollywood studio system, Lee worked for several years as president of production for TriStar and Columbia Pictures, where he supervised films such as *Jerry Maguire* (1996), *Philadelphia* (1993), and *As Good As It Gets* (1997). Lee currently manages his own production company, Chris Lee Productions, with a roster that includes *Final Fantasy* (2001), *Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever* (2002), and most recently, *S.W.A.T.* (2003).

Over \$2 million has been raised for the ACM during the past two years, and the program has laid the foundation for a com-

prehensive multimedia curriculum focusing on three main education tracks: Cinematic & Digital Narrative Production, Animation and Computer Games, and Critical Studies taught by filmmakers like Merata Mita. Additionally, a slate of promising ACM student films conceived, written, and made in Hawai'i, will premiere at the Hawaii International Film Festival.

Another sign that the film scene in Honolulu is becoming something bigger is the increased number of film festivals around town, with many of them having only just emerged within the last three years. In 2004, six festivals screened films and videos for the city and county's population of roughly one million.

The Cinema Paradise Film Festival (September) showcased independent films and documentaries with a similar urban vibe to that of downtown New York's Tribeca Film Festival, while the Digital Independent Film Festival (May) programmed exclusively digital projects. GiRL FeST Hawaii (May–June) featured lectures, performances, workshops, films and videos that reflected the festival's mission: the prevention of violence against women and girls. Honolulu's only gay, lesbian, and transgendered film festival is the Rainbow Honolulu Film Festival (May), and the festival devoted entirely to short films and videos is 'Ohina: The Short Film Showcase (October).

The oldest and largest of the bunch is the Hawaii International Film Festival. What started as a showcase of seven films from Asia is now an international event in its 24th year that screens over 130 films from around the world. Lately, the HIFF has a renewed energy since winning a community arts and culture

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grant in 2002 from the highend luxury goods company Louis Vuitton Hawaii. HIFF's 2004 jury included actors Maggie Cheung and David Wenham, UCLA professor Emanuel Levy, and the festival also offered a free workshop by cinematographer Allen Daviau (*E.T.*, *Empire of the Sun*, and *Van Helsing*).

Since 1981, when Jeannette Paulson-Hereniko first launched HIFF, there has been a notable increase of films submitted by Hawai'i filmmakers. "There wasn't a single entry to consider programming from a Hawai'i filmmaker [when I started HIFF]," Paulson-Hereniko says. "Now there are over forty submissions just from Hawai'i." Paulson-Hereniko is no longer the director of HIFF, but she keeps busy in the film world by producing and promoting her husband's feature film, *The Land Has Eyes*, which premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. A writer, filmmaker, poet and professor at the University of Hawai'i, Vilsoni Hereniko's film about a young Rotuman woman's experiences on the small Fijian island of Rotuma seems to embody the direction of film and video in Hawai'i. The film reflects the growing collaboration within Honolulu's film community to help get a project made, and the thinking behind *The Land*—like that behind *The Ride* and *The Tattoo*, and the ACM's student films—is rooted in the desire to depict a story that is native to the experiences of the Pacific, particularly those of Pacific Islanders. Similar to the ways in which the films *Once Were Warriors* (1994) and *Whale Rider* (2002) re-articulate representations of the Maori in New Zealand, the new attitude in the burgeoning film community of Hawai'i is about animating the cultural, social, and political of the islands.

Hawai'i is more than surf, sea, and sun. And its independent film scene is thriving more than ever. ★



Sapeta Taito in Vilsoni Hereniko's *The Land Has Eyes* (Te Maka Productions)



Actor David Wenham opened the Waikiki Sunset on the Beach screening during HIFF 2004. (Rae Huo and Sanford Mock)



2004 HIFF Governor's Reception for Filmmakers (Rae Huo and Sanford Mock)

Dirty Nerdy Secrets

CHRIS GORE'S TIPS FOR MAXIMUM EXPOSURE

By Rick Harrison



The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide, third edition, by Chris Gore, Lone Eagle Publishing Co., 477 pgs, \$21.95.

Marketing is a dirty word. It's the kind of word you expect actors to spit out with revulsion when asked by James Lipton which is their least favorite on "Inside the Actors Studio." It's the kind of word you read about all over these pages last month. But as you prepare for (or wish you were preparing, or perhaps don't care about it at all) next month's Sundance Film Festival, it's a word that bears further inspection and constant vigilance.

For instance: George W. Bush's chief of staff Andrew Card, speaking to the *New York Times* in September 2002 about the timing of a scrupulous plan to convince the American people, Congress, and international allies of the need to invade Iraq, said, "From a marketing point of view you don't introduce new products in August."

If this isn't enough for you to equate marketing with satanic shenanigans, then perhaps you're not a real artist.

But then again, a filmmaker, even in the digital age, needs more money to make art than your average starving acrylic painter or junkyard sculptor. With deference to Andrew

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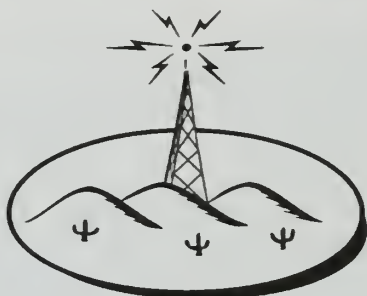
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"The-Country-Is-Under-Attack-So-Feel-Free-To-Stare-Into-Space-For-A-Good-Seven-Minutes, Mr. President" Card, filmmaking is a lot like assembling an army. You need materials, manpower and hopefully oil-rich friends to pay for it all. Most of all, you need a good plan.

Luckily, Chris Gore's *Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide* (Lone Eagle) does most of this hard work for you. In a newly updated and expanded 3rd edition, Gore provides a 477-page book that is part pep talk, part blueprint of practical and detailed advice, part desktop reference, part insider's scoop, and part daunting buzzkill about the insane effort required for people to actually see your film.

The best-selling book of its kind and a syllabus staple at USC, UCLA, and NYU film schools, Gore's book often serves as a filmmaker's first exposure to the nasty gruntwork necessary to transform all the nasty gruntwork of actually making the film into enough exposure and profit to pay back investors and finance the next project. It's required reading if you want to be a filmmaker and not just the guy who owes Uncle Charlie \$8,000 for that short on your website, www.Icouldntgetadistributiondeal.com.

Gore peppers his book with big-picture advice ("You cannot control success or failure, only how you react to it") with shiny nuggets illuminating sneaky maneuvers to massage the system (like submitting a defective tape to a festival so you can buy more time while ostensibly making the deadline). There are tips everyone should follow (like how to assemble your electronic press kit) and those that are more tailored to individual personalities. (Gore insists you should dress or color your hair to stick out from the crowd at festivals, advice that if followed by every filmmaker, could turn Park City, Utah, into an annual Sigma Chi Halloween Party. Even more so.)

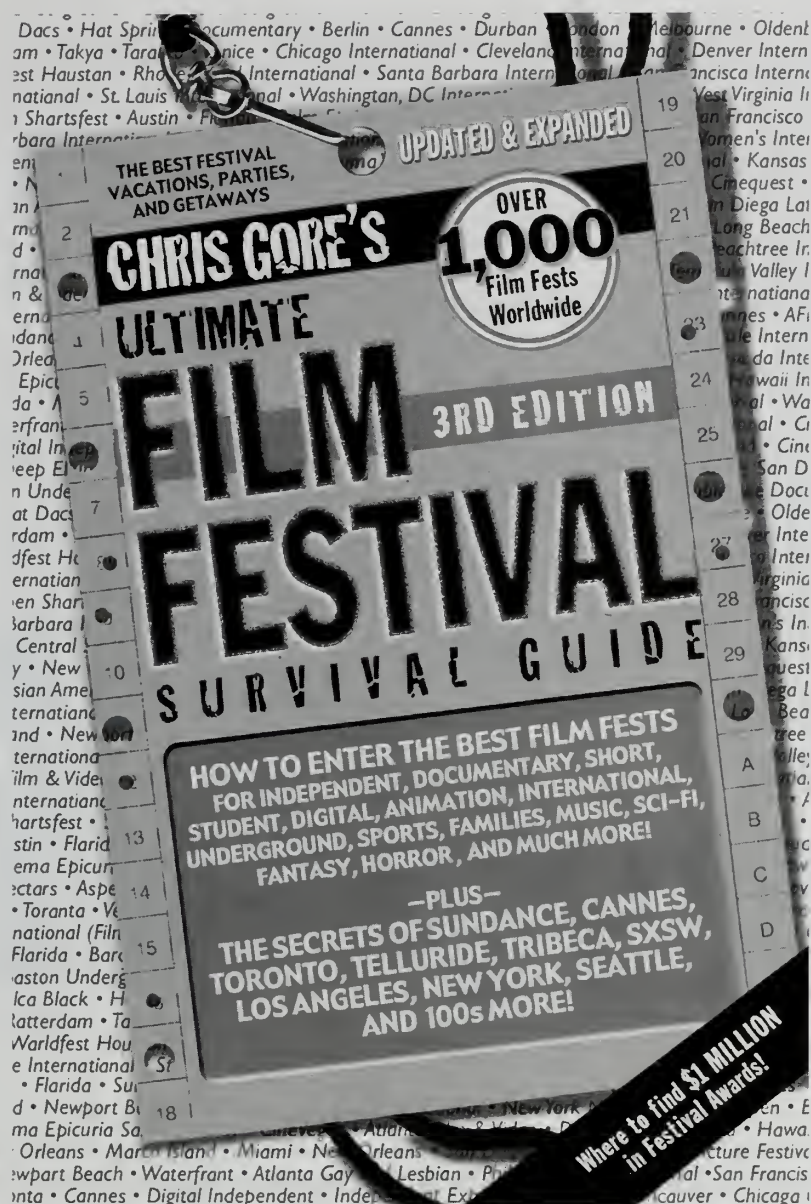
In the fast-changing festival landscape, the 3rd edition is a substantial and necessary revision of the 2001 edition and the original, published in 1999. The new material includes updated listings for over 1,000 festivals worldwide (divided into helpful categories like "Best Gay Film Festivals," "Best Global Consciousness Festivals," and "Best Party Festivals"), sections on how to put together a promotional budget, Gore's "10 Dirty Secrets of Independent Film," what festival programmers do and how they mess things up, and all new, insightful nuts-and-bolts interviews with directors including Morgan Spurlock (*Supersize Me*) and Jared Hess (*Napoleon Dynamite*).

Chapters focus on common mistakes that will potentially kill your chances of either gaining acceptance to festivals or maximizing your impact when there. Gore offers tips on how best to spread the word through that all-important press kit, original poster design, intelligent trailer editing, ubiquitous website hawking, hiring a publicist, and parties.

The section on parties might be either eye-opening or obvious, depending on your experience hob-nobbing in any business setting. As Gore stresses, the film business is like any other, in that people tend to work with the people they like, amplified by the chummy, often pretentious, wink-and-nod bullshitting sheen of the film world.

"Film is a social business," Gore says. "You need to be able to socialize and party with a millionaire and ask him for money to make a movie."

Gore's self-deprecating humor (whether genuine or a marketing tool in itself) comes through in a list of festival "Party Don'ts" that includes such gems as "Do not, as I have done, put drinks on the tab of the table in the corner" and "Do not, as I have done, stand on a chair and thank everyone in the room for coming and for their support for your film, when you haven't made the film



that the party is for."

Perhaps more practical for sober and chaste filmmakers, Gore suggests that you should "protect your festival premiere status as you would your own virginity"—never rush a film to make a festival deadline and consider showing in a TBA slot as a "work in progress" to gather feedback and preserve your ability to boast a big premiere.

The real question is: Does any of this advice actually work? I'm not a filmmaker, and could hardly judge this book firsthand any more than I could judge Dr. Phil's weight-loss book (although don't get me started on his relationship book, his smug paternalism,

or, while we're on the subject, his mustache.).

But after speaking with a variety of filmmakers and industry cogs, it was clear that while not everyone swears with a hand resting on Chris Gore's paperback bible, just about everyone has heard of it and has something positive to say. And for beginners looking to figure out this crazy game, it has become as indispensable a tool as a camera or a lawyer or a colorful haircut.

Another real question: What makes Chris Gore such an authority? Gore, thirty-nine, is best known these days as host of the IFC TV game show for film nerds *Ultimate Film Fanatic*. In 1985 he started *FilmThreat* maga-

zine while in college in Detroit, pasting together pages and photocopying them like a punk rock zine and with the same irreverent editorial attitude. Gore sold the magazine to Larry Flynt in 1991 only to reacquire it in 1996. Today, FilmThreat operates exclusively as a website (www.filmthreat.com) while distributing hand-selected DVDs and videos. FilmThreat features a typically blunt take on film and a perennial beef with one-time media darling Harry Knowles for gorging on Hollywood perks while gushing favorable reviews on his website, aintitcoolnews.com.

According to Gore, FilmThreat boasts 300,000 unique visitors a month and is the number one independent film website. Having attended over 100 film festivals since he was twelve, Gore can be found hosting festival panels around the world with such original concepts as "Shooting Nude Scenes." As of press time, he was waiting to hear back from festivals after submitting *My Big Fat Independent Movie*, a feature comedy he wrote and produced.

Asked about all of this success in such a competitive industry, Gore answers with shameless pride, sporting spikey hair and a wispy goatee. "I market myself," he says.

It's a necessary evil. ★

All the Commotion

TRACY MCKNIGHT'S ONE-STOP SHOP FOR MUSIC PRODUCTION

BY NICHOLAS BOSTON

Songs get stuck in my head, easily. Sometimes I don't even need to hear the melody; my brain makes its own associations. For instance, without fail when I ride the D train in New York, my mind always gets to singing the song "Keep On." If you're not versed in funk-R&B fusion of the mid-eighties, "Keep On" by the duo group D Train, was a dance track whose lyrics went like this: "The sky is the limit and you know that you keep on, just keep on pressin' on/The sky is the limit and you know that you can have what you want, be who you want."

On the day that I went to visit Tracy McKnight I didn't take the D train, so "Keep On" was not running through my head. But its message of persistence would have been fitting narration for the kind of person McKnight is, and the goals she has set out for herself.

A little over a year ago, McKnight co-founded Commotion Records, a one-stop development, production, and marketing company for independent film soundtracks. In the film industry for over a decade, mostly as a music supervisor, McKnight has overseen the musical direction of fifty-plus feature films and produced or assisted in the production of over 200 recordings. Her heart, she says, is close to musicians and composers. Which is why it pained her to know that the commercial life of a soundtrack, on even the most successful indie films, was

only as long as the movie's theatrical run. It's hard enough for big box-office releases to keep movie scores buzzing in the minds of viewers after they've left the cinema—for independent productions with lower budgets, the task is even harder. Of the top ten most successful movie soundtracks, led by multi-platinum selling *The Bodyguard*, not one belongs to an independent picture. McKnight wanted to see the musical talent she works with go places—namely to the front display tables in music stores.

Enter Walter Yetnikoff, a former president of CBS Records (now Sony) who helped guide the careers of Michael Jackson, The Rolling Stones, and Bruce Springsteen among others. Yetnikoff had recommended McKnight for her first music supervision gig on the 1997 monster flick *Love God*, and the two kept in touch over the years as McKnight racked up one independent film soundtrack after another: *Human Nature* (2001), *Raising Victor Vargas* (2002), and last year's docu-bio *My Architect: A Son's Journey*. When the two ran into each other at a sparsely attended sound screening in Los Angeles, where McKnight was trying to promote her latest soundtrack for *The United States of Leland* (2003), Yetnikoff put the question to her: "What do you want?"

"I [told him I] want my own label," McKnight says. "I want people to be psyched about independent film soundtracks."

It was like an encounter with a fairy godmother. "Three days later,



(L-R) *Filmmaker* magazine's editor Scott Macaulay, Tracy McKnight, and filmmaker Gil Holland at the 2004 Sundance Music Cafe (courtesy of Commotion Records)

the contract was on the table. Two months later, we had our office. A month after that we put out our first album," McKnight says, seated at her desk in a spacious office on 5th Avenue in New York, just south of the Flatiron District, or what has been previously known as the city's Silicon Alley.

Yetnikoff, who at seventy recently published a memoir of his life as a recording industry executive, *Howling at the Moon: The Odyssey of a Monstrous Music Mogul in an Age of Excess* (Random House, 2004) oversees the company's general operations, while McKnight handles acquisitions, client development, licensing, and promotions. The team has also struck a distribution deal with Koch Entertainment, the country's largest independent record company.

Commotion Records made an auspicious debut in November 2003 with the soundtrack for *The Cooler*, a film that won cast member Alec Baldwin an unexpected Oscar nomination. Having the company's very first project receive such critical acclaim looked good for McKnight, and felt even better. But, as is generally known, good reviews don't necessarily go hand-in-hand with success at the box office, or favorable response to the soundtrack. And vice-versa. Witness the utterly freakish returns on the music to *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2001), which went on to top the charts, score numerous

awards, and outshine the otherwise critically lukewarm movie.

Navigating these interstices in the business is part of the overall challenge that McKnight is after. The company's mission is to develop and represent "quirky and cool" soundtracks. "Specialty films are our niche," McKnight says. "That's what we're going after."

McKnight, who was raised the youngest of three children in a New Jersey household, has shoulder-length brown hair and dimples. She smiles easily. On the day I met her, she was wearing pinstripe slacks, a red fitted blouse and wedge-heeled shoes that fit somewhere between sensible and sweet. She has small hands, which she has a habit of using to lift and tousle her hair.

"This is not the get rich quick scheme," McKnight says, "this is art. You persevere and you survive, sort of like how music supervision started for me."

In 1990, McKnight was studying at the Fashion Institute of Technology and thinking of going into cosmetic marketing or "something to do with holistics." Instead, she got a job at a recording studio called Planet Sound. "I saw how records were made," says McKnight. "I got bit by a bug I didn't know would bite me."

After college, McKnight worked as an assistant at Arista Records, where she loved the exposure to artists and newly minted music, but



Tracey Ullman in *A Dirty Shame*, for which McKnight supervised the music (James Bridges/Fine Line Features)

"corporate America, I didn't love so much." She soon connected with Bill Laswell, the underground recording artist and producer, and went to work for him in a one-room office on Lower Broadway. There, she thrived. Laswell, under the auspices of his underground label Material, Inc., was experimenting with many different forms of music and instrumentation (he produced and co-wrote Herbie Hancock's infamous synthesized hit "Rockit") and as his assistant, McKnight got to learn about non-western musical styles like Chinese pipa and airhoots and throat singing from Central Asia. She also got to encounter some of the most notable musicians in America. "When you have Ornette Coleman stop by your office and hang out for two hours, that's not something you forget," McKnight recalls.

After four years working with Laswell, McKnight decided she was ready to start making her own deals. In 1994, she moved to Los Angeles, and although her stay there was just a few months, it was in Los Angeles that she discovered there was such a thing as a music supervisor and perhaps she might like to try her luck at being one. "It wasn't a big job at that time," she said. "I just learned about what a music supervisor was. After having those four years with Bill, I knew I could be spreading my wings more creatively." The next decade would see both McKnight and the category of music supervision become better

known and more sought-after in the industry.

McKnight successfully found her way into the field, which, less than ten years ago, was still a fairly informal category in professional film production, and she quickly honed her skills and diversified. In the late nineties, she served as music director at Independent Pictures, a production company, and later as executive director at Good Machine Music, an artist management outfit. She also consulted on soundtrack acquisitions for Yetnikoff's Velvel label and for Koch Entertainment. Her more recent credits as a music supervisor include John Leguizamo's *Undeclared* (2003) for HBO, Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2004), and also this year, John Waters's *A Dirty Shame*.

About working with McKnight, John Waters says, "I just made two phone calls and everybody said great things about her. She's a great private detective, and that's what you have to do. She found the publishers and writers of the most obscure novelty records. She found people in nursing homes." Composer George S. Clinton, who wrote the score to the Austin Powers movies and whom McKnight recruited to work on *A Dirty Shame*, says, "I was aware of Tracy long before I met her. She's Miss Independent Film, in New York in particular."

Similarly, Peter Golub, director of the Composer's Lab at the Sundance Institute, where McKnight has been an advisor for the past

MY ARCHITECT

McKnight engineered sound for *My Architect* (Louis Kahn Project Inc.)

two years, expresses admiration for her. "There are a lot of people trying to do [music supervision], but they don't understand the whole post-production process, or they don't have the aesthetic or business understanding to do it in a creative way," he says. "Tracy does."

As to the actual role of music supervisor, definitions vary slightly. "For the past twenty years, almost every feature film has had a music supervisor or coordinator," writes Michael Rogers in his column on the subject for *Film Music* magazine. "Their role is often misunderstood and they are in all fairness not quite as powerful as frequently perceived. However, they are inherently essential to the contemporary filmmaking process." And Sharal Churchill, a former head of music for MGM and author of the book *The Indie Guidebook to Music Supervision for Films*, has this to add about the trade: "The primary role for a supervisor is administrative. It involves a lot of paperwork, clearances, budgets, end title credits, music cue sheets, etc. Other work includes the selection of the composer, negotiating agreements. The other twenty-five percent of the job is the creative aspect of finding musical opportunities to work with visual images. Those two things combined can really prop up scenes in a motion picture, a television show, or a commercial. Music can also be a big branding item for soundtracks."

McKnight thinks of it in simpler terms. "I love the process," she says. "It's like shopping."

Commotion Records plans to launch a series of retrospective albums—compilations of individual composers' work lifted from various film scores. Nathan Larson, whose music can be heard on the soundtracks of *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002), and *High Art* (1998), inaugurates the series with an album entitled *Filmmusik*.

"We've been trying to get the thing going for a year," Larson said in an email exchange. "But legal hassles with the film studios have made it a long haul." He remains optimistic, however. "Soundtracks and 'serious' film scoring in general (with a few multi-platinum exceptions like *Saturday Night Fever* or *Star Wars*) occupy a ghetto in the record industry, both in terms of respect and sales," Larson says. "If you don't have a slew of hip-hop artists or brand names to the thing, if there's no proper songs on the record, it's pretty tough to get people interested in buying it. Traditionally, there were only a couple of labels that would deal in soundtracks, and it was/is sort of a stuffy, old-guard-y kind of scene...Commotion Records seeks to take film music and put it before



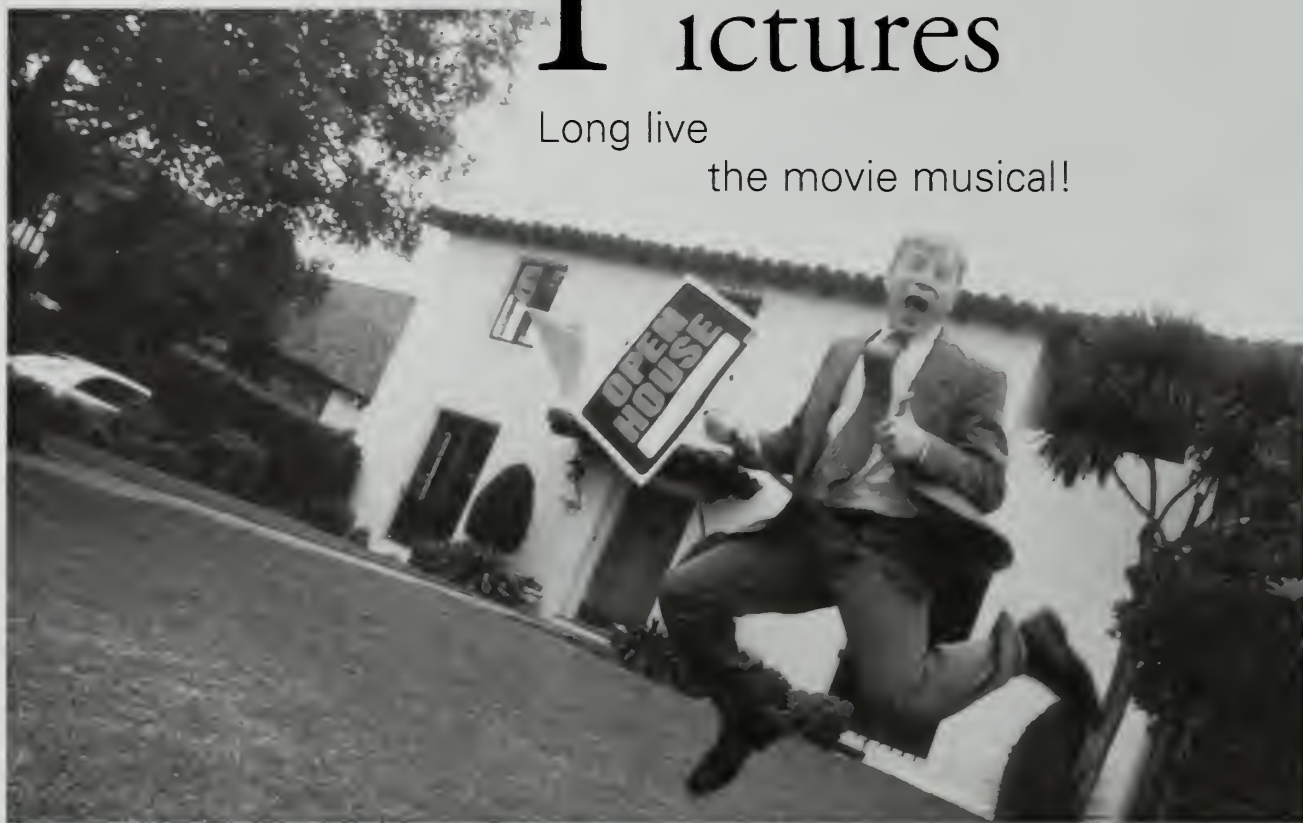
Raising Victor Vargas features McKnight's skills for matching song and mood (Peter Sollett)

the public in a serious way, without being pretentious or elitist."

Apart from the composers' series, McKnight has just completed work on actor B.D. Wong's directorial venture, *Social Grace*, to be released next year, and on the filmmaker Alice Wu's debut *Saving Face*, which is currently touring film festivals around the country. Generally speaking, McKnight and Commotions are constantly out pitching and negotiating deals. "I'm always in the process of trying to find something that nobody else has found," McKnight says. Mere months after Commotions opened its doors, the company jumped in with a bid to handle soundtrack development and marketing for Mel Gibson's controversial *The Passion of the Christ*. McKnight says they came close, but didn't bag the deal. "I don't think we didn't not get it," she says. "We were brand new, we were a month out. I understand the idea that you have to earn people's—I don't want to say 'respect'—[but] sometimes people don't want to be a guinea pig." ★

Singing Pictures

Long live
the movie musical!



Anthony Rapp celebrates a sale in *Open House* (Dan Mirvish)

BY LISA SELIN DAVIS

Movie musicals are not dead. They didn't die in the 1930s. Television didn't kill them. And expensive 1970s flops didn't knock them out, either. They may have been hibernating or relegated to children's animated films, but the musical keeps coming back, to haunt or to thrill, depending on your attitude.

Some say Miramax's *Chicago* (2002) returned musicals to the hearts of moviegoers, but the 21st century produced a number of independent musicals that put the genre back on the map before Richard Gere studied tap dance and Renee Zellweger learned to croon. In fact, for independent filmmakers, the musical might just be the next big thing.

Even silent films were musical, with live piano accompaniment at the least or full-blown orchestras in larger theaters, and big studio films like *Birth of a Nation* (1915) were distributed with their own scores. In 1926, Warner Bros. perfected the Vitaphone, which synched phonographic recordings with film frames and made the first musical, *Don Juan*, an opera-style film with no dialogue. It proved such a hit that they flooded the market with these sorts of all-singing-and-no-talking pictures, so much so that audiences began to veer away. One hundred

musicals were produced in 1930, followed by only fourteen the next year: the first big death of musicals.

Busby Berkeley revived them again in 1933 with *42nd Street*, combining song, dance and spoken word, and musicals continued strong throughout World War II. But in the 1950s, the popularity of television stole audiences away. Then the federal government brought anti-trust suits against studios, forcing them to sell off theaters and cut their musical divisions to maintain profits: the second death. The musical morphed into the syrupy sweet Technicolor dream worlds of *Oklahoma!* (1955) and *South Pacific* (1958), perfect for postwar America.

In 1965, *The Sound of Music*, adapted from the stage, racked up five Academy Awards, including best picture, beginning a run of adapted-from-the-stage musicals. In 1968, another stage-to-screen adaptation, *Oliver!*, became the eighth musical to win Best Picture—and the last until 2002's *Chicago*.

The 1970s saw a series of duds that constituted the third death of musicals. Lavish productions like *Mame* (1974) and *Lost Horizon*



Catherine Zeta-Jones and male cast members in Rob Marshall's *Chicago* (David James)

(1973) sunk millions for studios, though a few rock and roll successes like *Grease* (1978) and *Hair* (1979) kept them limping along.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Disney revived the musical, beginning with 1989's *The Little Mermaid* and continuing through 1996's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. These were animated versions of the bright and lavish 1950s musical, digestible primarily to children.

And then, at the end of the decade, a few musicals hit the screen that resembled nothing else that had come before. *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* (1999) had its mischievous juvenile characters bursting into song 1950s-style. In the new millennium, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*'s unlikely hero/ine sang a polished rock score, and Eminem made his hip-hop musical debut in *8 Mile* (2002). We saw

VH-1's hip-hopera *Carmen* with Beyoncé Knowles, cult musicals like *The American Astronaut* (2001), Neil Young's *Greendale* (2003), and Lars von Trier's anti-musical *Dancer in the Dark* (2000). There may not be a full-on renaissance but clearly, independents are embracing the form.

A musical is a very particular animal, defined by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a film containing "not fewer than five original songs by the same writer or team of writers either used as voice-overs or visually performed. Each of these songs must be substantively rendered, clearly audible, intelligible, and must further the storyline." An arbitrary group of songs unessential to

the storyline, they say, does not a musical make.

Characters can't just be singing—they have to be singing the story. And there are two basic ways to do that. Films may incorporate an explanatory device for the musical numbers, or they may unabashedly burst into song. In *Chicago*, for instance, the characters have active fantasy lives in which the singing and dancing occur. Hedwig is a performer, telling the story of his/her botched sex-change operation in concert.

Dan Mirvish, a filmmaker and co-founder of the Slamdance Film Festival, says his new film, *Open House* “is definitely the kind where people just burst into song. It's a slightly altered reality where people just sing a lot.” He had been trying to get the film off the ground for months as a straight comedy. “I took it around to independent companies, and they said it didn't have an indie-enough hook to it,” he says. “There were no lesbian vampires or anything like that.” Studios rejected the story as too small. “The idea literally came to me at four in the morning: Let's turn it into a musical.”

The key, says Mirvish, is not to reinvent studio pictures but to find a way to draw attention to your smaller film. “You have to have some kind of reason for critics or festival directors to pay attention—lesbian necrophiliacs, S&M, heroin addicted pedophiles—you got to have something,” he says. As a musical, *Open House* made it to the Hamptons International and Austin film festivals. As a straight comedy, it couldn't even get financed.

Another advantage of musicals: actors want to make them. “Most actors love to sing,” he says. “If you have a musical, you have a better chance of attracting higher caliber actors if you're not going to pay them much.” *Open House* stars Sally Kellerman and Kellie Martin, who sang live during filming. “And all done for the price of Catherine Zeta-Jones's cellphone bill on *Chicago*,” Mirvish says.

Guy Maddin's 2003 quasi-musical *The Saddest Music in the World* was made for about \$2 million. A lover of Busby Berkeley 1930s musicals, Maddin wanted to make something that blended music into action. He says, “I'd have them sort of subliminally sing a syllable and get up the courage every now and then to do a full song.” For Maddin, the musical aspect didn't add to the budget. “Had this not been a musical I still would have needed a score and I still would have had an orchestra in the studio,” he says.

Music was not a hook for Maddin, but an emotional motif. He set Jerome Kern's “The Song Is You” in several styles, from a dirge to a fox-trot, changing the meaning like a literary trope. “Music is more powerful when it makes numerous appearances, when it was producing one set of emotions in the earlier context and producing the opposite in its final context,” Maddin says, adding that music is both a way to draw attention to the film experience, and a way to express deep emotion without dialogue. “When your heart is engaged with another heart, it's really singing.”

Inspired by von Trier's method of choreographing *Dancer in the Dark* (von Trier set up 100 cameras to randomly record the dancing and singing scenes) Maddin had three crew members case the set with Super8 cameras. “We cut it together like an old ransom note,” he says.

Both Mirvish and Maddin had trepidation about making musicals. Neither has formal musical training, and they're well aware that “musi-

cal” is still a dirty word as studios are still afraid of audience aversion to the genre. Early trailers for *Chicago* didn't advertise it as a musical, and the previews for the forthcoming *The Phantom of the Opera* include no singing. But Mirvish has found that people like musicals even when they think they don't. “We've shown it at enough festivals now that I know that the audience will say, ‘I don't really like musicals but I really like your film,’” he says. “It really does work for people that aren't into the musical theatre.”

Maddin's method of recording the musical numbers—a patchwork of close-ups and quick cuts in a newsy style—made it easier for audiences to accept. “It was the perfect hybrid between cinema verité and choreography,” he says. “It's easier to swallow for people who can't accept sudden outbursts into song, who demand realism even though there's no such thing in movies.”

Many filmgoers fear what they think of as the standard 1950s musical, the hysterical musical outbursts punctuating melodramatic storylines. “Even I have a strong resistance to 1950s musicals. There's too much brashness, the colors are too harsh,” Maddin says. He calls those musicals festive football matches. “I wanted my movie to have sort of darker feelings and a sort of darker aftertaste.”

Today's audiences are more likely to embrace that kind of complexity—the juxtaposition of blissful singing with dark subject matter—in part because MTV prepared them for strange pairings of music and images and changed their expectations. “MTV has had a tremendous effect on film musicals,” says John Kenrick, author of the website Musicals101.com “The days of the four- or five-minute long take of one camera shot of Astaire and Rogers step by step working their way through a number—those have passed. In the age of MTV, we have to have as many quick cuts as possible.”

“We grew up with media saturation and channel surfing,” says Elizabeth Lucas, who recently curated a program of new musical films for the New York Musical Theater Festival. “It's not just the influence of MTV with jump cuts, it's also the fact that Disney animated features were huge when I was growing up.” Lucas says television musical episodes of “The Simpsons,” “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” and “Ally McBeal” have opened the gate for musical movie appreciation. “We're not accustomed to linear storytelling,” she says.

The anti-realism of musicals can be difficult to digest for those who crave a seamless entry into the fantasyland of film, but Maddin prefers movies that call attention to themselves, the self-reflection of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) or even David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999). “I like being constantly reminded that I'm watching a film,” he says. “You know you're looking at a painting or listening to a song,” Maddin thinks audiences are not only ready for new film experiences they're hungry for them. “We've opened up the borders of films, not always in musical ways, but in different ways that get into the hearts of viewers,” he says, citing the success of Charlie Kaufman scripts. “People are actually looking for alternatives to the slickest and most earth-bound stories.”

Musicals today explode the traditional melodramatic storylines. We've got Hedwig's traumatic transvestite tale, the blind single mother of *Dancer in the Dark*, Cole Porter's bi-sexuality in *De-Lovely* (2004). If this is the next golden age of musicals, the gold is slightly tarnished,

reflecting our fragmented feelings as Americans during tough times.

The first two musical golden ages occurred during periods of great hardship: the Great Depression and after World War II. Perhaps the ongoing war on terror and nuclear proliferation struggles within the so-called "axis of evil" contribute to our re-acceptance of the musical form. "In times of crisis in American history, America loves to sing," says Mirvish.

"Post World War II musicals were idealistic. *Oklahoma!* took place in this never-never land of the Midwest, a land that never really existed," says Kenrick. "This [war on terror] is a different kind of war. We don't know what we're fighting for." But America's divided agenda is a boon for modern independent musicals that present a disjointed world, an eerie dislocation that touches audiences lost in confusion.

This year, at least five musicals will reach theatrical audiences. Besides *Open House*, *Greendale*, and *Phantom*, there's the French musical *Les Choristes*, and Miramax will release the first Hollywood/Bollywood musical merger with *Bride and Prejudice* (this month). Mirvish hopes these five films will sway the Association of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to breath life into the so-far dormant Best Original Musical category. There are Oscars for Best Song and Best Score, but not for Best Musical Film. The category is listed in the Oscars rules as long as five musicals are theatrically released, with at least a one-week run, in a given year. This is the first year since the 1960s that enough films could fit the bill.

A Best Musical category means independents have a greater chance at winning—with fewer competitors—and at getting noticed. "There's nothing like an Oscar nomination to get distributors interested in your

film," Mirvish says. And lobbying for musicals would prove much easier than lobbying for comedies or dramas, with only 276 members of the Academy's musical branch. "That's only 276 flyers to print." The Academy had no comment for this story, but Mirvish thinks their reluctance may have something to do with not wanting to extend the already lengthy awards show.

Whatever happens with the musical in the future, John Kenrick says they must all have heart, courage, and brains—the *Wizard of Oz* formula for a good film. "It's up to independent producers to bring any kind of hope in the future," he says.

But studios will venture into musicals, as well. There will be musicals adapted from screen to stage and back again, as John Waters's *Hairspray* is re-translated from Broadway and Mel Brooks reworks *The Producers* back into a film. More re-adaptations of Broadway successes will hit the big screen like *Urinetown*, to be produced by Killer Films. It could be the beginning of the next golden age...or it could be the end of a brief resurgence of the form. Filmmakers and producers will be looking to see if any musical can repeat *Chicago's* brilliant performance both at the box office and with the critics. "What *Phantom of the Opera* will do this Christmas remains to be seen," Kenrick says. "It could put the nail back in the coffin."

But Lucas is more optimistic. "We're only beginning to explore what the form can do," she says.

For now, the musical movie still lives, if quietly, breathing shallowly at the edges of both studio and independent cinema. "You can keep throwing into the grave," Kenrick says, "where the Dracula of show business will keep rising up once you give it fresh blood." ★



The Saddest Music in the World is "the perfect hybrid between cinema verite and choreography," according to its director, Guy Maddin.



Isaac Hayes performing in 1973 (Wattstax)

Soul Tracks

The rich history of music in black cinema

BY DOUGLAS SINGLETON

The image of the hip black detective played by Richard Roundtree in Gordon Parks's unforgettable 1971 film, *Shaft*, precursor to the "blaxploitation" film explosion of the 70s, is inseparable from the brilliant musical soundtrack composed for that movie by Isaac Hayes ("...Shaft is a bad muther—Shut your mouth!"). The music and film go together like Almodovar and cross-dressing, Scorsese and gangsters, Godard and jump cuts. Indeed there is a long, illustrious history of the powerful, compelling use of music in African American film, from Melvin Van Peebles's recruitment of the young Earth, Wind & Fire for his trailblazing *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) to Otto Preminger's *Carmen Jones* (1954) and even farther back to the first African American "talkie" film, the stereotype laden musical *Hearts in Dixie* (1929). Peebles's guerilla shooting of *Sweetback* was dramatized in his son Mario's 2004 film *Baadasssss!*, highlighting the importance the development of music was to crafting the film.

Although many of the movies melding funk soundtracks to film during the golden age of 70s black cinema were produced independently (hence more freedom to use whatever off-the-wall music they chose), that expert meshing of music and film has been passed down to their contemporary studio filmmaking offspring. As creatively

roped in as these heirs to black cinema may be by the studio system, the spirit lives on, especially as channeled through the use of hip-hop in movies. Some charge this usage often lacks the grace of 70s movie music, is at best irresponsible and at worst a form of modern minstrelsy—the same charges tossed about during the 70s film explosion. Regardless of one's feelings about the merits of music in contemporary films, it is impossible not to recognize the importance the use of music has acquired, and the skill with which it is done. The aesthetic has been a constant characteristic of African American filmmaking through the ages.

1975's *Cooley High*, a romantic tale about black youth on Chicago's south side, made great use of 60s Motown classics by the likes of The Supremes, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, and The Four Tops. The music so helped build a sense of the era that it became a rich part of *Cooley High*'s tapestry. *Across 110th Street*, with a brilliant title song by Bobby Womack (re-used in Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*), is *Cooley High*'s stylistic antithesis—violent, brutal, displaying a rawness about its Harlem streets that Womack's song crystallized perfectly. Avant-garde jazz pianist, bandleader, and spiritualist Sun Ra wrote the music for and starred in the 1974 *Space is the Place*, a low budget, far-

out cinematic journey about Black Nationalism and “outer space.” Set in the ghettos of Oakland, *Space is the Place*, despite dubious renown as a camp classic, is noted for brilliant music and an ability to capture the temper of Sun Ra’s aura, his spirituality, and his fantastic band.

Isaac Hayes participated in the 1973 concert film *Wattstax* (re-released for television broadcast on POV this past September), the “black Woodstock” held at the Los Angeles Coliseum ostensibly organized for community awareness and “black togetherness.” The film featured brilliant live performances by Hayes, hot off his success with *Shaft*, the Staple Singers, Bar-Kays, Albert King, and a number of astonishing acts off the legendary Stax Records label. The film is punctuated by social-ly biting stand-up comic interludes by a young Richard Pryor and footage exploring the lives of souls throughout the streets of Watts. *Wattstax* is a wonderful chronicle of the era, linking music, community activism, and filmmaking.

Of course Hayes had already set the tone for great movie music with the brilliant score for *Shaft*, which not only sold millions of copies but also garnered Hayes an Academy Award to boot. *Shaft* set off dozens of imitators cinematically and musically (*The Mack*, 1973, *Dolemite*, 1974), the most successful of which, on many levels, is 1972’s *Superfly*. The soundtrack to that film, a heartfelt exploration of the drug and hustler world the film chronicled, was written and performed by R&B composer Curtis Mayfield at the peak of his skill. *Superfly* might well be the pinnacle of cinematic musical composition of the era. Songs from *Superfly* stormed over black radio the summer the film was released—“Little Child Runnin’ Wild,” “Pusherman,” and the title song weave stories of urban struggle, longing, and the reality of the streets. Built with haunting melodies, they are unforgettable. I remember watching *Superfly* for a third time when a youngster, and though I understood not one iota of what the lyrics meant, sang them passionately.

If *Superfly* was low art “blaxploitation” at its sexiest, there were plenty of “high art” alternatives from the era using music to powerful effect, too. Berry Gordy and Motown Records got into the high profile film business with movies starring Diana Ross. *Lady Sings The Blues* (1972) starred Ross as the embattled jazz singer Billie Holiday, Ross re-singing Holiday’s catalog of classics. Co-starring heartthrob Billy Dee



Melvin Van Peebles recruited Earth, Wind & Fire for *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Williams, the film scored Ross an Academy Award nomination. Before modern Hollywood had figured out how rich a character music could be in film, and how lucrative the pairing of the two, the black film-making world already had it going on.

Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier starred in a trio of films in the 1970s that successfully incorporated wildly popular music. The title song for *Let's Do It Again* (1975), also composed by Mayfield, was as huge a hit for the Staple Singers and as cherished by black America as the film was celebrated. 1974's *Claudine*, a refreshing family drama made amidst the era's sea of coarse, clone-like action thrillers, starred Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones and told the story of a single mother struggling to raise six kids while romantically involved with a whimsical, complex garbage man who is not the children's father. The songs performed by Gladys Knight & The Pips speak of the inner city's lower classes struggling to survive amidst Sisyphean hurdles set before them. *Car Wash* (1976) featured another brilliant cameo by Richard Pryor (by then a star) and a funky title song full of hand claps and lyrics that half of Oakland, New York, and Chicago could recite on cue. The romantic ballad, “I Want To Get Next To You,” sung by funky crooners Rose Royce, was used to such heartfelt effect that it is still played at basement parties, family barbecues, and weddings to this day.

Indeed, many profess this golden age used music in ways that sets it apart from the present era of assembly line pop music attached to films arbitrarily. Today it is unthinkable for a movie to be made without all possible musical tangents exploited—soundtracks, music videos, jingle advertisements, sports tie-ins. The goal of budding R&B and rap stars



Miles Davis composed a haunting score for Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows*

Miles Davis composed a poignant, haunting score for the 1958 Louis Malle thriller, *Elevator to the Gallows*, crafted while he was passing through Paris and visiting the set of the film. Miles scored a number of films, as did James Brown to great success (*Black Caesar* (1973), *Slaughter's Big Rip-Off* (1973)). Marvin Gaye wrote the title track for the 1972 Robert Hooks-starring movie, *Trouble Man*, the song far outclassing the picture.

2002's *Brown Sugar*, starring Taye Diggs and Sanaa Lathan, took the idea of merging movies and music to another level by basing its love story in the world of hip-hop magazines and record labels. The film's opening is a two-minute documentary montage of hip-hop luminaries discussing their love for hip-hop and its history. Though some called *Brown Sugar* pandering, romantic slop, it possesses a likable charm. It's hard to argue with a film centered around the hip-hop classic "The Show" by Doug E. Fresh, Slick Rick, and Dana Dane, and featuring plot twists relating to Common's metaphorical love song "I Used To Love HER." The Erykah Badu penned "Love Of My Life (An Ode to Hip-Hop)" boomed from car stereos the whole summer.

is to get their music attached to a movie of some sort (if not star in the movie themselves). Former "gangsta" rapper Ice Cube has built a veritable empire uniting music and movies with his *Friday* and *Barbershop* franchises. Others, from Master P (*I Got The Hook-Up*), Beyoncé (*Austin Powers in Goldmember*), Snoop Dogg (*Soul Plane*), to Babyface (*Soul Food*) have built careers meshing music with film, and vice versa, with varying degrees of success. Although Cube's *Barbershop* films surely evoke some of the intelligence, romance, and social awareness of its 70s counterparts, many of today's films lack a sense of musical integrity and cohesion with the films they are married to.

Not all have been throwaways unworthy of attention. The use of R&B sex symbol D'Angelo's searing, DJ Premier produced "Devil's Pie" seamed perfectly with Hype Williams's New York street morality tale, *Belly* (1998), in ways that call to mind the cleverest, most melancholic gangster films of past decades. The soundtrack to 1994's *Above the Rim* (starring Tupac Shakur) was deemed by *VIBE* magazine one of the greatest soundtrack albums in black movie history. Boasting hip-hop and R&B artists like 2Pac, Sisters With Voices, Snoop Dogg, and the mildly legendary Al B. Sure! and Lady of Rage's "Afro Puffs," it set a new standard for the pairing of pop music with the urban black drama. Although titles like "Big Pimpin'" and "Pour Out A Little Liquor" lack some of the grace of their 70s counterparts they undeniably capture a particular temper of the era, a feat African American filmmakers have excelled at.

Brown Sugar is part of a recent tradition of movies based on hip-hop culture. The seminal *Wild Style* by Charlie Ahearn probably got it most right back in 1982. Starring graffiti artist Lee Quinones, impresario Fab 5 Freddy, with performances by legendary rappers the Treacherous Three, Busy Bee, and the Cold Crush Brothers, it is a landmark window into a musical universe unknown to mass American culture. It joins the 1929 film *Hallelujah*—with its racially charged first look into the musical world of Negro spirituals, folk songs, and the blues, as windows into African-American culture. Low budget and showing it at the seams, *Wild Style* was followed by a slew of imitators, some of which seem almost laughable in retrospect (*Breakin'*, 1984 and *Rappin'*, 1985). 1985's *Krush Groove*, best known for starring Run-DMC, The Beastie Boys, a young LL Cool J, Sheila E., and a pre-*L.A. Law* Blair Underwood, is often credited as the film that brought the world of "rap music" to a wider audience, though both *Beat Street* (1984) and *Breakin'* came before it.

Although contemporary films are chastised for lacking the depth and integrity of those from epochs past there have been some notable exceptions: Charles Stone III's *Drumline* (2002), set in the world of collegiate marching bands at predominantly black colleges, is an exhilarating piece of moviemaking with thrilling musical sequences. Culturally rich and honest, it is filled with silly romances and issues relevant to the African American community. The wonderful *Love and Basketball* (2000) by Gina Prince-Bythewood joins the tradition of romantic comedies using benchmark soul classics, like Al Green's



Richard Pryor performing at a Los Angeles comedy club (*Wattstax*)

“Love and Happiness,” to instantly establish entry into a world recognizable to any generation of African American audiences.

Spike Lee has always made music an integral part of his films, setting 1990's *Mo' Better Blues* in the world of late-night jazz clubs, and semi-musical *School Daze* (1988) in the world of fraternities and “stepping” competitions at traditional black colleges. He has had his composer father, Bill Lee, and jazzman Terence Blanchard score a number of his films, and even enlisted Prince to write the songs for *Girl 6* (1996). His films document the arc of 20th century urban black music from Duke Ellington to Public Enemy. A Spike Lee film without music as an integral part of its fabric is almost unthinkable, a lesson Lee learned from his cinematic forefathers.

From Oscar Micheaux's *Swing!* (1938) to Forest Whitaker's *Waiting*

to *Exhale* (1995), African American filmmakers have inherently felt music and the moving image go hand in hand, and married the two to craft a spirit and mood audiences will identify with. In this they reach out to audiences in ways similar to the manner music is used in churches across America—preachers and choirs melding spoken word and spiritual music to uplift the congregation. Even comedians on the standup stage use music—Eddie Murphy actually sang, and Richard Pryor's immersion in his delivery was simply musical. Long before Hollywood became obsessed with the mechanics of marrying music to film, black filmmakers had mastered this art of soul and cinema, and passed the knowledge on to their filmmaking offspring. Fans of the cinema can only hope that the lesson has been learned properly, and used wisely. ★

Skywalker Sound

George Lucas's lab is going indie

BY NIALL MCKAY

"Sound is fifty percent of the motion picture experience." —GEORGE LUCAS

Situated on George Lucas's ranch in the lush hills of Marin County, Skywalker Sound, with a half dozen mixing rooms, orchestra scoring stage, eighty Pro Tools work stations, 300-seat theatre and 170 employees, hardly seems like the place to mix the next low budget indie classic. Hell, I'd make any type of movie just to spend a few days at the guesthouse, workout in the health center, and hang out at the inn. Perhaps I could go horseback riding with George (currently at work on *Star Wars: Episode III, Revenge of the Sith*) or shoot some pool with Bob (Robert) Zemeckis (who is working on *Polar Express*).

There's an air of understated grandeur about the place. At lunch hour, film folk in twos and threes walk around the Ewok Lake like members of some exclusive club or the inmates of a high-class treatment center. There are similar rules, too: no video cameras, no photographs inside the buildings, no photographing the people you're not with, and guests must be accompanied by a warden at all times. Even the entrance is unmarked except for the address: 5858 Skywalker Ranch Road.

LucasFilm Ltd.'s sound division, Skywalker Sound, founded in 1987, is, despite its northern California location, very Hollywood. The studio and its engineers have either been nominated for or won about two dozen Academy Awards for blockbusters including *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), *Titanic* (1997), and, of course, *Star Wars* (1977). It has pioneered the use of new technologies like end-to-end digital production and is recognized for having some of the best talent in the biz.

So why is it now actively seeking independent films?

"There's a migration to either extreme of the budget spectrum," says Skywalker general manager, Glen Kiser. "You have huge \$100 million-plus tent pole visual FX films on the one extreme, and you've got something like *Napoleon Dynamite* on the other."

In the past couple of years Skywalker Sound has worked on films with budgets below \$500,000 as well as films with budgets of \$200 million and up. This "migration" is creating new challenges for Skywalker, which wants to compete effectively on both sides of the spectrum. "It seems like mid-budget films of about \$50 or \$60 million have almost



One of the mixing rooms at Lucas's lab where films such as *Jurassic Park*, *Titanic*, and the new *Star Wars* films were recorded (Morten Kettel/Lucas Digital)

completely disappeared in the last couple of years," Kiser says.

In their place, Skywalker has worked on a series of indie films including most recently, Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and others such as Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), Philip Kaufman's *Quills* (2000), and Sandi Dubowski's *Trembling Before G-d* (2001).

For Skywalker Sound the benefits of working on independent films are tangible. They get to work with new talent, some of whom will become tomorrow's blockbuster directors. They also get to grow new talent, because the studio can afford to let their young and hungry sound designers work on smaller projects—easier than to let them loose on a \$100 million project. And often, because low budget films are the most creatively challenging, they're often the ones that pick up industry awards.

"Everybody who works here loves working on films," Kiser says. "Nobody's punching a time card, so if I can vary the projects between independent and studio projects they are happier." Besides, it's mostly the engineers themselves, drawing from their network of friends, who bring in about fifty percent of the indie projects.

Apart from spending a few very pleasant days kicking around the ranch, there are many additional benefits for independent filmmakers

to work with a large outfit like Skywalker Sound. Bad sound is often, regrettably, one of the hallmarks of an independent production. In fact, viewers are much more willing to put up with shoddy camera work than bad sound. "There seems to be a much more direct relationship between the ear and the brain," Kiser says. "The ear knows immediately when there's something wrong."

Bad sound like bad filmmaking breaks the spell and we are jolted back to the real world. The illusion is broken and we're no longer following the story but are silently criticizing the camera work or wondering where that annoying sound in the background is coming from. At the same time, good sound designers and editors can, like a good film editor, add a subtlety that will heighten or stress a point and improve the film's overall impression.

Tod Lending's documentary *Omar and Pete* (2004) explores the social and economic barriers that African American men experience when they are released from prison. "Instead of leaving silence, we found that we could add room tone which turned the movie into an atmospheric piece," Kiser says. "There's something very powerful in an urban environment when you are following a guy through a lonely task, and you add the distant sound of children playing in the background."



Glenn Kiser is Skywalker Sound's vice president and general manager (David Owens/Lucas Digital Ltd.)

It doesn't necessarily have to be faked because these are all sounds that you would hear in the real situation. At least, that's the argument. In *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Michael Moore decided that the emotional impact of actually seeing the airplanes hit the World Trade Center had become overexposed and had therefore lost its meaning to the public. So he asked supervising sound editor Gary Rizzo and Skywalker sound editor Scott Guitteau to build a soundscape that would allow him to fade the film to black for three minutes. A trick for sure, but one that put the audience where our unsuspecting country was on that September morning—in the dark.

To achieve this, Rizzo and Guitteau restored what they could and remixed the rest from other sources to recreate a hauntingly realistic atmosphere, which resulted in a far more powerful sequence than the original muted sequence. The million-dollar question is: Where do you draw the line? One could, for example, add extra screaming to make the scene more poignant, crossing an invisible but very subjective line.

It's a line that Rizzo and Guitteau had to walk very carefully when they remixed the scene in *Fahrenheit 9/11* that captured the bombing of Baghdad. Most people who watched this on their television sets did not hear what it was like on a Baghdad street. So Rizzo and Guitteau hired researchers to comb through hours of radio correspondents' tapes in order to carefully reconstruct the scene. When Rizzo and Guitteau were finished, they screened the footage to people who were on the ground in Iraq to ensure its accuracy.

"It would have been a lot easier to say [of the Baghdad footage], 'Well the images are good, we'll throw away the sound and

recreate some new stuff from our [*Star Wars*] library," Kiser says. "But this is a documentary."

And in other situations, equally subtle yet significant judgment calls need to be made. Mark Jonathan Harris's film, *Into the Arms of Strangers* (2000), a film about the Kindertransport during World War II, featured a reenactment of the many Jewish children in Britain who were sent by their parents from the city to live more safely in the countryside. Legendary Skywalker sound designer Gary Rydstrom (who recently left to become a director at Pixar) was able to heighten dramatic tension in that particular scene by adding the sound of steam trains when the children were sent away.

These recent films also highlight a trend in independent filmmaking: Technology that was once reserved for features is now being used to heighten the dramatic effect in certain documentary non-fiction films. And while digital video and Final Cut Pro are making it easier to create less costly nonfiction films, production values are being raised because independent producers are competing with the likes of Gary Rizzo.

Final Cut Pro and Digidesign's Pro Tools will enable the indie producer to remove a bump here or a squeak there, perhaps add an echo, but that's a long way from producing a great movie. While computerized special FX achieve wonders by inventing future worlds in far off galaxies, recreating the sinking of the Titanic or blurring the lines between fantasy and reality, there is no machine that can generate the authentic sounds of a sneeze, footsteps in the snow, or a child crying. These have to be recorded. They can be manipulated, distorted, edited and mixed, but they still have to have been recorded with a microphone at some point.

Over the past twenty-five years, Skywalker has collected, catalogued, and stored over 120,000 sound files in the bowels of the technical building on a four terabyte database. And new sounds are being added to the library all the time. Recently, the company sent a team of sound engineers to record the sound of steam train engines in Minnesota for *Polar Express*.

The Skywalker library, combined with its studio talent, provides a competitive edge in the marketplace. Other Hollywood studios and facilities have to record each sound from scratch, whereas it has always been very much part of Lucas Digital's strategy to save and reuse these sounds. (Lucas Digital is a LucasFilm company comprised of Industrial Light & Magic and Skywalker Sound.)

"Nobody has ever figured out and I don't know that anybody will ever figure out how to synthetically create sounds. Even when you're creating fantasy sound elements for a space ship or a Tyrannosaurus Rex or any kind of animal," Kiser says. "We have done experiments through the years, and we have tried to create sounds synthetically and it never works."

Indeed Kiser says that Skywalker Sound has been more than a little responsible for establishing Industrial Light & Magic (Lucasfilm's special FX division) as an industry powerhouse. People are rightly impressed with ILM's technological wizardry in the creation of digital worlds. While ILM creates the wonderful pictures, it is Skywalker Sound that makes them believable.

Now *Episode III* has ushered in a new era of sound design that



Non-blockbuster films like Tod Lending's *Omar* and *Pete* are now produced at Skywalker Sound's enormous ranch (Lucas Digital Ltd.)

allows individual editors to work on slices of a film. Rather than mixing everything in a million dollar sound studio, the company is mixing smaller films in more studios, increasing productivity and reducing costs. To help achieve this goal Lucas has built four new sound mixing rooms, which are fitted with Pro Tools workstations.

"We have had to reinvent our process so that we can work on smaller projects," Kiser says. "The rooms were designed so that we can use them to prepare and pre-mix very large films or work on smaller independent film."

In other words, the rooms were designed to bear the necessary technology so that one sound artist can single-handedly work on a small project without the back room support of sound engineers and mixing technicians, which drive up costs. And it's not just indie films that Skywalker is eyeing but video games, too. These include Lucas Digital's own games, but as other mainstream video games aim more

and more to simulate reality, they require more complex film and video sound engineering, which Skywalker is happy to provide.

But how happy and willing are the folks at Skywalker Sound to swing open their doors to struggling indie filmmakers of all stripes? Not entirely. Unlike most facilities Skywalker doesn't even have a rate card. Pricing depends on what needs to be done, over what period of time and by whom. It also depends on what other projects are working their way thorough the studio at any given time. Spring and autumn tend to be bad for smaller films, as the place is jam-packed with blockbusters slated for the holiday season.

Kiser says, "We have a look at the scripts and if the project is interesting and the filmmaker is flexible, and we have the time and the staff, then we can usually come to some arrangement."

Don't call us, we'll call you? ☆

ASK

the Documentary Doctor



Fernanda Rossi

Dear Doc Doctor:

Many people suggested that I add more narration and music to my documentary, which I did, but now other people are saying there is too much of both. How do I achieve the right balance between image and sound in documentary film?

Before you figure out where others want you to be, let's make sure you know where you are. Grab a piece of paper and a pen, and draw a line along the center of the page. At one end, write "purist verité documentary"—under that: "no narration, no interviews, no music" (think Albert Maysles). At the other end of that continuum, write "essay/editorial documentary"—and under that: "lots of narration and interviews, music OK" (think Michael Moore). This last part about narration and interviews means you. How large of a presence do you want to have in your film?

Maybe you are more of a Maysles type, verité filmmaker but you're not a purist, so you feel comfortable with some music, interviews, and some narration to clarify what the camera can't capture. You are committed to docu-

menting reality and your voice and vision comes through in your choices of camera angles and characters, but nothing else. Images and direct sound prevail, and external sound, such as narration and music, are scarce.

Or maybe you are more about doc-commenting—which is to say, rather than being an invisible bystander, you are interacting with reality. You are interested in exposing and exploring the issue from a clearly stated point of view, conveyed through narration, a careful choice of interviews, and your placement in the film as a character—a columnist talking to the audience. Images abound but they are at the service of your narration—ultimately your script.

The right amount of anything in a film—action footage, narration, music, interviews—has a direct correlation with where you choose to position yourself, which in turn affects the amount of time and struggle you will be facing in the cutting room. Award-winning producer and director Lilibet Foster, of the verité style documentary *Brotherhood: Life in the FDNY*, shared her thoughts on the subject: "There are narration-led documentaries,

which take less time and effort to make if the script was conceived before shooting. Then there are interview-led films, which you can cut together to be the backbone of the entire story. It's a manageable process, but you will have to sort through transcripts and create a script rather than writing your own voice-over from scratch. And finally there is scene-led or verité, which is most challenging and takes the longest because the scenes are made up of action and verité dialogue rather than a previously conceived interview or voice-over script."

In all, there is no right balance to achieve, but rather a conscious choice to be made about what style of film and filmmaker you want to be.

Dear Doc Doctor:

I can't afford sound editing or sound design. I'm not even sure it's right to do sound design in a documentary. Can I do without them?

Sound editing and design, and in some cases even mixing, are often forgotten or neg-

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The oldest and largest national moving-image media organization, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AIVF offers a broad slate of education, information, and resource programs for members and non-members alike.

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AIVF workshops and events cover the whole spectrum of issues affecting the field. Practical guides on festivals, distribution, exhibition and outreach help you get your film to audiences (see other part of this card).

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*, a national magazine filled with thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on legal, technical, and business matters—all geared to the working independent. Plus the field's best source of festival deadlines, exhibition venues, and funding opportunities, as well as AIVF member activities and services.

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lected as a second cousin of picture editing. By the time most filmmakers are done with picture editing they are not only exhausted and short of time to make their festival deadlines, they are also very short of money. Many rush through or skip sound editing altogether. The consequences, however, are more far-reaching than what meets the eye, or in this case, the ear.

Chief-mixer and co-owner of Splash Studios, Peter Levin, says: "As a mixer I often get projects that haven't been sound edited, and then we have no choice but make the mixing session into an edit session. Mixing and editing require different skills. I like doing it, but it's a bad use of resources. So what appears to be saving money by eliminating a step, ends up being very costly and frustrating for both the filmmakers and myself."

Sound, like images, create a world that needs to be coherent and cohesive. Our eyes are fairly trained (courtesy of MTV) to follow a continuum of images no matter how many jump-cuts we see—our hearing abilities are not quite there yet. I have viewed rough-cuts with audiences, and received ambiguous feedback about the structure of the film or the clarity of a scene. After editing the sound, without touching a single image frame, the test audience will then ask what we had changed in the scene to make it flow so well.

As per your inquiry of sound design, some filmmakers squirm at the thought of adding any sound or effect that wasn't captured originally by the camera. Others happily add suspense-like vibratos or pigeons gabbling to complete the ambience. It all depends on the intention. However, unlike most fiction films, you can do without sound effects if that's your choice.

Ultimately, you want your film to offer an honest yet engaging experience to the audience. You want them to experience reality, and most often, reality has sound. It's your job to reproduce the easiness by which we can hear natural sound. And so, budget restriction and deadlines notwithstanding, do edit your film's sound and most importantly, do not forget to record room tone. A minute spent during the shoot is several hours saved in the sound edit room. ★

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FESTIVALS

By Bo Mehrad

Listings do not constitute an endorsement. We recommend that you contact the festival directly before sending cassettes, as details may change after the magazine goes to press. Deadline: 1st of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1st for Nov. issue). Include festival dates, categories, prizes, entry fees, deadlines, formats & contact info. Send to: festivals@aivf.org

DOMESTIC

ASPEN SHORTSFEST, April 6-10, CO. Deadline: Nov. 5, Dec. 15 (final). Fest is a premiere int'l competitive showcase for short films (30 mins & less). Fest seeks entries of originality, integrity & technical excellence. Student & int'l entries also welcome. Founded: 1992. Cats: comedy, short, animation, children, doc, drama, student, comedy. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 70mm. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35, \$45 (final). Contact: Ryan Van Bidder; (970) 925-6882; fax: 925-1967; shortsfest@aspenfilm.org; www.aspenfilm.org.

BLACK POINT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 21-25, WI. Deadline: Dec. 31; Jan. 31 (final). Fest takes place in Lake Geneva, WI, about an hour from Chicago, Madison & Milwaukee. Founded: 2002. Cats: any style or genre. Awards: 4 shorts awards, 6 feature awards incl. audience & documentary. Formats: 35mm, 1/2", DVD, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20 (Short); \$30 (Feature); \$25 (late-Short); \$40 (late-Feature). Contact: Richard Paro; (262) 740-BPFF; richardparo@yahoo.com; www.blackpointfilmfestival.com.

CHICAGO DOC FILM FESTIVAL, April 1-11, IL. Deadline: Jan. 12. Fest describes its programming as "designed to extend appreciation of the art of documentary film & its unique power to inspire & communicate a world of ideas & cultures." Founded: 2003. Cats: doc. Awards: Cash Awards in various cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DigiBeta, Beta SP, DV-Cam, DVD, DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$50.

Contact: Festival; (773) 486-9612; fax: 486-9613; info@chicagodocfestival.org; www.chicagodocfestival.org.

CHICAGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL, April 8-20, IL. Deadline: Dec. 10. Festival promotes Latino culture in the U.S. by presenting the best & most recent films & videos from Spain, Portugal, Latin America & the United States. Works from Latin America, Spain, Portugal & the United States are considered as well as works from other countries if the director is of Iberoamerican descent, or the subject matter is directly related to Latino culture. Founded: 1987. Cats: Feature, Short, children, family, student, youth media, doc, animation, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVD, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25. Contact: Int'l Latino Cultural Center of Chicago; (312) 431-1330; fax: 344-8030; info@latinoculturalcenter.org; www.latinoculturalcenter.org.

CUCALORUS FILM FESTIVAL, March 30 - April 3, NC. Deadline: Nov. 24; Dec., 24 (final). Cucalorus is a non-competitive showcase of independent features, shorts & documentaries from around the world. The fest is held in historic downtown Wilmington, NC, one of the leading film production cities in the US. Founded: 1994. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Video. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$20 (early); \$30 (final). Contact: Dan Brawley; (910) 343-5995; fax: 343-5227; mail@cucalorus.org; www.cucalorus.org.

DC INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL & MARKET, March 3-11, DC. Deadline: Nov. 15; Dec. 15 (final). Fest's mission is "to present a yearly event where industry professionals & the general public come to see the latest, most exciting films from the United States & abroad." Fest also incl. seminars, a film market, a trade show which

offers an opportunity for production companies to showcase their services & latest technological advances plus network in the country's third most important production community. Founded: 1999. Cats: feature, short, animation, doc. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, 1/2", DVD. preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry Fee: \$10 shorts (up to 30 min.); \$20 features. Contact: c/o MediaFusion; phone: (202) 537-9493; fax: 686-7168; dcindiefilmfest@aol.com; www.dciff.org.

FULL FRAME DOC FILM FESTIVAL, April 7-10, NC. Deadline: Oct. 15, Nov. 15, Dec. 15 (final). The four day event takes place at the historic Carolina Theatre in downtown Durham, North Carolina, w/ morning to midnight screenings, panel discussions, seminars, Q&A sessions. Works must have been completed after Jan. of previous year. Films cannot be longer than 180 min.. Cats: doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DigiBeta. preview on VHS/DVD. Entry Fee: \$35; \$45; \$55 (final). Contact: Connie Di Cicco; (919) 687-4100; fax: 687-4200; connie@fullframefest.org; www.fullframefest.org.

HI/LO FILM FESTIVAL, April, CA. Deadline: Jan. 1; Jan. 15 (final). Non-competitive fest "celebrates films w/ high concepts & low budgets for the adventurous & disenchanted." Festival seeks films that cannot be found at the multiplex: films that are more smart than slick, that privilege ideas over commerce; that prove filmmaking has more to do w/ brains than wallets. Any genre, any subject, any length—bring it on! Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats: super 8, 35mm, 16mm, digital, Hi8, 3/4", VHS, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$15; \$20 (late). Contact: Festival; (415) 558-7721; info@hilofilmfestival.com; www.hilofilmfestival.com.

HIGH-DEF FILM FESTIVAL, World Tour.

Deadline: Jan. 10. HDFEST is known as "the world's only high-definition film fest" due to the fact the fest showcases projects in HD which have been shot in HD format exclusively. HDFEST works to bring together filmmakers & technological innovators from all over the world. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, TV, music video. Awards: World tour screening. Formats: DVD, VHS. Preview on DVD or VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (under 40 min); \$50 (others). Contact: Hdfest Productions; admin@hdfest.com; www.hdfest.com.

INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL (LOS ANGELES), April 20-24, CA. Deadline: Jan. 5. Fest showcases films from & about India by Indian & int'l filmmakers. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre. Awards: Audience Award in all cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry Fee: \$30 (up to 60 min.); \$40 (Over 60 min.). Contact: Christina Marouda; (310)364-4403; fax: 278-3499; info@indianfilmfestival.org; www.indianfilmfestival.org.

ISRAEL FILM FESTIVAL, NY: Oct. 14-28; Chicago: Nov. 3-14; Miami: Dec. 1-9, CA. Deadline: Jan. 15. IsraFest Foundation Inc. presents Israel's newest feature films, documentaries, TV dramas, miniseries & student shorts; showcasing more than 400 new israeli films to over 450,000 filmgoers in the U.S. IsraFest Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to enrich the American view of Israeli life & culture, to spotlight Israel's growing film & television industry, & to provide an intercultural exchange through the powerful medium of film. The fest is presented in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, & Chicago. Open only to israeli films made during 2001. Founded: 1982. Cats: feature, doc, short, student, TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: No entry fee.. Contact: IsraFest Foundation Inc.; (323) 966-4166; (877) 966-5566; fax: 658-6346; info@israelfilmfestival.com; www.israelfilmfestival.com.

KANSAS CITY FILMMAKERS JUBILEE, April 22-28, MO. Deadline: Oct 15; Dec. 1; Dec. 20 (final). Annual event open to domestic & int'l short films 30 min. or less. With screenings, seminars, receptions, jazz &

BBQ, the fest promises "a laid-back environment where filmmakers can mix, share & celebrate their hard work & creativity." Cats: narrative, experimental, animation, doc, short. Awards: Fest awarded over \$100,000 in cash & prizes since 1997. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$30; \$40; \$60 (final). Contact: KCFJ; (913) 649-0244; kcJub@kcjubilee.org; www.kcjubilee.org.

KEY WEST INDIE FEST, April 7-10, FL. Deadline: Dec. 31. An int'l event showcasing the best independent films & screenplays in the world - by the sea. Companion event w/ Telluride IndieFest. All genres acceptable. Cats: feature, doc, short, any style or genre, script. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$45-\$60. Contact: Micheal Carr; festival@keywestindiefest.com; www.keywestindiefest.com.

LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-26, CA. Deadline: Jan. 14; Feb. 18 (final: shorts, music video); March 1 (final: features). Fest showcases the best of American & int'l independent cinema. The fest screens over 80 features & 60 shorts. Fest is widely recognized as a world-class event, uniting emerging filmmakers w/ critics, scholars, film masters, & the movie-loving public. Founded: 1995. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Animation, Music Video, Student. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DigiBeta, HD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$50/\$65 (features); \$35/\$45 (shorts); \$20/\$30 (music videos). Contact: Varky James; (310) 432-1208; lafilmfest@ifp.org; www.lafilmfest.com.

METHOD FEST INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, March 25 - April 1, CA. Deadline: Dec. 5; Jan. 25 (final). Named for the 'Stanislavski Method,' fest highlights the great performances of independent film. Seeking story driven films w/ outstanding acting performances. Founded: 1999. Cats: Feature, Short, student. Awards: Sculpted statuettes in various cats. Awards to Best Actor, Actress, Screenplay, Feature, Short, Quality Low Budget, & Audience Favorite Feature. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, DV, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: Student: \$25; Shorts: \$30, \$40 (final); Features: \$40 , \$50 (final). Contact: c/o

Franken Enterprises; (310) 535-9230; fax: 535-9128; Don@methodfest.com; www.methodfest.com.

NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April 14-21, TN. Deadline: Oct. 29; Nov. 19; Dec. 17. Formerly the Sinking Creek Film & Video Festival, fest is the longest-running film fest in the South w/ an int'l reputation for its support & encouragement of independent media. Festival programs over 150 films & provides high-end industry level workshops. Fest incl. workshops, panels, screenings, parties & closing awards ceremony. Founded: 1969. Cats: animation, doc, feature, student, experimental, short, youth media, children, music video, family. Awards: Cash prizes awarded for all cats plus a special award, The Regal Cinema/Nashville Independent Film Festival Dreammaker Award, which grants the award-winning film a week's run in a Regal Cinema in Los Angeles county, also qualifies the winner for Academy Award consideration. 1st prize in the short narrative & animation cats also qualifies winner for Academy Award consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, DigiBeta, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35/\$40/\$45 (under 60 min.); \$50/\$55/\$60 (over 60 min.). Contact: Festival; (615) 742-2500; fax: 742-1004; info@nashvillefilmfestival.org; www.nashvillefilmfestival.org.

NEW RIVER FILM FESTIVAL, April 7-10, VA. Deadline: Dec. 31. Fest takes place in the southern town of Blacksburg, VA & will feature discussions, screenings, & workshops. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation, student. Formats: Beta SP, 16mm, DVD. preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$20-\$55. Contact: George Woods; (540) 239-4115; info@newriverfilm.com; www.newriverfilm.com.

NEWFEST: NEW YORK LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, June 2-12, NY. Deadline: Dec. 20; Feb. 18 (final). This fest is committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs, & showcases all genres of film & video in the interest of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered persons. Founded: 1989. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DVD, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20; \$25 (final).

CONTACT: Basil Tsiokos; (212) 571-2170; fax: 571-2179; info@newfestival.org; www.newfestival.org.

PALM BEACH INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, April 14-21, FL. Deadline: Dec. 30, Feb. 4 (final). Festival showcases over 80 American & Int'l independent features, shorts & documentaries. Set in Florida's tropical playground, fest gatherings range from stimulating seminars to casual beach parties & a black tie affair hosting some of top names in the film industry. Founded: 1996. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, experimental. Formats: 35mm, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30-\$70. Contact: Festival; (561) 218-0003; fax: 362-0035; info@pbifilmfest.org; www.pbifilmfest.org.

PORTLAND DOC & EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL (PDX), April 20-25, OR. Deadline: Dec. 15, Jan. 15 (final). Fest is a four-day expo of non-conventional cinema. PDX seeks work that is "artistic, underground, quirky & challenging work that reflects contemporary culture, documents historic oddities, & is otherwise generally unclassifiable." Cats: doc, short, experimental, underground. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$15. Contact: Peripheral Produce/PDX Film Fest; pdxfilmfest@peripheralproduce.com; www.peripheralproduce.com.

RENO GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Feb., NV. Deadline: Dec. 3. Cats: feature, short. Formats: 16mm, Beta SP, Mini-DV, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Cinemareno; cinemareno@excite.com; www.cinemareno.org.

ROSEBUD FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 27-28, DC. Deadline: Jan. 23. Founded in 1990, the competition is open exclusively to DC, Maryland & Virginia film & video artists & seeks to honor the innovative, experimental, unusual & deeply personal in creative film & video making. The competition is open to all works released in previous year. Founded: 1990. Cats: any style or genre. Awards: 5 winners incl. one Best of Show will be chosen. Winners each receive a \$1,000 cash prize, plus additional products & services. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$25 (Entry fee incl. a one-yr.

membership to Arlington Community Television, the sponsoring organization). Contact: Jackie Steven, Festival Director; (703) 524-2388; fax: 908-9239; jax@arlingtonmedia.org; www.rosebudact.org.

SAN FRANCISCO INT'L LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL / FRAMELINE 29, June 16-26, CA. Deadline: Jan. 7, Feb. 4 (final). Fest one of the oldest & most respected, is committed to screening the best in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Film. Many works premiered in fest go on to be programmed or distributed nat'lly & int'lly. Rough cuts accepted for preview if submitted on 1/2". Fest produced by Frameline, nonprofit arts organization dedicated to gay & lesbian media arts. Founded: 1976. Cats: any style or genre, feature, doc, short, experimental. Awards: Frameline Award, Audience Award, 1st Feature Award (\$10,000), Excellent Doc Award (\$10,000). Formats: 35mm, 1/2", Beta, 16mm, BETA cam SP- NTSC only. VHS- NTSC/PAL. Entry Fee: \$15-25. Contact: Program Coordinator; (415) 703-8650; fax: 861-1404; info@frameline.org; www.frameline.org.

SEDONA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, March 3-6, AZ. Deadline: Dec. 15. Annual fest features the finest in current American & int'l independent cinema, tributes, panel discussions & an in-depth workshops. The fest mission is to present & support the best in contemporary int'l & domestic independent cinema, tributes, panel discussions & an in-depth workshop. Cats: dramatic & doc (features & shorts), animation, feature, short, doc, script. Awards: Audience choice—Best of Festival for full-length & short films. Formats: 35mm, DVD, DV, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$35 (shorts, 30 min. & under); \$50 (features); \$10 discount for entries postmarked before Nov. 1. Contact: Festival; (928) 282-1177; fax: 204-5819; director@sedonafilmfestival.com; www.sedonafilmfestival.com.

STANDING ROCK SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 22, OH. Deadline: Dec. 22. Fest is open to all filmmakers & videographers worldwide w/ original work. Seeking works 20 min. or less in length. Cats: short, any style or genre. Formats: DVD, 16mm, Hi8, Super 8, 1/2". Entry Fee: \$15. Contact: Jeff

Ingram; (330) 673-4970; info@standingrock.net; www.standingrock.net.

SYRACUSE INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 27-May 1, NY. Deadline: July 15; Dec. 15 (final). The fest showcases "all forms of expression from all genres & lengths, made by artists of all ages, countries & ideologies." Entries will be prescreened in their entirety by a professional prescreening committee. Final judging by int'lly acclaimed film & video artists. Reviews of selected films & videos will be published in a post-fest publication. Founded: 2003. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation, experimental, youth media. Awards: 15 cash awards, from \$500 to \$1,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Mini-DV, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30-\$85. Contact: Christine Fawcett; (315) 443-2247; fax: 443-5376; cfawcett@syrfilmfest.com; www.syrfilmfest.com.

TELEVISION DOC FESTIVAL, April, NY. Deadline: Jan. 15. The Museum of Television & Radio hosts this annual fest that premieres documentaries of all types, followed by discussions w/ filmmakers, & celebrates the work of influential documentary makers. The two-week fest consists of documentaries that have not yet been publically screened in New York & have a connection to television (produced in part or wholly w/ television money [US or int'l], or have a broadcast deal in place). In addition, the Festival hosts a documentary pitch workshop, screening works in progress to industry professionals. Founded: 2000. Cats: doc, TV. Formats: Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: TV Doc Festival; (212) 621-6600; (212) 621-6699; TVDocFest@mtr.org; www.mtr.org/tvdocfest.

TEXAS FILM FESTIVAL, March 28 - April 2, TX. Deadline: Jan. 2. The Texas Film Festival is a non-competitive invitational fest run entirely by student volunteers w/in the MSC Film Society. Since 1993, their purpose has been to celebrate contemporary independent filmmakers & to promote film as an artistic medium focusing on education rather than securing distribution. Founded: 1993. Cats: doc, feature, short. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30 (features); \$20 (student features); \$15

(Shorts). Contact: c/o MSC Film Society; (979) 845-1515; fax: 845-5117; txfilmfest@msc.tamu.edu; <http://www.txfilmfest.org/>.

THUNDERBIRD INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, June 1-5, UT. Deadline: Dec. 15; April 1 (final). This fest showcases student & independent films in a personal "down-home" atmosphere, & emphasizes family friendly films w/ allowances for cultural differences. Cats: short, doc, feature, student. Awards: Thunderbird trophies. Formats: DVD, 35mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$30 (early); \$50 (final). Contact: Southern Utah University; (435)586-7861; fax: (435) 865-8352; tiff@suu.edu; www.thunderbirdfilmfestivals.suu.edu.

TRENTON FILM FESTIVAL, April 29 - May 1, NJ. Deadline: Nov. 1; Jan. 15 (final). Located one hour south of NYC, 30 min. north of Philadelphia & 8 miles from Princeton, Trenton is a great showcase for independent & foreign filmmakers. The three-day fest screens over sixty films at four venues & has the New Jersey State Museum as its main theatre. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Awards: Ernie Kovacs award in each category. Formats: Beta, Mini-DV, DVD. preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: \$35/\$45 (features); \$25/\$35 (shorts). Contact: Kevin Williams; (609) 396-6966; fax: (609) 392-3634; info@trentonfilmfestival.org; www.trentonfilmfestival.org.

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL, April 21-May 1, NY. Deadline: Nov. 1; Dec. 10 (final, shorts); Dec. 17 (final, features). Created by Jane Rosenthal & Robert De Niro, the mission of the fest is to "enable the int'l film community & the general public to experience the power of film by redefining the film fest experience". Fest was founded to celebrate NYC as a major film-making center & to contribute to the long-term recovery of lower Manhattan. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, HD Cam. Preview on VHS, DVD. Contact: Festival; (212) 941-2304; entries@tribecafilmfestival.org; www.tribecafilmfestival.org.

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM & DIGITAL VIDEO FESTIVAL, February 18-20, NJ.

Deadline: Jan. 21. Annual fest encourages any genre, but work must have predominantly originated on Super 8 film or hi-8 or digital video. Festival mandate is to spread the 8mm & digital word. Toward that end the Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC has sponsored seven touring programs, culled from fest winners for the past several years, which have travelled extensively & seen new audiences. Cats: any style or genre. Awards: \$4,000 in cash & prizes; selected winners go on Best of Fest Int'l Tour. Formats: Hi8, super 8, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4", DV, 8mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40 (check or money order payable to Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC). Contact: A.G. Nigrin; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.njfilmfest.com.

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 28 - May 5, CA. Deadline: Nov. 15; Dec. 17 (final). Visual Communications, the nation's premier Asian Pacific American media arts center, established Fest as a vehicle to promote Asian & Asian Pacific American cinema. The Fest has grown from its beginnings as a weekend series into an annual showcase presenting the best of Asian Pacific American & Asian int'l media in the United States. Founded: 1983. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 8mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$20; \$30 (final). Contact: Festival Director; (213)680-4462; fax: 687-4848; info@vconline.org; www.vconline.org.

WORLDVEST HOUSTON INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 22-May 1, TX. Deadline: Nov. 15; Dec. 15; Jan. 15 (final). WorldFest has reduced the number of films screened to a maximum of 60 feature & 100 short premieres, w/ a total & absolute emphasis on American & Int'l Independent feature films. Fest honors films from Mexico, Canada, France & Germany. Associated market for features, shorts, docuementaries, video, independent/experimental & TV. Fest also offers 3-day seminars on writing, producing & directing, plus distribution & finance. Founded: 1961. Cats: feature, doc, short, script, experimental, animation, music video, student, youth media, TV, children, family. Awards: Student Awards Program. Scripts & screenplays also have competi-

tion. Cash, services & equipment awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, S-VHS, DigiBeta, U-matic, DVD, CD-ROM, Web. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: \$40-\$90. Contact: Team Worldfest, Entry Director; (713) 965-9955; fax: (713) 965-9960; mail@worldfest.org; www.worldfest.org.

INTERNATIONAL

BRUSSELS INT'L FESTIVAL OF FANTASTIC FILM, March 12-26, Belgium. Deadline: Dec 15 (shorts), Dec 30 (features). This Film fest has as its purpose to reveal & to valorise the cinematographic works in the cats of fantasy, science-fiction or thriller. Cats: feature, short. Awards: Grand jury, cash award, & audience awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DVD, Beta SP, DV, VHS. Preview on VHS. Contact: BIFFF; fax: (011)32-2-201-1469; peymey@biff.org; www.biff.org.

EKSPERIM(E)NTO FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 12 -19, Manila. Deadline: Sept 30(Early), Dec 15 (Final). This fest is a volunteer-ran, non-corporate travelling fest committed to encouraging & promoting young, unknown & less-visible Filipino independent filmmakers & video artists. The fest focuses on experimental, independent & non-mainstream works but screens almost anything that is interesting. Cats: any style or genre, feature, short, experimental, student. Awards: Grand Jury Awards for various cats. Audience Award. Formats: 16mm, Mini-DV, VHS. Preview on Mini-DV or VHS-NTSC. Entry Fee: \$0 if freight services (i.e. Fedex, UPS, DHL, etc) are used. \$5(early & if mailing w/ local gov. postal service), \$20(Final). Contact: c/o NCCA-Cinema Program; (011) 63917-8309206; eksperimento@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/eksperimento.

EILAT INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, April 6-9. Deadline: Jan 15. The fest provides a platform & respectable stage for veteran & beginner filmmakers alike of quality films from all over the world to showcase & promote their creations. Cats: feature, children, Israeli. Formats: VHS. Preview on VHS. Contact: Festival; www.eilatfilmfest.com.

FESTIVALS

HONG KONG INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, March 22 - April 6, China. Deadline: Dec. 3. Fest regularly incl. a selection of Int'l, Asian, & Hong Kong Cinema Retrospectives among 300 films & videos screened at various venues. The fest has been recognized as a valuable showcase for Asian works that allows the West to discover the riches of Chinese cinema. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Entry Fee: \$30-\$50. Contact: HKIFF; 011 852 2970 3300; fax: 2970 3011; info@hkiff.org.hk; www.hkiff.org.hk.

INT'L FEATURE FILM COMPETITION FOR WOMEN FILM DIRECTORS, April 12-17, Germany. Deadline: Jan. 9. Festival organizes every 2 years as an int'l film fest centered on one topical theme which also incl. historical aspects. They highlights those films that came into being largely as a result of women's efforts director, screenwriter, sound technician, camera operator or editor. The fest is a non-competitive framework. Founded: 1987. Cats: Any style or genre, feature, doc, short. Awards: Grand prize 25,000 Euro. Formats: All formats accepted, 35mm, 16mm, S-VHS, Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta, U-matic. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: 25 Euro. Contact: femme totale e.V., c/o Kulturburo Stadt Dortmund, ; 011 49 231 50 25 162; fax: 011 49 231 50 25 734; info@femmetotale.de; www.femmetotale.de.

LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, March 30-April 13, UK. Deadline: Dec. 14. Annual int'l noncompetitive fest addressing lesbian & gay identity & experience. Submissions must not have been previously screened in UK & must have been produced in last 2 years. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Anna Dunwoodie; 011 44 20 7815 1323; fax: 44 20 7633 0786; anna.dunwoodie@bfi.org.uk; www.bfi.org.uk/llgff.

MILAN INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, March 10-20, Italy. Deadline: September 30 (early), January 31 (final). MIFF was founded to encourage & support the work of independent & experimental filmmakers &

provide a world-class int'l platform to showcase their films. Founded: 2000. Cats: feature, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: Features: \$50 (early), \$90 (final); Shorts: \$30 (early), \$50 (final). Contact: MIFF, or FFIM; 011 39 02 8918 1179; info@miff.it; www.miff.it.

NATFILM FESTIVAL, April, Denmark. Deadline: Jan. 1. Annual fest is the biggest film event in Denmark showcasing 140 feature-length films & attended by 40,000 people. Again this yr. a number of foreign films secured theatrical release or TV-sale in Denmark as a direct result of successful fest screenings. Note that only features are screened (minimum 65 min.). Only prints w/ English dialogue or subtitles accepted. Cats: feature, doc. Awards: Nat'l Prize & Distribution Prize (awarded by audience). Formats: 35mm, Beta SP, DV-cam. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Kim Foss, Fest Dir.; 011 45 3312 0005; fax: 45 3312 7505; info@natfilm.dk; www.natfilm.dk.

OBERHAUSEN INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, May 5-10, Germany. Deadline: Jan. 15. The world's oldest short film fest offers a forum for aesthetic & technological innovation & reflection. There are no limits as to form or genre but films in the Int'l & Children's & Youth Competitions must not exceed 35 min. & have been made after Jan. 1 of the previous year. All submitted works are viewed by an independent selection committee appointed by the fest & will be in the market catalogue unless stated otherwise. Approx. 70 titles will be selected by the Int'l Competition & 40 in the Children & Youth Competition. Founded: 1954. Cats: Short, Any style or genre, Children, Music Video. Awards: incl. Grand Prize, Jury of Int'l Film Critics award. Works will compete for prizes worth a total of 37,500 EURO (approx. \$46,000). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP/PAL, DV, S-VHS, Super 8, DVD. Preview on VHS or S-VHS. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Melanie Piguel, Coordinator; 011 49 208 825 2652; fax: 49 208 825 5413; info@kurzfilmtage.de; www.kurzfilmtage.de.

ROME INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April 4-9, Rome. Deadline: Dec. 15. This Festival is a non-profit cultural organization whose mission is to promote & increase the visibility of Italian & int'l cinema, which is often out of public reach. Cats: script, short, feature, doc, student. Awards: Airline tickets, cash, film, film development & post production assistance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DVD, VHS. Preview on VHS or DV. Entry Fee: \$12 (student), \$42 (screenplay, shorts, & docs), \$60 (Features). Contact: Fabrizio Ferrari; 011 39 06 4542 5050; fax: 2331 9206; info@riff.it; www.riff.it.

SCI-FI LONDON, Feb. 2-6, United Kingdom. Deadline: Dec. 1. Fest dubs itself non-geek serious look at sci-fi film. Founded: 2002. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: Beta SP, DigiBeta, DVD, 35mm, HD5, HD-cam. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Louis Savy; 011 020 7426 0861; fax: 537 46621; info@sci-fi-london.com; www.sci-fi-london.com.

SINGAPORE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL, April 15-30, Singapore. Deadline: Jan. 15. Invitational fest offers non-competitive & competitive section for Asian cinema, w/ award for best Asian feature. Open to features completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. Entries must be Singapore premieres. About 120 features shown each yr, along w/ 60 shorts & videos from 60 countries. Main section shows 35mm; all other formats accepted in fringe programs. Several US ind films have been featured in past editions. Cats: Short, Feature, Doc, Animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Philip Cheah, Festival Director; 011 65 738 7567; fax: 011 65 738 7578; filmfest@pacific.net.sg; www.filmfest.org.sg.

VIDEOEX INT'L EXPERIMENTAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 19-29, Switzerland. Deadline: Jan. 30. Cats: experimental. Entry Fee: None. Contact: Festival; 011 41 43 322 0813; fax: 322 0815; info@videoex.ch; www.videoex.ch.

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By Michael Tierno

Deadline: First of each month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., Sept. 1st for Nov. issue). Contact: (212) 807-1400, x221; fax: (212) 463-8519; classifieds@avf.org per issue cost: 0-240 characters (incl. spaces & punctuation): \$45 for nonmembers/\$30 for AVF members; 241-360 chars: \$65/\$45; 361-480 chars: \$80/\$60; 481-600 chars: \$95/\$75; over 600 characters: Call for quote. (212) 807-1400, x241. Frequency discount: \$5 off per issue for ads running 5+ times. Ads exceeding the specified length will be edited. Place ad at www.avf.org/independent/classifieds or type copy and mail with the check or money order to: AVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013. Include billing address, daytime phone, # of issues, and valid member ID# for member discount. To pay by VISA/MC/AMEX include card #, name on card and expiration date.

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FILMS/TAPES WANTED

By Amy Ouzoonian

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AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepts entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Looking primarily for feature films w/o wide distribution, but also will consider shorts, animation, new media, etc. for other programs & showcases. Send 1/2" VHS viewing tape, press kit (any written background materials), cover letter w/ contact info & S.A.S.E. to: Margot Gerber, The Alternative Screen, 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. Tel.: (323) 466-3456 x115; fax: 461-9737; www.americancinematheque.com.

CAPE COD FILM SOCIETY SCREENING SERIES

of Brewster, MA, seeks experimental, documentary & fiction films & videos. Films can be any length, genre or style, but should fit into one of these 7 categories: war, women filmmakers, race & identity, religion, Cape Cod, masculinity or grief. Please send work on VHS, DVD, or mini-DV w/ filmmaker bio & suggested category. Also indicate your availability to appear with your work for Q&A. Send to: Rebecca M. Alvin, Belly Girl Films, Inc., PO Box 1727, Brewster, MA 02631-7727; bellygirl@earthlink.net.

CELLULOID SOCIAL CLUB is a monthly screening series in Vancouver featuring the best in independent provocative short & feature films & videos followed by fun & frolic. Hosted by Ken Hegan at the ANZA Club, #3 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC. No minors. Prizes galore. For info call (604) 730-8090; info@alterentertainment.com; www.CelluloidSocialClub.com.

CINEMARENO a year-round festival of films. Monthly screenings showcase independent films and videos. Formats: 16mm, Beta-SP, Mini-DV. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry fee: \$20; fee waived for AIVF members. Entry form & instructions at www.cinemareno.org. Contact: Cinemareno, PO Box 5372, Reno, NV 89513. Entry form and guidelines at: www.cinemareno.org.

CLUB DIY is a new monthly screening series in Hollywood, CA, showcasing the best work from the DIY Film Festival at the Derby nightclub. Each screening will also feature discussion panels and cocktail

FILMS/TAPES WANTED

party. For more info, call (323) 665-8080; DIYConvention@aol.com; www.DIYReporter.com.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, seeks original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to include w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not required. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience (dialogue must be subtitled). Send 1/2" video copy (nonreturnable) to: The Film Society of Lincoln Center, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@filmlinc.com.

DIGITAL CAFE SERIES seeks videos (shorts & features) ranging from social-issue docs to experimental video for our ongoing biweekly screenings. Youth-produced videos (20 min. or fewer) may also be entered into the Young Videomakers Program at the Hamptons Int'l Film Festival. VHS only. Send S.A.S.E. if you'd like your video returned. For more info, contact Emily or Maggie at (845) 485-4480; emily@childrensmediaproject.org; www.childrensmediaproject.org.

DOCUCLUB is seeking submissions for its In-the-Works program, a monthly documentary rough-cut screening series in New York City. If you urgently need constructive feedback and want a chance to network with your peers, visit www.docuclub.org for details, or contact Liz Ogilvie: (212) 874-1878.

DREAM SERIES: Seeks challenging social-issue documentaries that promote frank community discussions about issues of racial prejudice and social injustice that fall under the Martin Luther King, Jr., legacy. Selected works are screened for this ongoing monthly series at the MLK National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA, and promoted, listed, and reviewed in local print. Formats: VHS, Beta. Send non returnable VHS screeners to Mark A. Smith, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW, Suite N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; mark@imagefv.org.

DVD/MINI-DV (NTSC ONLY) clearly labeled w/

name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; (415)-864-0660.

ECHO PARK FILM CENTER microcinema seeking submissions to screen for weekly Thursday evening cinema. Non-Hollywood documentary, animation & experimental films & videos. We do not screen feature length narratives. Filmmakers will receive an honorarium. Contact: Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., LA, CA, 90026; (213) 484-8846; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.echoparkfilmcenter.org.

ELECTRIC EYE CINEMA of Madison, WI, is a monthly venue for independent documentary video features. All net profits from screenings redistributed back to participating filmmakers. Looking for 30 to 90 min. works that are creative, witty, or politically conscious. Also looking for shorts 10 min. or fewer, any genre, to be screened at our (unpaid) Open Reel Hour at the beginning of each monthly program. Send VHS tapes, summary of film & filmmaker bio to: Prolefeed Studios, Brian Standing, 3210 James St., Madison, WI 53714; www.prolefeedstudios.com.

EMERGING FILMMAKERS series at the Little Theatre in Rochester, NY, seeks work from New York State amateur filmmakers of all ages. Deadline: ongoing. Send VHS screener & cover letter to Karen vanMeenen, programmer, Emerging Filmmakers Series, Little Theatre, 240 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14604; ren@eznet.net.

FLICKER encompasses a Super 8 & 16mm showcase held Ashville, Athens, Chapel Hill, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Richmond & Bordeaux, France. Film grants of \$100 to filmmakers are also offered through some groups. Send a short proposal to the Flicker nearest you; see the website for a list of local Flickers: www.flickeraustin.com; no submission fee. Website: www.flickernyc.com.

GIRLS ON FILM is a quarterly screening series in San Francisco that seeks short narrative, doc & experimental works of 30

min. or fewer by women of color. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS, or Beta; preview on VHS (NTSC) or DVD. No entry fee. Send preview (clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone # & e-mail) to: Jennifer Jajeh, Girls On Film, 1566 Grove Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94117. Include S.A.S.E. if you'd like your work returned. For more info, e-mail girlsonfilmseries@hotmail.com; www.atasite.org.

INDIE CINEMA NIGHT, presented by the Atlanta Urban Mediamakers Association, Inc., seeks short & feature-length narrative, documentary & child-aimed works of all genres for a monthly screening series. Preview on VHS, Beta SP, or DVD. Reviews of selected works will appear in Urban Mediamakers magazine; audience evaluations solicited after every screening. No entry fee. (404) 287-7758; aumai@urbanmediamakers.com; www.urbanmediamakers.com.

MAKOR continues its Reel Jews Film Festival & ongoing screening series showcasing the work of emerging Jewish filmmakers. Now accepting shorts, features, docs, and/or works in progress, regardless of theme, for screening consideration. Program sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact Ken Sherman: (212) 413-8821; ksherman@92ndsty.org.

MICROCINEMA'S INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a monthly screening program of international shorts, videos & digital works has been presented hundreds of times in 35 countries and Antarctica. Seeking short video, film & digital media submissions of 15 min. or fewer on an ongoing basis for the monthly Microcinema screening program. Artists qualify for a nonexclusive distribution deal, incl. additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, animation, etc. Works selected may continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings. Submit VHS or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) labeled w/ name, title, length, phone # & any support materials, incl. photos. Submissions will not be returned. Contact: Joel S. Bachar, Microcinema International, 531 Utah St., San Francisco, CA 94110; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com.

NEW FILMMAKERS LOS ANGELES seeks submissions for its weekly screening series. Films can be any length/year of production. Films without distribution only. No entry fee. Keep press kit to a minimum: synopsis, director's bio, 1 production photo. Submissions preferred on DVD; VHS (NTSC) & Mini DV also accepted. Send submissions to New Filmmakers, P.O. Box 48469, Los Angeles, CA 90048. For more info, e-mail newfilmmakersla@yahoo.com; www.newfilmmakers.com/LA%20call_for_entries.htm.

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450-seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series, which features a discussion & reception following your film's screening. Any length/genre. Connection to New England, whether through subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers, helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com.

SHIFTING SANDS CINEMA is a quarterly screening series presenting experimental video, film, animation & digital media. Short works (under 20 min.) on VHS (NTSC) are sought. Incl. synopsis of work, artist bio & contract info. Deadline: ongoing. Tapes are not returned. Submissions will become part of the Shifting Sands Archives & will also be considered for curated exhibitions & other special projects. Contact: Shifting Sands Cinema, c/o Jon Shumway, Art Dept., Slippery Rock Univ., Slippery Rock, PA 16057; (724) 738-2714; jon.shumway@sru.edu.

URBAN MEDIA MAKERS is seeking all genres and languages (subtitled in English) for these monthly screenings — action, animation, horror, sci-fi, children, drama, documentaries, comedies, music videos, TV shows, and new medias. Submissions are free and include audience evaluations and an opportunity for your film to be showcased on public television in Atlanta, Georgia, Decatur, Georgia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Chicago, Illinois, and Miami, Florida. Please mail a VHS/DVD/DV/BETA SP copy of your film and include a synopsis of the film, a short

bio and resume of the director/producer/writer, as well as press materials if they are available to: Atlanta Urban Mediamakers, Attention: Indie Cinema Night 2003, P.O. Box 50435, Atlanta, Georgia 30302. There are no submissions fees. Please direct questions to 404.287.7758 or aumai@urbanmediamakers.com.

WORKSCREENING/WORKS PRODUCTIONS is accepting submissions of both feature & short documentaries & fiction films for programming of its upcoming inaugural season of weekly showcases of independent work streamed online as well as on our microcinema screen in New York City. Looking for alternative, dramatic, animation, etc. Submit VHS/S-VHS (NTSC please) labeled with name, title, length, phone number, e-mail, address & support materials, including screening list & festival history. Tapes & material will be returned only if you are not selected for showcase & you include an S.A.S.E. Contact Julian Rad, Works Productions/WorkScreening, 1586 York Ave, #1, New York, NY 10028; WORKSinfo@aol.com.

GALLERIES | EXHIBITIONS

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE in PA seeks artists for exhibition at the site. Some funding avail. for media arts. Proposals are reviewed annually each fall. See website for information and deadline. To request an application, or schedule an orientation tour, contact Brett Bertolino at (215) 236-5111 ex. 12, or at bb@EasternState.org, or visit www.easternstate.org.

RUNNING FREE, a touring collaborative video installation presented by Montreal's View 72, seeks shorts (5 min. or fewer) of a single person running continuously. Format must be mini-DV, but send VHS for preview. Immaculate_conception@view72.com; www.view72.com.

TRUE STORIES is a monthly sneak preview for new documentaries. Any length accepted, VHS or DVD format. No deadline, tapes held on a rolling basis until entire series is programmed. For more info contact Sean Frechette, Film Arts Foundation, 145 9th



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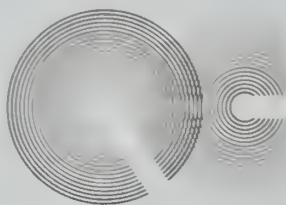
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St. Ste. 101, San Francisco, CA 94103;
(415) 552-8760 x324; www.filmarts.org/exhibition/truestories.html.

UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY at Central Michigan University reviews proposals year-round. All media considered, incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Artists interested in exhibition at the University Art Gallery should send 20 slides, video or disc, resume, artist statement & S.A.S.E. to: Central Michigan University Art Gallery, Art Dept. Wightman 132, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

SHOWCASES

FINISHING PICTURES accepts shorts, feature works-in-progress & web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com.

TOURING PROGRAMS

THE HIP HOP FILM FEST TOUR is an ongoing event hitting major cities & cultural centers on a global level. Organizers are indie filmmakers looking to share their visual documents of the vibrant Hip Hop culture and connect with other mediamakers. Deadline: Ongoing. Visit www.hiphopfilmfest.com for more information, email Info@HipHopFilmFest.com, or call (866) 206-9071 x9211.

BROADCASTS | CABLECASTS

AXELGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of experimental film & video under 28 min. Send vhs, svhs, dv labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; 716-884-7172; office@squeaky.org; www.squeaky.org.

BIJOU MATINEE is a showcase for independent shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35, leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions should be 25 min.

or fewer, VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, New York, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com.

INDIE FILM SHOWCASE, the award-winning Twin Cities cable showcase, accepts ongoing submissions. Programs run 7-8 p.m. every Saturday & Sunday for a month. No fees. Send your work in any format (Beta, 3/4, Mini,DVCPRO, the 8's, 1/2") & a S.A.S.E. to: Indie Film Showcase, 2134 Roth Pl., White Bear Lake, MN 55110. For a release form & more info, visit www.proletariatpictures.com.

INDUSTRIALTELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show now in its 8th year, is looking for experimental, humorous, quirky dramatic, erotic, horror/sci-fi, animated and underground works for inclusion in the new season. Controversial, uncensored and subversive material is encouraged & given priority. We guarantee exposure in the NYC area. We accept: DVC Pro, mini-DV, SVHS, VHS, 3/4" SP, 3/4", Hi-8. Contact: Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Bx 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; ed@2droogies.com; www.industrialtelevision.com.

MIND IGNITE seeks short films for Australian anthology TV show. Work must be 28 min. or fewer, any genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV, mini-DV, SP, Super 8 or 8mm. Along with film, the filmmaker must also submit a press kit, clearance for all music & sound, artistic release & signed nonexclusive licensing agreement, which can be found on www.mindignite.com. For more info visit site, or call Anne Maryfield, +618 9324 4455.

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY TV STATION in Chappaqua, NY, with a potential viewership of over 100,000 people, offers the opportunity for new and seasoned video/media producers to cablecast their projects. Preference given to Northern Westchester but all Westchester residents are welcome. For more info contact NCCTV@hotmail.com.

SUB ROSA STUDIOS seeks a variety of different video & film productions for ongoing Syracuse-area TV programming &

VHS/DVD/TV worldwide release. Seeking shorts or feature-length nonfiction productions in all areas of the special-interest or instructional fields, cutting-edge documentaries & children & family programming. Also seeking feature-length fiction, all genres, especially horror & sci-fi. Supernatural-themed products wanted, both fiction & nonfiction, especially supernatural/horror fiction shot documentary style (realistic). Contact: Ron Bonk, Sub Rosa Studios, (315) 454-5608; webmaster@b-movie.com; www.b-movie.com.

THE SHORT LIST is an int'l showcase of short films that airs on PBS, Co Cable & Movieola. Licenses all genres, 30 sec. to 25 mins. Produced in association with Eastman Kodak & Cox Channel 4. Awards 5 Kodak product grants annually. Submit on VHS or DVD. Appl. form avail. on www.theshortlist.cc or www.theshortlisttv.com. Contact: fax (619) 462-8266; shortlist@mail.sdsu.edu.

THEXPATCAFE TELEVISION SHOW is a screening venue for short independent film/video/new media produced artists, accepting submissions for the 2004 season. Work must be fewer than 20 min. in length. Mini-DV & SVHS format only. Submission form is available at www.thexpatcafe.com.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for cutting-edge television station from Nantucket Island, Mass. Must be suitable for TV broadcast. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. S.A.S.E. to Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

ZOOM: ZOOM is a kids-only series on PBS, featuring kids plays, films, games & more. ZOOM is seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta, digital formats. Age: 5-14. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gunther, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; marcy_gunther@wgbh.org.

WEBCASTS

ALWAYS INDEPENDENT FILMS shows independent feature films, short films, docs & animation. In addition, AIF features original made-for-Internet content as well as on line film festivals. www.alwaysif.com.

ATOM FILMS seeks quality films & animations for worldwide commercial distribution to our network of television, airline, home entertainment & new media outlets, including the award-winning AtomFilms website. Submissions must be 30 min. or fewer. For more info & a submission form, visit www.atomshockwave.com.

D.FILM Digital Film Festival is a traveling & online showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was official digital film program at 1999 Cannes Film Festival. Look for it in your city & visit web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game [www.dfilm.com].

FILMFILM.COM: the internet's complete movie studio [www.filmfilm.com] seeks submissions on on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com.

THE NARCOLEPTIC VIDEOGRAPHER is a short-film producing comedy collective made up of actors, writers, filmmakers and musicians. With a signature blend of guerrilla-film aesthetic, visceral cutting and entirely improvised dialogue. The NV seeks humour in character details and situational absurdity rather than with set-up punch lines. This has proven to be an exciting and fresh approach to comedy. http://narco.ca.

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming. Expose your feature or short to int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launched last fall. Site hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of largest ISPs on the net: films@alchemy.net.

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NOTICES

Amy Ouzoonian

Noncommercial notices are listed free of charge as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length and makes no guarantees about duration of listing. Limit submissions to 60 words and indicate how long your information will be current. Listings must be submitted to notices@awf.org by the first of the month two months prior to cover date (e.g. Sept. 1 for Nov. issue). Remember to give us complete contact info (name, address, and phone number). Listings do not constitute an endorsement by *The Independent* or AWF. We try to be as current and accurate as possible, but nevertheless, double-check details before sending anyone anything.

COMPETITIONS

ITVS FUNDS, distributes and promotes new programs primarily for public television. We work with independent producers to create and present programs that take creative risks, advance issues and represent points of view not usually seen on public or commercial television. ITVS is committed to programming that addresses the needs of underserved and underrepresented audiences. We look for programs that bring new audiences to public television and that expand civic participation by bringing diverse voices into the public sphere. For more information on receiving funding, visit their website: www.itvs.org.

SHORT FILM SLAM, NYC's only weekly short film competition, is looking for submissions. Competition on Sundays at 2 p.m. At the end of each show the audience votes for a winning film, which receives further screenings at the Pioneer Theater. To enter, you must have a film, 30 min. or fewer, in a 35mm, 16mm, BetaSP, VHS, or DVD format. To submit your film, stop by the Pioneer Theater (155 E. 3rd St.) during operating hours, or get in touch w/ Jim at (212) 254-7107; jim@two.boots.com.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Nonprofit Incorporation & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made. Contact: (212) 319-2910 x. 9.

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT & MEDIA SUMMIT 2004: New York City: April 3-4; Los Angeles: June 12-13. A lively and engaging forum of people with vision from the independent and mainstream music, film, video and multimedia worlds of the entertainment, media, and communications industries. People connect with people, exchanging ideas and creating projects in a context of innovation, reinvention, and possibility. Together, this community is proactively effecting new ways to achieve sustainable careers and the direction of the revolution now taking place in marketing and distribution. For more information visit www.globalentertainmentnetwork.com.

MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK, Manhattan's public access TV administrator, now offers an ongoing free public monthly seminars on film & TV production. Each month's workshop is held at MNN & features a different speaker, screening & focus; past speakers have included Sharon Greytak, Joel Katz & Sam Pollard. For more info visit www.mnn.org or call (212) 757-2670.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival), and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program,

including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

8TH INT'L FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES ANNUAL OPEN DAY: Jan. 12, San Francisco, a full day of panels & networking opportunities w/ key int'l film financiers & buyers. The only day of IFFCON w/ registration open to the public. Topics include: "Pitch Perfect, How to Sell your Idea" & "Funding the Future: The Digital Wave." Registration fee: \$150. Info & registration: (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

DI2004 CONFERENCE, January 30-February 1, 2004 at the San Francisco Marriott Hotel. This conference will bring together indie innovators in film, TV, music, games, policy and the arts unite to tackle the impact of digital production and distribution on independent content makers. Open to the public, registration required and press passes are available upon request; for a full description of sessions, panelists and moderators, visit the website at www.digitalindies.com.

DIGITAL MEDIA WEEK Conference and Exposition is the first business forum to bring the diverse players in the explosive digital content marketplace—technology providers, users & resellers—together at a unique event dedicated to advancing the digital content industry. Over 100 expert creative professionals will offer their knowledge in the evolving digital content industry with educational seminars and hands-on

tutorials. For more info contact: Darice Gall; 203-882-1800, ext. 104.

INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION WORKSHOPS offer hands-on training with the latest equipment in a total immersion atmosphere under the guidance of leading professionals. In addition to the campus in Rockport, Maine, workshops, courses, photo and film expeditions are offered in Tuscany, Provence, Mexico, Cuba, Martha's Vineyard, Greece, Norway & Peru. Contact: International Film & TV Workshops, Box 200, 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581; fax: 236-2558; info@TheWorkshops.com; www.TheWorkshops.com.

INTERNATIONAL FILM SEMINARS INC. is a NY-based nonprofit organization est. 1960. We have evolved from small, informal gathering of filmmakers & students to respected, est. media arts institution. We are recognized as a leader in continuing tradition of doc & other independent film & video in their production, exhibition, scholarship & study. Contact: International Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste 510, New York, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax 925-3482; ifsnyc@aol.com.

MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK, Manhattan's public access TV administrator, now offers an ongoing free public monthly seminars on film & TV production. Each month's workshop is held at MNN & features a different speaker, screening & focus; past speakers have included Sharon Greytak, Joel Katz & Sam Pollard. For more info visit www.mnn.org or call (212) 757-2670.

REEL ALTERNATIVE FILM SALON AND REEL WRITERS WORKSHOP: respectively accept completed film and screenplay submissions year round. Black, Latino, Asian and Native American filmmakers (directors, screenwriters, producers, and DPs) of Color are encouraged to submit their VHS tape or script. Yes! We are interested in your mainstream projects, also. Submit your tape or script with a synopsis, your bio and a \$10.00 submission fee (check or money order) to: IGH MULTIMEDIA, LLC 655 Fulton Street, Suite 139 Brooklyn, NY 11217. For more details, call 718-670-3616 or e-mail: ighmultimedia@excite.com.

ROUGH CUT: A monthly screening workshop designed to nurture filmmakers as they make their way through the editing of their feature film or video. Screenings of the "work in progress" include a stimulating forum for filmmakers to solicit feedback, suggestions and comments on their projects. Twice a year the IFP will host a reception for all Rough Cut participants to allow them to network with established producers, distributors and members of the film community. Workshop available exclusively to IFP members and selections are made on a on-going rolling basis. No fees for submission. For application and further details or how to become an IFP member please call David Maquiling at 212-465-8200 x 226; dmaquiling@ifp.org or www.ifp.org

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL FILM & PRODUCTION WORKSHOP begins its 27th year as a unique "hands-on" program which trains people who have limited resources & access to mainstream educational institutions & standard training programs, with an emphasis on people of color and groups that have been traditionally marginalized. This intensive 6-month, 8-participant program focuses on preproduction, production & postproduction skills necessary to take a project from conception to completion in both 16mm film and DVcam production. Prior film, video, or related experience recommended but not required. Application required & 2nd round of applicants selected for interviews. Cost: \$550. Deadline: Jan. 30th, 2005. Workshop begins early April 2005. For application visit www.twm.org or send a S.A.S.E. to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl., New York, NY 10018. For more info, call (212) 947-9277 x301.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on an ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program, NO-TV fest (for film and video artists), SMARTFEST (Student film/video festival). and residencies for Artists. The Media Center provides equipment and services in its access program, including low cost 16mm film to video (most formats) transfers. For more information call Rich Della Costa at (585) 442-8676.

PUBLICATIONS | DIRECTORIES

BOOKLET AVAILABLE to help individuals obtain money from the government. 48 page booklet gives info on how & where to get free money, free advice, & free services from the government. Send \$5 to cover the cost of printing, postage & handling to: Free Enterprise Institute, Government Giveaway Booklet Offer, Dept. GGB-407-1, Box 96071, Washington, DC 20090-6071; www.FreeEnterpriseInstitute.org.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange, seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info, contact Roselly Torres, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., NY, NY 10014; (212) 243-4804; rosellytorres@lavavideo.org.

FILMCOMMISSIONHQ.COM is the world's most current, accurate and complete online directory of Film Commissions and media support offices, allowing media professionals to find regional production expertise quickly. Commissions are listed regardless of any affiliation with us. www.FilmCommissionHQ.com.

VERSUS MEDIA puts indie filmmakers in touch with indie musicians with a 24/7 database filled with musicians seeking to work with video and film developers, biweekly e-mail containing 10 of the latest musician profiles & the option to post your latest projects where musicians can answer your needs. View www.versusmedia.com or contact info@versusmedia.com.

UPP-LETTERS FROM THE UNDERGROUND, a new publication, is an international directory for zines, counterculture music, independent films and activist videotapes. Free directory listing forms and an international classified section are on our website. Current issue includes a directory of 100+infoshops and places that archive indyfilm worldwide and more. www.dsame.com/upp.html.

RESOURCES | FUNDS

ARTHUR VINING DAVIS FOUNDATION provides completion funding for educational series airing nat'lly on PBS. Children's

series are of particular interest. Consideration will also be given to innovative uses of public TV, including computer online efforts, to enhance educational outreach in schools & communities. Funding for research and preproduction is rarely supported. Recent production grants have ranged from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Proposal guidelines available on website. Contact Dr. Jonathan T. Howe, Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, 111 Riverside Ave., Ste. 130, Jacksonville, FL 32202-4921; arthurvining@bellsouth.net; www.jvm.com/davis.

ARTS INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC WORLD ARTS INITIATIVE provides grants in support of projects that foster cultural understanding between the Islamic World and the United States. Professional artists, non-profit organizations and scholars may apply for support of projects in the areas of contemporary performing, literary, media and visual arts, and arts-related scholarship. Individual artists are eligible to apply for commissioning grants (up to \$25,000) for the creation of new work between contemporary artists from the Islamic World or a collaborative work between contemporary U.S. artists and artists of the Islamic world. For more information, visit: www.artsinternational.org Deadline: December 15, 2004.

ASTRAEA provides grants up to \$10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Our U.S. Grants Fund utilizes a community-based activist grantmaking panel to review proposals and to make funding decisions. Deadline: Dec. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321.

BLACK DOCUMENTARY COLLECTIVE (BDC) provides people of African descent working in the documentary film & video field with the opportunity to network professionally, promote each others' work, exchange ideas in order to generate productions & advocate on issues impacting black documentary makers. They hold works-in-progress screenings, project seminars, participate in the IFP Film Market & have special sessions with funders for independent producers. For more info, email BlkDocCol@aol.com.

DIVERSITY FUND: Corporation for Public Broadcasting seeks creative ideas for TV projects that explore America's growing diversity & reflect diverse experiences. The Diversity Fund is

part of the "I, too, am America" Initiative. Project applications will be accepted throughout the year until the available fund is exhausted. Be aware that this call may be terminated at any time by CPB. Visit website for application information. Contact: Diversity Fund, c/o Program Operations, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 401 Ninth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004-2129; thead@cpb.org or ljones@cpb.org; www.cpb.org/tv/diversity/rfp.

DIY REVOLUTION is now accepting free listings/classifieds on an indie media network. DIYR is a resource aimed to unite independent filmmakers, artists, activists, musicians, media groups & writers working for a more just, authentic & progressive world working outside of a corporate paradigm. Visit us at www.diyrevolution.com or www.diy.com for your free membership.

ECHO LAKE PRODUCTIONS helps finance and produce narrative films, not documentaries. Amounts awarded are \$500,000-\$1,000,000. For more information, visit: www.echolakeproductions.com

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER PRESENTATION FUNDS award up to \$1,000 each year to nonprofit media arts organizations in New York State. Funds must go to fees to artists for in-person presentations of film, electronic media, sonic art, and art using new technologies and the internet. Electronic music & work that's primarily commercial, instructional, educational, or promotional not considered. For more info, call program director Sherry Miller Hocking, (607) 687-4341; etc@experimentalcenter.org; www.experimentalcenter.org.

FILM AND VIDEO ARTS INSTITUTE is a nonprofit media arts organization that provides production and post-production equipment, fiscal sponsorship, plus youth and artist mentorship programs to members. Funded productions are of any length and genre. For more information and guidelines, visit their website: www.fva.org.

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR VISUAL ARTISTS: The awards honor visual artists who live & work in California, Oregon, & Washington & whose work demonstrates high artistic merit for 20 yrs. or more. The next awards cycle is 2005/2006. Five artists from CA and five from OR/WA will be selected to receive unrestricted grants of \$25,000 each. Applicants should work in the disciplines of fine

arts or craft media & have sustained a 9-months-per-year residency in CA, OR, or WA for the last three yrs. Artists cannot be of current nat'l renown. To receive application information, mail, fax, or email your contact information (name, address, telephone #, email) with a request to be placed on the mailing list. Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Artists, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100, Pasadena, CA 91103; fax: (626) 585-0011; FFAVA@flintridgefoundation.org.

FORD FOUNDATION MEDIA, ARTS & CULTURE GRANTS fund independent film, video, radio & digital media that meets the foundations goals to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty & injustice, promote int'l cooperation & advance human achievement. www.fordfound.org/about/guideline.cfm; office-secretary@fordfound.org.

GLOBAL CENTER, a nonprofit, IRS-certified 501(c)(3) educational foundation, seeks filmmakers seeking fiscal sponsors. For more info, call (212) 246-0202, or email roc@globalvision.org; www.globalvision.org.

GRAND MARNIER FILM FELLOWSHIPS are awarded to graduate film students enrolled in an educational institution in the U.S. (excluding CA and TX) for work in filmmaking, video, or critical writing. Three awards of \$5,000 each will be given to students who excel in either film, video or critical studies. Award to be presented at the New York Film Festival. Forms online (www.film-linc.org) or contact: Grand Marnier Film Fellowships, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., 4th., N.Y., NY 10023-6595.

GREENE STREET is a production and finance company, providing funds for projects that are in the production stage. Consideration is based largely on the script. For more information, visit: www.greenestreetfilms.com.

JAPAN FOUNDATION provides film production support to experienced independents or corporations for production of films, TV programs, or other a/v materials that further understanding of Japan and Japanese culture abroad. Contact: Japan Foundation, 152 W. 57th St., 39th Fl., New York, NY 10019; tel: 212.489.0299.

JEROME FOUNDATION'S MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM offers production grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 to emerging NYC artists w/

works budgeted up to \$200,000. Narratives, docs, new media & experimental works, as well as radio, interactive formats, online programs & virtual reality experiments considered. Contact program officer Robert Byrd; (651) 224-9431 (or toll-free in NY or MN only, (800) 995-3766); fax: 224-3439; www.jeromefdn.org.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue in one of the foundation's 2 major programs (human & community development; global security & sustainability). Send pre-lim. 2- to 3-pg letter. Contact John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org.

NEW MARKET CAPITAL is a small company that has evolved from financing and coordinating pre-sales of films to producing and distributing 6-0 projects per year. Their goal is to "make strong films with break-out potential.

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM: is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 20,000 visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites free to read: www.nofilm.com.

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA provides new filmmakers w/ access to a fully accessorized Arri 16SR camera package, w/ instruction & technical support. Students, media arts center members & unaffiliated independents should apply. Commercial projects, music videos & PSA's not considered. Feature-length discouraged. Provides camera on year-round basis. No deadline, but allow 2 weeks min. for processing. (206) 467-8666; f: (212) 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com; www.oppenheimercamera.com.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM donates 16mm camera packages to film projects, incl. graduate student thesis films, of any genre. Highly competitive. Submit proposals 5 to 6 months before you intend to shoot. Filmmakers must secure equipment & liability insurance. Send S.A.S.E. to: New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2602.

PORTLAND, OREGON, FILMMAKING GRANTS: Digital Media Education Center of Portland is announcing an open call for submissions for Avid Film Camp program. AFC is a boost to indie feature directors looking to complete their films while offering Avid-authorized training to career editors. Films will also receive free Pro Tools audio finishing & Avid Symphony Online editing. Submissions need to be feature-length projects w/shooting completed. Projects accepted on a rolling basis. Contact Deborah Cravey, Digital Media Education Center, 5201 SW Westgate Dr., Ste. 111, Portland, OR 97221; (503) 297-2324; deb@filmcamp.com; www.filmcamp.com.

SUNDANCE DOCUMENTARY FUND, formerly the Soros Documentary Fund, supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Development funds for research & preproduction awarded up to \$15,000; works-in-progress funds for production or postproduction up to \$50,000 (average award is \$25,000). www.sundance.org.

THE CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE MEDIA AND CULTURE offers grants to independent filmmakers in post production. Filmmakers who make films that focus on issues in the economy, class, the poor, women, war and peace, race and labor. Grants from \$100-\$10,000 are distributed four times a year.

THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING has allocated up to \$2 million dollars this year to create the New Voices, New Media Fund. Objectives of this fund are to harness new media by supporting creation of mission-driven, diverse new media content & providing opportunities for diverse content creators working in public broadcasting to develop the skills that new media demand. Project applications are accepted throughout the year. For more information, visit: www.cpb.org/tv/funding

THE MALKA LUBELSKI CULTURAL FOUNDATION offers grants for completion of multi-disciplinary, visual, video, and installation art projects with an international slant. The application process is informal; send a brief proposal with some supporting information. Not open to students.

THE NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION offers a Open

Door Completion fund: funding is available for applicants with public TV projects in final post-production phase. Full-length rough cut must be submitted. Review process takes approximately 1-3 months. Amount granted is up to \$20,000. For more information, visit : www.naatnet.org.

THE OPPENHEIMER CAMERA NEW FILMMAKER EQUIPMENT GRANT PROGRAM provides a grant of support new filmmakers in producing their first serious film project. The grant awards the use of our Grant Program Arriflex 16SR camera package to senior and graduate thesis students and to independent filmmakers for a scheduled period of time. For more information, visit: www.oppenheimercamera.com.

THE PUFFIN FOUNDATION supports the creation and presentation of new artistic works to the public. In particular, the Foundation intends to foster & encourage younger artists & those whose projects find funding difficult because of the projects' genre &/or social philosophy. Awards are \$1000-\$2500 to projects incl. short films & videos. Grant proposals for 2004 are accepted from Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2004. For more info, visit www.puffinfoundation.org.

THE STANDBY PROGRAM offers post production services to artists and non-profit organizations, provide technical consultation and do publications to serve the media arts field. For more information, visit: www.standby.org.

U.S. - MEXICO FUND FOR CULTURE grants economic support to projects of excellence that reflect the artistic & cultural diversity of Mexico and the US & promote lasting ties among artists, scholars & cultural institutions in both countries. Application should incl. a plan for evaluating & documenting the process, results & impact of the project. Special attention will be given to projects that propose innovative ways to understand and conceptualize art. Deadline: Dec. 12, 2004. Visit www.fidemexusa.org.mx.

WALLACE ALEXANDER GERBODE FOUNDATION supports projects offering potential for significant impact w/ a primary focus on the SF Bay area & Hawaii, including arts & culture, environment, pollution, reproductive rights & community building. Projects must have nonprofit status/fiscal sponsorship. Send letter and synopsis to: Thomas C. Layton, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, 470 Columbus Ave., #209, San Francisco, CA 94133-3930; (415) 391-0911.

SALONS

Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting

Visit www.aivf.org/region for an overview of the broad variety of Regional Salon programs

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country

ALBANY/TROY, NY:

UPSTATE INDEPENDENTS

When: First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Bulmer Telecommunications Center, Hudson Valley Community College, 80 Vandenburg Ave., Troy, NY

Contact: Jeff Burns, (518) 366-1538
albany@aivf.org

ATLANTA, GA:

IMAGE

When: Second Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

Where: Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 353 Means Street

Contact: Sonia Vassell, (404) 352-4225 x20
atlanta@aivf.org; www.imagefv.org

CHARLESTON, SC:

When: Last Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Charleston County Library
68 Calhoun Street

Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841;
or Peter Wentworth, charleston@aivf.org

CLEVELAND, OH:

OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

Contact: Annetta Marion or Bernadette Gillota, (216) 651-7315
cleveland@aivf.org; www.ohiofilms.com

COLUMBIA, SC:

When: Second Sundays

Where: Art Bar, 1211 Park St.

Contact: Wade Sellers, (803) 929-0066
columbia@aivf.org

DALLAS, TX:

VIDEO ASSOCIATION OF DALLAS

When: Bi-monthly

Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 428-8700
dallas@aivf.org

EDISON, NJ:

Where: Passion River Productions,
190 Lincoln Hwy.

Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711
edison@aivf.org; www.passionriver.com

FORT WAYNE, IN:

Contact: Erik Mollberg
(260) 691-3258; fortwayne@aivf.org

HOUSTON, TX:

SWAMP

When: Last Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where: 1519 West Main

Contact: Mary Lampe, (713) 522-8592
houston@aivf.org

HUNTSVILLE, AL:

Contact: Charles White, (256) 895-0423
huntsville@aivf.org

JEFFERSON COUNTY, AL:

Contact: Paul Godby, (205) 956-3522
jeffersoncounty@aivf.org

LINCOLN, NE:

NEBRASKA INDEPENDENT FILM PROJECT

When: Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street

Contact: Jared Minary, lincoln@aivf.org,
(402) 467-1077, www.nifp.org

LOS ANGELES, CA:

When: Third Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Where: EZTV, 18th Street arts Center, 629 18th St., #6, Santa Monica

Contact: Michael Masucci
(310) 829-3389; losangeles@aivf.org

MILWAUKEE, WI:

MILWAUKEE INDEPENDENT FILM SOCIETY

When: First Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

Where: Milwaukee Enterprise Center,
2821 North 4th, Room 140

Contact: Laura Gembolis, (414) 688-2375
milwaukee@aivf.org; www.mifs.org/salo

NASHVILLE, TN

Where: See www.naivf.com for events

Contact: Stephen Lackey, nashville@aivf.org

PORTLAND, OR:

Where: Hollywood Theatre

Contact: David Bryant, (503) 244-4225
portland@aivf.org

ROCHESTER, NY:

Where: Visual Studies Workshop

Contact: Liz Lehmann
(585) 377-1109; rochester@aivf.org

SAN DIEGO, CA:

When: Monthly

Where: Media Arts Center, 921 25th Street
Contact: Erhan van Thillo (619) 230-1938
sandiego@aivf.org

SAN FRANCISCO, CA:

Contact: Kathy Vaguilar
(510) 482-3484; sanfrancisco@aivf.org

SEATTLE, WA:

SEATTLE INDIE NETWORK

When: Bi-monthly

Where: Wiggly World and 911 Media Arts Center

Contact: Andrea Mydlarz, Fiona Orway;
seattle@aivf.org

TUCSON, AZ:

Contact: Jana Segal, (520) 906-7295
tucson@aivf.org

WASHINGTON, DC:

Contact: DC Salon hotline,
(202) 661-7145, washingtondc@aivf.org

THANK YOU

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) provides a wide range of programs and services for independent moving image makers and the media community, including *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, information services, and arts and media policy advocacy.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:



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The Nathan Cummings Foundation
The National Endowment for the Arts
New York State Council on the Arts
The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation
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BUSINESS/INDUSTRY MEMBERS: AL: Cypress Moon Productions; AZ: Ascension Pictures; CA: Action/Cut Directed By Seminars; Arrowwire LLC; Groovy Like a Movie; Illuminaire Entertainment, Jungle Software; Media Del'Arte; San Diego Asian Film Foundation; SJPL Films, Ltd.; CO: Pay Reel; CT: Anvil Production; DC: 48 Hour Film Project; FL: Academy Leader Inc; Key West Films Society; New Screen Broadcasting; IL: Shattering Paradigms Entertainment, LLC; MA: Escape TV; Exit One Productions; Glidecam Industries; Monkey Ray Productions, LLC; MI: Michael Kuentz Communications; MD: Brownpenny Films; NewsGroup, Inc.; NH: Kinetic Films; NJ: Chica Luna Productions/Chica Sol Films; Lumiere Media; NY: 25th Asbury Shorts of New York; American Montage; C-Hundred Film Corporation; Code 16/Radical Avid; Cypress Films; D. R. Reiff and Associates; DeKart Video; Docurama; Downtown Avid; Forest Creatures Entertainment; Free Dream Films; Getcast.com; Gigantic Brand; Greenhouse Pictures LLC; Greenwich Street Productions; Inkling Productions; Interflx; Lantern Productions; Lightworks Producing Group; Mad Mad Judy; Mercer Media; Missing Pixel; Moxie Firecracker Films; Off Ramp Films, Inc.; On the Prowl Productions; The Outpost; Robin Frank Management; Symphony of Chaos Productions; Triune Pictures; Wolfen Productions; OR: Art Institute of Portland; PA: Skanfo Inc.; RI: The Revival House; VA: The Project Studio; Singapore: Crimson Forest Films

NONPROFIT MEMBERS: AR: Henderson State University; AZ: Pan Left Productions; CA: East Bay Media Center; Everyday Gandhis Project; Film Arts Foundation; NAATA/Media Fund; New Images Productions; Sundance Institute; USC School of Cinema and TV; CO: Denver Center Media; CT: Film Fest New Haven; Hartley Film Foundation; DC: American University School of Communication; Gaea Foundation; FL: Miami International Film Festival; University of Tampa; GA: Image Film and Video Center; HI: Pacific Islanders in Communications; IL: Art Institute of Chicago (Video Data Bank); Community Television Network; Department of Communication/NLU; Kartemquin Films; Light Bound; IN: University of Notre Dame; KS: Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee; KY: Appalshop; Paducah Film Society; ME: Maine Photographic Workshop; MA: CCTV; Documentary Educational Resources; Harvard University, OsCLibrary; LTC; MD: 7 Oils Production; Silverdocs; AFI Discovery Channel Doc Festival; MI: Ann Arbor Film Festival; MN: Walker Art Center; IFP/MSP; MO: DHTV; Webster University Film Series; MS: Magnolia Independent Film Festival; NC: Duke University, Film & Video Dept.; University of North Carolina, Dept. of Broadcast and Cinema; UNC, Wilmington; Cucalorus Film Foundation; NE: Nebraska Independent Film Project/AIVF Salon Lincoln; Ross

Film Theater, UN-Lincoln; NJ: Black Maria Film Festival; Capriole Productions; College of New Jersey, Department of Communication Studies; Freedom Film Society, Inc.; Princeton University, Program in Visual Arts; NM: Girls Film School; University of New Mexico; NY: American Museum of Natural History; Arts Engine; Cornell Cinema; Council for Positive Images, Inc.; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Department of Media Study SUNY Buffalo; Dutchess Community College; Educational Video Center; Experimental Television Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Firelight Media; Hourglass Group; International Film Seminars; LMC-TV; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; Melted.org; National Black Programming Consortium; National Video Resources; New School University; New York Women in Film and Television; Paper Tiger Television; Parnassus Works; POV/The American Documentary; RIT School of Film and Animation; School of Visual Arts, Film Department; Squeaky Wheel; Standby Program; Stonestreet Studios Film and TV Acting Workshop; Stony Brook Film Festival; Syracuse University; United Community Centers; WaxFactory; Witness; Women Make Movies; OH: Athens Center for Film And Video; Independent Pictures/AIVF Ohio Salon; Media Bridges Cincinnati; School of Film, Ohio University; Wexner Center; OR: Media Arts, MHCC; The Oregon Film and Video Foundation; PA: Philadelphia Independent Film & Video Assoc. (PIFVA); Pittsburgh Filmmakers; Prince Music Center; Scribe Video Center; RI: Flickers Arts Collaborative; SC: South Carolina Arts Commission; TN: Indie Memphis Film Festival; TX: Austin Film Society; Southwest Alternate Media Project; UT: Sundance Institute; WA: Seattle Central Community College; Thurston Community Television; Canada: The Banff Center Library; RIDM; France: The Carmago Foundation

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THE LIST

THE INDIE PLAYLIST

By Amy Ouzoonian

Soundtracks have been contributing to cinematic vision since silent films. Some films achieve a perfect harmony between the music and the visuals; others are more reflective and experimental. We asked some of our favorite filmmakers which independent film soundtracks have made an impact on them. Here is their song and dance.

"John Carpenter's score for *Halloween* would have to be my favorite. It's a little bit antiquated now, from all the bad imitations, not to mention the endlessly derivative sequels, but that only proves its influence. The fact is, the original 1978 movie *Halloween* still packs a punch and it's due considerably to the music. Most film fans can name its theme in six notes. True, the main theme is a bit of a bite off of "Tubular Bells" from *The Exorcist* and it's not the most subtle of scores, but its simplicity and severity—the key to its effectiveness—is an integral support in the movie's well chosen ethic that less equals more. There always has to be some kind of obstacle to create something truly innovative, right? OK, maybe it's just because that *Halloween* theme is so creepy and evil."

Ari Kirschenbaum, director, *Fabled*

"I think it's Alfonso Cuarón's *Great Expectations*. I loved the soundtrack because it was so eclectic, ranging from the more produced dreamy sounds of Mono, to raw melodic rock tunes by Pulp and Chris Cornell. Then there's Césaria Évora's version of the beautiful "Bésame Mucho." And as diverse as the songs were, they all captured the mood of the story and the characters so well—the heartwrenching emotions, tormented souls, unrequited love."

Bertha Bay-Sa Pan, director, *Face*

"One of the best indie soundtracks for me is Wim Wenders's *Until The End Of The World*, an amazing vision of songs, and one of my favorite things is that he has Elvis Costello covering "Days" by The Kinks, which was a song very dear to Wim and that he used in one of his earliest movies. I also love Wes Anderson's *Rushmore* soundtrack. Again, The Kinks make a bold appearance here with "Nothing In This World Can Stop Me Worryin' Bout That Girl" and a song I always had hoped to put in a movie "Concrete & Clay" by Unit 4 Plus 2. *Jackie Brown* is one of my very favorite soundtracks. I love Bobby Womack's theme song to *Across 110th Street* that Quentin uses here. I love the *Lost In Translation* soundtrack and the amazing songs by Kevin Shields

which Sophia Coppola uses so beautifully. The Hughes Brothers—love the soul jams by Isaac Hayes in *Dead Presidents*. And I love the *Dazed and Confused* soundtrack and Kurt Voss's raunchy chick bands in *Down And Out With The Dolls*, and of course "Oh, Brother!" by the great C Brothers!"

Allison Anders, director, *Mi Vida Loca*

"*Ghost World* had an amazing soundtrack—it complimented the quirkiness and sadness of the film and reflected the filmmaker Terry Zwigoff. You actually felt that Terry had pulled these songs from his own collection."

Illeana Douglas, director, *Supermarket*

"*Donnie Darko*—by this I mean the actual film's soundtrack and not the CD release of the score. While Michael Andrew's score is amazing unto itself, the mix of that with music from Gary Jules, Echo & The Bunnymen, Tears For Fears, Joy Division, Duran Duran and others was tonally perfect. I was absolutely floored the first time I saw the film."

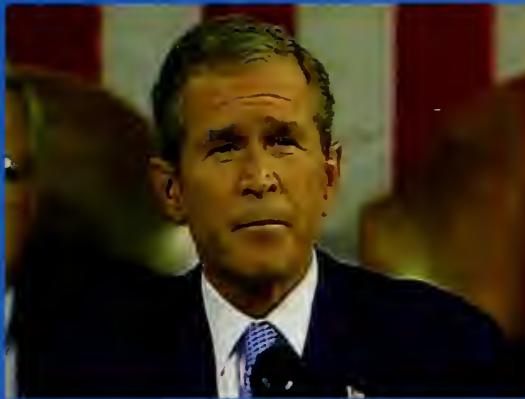
Frederick Wedler, producer, *Ocha Cups for Christmas*

"*Run Lola Run*, definitely my favorite indie soundtrack. In this case the music is as important to the film as the performances, the script, and the fast paced editing. It drives the film and makes the experience of watching the film very special. It's like a roller coaster ride. I think Tom Tykwer created a soundtrack that was very unique at the time and it helped to set the film apart and make it emotionally compelling. I do use the score a lot as temp track for my own editing."

Sven Pape, director, *LA Twister*

"My favorite independent film soundtrack is probably *Rushmore*. It's so quirky and yet upbeat. It's a lot of fun to put on in the background when I'm writing."

Katherine Makinney, president, Postmodernparables.com



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