



MESSAGE  
- Lori Spring  
- Alan Davis

PHONE NO.	
RECEIVED BY	
DATE	

MESSAGE - Fringe into  
the density  
of a Chroming in a sea  
of signs  
Date will be done

MESSAGE FOR  
- Colin Branton  
- Jean-Pierre

L.I.F.T. Newsletter  
Volume 2 Number 2  
June - July 1988  
Year of the Dragon

MESSAGE  
- James  
- Andrew

MESSAGE - I want to  
remember myself  
but it's not  
same as

MESSAGE FOR  
- Jerry Thelley

PHONE NO.	
RECEIVED BY	
DATE	



MESSAGE FOR  
- Edie  
- Lori Spring

MESSAGE FOR  
- JEAN-LUC  
- GOD  
- HEAVE



WANTS TO  
BORROW  
IDEAS...

MESSAGE FOR  
- Joseph Beuys  
- Fox  
- 20th Century



MESSAGE - Jerry, wrong  
father I'll not  
sign and forward, but  
George Helms on  
- 11-19

ALL

LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS  
OF TORONTO  
PRESENTS

**5**  
**INDEPENDENTS**

The Toronto Premiere screening of five films  
by local independent filmmakers

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*TREE TALE*

by Amy Bodman

*THE INSIDE FILE*

by Richard Mackenzie

*HEART OF THE FOREST*

by Adrienne Mitchell  
& Linda Outcalt

*FAT MAN / THIN MAN*

by Derek Rogers

*WHAT'S IT TAKE*

by Peter Vinet

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Five short films that reflect a variety of themes and styles; from a contemporary silent film to a children's drama.

July 14th., 1988 9 pm

**BLOOR CINEMA**

## NEWS ITEMS

## VOLUNTEER FORMS

Rebecca Rutland, membership co-ordinator of LIFT, would like to thank all of you who have responded to the volunteer job list mail-out issued in May. She would also like to remind those of you who have not yet responded to please do so A.S.A.P.

## NEW STAFF

David Jefferson has been hired as Assistant Technical Manager; he comes to us armed with both technical knowledge and film studies ... and he's eager to relieve Marc of some of his pressing duties. Gary Popovich was hired as Communications/Publicist; he is presently putting together plans for some LIFT screenings as well as taking on editorial duties for the LIFT newsletter. Luis Ceriz has been hired as a Production Assistant to Annette Møngaard and Marsha Herle on the THREE BLONDES INC./LIFT co-production. Luis has just completed his third year in the Film Studies Program at Ryerson.

## NEW FALL WORKSHOPS

We are in the process of organizing some new fall workshops. These include: Production Management for Short Films; Experimental Survival Workshop, all the things you might have to do to continue making experimental films, including writing, curating, and teaching; Sound Workshop, sound still seems to be secondary in many people's minds, making the films suffer as a result; Art Direction; Advanced Screenwriting; and Directing Workshops. Please pass your suggestions on to us; we'd like to hear your ideas.

## DIRECTORS APPOINTED TO ACADEMY PROGRAM

Janis Lundman and Peter (Bay) Weyman were amongst nine Ontarians chosen by The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television

for its Director Observer Program (DOP). Initiated two years ago by the academy, DOP gives the appointed filmmakers a chance to help produce a feature film with a seasoned director. The salaried positions last a maximum of 12 weeks, depending on the number of films in production. Funding is provided by the Ontario Film Development Corporation. Producer Don Haig, filmmaker Atom Egoyan, director Bruce Pittman and Ian Birnie, an officer with the OFDC, chose the finalists. Peter has already been placed with director Patrick O'Connor to work on Norman Jewison's production of *The January Man*. The other appointees will be placed when suitable positions become available. Congratulations to both Janis and Peter.

## VIDEO FOR PBS (from Parallelogramme Magazine)

Alive from Off Center is conducting an international search for video for summer broadcast on PBS. They are primarily interested in performance video and related genres of television experimentation (video animation, dance, fiction, documentary, performance and music). An acquisition fee of approximately \$300 per minute will be paid. For more information contact Helen DeMichiel, Associate Producer, Alive from Off Center, DTCA/TV, 1640 Como Ave., Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108, (612) 646-4611.

## GRANTS, AWARDS, AND MAJOR SCREENINGS

Ed Ackerman's *Primiti Too Taa* continues to do extremely well at the festivals. Ed received a \$100 prize at Ann Arbor; the Bronze Apple Award at the National Educational Film and Video Festival in Oakland, California; was a finalist in the American Film and Video Festival in New York; was accepted to show at the Zagreb Animation Festival and at the Oberhausen Festival in West Germany. While at the National Educational Film and Video Festival

Ed met with American producers and distributors, consequently, he sold *Primiti Too Taa* to "Spike and Mike" for the Festival of Animation tour: a 35mm theatrical package of short animation. So Ed will soon re-animate the film in 35mm as soon as he completes his 70mm Imax version. He has been working with LIFT member Herwig Geyer building a 70mm camera adapted from a Police mug shot camera. Imax Co. has given the filmmaker 100ft. of film to do the initial tests, but they are reluctant to show something like *Primiti Too Taa* on their big screen ... but Ed will try to persuade.



Marc LaFoy recently received a Saskatchewan Arts Board film completion grant for his film *Passing Through ...* LIFT members Barbara Sternberg, Ed Ackerman, Annette Møngaard and Mike Hoolboom screened their films at the National Gallery opening in Ottawa ... also at the opening, Ed Ackerman was invited to give a

talk about independent animation filmmaking, creative problem solving, creative problem causing and how they are connected. The 80 seat lecture theatre was filled to capacity, but then again, Ed offered a free neck tie to all who stayed for the full hour ... Mike Hoolboom was accepted at the Ann Arbor Film Festival for his film *Scaling* ... Gary Popovich's new film *Immoral Memories I* was accepted for screening at the Ann Arbor Film Festival and at Oberhausen in West Germany ... Scott Gilmore, Lori Spring, Adrienne Mitchell, and Ed Ackerman participated at the Yorkton Festival in Saskatchewan where Lori won 1st Prize for her film *Inside/Out*. Congratulations Lori! (Scott Gilmore brings us more news from Yorkton later in this issue) ... Adrienne Mitchell's *Heart of the Forest* was the only Canadian film accepted in competition for the short film category at the International Children's Festival in Adelaide, Australia (June 20-25) ... and finally the IMAGES 88 festival has accepted LIFT filmmakers Marsha Herle (*A Little Older*), John Greyson (*Ads Epidemic*), Gary Kibbins (*Cop Out*), Colin Brunton (*The Mysterious Moon Men of Canada*), and Alexandra Gill (*Harriet Loves*) for screening.

#### LIFT AT THE BLOOR CINEMA

A LIFT screening has been scheduled for Thursday July 14, 9:00pm at the Bloor Cinema (Bloor and Bathurst). Derek Rogers and Richard MacKenzie made the initial contacts and the arrangements. Should it be successful, the screening could conceivably turn into a series ... so come out and support the venture. Films include: Adrienne Mitchell's *Heart of the Forest*, Amy Bodman's *Tree Tale*, Peter Vinet's *What's It Take*, Derek Roger's *Fat Man/Thin Man*, and Richard MacKenzie's *The Inside File*.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### CINEMATOGRAPHERS AVAILABLE

Cinematographers, Maurizio (Moe) Belli and Stephen Smith of FINE CUT PRODUCTIONS have recently become members of LIFT. Moe has shot a number of half-hour dramas, several for LIFT members (Maureen Judge's *Family Business*, aired on CBC-TV, and Daniel Campbell's *Unhooked*, screened at this year's 11th Montreal World Film Festival). Stephen was cinematographer on *Black Earth*, a one-hour documentary photographed in India by Jessy Nishihaute and Vivian Darroch-Lozowski (to premiere at AGO) and has freelanced for the CBC...Moe and Stephen have a complete camera and lighting package and are interested in participating in LIFT shoots...members interested in viewing their demo reel should call their office at 964-1939.

##### SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

The Praxis Film Development Workshop is accepting script submissions for their fall session (OCTOBER 9 - DECEMBER 4). With seasoned professional independents, participants work towards creating their own innovative feature length scripts that will be ready for production. Deadline for fall session is JULY 15, 1988, for spring session NOVEMBER 7, 1988. For more information see the brochure in the LIFT office.

##### PRODUCTION ASSISTANT AVAILABLE

Looking for work as a production assistant for film projects. Experience mostly in theatre but some film. Well organized, resourceful and intelligent. Contact Doug Collins (416) 533-8776.

##### STUDIO FOR RENT

Dogstar Studio, 900' of unobstructed space, with power, @ \$5.00/hour, Queen & Roncesvalles. Contact Doug Collins at 533-8776.

##### IMAGES 88

Come and celebrate Canadian independent film and video this June at the Northern Visions Showcase. Northern Visions, an organization of film and videomakers, distributors, and curators, is holding a four evening event at the Factory Theatre, JUNE 28 - JULY 1, showing two programmes each evening. The shows will feature independent video and film from across Canada and include work from Toronto. Call 971-8405 for further information.



##### CAST - CENTRE FOR ACTOR'S STUDY IN TORONTO

by Janis Lundman

For anyone wanting to understand the process of acting and how an actor prepares for and learns a role, I highly recommend sitting in as an observer during some CAST classes. CAST is a non-profit group which serves as an artistic home for professional actors. It treats the craft of acting as a serious enterprise, and the individual's development of that craft as an on-going and open-ended process. To this end, classes from beginner to advanced are held and structured to develop and refine the technique of acting.

The actors participate in scene studies and monologues over a period of one month. They meet twice a week and may perform their scenes and monologues up to 3 times during this period. At the end of each performance the instructor asks questions and gives suggestions as to how the actor could change the performance.

The classes are taught by instructors who are actor/directors themselves: Diana Reis, Maryanne MacIsaac, Kurt Reis, and Rosemary Dunsmore. Invited experts such as Carole Rosenfeld (from HB Studios in New York) and Neil Freeman are invited to teach special classes periodically throughout the year. The cost is \$10.00 per class with a minimum of 4 classes required. For further information on CAST you can call 925-1634. Their office hours are 11am-3pm.



## FESTIVAL REPORTS

### FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE FILMS ET VIDEOS DE FEMMES DE MONTREAL

by Edie Steiner

The fourth annual women's film and video festival took place in Montreal May 27 - June 3, 1988. About 150 films and videos of varying lengths were screened in three locations in the downtown core. Toronto was well represented including films/videos by LIFT members Kim Derko, Paula Fairfield and Lori Spring. Lori Spring was present at the screening of her film *Inside/Out*, which was enthusiastically received by the audience. The general atmosphere of the festival was very low-key. There was not much audience interaction or discussion and the feeling was somewhat cool and isolated. Audiences at video screenings seemed particularly impatient with anything extremely experimental. Many screenings were poorly attended, though others drew crowds. Film seemed to draw more attendance/attention than video.

The festival seemed well organized—screenings occurred on time, they offered a great catalogue for \$5, coupons for 10 screenings at \$25, theatres were relatively easy to get to and were near each other, festival personnel were friendly and courteous, and there seemed to be an even distribution of English/French language soundtracks or subtitles. Despite the lack of "film festival" intensity, it was fun.

### THE YORKTON SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

by Scott Gilmore

I had never attended the Yorkton Festival before but I'd heard a lot about it. I wanted to go but there was only one problem—money! I was broke, and because Yorkton's in the middle of nowhere, its expensive to get there, especially last minute. The flight alone was going to cost \$630 return. Anyway, I did end up going, with my partner Felix Gray, and we had a great time.

For those of you who haven't heard of Yorkton, or who have but know little about it, I'll do my best to clue you in.

Some key bits of info:

- \*It is the largest and longest running short film festival in North America.

- \*In 1979, it was changed to an all Canadian film festival—films from coast to coast compete for the Golden Sheaf Awards.

- \*The Golden Sheaf Awards themselves are heavy suckers. A bit too heavy to use as a paper weight but perfect as a book end.

- \*The town of Yorkton is approximately 175 kms. north-east of Regina. That's right, smack-dab in the middle of prairie farming country.

The festival programming was spread out over five days in various theaters and screening rooms throughout the town of Yorkton. An added feature of the festival was The Marketplace that enabled people to privately view any film entered. This was great because not all of the nominated films were in the program, and films would also conflict with workshops and seminars.

A total of 313 films were entered and 77 films were nominated. Among those 77 films, 4 were by

LIFT members—Ed Ackerman's *Primiti Too Too*, Lori Spring's *Inside/Out*, Adrienne Mitchell's *Heart Of The Forest*, and my own film *Bouncing Back*. Congratulations to the nominees—the competition was stiff.

Coming out victorious at the awards ceremony was Lori Spring's *Inside/Out*, winning the golden Sheaf Award for Best Drama under 30 minutes—good going Lori! Furthermore, the Original Music for *Inside/Out*, performed and conducted by John Tucker, won a Golden Sheaf Craft Award. A list of all the winner's can be seen in next month's *Cinema Canada*.

The festival was not without its fair share of controversy. On the morning of the Awards Banquet, rumours were in the air—some heavy shit was going to go down. It was later announced at the forum discussion with the jury members that awards would not be given in 6 of the 15 categories. They felt that the films in those categories were not worthy of Golden Sheaf Awards. Needless to say, that pissed a lot of people off, and rightly so. They insulted filmmakers whose films were nominated (some of them award winners at other festivals), and they told them, "We're sorry, but we feel your film is no good." Without the support of Canada's filmmakers, this festival is nowhere. The film festival is an event showcasing the best short films produced in this country this year and, in the words of the Yorkton organizers, "a meeting place for the best and the brightest of the Canadian Motion Picture Community." I am angry not so much at the concern for quality control, but rather with the timing of the decision. It would have been much more appropriate to have reached a decision at the pre-

selection committee stage. How can anyone justify pre-selecting films in a category, phoning filmmakers from the other end of the country with 'good news', congratulating them, and expect them to shell out one thousand bucks to attend a festival, only to have a panel of critics tell them that their film and all the others in their category aren't up to snuff. No thanks!

Nevertheless, I was happy I attended and I would recommend the festival to any independent filmmaker who can afford it. It's a good opportunity to see the most recent work by Canadian independents and it offers the chance to meet and discuss films with your peers.



#### MONTHLY SCREENINGS

8:00 pm at LIFT

July 11  
 FAT FILM, GRID, SCALING, and SVETLANA  
 by Mike Hoolboom  
 Program 65 minutes.

July 25  
 THE SCAVENGERS  
 by Ross Turnbull

VIVISECTION and BLIND LOVE  
 by Miroslav Baszak  
 Program 64 minutes

## CINEMATIC INTERCOURSE

by Gary Popovich

Stories circulate around the membership concerning the monthly screenings. Some look forward to the meetings in the tiny LIFT office crammed with up to 65 members and as many beer bottles and opinions—where fists pound and blood can boil hot enough to emit enough heat into the room to crinkle the film emulsion into shapes that even the experimental filmmakers would envy. Others prefer to watch the films and leave immediately afterwards. Others still prefer not to show up because there really is no critical discourse that takes place at the screenings.

Included amongst the aims and objectives of LIFT are: the support and encouragement of independent filmmakers who represent an alternate and independent way of filmmaking, and the provision for an environment in which personal contact promotes communication, exchange of ideas and learning through the experience of others. Our films as well as our speech (and writing) enter a dialogue regardless of how well we control it. If we care to nurture an independent, innovative, artistic sensibility associated with the co-op our voices have to be heard. Silence is tantamount to submission; submission serves the status quo, the dominant forms; and the dominant forms are vehemently opposed to independence. The co-op is a place where things can be thought through differently, where what we do, how we live, how we make ... films, love, our gestures aroused from a passionate working engagement with what's around us ... is not restricted to one way, or a right way.

But this has to be exercised and continually fought for with intelligence, sensitivity, and generosity. It can't happen if LIFT becomes, as some members fear, a large machine for wimpy backslapping

and business deals ... or worse, a discount equipment rental company. The monthly meetings/screenings could be one forum (among others) where the more pressing business of film can be discussed—our tools. As workers in the cinema we need to talk about light, form, colour, rhythm, grain, characterization, narrative, emulsion and film stocks (as if 7291 and 7292 were all that existed), timbre, counterpoint, pitch, the relationships with which we work—image-image, image-

sound, and sound-sound, and the world that generates these images and sounds and takes them up as part of it. Our work as artists, when we get together, is to talk about aesthetics. Anything else is unreal, emulsionless, base, and therefore probably belongs in Hollywood.

Monthly screenings are once again being held at the LIFT office, 345 Adelaide St. West Suite 505.

## LIFT CROSSWORD

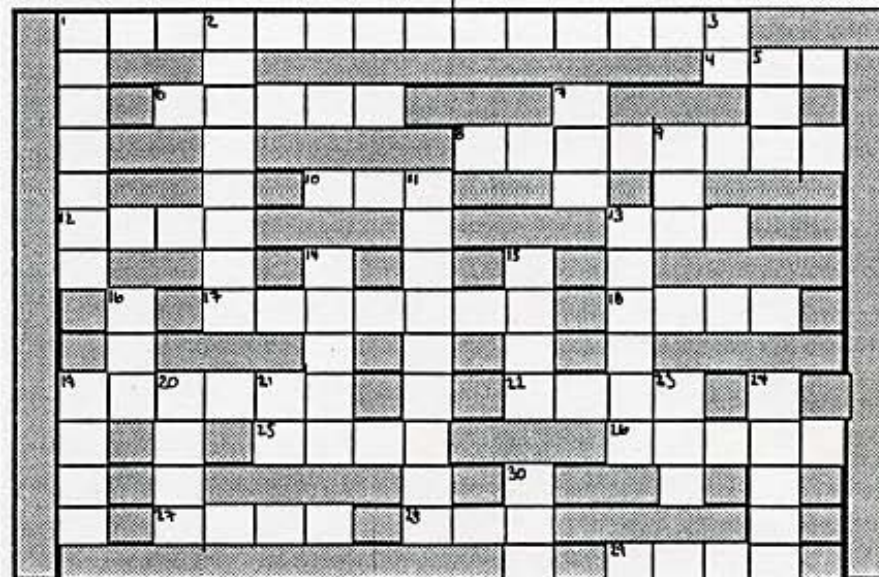
### ACROSS

1. Images 88 location
4. Development Education Ctr.
6. Our local rep
8. LIFT's street address
10. Ms. Pazdro
12. Director of *Triumph of the Will*
13. Free rag
17. Late great Canadian animator
18. No. of LIFT staff raised in Toronto
19. Workshop leader
22. Film critic
25. FILM ARTS Don
26. Demon film stock moguls
27. Enormous film format
28. No. of LIFT staff
29. A whole lot of "Music"

The first person to bring into the LIFT office this Crossword correctly completed will win a special prize.

### DOWN

1. Hoolboom title
2. Fat funding agency
3. Mr. *Primiti Too Tee*
5. Last Word
7. Colour of Rebecca's hair
9. Recent LIFT screening locale
11. Winter tanner
13. Famous Eskimo
14. She backed down
15. Eaton's Center artist
16. Local job
19. Sirk's *Written on the \_\_\_\_\_*
20. Winner at Yorkton
21. Colourful Canadian interrogative expression
23. The Cinematographer
24. Shoebox theatre owner
30. NFB's *After the \_\_\_\_\_*



*With this issue of the newsletter, we are beginning a regular column of interviews conducted by Leo Faragalli. As LIFT grows larger it gets harder and harder for filmmakers to get to know each other, to exchange ideas. Now that LIFT is administratively and financially stable, we can use the newsletter's articles and interviews, as well as the monthly screenings, as a forum in which to address the important questions concerning the future of LIFT. Leo has interviewed a number of filmmakers, both long standing and new members, on their filmmaking practice in relation to the co-op.*

#### **PETER METTLER IN INTERVIEW** By Leo Faragalli

Peter Mettler attended Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto and graduated (as a cinematographer) in '82. He has worked with Atom Egoyan and Patricia Rozema and numerous other distinguished Canadian filmmakers. His films, including the soon to be finished feature *The Top of His Head, Eastern Avenue* ('84) and *Scissere* ('82), explore ideas of perception, intuition and communication.

Leo Faragalli: How long have you been a member of LIFT, and why did you join?

Peter Mettler: I was actually involved in its conception, along with Bruce McDonald and numerous other people, while in my last year at Ryerson. A few of us at school wanted to form a co-op amongst ourselves, because nothing existed along those lines. At about the same time Janis Lundman had put

photo by Martha Davis



out the word for anyone who'd be interested in forming a co-op to contact her. So several disparate people came together, basically via Janis Lundman, and started forming ideas about a co-op.

L.F.: Were these ideas geared towards the practical elements of production or were they more ideologically directed?

P.M.: Well, at the time there were two groups of people. Those of us who wanted to do something more along the ideological, involving a forum that might even lead to the evolution of some kind of movement or aesthetic union; we didn't want everything to look the same or be the same, but felt that at the core should be the work, the quality of the work, and the exchange of ideas that were being expressed. The other party involved with the discussions was more interested in "...how do we set up all the rules?" and "...how do we talk about having meetings?" and "how do we talk about talking about having meetings", etc.' In a way we were very opposite factions. I mean it's thanks to the administrative mind that LIFT got off the ground, but it didn't really get off the ground the way we had envisioned it. Part of the problem is that, being government subsidized, you have to be

open to everyone, and in being fair to everyone an integral artistic grouping becomes more difficult. We wanted to find a happy medium between being completely open and channelling similar ideas about filmmaking into a co-op. Also we wanted to avoid what had happened to the last co-op, which was that people came in and started making industrial films with co-op equipment and the institution of the co-op started getting taxed while the ideological focus dissolved. That's what we were afraid of ... we didn't want another institution like that.

I visited some of the other co-ops, attended meetings and heard what people had to say. The amount of energy needed to properly set up or alter systems is very demanding—there was a conflict. We wanted to make films, not to get into politics, and to make that our entire work. For instance, what Annette [Mangeard] is doing is a huge job, and it's hard for her to still make films. We're still connected to LIFT but it's not in a big way. We support it and it seems to be growing in a positive direction, from what I can see.



L.F.: Do you think then that your own films have maintained a certain evolutionary development, that the sources of your aesthetic vision are related?

P.M.: They are definitely related ... there is definitely an evolution. The film I made in school dealt with certain themes that are being elaborated upon now. I haven't made a lot of films since school but I did a film called

of intuition. It's been a huge project because it's a 35mm theatrical release, with a budget of 1.3 million dollars and I've been working on it for five years, and four years of that was getting it off the ground—raising the money, writing, modifying, auditioning and getting locations and all that stuff. And that's where I am now ... editing *The Top of His Head*.

L.F.: It is, but if you told me the point of view of the narration it might be clearer still.

P.M.: It sort of bounces around actually. It's also conscious of itself. The fact that he's selling satellite dishes is played in a way that what you're watching could be a satellite transmission—it's just a story, it's not a real thing—I mean that it doesn't give you the illusion of getting into the character's head or mind-space completely.

L.F.: Are there other artists that help support the direction of your work?

P.M.: To begin with, just personally, I think that the person that influenced me most as an artist is a sculptor in Switzerland, whose specialty is not film. His approach to his work and how he ties that in with his life, taught me a lot—that form and intellect are not the most important things. In Toronto there is a sense of working in isolation at times, but I think that I've been very lucky. I think that there is a lot of communication that happens when you work with other people on specific projects. I've worked with Atom Egoyan, Bruce McDonald, Patricia Rozema, Jeremy Podeswa and numerous other people—and we all talk to each other, and we all talk about what we're doing and I think that as a result there are some ... shared sensibilities that come out of it. They're not the same films by any means, but at least people are being pushed in a direction other than commercial mainstream ... and I find that there's some kind of unstable solidarity there. So working on a project together, rather than working on a proposed idea or film, is the best way, I think, to communicate about the work and the direction it should take.

L.F.: If the project is your own though, and you ask others to help determine direction while in progress, does this jeopardize the work at all?



photo by Martha Davis

*Scissere* that was a ninety minute experimental drama, which is difficult to explain; you have to see it. From there, getting out of school, I did a film called *Eastern Avenue* which was two things: it was a reaction to *Scissere* in terms of *Scissere* being a very intellectual and heavily structured film and exhausting to make for me. And *Eastern Avenue*, as opposed to that, progressed without boundaries or guidelines, no script, total intuition, taking the camera and shooting, trying not to relate anything back to what I had shot earlier ... and I love that film, even though it doesn't make sense to most people ... it's something that I really cherish, along with the experience of it. And that was a working tool for the present film, *The Top of His Head*, which has as one of its central themes, the idea

L.F.: It's an evocative title. Can you talk about the idea of the unconscious as both a dramatic and a formal element. Do they both exist in this film?

P.M.: I'm trying to work on both levels. The film shows a protagonist who undergoes a shift in perception—he's a satellite-dish salesman, and the film formally explores that perception in a way that the audience also undergoes that shift in perception. The images become non-linear, non-narrative and non-dramatic—they don't serve the story anymore, but they are something that the audience has to be involved with, and participate with, and react to, in the way that the character is involved in his environment in the film. I'm not sure that that's clear.



photo by Martha Davis

P.M.: *The Top of His Head* was a difficult film for me to make. While working in a large group of twenty-five people, as opposed to fifteen or ten, I learned that there are advantages and disadvantages. Some of the more spontaneous creative ideas were weakened because of the size of the production while other ideas that involved a lot of set up were strengthened. On the whole I'd probably tone it down a bit next time—depending on the content of the film. But I'd rather have more time with fewer people and really work things through.

L.F.: It appears then, that you do consult with other filmmakers at a theoretical level.

P.M.: Yes, but not as much as in the past. I think that an organized forum for that sort of thing might be a good idea. I've often thought of just having a bunch of people together about once a month. We could bring people together in a similar way to what Friljof Capra and the Elmwood Institute are doing. They discuss things by putting two or three people in front of everyone and letting them discuss an issue while the others listen. The ideas are presented quite well because it doesn't turn into a free-for-all. After about an hour everyone else contributes. If

every month there's a different group at the centre, then you remain focused and avoid getting out of hand.

L.F.: One assumes then, that there are issues, theoretical, innovative or otherwise, that could be addressed; but don't you think that there are as many film styles as there are filmmakers? ... or do some innovative trends exist within the group of young filmmakers in Toronto?

P.M.: I don't really know at LIFT what's happening right now. Of the people that I do know, if there is such a thing as trend, then it's very subtle. There are some formal similarities for example, between my film and Atom's [Egoyan]. Long takes to begin, but again that's where collaboration happens. I worked on his last three films as a cinematographer, so naturally there will be visual and pacing similarities although the "stories" are quite different. More generally, amongst the people that I talk with, there is an encouraging tendency towards originality and exploration. These include a self-consciousness in some of the work, in that the work comments self-reflexively on the medium of film, television, photography, acting and even the auteur. Also you often find people dealing more generally with the entanglements of modern life as opposed to specifically Canadian issues—political, social, etc. But my point of view is very limited as I have been so immersed in the energy of making a film for several years now. And it is difficult to see all the films that are being made in our community—ac they often are shown only once or twice.



photo by Martha Davis

L.F.: Do you ever begin with an idea about these different methods of cinematic expression, develop that at length, and then impose what might be a secondary dramatic theme?

P.M.: Yeah it's true, that does happen ... but often my ideas begin in the form of visions, not intellectual constructs, but visions derived from a more irrational source ... they're painterly and impressionistic. That's the first seed for the idea that later has a narrative brought into it.

L.F.: And does that seed ever contain a consideration for the language, the syntax and semantics of cinema? If so, do they become primary thematic issues?

P.M.: Yes definitely. They're about that. I mean, my films deal with perception—that is the main theme! It's never spelled out but that is my main interest. In *The Top of His Head* the story is something that I dragged into it, so that more people could see it. So that my interests could effectively reach more people. But my interest in drama doesn't end there ... drama must have something going for it, it's been going on forever.

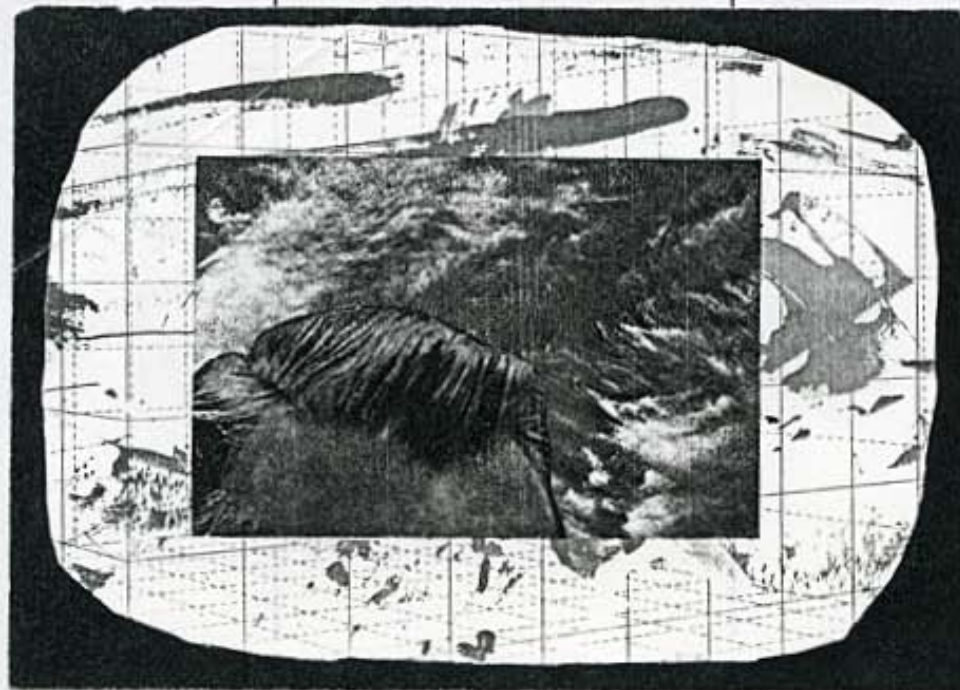
photo by Martha Davis



L.F.: Some people believe that art about art is bad art. How do you feel?

P.M.: I know what you mean. There is a certain elitism that some films propagate. These films hide, or are protected by a facade of "Art", when they're not really art. But then again, who decides? ... It's a whole other issue. Sometimes certain "experimentation" is simply just imitation. This I believe is the *modus vivendi* of

some of the works in any medium and the commercial film industry is a glaring example. I'm getting off topic. Art about art is very important when it's genuine and when there is real exploration with rewarding insight. Even if only one person watches it, it needs to be done. When it's the other form I mentioned ... it bugs me.



Credit: Greg Zbawew

## TAKING BACK OUR SCREENS

by Gary Popovich

As you are probably well aware the distribution issue in Canada has risen from the dust again only to be smothered by the government once more. The new distribution policy (proposed by Communications Minister Flora MacDonald), the much awaited bill which promised to put more control of foreign films in the hands of Canadian distributors, has been protested by Ronald Reagan; Jack Valenti, head of the studios' association in the U.S.; the U.S. Senate; and the State Department. In consequence, an altered bill has been prepared, much watered down and more acceptable to the Americans, in which distributors will be monitored by the Department of Communications (on a totally passive basis).

In effect, Americans received from our government, our Prime Minister and Communications Minister, everything they wished (in return the Americans worked out a deal in which they would protest MacDonald's new bill to make it appear to Canadians that the Minister was being tough with the Americans). Canadians got nothing out of this ruse, this plotting against Canadian culture, against the Canadian people, except the feeling that our Prime Minister and our government have betrayed us. Furthermore, in an effort to appease the expected anger arising from the film and cultural community, a \$10-million fund has been arranged and MacDonald recently made the announcement that it would be allocated towards Canadian film distribution, with an additional \$20-million for Telefilm Canada. But once again (and this has a long history in Canada, discussed recently in *Cinema Canada*, March 1988, No. 150, by Connie Tadros) out of an act of cowardice, blindness, or under the assumption that Canadians are complacent or don't care, our government throws money at

problems instead of executing political actions which could deal with the problem.

Throwing money into production and distribution is useless if we are continually unable to get access to our own screens. Even MacDonald's initially proposed legislation was much too soft. It is about time we stopped having our screens swamped with the work of Hollywood hacks who appeal to the lowest common denominator (and by Canadians who wish to do likewise).

But talking or writing about it is not enough—we need some kind of action. As Tadros has pointed out, the producers working with Telefilm have lost the will, desire and energy to work for a Canadian cinema as opposed to an American industry. They can no longer bring themselves to protest—they receive money and continue to manufacture TV product that might as well be disposable lighters, or fast food hamburgers, or footwear...instead of films for art galleries, festivals, and cinemas that have a discerning taste.

It is now left to the younger generation of filmmakers, and those few others who still care, to speak for an indigenous cinema, as opposed to an American cinema, to protest against our betrayal by our own government, to demand the return of our screens. We want to create and see our own work—now, while there is still a hope left of achieving it. To remain silent and passive is to condone the decisions by our government. It was American lobby groups expressing their interests who worked up the energy to persuade our government to sell us out. They thought we wouldn't care or protest; they assumed we would be complacent.

We need to begin discussing the issues. We can't leave the solutions of our problems to some nebulous industry executives—they

don't care. And we can't leave the work to whomever might be in the LIFT office, or at this coalition or that lobby group. We can use these pages to get ideas out; and again, we can use the monthly screenings. But we must begin talking, so that we can take up action—be it letter campaigns, meetings, protests, articles ... so that all of us, at all times are able to speak to our needs.

In addition to the distribution issues, taking back our screens might also mean imposing Canadian content quotas. We could also talk about the effectiveness of a levy on ticket prices that would go to a production fund for independents (as is done in some European countries). We should also be questioning the enormous amounts of Canada Council money that goes to the grand institutional art companies (ballet, opera, symphonies, etc.) while film production gets next to nothing (in fact during Flora MacDonald's last hand out the Canada Council did not receive money because no one at the Department of Communications knew that the Canada Council funded film production!) We must get the discourse going.



## FILM REVIEWS

### CLOSE YOUR EYES AND THINK OF ENGLAND by Janis Lundman

review by Scott Gilmore (AGO screening)

*Close Your Eyes and Think of England* by Janis Lundman is an examination of how society perceives the woman of the eighties, presented in a variety of filmic styles ranging from documentary to surreal drama. The film poses the burning question, "What advice would you give to a woman for her to be perfect?" and it admirably attempts not to answer it, but to shed some new light on an age-old question.

The film presents a woman's perspective of living in a 'man's world', living with the stereotypes, reacting to archaic male attitudes, and walking the fine line between independent woman and strident feminist.

A young woman scratches the silver coating from a lottery ticket and wins, but before she can collect the prize, she must answer the skill testing question, "What advice would you give to a woman for her to be perfect?" The remainder of the film is her quest for the 'right' answer. She takes her question to the streets, talking to real people, capturing at times intelligent, insightful answers. Unfortunately, some people had next to nothing to say on the topic.

The film is ambitious in its attempt to mesh the documentary with the drama, but the dramatic bridges seemed too direct, driving the woman's plight home like a hammer striking the cranium. I realize that these segments are light-hearted and realism was not the intent, but I feel that the over-play and exaggeration of the point weakened the impact of the subject matter. I much preferred the docu-style street segments which proved to

be infinitely more insightful.

The film was well shot, convincingly acted, and upbeat in its tone and pace, but I was left with the feeling that the subject wasn't dealt with objectively enough. Perhaps I felt I needed a sequel on the next question; "What advice would you give to a man for him to be perfect?"

*dir. Janis Lundman; prod. Michelle Sirois, Janis Lundman; s.p. Janis Lundman, Anne Marie MacDonald, Banuta Rubess, Maureen White; d.o.p. Adrienne Mitchell; ed. Keith Hlady; music John Lang; l.p. Catherine Barrie*

### INSIDE/OUT by Lori Spring review by Bruce McDonald (AGO screening)

"No matter which way the wind blows,  
it's always cold when you're alone" —Steve Earl/Exit Zero

Joanna is a melancholic media maiden living alone in an upscale loft in downtown Toronto, and she has a disease that outshines the common cold—the fear of being touched. We meet her on the street down around Queen and Bathurst, making her way home, amidst a herd of smelly immigrants, trendmongers and scary



photos by David Rasmus



old derelicts, and she has the cowering look of a frightened gazelle as she snakes her way along the sidewalk. Joanna regains her composure upon reaching the quiet safety of her apartment and finds herself with no desire at all to return to the outside world and the poor sods that inhabit it.

In her debut film, Lori Spring sketches a chilling portrait of an untouchable woman and sets up a tug of war between the young woman's desire just to be left alone and her creeping realization that her own salvation just might be tied up in the salvation of others. The script by Spring and co-conspirator Alan Zweig plants Joanna, played by Emma Richler with quiet desperation, inside her not-so-shabby apartment where she hides out for most of the film. The days turn to weeks and the weeks into months as Joanna spends her time falling in love with herself, exercising herself, tattooing herself, eating candlelit dinners with herself, writing letters on her computer and mostly just staring out the window with her most trusted companion, the video camera. Anything she needs from the outside world is ordered in and brought to her by delivery

boys. The bait, to tempt Joanna out of her ivory castle exile, comes in the form of a wrinkled old woman, who sits all day long in the big picture window across the street. Because she too seems a prisoner, Joanna begins to become curious about her neighbour.

One evening, Joanna accepts the presence of dinner guests, in order to show them the videotapes she has been making. Eric, the odd man out, played with snorting intolerance by Zweig, watches the "art" video with disgust and begins to badger Joanna to explain her exclusive reclusiveness. The tension builds wonderfully, but when Eric begins to cut too close to the bone, Joanna clams up and we are left, like the frustrated, impatient Eric wanting to know why she won't come out to play. We all understand this idea in theory. People basically suck, so why not just lie in bed and pull the covers over our heads? We've all done it and will keep on doing it.

Joanna seems very normal, she's not out to lunch like Polanski's characters in *Repulsion* and *The Tenant*; she is not crippled like Jimmy Stewart in *Rear Window*, and she is not on a vigilante psycho

trip like Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver*, all films that *Inside/Out* pays tribute to. Perhaps the reason for Joanna staying in her ivory tower is that she simply hates the earth, or perhaps she respects it so much she avoids contact, or maybe it is because she loved it as it was before she existed and with her videocamera aimed outwards, she never tires of examining it, brick by brick, window by window, person by person, contemplating with fascination her own absence. It could be that she is just a spoiled brat, who is just wasting her precious time but that is too easy an equation. There is a dark current of sadness in Joanna, but like in Agnes Varda's film, *Vagabond*, the flip side of the coin to Spring's film, you never get in to get out.

With Steve Deme's glowing cinematography, and Emma Richler's subtle shadings, Spring has produced a daring and very brave first film that has enough packed in a half hour to unravel into a feature. Nice touch.

dir., s.p., ed. Lori Spring; story Alan Zweig, L.S.; d.o.p. Steven Deme; music John Tucker; i.p. Emma Richler, Jackie Burroughs.

**THE MYSTERIOUS MOON MEN  
OF CANADA** by Colin Brunton  
review by Gary Popovich

When she turns her head into the night he becomes the face of stories while she disappears in desire. In child-eyed wonder the stories begin as they always do, in light with chasing moonshadows, bogeyman, old men on clouds in the heavens, and a man in the moon surface skin of cheese. The story of a child is repeated in the history of the 7th art—a sleight of hand side show, with disappearing acts, dancing devils, trips to the north pole, and of course to the moon. The imaginative documentary of a fiction, the only truth that warranted use of the word, the logos, the perverse logic which so much angered Plato and banished the poets, the wonder of not knowing, the Janus-faced other when she turns her head and he begins to speak from her dark side.

In his dream, the chorus girls march waving into his erection, jettisoned and soon moving into the face of adventure. Melies saw his own cigar chomping father, moon-faced, bright, with dripping rocket hanging from his clenched teeth, a vaudeville hustler chasing dreams. When we pay tribute to this museless art, we begin with these documents, and we begin with the fiction of the light reading of day to day events and pronounce the name of this light in the language of its invention. Here Lumiere greets Melies in their invention without a future.

Perhaps the future is not what it used to be. Perhaps the belief in magic transformation is no longer possible in a jaded world, in the 80's, when the moon has seemingly lost its mystery because it is no longer part of NASA's race. Brownie McFadden asks himself these questions as he comes to the end of his search in Colin Brunton's *The Mysterious Moon Men of Canada*.



An industrial filmmaker sent by his boss to do a story about Larry Hudson the blind cyclist who is racing across Canada to raise money for glaucoma research, Brownie finds himself in his own blind search racing across Canada in search of proof that a few enterprising young Canadians actually were the first men on the moon in 1959. He has with him a letter by someone named Jean-Pierre to someone named Wesley about a moon trip and some extent super-8 film footage documenting the trip.

Brownie's investigation takes him to Mr. and Mrs. Haines who reported a UFO in 1959 coinciding with the information in Jean-Pierre's letter. For the Haines, whose religious fundamentalism is worn upon their sleeves, the UFO looked like an angel, and the burnt grass at the landing site may not seem as significant as the shroud of Turin but it is evidence regardless. Here begins the first coincidence in the triangulation of a mystery's threads that lie scattered waiting for a storyteller to weave a new text. History, circumstance, blind belief ... will to believe, the power to invest and contribute a bit of the self to a phenomenon that without human intervention can only remain a

patchwork mystery. Fiction and legend, as Godard has remarked, places complex reality in a form that allows it to pervade the world and make it universal.

In his search Brownie encounters numerous people whose passions, beliefs, imagination, and creative force allow them to pervade the mysteries that surround them. Brunton's film is full of wondrous claims and magical transformations that wash over the willing like a cleansing aura: the religious couple who point out a UFO landing site, a scientist that teaches dogs to speak, and a native Indian who flies through space extra-corporally. It is the process of moving through the mystery rather than the final result or solution that most interests Brunton. This is not a film about ends; rather, it is a celebration of the power of creative transformation, which brings us back to the very earliest days of cinema.

And in the moon Brunton finds his universal image. The waxing and waning roundness eternally tied to the feminine, to the power of cycles and the nature of growth ... and the investment of the masculine as man in the moon, or as traveller to the moon. The dark

side or the blind side, and the sunny side, the side that reflects, a screen on which is projected our dreams. Two sides as revealed/veiled, and from the two: desire. The perpetual turning of the dark and light, this he and she shuttering that stands as metaphor for cinema.

Brunton makes his claims and fashions his images in what he recognizes as one of the most sceptical of peoples—Canadians—who all too often have little belief in themselves. And in the middle of his mystery he finds his own childhood dreams imaged, imagined, as spaceman, moviemaker, actor, camera turning in space, loss of gravity, lightness, humour, joy, and child singing and running through the open fields. It is never technology alone that creates; as Bazin has said, it is in the minds and imaginations of those who dreamed of capturing the movement of life that the cinema itself was born.

*dir. prod. s.p. Colin Brunton; ass. prod. Bruce McDonald; d.o.p. Gerald Packer; ed. Bruce McDonald; music Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, The Gun Club; l.p. Gerry Quigley.*



### **BOUNCING BACK** by Scott Gilmore review by David Jowett (LIFT screening)

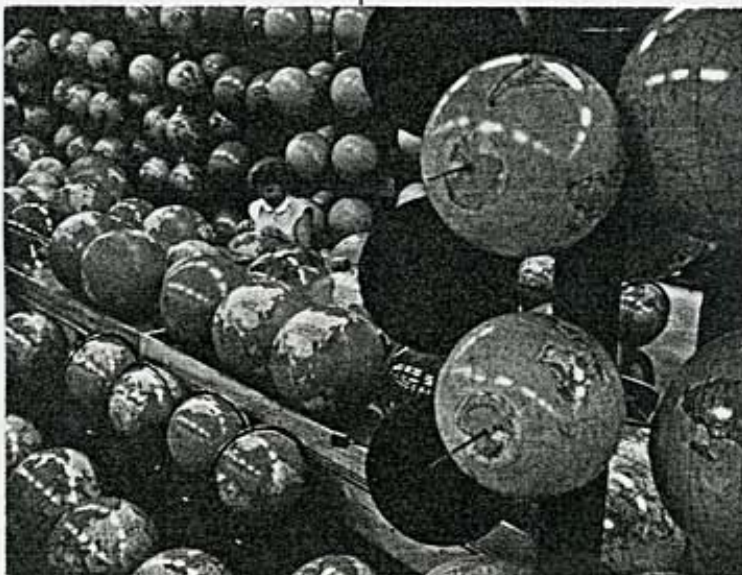
Scott Gilmore's drama *Bouncing Back* zig-zags back and forth through the demise of Suzanne and Cactus's affair. She's a potter; he's a trampoliner salesman. By way of flashbacks and aided by Suzanne's voice-over narrative the story moves them together into her log cabin, through trials of trust, and his other affair, to the point where she begins to feel his manipulation and discomfort in the relationship. When she tells Cactus that she has stopped taking the pill and believes she is pregnant, he reacts with anger, feels betrayed by what he feels is a decision made without his consultation, and he splits.

Suzanne must pull her life together; her bouncing back is a hard knock on the head for Cactus, who has been a thorn or prick in her side. Suzanne's new role makes Cactus a player in a new cast—a heavyweight lug who takes a hard bounce into the art market. A film full of witty subtleties, some of which will explain these cryptic comments.

*dir. Scott Gilmore; prod. Scott Gilmore, Felix Gray; d.o.p. Keith Hlady; ed. Sarah Peddie; music Tom Szczniak; s.p. Scott Gilmore; l.p. Sion Hughes, Christina Collins.*

### **LEAH** by Susan Morry review by David Jowett (LIFT screening)

*Leah* opens on a fairly tight shot of an aged woman's head and face. She sits still, her attention focused inward. Her head tremours slightly, her face is lined. This is followed by a view down a vacant institutional corridor, a symmetrical interior that reflects its polished surfaces onto itself and situates the woman. She speaks as we watch sepia-toned photographs from her Russian past: her family, her home, and landscape. She says little, only a few recollected details from each picture, uncalculating and harmless, about her father's beard, or the farm, or someone's beauty. The camera often zooms slowly into the photographs, as if simulating the mind's eye pull to the past. Gradually we become accessories in her effort to recall; we apply our memories and imagination to help her make it live, to help her divine the past. The soundtrack is a vaguely sentimental piece by Eric Satie. A final shot of the woman as she totters along the corridor humming a tune, something brought back again...a few things remembered, the generational aspect of a descendent's descent.





## GRANT DEADLINES

## CANADA COUNCIL

## EXPLORATIONS

DEADLINES	RESULTS
January 15	mid April
May 1	end July
September 15	mid December

## AID TO ARTISTS (INDIVIDUALS)

DEADLINES	RESULTS
A: October 1	January 1
B: April 1	July 1
October 1	January 1

## FILM PRODUCTION

DEADLINES	RESULTS
July 15	October 1
November 15	February 1

## ART BANK

DEADLINES	RESULTS
February 1	mid March
August 1	mid September

## ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

## FILM PRODUCTION

DEADLINES	RESULTS
November 1	early February
April 1	early July

## SCREENWRITING

DEADLINES	RESULTS
February 1	early May

## PROJECT GRANTS

DEADLINES	RESULTS
September 15	mid November

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/  
NEW MEDIA ARTS

DEADLINE	RESULTS
August 1	September 14
January 15	March 15

## ARTISTS AND THE WORKPLACE

DEADLINE	RESULTS
March 1	mid April
July 4	mid August

## FESTIVALS

The following are festivals which TELEFILM CANADA coordinates on behalf of Canadian filmmakers. Entry forms and regulations are available at the LIFT office.

## FUNNY FILM FESTIVAL

Darfo Boario Terme, Italy  
September 18-24, 1988  
Deadline: invitational

## 36TH SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST

San Sebastian, Spain  
September 15-24, 1988  
Deadline: July 15, 1988  
films over 52min.; Spanish subtitles required.

## 29TH FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI

Firenze, Italy  
November 25-December 3, 1988.  
Deadline: September 20, 1988.  
documentary films

## UPPSALA FILM FESTIVAL

Uppsala, Sweden  
October 21-30, 1988  
deadline: August 20, 1988  
shorts and features

37TH INTERNATIONAL FILM WEEK  
MANNHEIM

Mannheim, Federal Republic of Germany  
October 3-8, 1988  
deadline: contact TELEFILM before July 4; films or cassettes must be in Montreal before July 12.

6TH INTERNATIONAL ESSEN  
CHILDREN'S FILM FEST

Essen, Federal Republic of Germany  
October 28-November 6, 1988  
deadline: July 15, 1988

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF  
AURILLAC

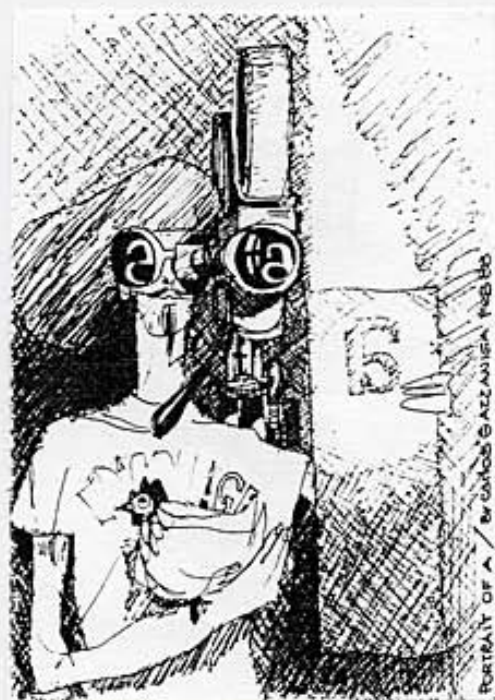
Aurillac, France  
October 18-25, 1988  
deadline: July 31, 1988  
rural films; TELEFILM does not coordinate this festival

4TH ANNUAL WOMEN IN FILM  
FESTIVAL

Hollywood, California  
October 14-16, 1988  
deadline: before July 15, 1988.

12TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST  
OF INDIA

New Delhi, India  
January 10-24, 1988  
deadline: before October 31, 1988.



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## ATTENTION ALL OUTLAWS



Mug shots will begin being taken at LIFT JULY 15. Filmmakers, directors, cinematographers, producers, editors, actors, writers, and dreamers of the independent community and their MUGS are wanted for publication in the OUTLAW EDITION of CINEMA CANADA.

Book your appointment with David Jefferson at LIFT.



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