

# Made in the Shade



**HYDROPONIC FILMMAKING  
BEATS THE HIGH COST OF LIVING**

# LIFT

THE LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO

July/August 1996

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# editorial

With the economic culture dosey-do-ing to the tune of Duffer Mike's Threshin' Stompin' cornpokes, it's hard to remember a time when good ol' down home truths like "Prosperity is just around the corner... (mine, mean, your is -er- way off yonder)" or "Arbeit macht frei" oops, I mean "based on an unequal, proprietary concept of wealth, we predict that our friends will get rich and you others -- who have just not been trying hard enough -- will inevitably take your place at the bottom of the food chain, as is 'natural' in an organic society where all people are not created equal..." were not gospel. In filmmaking terms, it means that there are those who are saying with authority and conviction and one eye on palm trees that films are, by their nature, *meant* to make money, *meant* to appeal to the folks in the Harris government, and that success *means* box office, and a ticket to stardom. It's an insidious way of thinking, and it's ruining our fun.

There is no denying the money-making possibility of industrial film. The behemoth that is cultural industry won't go away, nor will the rhetoric or the so called 'reason' that forms the conservative position on the arts. Nor will the convenience of box office take as a defining principle of successful filmmaking. Nor will the meanness that slips sideways out of the mouths of those who finally get to say "I told you so" as last rites are said over non-economically driven arts projects.

The point is, though, as Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "No one can make you feel inferior, unless you let them."

# message from the chair

Dear LIFT Members:

August, sadly, signals the beginning of the end of the summer. This August also signals the last month of Sally's tenure at LIFT as Membership Co-ordinator. She will be moving on in September to pursue her careers in both music and film. For the past five years, she has dedicated herself to LIFT and in so doing has made the liaison between the members (now 615!) and the Co-op stronger and more efficient. We wish her well in the future and are glad she is remaining a member of the Co-op. We are very pleased to welcome Deanna Bowen as the new co-ordinator.

The events keep happening this summer. Next up is the Party of Parties on Friday, August 30. It will be held at LIFT and will be a great way to celebrate LIFT and its filmmakers. It's also the first and will be the best of a lot of parties surrounding the Toronto International Film Festival. As well, congratulations go to LIFT filmmakers who are having their work shown at the Festival: Grimur Ardal, Maria Drasilov, John Greyson, Carolyn Hew, Mike Hoolbloom, Kris Lefcoe, Michael McNamara, Wrik Mead, Jason Romilly and Su Rynard. Statistically speaking, LIFT filmmakers comprise an impressive 33% of the Canadian short film programme and 20% of the features.

Until the next time,

Hope Thompson  
LIFT Chair

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 Council 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

LIFT's website was incorrectly addressed in our last issue. The correct address is:

<http://www.inforamp.net/~lift>

e-mail: [lift@inforamp.net](mailto:lift@inforamp.net)

Anyone with questions, suggestions or ideas, please call Lisa at the LIFT office, or e-mail us.

DO YOU HAVE e-mail???

Send us your e-mail address and let us know if you would be interested in receiving your bi-monthly mailing by e-mail in the near future. You can e-mail the info to us at [lift@inforamp.net](mailto:lift@inforamp.net)

★STOLEN MOMENTS FROM LIFT'S LAZY SUMMER



LIFT MEMBERS CATCH THE FERRY FROM  
TORONTO ISLAND... NEXT STOP HOLLYWOOD!

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ON THE COVER:  
PETER METTLER IS MADE IN THE SHADE

# critical dates & dubious deadlines

## upcoming festival deadlines:

FESTIVAL	DEADLINE	TELEPHONE
Chicago Int'l Film Fest. (Illinois, Oct. 10-20)	Aug. 19	(312) 644-3400
Cabbagetown Film & Video Fest. (Toronto, Sept. 4-5)	Aug. 27	921-0857
Japan Prize Int'l Educational Program Contest	Aug. 29	03-3465-6199
Sudbury Cinefest '96 (Sept. 17-22)	Aug. 30	(705) 688-1234
Turin Int'l Fest. of Young Cinema (Italy, Nov. 15-23)	Aug. 31	+39-11-5623309
Caracas Film Fest (Venezuela, Nov. 24-30)	Aug. 31	(58-2) 285-9661
Rome Eserciti e Popoli Film Fest. (Italy, Nov. 1996)	Aug. 31	
Zilina Ekotopfilm Fest. (Slovak Republic, Nov. 4-8)	Aug 31	(07) 230 503. 235 20
Yellowknife Far North Film Fest. (Nov. 29-30)	Aug. 31	(403) 873-4262
Brno Sixteen Film & Video Fest. (Czech Republic, Oct. 17-220)	Sept. 1	+42-5-4221 4625
Amsterdam Int'l Documentary Film Fest. (Nov. 28 - Dec. 5)	Sept. 1	31 20 627 3329
Mannheim-Heidelberg Int'l Film Fest.(Germany, Oct. 11-19)	Sept. 1	+49 (0)621-102943
Buenos Aires Mar del Plata Int'l Film Fest.(Argentina, Nov. 7-16)	Sept. 1	54-1 383-2622
Abitibi-Temiscamingue Int'l Film Fest. (Quebec, Oct. 26-31)	Sept. 2	(819) 762-6212
Toulon Maritime & Exploration Int'l Film Fest. (France, Nov. 13-17)	Sept. 7	(33) 94 92 99 22
Sao Paulo Int'l Film Fest. (Brazil, Oct. 18-Nov. 1)	Sept. 10	(55-11) 883.5137
Stockholm Int'l Film Fest. (Sweden, Nov. 8-17)	Sept. 12	+46 8 20 05 50
Banff Film & Video Fest. of Mountain Films (Nov. 1-3)	Sept. 13	(403) 762-6441
Antibes Underwater World Film Fest. (France, Oct. 30-Nov. 3)	Sept. 15	33-93 61 45 45
Gijon Int'l Film Fest. for Young People (Spain, Nov. 22-29)	Sept. 15	(9) 8-534-37-39
Malaga Int'l Biennial of Scientific Cinema (Spain, Nov. 25-30)	Sept. 15	(34) 5 2306894
Golden Knight Intn'l Amateur Film and Video Fest. (Malta, Nov. '96)	Sept. 15	00356 222345/236
Amsterdam Forum for Int'l Co-Financing of Documentaries (Dec. 4-6)	Sept. 20	31-20-627-3329
Autrans Snow, Ice, Advnt. & Evasion Film & Vid. Fest.(France, Dec. 5-8)	Sept. 20	33-76-95-30-70
Poitiers Henri Langlois Int'l Film Fest. (France, Dec. 2-8)	Sept. 30	49 41 80 00
Torello Int'l Fest. of Mountain Films (Spain, Nov. 15-24)	Sept. 30	(3) 850 43 2
Calgary Heartland Film and Video Fest.	Sept. 30	(403) 262 1873
Odivelas Int'l Documentary Film Fest. (Portugal, Nov. 16-14)	Sept. 30	(01) 938 84 07/838 85 07
Aix-en-Provence Short Film Fest. (France, Dec. 10-14)	Oct. 1	(33) 42 38 47 83
Cairo Int'l Film Fest. (Egypt, Dec. 2-15)	Oct. 1	3933832 - 3923962
Montreal Int'l Fest. of Films on Art (March 11-16, 1997)	Oct. 10	(514) 874-1637
Sao Paulo Int'l Film Fest. (Brazil, Oct. 18-Nov. 1)	Oct. 10	(55-11) 883.5137
Stockholm Int'l Film Fest. (Sweden, Nov. 8-17)	Oct. 12	+46 8 20 05 50
CSIF \$100 Film Fest. (Calgary, Alberta, Nov. 14-16)	Oct. 15	(403) 277-1741
Calcutta Int'l Film Fest. (India, Nov. 17-Dec. 7)	Oct. 15	(91-33) 228-7911
Academy Awards/Documentary Awards (Calif., March 1997)	Oct. 31	(213) 278-8990
Paris Fest. Int'l du Film d'Art et Pedagogique (Nov. 22-Dec. 3)	Nov. 1	42 65 08 88 - 45 68 16 58
Paris Int'l Film Fest. of Visual Anthropology and Social Documentation (March 7-16, 1997)	Nov. 1	
Santa Barbara Int'l Film Fest. (Calif., March 7-16, 1997)	Dec. 1	(805) 963-0023
Oregon Queer Film Fest., Univ. of Oregon (Eugene, February, 1997)	Dec. 1	(541) 346-4375
Hiroshima Int'l Amateur Film and Video Fest. (Japan, Spring, 1997)	Feb. 2	082-222-1133

Guidelines and application forms for the following festivals are on file and available for photocopying (10¢ a page) at the LIFT office. As much as we'd like to, LIFT staff cannot take the time out to fax forms to members. Please do not ask. If you are unable to make it into the LIFT office, you will have to call the festival directly to request an application form.

**AN EXCELLENT RESOURCE:** The 1996 edition of the AIVF Guide to International Film & Video Festivals is available as an in-house resource for all LIFT members. Invaluable for planning your festival entries for the upcoming year and getting the inside scoop on the international festival circuit.

# critical dates & dubious deadlines

## calls for submissions:

### WANTED: INFORMATION ON ARTISTS AND PROJECTS IN NEW MEDIA.

V Tape is embarking on a pilot project to collect and catalogue information about artists and projects in new media including CD-ROMs, selected audio artworks and creative internet projects. The catalogue is intended as a platform for artists to showcase projects available for sale to arts and cultural organizations. If you are an artist with work appropriate for inclusion, please contact V Tape with the following information: title of the artwork; description of the piece; relevant technical information; a biography; and CV. Submit this information to the attention of John Chung at V Tape: 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 452, Toronto, ON M5V 3A8. Tel: 351-1317 Fax: 351-1509. e-mail: video@astral.magic.ca

### THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

is launching a production program to expand filmmaking opportunities for aboriginal peoples in NFB production. The AFP is a 3-year initiative from the English Production branch. The Program will set aside \$1 million for each of the Program's 3 years to finance its productions, and will provide an opportunity for independent aboriginal directors from across the country to produce or co-produce film or video projects. The AFP will serve as a replacement for the NFB's Studio One structure. For more details, please contact Louise Lore, Executive Producer, NFB Ontario Centre, 150 John Street Toronto M5V 3C3 Tel: 973-2979/Fax: 973-7007



## funding & grant deadlines:

### ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

Artists, Film and Video: Oct. 1  
For more info., contact the Film, Media Arts Office, Ontario Arts Council: 151 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON, M5S 1T6. Phone: 969-7450 or 1 800-387-0058. Acting Grants Co-ordinator, Dan Lander, ext. 6305.

### CANADA COUNCIL

Film Production and Creative Development Grants November 15 (contact Leuten Rojas, ext. 5541)  
First Productions In Media Arts: Sept. 1 (contact David Poole ext. 4253)  
For more information, 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: Sept. 20, Dec. 6

For further information and guidelines/application forms, contact:

FUND, BCE Place 1818 Bay St. Box 787 M5J 2T3. Phone: 956-5431

### 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: Sept 30. Contact Marie Lalonde for more info: 591 5757 ext. 2734.

### ONTARIO FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Call for information regarding interim certificates covering eligible costs for provincial tax credits: 314-6858. See pg.10 for update on programmes.

### CANADIAN INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO FUND

No upcoming deadlines confirmed. Watch this space for a possible announcement in the fall. For more information, contact: Robin Jackson, 666 Kirkwood Ave., Suite 203, Ottawa, ON K1Z 5X9. Tel: (613) 729-1900. Fax: (613) 729-4610

**new members:**

Welcome new members  
as of June 10-Aug.1 1996

- Stéphanie Allaire
- Stephanie Beaudoin
- Naomi Bock
- Riel Brown
- Drake Conrad
- Peter Cresswell
- Darren Doyle
- JoAnna Ellerington
- Peter Gugeler
- Tina Hahn
- Karen Lee Hall
- Ken Hama
- Nick Kantos
- Navin Khanna
- Junior Lewis
- Alfonse Licata
- Sarah Lightbody
- Tina Madden
- Peter McNamee
- Krista Mitchell
- Allyson Mitchell
- Niara Modi
- Mduduzi Mokgakala
- Andres Pelenur
- David Ridgen
- Patrick Ryan
- Elida Schogt
- Yavorka (York) Spasic
- Lynn Spencer
- Dave Thomas
- Dawn Wilkinson
- Christina Zeldler

Mingle with the rich and famous! L.I.F.T. is looking for interested members to form both a Fundraising Committee and a Lobbying Committee. For information, please call Deborah MacInnes, at L.I.F.T. 588-6444.

L.I.F.T. has a new membership coordinator! Deanna Bowen, of Gay and Lesbian Film Festival fame, will take over that job from the excellent Sally Lee, whose band Venus Cures All is rocketing to stardom. Deanna's a media artist/visual artist whose work centres around the theme of race, gender and sexuality. She has an upcoming show in April, 1997

**announcements:**

Party...Party..Party...  
The Special Events Committee is looking for new members. Guaranteed front row seats at all LIFT events. Call Denise Jones at 588-6444.

Be on the cutting edge of the cultural world! The LIFT Newsletter Committee is looking for a few new members. Phone Deanna at LIFT 588-6444.

**lift orientation:**

LIFT will be hosting orientation sessions for individuals interested in joining the co-op, as well as for any members who haven't yet familiarized themselves with LIFT's facilities and resources. The Membership Co-ordinator will introduce attendees to the LIFT staff and will show everyone how to access the various hands-on information resources (funding files, festival and crew lists, etc.) and will answer specific questions regarding resources, membership structure and policy, etc., or more general ones regarding how to get more involved in the co-op and it's activities. The Equipment Co-ordinators will take everyone on a short tour of the editing rooms, go over the equipment resources, explain equipment booking policies and procedures, and answer questions regarding LIFT production equipment and post-production facilities.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1996**  
**11:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.**  
**37 HANNA AVE., SUITE 301**

**NEW:** An orientation of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre will also be conducted for interested individuals.

Space is limited, so call to reserve a spot.  
LIFT 588-6444

**congratulations:**

Just another film festival? I don't think so! Why do we gear ourselves up for the Toronto International Film Festival? (Why do so many excellent, interesting films get left out?) What does the TIFF represent, exactly? Bigness. Fame. Distribution. Luck. Glamour. Excitement. And perhaps the only time a line-up a block long of people waiting to see your film...

This year's LIFT films are:  
*Bangs* by Carolyn Hew  
*Alone* by Jason Romilly  
*Can I Get a Witness* by Kris Lefcoe, the film she made at the Canadian Film Centre  
*Carnival* and *Letters from Home* by Mike Hoolbloom  
*Eight Men Called Eugene* by Su Rynard

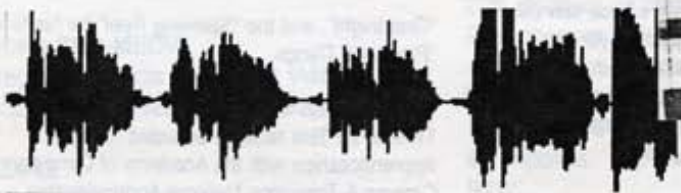
*Frostbite* by Wrik Mead  
*My Mom Works at Sears* by Maria Drasilov  
*On the Rocks*, by Grimur Ardal

Features by LIFT members include:  
*The Cockroach that Ate Cincinatti* by Michael McNamara  
*Lilies* by John Greyson  
*Shoemaker* by Colleen Murphy

and we congratulate everyone, offer them our best wishes (look out for yourselves, it's a zoo in there) and hope they enjoy the parties. More on the films once we've seen them!

## liftgear & machinations:

What's new with equipment @ LIFT?



A PROTOOLS

YES  NO

B with DR. LISA

YES  NO

maxell

### IT'S HERE!

Well, it is finally here! LIFT members are the proud new owners of a Protools Project digital non-linear sound editing system with an 882 I/O interface, Video Slave Driver, Mackie mixing console, etc. etc. etc. It is temporarily located in the Orange Edit Suite, while LIFT member Gord Creelman designs a work station for the Grey Suite (next to the Oxberry). Everything should be in place by September at which time the room will be available to full members for \$10/hr, and to associate members for \$20/hr. If you are interested in using the suite in its interim state (at lower rates), please contact Lisa or Greg to make arrangements. Greg is currently looking for a short film to sound edit for training.

The system is up and running, powered by a fast 7200 Power Macintosh. The Protools system slaves to a VHS video deck (which was generously donated by Magnetic North). Once you have picture lock on your film, you must have a VHS

transfer with both VITC and LTC time code at 29.97 NON-DROP frame, with a window burn. The time code is read by the computer, and allows digital audio stored on the computer hard drive, to be played back at the same rate. Two LIFT members' films are being edited on this new system: Jason Romilly's *Alone*, sound edited by Lisa Hayes (debuting at the TIFF), and Lee Shane's *Sqewed*, sound edited by Craig Henighan.

Many thanks to LIFT members who provided ideas and technical support in the purchasing phase. In particular, Michael Werth, LIFT member and sound editor at Deluxe, who provided much technical support to get the system running. And Criag Henighan, currently a non-member, who also did a lot of work to help get the LIFT system up and running. If you would like to be on our list of Protools editors, please give us a call.

For those interested in learning more about

Protools, there will be two workshops in September. Check out the Fall Shoptalks brochure. The October issue of the LIFT newsletter will have a detailed article on the joys of digital sound editing with Protools.

Keep in mind that this equipment (like all other LIFT equipment) is for use on member's independent films. Therefore, it cannot be used on commercial projects, or projects where the member does not have complete creative control. As with all other LIFT equipment, an associate or full member may hire an editor to operate the equipment on their behalf. If an affiliate member or non-member wishes to use the Protools system on their film, they can hire an associate or full member to do the editing for them, but the full or associate editor will be billed at the associate rate.

still from Bangs by Caroline Hew



still from Alone by Jason Romilly



still from On the Rocks, by Grimur Ardal



\*For those of you whose films are not in the Festival, you have an a chance to win friends and influence people at the LIFT annual Salon des Refusees, which will be at the Rivoli September 11th. Deadline for submissions will be August 23rd. All you need is your letter of rejection from the Film Festival.

**congratulations:**



Congratulations to Lisa Hayes, whose film *Dike* won Best Short Film award at the Sydney Festival, and to Elizabeth Yake, Producer of Colleen Murphy's Canadian Film Centre short *The Feeler*, which won Best Performance for Randy Hughson in the lead role.

LIFT Member Rick Palidwor won two awards at U of T's Hart House Film Board awards gala. Rick received the "First Reel" award for a short

"Goodnight" and the "Spinning Reel" for his film "Favourite Things."

Congrats also to Jason Suedath and Gillian Truster, LIFTers recently awarded 12-week apprenticeships with the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television National Apprenticeship Training Program.

**GRANT RECIPIENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

A total of \$20,000 was awarded to LIFT by the National Film Board to grant to LIFT members. LIFT also provided \$2,000 in equipment service awards, and \$100 in office services. The jury was comprised of LIFT members: John Greyson, Jennifer Holness, Helen Lee, Iris Paabo and Gary Popovich. The facilitators were Irene Bunce and Greg Woodbury

\$3,000 in cash to Katherine Asals for *EL D.F.* A portrait of Mexico City. A loose and highly subjective documentary portrait of one of the world's biggest cities at one moment in time.

\$3,000 in cash to Lisa Hayes for *Lez Befriends*. Two female friends, one lesbian, one straight, recount episodes from their lives and the way people react to their long term platonic relationship. *Lez Be Friends* takes a comical look at sexual orientation, friendship, homophobia, and heterosexual privilege.

\$3,000 in cash to Carolynne Hew for *Bangs*. *Bangs* is a comedy about a Chinese girl obsessed with her large egg like forehead. Her fixation leads her from the daily battleground of fancy hair products to the world of an overpriced Chinese face reader until she finally confronts her own demons.

\$1,000 cash to Paul Lee for *The Offering*. *The Offering* is a short dramatic film about the progression and the passing of life, as told through the friendship and love between two monks, from their initial encounter to their final parting. Without dialogue and music, the soundtrack of the film will be built entirely from natural soundscapes, foley and sound effects.

\$2,000 in cash to Su Rynard for *Eight Men called Eugene*. *Eight Men Called Eugene* is a playful "faux" documentary that traces the history of genetics by "exposing" the contributions of eight scientists to the field of genetics. In doing so, *Eight Men Called Eugene* creates a parallel between eugenics and genetics.

\$3,000 in cash to Steve Sanguedolce for *Too Hot To Handle*. *Too Hot to Handle* will poetically examine the construction of masculine identity, using leitmotifs from rodeo, hockey, baseball and the depiction of Italians in Hollywood gangster movies. *Too Hot To Handle* will expose the inevitable conversion of desire into violence.

\$2,000 in cash and \$1,000 in equipment services to Mario Tenorio for *The Red Window*. *The Red Window* is about Sara, a young filmmaker in her early 20s, brought from El Salvador to Canada at the age of ten. She is working on an Super 8 experimental film based on the memories of her grandmother, her fantasies and her relationship with her 40 year old Argentinean boyfriend, whose unexpected suicide has stricken her whole being.

\$3,000 in cash to Hope Thompson for *It Happened In The Stacks*. Intrigue, romance, crime and punishment for lesbian librarian, Jane Putnam, it can all happen in the stacks of Toronto's oldest public library.

\$1,000 in equipment services to Diana Vazquez for *Flesh*. *Flesh* is a 7 minute poem filmed in 16mm colour, that travels through the psychological anxiety of fat, while taking a unique look at a large woman's body. It is written from the introspective point of view of a child who watches her mother struggle with her weight and body image.



**discounts for members:**

**CASABLANCA**

50% off services with the exception of stock. For more information, call David Cooke at 461-2550 or 465-8232

**CODES PRO-MEDIA**

Category discounts on audio & video tape-stocks. Call 593-0404 for more details.

**DELUXE**

20% discount on lab fees on COD orders upon presentation of the LIFT membership card. Call 364-4321 for more details.

**DISCOVERY PRODUCTIONS**

15% discount on audio post production work. Call 596-1149 for more details.

**EXCLUSIVE**

10% discount on service only. Call Greg Miller at 598-2700.

**KODAK CANADA INC.**

9% discount (plus 2% for cash) on film stock. Orders must be placed on authorized order form, available at the LIFT office. Call Kodak, Customer services at 766-8233 for more details.

**LIGHTSOURCE INC.**

25% discount on light equipment rentals, 20% discount on purchases. Call Michael Rosenberg at 588-6871 for more details.

**NUMBERS**

15% discount on edge coding, 5% on editing supplies. Call Helen Brunjes at 941 9412.

**PATHE**

20 to 25% discount depending on size of the project and other terms. Can also provide package prices for an entire project. 977-9740

**P.F.A./MEDALLION**

15% discount on lab fees for COD orders. Call 593-0556 for more details.

**PRINT 3 (481 University only)**

10% discount on scripts, resumes, grant applications. Willing to negotiate on large orders. Call Paul at 596-8577

**SONIC BLOOM**

50% discount on audio post production. For more details call Matt at 466-5071

**SOUNDHOUSE INC.**

25% for services, 10% for materials.

Payments must be made on a COD basis & sessions will be booked on a "bumpable" basis. Call 598-2260 for more details.

**SOUND MATTERS/ EARS OF EXPERIENCE**

25% off audio post production. Call Matt Davies at 466-5071 for details.

**SOUND TECHNIQUE**

Film and video sound finishing \$80.00/hr, master mixes for \$40.00/hr and customs by the sound doctor. Call 778-4973 for more details.

**SPOT FILM & VIDEO**

20% off all lab prices, and 45% off video transfers. For more info. call Al Lindsay or Jim Hardie at 535-3522.

**VALIS VIDEO**

20% off on rental of video and audio editing suites. Call 971-6031 for more details.

**WALLACE STUDIOS**

10% off on studio space rental. Call 537-3471 for more details.

**WILLIAM F. WHITE**

50% off of equipment rental. Subject to availability. For more details call Bill White at 252-7171

**lift website:**

**LIFT ONLINE!**

Just a reminder that LIFT is now online. Here's the information:

LIFT'S HOME PAGE:

<http://www.inforamp.net/~lift>

LIFT'S E-MAIL ADDRESS: [lift@inforamp.net](mailto:lift@inforamp.net)

**DO YOU HAVE e-mail???**

Since LIFT finally has the technology, we need to know which members have an e-mail address, what the address is, and if you would be interested in receiving your bi-monthly mailing by e-mail in the future. You can e-mail the info to us at our e-mail address).

Anyone with questions, suggestions or ideas regarding LIFT online, please call Lisa or Greg at the LIFT office, or e-mail us.

# f.y.i

## Say Wha'?

Ministry of Citizenship,  
Culture and Recreation

Division  
1111  
1111  
1111  
1111  
1111

Ministère des Affaires civiques,  
de la Culture et des Loisirs

Division  
1111  
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### Crunching the Numbers at the Ontario Arts Council

By now everybody's probably heard that the Harris PC's have cut the Ontario Arts Council about a third of their money got axed. Many who worked at the Council have been laid off as a result at present the Media Arts Department is down to Dan Lander former grants officer and now temporary officer/grants officer/secretary. And Janice is still there part time. The good news? Following the departure of media arts officer David Craig left, they hesitated, but have decided to fill his position after all there'll be a posting in the fall.

Before any of the cuts about a million bucks went into grants to individuals for films and videos. Since the cut, about \$700,000 is earmarked for these same grants. That's the money you apply for to make your film/tape.

In the last jury round there were 117 applicants and 23 folks were the lucky winners. In a cost cutting measure it was decided not to hand out the list which tells you who was on the jury, who got grants, how many applied, etc. The letter will be reinstated in the next round.

There are now two jury rounds per year instead of three though that may change when a new media arts officer is hired in the fall. Right now there isn't the staff to handle three juries. This means that every year the Ontario Arts Council can expect to support (more or less) 46 film and video makers in this province.

The money for first projects has been maintained at the same level. This is not the only money that the Media Arts Office doles out of course, some of it goes to organizations like LIFT, CFMDC, Pleasure Dome and innumerable others. Before the cuts, roughly 1/3 of all the media arts money went to organizations and 2/3 went to individuals and after the cuts this ratio has been maintained.

...with thanks to Mike Hoolbloom

June 10 1996

Ms. Virginia Rankin  
**NETHERWOOD FILM PRODUCTIONS**  
17 Westminister Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6R 1N3

Dear Ms. Rankin:

Thank you for your letter in which you express your concerns about the future funding for the Ontario Film Development Corporation.

Our government is faced with a serious financial situation and we are committed to taking immediate steps to addressing it. To this end, we have frozen spending or cancelled programs and projects that we cannot afford or that we believe require careful review before more costs are incurred. These decisions are affecting every ministry of the Ontario Government and will impact on many segments of our population. However, these measures will also save Ontario taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

In your letter you cite the economic impact to Ontario generated by the film and television production industry. This government is aware of the significant contribution this industry makes to Ontario's economy and of the record-level of film production activity Ontario has increasingly enjoyed in recent years. In recognition of this and to ensure Ontario remains a major player in the North American film industry, the Minister of Finance introduced a film and television tax credit in the Spring budget. This initiative will be administered jointly with the Ontario Film Development Corporation.

We believe that tax measures such as this one, combined with an agenda of fiscal constraint, will improve business confidence in Ontario and stimulate more of an entrepreneurial spirit a spirit exemplified so well by Ontario's film and television industry.

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Thank you for sharing your concerns with me. The points you raise in your letter have been among our many considerations when determining the government's future role in relation to the film and television industry.

Yours sincerely,

Marilyn Mushinski  
Minister

### ...and Now the Hot News...

The OFDC is conducting informal consulting sessions with filmmakers, arts organizations, etc. surrounding a proposed \$300,000 fund for short films or videos (maximum per project grant of \$25,000). The programmes mandate will be to help filmmakers make 'calling card' films, drama or documentary, (current wording is professional development opportunity). Directed at "...emerging filmmakers already with some experience, but who have not yet completed a theatrical feature or broadcast

production," on the downside, the OFDC can't "double fund" something that the OAC or another council is funding. The end product is intended to "advance the filmmakers experience, credibility and career goals within the Canadian Film industry." Read: think of something with an industrial bent, rather than an artistic or experimental project. Look for an announcement occurring (maybe) sometime around the Toronto International Film Festival, with a first deadline estimated for the fall? (the end of October?), 'God willing and the creek don't rise...'

# HELLO, ZMI - GOODBYE!

by Jonathan Culp

## Prologue: Getting There

Here's what social responsibility means to me, late morning Nowhere, New Hampshire, crying at the side of the road. It means turning my bike around to look at the mouse that ran under my wheels, that now lies paralyzed on the pavement. It means waiting for it to run away, staring at the blood in its nostril, My responsibility. It means trying four times before my trembling foot can stomp the misery out of this screaming thing, claws flailing in the dirt, never did nothing to me. The first thing I ever killed without a motor.

Just in case the above description is calling up visions along the Ted Nugent/ Robert Bly continuum, let me lead you to my proposed moral. I could have taken a car to my thousand-dollar radical media conference, but it would have been less efficient, because my goal was reflection, not speed. As I allowed myself the space to define the object of my reflection, a screaming mouse stepped up and demanded my attention, made me learn how to kill it.

And if there's one piece of information any radical Canadian filmmaker can use, it's how to kill a screaming American mouse.

## These are the people in your neighborhood.

The fourth annual Z Media Institute (ZMI) took place for nine days in June at Wood's Hole, Massachusetts. Hosted by Z Magazine, the conference explored access strategies and networking opportunities for radical media. Although fully one-quarter of the sixty attendees were Canadian, the speakers were all American, and this was reflected in the topical emphasis. I hope the organizers will address this flaw in future sessions. I had enough of a job figuring out my role as an artist in a room full of activists.

Where I'm coming from, the issues of art and politics can get sticky. You said it: an artist is no more an activist by definition than a Canadian is an American. Because the artist's role is said to lie in asking the "big questions" that might represent their freedom better than the available models of society, and because politics and aesthetics are indeed discrete spheres with sometimes conflicting mandates, how and why might the two form a lasting and effective bond? Sure, we're blessed with a focal point in a pop-culture personality that embodies our common nightmares (particularly one as close to home as Queen's Park and who also recalls an aesthetic and intellectual meld of John Wayne and Reuben Kincaid), but ultimately beating up on this pipsqueak is a distraction and an energy drain. Tapping this grotesquely bad example to formulate a proactive alternative is a better idea. The fact is that any social reform that truly makes it easier to live and

dream will make the processes of art more universal as well, and any artistic analysis that neglects this fact will likely be damaged goods.

Can we start from the proposition that we be activists for our own selves? Margaret Cerullo, in her ZMI workshop on feminist theory, cited that fruity Dan Quayle-Murphy Brown altercation as a watermark in which the putative "cultural elite" became honorary members of the first rank of political scapegoating, along with welfare mothers, the dread homosexual, etc. I'm not into identity status games, and you may argue that this is old news, but you have to agree that in the intervening years (and to be patriotic I might invoke *The Valour and the Horror* as our Canadian equivalent), the definition of any old mushy media dissent as "elite" manipulation has become a favoured tactic in reining in public debate. And while our beloved starving-artist mythos is a dis-

the arts, from Marxist to misanthrope, should have no trouble standing behind. It may not get you a pitch at Alliance, boo hoo. Say bye to that BravoFact, sniffle sniffle.

## And speaking of money...

In the toilet of ZMI's dining hall with a friend, I recited an entire activist rap poem before a security guard emerged from the far stall (he guarded the entrance to the gated community from which ZMI rented its facilities, speaking of, um, conflict). Expecting him to disapprove, he instead bonded with me over the magic of poetry and/or antique cars, and if his highest praise was reserved for Robert Service, that didn't make the fact of our connection any less inspiring, nor did it justify my advance anxiety: an assumption of failure which is common and lethal in art or politics.

This brings me to money, the relevant and



ortion of the fact of privilege that got most of us into the business in the first place, film sucks for standard-of-living and won't get any better with the government's new commitment to giving money to artists rather than organizations. This is not an aesthetic issue, folks; it's called union-busting, a standard-issue smoking gun in our little class war.

So we're citizens of the world, right? So peer assessment and non-private subsidy are vital to us as a "community," activist by nature, as essential to our livelihood as to our art. And therefore we should be happy to seek common cause with anyone else who's being fucked over, a pool that is getting big enough to matter, pardon my understatement. Cerullo nailed down the great power of the poor as "disruption." That's an agenda that

uniting anxiety of filmmakers and radicals, the pursuit of which saps time and energy and sometimes tweaks our intentions in uncomfortable ways. Aside from the availability of funds, many are debilitated by their fear of asking for it. And rich leftists are indeed out there somewhere, though in the great tradition of self-interest they do like their money and their big house. So they are (um) conflicted about whether to fund the deconstruction of capitalism, or for that matter 16mm salvos against conventional wisdom.

The creative hurdle here is for the film community to access this support by non-competitive and mutually reinforcing methods, and in resisting the temptation to compromise your own intentions to reel in that dangling dollar: not to know what they care about, as Barbara Ehrenreich pointed



out, but to make them care about what we care about. This conference was wall-to-wall with well-intentioned fundraising seminars that deteriorated into somber surveys of the corpse-strewn horizon. But better models do exist gee, the state-subsidy model looks OK these days, huh? and even better ones can be invented. Don't limit your expectations because you've chosen to play the rebel. (And I admit it kissing off Alliance and BravoFact plays right into this flaw.)

By the way, while we're playing the common ground game, I should note that Holly Sklar spent many of her allotted ZMI minutes grouching that the Left spends "too much time producing and not enough promoting." Sound familiar?

## Democracy, 24 frames a second

I would like LIFT members to think about workplace democracy on set. The messy pyramid of feature-film organizational legend is ingrained like a Syd Field paradigm, and for understandable reasons: the culture of overwork that swamps

most independent filmmaking leaves little time to imagine A Better Way in the abstract, and it's easier to pick a project that responds to the conceptual shoehorn than it is to build a better shoe. But as someone who has spent some of his most dismal days p.a.'ing on cashstrapped productions, I saw the relevance of this issue as soon as ZMI Radical Theory ringmaster Michael Albert offered the magic words, "structures have implications."

What this means is that a film set that adheres to hierarchical models of organization will never produce an effective critique of hierarchy or class due to vested interest. So if class is a meaningful issue to you, you might want to challenge that hierarchy on aesthetic as well as political grounds. If the filmmakers are concerned about issues of racism and sexism, then it is to their advantage to take generous corrective measures in their hiring policy. And if they believe in what I took to be ZMI's principal lesson - that decisions should be made by the humans they affect - then it may be reasonable to suggest a new search for collective options in project organization, with members sharing equal rewards, access to information and quality of life, where rigid specialization is eased by participation in and demystification of the areas (content and finance being just two) where the decisions affect everyone.

And if you're not interested in any of this, where exactly does that leave you? On your own, that's where, you against the big cruel world, how poetic. Yes, these experiments in structure are prone to breakdown; no, this participatory disposition is not likely to be shared by the Steadicam guy you fly in from Atlanta. But, to borrow another phrase from Michael Albert, *this is not rocket science*. (In fact, we routinely gravitate to such power-sharing models in our smaller projects, right?) The idea that certain aspects of production should be saved for the "experts" is a form of learned helplessness that will be easier to dismantle than, for instance, the learned isolationism of white maleness (another painful process that we would do well to confront, thanks Elena Featherston). So give yourself an extra week in preproduction to chew on that!

## Bring the Bouyancy Back Home

I wasn't around in the sixties, but Michael Albert says the difference between then and now is that back then it was radical to realize that things were fucked up. Today everyone knows things are fucked up. Therefore, the radical left now has to cough up a vision of the way things ought to be. This is somewhat harder, no? And since the dominant strains of casual discussion at ZMI were how, first, postmodernism is bad bad bad, and second, Chomsky does not use a holistic frame of analysis and therefore Isn't God, I bet the thousand-dollar radical media conferences can't do this job alone. Not that us filmmakers are coming from any special place of wisdom. But we

HOLLY SKLAR, Progressive Media Project

Progressives are suffocating themselves with low expectations about what is possible through the mass media. The right, they were visionaries in seeing the power of talk radio, of cable television, of campus media, and electronic media... systematic outreach and work through mass media can be mutually reinforcing to work with independent and alternative media, it need not be either or.

ELENA FEATHERSTON writer, filmmaker

The thing that very few people talk about in terms of race and media is how media is used to construct whiteness. Because one of the privileges of being white, of course, is that you don't have to think about it. You don't have to understand yourself as a product, as opposed to a consumer...None of the films that I've seen deal with the fluidity of racial identity.

BARBARA EHRENREICH, journalist

There is a kind of hopelessness...a certain kind of despair that says you really can't change the world anymore, in fact there isn't a world anymore, all there is is what we write - You can't change the world but you can edit it which I think does come from a very despairing place.

could find worse ways of directing our energy, once we've poked our holes in putative Common Sense, than to peek through and see what's on the other side.

But if we're not convinced we know what the next step is, and if we're committed to the refusal of fixity that characterizes our most useful revolutions, how do we brook this vision thing? That's your call; me, I dream of a fearlessly idealistic film subculture that is as direct, accessible, and energetic as the best punk rock. Invoking this continuity raises whole rafts of new approaches to message-slinging and audience relations, and I think the have-a-good-time mode of distribution and exhibition is a wise model in bad times such as these. A revolution that dances, in other words.

In the meantime, we would do well to reflect on the opportunity that LIFT offers to keep the film community around here together and healthy. ZMI may have changed the way I think about these issues in my life, but collective action gets crowded when it takes place in one's brain. It takes a good group of people in a good structure to actually build a better rodent-euthanizing apparatus, and LIFT might as well be the place for these changes to begin.

Jonathan Culp will be making transcripts available from Z Media Institute, of seminars by Noam Chomsky, Barbara Ehrenreich, Elena Featherston and others. Prices will be \$1-3 based on length. Call Jonathan at 591-2214 or look for a posting at the LIFT offices.

Yes.

# Peter Mettler Phenoeman



Swiss-Canadian filmmaker Peter Mettler has produced five features, the most recent and renowned being *Picture of Light*, a beautiful and poetic documentary on the Northern Lights and the inherent paradoxes and difficulty in attempting to visually document this phenomenon. He has also, throughout his career, collaborated with several members of "Ontario's New Wave", serving as cinematographer on both Atom Egoyan and Patricia Rozema's first features.

Interest in and appreciation of Mettler's work seems to be growing every day. Peter Mettler - *Making the Invisible Visible* (available at Book City, Pages, and Theatrebooks), a lovely book summing up and analyzing Mettler's work to date, has just been published, and he is to be the subject of a retrospective at the Cinematheque Ontario this fall.

I SPOKE WITH PETER METTLER AT HIS HOME/OFFICE ON JULY 12, 1996  
Jason Mc Bride

From what I know of your biography you're a photographer and a musician as well as a filmmaker and I just wanted to know what you get out of filmmaking that you don't get out of photography or music?

Well I guess filmmaking is a much bigger engagement with life in general because it involves collaborations with people and it involves communication in a different way. The structure and distribution of films is a much different system than photography where you show your pictures in galleries. I never did photography with the intention of communicating, it was something I did as a form of visual note-keeping. It was more in the realm of pleasure; it was very inarticulate. I didn't make photographs to bring them together to make a point. It's really pure observation, pure formal experimentation, and kind of a diary of images over the years. Most of them I keep in contact sheets, and then once a year I print maybe thirty of them. But I take hundreds in a year.

And music I started as a little kid. My parents were those kinds of parents that force their child to play piano. I didn't like it at the time. I didn't like where it was pushing me, what it was making me do. I didn't know why, just instinctively I didn't enjoy it. As soon as I stopped taking formal lessons I started to improvise and really enjoyed that. And then you couldn't get me away from the piano because it became an expressive, interpretive activity.

And in a way, music has always been informed the films and work that I do because I think that I work in a more musical sense than a narrative sense. There are narrative senses in music as well, but more tones and moods and impressions. I find playing an instrument a really good way to work things out, to kind of like meditate on an idea. It's a working tool. So really they both feed into making a film.



Yeah, I wanted to ask because of, especially in *Picture of Light*, your ambivalence about the filmmaking process, and I just wonder what compels you to still produce images as a filmmaker?

I don't think ambivalence is the right word, but more

Suspicion?

Yeah, suspicion. A kind of wariness about the power of images, and the power of media in general. I mean, it's all spelled out in *Picture of Light*, but the tendency of media and images is to become replacements for experiencing real things. And in making *Picture of Light*, partially because of where we were, and what we were seeing, that feeling or that paradox became really underlined. It's something I've always thought of or been aware of. But I didn't know when we set out to make *Picture of Light*, that that was what the film was going to be about. That aspect became so strong that it seemed that it should be addressed.

Do you still enjoy going to the movies?

Not as much as I used to. Mostly because I don't see as many movies that I like—I mean I love good movies obviously—being more and more preoccupied with different things, work, and not having a lot of time to

go out and see more movies. I get tired of seeing movies that are only interesting, not inspiring, revelations. So I see less than I used to.

Have you ever seen a documentary called *El Sol del Membrillo* by Victor Erice?

No.

It's a documentary about a Spanish painter, Antonio Garcia Lopez, a realist painter. And the whole film is about him painting and trying to capture the light falling on a fruit tree in his backyard. And it's related, I think to *Picture of Light*, in that it's partly about what André Bazin called the "desire to replace the external world

with its double." But one difference between the two movies is that there's no voice over in *El Sol del Membrillo*. And I was wondering if you ever thought about not including a voice over in *Picture of Light*, if you ever thought about just letting the images communicate what you were communicating in the voice over?

Yeah, definitely. I mean I'm really not a fan of voice-overs and that was the first time I'd ever used one like that. For me it was a bit of an experiment. What I'd gone through in my other films was a kind of surprising realization of how little...or how much is missed in terms of what an audience picked up, whether it's a visual or aural language. I mean it depends on the audience, but in a general sense I found. I always thought things were really obvious then I would discover that they weren't at all. Either someone would have to watch the film four or five times to see something that I thought was obvious, or it would just go unnoticed and it would be just the main line of the film that people would see.

So this was an experiment in some ways to put a layer into the film that was really up front and just see what that did, in the chemistry of how people responded. And it's interesting in North America, people seem to respond to that very strongly, really hang on to those words. In Europe there was a tendency. I mean they also hung on to the words but more people would say "why are you explaining things we don't need that?" I think this says something about the different cultures (again this is very general) and how they read film.

I think in *Picture of Light*, the particular text that's there is not in the images you know the cinematic language. If you took that text out the film would read very differently. The text is really needed to create the ideas that are in that film. Because it's referring to images it's talking about things that are in the images but you wouldn't be thinking about necessarily if there wasn't a voice pointing out the issues. So I'd be curious to see that other film you mentioned.

Yeah it's a beautiful film. One of the most beautiful recent films I've seen. One of the things I love about your films (I was just watching *The Top of His Head* again yesterday) is that so many of the images are associative or metaphoric or poetic. So many other filmmakers just use the image as a way of helping the audience to understand the narrative. *The Top*

of *His Head* has a Goethe epigram at the beginning [which is too long to quote here but begins "We talk far too much..."] which made me wonder if you've ever had the desire to make a silent film, a completely silent film.

Yes.

Would you?

Would I? Yeah. I mean some of my work is silent for a long time. For me in the process. And I guess again it's a question of how far can you go with films that are difficult to integrate into the mainstream, I'm not even talking the mainstream, I'm just talking stream. To get them shown to get an audience. I mean at some point you have to decide who the film is for. Is it for a small elite group of people or is it something you'd like to circulate to a larger small elite group of people? Again where's the boundary of having it shown? It's not so much an issue of commercial or non-commercial, it's more just an issue of communication. There's lots of things I'd love to do if it was an unfettered medium, if it didn't require a lot of money to make the simplest of films. So making a silent film is certainly one thing I'd obviously like to do.

But what I started out to say is that for me often the films are silent for a long time before the sound element comes in. Just working with the image alone. But I love sound too so it's not like a drawback.

*Eastern Avenue* is a film like that. That's a real pure image flow, like a diary. There's no narrative, there's very little logic to it other than chronology. And that was silent for a couple of years. I didn't rush to edit it.

It seems to me, and this might be presumptuous but that you have the ideal filmmaker's life. You make the films you want to make, you're constantly travelling. And this might be too personal, but how are you able to get the funding to make your films which are fairly non-commercial films?

Yeah, well it is idyllic in one sense, but it's a really hard position to hold and requires huge amounts of work. You know, we're really quite independent in terms of being an independent production company and it means we manage absolutely every aspect of the process up until distribution. And still, in distribution we're still quite involved. *Picture of Light* was finished in '94, and we've been working on it for two years without the chance to



# Yes.

do anything else, and consider it a kind of drudgery you know, because it's just total administration for two years.

So you do pay for that freedom. And at the same time you don't make any money. Somehow there's always a little dribble that keeps you afloat, but you don't amass any kind of significant capital. You know, we buy little bits of equipment here and there. It's not easy; it's not an easy way to work[. . .]

Every film has had a different sort of cosmology of how it got to be. I mean, there haven't been that many. The Top of His Head was perhaps the biggest sort of commercial venture involving pre-sales, Telefilm, OFDC, a coproducer which was Rhabus. It worked the most like a normal film. Tectonic Plates I was hired to do; it was like a job. And Picture of Light was just this miraculous meeting with the guy who's in the film, the meteorologist, Andreas. He proposed the idea, and he was able to access enough money to start the ball rolling, and then we were just lucky to be able to find money along the way as we were making the film. That's very unorthodox; usually you can't start shooting a film without having the whole budget in place; that's not at all how we worked in that case. And there were always crossroads. When we were making the film we didn't know if it would be a feature or an hour, whether it would be in 16 or 35. So we shot in Super-16, and we gathered material. Then in the editing we came to a certain point where we had to make the decision: were we going to invest in a blow-up, are we going to find the money to invest in a blow-up? - which changes the whole potential of the film's distribution, and the cost of making it. Is it going to be a television 50 minutes or is it going to be a feature film? Do we have the material to make a feature film?

So all those things were decided, in a sense, organically. I don't know if that's the correct word to use, but as the project developed we would make those choices along the way. Which is great because you're not boxing yourselves into something that doesn't suit the material or the experience that is this unfolding of a film. Films take on their own momentum, especially if you're working with an open process, an exploratory process. Which is where I think you discover a lot of interesting things, that can really make you think and enrich you.

Is Picture of Light your most commercially successful film?

Yeah, I guess it is.

And has that made things easier, at least has it made it easier to get financing?

I'm at that stage now where I'm going out to get more financing, so we'll see. What it has done is sort of triggered. Well, I guess this is the same for any filmmaker, each subsequent film, the success of one film relates back to the other films and what it has done is aroused a sort of general interest in my work, and I've been showing my older films now in context of Picture of Light. Yeah, it all helps. Especially in Europe, to sort of have people acknowledge who you are, and television stations want to know what you're doing. They send you, not invitations, but queries as to what you might be doing.

The only criticism I had of it [Picture of Light] was that I wanted more. Ironically, I wanted more images. Was there a longer cut?

There was a longer cut, there was one very much longer cut. When we first finished the film, it was ten minutes longer, which we thought was the final version. One of the difficult things in working in the process that I've been working in is when a film puts a lot of emphasis on the sound and into optical effects, rhythms other than just the image cutting, you don't actually get to see what the finished film looks like until you get your first answer print with the sound on it. You know all the elements are mixed, all the opticals are in, then finally you get the total rhythm of the film. Before that you're always dealing with fragments, imagining that soundtrack we made over there and this picture here are going to go together somehow. You just have it in your mind, an abstraction, until you get your answer print. So for Picture of Light, it seemed in the last third quite wonky and out of rhythm. There was a version that was two and half hours long, which was a different film. Its tentacles went much further and explored some other subjects in great detail. You know, for one, it's quite difficult to have a film like that, in terms of getting it on its feet and trying to sell it, all those restrictions. And two, I still think this is a better film than that one even though that one had a lot more in it.

And you're working now on something called Gambling, Gods, and LSD? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Yeah, it's kind of hard to talk about. But it's a film again that I want to make in a very open way where the shooting of one subject or one theme actually informs what the next theme will be and what the next theme will be after that. Really truly exploratory.

It revolves around themes of transcendence so it's a theme-based rather than a subject-based documentary which Picture of Light was. But it of course gave birth to a number of themes with the Northern Lights as its subject. Here, we're starting with theme instead of a defining subject.

Have you started production on it?

No. Still writing, researching. I've shot little bits and pieces of things that I think might go into the film. And one of them has branched off into being its own film, which is some material that I shot about four years ago in Indonesia, that I'm going to make into a forty minute film for a specific event in Toronto and Vancouver in October, which involves a live theatre performance to the film. So there's no soundtrack, it's a silent film, but there's live music accompanying it. And it's very lyrical.

What's the difference, creatively, for you producing images for your own films as opposed to producing images for other directors? Do you still intend to do that?

Well, it's a thing I really like doing and intend to do. But the reality of time has made it more and more difficult, and I haven't done it in many years. But I think what I like about it especially is you're in a kind of servant position. You're not responsible for managing the whole operation of a film. Yet you still have a very significant part as cinematographer in helping to bring the director's intuition and vision and plan into a visual medium. So it's very freeing in a way because you don't have the whole bulk of the thing to carry, yet you're doing one of the most important aspects of the film. You're a servant and there's something very pleasing about that role. And challenging, because it's kind of laid out for you; even though a lot of it's mysterious it's laid out what you have to do. Whereas when you're on your own, it's the blank page syn-



# Hmm. Can you be more specific?

drome, you know? When you're making your own film, you can go anywhere. When you're shooting someone else's film you're responding to what you sense they want or need. It's really a lot about tuning your intuition into their intuition or their nature or the film's nature. That's the cinematographer's side, how did you word the question?

I think you answered it. So if I was to call you up with a script and you really liked it, would you shoot it?

[Laughs] Maybe. I've been talking to people a lot about shooting but it always ends up that I don't now. Just because of the amount of time. And it is different. Making your own films and working with the images in your own films, is a whole different relationship. Because it is unfettered, and you are responsible. It's a different domain: one is completely consuming. So it's hard to flip back and forth.

How do you feel about Canadian filmmaking today? Or Canadian films?

Hmm. Can you be more specific?

Let me try a different question. Being a Swiss and Canadian citizen do you feel that you are a Canadian filmmaker? Is there such a thing?

I think of myself as somewhat schizophrenic because I've worked between the two cultures a lot, and I've lived between the cultures. There's a definite component to each culture in what I do. And I think the work definitely thrives on that schizophrenia. To identify myself as a Canadian filmmaker I guess it's an old question. How do you identify Canadian films? How do you identify Canadians? And I guess I



have to say yes, I am a Canadian by virtue of the fact that I've grown up and work in Canada. And share certain characteristics of other filmmakers of my era. And there's all sorts of reasons for that nebulous identity. I think one of them is that Canada is a fairly rootless place in terms of its being a recent country without a long history of its own and we all come from different places with different cultural backgrounds that are still in each of us. A schizophrenic element in all of us. So this

idea of identity runs throughout all the films in one way or another. And also the presence of media being really strong especially in Toronto, is something that runs through a lot of films. Some kind of awareness about the language of media or cinema in general seems to pop up again and again in a lot of Canadian films. That's something because of Toronto about being here, that I don't feel that much in Europe. People dealing with the language of cinema as part of the subject matter of their films.

I just got the book [Peter Mettler - Making the Invisible Visible] the other day. How do you feel about it?

Now that it's over and done and it exists, I think they did a nice job.

Yeah it's a beautiful book.

I especially like the way they sort of created puzzle pieces, a lot of both visual elements and thematic elements throughout the book. So that it reads a little bit like the way I like to work in my own films where tangents and associations are made as you go through the main part of the book. That really makes me happy. It doesn't try to define the cinema of Peter Mettler or Peter Mettler which is what I was really wary of when they wanted to make the book. You know having this thing [laughs] this object paper, is somehow scarier than the films because it has a real defining potential. I think they managed to keep it quite open and interpretive. I was very happy.

And there's an upcoming retrospective at the Cinematheque. Do you feel that you're at some sort of turning point in your career?

Well I don't know what I'm turning from or in. That's just the way things are right now. But there is a funny sense of turning point which I can't articulate that I felt starting about a year ago. It had to do with moving because we moved out of our last place. Having to do with working more deeply in Europe. It has to do with changes in how films are getting made. Technology as well, the possibilities of different mediums of filmmaking type work. And it has to do with me too in a way. It has to do with my choices in terms of how much I'm willing to compromise in the mainstream to do my work. I'm not attracted, right now anyway, to making big films that require big entanglements—structures, and financing that restrict the creative process. Right now I'm more interested in pursuing creative projects in a small framework of budget, and involvement by members of various communities, and so on. I

don't know if that's a turning point.

One more question, it's a fannish question but what filmmakers influenced you or still influence you?

Well I just wrote this thing the other day for the Cinematheque because what they do is they have a carte blanche where you show a number of your own films and then program influences. I really avoided the influence thing partially because a lot of the obvious influences are films people know quite well already. But the other point I was trying to make was at least for me there's so many things that influence the work that it's not quite appropriate to identify single films as being the most important influences. Growing up at five years old, being exposed to television those first sort of emotional experiences you have watching *The Wizard of Oz*—the flying monkeys and that kind of stuff—may be much more influential than Tarkovsky in your more mature stages of filmic appreciation. And a lot of times it's negative inspiration. It's something you see that you don't like that gives you a negative inspiration to react and offer a counterpoint. You know I find a lot of my influence works that way.

But if there are films that I like and relate to strongly it would include Tarkovsky, Antonioni, Brakhage, Nicolas Roeg. Now, more recently there's a number of films those are the ones I'm programming at the Cinematheque which kind of tread this nebulous line between documentary and fiction and work in a lot of the ways that I've been talking about. So I consider them influential or their kinship in some way or at least with the work I'm pursuing right now. And they include films like *Step Across the Border* and the work of this Armenian director named Peleshian. They're all films that aren't known here but you'll see them in the programme.

Influences are just so funny. You'll respond to films at the right point in your life because somehow you can relate to it. Someone has articulated this mass of emotions and responses into a kind of epiphany. That's when it becomes one of your favourite films or an influence. It works very much like a mirror. But I just find it misleading when people talk about influences because there's just so much. Unless you're just totally postmodern in your work in terms of only referring to other films, it's really life at large and the other arts and your conversations with people, and your personal experiences, that are really what are giving you the juice.



# Hyphen-Asia: Mantra Meltdown (Race Gender and Sexuality) Desh Pardesh '96

by Michelle Mohabeer

The Body of a Poet  
a film by Sonali Fernando,  
16mm, 29 mins. U.K., 1995

Dirty Laundry  
A videotape by Richard Fung,  
32 mins. Canada, 1996



The sixth annual Desh Pardesh festival/conference recently wrapped in Toronto on June 9th, 1996. Desh Pardesh is an international melange of Diasporic South Asian art, culture, politics and activism with a 1990's sensibility. In 1996 the Desh festival has emerged as a dynamic alternative space that demands re-examination of a static and nationalist definition of "South Asian" identity based solely on "colour", visibility, cultural origin or language. This year's festival has been about forging connections and building alliances among all 'people of colour' across art, cultural and community lines.

This progressive vision of community building and alliance also extends to the film and video program: Sonali Fernando's *The Body of a Poet* and Richard Fung's *Dirty Laundry* are both striking takes on history, race, gender and sexuality. Both are concerned with acts of remembering, from the standpoint of an active revisionist mythologizing of history.

*The Body of a Poet* is a sumptuous visual tribute to the late African American warrior poet, visionary and teacher Audre Lorde. The film is a loving homage and testament to the life of a woman who was a symbol of courage, rebellion and strength. Shot in Super 8mm, 16., and video, the film was then tinted a sepia-honey tone, and the result is a stunning pastiche enriched with the artists textured erotic and revolutionary poetry.

The film's stunning super 8mm opening sequence counterpoints the paradoxically invisible/visible role of African Americans in American history: stark images of urban skyscrapers and industry run against a terse voice-over that comments "we have lived American history;" a 60's image of a Black woman revolutionary with a large afro, (AKA Angela Davis) driving a car through the urban and desert landscape of California appears against voice-over about the alienation and displacement of poor urban African American people, "Like a motherless child, far away from home." Finally, with an abrupt cut to sparkling surgical steel instruments laid out on a table, the film juxtaposes the broader plight of poor urban American blacks with the more personal history and trauma of a fighter and "one-breasted Amazon" whose weapons were words.

The film contextualizes Lorde's life and death in relation to the racism and segregation laws practiced in 1950's American society: dramatic re-enacted flashbacks of her childhood and life as an adult woman are complexly interwoven with scenes of contemporary lesbians speaking about the 'value' and 'merit' of Audre Lorde's poetry and political practices. The film uses its title literally to visually dissect Lorde's poetry, life, love, erotic pleasure and eventually her death by cancerous mutilations: the ghostly presence of Lorde's encroaching death haunts the film through glances at blood spilled on the tile floor of a sterile hospital room, and a white sheet, like a shroud, that covers the Lorde character's lifeless body. At the film's close, the character of the young Audre lies with the dead older self, both as an act of unification and as a comment on the circularity of life and death. In Lorde's own words "we learn that death is not the end of life; that language and change are the beginning"

Like *The Body of a Poet*, Richard Fung's *Dirty Laundry* also ferrets out the apparitions lost to the obfuscation of history's half truths. *Dirty Laundry* is a revisionist attempt to "uncover" the enigmatic

history of the Chinese Railway workers who built the CPR through the Canadian Rockies. A hybrid work of fiction and documentary, *Dirty Laundry* sets out to legitimize the half-truths of history through the creation of its own fictional resonance. The videotape blends exquisite ghostly archival footage of railway workers and trains with dramatic scenes shot on a set resembling a moving train. The voice of "authority" is present through four "expert" historians. In documentary style the witnesses, Nayan Shah, Sky Lee, Dora Nipp and Anthony Chan, all bear testimony to the complexities and historical enigmas of the Chinese men and women who were workers and settlers in 19th Century British Columbia.

The video begins with a fictional absence, in the space of memory and forgotten history; a scene in a photographer's studio depicts a man dressed in traditional Chinese clothing posing for a picture with an "invisible" partner. The photographic flash cuts to a ghostly archival image from the perspective of a train winding along the railway. The perspective of historian Nayan Shah interjects over the archival memory footage to comment on notions of how the conventional recording of history often demythologizes what is not visibly apparent. Thus, from the outset the videomaker creates the tension between the official version of history sanctioned by "fact" and "truth" versus the mythologized reading of history through meaningful interpretation. *Dirty Laundry* excavates the enigma of the posed studio portrait to reveal another version of history: underneath the posed portrait is another photograph of the same man and another holding hands.

Michelle Mohabeer is an award winning independent filmmaker, and writer. She is currently in development with Chameleon, a feature-length drama

# Films, Fairy Dust and other fuck- ing cool shit (or "How I Found Myself on the Independent Imaging/Filmmaking Retreat") by Cara Morton



It started with this dream: I am surrounded by lowing cattle- oh yeah, and the moon is huge, pregnant, promising full. The air is sweet and warm and I am on my back, floating on the grass, while Maya Deren pulls a tiny key from her mouth again and again, while Maya Deren pulls a tiny key from her mouth again and again, while Maya Deren... Kazaam! Hang on a second... this isn't a dream at all. This is real. I am on a filmmaking retreat taught by Phil Hoffman on his enchanted property just outside Mount Forest (2 blessed hours from Toronto).

I am fully awake and it's the end of the first day. 9 of us, 8 women and 1 guy, "the guy on the girl's trip" have just spent an amazing day playing with the camera. For some of us it was a time for re-discovery; while for others it was that first glorious encounter between magician and medium, otherwise known as the Bolex. Now it is around midnight, and we are lolling in the grass like the cattle in the field next to us, chewing our cud and watching Meshes of the Afternoon flicker off the outdoor cinema the side of the barn. For me, this is film at its best: fields, forest, cattle, countryside and total immersion in the process of creation.

O.K., back story time. The reason I went on the workshop in the first place is now brace yourself, this may sound harsh - sometimes I hate film. I MEAN SOMETIMES I HAVE TO WONDER WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO ME? Why am I putting myself through this agony? I've spent most of my grant money, I'm in the midst of

editing and I find myself asking, what is this damn film about anyway? Why am I making it? What am I trying to say? At this point those of you who run screaming from process-oriented work can laugh at me. O.K., so I don't plan much (what do you mean, storyboard?) I like letting things happen, man, let that creative, unconscious self reign. But sooner or later that insightful (not to mention delightful) self turns on me (traitor!) and I am left stranded in a dark editing suite with the corpse of my film and that evil monster self who thinks analytically, worries about money god forbid and who just doesn't get it! So 'round about May, that's where I found myself. But then, the cosmic wheel turned and I went on the workshop hoping to exorcise (Your mother sucks cocks in hell) this critical, anti-process monster side of myself. And it actually worked. I opened up to my instincts, started trusting myself again. (So what if this sounds like a new-age self-help tirade, Just go with it...)

One of the first censors to go was the money obsessed self the self that abruptly grabs your camera away when you're trying to have fun. Now, in the mainstream film world, this may sound subversive, or certainly weird, but if you can shoot without analyzing every detail, without worrying about money money money... Imagine! You can experiment! You can try things, be free with the stock! How? Cheap film! At Phil's we were shooting on the incredible Kodak 7378. At \$187.90/2400 feet 12 bucks/ 100 feet. It's cheap because it isn't actually picture stock it's optical sound print stock. It's black and white and has a varying ASA somewhere between 12 and 30 depending on how you process it. And it's gorgeous: very high contrast with a fabulous dense grain. I highly recommend it, but do some exposure tests with the lab you are planning to use. O.K. So we can shoot cheap! But there's more! Remember Polaroids? At the workshop it became clear to me that I had been missing that sense of wonder about film - that sense of playing an important role in a magical process. Thank's to Phil's workshop I got that feeling back. How? Hand Processing! It's better than polaroids! You can control the process of development! You can develop your film as negative or reversal, you can solarize (a personal fave), you can under develop over develop anything you want in minutes. Imagine you wander around the countryside shooting to your heart's (and wallet's) content and then run back to the barn where the darkroom is

set up and process your film. It's hard to describe the feeling you get when you hang your film out to dry. It's a mixture of wonder, accomplishment and connection to the medium. All this for less than 1/4th of what you might usually pay.

But wait there's more! At this point you can tint or tone your film with other colours to get some far out moody effects. Most of us favoured the potassium permanganate which kind of eats away at the film emulsion. This brings us to scratching. Imagine not only not worry about scratches, but trying to make them! Nothing, I mean nothing, beats stomping on your film, rubbing it against trees, rolling around with it in the frass or even chewing on it like bubblegum (O.K. no one actually tried the oral thing, but it would be fun, no?)

These experiences totally changed my relationship to film as a medium. I became equal to it, no I became the master of it (on your knees). No more God-like can of film handled with white kid gloves. I shot it, and I can fuck with it, and then, if I don't like it, well, I can re-shoot for the price of a new pack of crayons. It's a truly plastic medium.

At this point, the workshop feels complete. We've shot, processed, tie-dyed the film and dragged it through the muck and cow shit what more could there possibly be? A JK! After one short experience on this miraculous machine I have to say I'm hooked. Optical printing is fun and easy! I want one! (Hint Hint). Believe it or not, Day 5 arrives the mythical last day. We have our final screening (most of us have actually finished a short piece) and then lots of discussion. Later that evening, as we are striking camp, the sun is miraculous, huge and orange, setting over the marsh. It is so beautiful, we stare, but after 5 days of total immersion in beauty, we are exhausted by it. It's too much, all we can do is ridicule how goddam perfect it all is.

On the way home I realize I've achieved more than I imagined possible I've found the magic in film again. My next dream goes like this... I'm in Toronto, in a basement, surrounded by streaming ribbons of film I've shot and processed myself. I start chewing on it. I chew and chew until my film turns into a tiny perfect key, until my film turns into a tiny perfect key and I pull it from my mouth...

Cara Morton is a filmmaker...

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CATRINE POYRAZ THE BONES TABLE

100  
Director of "Bowling in the Park"  
"The Kingdom" by Lars von Trier

EVEN THOUGH DANISH CINEMA ENJOYED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SUCCESS COMPARED TO ITS OTHER SCANDINAVIAN NEIGHBOURS (INCLUDING TWO BEST FOREIGN FILM OSCARS IN THE LATE EIGHTIES), IT WAS NOT UNTIL LARS VON TRIER'S ENTREE INTO THE ARENA THAT AN EXPLOSION WAS HEARD IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WHETHER ONE LIKES HIS AESTHETICS OR NOT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IGNORE THE FACT THAT, IN TODAY'S MALNOURISHED FILMMAKING PRACTICES, THE 40-YEAR-OLD DIRECTOR REMAINS A TRUE VISIONARY.

by Pedram Fouladian

# Lars Von Trier gives you the keys to The Kingdom

A graduate of Danish Film School, von Trier first came to international attention with *Element of Crime* (1984), a greenish-yellow tinted "film noir" that is best described as *Blade Runner* directed by Andrej Tarkovsky. The low budget *Epidemic* followed in 1987. In 1991, von Trier grabbed the attention of North American audiences with the kitsch spectacle *Europa* (aka *Zentropa*). His films up to this point "borrowed" heavily from some old masters such as Welles, Syberberg, Fassbinder, etc. (von Trier is rumoured to have said that *Europa* is a film about films that he likes). *The Kingdom*, a made for tv soap opera/ghost story/miniseries recently screened in Toronto, marks a formal departure from the previous films, which may have to do with the simultaneous release of this

manifesto. In the humble opinion of this writer, however, *The Kingdom* lacks any radical and subversive elements and, even though it is subliminal television, it merely seems like the world's longest commercial. Von Trier's latest film *Breaking the Waves* won the Jury's Special Prize at Cannes this year. Shot by Jarmusch and Wim Wenders' court cinematographer Robby Müller, *Waves* will open commercially later this year.

The text presented here appeared last year in *Chaplin*, a bimonthly magazine published by the Swedish Film Institute. No background to the creation of the text was given, perhaps since the textual charisma did not call for one. As for who and what DOGM 95 is, I am not so sure. DOGM can be literally translated as *Dogma*, but whether that is the purpose or not is unclear. I cannot tell if their next step is making a film or hijacking a plane. Which brings us to the political ambiguities of the radicalism demonstrated in the text. Attacks on the bourgeoisie and commercialism can come from either side of the political spectrum. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether the following manifesto is 60's-style leftism or something that Goebbels once scribbled on a wash-room stall.

Even though revolutionary art is for many more than a myth or semantic confusion, the following manifesto may not be it. Arriving between the hyper aesthetics of *Europa* and the unchaste *Breaking the Waves* (shot with a reported budget of \$8m) by way of a soap-opera-gone-to-hell, the *Vow of Chastity* is an amusing if not inspiring read for anyone interested in cinema.

#### DOGMA 95

At one point, slogans about individualism and freedom culminated in innovation, but no real change. The wave, just like the directors, became more and more flat. The wave never became stronger than people behind it. The anti-bourgeois idea of art. The auteur concept was bourgeois romanticism and therefore — false!  
FOR DOGMA 95 THE CINEMA IS NOT PRESENTED AN INDIVIDUALIST

Today, a technological flood is ruling, which entails the ultimate democratization of the medium. For the first time, everyone has the opportunity to make a film. But the more accessible the medium becomes, the more the avant-garde stands out as important. It is not a coincidence that the expression avant-garde has militant implications. The answer is discipline — we must dress our films in uniform since the individualist cinema is decadent by definition.

DOGMA 95 stands in opposition to the individualist cinema through the undisputed collection of rules which we have called the VOW OF CHASTITY

In 1960, enough was enough! The cinema had been made-up to the point of death, they said, but recently the make-up has been applied with explosive excess.

The decadent filmmakers "foremost" duty

consists of cheating its audience. Is this something we can be proud of? Is this where 100 years of filmmaking has brought us? To illusions through which feelings communicate through the individual artist's free choice of wizardry?

Predictability (dramatic storytelling) has become the golden calf around which we dance. Letting the invented characters' inner life justify the plot is too complicated and not "fine" enough. Today, the superficial plot and the superficial cinema are being praised like never before.

The result is unproductive. An illusion of pathos and an illusion of love.

FOR DOGMA 95, the cinema is not an illusion.

Today, a technical flood is ruling, where the make-up has been elevated to something divine. With the help of new techniques, anyone can at any time clear away the last remains of truth in the suffocating embrace of sensation.

DOGMA 95 works against the illusion inducing cinema through the indisputable rules that constitute the vow of chastity.



## THE VOW OF CHASTITY

I PROMISE TO SUBORDINATE MYSELF TO THE FOLLOWING RULES

WHICH HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT AND DETERMINED BY DOGMA 95.

1. All shooting must take place on location. Art direction and props is not permitted. (If props are required for a story, a location must be chosen where those kind of props already exist)
2. Sound must be recorded at the same time as the picture. No sound may be recorded separately from the picture (music may not be used unless it is coming from the location)
3. Camera must be handheld. Every movement or lack of movement that can be performed by hand is permitted. The film will not take place where the camera is placed, the camera will follow the flow of events
4. The film must be shot in colour. No lighting is permitted. If the light is too weak to exposure, the scene should be eliminated or a light can be mounted on the camera.
5. Optical post-treatment of the stock, such as filtering etc is absolutely forbidden.
6. The film may not contain superficial plot. Murder weapons and similar elements may not be used
7. Temporal and geographical digression are not permitted; the film must be set here and now.
8. ...Genre cinema is not accepted.
9. The format shall be 35mm.
10. The name of the director may not appear in the opening credits.

FURTHERMORE, I VOW THAT AS A FILMMAKER, I WILL REFRAIN FROM PERSONAL TASTE! I AM NO LONGER AN ARTIST. I PROMISE TO REFRAIN FROM CREATING A "PIECE" SINCE I GIVE THE MOMENT PRIORITY OVER THE ENTITY. MY FOREMOST GOAL IS TO DEMAND THE TRUTH FROM MY ASSOCIATES AND FROM MY SCENARIOS. THIS I WANT TO PROMOTE WITH ALL MEANS AND AT THE COST OF ALL GOOD TASTE AND AESTHETICS.

I HEREBY EMIT THE VOW OF CHASTITY

Copenhagen, Monday, March 13, 1995

LARS VON TRIER.....THOMAS VINTERBERG.

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In order to make submission of completed films to the Programming Committee simpler, we have set up a drop box, located at the LIFT office. Please leave us your prints, video dubs, or just descriptive materials on your finished (or nearly finished) films, so that we can show them at future LIFT screenings. (Be sure to include contact information with all submissions).

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LIFT is looking for someone who can write a small computer program for a Macintosh for volunteer hours. Interested people can call Lisa or Greg at LIFT.

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