

December 1995/January, 1996
Volume 15, Issue 6

LIFT

LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS
IN TORONTO

In Frame :
Phillip Hoffman interviews
Stan Brakhage

Dancefilm - Jamie Phelan
on pointe

Annette Mangaard's Fish Tales
Jan H. Goutts falls hook line & sinker

HERITAGE MOMENTS

'We are able to ask for a quid pro quo in the form of Canadian content on Canadian screens and international circulation for Canadian newsreel and other material... One result we can count on... is the progressive inclusion of Canadian subjects in Hollywood schedules. As a result of pressure from Ottawa and Toronto, three such films have been included in the last three years to the great benefit of Canada...'

(John Grierson, 1944, arguing against a Canadian feature film industry).

"Mr. Chairman,

We commend the government for its bold concept in establishing the first steps toward a feature film industry in Canada.

We realize the taxpayers have committed 20 million in expectation of seeing Canadian films for the first time in their neighborhood theatres. These films have seldom appeared.

In six years, we've learned that the system doesn't work for Canadians.

The film financing system doesn't work. Thirteen major films were produced in English Canada in 1972. Six in 1973, only one so far in 1974.

The film distribution system doesn't work. In 1972, less than 2 per cent of the movies shown in Ontario were Canadian, less than 5 per cent in Quebec, the supposed bedrock of Canadian cinema.

The film exhibition system doesn't work. The foreign-dominated theatre industry grossed over \$140,000,000 at the box office and is recycling only nickles and dimes into future domestic production.

Clearly something is wrong.

It is no wonder then that the Canadian Film Development Corporation can't possible work.

And neither can we."

(Letter from the Council of Canadian Filmmakers to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts, 25 April, 1974).

LIFT

The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers
in Toronto

December '95/January 1996
Volume 15, Issue 6

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The LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO is a non-profit co-operative which supports and encourages independent filmmaking through the exchange of information and access to equipment and facilities. LIFT hosts a program of workshops and monthly screenings and it provides access to information regarding funding sources, festival and grant deadlines and other related matters.

LIFT is supported by its membership, the Canada Council (Media Arts Section), the Ontario Arts Council, Metro Toronto Cultural Affairs Division, the City of Toronto through the Toronto

Arts Council, the National Film Board of Canada, Telefilm, the Ontario Film Development Corporation, the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

Articles published in the LIFT newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, the Co-op or members of the Board of Directors. Letters to the editor can be sent c/o LIFT, 37 Hanna Avenue, Suite 301, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1W5. Phone 588-6444; Fax 588-7017.

Funding & Grant Deadlines

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

First Projects

Jan. 15, 1996

Artists' Film and Video

Apr. 1, 1996

Contact the Film, Photography, Video Office, Ontario Arts Council: 151 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON, M5S 1T6. Phone: 969-7428 or 1-800-387-0058

CANADA COUNCIL

There is still a lot of restructuring going on. The following are tentative. Please call for further details. Phone: 1-800-263-5588.

Film Production Grants: probably March 15, 1996

(contact Leuten Rojas, ext. 5541)
New and Emerging Media Artists (to replace Explorations): probably Feb. 1996 (contact David Poole)

Short Term & Travel Grants: March 1, 1996

Arts Awards (A & B Grants): this program is very unsure. No deadlines have been announced.

Contact: The Canada Council, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5V8. Phone: 1-800-263-5588.

FUND

(Foundation to Underwrite New Drama for Television)

Script Development Programme

& Senior Projects Programme:

Jan. 5, 1996, March 7, May 3

For further information and guidelines/application forms, call: 956-5431.

Ontario Film Development Corporation

All programs have been frozen until further notice.

For further information contact: 314-6858

BRAVO! Starts Bravo! FACT

BRAVO! has launched a new foundation, Bravo!FACT, to assist Canadian talent by offering financial assistance and incentive for the promotion, development, production, and exhibition of Canadian-made shorts form arts video, in all manner of disciplines and modes of expression, and to stimulate public interest in and appreciation of the arts on television. Awards can cover up to 50% of the budget, up to \$25,000. Next deadline: Feb 29, 1996, contact Marie Lalonde. For more info: 416-591-5757, ext. 2734.

Racial Equity Fund (REF)

Applications available now. Call (416) 596-6749

for applications and information.
Dec. 15 (5:00pm) for 1995/96

Editorial

Stan Brakhage doesn't like stills, is what I've been told, because they don't represent film; film doesn't keep still. Sure enough. We decided that it meant it was okay that some of the ones included in Phillip Hoffman's interview with him dissolve a little with scanning, breaking away from the imagistic to the abstract. We thought he'd appreciate the collaboration. So what we have here is a representation of Brakhage, through electronic recording, then paper. Not much editing, because his talk about process is fluid and expressive, compellingly philisophically different from the economic determinism we are so used to hearing these days.



THE VILLAGE TRILOGY

Bodies at rest and in motion...

by Jamie Phelan

For me dance has always been the most honest and direct form of self-expression. I love to dance, to get wild, to move through space impulsively disregarding the economies of time. It's glorious to have time stand still inside

me as the music measures itself out towards the end of a song. Hey, I'm just a Joe who likes to get out on the dance-floor or the livingroom floor or where ever and shake his butt. And I'm just a Joe who had a great time in October sitting on that same butt watching amazing dancefilms at the 4th Annual Moving

Pictures Festival of Dance on Film and Video.

The festival presented an incredible array of international and Canadian films that ranged from the operatic to the sleazy along with many world premieres, special programming and work-

shops.

Simply stunning. The opening night screening, at the AGO's Jackman Hall, saw the world premiere of Lara Taler's *the village trilogy (casa, copii, famiglia)*. Taler's film creates a courageous nostalgia through expressionistic lighting and framing that looks new and fresh but feels as if it is a Grimm Brother's fairy tale. She describes *the village trilogy* as "returning to the physical language of early cinema", a fitting statement for a dancefilm considering that the earliest of Thomas Edison's kinoscope peep-shows, *Serpentine Dance* (1894), is a chronicle of a vaudeville dancer named Annabelle. There is an element of slapstick in *the village trilogy*, but one mixed with pathos. From the static flickering half-light of early cinema, Taler moves the camera and infuses it with an inertia that sweeps lovingly around the dancers in the third movement of the film, bringing the themes of isolation, discovery and family to an eligeic end, and the audience to their feet. Not only did *the village trilogy* receive a tremendous standing ovation, it won the inaugural Cinedance Award for best new Canadian dancefilm- which includes goods and services worth \$10,000.

Next up for the second half of the program was the Canadian premier of *Achterland* by Brussels based director/choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaker. You may have seen *Achterland* at last year's Moving Pictures, but you would have seen it at an incomplete stage. Either way *Achterland* is something is see- and hear. Performed on a large dance stage the dancers scrape, slide, rap and pound their bodies all over it. Around the sounds of the dancer's bodies, which garnered the film an award for stage-studio recording, are solo pieces for violin and piano performed "live" on stage next to the dancers. The movement and gestures of the dancers flowed from scenes of quiet intensity to crisp rhythms of the group dancing together. There was always a sense of playfulness that was either overt or held somewhere closer to the inner spirit of the dancers. Stagehand duties were performed by the dancers themselves as they slid chairs in along the side of the stage and moved in risers; both props were well used. Sexual tensions were repeatedly developed among the dancers and projected towards the audience. Barriers between screen and audience dissolved when the camera took

on the point of view of one of the dancers and elegantly swung around towards the back of the studio revealing the hardware of the cinematic apparatus and returned to our dancer alone on stage. Oscillating audience perceptions between identification and separation this scene highlight the complexity of the entire film.

After *Achterland* my stomach was in dire need of attention so I had to pass up the program of UK Shorts held at the Rivoli. Sitting in a theatre with hunger pangs sucks, but I wish I had endured the discomfort- apparently the shorts were fantastic, and all were North American premiers. Keith Cole, the festival's publicity director and a LIFT



SLEAZEBURGER

member, told me that Alison Murray's *Sleazeburger* was the film to see. At 24 Murray has already directed a sizzling trilogy of dancefilms - *Kissy Suzuki Suck*, *Wank Stallions* and *Pantyhead* - all of which deal with sex and social attitudes.

Conducting one of the four workshops hosted by Moving Pictures, Alison was in Toronto at Trinity Square Video for a full day session on "guerilla dancefilmmaking... for beginning filmmakers and choreographers on a budget". Other workshops in the first ever Moving Pictures symposium delved into the areas of editing movement for dancefilm, aesthetic considerations of adapting existing work, choreographing specifically for the camera and how to get online and use the Internet to access film and video information relevant to artists like you and me. Prices ranged from gratis to \$55, all very reasonable.

Day 2, and again I attended only the early program, "Passionate Partnerships", this time at the John Spotten Cinema. Canadian offerings came from director's Antonia Thomson, *Salamandrina*, and Justin Stephenson, *Tabulae Anatomicae Sex*, both choreographed by Gabreil Spiegelschrift. Of the two I was more drawn to *Salamandrina*. The choreography was more compassionate; two men danced

and moved to embrace each other in a "battle between inner strenghts and weaknesses of the being". More than twice the length of *Salamandrina*, *Tabulae Anatomicae Sex* collaged pas de deux and trios with computer effects and written text and diagrams from the 16th century anatomist Andreas Vesalius. Stylistically Stephenson's film was the busiest I saw, a visual assault with the body as an information bomb that explodes its own history.

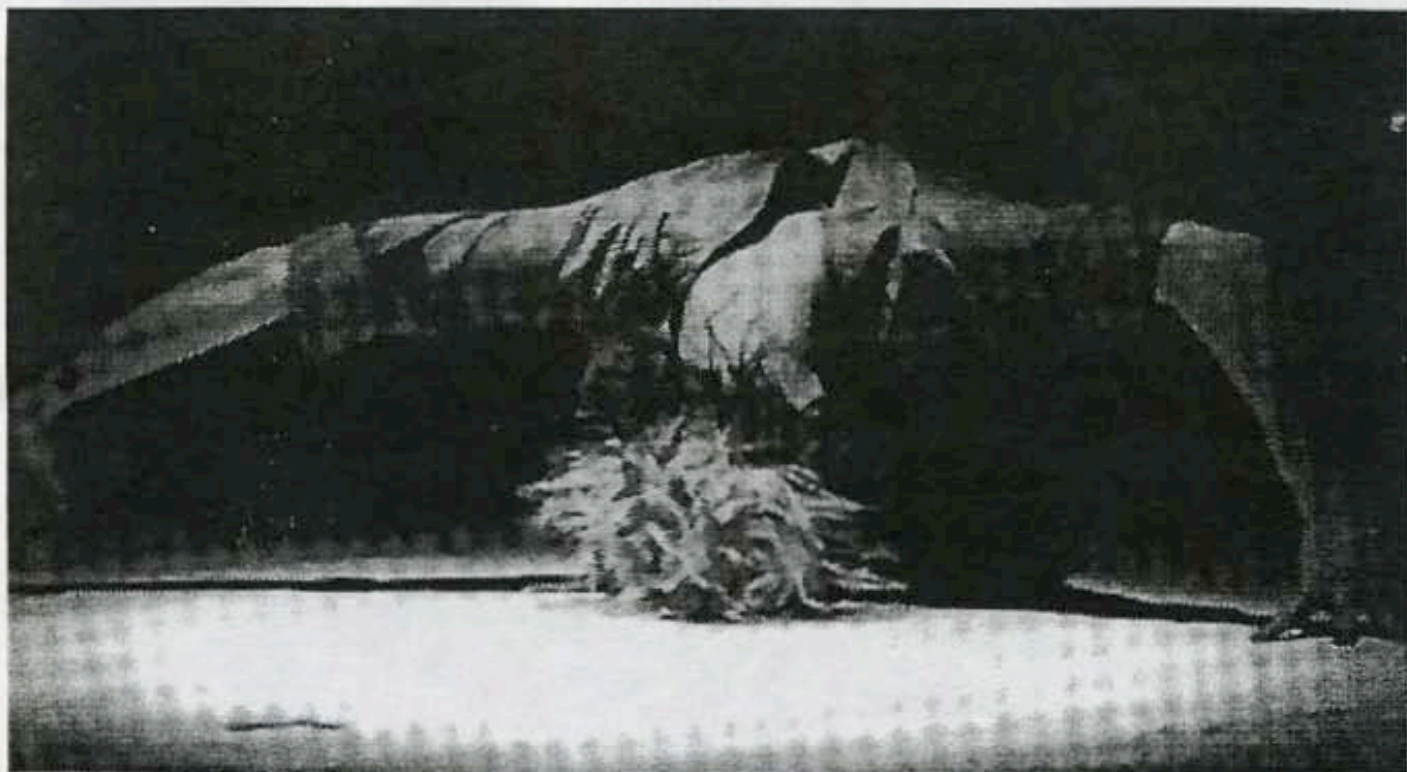
The two other videos in the program put the dancer's body on a larger plain of view, and the best view of the night was choreographed by Michele-Anne De May and directed by Thierry De Mey. Set in rugged allies and a huge mine pit, *Love Sonnets* delights in dancing over rocks, shale and even up the wall for love. As in *Achterland*, excellent location sound recording enhanced the feel of the film. What worked so well was how the sounds and rythms of the dancers were paced with the editing of the film, sustaining the lovers' euphoria despite the hardships that might fall under foot.

At the end of the month Bravo! aired *Dido and Aeneas*, so I was able to catch up on one of the films I missed during the festival. All I can say is I didn't miss much.

During one days absence from the

festival *The Last Supper*, directed by Cynthia Roberts, and a program of short works entitled "The Body In Crisis" slipped by. Connecting the works was the theme of AIDS. From the programme notes here is a brief description: "Directly or indirectly, these are works that have been touched by AIDS. They are grace notes, codas, swan songs, elegies and celebrations of life, hope and the continuing courage of human beings." Hopefully these films will be on screens again soon; *The Front Lawn*, *Emotional Logic: William Douglas Transformed*, and *The Last Supper* are Canadian, so there is a chance. As for *Sang de l'amour*, a French entry, and *Elegy*, from New Zealand the prospects might not be as good. That's one thing about a festival like Moving Pictures that is so wonderful, you get a high concentration of good films and vidoes that individually might not reach as wide an audience.

The last installment of the festival was a program of independent Canadian shorts, led by *Fire*, Antonia Thompson's second entry in the festival. Of course I decided to borrow the Bean's Bomber, a car who's open door welcomes those who enter to hell, to make time in some pissy Toronto rain, so I arrived at the end of the second short, *Roses...Thorns and Dreams*, by Cynthia Wells. Up next



SALAMANDRINA

was a multi-textured, cheeky terrorist strike on the financial district of downtown Toronto and the subway that carries the district's minions from work to home and back again. A mirror is held up to the suites for self-examination to provide them with a view of the possibilities they all share. By performing *Dancefront* in public spaces, directors Michael Downing and Stephen Marshall create a kinetic situation that feeds from the transitory and unsuspecting audiences, who themselves add a rhythm

and texture to the work.

Moving from the urban order to the natural world, *Fragments*, the collaborative effort of director James Alodi and choreographer Denis Duric, combined beautiful compositions with elegant movements through forests and beaches. Perhaps my favorite part involved a game of dancing hide and seek where dancers moved in and out from behind the trunks of tall trees. Behind each tree I felt there had to be a private dance happening.

After Evann Siebens' *Do Not Call It Fixity*, inspired by T.S. Elliot's poem Burnt Norton, a repeat screening of the *village trilogy* was held due to a strong buzz — Taler's film had not yet won the Cinedance Award. I'm looking forward to next year's Moving Pictures, making the 5th my fourth.

Jamie Phelan is a writer, producer and director.



THE LAST SUPPER

Call For Submissions

Banff Centre for the Arts (Media and Visual Arts) seeks proposals for television and new media co-productions. Participants engage in collaborative projects that explore and develop the creative possibilities of video and related media. Performing arts projects, short television operas, music for television, and dance for the screen, CD-ROMs, virtual reality projects are welcome. Deadline: on-going. For brochures and information contact: The Banff Centre for the Arts/ Office of the Registrar/ Box 1020, Station 28, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff, Alberta T0L 0C0 Tel: (403)762-6180 Fax: (403) 762-6345

Shameless Shorts, produced by the Women's Television Network, is an alternative half-hour program dedicated to independent short films from Canada and around the world. They are looking for any comedy, drama, animation, documentary or experimental work under 15 minutes made by women. Send a VHS copy of the work, along with any appropriate publicity material to Laura Michalchyshyn, Producer, SHAMELESS SHORTS, WTN, P.O. Box 158, Sta. L, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3H 0Z5. Ph. (204)783-5116, fax (204)774-3227, e-mail lmicchalchyshyn@wtn.ca.

Zero Point is seeking recordings of music compositions or sound works which were conceived as an integral part of a visual arts presentation or performance. Film scores, video soundtracks, music for dance, incidental music for theatre, sound works of art installation or multi-media events, etc. will be considered for broadcast in February, 1994. Please submit your recordings in cassette or CD formats, along with a description of yourself and your work to: Zero Point, Scott McLeod, Programmer c/o CKLN 380 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1W7.

Appropriation & New Meaning: Found Footage Filmmaking & Scratch Video (Deadline Jan. 15, 1996) are seeking experimental, narrative, animation, documentary, music videos, etc. in 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 1/2" or 3/4" video formats which deconstruct/reconstruct contemporary North American culture using found footage or hijacked video imagery. Works which satirize, plagiarize and hypnotize will be considered! Call Available Light Film/Media Collective @ 613-230-3892.

Hot Docs! Documentary Film Festival (Deadline December 29, 1995) Hot Docs! accepts documentaries of any length, made for television or for theatrical release, completed between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1995. Entry fee for up to 30 minutes is \$50; 31+ is \$100. Call for information on categories and how to enter. Call 416-975-3977 or fax 416-968-9092 for more details.

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Erotic Films/Videos by Women (Deadline Nov. 15, 1995) Available Light Film/Media Collective are seeking experimental narrative, animation, documentary, music videos and performance pieces by women in 25mm, 16mm, super 8, 1/2", 3/4". Historically women's sexuality has been interpreted by men for a male audience. Since the Second Wave of feminism in the seventies, women artists have been examining their sexuality, sensuality and erotic selves in film and videos. This programme will explore current investigations by a diverse community of Canadian women media artists. Call 613-230-3892 for more details.

Hot Docs! Documentary Film Festival (Deadline December 29, 1995) Hot Docs! accepts documentaries of any length, made for television or for theatrical release, completed between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1995. Entry fee for under 30 minutes is \$50 31+ is \$100. Call for information on categories and how to enter. Call 416-975-3977 or fax 416-968-9092 for more details.

UPCOMING FESTIVAL DEADLINES

Golden Gate Awards, San Fran. Int'l
Film Fest.
(California, April 18-May 5)
Dec. 8 415-929-5014

Knokke Int'l Fest. of Films on Art
(Brussels, Apr. 9-13, 1996) Dec. 15
32.2.218.10.55

Brussels Int'l Festival of Fantasy &
Science Fiction Films
(Mar. 8-23) Dec. 15 32.02.242.17.13

Films de Femmes de Creteil et du Val
de Marne
(France, March 22-31)
Dec. 15 33.1.49.80.38.98

New York Lesbian & Gay Film Fest.
(New York, June, 1996)
Dec. 18 212-343-2707

Canadian Independent Film Caucus
Hot Docs
(Toronto, March 21-24)
Dec. 29 416-975-3977

Toronto Jewish Film Fest. (Toronto,
May 2-9) Jan. 5

BACA/Brooklyn Arts Council Film
& Video Expo.
(New York, March 1996)
Jan. 15 718-625-0080

Tampere Int'l Short Film Festival
(Finland, March 8-12) Jan. 15 358-
31-213 0034
Bettina Russell Film Festival

(Waterloo, Oct. 3-5) Jan. 15
Desh Paradesh Festival
(Toronto, June 5-9)
Jan. 15 504-9932

George Foster Peabody Awards
(Athens, GA, May 1996) Jan. 16
706-542-3787

United States Super 8 mm Film/Video
Festival (New Jersey, Feb.9-10) Jan.
19 908-932-8482

Sydney Film Fest.
(Glebe, Australia, June 7-22) Jan. 25
612-660-3844

New York Lesbian & Gay
Experimental Film Fest.
(NY, June 1996)
Jan. 30 212-343-2707

Zagreb Int'l Animated Film Fest.
(Croatia, 1996) Feb. 1

Oberhausen Int'l Short Film Fest.
(Germany, Apr. 26-May 1) Feb. 15
0208.82.52.652

Charlotte Film & Video Festival
(North Carolina, May 2-12)
Mar. 1 704-337-2019

Vila do Conde Int'l Short Film
Festival (Portugal, July 2-7)
Apr. 19 351-52-641644

NEW MEMBERS

New Members
(Oct. 8 - Nov. 21)

Stephen Bannatyne
Anna-Lea Boeki
Giulio Buttino
Naomi Campbell
Loretta Clark
Laura Colosimo
Marianne Culbert
Jocelyn Cullity
Brenda Darling
Andrew Dolha
Michael Downing
Michael Drouillard
Tory Falkenberg
Dee Flake
Daniel Fox
Renée Georgacopoulos
Hasmi Giakouris
Aline Gilmore
Alexis Hurtado
James Hyslop
Simone Jones
Lesley Kelly
Maggie Knight
Daymond Lee
John Lesavage
Michelle Messina
Asad Mir
Carol Ng
Nick Nobile
Laurie Norton
Sarah Peat
Jamie Phelan
Kevin Rollins
Mikil Lee Rullman
Lora Santoro
Julie Saragosa
Dave Singh
Elliott Smith
Greg Spottiswood
Philip Stanger
Michael Tsouras
Wiebke von Carolsfeld
Lorraine Ward
Jennifer Wernigwans
Zeev Yodfat

LIFTNews

The Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (CFMDC) has relocated right downstairs at 37 Hanna. The CFMDC is active in the distribution of Canadian independent film. The Centre has an open door policy, and is always willing to accept new films. Members are charged a nominal \$30.00 membership fee. The Centre has an extensive catalogue of independent films, with an especially large collection of classic Canadian experimental work. Members have screening privileges (pending filmmakers' permission). Drop by the web site at <http://www.cfmdc.org>, send e-mail to cfmdc@interlog.com, or pay an old fashioned analogue visit to Suite 2XX, 2nd Floor, 37 Hanna.

LIFT'S new advertising rates are enclosed in this newsletter. Please note the slight charge for members' classifieds.

The community members and businesses in the area of 37 Hanna are launching a campaign to force the Roasterie coffee shop to clean up their unfiltered coffee exhaust spout. The toxic by products of coffee grinding are causing headaches and nausea, and no doubt the jitters. LIFT members are invited to boycott the Roasterie, and to send letters of support for the clean-up initiative to:

Information Officer, Approval Branch
Ministry of Environment and Energy
250 Davisville Ave., 3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M4S 1H2

Quote "EBR Registry Number IA5E2087.P,

Ministry Instrument Reference 8357195111". You can copy the letter to Ms. M. Spinney, Environmental Officer, Metro Toronto District Office, Central Region, at the Davisville address.

LIFT congratulates recent members who were successful in the recent Ontario Arts Council Artists' Film and Video competition. Katharine Asals for *El D.F.*, Francisca Duran for *Viaje al Norte*, Phillip Hoffman for *Destroying Angel*, Glace W. Lawrence for *Coming to Voice*, Naomi McCormack for *The Hangman's Bride*, Wrik Mead for an untitled project, Michelle Mohabeer for *Child-Play*, Mara Ravins for *On the Edge*, Steve Sanguedolce for *Away*, Lori Spring for *Flora & Fauna*. Jurors included Anne Marie Fleming, Kai Ng, Andrew J. Paterson, Gariné Torossian, and b.h. Yael.

The New Frontiers Film Festival, November 8 - 12, yielded awards for lift members Best Documentary went to Jorge Manzano's *City of Dreams*, based on dramatized events from Marvel Commanda's life. It deals with the loss of Native culture, language and spiritual traditions. Best Narrative went to Penny McCann's *Crabapple Jelly*: "Anna is losing the one person who can console her. Instinctively, she reaches for lessons of creation and ritual; knowledge gathered intuitively that she is barely aware that she possesses. Gently she is drawn towards transcendence".

IN FRAME :

STAN BRAKHAGE AND PHILLIP HOFFMAN DISCUSS THE NEGATIVE AND THE POSITIVE

"LIFT asked Phil Hoffman to speak with Stan Brakhage when he was in Toronto for a recent set of screenings".

SB: ...They think they're going to become the new Hollywood here... The problem is, and the beauty is, that Canadians doing gangster movies are silly. They - to the credit of Canada - they can't envision a viciousness and a horribleness at all comparable to Hollywood, and much to their credit. But the effect in the movie houses is, when it's a Canadian movie the audiences tend to giggle, every time the bad guys start talking over what they're going to do. In the US films they shoot first and ask questions later. Some degree of morality is left in Canada and they try to decide if they really should torture someone to death or not, and all that nonsense - I shouldn't call it nonsense, it's very real horror in the United States.

PH: We're talking about the kind of changes that you've felt here already with

everyone being forced to work frantically to make ends meet. I was thinking the last time I saw you was just when Free Trade was being implemented. And I remember - we were all really against it, and I remember some of the things you said-

SB: Everything's very much harder since the Free Trade agreement. Even getting our supplies for living here a month that we send in boxes is much harder since they have Free Trade. I presume if we were going to ship 10,000 mechanical rhinoceroses - we would have no trouble at all - that would be easier. But if we're trying to live - human beings on a living level are having everything much more difficult, and it's the same old junk. And I also understand a memo arose at some point between Reagan to Mulroney - "the degree to which you're supporting the arts constitutes an unfair exchange and you've got to cut them back" - well, they've slashed them to the bone in the United States, and apparently they're doing it in Canada too in a slower

fashion.

PH: They're making big cuts now in social programmes.

SB: So there it is - it's inhumanitas. From one end of this continent down clear to the tip of South America it's going to be the most vicious level of commerce, to the disadvantage of any human being trying to make a life with any kind of meaning here, and I'm really appalled by it - what do I know about it - maybe it's the only way to save - create a world that will withstand the European conglomerates as such. It's horrible.

The term Free Enterprise is Orwellian Newspeak as far as I'm concerned. It's really extremely restricted trade and all to the advantage of those who are trading and not those who are working for them or buying from them. So I don't think it's going to work for any length of time, not that I'm in any sense - I'm very delighted that the worst totalitarian empire we've seen in a long time has fallen completely

to pieces, and as it fell to pieces we saw it was even worse than we thought. Ecologically Russia is a disaster, and a bureaucratic meanness beyond anything we've imagined elsewhere in the world toward its people - not shy of radiating them to death - little children - creating a whole dead sea and everything - it's just horrible. But now that communism has fallen, the critique of free enterprise and capitalism has to begin to emerge in people's minds - that it's some misguided law of the jungle which is completely contrary to the whole evolution of being human, and that's the next thing that's go to fall, and then some newness that I can't even begin to imagine must emerge here, because this is horrible - this is a Dark Ages we are entering, and it looks like it's western wide world over, and I don't try to judge what's going on in the east - which is mostly the same old fascism over much of the east - certainly in China - but I can't imagine where it's going but I'm not in despair because I know that the so called Dark Ages was a time of great creativity. It was mostly anonymous - we have not the names of many of the people who sculpted and architected these great cathedrals, and I think my highest hopeful social moment, as well as aesthetic, that's been reverberating through my work ever since, was when I finally saw Chartres cathedral and I said, "Well, if this is the Dark Ages, than this is a wonder, and the human spirit will prevail under whatever oppression and will be creative," so those are my fondest hopes. And in fact my work has been very directly related to that great experience ever since. That on the one hand and DeKoonig's alzheimer's paintings on the other.

PH: I'd like to start with your hand-painted film *Black Ice* - I wondered if you could talk a little bit about working through the fears you spoke about in making the film and then if you want to segue into talking about how you made



FRAME ENLARGEMENT FROM *WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING*

it technically.

SB: First of all - I've had really crucial experiences with black ice - I've only slipped once and it was - I don't even remember falling - it was that quick, I was standing - next I was walking about a block and a half away with blood running down my face. Black ice is so slick and as other people's experience of it has been, you go down so fast you have no memo-

ry of it. If you bang your head, which most people do, you could kill yourself, for one thing. You have no sense - you go into that state of shock before a crisis, a lot of people break a leg on it. For me, it meant the beginning of cataracts in one of my eyes - I had to have a cataracts operation. I now have a plastic lens sewn in, and it was a crisis. And within two years the other eye which had developed cataracts also began moving in that direction, and it all stemmed from that black ice experience - so now I have plastic sewn in both eyes. In addition to which I've made some clots so I have to take a blood thinner and I'll be on that for the rest of my life and that thins your blood artificially so I'm an artificial hemophiliac, so that means if I slip on black ice again, more than likely I'd bleed to death into the brain before they could do anything. So black ice is major crisis in my life, because I live in a place that produces a lot of it, and I'm walking on it back and forth between home and school most of the winter. Now that's the crisis that causes me to meditate more deeply than I would anyway on this phenomenon, and then the question is, can I make beauty of it? For it is in itself beautiful, the imagination of its depths vis á vis human is infinitely beautiful, and it took many years but I began painting it - it takes a long time to paint that experience of ones nervous system vis á vis what's supposed to be your deadliest enemy - you walk with great timidity over it - actually timidity won't do you any good, you really have to be super-conscious when walking on it, put one flat foot in front of the other, because again, it is so slick that if

you do go down you're absolutely helpless, because it will be so fast - then to stare into that as I plod my way home from a hard days teaching at school, with my experience of it and sense of its potential for my end, finally comes this compound painting a frame at a time along a strip of film. Then that work was made into a mobius loop and sent to Western Cine to a man I've been working with for a quarter of a century, Sam Bush. I send elaborate instructions but



STILL FROM *DOG STAR MAN PT. 3*

our understanding is he is free to extemporize within those instructions, so our position became quite Dark Ages indeed - I'm the composer, he's the visual musician. Sam Bush is a very good musician with the step printer. He follows by instruction and he extemporizes and we get back this material and the only difference between me and the medieval composer is that I have the final cut. So I take this material and according to what's driven me to make it in the first place, to get the envisionment of it - some paradigm of what I'm really feeling and seeing - I make this film.

PH: How does this come back to you then in terms of the emotional process - what does it do to the emotional connection to the trauma.

SB: I have to keep the connection to the trauma very clear so that I'm not just making some decorative film - so that I'm really being true to the feelings that have engendered the film, which of course Sam Bush is not capable of doing - he's never slipped on black ice - but he's a technically stunning step printer. So my relationship with him is very much like Utu Maros or Hoku Sa's relationship to their master printers when they made their woodblocks and had to depend upon the expertise of those who could print them. You could say, in a way, I'm the subjective and they're the objective and then I finally have to be the final objective also as I look at what they've sent back. There's not any chance operations in it - I want to be clear about that - in as much as I'm having the final choice as to what constitutes the film.

PH: The space that I'm in as I watch it is what I imagine falling - the split second of falling - to be - so it was very powerful as a visceral experience. Even though the images are non representational of the physical experi-

ence.

SB: They're slightly representational in that I've gone for the crystalline in my painting to be true to that aspect of it - I've gone for the slippage. You'll know you're slipping on crystals, actually, in a dance of death, actually, and it's black and its sense of space is infinite. It's easy enough for me to put in an instruction like "move in on this thing, and back up superimpose for two feet" so that literally some of the shapes within given frames are moving closer or moving away - might say "start in close on the crystal and move back, then reverse film and double print the following". So that in fact you get this forward/backward motion due to the step printing, then you have to choose very carefully which crystals otherwise it just looks like you were looking closely at a crystal so they have to move in a space that's tangent to the imagination of this positive and of your world and of the world. So that's roughly how it's made, though I think the great mystery is I'm depending on that aspect of the unconscious which is what I don't remember when I fell. It's in me somewhere obviously, it banged my head seriously enough to knock out eventually both my eyes with cataracts, it could have killed me, and I don't remember also getting up and walking on... It's an interesting thing - I was walking the dogs at the time, at 9000 feet, up in the mountains where I was then living. The dogs were quite distressed and strange seeming, and I had blood running down my face, and I was walking them a block and a half roughly in city terms beyond where I had fallen, and then I went back to retrieve my gloves. Just like in those automobile accidents when you lose your shoes - it knocked my gloves off my hands, and it was my cold hands that made me begin to be aware as I was holding the leashes of the dogs that I had to go back to that spot

and get my gloves and then I saw the black ice and the slippage where I'd slipped and the blood so I could consciously reconstruct the whole scene, but all the rest of it absolutely in the unconscious: And it's from that unconscious as in all my work that I'm trying to tap to get the fulsome story from the nervous system from the whole nervous system and it all is compounded into a two minute and 40 second film.

PH: Just a technical question - how did you paint it, was it with acrylic?

SB: That film - it's hard for me to remember - I use acrylics, I use magic markers, I use India inks, I use dyes, I use a variety of smear techniques - mix with chlorox, mix with alcohol - paint both sides of the film, very often, not always but very often. I don't know exactly what paint was used. Maybe Martin's dyes, because I was after certain blues that were reminiscent of the Chartres cathedral blues, the dark Chartres cathedral blues. I have all these reproductions hanging around my work space to trigger my memory about Chartres cathedral. I thought those deep blues in the Chartres cathedral are rhymes of eternity. In a way we always posit black as death, but icy blue can be a doorway into eternity too, so I'm working with that as well.

PH: You're not painting it as if negative, and then reversing the image through the printing process are you?

SB: In that particular film what you're seeing is what I've painted, in terms of colour. I then create a negative to make prints off of. I was in that case, as most of my films are, trying to get as close to the colour as I was painting.

PH: The popular media, and even independent film, most typically uses sound, music, narration, language, and most of your work is silent. The space that I get into when I watch your silent films is akin to meditation, and that's a powerful experience. What have you found out in working for so many years in silent film, about silent film, and then I wonder if you might segue into talking about picture/sound relationship specifically in *Boulder Blues and Pearls And...*

SB: I don't know how personal this is with me, but even as I'm listening to this question, my eyes shift to the most neutral spot of rug I can find. In order that I can listen to you carefully and deeply. All my life it's very hard for me to listen and see at the same time. I can do so as I move through the world where the signals are all more or less memorized and the responses more or less codified and we'd dance around in the world listening and talking to each other along the line of signals. But if I want to listen deeply to your question I have to find a neutral spot of rug. Gertrude Stein once

defined genius as someone who could listen and talk at the same time. I'm clearly not by her definition a genius because I can't listen and talk at the same time, I can't even listen and look at the same time. So this has led to what's God given to me - my physiology and mentality - I tend to separate the listening and the looking - so that's why I've made mostly silent films and I don't ordinarily have very many experiences where I can listen deeply and look deeply at the same time, where I can attend even the reverberations of my own sound feedback. As you're talking parts of my memory are pulling up our being together years ago, here when Anton was being born, here in Toronto, and also the tones of your voice in relationship to others I have known of similar speaking patterns, or part of the brain is delighting in the Canadian inflection that's distinct from the US way of saying things - I'm very partial to Canada, as you know - so all of that's going on, and while it's going on, it precludes the fullest attention to what I'm seeing. So the best thing is to search for a neutral spot on the rug so the eyes are not feeding back their particulates of memory and qualities and tones and so on. So that's why I make mostly silent films, thought I would point out that that's quite a normal thing to do in the history of art, we do not normally expect painting to have sounds coming out of it, nor a sculpture, though it can. The ordinary expectation in any art is that it appeals singularly to a sense. And then it may, hopefully should, jog the other senses but the immediate involvement with it is with the eyes or with the ears, not both at once.

PH: So how do you work with sound in *Boulder Blues* and *Pearl's And...*?

SB: That film I really struggled. The music I admired very deeply - it was I suppose you'd call it, electronic music, by Rick Corrigan who I worked with in making *Faust*, and other films, *Crack Glass Eulogy* for example, so I'm very involved in his music. So I took his music and set picture to it. But instead of setting it synchronously, for the most part I took a pattern of sound, and with great attention to the textures of the sound, searched for material that would echo that visually.

Now the complexity there is that the mind does not receive visual material in at all the same way it receives audio material. So if you're going to get a fair corollary of a series of even very blunt rhythmic patterns - say sharp drum patterns - you're going to have to search for something from an audio viewpoint more smeary and vague and reverberatory at its edges. Throughout the film that's what I did, so that wherever you have a sound, there will, within a certain space of time that's within the capacity of human memory, like with a second or half a second or two or three seconds at the



STILLS FROM THE ACT OF SEEING WITH ONE'S OWN EYES'



FRAME ENLARGEMENT FROM VISIONS IN MEDITATION #1

outside, you're going to have a visual echo of that sound, and then across the work that slowly reverses itself so you have moments of synchronicity where both the sound and the picture are within, what we call, ordinary synchronizations.

The rhythms of both are occurring simultaneously. But then pretty quickly it gets to where the vision is setting up a rhythmic thing that the sound will shortly be repeating in its own way. What makes it complex again is that the vision will set up a kind of rhythm distinct from but very accurately echoing or prophesying — what sound is coming. And so that's how that was made. Then it approaches a point of synchronicity again where that reverses, and the sound comes first and the vision after. So that was a really complex sound/image combination. And I suppose in terms of the reception it exists in people's mind it's given over very much to the unconscious. The unconscious is going to pick up these things, but consciousness can only accommodate a very obvious immediate echo of sound and picture or a synchronicity which is what it's used to. So it's a kind of strange world for the eyes and the ears to view and hear that film. I had to do that not as a technical trick, but because that's the only way of working with what one might hear and what one might see that would be true to the tensions of my experience of living in Boulder. In other words the sound and the image are never quite together in this place. I think they aren't in most places where a person lives their daily living place.

PH: I think it's just taken for granted mostly, that sound has to go with picture, and that's

the first thing that film students do they try to match the sound with the picture. You are trying to work with sound non-linearly - a poetic matching of sound and picture.

SB: For a lot of people that film looks like the sound track is doing one thing and the vision another and two are sharing textures, a kind of textural sense and a kind of mood, or tone, you might say. But I would just point out to those students that might question it that way, try to make something non-synchronous. This is really hard. For example, you can take any dramatic scene, of any kind of making, that has drama in it, and slap Bela Bartok's music haphazardly over it and it will more often than not sound as if it were written for that piece of vision, for that scene. We always used to use Bartok a lot, he lends himself to this, but actually Stravinsky will very often do just as well, and electronic music, Stockhausen, whatever, because there's this capacity in humans to try to make things synchronous, so they will fudge in the brain on things that are off as much as 3/4 of a second, and feel them as if they were synchronous. That's why you don't have to be a genius to make the soundtrack for a Hollywood movie. You just have to work within a certain milieu of complexity of beats and drama whatever, and you got it. And very often those things are elaborately unsynched but they feel as if they're synched. So I was struggling all the way through working quite oppositely with *Boulder Blues and Pearls* to not have synchronicity but to have echoing synchs that were delayed or precedents for what was coming.

PH: You were talking about your films and

how they relate to visceral experience, you said the other night it comes from the beat of your heart, or your breath or hypnogogic vision - all these things relating to your body in some form, yet in some of this newer work or at least the program shown the other night, there weren't a lot of images of the body, and I know that in the past there has been, for instance the birth films, *The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes* of course, And I'm wondering if you have thoughts about that? Is this something that has changed?

SB: No it hasn't really changed. The difference is that now I'm working from inside the body, so in other words I'm trying to be true to or to create paradigms of the total experiencing of whatever the sensibilities are bringing in to the body through the eyes, the ears, the whole skin surface. I'm trying to make visual corollaries of the internal feedback, or response to that. The simplest to understand is hypnogogic vision, that is when the little patterns and shapes and colours and textures that seem to be projected from the inside out, seem almost to be projected against the eyelid, so that the poet Michael McClure called them brain movies, of our automatic feedback or response to what's pouring through us. So I'm very much within the body. Which state I've found very similar to music. So I've really come to sense that whatever music you're listening to really is in some way reflecting an inner state of ones' body's experience of itself. It's very easy when you talk about pop music, because the overwhelming thing is the heartbeat. The heartbeat is being represented with those big deep base drums that shake the whole street as cars go by playing the latest rock. And it's in another

more complicated way, with the entire brain and the whole nervous systems at play. So the music of the spheres is inside. The head is the sphere, but the head also has these ganglia, these roots, that dribble down from it that are our toes and fingertips and penis and vagina and so on, the whole splayed out piddima of the nerves that are causing the skin to bluish or pimple, freeze, etc. All that is going on at once, and I believe that the great classical composers have been more true to that, that the heartbeat and the breathing are overwhelming the pop music at the expense of being more viscerally involved in the entirety of the body. So as that's what interests me in music, that's also what interests me in painting. I paint because I can't get a camera inside my head and photograph what's going on. And that painting is where my work comes the closest to being a visual corollary of music.

Now then, of late, I'm even abandoning something of that. That will always be in my work, because it's grown up in it. But now I'm also trying to make things that are not corollary of internal body reactions, but exist just as films themselves, just as a very pure music might be said to do. It's always going to be closely, but very obliquely, related to the heartbeat, the breathing, the synaptic sparking of the nerves, and so on, but its also going to be trying to make something that isn't just a document of the body's feedback that forms a world of its own, a paradigm. And that I think is the drive to achieve what we call an art.

For most people the actual memories of the experiences of a given day that are the deepest are those that are only perceived through peripheral vision, and are only obliquely comprehended. That is, those things that slip right through the consciousness into the unconscious. This is the area that mostly engenders dream. 70 - 80% of most dreams are engendered by things that were not concentrated upon across the day, only seen in passing. And of course, finally as one grows used to a place, most of what you see is only seen in passing in a sense. You know where to put your foot, so you're not concentrating upon where its going, and so a true memory of a place where you're living would tend to be more an obliquity of envisionment so there again is why *Boulder Blues and Pearls And...* for that matter, its predecessor *City Streaming*, which was made here when we were living in Toronto and trying to get into the school system, trying to get a job, (laugh) I was trying to get all the way over into Canada, and during that period I made a film called *City Streaming* that I think should be shown sometimes with *Boulder Blues and Pearl's And...*

PH: My friend had a horrific dream the other night that had something to do with seeing a pair of feet cut off at the knees, but the feet were attached together like Siamese twins, and I realized that while we were gardening I found a zucchini that was joined like that, during the day, and so there's kind of an example, it's not anything that was concentrated on but it's one of the things that slide back through the day and the ingredients find their way into the dream.

SB: Whereas, if you'd picked up that Zucchini and made a thorough study of it and maybe dissected it and were thinking of writing a paper on it, you probably wouldn't have dreamed it.

PH: Let's change direction here for a second. You were introduced at the Cinematheque screening as the father of experimental film, and you seemed a bit uncomfortable with that, and you suggested that its time you graduated to being the grandfather of experimental film. Could you talk a bit about your uneasiness of that father figure position?

SB: I'm not looking for more stature in that position, but more mercy, actually. Fathers are not popular in our time as any kind of a figure, they are so slamdunked. I mean, I think this is grotesquely unfair but this is what's happening and its happening out of the urgent needs of women to assert themselves in ways that give them a chance to survive in an ever more vicious free-enterprise system. A system that has become so vicious that the economics now of I think both our countries has become that both husband and wife have to hold on to a full time job, and the children are raised by a daycare centre, so its completely wiped out any normal childhood for children, and we're vibrantly aware of it because we choose at all costs to do the other. All my efforts are to earn enough, against all odds not, to permit Marilyn to be a mother to the children. She's so dedicated to them which seems to be quite the normal thing, quite the most necessary thing for their well-being, that I'm trying to support that, so that makes me a very out of fashion archetypical father type.

So father has come to mean autocratic fascist. You know, I think that's what fathers did tend to do and probably still many do. We're talking about a lot of really bad human beings which have created an utterly monstrous sense of father. Well I fancy that I'm not deserving the flack from that, but all the same I do not want to be called father in that public sense of anything, and that's how I've been



CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

FISH TALE SOUP



D.O.P. Phil Earnshaw shoots Kathleen Laskey as she performs her "mud dance"

Photography: Sharon Stephens

IN THE SOUP:
Annette Mangaard's *Fish Tail Tales*

L.I.F.T. member Annette Mangaard has been making films over more than ten years. Starting with experimental works, such as *She Bit Me Seriously*, *The Tyranny of Architecture* and *The Iconography of Venus* her style has changed with time, becoming progressively more and more narrative in such films as *Let Me Wrap My Arms Around You*, *Northbound Cairo* and *94 Arcana Drive*, done at the Canadian Film Centre in 1993. For the past three years she has been working on her first feature, *Fish Tale Soup*. In a time of rapidly vanishing funding, Mangaard should serve as an inspiration to all independent filmmakers — *Fish Tale Soup* was shot for the unheard-of amount of \$80,000. Recently LIFT member Ian R. Coutts spoke to Mangaard about her film and the challenges of working with a tiny budget.

IC: In a sentence, what's *Fish Tale Soup* about?

AM: It's about a couple who are trying to have a child and this refugee comes along and basically insinuates himself into their lives and changes things in many ways.

IC: You said that in the best Hollywood style.

AM: That's one of the things you have to do when you're making your feature, because everyone wants to know that in one line, which is really hard when you start writing a script. I found that one of the most difficult things was to condense it down to one line.

IC: I hear *Fish Tail Soup* cost \$80,000 to make.

AM: It was \$80,000 to shoot it, and then we

got some completion services from the NFB and around another \$40,000 in cash, approximately.

IC: How long did it take to shoot?

AM: 20 days

IC: Is it in 16mm?

AM: Super 16mm. It can only be upped or downed. Super 16 has its own set of problems, i.e. getting the camera — there aren't that many super 16 cameras, and you also have to edit on a super 16 flatbed and you have to, if you want to screen it, get a super 16 gate.

IC: What was the size of your crew?

AM: Twenty-three people. Give or take. It went up or down on various days.

IC: What was the size of the cast? It sounds like a three-hander.

AM: It was basically three main characters and then there were about six dailies – people who'd come in for a day here or there.

IC: Was everyone paid?

AM: The keys all got paid – they didn't get paid very much and then we had dailies who would come in – volunteers who had never been on a film set and others who had a little bit of experience,

made to look like a western set, and its got these rolling hills and a kind of a Santa Fe feel. There's no furniture, there's just three big logs and a fireplace in it. I saved on furniture.

IC: But it sounds like a plausible house.

AM: Yeah, I would live there.

IC: You often hear this line, 'The budget is the aesthetic,' which basically means if you've got fifty dollars, you decide that the movie will be a fifty dollar sort of a movie – you don't go for a lot of car chases or Zeppelins smashing into

ran power lines over. We shared this place with another guy who was kind enough to move out. I did ask a lot of a lot of people. It's kind of like calling in all your favours, and you know people will do it, but it comes to a point where people will start to resent you. I think I've hit that point with my family. My parents lent me their car, and I've just come back from a month in Montreal [at the NFB], and I have a child who didn't see me for a month. That was awfully hard. And I had to sleep in a lot of basements.

IC: How long have you been working on *Fish Tale Soup*?



KATHLEEN LASKEY AS "VIVI" SHAKES IT FOR PAUL.

but wanted to gain more, so that was the tradeoff for them.

IC: Did LIFT have any involvement?

AM: At one point we were going to try and use some LIFT lights, but my co-producer had a deal with PS, so we rented equipment from them.

IC: I noticed something about your films *Northbound Cairo* and *There Is in Power – Seduction*. Both of those look like they were done on sets or largely indoors. Is this one like that or is it more realist?

AM: Well this one has a more realistic story, although *Northbound Cairo* wasn't that unrealistic a story, really. But there's an element of fantasy because the people live in a house that looks like an aquarium. The woman raises fish, and so she's got aquariums all over the place and you always hear this bubbling. She has painted the whole dining room like a huge aquarium. And their living room is

mountains. Was that your approach?

AM: I always wrote *Fish Tale Soup* to be a \$500,000 film. But then when I didn't even get \$500,000, I went through the script again – this is when I had rewritten it what felt like a hundred times – I cut out characters, and I cut out locations – where there were three locations, I made it one. It really was cutting down and getting rid of locations to keep the costs down. We shot most of the scenes inside one house. And that was the house next door to where I live. The guy who owns it had agreed a long time ago – he was trying to renovate it, but he wasn't getting anywhere, and it had been empty for a while. He thought this idea of doing a movie was fun and glamorous, and the house was still empty when we came to shoot, so he let me use it for next to nothing. He even let us knock a wall out, so we'd have a little more room.

The house had no hydro or water, so we used my house for that. Everyone had to use the washroom at my house, and we

AM: I wrote the first draft in January of 1992. Then I went to the Film Centre that spring, from '92 till the spring of '93. While I was at the Film Centre you were supposed to work on your feature but there was not actually a whole lot of time, and my child was a year old, so I didn't actually get that much writing done. When I was finished at the Centre I really actively, fulltime, started pursuing the writing and producing of it.

IC: Was that in 93?

AM: Yeah, the summer of 1993.

IC: How did funding breakdown?

AM: Well in the end it got funded mostly by the National Film Board, with a pre-sale to CITY TV, and a bit of money from that new cable fund because of the CITY TV pre-sale.

IC: And that was the bulk of it?

AM: Yeah.



DIRECTOR ANNETTE MANGAARD

IC: Can you break down your costs?

AM: Because it's not finished, I don't think I can, really. Although I'd say out of the 80,000 for the production, most of it went to the cast. We did that CEPIP deal, the low-budget ACTRA agreement, then we did the stock and the lab, and then crew and food. All the equipment was from PS

IC: So right now you're doing post-production?

AM: The NFB is doing most of the post-production, in terms of services under the co-production agreement. I think they're doing a good job. In terms of creative control they haven't been at all intrusive.

IC: What have you done at the NFB?

A: The mix, the blow up, the titles and the effects, and we edited at the NFB, they gave us a room.

IC: Was that in Toronto or Montreal?

AM: Toronto. Montreal's amazing. If I lived in Montreal, I'd be up there all the time.

IC: You got to use it because this was a coproduction. Do they let other independents use it at all?

AM: Yeah, they have that PAFPS agreement. It's easier for people who live in Montreal to hear about this, which would be much more difficult for someone living in Toronto.

IC: When are you finished?

AM: I think it should be March 17th.

IC: And then what?

AM: Well, we have a distributor, MAX films. It used to be Pierre Latour and Roger Frappier. They've split the company into two companies — film tonic and Max, (Pierre Latour) who will be distributing it. I guess first they'll see what kind of film it is and then hopefully they'll send it to festivals, and do some kind of a theatrical release and then do the TV thing. I don't know how long it'll take before it's on CITY

TV. I imagine it'll be at least a few years after.

IC: Is that right?

AM: Well, first you see if it's got a life anywhere else, and try and do the TV thing after you've explored all the other channels.

IC: What's the biggest difference between working on this and on shorts?

AM: This is 90 minutes. For a short, I'd think that you'd shoot for five days and that was hard, but this was 20 days. It was like running a marathon to get through the shoot. Even though it's the most exciting part, it's the most physically draining. I started working out beforehand because I thought "I'm going to have to be physically in shape". I found that I could only direct when I was standing. I couldn't direct seated, and while we were doing each take, every muscle in my body would just

clamp up. I broke all these blood vessels in my leg just from standing for 20 hours every day and concentrating on what was going on.

The other thing I think I could say about doing a feature is you have to be sure that the script works. You should spend the most time on that and make sure that it's really there before you start shooting. I found I never had time to change my mind when we were actually shooting. Because we were shooting so much, because we didn't have enough time, I never allowed myself to stop and really think. I did all that beforehand. I storyboarded it, and I did shot lists for every single scene and I told the first AD how many shots we were going to do every single day, and I decided to go through the script and take out everything I could that would cost money. I decided which were the scenes that were important to me, the ones that had the emotion in them, and I spent more time on them. There were other scenes, where I felt, ok, if I need to, I'll shoot this scene in one take. I wouldn't do any kind of coverage on it, and I did that with a lot of them. But with those you've got to make sure that your pacing is right on, or else it'll throw off the whole film, but it saves you a huge amount of time and stock because you're not doing any setups, and it makes the crew really happy every time you get through a scene.

I did actually shoot some important scenes that way, but I blocked the actors ahead of time so that I would have them moving in and out of the close-up, for example, I didn't have the camera moving. I had the actors moving so that I would have coverage on their lines. But I didn't have to move the camera and change the lights.

IC: Did you rehearse your actors beforehand?

AM: Yeah. Not that much, but for two weeks before, whenever the actors were available, I rehearsed them, so I probably got 15 to 20 hours rehearsal. I could have used more, actually, because it did help a lot. Now I realize that I could have saved even more time. Although the actors were very good; they didn't spend a lot of time on set going over and over their lines.

IC: So the more prep time you spend, the more money you save?

AM: I did spend a lot of time in prep, and I tried to go over every single thing that

was going to go wrong, so when something I hadn't thought went wrong, I didn't have to deal with all those other things - I'd already figured out that they would go wrong and how I would deal with them. And every single day, I thought about what scene I'd lose if I had to. When I was figuring out the schedule for each day I made sure that there was something that could be lost if we couldn't get through the day. The only day that we didn't make was because it was pouring rain, and that was the only exterior day. It was awful. So the next day we had to shoot a day and a half.

IC: It's so disciplined.

AM: Totally.

IC: I'm interested that you had to sit down and decide what things might have to be sacrificed.

AM: And then when you're editing you have to sacrifice again, because you have to lose all those wonderful scenes that took so much to shoot. I had 120 minutes with my first cut, so



JOHN JARVIS AS PAUL
"THE FOX" GETS IN THE
MOOD.

I had to lose a lot, but it was better for the story and for the film. Better to be short than long and overbearing. I always think it's better to have the audience wanting more than wishing it would end.

I really would say to people if they're going to do a feature to keep going over their script and cutting everything they can and to spend a lot of time preparing ahead of time. Make sure they've got a good group of people around them for the whole film.

IC: Did you work with a lot of people you'd worked with before?

AM: There were a few people I'd worked with before but a lot of them I hadn't, although I certainly would again. I thought the crew was really great; they came through every day and made it happen.

IC: How did you find them?

AM: I went around looking for people who wanted to make that step up. Like the cinematographer, Phil Earnshaw [Liberty Street]. He'd done a lot of TV work and he wanted to do a feature. So that was what he got out of it. He brought a gaffer and grip with him. Then slowly other people started coming on. The hardest thing was to find a good sound person. The other thing I'd say to people wanting to make a feature is shoot at a time of year that's not busy. We shot in May, the last minute before everybody got jobs.

IC: Because after that they're—

AM: Busy. There not going to do something for next to nothing. So do it in a lull period.

IC: Did that make a difference with equipment, too?

AM: And also with locations, I think that you really have to start looking for locations ahead of time. I had the cinematographer come to rehearsal, so he could see the blocking ahead of time. We always knew each set up we were going to do. I knew where the camera was going to be right away. So the crew didn't have to stand around and watch me try to figure it out. Prepare. Anything you can do ahead of time, do it. If I could have made muffins and frozen them, I would have done it.

Fish Tale Soup is in the final stages of post-production, and will be finished early in 1996.

Rumour Mill

WORKSHOPS

An additional Optical Printing Workshop will be offered due to overwhelming response...

Thursday, November 30, 7pm-10pm,
Sunday December 3, 10am-5pm Thursday,
December 7, 7pm-10pm, Saturday
December 9, 10am-5pm

This workshop will present the basic knowledge of optical printing and how it can influence the ideas and feelings you are trying to evoke on the screen. Participants will also learn how to operate the LIFT aerial image optical printer. Step printing, skip printing, matting, super impositions, and how to choose stock will also be discussed. Participants are encouraged to bring 8mm or 16mm film to use as source stock.

Instructors: Jeff Paul and Irene Buncel

Cost: Member \$50, Non-Members \$60
Location: LIFT Enrolment is limited to 8.

Any questions? Call LIFT at 588-6444,
Monday - Friday, 10am-6pm.

Send mail registration to:
LIFT Shoptalks
37 Hanna Ave., Suite 301
Toronto, ON, M6K 1W8

Participants may cancel up to 48 hours in advance and receive a full refund minus \$5 administrative fee. No refunds will be given with less than 48 hours notice.

STAN BRAKHAGE AND PHILLIP HOFFMAN DISCUSS THE NEGATIVE AND THE POSITIVE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

affected by it, that you are the king pin, and everybody should bring you your slippers, your supper, and you're some kind of autocrat that's going to tell everybody what to do. All my life's ambition and much of what I do is try to help younger filmmakers and older filmmakers. They don't give grants to older filmmakers. They're supposed to have made it, which means they're supposed to have made a Hollywood movie by this time or else they must be no good. So at some point they cease giving you any help at all, and you're in a position, not as bad, but similar to a very young filmmaker, who hasn't reportedly proved him or herself at all. They won't give them a grant either. So I'm very leery of the term father.

PH: At the screening the other night, you talked about the autobiographical that fuels your work and fuelled *Black Ice*. In introducing *Mammals of Victoria*, you said that you had a desire to know Marilyn in her teens. She grew up in Victoria, and she must have told you things about it, showed you things. How did that film get made, and how do you think Marilyn influenced the making of it?

SB: We were there on vacation visiting her parents, the children's grandparents and so it was wondrous to me. We were staying in the home where she grew up - that was magic but there's a sadness that I couldn't share my whole life with her. I don't quite understand, in some simple Winfield Kansas (which is where I grew up) sense, why Marilyn and I didn't grow up next door to each other. So while we were visiting, I made *A Child's Garden and The Serious Sea*, taking great advantage of this beautiful garden that her parents and her brother Brian have maintained much as it was when she was playing around in it when she was a kid. And the whole ocean that surrounds that island becomes the metaphor for a growing up that was very much like *Anticipation of the Night*, it had that gloomy perspective on adult games, but it was more balanced than *Anticipation of the Night* and certainly did not have the faults of the imposed dramatic ending. So then I wanted to do something of the adolescent period. Just to be blunt about it, Marilyn says it doesn't really give her a sense at all of her adolescence. She says, however, "It gives me a sense of yours" (laughs). Mine was very torturous and gloomy indeed, and yet very beautiful in that sense that one has to respect the most transformative period of your life, short of birth and death, that teenageness is. So it's a celebration in a way against all odds of sadness and confusion, and all the metaphors in the film, of the strain of the

reflective light in the ocean, and the distorted television pulls the confusions of what try-

ing to determine what is. That movie takes three-fourths of itself to determine what it is, which I think is a fair paradigm of the teenage condition. So it doesn't matter now what prompted me at a gut level to make this film, which was that I was trying to share by photographing the literal surrounds that Marilyn grew up in something of her teenage period, I was at least able to express something of mine.

PH: How does that feel? I talked to her after about it, I wonder how it feels that she doesn't totally embrace that film. There's a kind of bittersweet quality to that - wanting to go back and experience her life, and then the one that you made it for, or about, is not moved in a strong way.

SB: Well, to begin with, it isn't a likeable film. I would say this about it in terms of someone who's offput by it - that the extent to which it is going to be true to the teenage condition is going to offput anyone who has survived that - which is to say any adult (laugh). Most people don't want to think about their teenage period, or if they do it was certain hijinks that they did - certain rebellious, now funny but at the time probably very dangerous flamboyancies that they managed in that passage - or just that they survived it - but most people don't want to think about it in any bone deep sense, their teenage nebulosities and confusions and so on. I'm not saying that that's the case with Marilyn, I don't really know, maybe that's the perfect place to go through your teens and she had a really even-keeled adolescence. But I would think that for most people they would not because whatever their environs, the body is going through really eruptive changes, very disturbing changes. So even with Marilyn, I would say it isn't going to be a likeable film the extent to which it is successful, because the first time that people become aware of the slime of themselves, the pimples...

PH: When I finished "passing through torn formations", the film I made about Czechoslovakia, about mother's family, when I showed it to some of our relatives in Czechoslovakia--

SB: They didn't want to acknowledge it.

PH: They weren't moved by it. There was a bit of a tragic quality of that for me. On one level I knew that what I was making was right for me, but on the other hand I wasn't able to come into communion with these people, my ancestors, and I'm wondering what you feel about the possibility within filmmaking to come into communion with another person, within

the making.

SB: I think in this sense, that because I was thinking of it as an attempt to picture - more than picture present the textures and tones of the psychopathies of adolescence, because I was thinking of it vis a vis Marilyn, that I wanted to share even this difficult time with her, that it freed me to express more deeply mine own. Kind of a trick in a way, I didn't think of it as a trick, but I think that's what happened, so something of mine own could slip through that. And I think that's what we're always stuck with - we're stuck with our own. And empathy is the degree to which you can out of your own base have compassion for the fellow human beings. You can't really in any sense live their lives or even in your imagination very effectively, because each of us are so completely unique and individual and all what we do share is the process and the grounds. I know as well as I was unable to make it, that the process of remembering, putting the members together of such a time, the process of that is very true in the *Mammals of Victoria*.

PH: Showing this film without an introduction - without the introduction about the autobiographical element. How do you feel it holds up? Is it easy to let it go in that way?

SB: Oh yeah, it mostly does - most of my films have to hold their own I'm not there to speak with them and I often worry when I do speak with them that I'm giving people insights in one way but I'm precluding other insights they might have, and I think the great mystery of that period of living and of the ocean and of life on earth, might be very much more fulsome if you just had the *Mammals of Victoria* and then come these strange moody, oceanic, tv spitting envisionments.

PH: I play my work in a similar way; sometimes I'll introduce it and sometimes not. There is a difference there, and I think you're right that introducing it can sometimes narrow the route in.

SB: Your film is more about generations in that sense, but I only relate it to *Mammals of Victoria* because there is a good deal of adolescent searching for ones genealogical and relative past. That's the great search for humanity. I don't think there's anything of that in the *Mammals of Victoria*. That I dealt with through the pee wee golf course in Parksville in *Child's Garden* and the *Serious Sea*. That is the - I think somewhat earlier - almost pre-teen, but of course it reverberates across the teens, search for what it is to be part of generations of being human.

LIFT
LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO
ADVERTISING RATE SHEET

Effective December 1, 1995

LIFT is now offering limited advertising space in its bi-monthly newsletter
 – a direct mailing that reaches over 850 independent filmmakers and arts organizations.
 Four pages (including the outside back cover) will be allotted on a *first-come first-served* basis.

INSERT - Limited number available per mailing!

800 copies of the one page insert must be provided by the advertiser.

REGULAR: \$150.
NOT FOR PROFIT: \$100.

CLASSIFIED ADS (30 words)

Per Issue LIFT Members: \$5.
 Others: \$25.

DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS

ONE-EIGHTH (3 1/2" x 2")

1 Issue: \$60.
 3 Issues: \$55.
 6 Issues: \$50.



ONE-QUARTER (3 5/8" x 4 5/8")

1 Issue: \$110.
 3 Issues: \$90.
 6 Issues: \$80.

ONE-THIRD (2 1/2" x 9 1/2")

1 Issue: \$120.
 3 Issues: \$110.
 6 Issues: \$100.



ONE-HALF

Vertical (3 1/4" x 9 1/2")
 Horizontal (7" x 4 3/4")

1 Issue: \$180.
 3 Issues: \$150.
 6 Issues: \$120.

FULL PAGE (7" x 9 1/2")

1 Issue: \$240.
 3 Issues: \$200.
 6 Issues: \$180.



BACK COVER (7" x 9 1/2")

	~	Inside	Outside
1 Issue:	\$360.	\$400.	
3 Issues:	\$330.	\$360.	
6 Issues:	\$300.	\$325.	

*Rates are for camera-ready or disk-formatted artwork only.
 If you require design assistance, please call the office for rates.*

To book your space, please contact Denise Jones or Deborah McInnes at
 (416)588-6444 fax (416)588-7017

LIFT gratefully acknowledges the support of its members, the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council through the City of Toronto, Metropolitan Cultural Affairs Department, National Film Board, Ontario Film Development Corporation, and the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

MEET THE MAYOR!

OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, December 14, 5 - 7:30 p.m.

After months of anticipation and weeks of unpacking, packing, installation, painting, cleaning and decorating, LIFT is publically unveiling our brand new facility at 37 Hanna.

The Open House will be 5 - 7:30 p.m., Thursday, December 15, 1995. Mayor Barbara Hall will cut the ribbon.

During the summer, we relocated from the cramped 1,600 square foot facility on Adelaide Street to the spacious 5,600 square foot space in the King and Dufferin area. The new location has 3 editing suites, a Super 8mm Steenbeck Suite, Sound Transfer Suite and an Oxberry room, plus the roomy office and a mezzanine suitable for meetings, available to LIFT members for a small charge.

**Don't miss the
LIFT Annual Holiday Party
Thursday, December 14 from 8:00 p.m.
to 1:00 a.m.**

37 Hanna Avenue, Suite 301

Share the holiday cheer at our annual holiday bash
great company grape (wine)
cheap beer free eats
good times!!!

**Admission by donation of baby food and high protein
goods or \$3.00 for the Food Bank**

