



LIFT ΙΝΤΕΡΝΑΤΙΟΝΑΛ



**THE LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS  
OF TORONTO**

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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 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.

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

# editorial

*Some TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL highlights:*

Congratulations to Brian Nash and Elizabeth Yake, whose "bp: pushing the boundaries" won a jury special mention at the fest.

Steve Gravestock's *Dialogue* series ruled, had some of the best picks at this year's TIFF. Great to see the Pennebaker-Dylan co-production *Don't Look Back* with the director in attendance. Pennebaker revealed that he edited the work on rewinds in about three weeks... Also cool to see again was *Detour*, selected by Errol Morris. It was easy to see where bits of *Thin Blue Line* came from. By the way, the flawless print of Cukor's *Les Girls* was awesome on the big screen.

There were LIFT-ers employed by the Festival: Ron Kooperdraad works at one of the cinemas as a TIFF representative, Carolynne Hew is a programme support person at the TIFF office and Jane Farrow was along as Triptych Productions front person, throwing a big "meet the producer's" bash to connect filmmakers to producers. Cassandra Nicolau is the Senior Sales Office Coordinator and this year Pedram Fouladianpour was the OFDC Producer intern.

Ali Kazimi turned away about 100 people from his screening of *Shooting Indians*, and short film screenings featuring LIFT member's work (see previous issue) were standing room only, as usual...

I skipped all the soon-to-be-released stuff, and continued my search for great, simple, low-budget film ideas at the Toronto Festival. There was one especially intriguing work. *Robinson in Space*, shot on 35mm, is a trip around industrial Great Britain. It's composed of a series of almost still shots, with perhaps one thing moving through the frame, and has a voice-over written in the manner of Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*) -- a kind of formal travelogue that chronicles near-nuclear disaster, industrial wastage, inner-city poverty and human tragedy in today's Britain. The lilting tone is beautifully ironic. And cheap to shoot!

Gotta go... gotta make a film.



THE CANADA COUNCIL  
FOR THE ARTS  
SINCE 1957

LE CONSEIL DES ARTS  
DU CANADA  
DEPUIS 1957

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### ON THE COVER:

The intrepid Lisa Hayes mixes in some local flavour in her heady Russian Cocktail tour.

# critical dates & dubious deadlines

## upcoming festival deadlines:

FESTIVAL /LOCATION /DATE:	DEADLINE:	TELEPHONE:	E-MAIL:	WEBSITE:
<b>2ND GRENOBLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL - BOARD AND BLADE SPORTS</b> Autrans (March 8-1 Jan. 30 to Feb. 8, '98)	10/17/97	31 41 05 46	goteborg.filmfest@mailbox.swipnet.se	www.goteborg.se/kultur/film/festival/
<b>INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM</b> Rotterdam (Jan. 28 Feb. 8, '98)	10/17/97	+31-10-4118080	iffr@luna.nl	http://www.iffrotterdam.nl
<b>NEW DELHI INT'L FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA</b> New Delhi (Jan.10-20,1998)	11/20/97	+91 11 615953/694		
<b>NORTEL PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL</b> Palm Springs, Ca (January 8-19, '98)	11/1/97	(619) 322-2930	filmfest@ix.netcom.com	www.psfilmfest.org
<b>PHILADELPHIA FESTIVAL OF WORLD CINEMA</b> Philadelphia, Pa (April 29 May 10/98)	1/12/98	215 895 6593	pfwc@libertynet.org	www.libertynet.org/~ihouse
<b>SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL</b> Santa Barbara, Ca. (March 5-15, 1998)	12/1/97	(805) 963-0023	sbiff@west.net	http://www.west.net/~sbiff
<b>SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL</b> Glebe (June 5-19, 1998)	2/20/98	61 2 9660 3844	info@sydfilm-fest.com.au	
<b>TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL</b> Taos, Nm (April 16-19, '98)	1/15/98	505-751 0637	ttpix@taosnet.com	www.taosnet.com/ttpix/
<b>TORONTO WORLDWIDE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL</b> Toronto, On (June 1-7 1998)	3/1/98	(416) 535-8506	twsff@idirect.com	

Guidelines and application forms for this list of 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.

The 1996 edition of the AIVF Guide to International Film & Video Festivals is an invaluable resource for planning your festival entries for the upcoming year. It's available at the office as an in-house resource for all LIFT members.

# critical dates & dubious deadlines

## calls for submissions:

### THE FILM CORE POST PRODUCTION

**FUND** - Deadline: October 20. FilmCore, the organization held accountable for the New York Underground Film Festival, is now accepting entries for its 1998 Post Production Fund. Grants of \$500-\$2000 will be awarded to independent filmmakers seeking to complete projects of any length and genre on video, 16mm or 35mm. Priority will be given to works that share the NY Underground Festival's subversive, controversial and cutting-edge spirit. For guidelines & application forms, contact: Ed Halter 212.925.3440 or visit their website @ <<http://www.nyuff.com>>

**The Pan African Film Festival (PAFF)**, the largest independent film festival in the U.S., will hold its 6th annual gathering from February 6-16, 1998 in Los Angeles. Film

and video submissions (features, shorts and documentaries) will be accepted through October 15, 1997. The PAFF will exhibit films from all over the world that are made by and/or about people of African descent. For more information, call (213) 295-1706 or fax (213) 295-1952.

**Crew for the WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR workshop** (Jan. 18-31, 1998) are needed. This is a master-class in directing for mid-career Canadian women directors, experienced actors and other experienced industry professionals serious about making the cross over to directing. If interested please send resume and cover letter to: **CREW/WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR**, Att'n Jed DeCory, Associate Director Production & Training, Media &

Visual Arts, Banff Centre for the Arts, Box 1020, Station A, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff AB, T0L 0C0. Deadline: December 29, 1997.

**If you've made a film about the October 26, 1996 Metro Days of Action** call Jonathan Culp about compiling your video with his and others for possible screening on/around October 26, 1997. . . Call Jonathan Culp @ (905) 562-7267

**Pleasure Dome** is seeking submissions from Toronto-based experimental film & videomakers for their annual New Toronto Works Show to be presented this winter. Selected by a volunteer group of Pleasure Dome members, this annual event showcases the most adventurous new work that Toronto has to offer. Please contact them at any of their screenings or send your VHS submission to Pleasure Dome, 6 Alcina Avenue, Toronto On, M6G 2E8, ph: 656-5577, email: [pdome@ican.net](mailto:pdome@ican.net) [www.home.ican.net/~pdome](http://www.home.ican.net/~pdome)

**BLINK TV ACCEPTS** Submissions on an ongoing basis. Contact **BRETT RUSSELL**, ACQUISITIONS MANAGER, 7440 GIRARD AVE SUITE 1, LA JOLLA, CA, 92037 USA. Tel: 619-454-4995 or email at [blink-tv@aol.com](mailto:blink-tv@aol.com)

**IMAGES FESTIVAL:** Submissions deadline December 2nd, 1997  
401 Richmond St., Suite 448, Toronto, M5V 3A8. tel 416-971-8405/ fax 416-971-7412. [images@interlog.com](mailto:images@interlog.com)

## announcements:

**STAFF NEWS.** John Kneller has joined the LIFT staff as Technical Co-ordinator II. John comes to LIFT after 5 years as a Lab Technician at Exclusive Film & Video. A well known experimental filmmaker, his latest film, *We Are Experiencing...*, was shown at September's Toronto International Film Festival. Stop by and say hi to our new techie.

**WANTED! VOLUNTEER WHO CAN SEW.** Fulfill your volunteer hours sewing trim bin covers. If interested, please call Lisa at 588-6444.

**FREE PRACTICE HOURS IN PRO-TOOLS.** These hours are set aside on Tuesdays for members who have some experience with non-linear editing systems or with earlier versions of ProTools and require a little practice to get up to speed with LIFT's ProTools Project version 4.0.1. The day is divided into three blocks: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.; 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. Please call ahead to book one of these times, or take your chances and drop by. (Lots of slots are available. This time is not booked as far in advance as it did in the summer.)

## funding & grant deadlines:

### ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL 961-1660

Media Arts Special Projects:  
Jan 15  
First Projects: Film & Video  
Jan. 15  
Grants to Visual Artists:  
\$3000 Grants:  
Jan 15  
Visual Arts Special Projects  
January 15

**CANADA COUNCIL**  
1-800-263-5588 X 4075/4138  
Grants to Film:  
November 15  
Interdisciplinary work and performance Art  
Creation and Touring Grants  
December 1

**CANADA TELEVISION AND CABLE  
PRODUCTION FUND EQUITY  
INVESTMENT PROGRAM**  
(514) 283-6363  
started September 9, 1996

### MACLEAN HUNTER/COGECO FUND 596-5878

Maclean Television Fund:  
Nov. 1, Feb. 15, 1998  
Cogeco Program Development Fund:  
February 1, 1998

**CANADIAN INDEPENDENT FILM AND  
VIDEO FUND**  
(613) 729 1900  
November 28

**BRAVO!FACT**  
Grant deadline: January 8, 1998.

**new members:**

Welcome new members  
as of sept. 97:

- Joseph Akrami
- Anthony Arnold
- P. Rodney Barnes
- Cozi Brown
- Robert Brushett
- Robert Campione
- Michael Carroll
- Lucy Drumonde
- Nadia Dusil
- Brian Frank
- Daniel Franklin
- Luis Freitas
- Paul Gordon
- Erik Jacobsen
- Owen Kelly
- Jeanalexis Macdougall
- Michael Meinhardt
- David Mueller
- Raymond Ng
- Patrick Oh
- Michael Peterson
- Chris Remerowski
- Elizabeth Shannon
- Stuart Shikatani
- Hoon Song
- Katharine Tasker
- Christina Theocharis
- Clint Tourangeau
- Eric Vinet

**liftgear & machinations:**

What's new with equipment @ LIFT?

**COMPUTERS FOR RENT.** Thanks to the generosity of EDS and General Motors of Canada we now have a couple of computers available for rent to members. They are Mac lici s, with word processing and design software, and rent for only \$5 an hour. The computers are set up with Filemaker Pro v3, Microsoft Word v6, Quark Xpress v3.32, Adobe Pagemaker v6.5, and Microsoft Excel v5, with plans to also include Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator in the very near future. Laser prints are available for 50¢ per page. These rates compare favourably to other options: Kinko's rent at \$15/hour and Laserline at \$28/hour. You can call ahead to book a computer, or just drop in.

**OPTICAL PRINTER DONATION.** Two Optical Printers were donated by Greg Miller at Exclusive Film & Video. The first allows for blow-up to 16mm from super 8 and the second allows for blow-up from regular 8 to super 8. These printers are used solely for 1:1 printing but run at a remarkably speedy 18 fps. The lamp houses on both machines are reversible so that they can be used as reduction printers. (16mm to Super 8, Super 8 to Regular 8). They are both in working condition but could benefit from a little TLC. Any members interested in administering to the needs of these old war-horses should contact John at LIFT.

**MORE SOUND EFFECTS.** Many months ago, a mysterious stranger appeared at LIFT's doors with two huge boxes of vinyl LP's that made up a sound effects library. This man of mystery kindly donated the unopened albums to LIFT, glad to see that someone would use them. And now, LIFT member and sound recordist Tony Morrone, is in the process of mastering the albums onto DAT tape for use in LIFT's sound room. It's a great expansion to

LIFT's Sound Ideas 40 CD Sound Effects Library. We are currently looking for a volunteer who would be interested in cataloguing the effects on a Filemaker Pro Database. If interested, call Lisa at 588-6444.

**DID YOU KNOW?** LIFT is a charitable foundation, and as such we can give out tax deductible receipts for equipment that is donated to us. Some of our donations in the past two years included an Eclair NPR with prime lenses, an underwater housing for a Bolex camera, a Sachler & Wolfe Tripod, two Nizo super 8 cameras, a JVC VHS video deck, two Steenbeck editing flatbeds, two 16 mm splicers, three Mac lici computers, a sound effects library, film stock, and these latest Optical Printers. If you or someone you know has equipment that they want to get rid of, chances are that LIFT members can make great use of it. So, when you're doing your fall cleaning, give us a call! 588-6444.

**SHOPTALKS.** Some spaces still remain in the following:

- Digital Non-Linear Sound Editing with ProTools** (instructor TBA) Nov. 13, 15 & 16
- Selling Your Writing with Sheri Elwood** Oct. 29 & 30
- Story Development and Pitching for Shorts\*** with Marlene Rodgers Nov. 29 & 30\*
- Production Management with Roberta Pazdro** Nov. 22

\*Please note that the dates for the Story Development workshop have changed from Nov. 8 & 9 to Nov. 29 & 30. If you're interested in any of these workshops, call LIFT at 588-6444.

**IN THE SHOP.** Recently repaired equipment includes the Bauer Super 8 camera, one of the Sekonic light meters, the O'Connor 1030 tripod, and the Jenson speed control on one of the Arri BL Cameras. All are back and better for it.

**lift orientation:**

LIFT's Orientation will be held **Wed., Aug. 20, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** The session is for individuals who haven't familiarized themselves with the co-op's facilities and resources. Call to reserve a spot. 588-6444.

**MEMBERS IN ACTION:**

The last issue of the newsletter contained our first column on what LIFT members are up to. If you have something you'd like listed in the next newsletter, jot it down and send it to Lisa at LIFT (fax: 588-7017, e-mail: lift@inforamp.net).

**On the Screen:**

**DAYS OF ACTION -- ACTION REPLAY YEAR 1** Film and video on the metro Days of Action, Oct 25th and 26th 1996. Action! **Jonathan Culp's State of Fear Across** by **Cara Morton** and more. Symptom Hall 160 Claremont Sunday 26, 7:30 pm \$3, A video compilation launch party.

**John Detweiler** and **Renée Duncan's** recently completed *Year of the Sheep* (see last issue's column) premiered at the Atlantic Film Festival (Halifax) in September, and then went directly to the Vancouver International Film Festival in October.

**Roy Marques** will soon be filming the fall sequence of his 16mm film, *Interlude*, a study on the change of seasons which features an instrumental from Steven Morrissey. Roy received a \$2000 grant from the OAC First Projects to realise this film. Also recently completed by Roy is a VHS video compilation of interviews with Steven Morrissey and Johnny Marr of The Smiths titled *Our Steven Speaks*.

After its premier at TIFF, *Breakfast With Gus* traveled to Sudbury Cinefest and the Ottawa Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. The 8 minute short was written & directed by **Slobhan Devine** and produced by **Victoria Hirst**.

**Three Minute Rock Stars** go to New York's MIX Film & Video Festival in November. Seven of the three minute super 8 films were selected for screening, including LIFT members **Allyson Mitchell's Chow Down**, and **Jane Farrow's Echinacea Patient**. Allyson's animation *Don't Bug Me* has also been selected for screening along with **Jason Romilly's Alone Sarah Abbott's Froglight** and **Why I Hate Bees** and **Christina Zeidler's soulsucka**.

**Barbara Mainguy's** film *The Front Seat* was invited to the Atlantic Film Festival as well as the St. John's Women's Film Festival.

**Antonio Ranieri's** super short film *DIM* has been invited to the Short Attention Span Film & Video Festival in California, a festival that refuses to show any film that's longer than 2 minutes!

Director/Writer **Paula Tiberius** and Producer/Actor **Tanya Henley** will be traveling to New York City to present their film *Killing Time* at the First Annual New York Comedy Film Festival.

**just out of the lab:**

Between screenings of his 56 minute film *Shooting Indians* at the TIFF **Ali Kazimi** was busy completing a half hour documentary, *Some Kind of Arrangement*, an NFB co-production about arranged marriages. Ali was both Director and DOP. It will be broadcast on CBC's Witness in late November or early December. *Shooting Indians* went on to screen at Sudbury's Cinefest and then the Vancouver International Film Festival.

**Mario Tenorio's**, *The Red Window* (see last issue's column), is completed.



Loise Liliefeldt sucks All(s) Sole(s) in Christina Zeidler's soulsucka

**posting:**

**Derreck Roemer** is currently editing his film, *Gauguin's Dream*, on an Intercine in LIFT's green suite. Shot over two weekends in late July and early August on LIFT's Arri SR camera, the film tells about a guy trapped in a dull and unsatisfying job.

Using Adobe Premier in his own home, **Sam Lee** is almost ready to lock picture on his film *Standard Deviation*. It's a 90 minute film full of millennial angst about a guy who works at a 1-900 Psychic hotline who tries to figure out how to win the next big lottery. Since Premier doesn't create a negative cut list, Sam plans to conform his work print to the video copy in one of LIFT's edit suites so he can make a 16mm release print.

**Drake Conrad** is currently in Post-Production on his short film, *Scarlet*. The film was shot in August on LIFT's Eclair NPR.

The picture is locked on **Annie Szamosi** (Director) and **Karen Levinson's** (Writer/Producer) 13 minute film. Edited by **Miumi Jan** in LIFT's editing facility, *Decent Proposal* is a comedy about the difficulties a young Polish guy gets into when he tries to propose to his girlfriend. The film is currently going through post sound work and should be completed very soon.

**Yavorka Spasic's** *Cockadoodledoo* is in the can! This mock-documentary was shot over several weekends in August & September with LIFT's Arri BL. This mild comedy rags-to-riches-to-rags tale about an unknown, eccentric artist was inspired by the Yavorka's sister's artwork. Yavorka plans to edit the film at LIFT.

Principle photography is complete on **Valerie Weiss'** experimental documentary *Time Piece*, shot by **Andrew Watt** and **Steve Sanguedolce**. The 16mm film is about objects and the memories that they trigger, and how that helps to form our sense of identity. A film and television editor, Valerie is editing the film on a Lightworks system.

**Jason McBride** shot his short film, *Stargaze*, in late August with LIFT's Arri SR.

## More:

### LIFT Activity:

#### Posting (cont.):

**Jesse Rosensweet** is producing a documentary about Yiddish culture called *Neshoma*. During principle photography, the Ashkenaz Festival parade was shot on Labour Day using LIFT's Arri BL and Eclair NPR and a third camera, a borrowed Arri SR. The TV hour length program uses a mixture of film and video.

#### In Production:

**Ruba Nadda's** latest *The wind blows towards me particularly* was shot in late September on LIFT's Eclair NPR. 'A young Muslim wife, invisible in her veil, observes the dramas that unfold around her. Once she removes her veil, she enters the action, seducing a young man who just left his girlfriend. Post-production will be completed with *Damascus Nights* a 30 minute film that Ruba will be shooting in October. 'In a busy cafe, an Arab man tells his life story to his uninterested young daughter.'

New member **Clint Tourangeau** will be shooting his film *Shades of Black* in October with **Marcos Arriaga** as DOP. It is the first part of an imagined autobiography concerning the hapless filmmaker Clint as a 16 year old head banger and his new experiments in terror with his rebellious cousin. Sounds interesting.

### Calender:

**Jamie Phelan** is co-ordinating a series of screenings at the **Faktorie**, (400 Euclid, behind Kalender on College street). The October 11th inaugural screening featured **Atom Egoyan's** early work. Another will be scheduled for mid-November (Jamie's not sure of the date yet) -- watch this space or check out posters around the College Street strip. Meanwhile, Jamie is looking for submissions. Give him a call at 536-9349. Faktorie's number is 967-4565.

**J.P. Majjala** is in Production on his first feature, *Sleepwalker*, which shot two weeks in early September, one week in late September and one week in early October.

Our favorite Postman **Joe Leclair** is in Production on his first media production, *Redemption of the Canadian Businessman*, about black Monday in 1987. Production is taking place over several weekends. Joe is shooting on video and plans to transfer to 16mm for exhibition.

*The Doctor's Daughter*, **Janine Fung's** new film, shot for one week in late June. Where else but at her father's Doctor's Office in Scarborough. Inspired by real life, the film features Janine and her father as the daughter and the doctor respectively. Janine said they had to spend more on the gels to correct all the florescent lighting and large windows than she did on equipment rentals at LIFT. The cast and crew of five will be flying to Trinidad with LIFT's Arri SR in November to shoot another portion of the film. (Is it too late to get on the crew of that film?) Next spring Janine will be shooting the remainder of the 90 minute film in Toronto, once she has raised enough money.

**Gary Popovich** and **Steve Sanguedolce** are in the process of producing a CD ROM on hand processing techniques for film.

### In Prep:

**Jason Romilly** is preparing to shoot his next film, *Spent*, for four days in November, thanks to a grant from the Canada Council. **Mark Caswell** will be DOP.

The creative team of *Annabelle Meets This Guy* (**Virginia Rankin**, Writer & Director; **Karen Walton**, Co-Writer; **Mark Caswell**, Producer & DOP; and **Victoria Hirst**, Producer) were busy casting for their upcoming feature film.

**Paula Devonshire** is producing *Shudder*, a chilling ghost story, written and directed by **Brett Sullivan**. Production on the 20 minute film will be taking place over two weekends in late October.

**Sarah Abbott**, who had two films in LIFT's National Salon des Refusés (*Froglight* and *Why I Hate Bees*) has gone to France for two months to do research for her new film. She plans to shoot this feature length documentary over a one year period in Bardou, a small French village. (It may not be too late to get on this crew.)





**congratulations:**

**big important announcement:**

**THE OFDC Calling Card Programme is ON!!**

The OFDC has finally announced their new calling card program for emerging filmmakers. The Programme will provide filmmakers with an opportunity to create a 15-25 minute "calling card" film, in order to prove their readiness to make long form projects.

Partnering with film and television industry in the development and operation of this new program, Calling Card films will be licensed and promoted by Showcase Television. The programme will be co-ordinated by the OFDC Skills Development and Marketing Initiatives programme (SDMI). From all eligible applications in a quarter, a committee of industry professionals will cull a shortlist. The producers and directors of the shortlisted projects will then have an opportunity to pitch an industry jury. The programme will provide grants of up to \$30,000 each to approximately 10 dramas.

The next deadline will be January 5th, 1998.

Phone the OFDC for more details (314-6858)

bp *Pushing the Boundaries*, directed by **Brian Nash** and produced by **Elizabeth Yake**, won a special jury mention from the Toronto International Film Festival. The John Spotton Award (\$2500 cash plus \$2500 worth of FAB benefits) went to **Roshell Bissett's** film *Cotton Candy*.

**..and just a quick review:**

bp: *Pushing the Boundaries*.  
a process documentary  
"bp could spell pterodactyl in kindergarten"  
dir. **Brian Nash**

bp participates in this film by means of a cardboard cutout: a reconstruction of himself, cheerily smiling: The concrete poet... Poet, musician, artist and aesthetic and literary trickster, he engaged in formal experiments - words and letters -- He used Scrabble, cutouts, drilled into cardboard, spoke, shouted, sang, fragmented and reconstructed. His bookshelves were stacked with games. barry phillip nichol was his name.

An original in the structuralist tradition, he was an onsite investigator of the politics of language, preferring the empirical moment of sound poetry to intellectual discourse. "What is a poem is inside of your body; What is a poem is inside of your head" he said, "If we can free the word we can help free people and free ourselves." Among his inventions were a sytem to weigh human speech, among his impulses the roots of the 'zine - an initiative to work against mainstream concepts of bookness -- imagetext.

One of his poems, the famous pop balloon poem (inflate and destroy), came with instructions: Insert balloon in headband to have a cartoon thought-balloon projecting from your head. The end of the reading process requires you to take a 'thought suppressant' (a pin) amd burst the balloon. In the words of one of his friends: he was the poster boy for people who die too young. bp would have liked this film.

Barbara Mainguy

This year's jury was:  
**Anne Golden** (producer/distributor),  
**Mike Hoolboom** (Experimental filmmaker)  
and **Geeta Sondhi** (documentary producer)

**THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT FILM SERIES (CIFS)**

is having an Indie Industry night on **November 18th, 8:00 p.m.**, Eaton Lecture Theatre in Ryerson's Roger's Communication Centre at the corner of Gould and Church.

**Support Independent Film**

**CIFS**

www.cifs.ca



**Overboard: from the Board of Directors:**

jonathon cul... nish...



Rurally-routed Board member Jonathan Culp has temporarily given up filmmaking to pursue a new vocation, the harvesting of pumpkins. "It's a whole other world" says Culp. "I had to take my sandals off" His experience, which immediately followed the only board meeting between deadlines, consisted of the following: "First you clip the stem! Then you wipe the pumpkin with a rag which is dirtier than the pumpkin itself! Then you place it to one side of the patch! Then you do it again!" Although Board affairs remain virtually static from two months ago, Culp says that three days of pumpkin-hauling has given him new insights into the lives of working people. "All the guys agree it's even worse than picking strawberries! Good thing I'm going to be in T.O. working on the board package when they load them into the bins!" More vital Board news next issue!



## Barb Mainguy interviews sheep herders Renée Duncan and John Detweiler

other people's money..

**R**enée Duncan and John Detweiler co-write, co-produce and co-direct films. Their latest, *Year of the Sheep*, played at the Atlantic Film Festival. 'Word of Mouth' on it was great, with one Festival filmmaker calling it the funniest film he had seen in the last three years. I spoke with John Detweiler in Halifax about the trials and tribulations of independent filmmaking. A lot of what he said spoke directly to the problems of funding a first feature in Canada.

**Barb Mainguy:** Did you write the film together?

**John Detweiler:** Yes. We wrote the script in 1991. We basically both sit down -- it's not one of us does one thing and one of us does the other thing -- we both run lines past each other. It's sort of traditional to have multiple screenwriters especially for comedy, sometimes seven or eight. I think two is a good number because there aren't too many. It's good to have someone to react to lines. We wrote the initial script in a week. There's not a lot of dialogue, so the final script was 60 pages long.

**BJM:** Where did you meet and start collaborating?

**JD:** We both went to York, so we made 3 short films together there, then the half hour, then this one. Neither of us have really ever made a film by ourselves. We just kind of evolved a way of collaborating. It works on set too. It's a bit more strange with directing it takes a little bit of time, sometimes you have to educate the crew a little, especially with the male/female thing, you have to make sure everyone understands that both people have equal say.



**BJM:** So did you just shoot with what you had?

**JD:** We had this \$20,000 OAC grant and a LIFT grant -- \$7,000 plus equipment. By 1991 we had tried twice to get the Canada Council. The first time they told us that the jury supported our project but for logistical financial reasons couldn't give us the money, so for that reason we were told we could reapply. Then we didn't get it. We were worried that the OAC was going to pull back their grant, so we changed the script, because we wanted something to shoot, and get it over with, so we rewrote the script and completely simplified it made it just two characters and one location.

We shot. At that point we had about \$23,000 so we shot it with that. And I should say to that what we ended up with about 60 minutes. So we added another shoot too -- we shot additional sequences, two years later.

**BJM:** How did you fund that shoot?

**JD:** We managed to get all our equipment for free and our location for free, so all we had to pay on that shoot was film stock. The actors did the second shoot on 100% deferral. The '91 shoot was about 40% deferral, and all the crew was paid.

**BJM:** You had an Actra contract?

**JD:** Yes.

**BJM:** Tell me about the actors?

**JD:** Beoslav was in our half-hour. Patrushka Sarakula we found in the LIFT file, so we said, that's ok, we'll call this person. She just worked so well with Beoslav they looked like a real couple.

**BJM: Where did you spend your money? What about locations?**

**JD:** We put up a notice at LIFT and someone answered, so we paid them \$800 to shoot in their apartment for a week. Our whole shoot was 7 days the 1991 shoot. Basically all our budget went to hard costs -- crew, actors, equipment (which we got from Janet Goode) LIFT didn't have a reliable camera at that stage, this was before they got the Arri SR. We had all our process and work print done at Robert Allen. They were fantastic; they gave us a great deal, and the work was excellent.

**BJM: You deliberately made your idea a low budget idea.**

**JD:** Absolutely. We had to be able to do it in one location with two actors. It could have been all in black and white. It's half price to shoot black and white.

**BJM: And you finished in 1993 -- What did you do between shooting and finishing?**

**JD:** We worked at totally un-film-related type jobs... Installing eavestroughing...

**BJM: Then you got the money to finish it?**

**JD:** We sort of got the money to finish it in 2 installments. The OAC had given us their maximum grant, but then the Rae government upped the maximum to \$40,000, so we reapplied and got an additional \$17,000. That was in '95. At that point we knew we had almost enough to finish the film. The latest grant we got was \$7,000 from the Canada Council, and that was enough to finish it. I'm sure we put in a bit of our own money here and there, but we tried not to.

**BJM: It seems to require incredible patience.**

**JD:** Yeah. I'm not a really big fan of the way the grant system works. I don't like the idea that you have this happen all the time: We would go to the Ontario Arts Council and they would say we really love your present project, but we don't really like your support material. Then we'd go to the Canada Council and they'd say the complete opposite. It means you might get half your funding then not get the other half. European film agencies tend to fund the whole film, sort of for better or for worse.

**BJM: Did you ever think of going for other money, private sources?**

**JD:** The OFDC had a completion fund for about 6 months in 1995, before they were nuked by the Harris government. We



were all set to go for that. nobody ever got money from the completion fund because you couldn't access the completion fund unless you had a broadcast license, when you didn't tend to need it. Anyway, we had Cineplex at that point, and we applied, but at that point the thing blew up -- the OFDC vaporized over night. We showed it to a few different distributors. We never really got a firm offer. We got a fair bit of interest, but what we really needed was some money. The smaller distributors don't have access to the film distribution fund, so they can't really give you any money to complete.

**BJM: When did you finish it?**

**JD:** We finished it in terms of having a release print -- I guess in June. This 7-year project... We had horrible problems getting a release print. They put our negative through 6 or 7 times to get a release print, the process took two months... The sound was bad, or the picture was somehow scratched... The timer was great, though. Plus it's expensive -- it's harder these



# YEAR OF THE SHEEP

interview with Renée Duncan  
and John Detweiler cont..



days to get a really good deal for the independents.

**BJM: Wow... So who is your distributor?**

**JD:** We don't have one at the moment. We don't really want one. At this point, it would be like, here, sign this!, and the tv sale that you would have made anyway they suddenly get 40%. They get a 75% federal subsidy for prints and advertising, so in other words they could spend \$100,000 promoting your film, but they only have to spend \$25,000, but you owe them the \$100,000.

**BJM: Then they owe the government the \$75,000?**

**JD:** Not with the distribution fund. It's a straight subsidy. For every \$100,000 they spend, they get \$75,000 back. I'm no free market person myself, but this really does totally distort the industry because it means a distributor doesn't care what the film they are distributing is like. They don't have to make a business decision -- "We get 75 for free, and one tv sale will get the remaining 25%, and just our name will get the tv sale." So it means there is no risk -- they choose films not on quality, but on how easy they will be to market.



**BJM: What about the Toronto Festival?**

**JD:** It didn't get in. This may sound like sour grapes, but I only found one 16mm feature there without a distributor. I would have thought our film is one of the first they should go for, because of the way it was made. It's getting into other festivals, though.

**BJM: And what now?**

**JD:** Try to get it into a bunch of Festivals. We're going to see what happens. We wrote another project in 1995, and we got development funding from the OFDC. Telefilm told us unless we finished *Year of the Sheep*, we couldn't be considered as producers. We wouldn't mind getting an independent producer, but we found it was very difficult to get someone to read a script unless it came personally recommended by someone they knew. They said if they did read scripts they'd get about 40 a week. So it's hard to get them to do that initial read. We thought that getting development from the OFDC would have carried some weight, but it didn't. So we've put together a one-sheet promotion for it, just as a thing to give people, then if they're interested they can read the script...

*Year of the Sheep* played most recently at the Vancouver Festival.



YEAR OF THE SHEEP

LEAD US ~~NOT~~ INTO TEMPTATION

# HANGING OUT IN HISTORY:

## Filmmaker Edie Steiner interviews Naomi McCormack

*This year Naomi took the top prize at Yorkton - the prestigious "Golden Sheaf Award", for her short historical drama "The Hangman's Bride" I admire this rather weighty bronze statuette*

**E.S:** That's quite a lovely ornament, Naomi.

**N.Mc:** Yeah I like it myself. It seems very apropos considering my previous calling in agriculture (the award is cast in the shape of a sheaf of wheat).

**E.S:** Tell us a little about the rocky road to such an honour. How did the idea for "The Hangman's Bride" first originate?

**N.Mc:** It originated when a boyfriend choked me until I passed out, an incident that left me with an enduring horror of strangulation. I first explored this theme with dance, in an autobiographical film called *How to Be A Girl* (my first film), and I'm still exploring it, albeit with a different understanding now. What's changed is that my concern has become wider, in that the fear of personal strangulation has been superseded by a deeper kind of revulsion. I can only describe this as a fear of asphyxiation of the individual by the whole patriarchal arrangement. That sounds pretty heavy, but it is the manifestations of the system are totally appalling and at the same time insidious -- we just take so much of what suffocates for granted now. It's only when you look at history, especially the history of 18th c. crime and punishment -- when it was common for both women and men to be tortured and killed for crimes of petty theft or insubordination -- that it becomes blatant.

I began writing the original script in 1993 but wasn't particularly happy with any of the drafts -- it's very difficult to write a screenplay around a theme. In 1994 I went to see a dance performance by Eryn Dace Trudell, a choreographer with whom I had collaborated on a theatrical work a couple of years earlier. On the program with her was an American choreographer, Sari Eckler, who performed a dance about the plight of Fran Eloise Laurent, a condemned serving maid. Several months of research and writing later, I completed the first draft of *The Hangman's Bride*. So I guess

you might say that the story really found me, rather than the other way around.

**E.S:** How long did it take to get funding in place? Describe the development period.

**N.Mc:** The development period always feels way too long to me, but when I actually get into production, I realize I needed every minute that it took. Suffice it to say that over the course of about three years of research, grant applications and rewrites I eventually obtained partial funding from both the Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils which, along with my credit cards, enabled me to shoot and edit the film. I completed post production with the assistance of a pre-license agreement from Tara Ellis at CBC Canadian Reflections, who supported the film on the basis of the first rough cut.

**E.S:** What was LIFT's role in the production / post-production?

**N.Mc:** Josie Massarella and I edited the film at the then brand spanking new Hanna Ave. location. We were in the yellow room -- it's possible the colour of the door had a subliminal effect on the entire piece....

**E.S:** The film was primarily shot in one studio location. How did this facilitate the production? What difficulties did it present?

**N.Mc:** The most dramatic way it facilitated the creation of the work was that it meant that my d.o.p. Jonathan Freeman and myself could design scenes and shots the way we wanted them, without the constraints of existing architecture. It also facilitated the production in a pragmatic way, in that it



Naomi McCormack

was way cheaper than renting a historical location.

Difficulties it presented were idiosyncratic -- one night there was a wedding in the studio next to us and we couldn't shoot sound -- but that could have happened in a location as well. The set itself was both a blessing and a curse -- it was great to be able to fly the walls, but their flexibility was also their downfall -- I finally had to ask the actors not to lean on the "masonry" anymore because, true to its vacuum form nature, it was buckling under the touch. Not great for close ups.

Beyond the issues of set expense and authenticity, there are other challenges peculiar to historical drama that I would love to discuss with other directors working in this vein -- historical people, please get in touch with me!

**E.S:** What kind of challenges?

**N.Mc:** It starts in development -- there's this idea that historical drama is exorbitantly expensive. Paradoxically, the belief that it's so pricey makes it more difficult to secure funding -- there's a disbelief in your ability to pull it off. Your credibility as a producer is questioned. On the aesthetic front, some people can't understand why you would want to devote yourself to work that is so

## HANGING OUT IN HISTORY:

Filmmaker Edie Steiner interviews Naomi McCormack (cont.)

blatantly romantic -- you can end up feeling a bit out in left field.

During the actual shoot -- well, the only danger here is that it's so much fun -- historical drama provides great opportunities to surrender to camp. What person can pick up a sword without thinking of Zorro, if only for a second? It makes it more difficult for anyone to take themselves too seriously -- but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

When you're finally finished and trying to screen it, you'll find that there's a few programmers who don't really know how to deal with it, nor wish to. I have the impression that historical drama occupies a location in our cultural aesthetic galaxy close to the outer planet reserved for Harlequin romances -- there's this kind of hegemony of cool that precludes any non-ironic treatment of history.

history's totally devalued in our culture -- to say something's "history" now is tantamount to saying its irrelevant.

**E.S:** The film has been to numerous other festivals and has won at least one other award. Tell us about them

**N.Mc:** "Numerous" may be gilding the lily -- I think it's been screened at 5 or 6 of the 30 or so festivals I've applied to. But I was able to attend some of the festivals that did screen it and for the most part they were great experiences. I have learned a couple of things about the festival thing -- the first is, if you're film is unusual in any way, it may take a long time for it to find its audience. You just have to go the distance. Don't give up -- you owe it to yourself and all the people who helped you. Even after I personally felt that I could not rip open another festival rejection letter, the thought of all those people who made the film kept me sending that cassette out there, and voila, it finally hit heavy metal -- twice! (she brandishes another decorative object).

My second observation is this -- short film festivals like Local Heroes and Yorkton and other small festivals are often the best place for short films. This sounds obvious, but many people seem to think the bigger the festival the better -- its often quite the reverse for work that is out of sync with prevailing trends. Of course I'm talking about find-

ing your audience, not going to monster parties.

**E.S:** You are currently working on a documentary for CBC / Man Alive. This is a project you've been researching and trying to get produced for the past two years. Could you talk a bit about trying to sell a doc to broadcasters. I understand you approached numerous other possible venues before finally making a successful deal.

**N.Mc:** I'd like to talk about the content of the work first before getting into the funding scenario, partly because it's the content that's your most potent fundraising tool and partly because I find the whole business of raising money very difficult and inordinately time-consuming. Although I accept the fact that raising the money for a project is a good discipline, I'm sure that someone else could do it better for

me and I wish that they would make themselves known to me. But I digress.

The documentary is called *Everdale* and it's a personal piece on going home -- in this case, to *Everdale*, the rural free school commune where I grew up. The commune was a 60's era utopian experiment, and was much documented in its heyday by filmmakers like Don Shebib and others. My own project is a diaristic piece about the challenges of confronting memory and in the process, deconstructing a utopia. This isn't as bleak as it sounds, but I do feel I'm having to take a lot of risk, both in the deconstruction aspect and because I've chosen to make a very personal piece for a national television audience. So I feel very naked. But also very excited. I always fall in love with my projects at some point during their creation, and it's often right about now, when I'm first screening the footage. I'm in that stage now, and part of the time I'm euphoric, part of the time I feel way too vulnerable and pissed off and just want to walk. But I can't walk because I have a delivery date. So I'm engaged in this fierce kind of way.

The actual process of creating a documentary is both scary and exhilarating for me, in that, unlike drama, I can't really foretell what people are going to do in any given situation. The images come in a surprise, gifts strewn in among the

cross. As I keep looking, the characters reveal who they are and I begin to understand what the story is about. There's a whole lot of listening that goes into directing a documentary like this, and I'm discovering that surrendering my directorial ego is -- challenging. It's a whole different ball game from drama.

Ok now your funding question. The funding route was completely different from *The Hangman's Bride*. In this case I got rejected by the arts councils and the NFB all round, several times over it seemed (but I'm sure wasn't). Juries were concerned that the project was too "content oriented" and that I wanted to make a doc after making a successful drama -- I guess you're not supposed to do that. I wasn't ready to give up though, and in a state of total naiveté began approaching broadcasters. I immediately found out that I don't watch enough tv to have a good handle on program mandates -- my pitches were too non-specific and went nowhere -- and it began to seem like just doing the homework was going to require a major lifestyle change.

At this point I was getting a tad discouraged, but continued researching the project anyway, digging up all these people who had lived at Everdale and talking with them. Lo and behold, I eventually discovered a former communitard working at CBC. He suggested that I approach the folks at *Man Alive* and helped me shape the pitch -- four meetings and several months later, I signed the contract. So you can say that luck was definitely involved. But luck is nothing without perseverance.

**E.S:** What's your budget like for this project?

**N.Mc:** People have this idea when you say that you're working on something for CBC that money is raining down upon you. I wish! The standard budget for this show is between and 25 thousand dollars, out of which comes the all the expenses -- your CBC crew, editor, digital editing suite, materials, equipment and everything else at CBC rates. What's left after all those expenses is your producer's fee, so you really can't afford to be too extravagant. Although I'm extremely pleased to have the opportunity to make the project, I'm not about retire on it.

**E.S:** What other projects would you like to work on? Is a feature version of "The Hangman's Bride" in the works? Where do you see your work heading in the future?



## naomi's band

**N.Mc:** The project that I'm in development now is a dance film with choreographers Eryn Dace Trudell and Susan Lee. It's called *The Elimination of Lateral Violence* and is so totally thrilling to me that I feel a stab of disloyalty to my current project even contemplating it. Without giving too much away, it features choreography that defies the conventions of heterosexual partnering and gravity. I'm really excited to be working on it, and I guess that's all I'm going to say right now, (except that I'm looking for funding!)

I have completed the treatment for a feature version of *The Hangman's Bride*, but at the moment it's on hold until I can find a producer interested in taking it on. It's a bit too big a project for me on my own.

Where do I see my work heading in the future? Hmm -- that's a big one.

Whenever I've thought about my future in the past, I've typically thought of it as stretching out in front of me in a more or less linear manner -- but, having lived half my life now, I'm finding that it

just keeps surprising me with its circularity. It's like an ouroboros, it keeps turning itself inside out to reinvent itself with more and more layers. Like -- I used to be a farmer, now I'm a filmmaker. On the surface they seem quite disparate vocations, but on another level they're both aspects of the same trip -- sometimes you're in touch with the divine and sometimes you're shovelling shit.

This circularity thing is one of the reasons why I'm interested in history -- my personal history has yielded so many clues to my understanding of the present, I can't help but think that it's part of a larger phenomenon, and that if we understood our collective history we could better affect our collective life as a society. But what's happening is that history's totally devalued in our culture -- to say something's "history" now is tantamount to saying it's irrelevant. It's as if the idea of a continuous human community kind of gags in the post modern throat -- like it's totally gauche to feel connected with anything, much less something as humbling as history. But the more you feel like you're

above time, the more you're isolated inside it -- it's like a temporal xenophobia. I want to subvert that xenophobia any way I can, and if it's with historically based work, great.

Sure, there's always the danger of nostalgia -- or just hanging out in history to avoid the present -- but my own experience has been the reverse. Finding a home in another time period has enabled me to feel less defensive about being marginal in this one -- it kind of breaks up the domination of the present. Putting less energy into being reactive has given me more to use proactively; I believe that by immersing myself in history I've begun an engagement with the present that's truly on my own terms. Those terms are proving to be protean, in that the engagement keeps taking different forms. Which leads back to your question about the future -- I knew we'd get back to it.... Right now, I'd have to say that I'm just cruising on intuition -- I honestly don't know what's in the future. Where my work will ultimately lead me is a mystery -- except that it's likely a place I've somehow been before.

# the Atlantic Film Festival.



I got out of town to the Atlantic Film Festival. My film was playing in a programme of shorts there (also showing at the Atlantic Fest were LIFT-er Cassandra Nicolau's *Dance with Me*, Bangs, by Carolynne Hew, Su Rynard's *Strand* and John Detweiler and Renee Duncan's *The Year of the Sheep* (See Other People's Money). The Atlantic Festival runs for 10 days in late September, in three theatres in town: the Oxford, a restored art deco theatre, Wormwood's Dog and Monkey Cinema -- a rep theatre, and in one theatre in the Park Lane multi-plex downtown. During the day, music videos and video art screen at the Dalhousie Art gallery, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Maritime Museum, the Atlantic City centre and the main branch of the public library. The Festival headquarters are in the stately Westin, an old CN-CP grand hotel.

The industry panels had, well, an industrial feel, with the onus on \$\$ and how to get them. The Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation gave away 2.5m last year (sigh) mostly on independent production. There was a companionable refrain of "C'mon down!" from displaced Torontonians I kept meeting there, who have that healthy glow from the sea air, and a sense of being relaxed and...



above: members of London's HALLOWE'EN SOCIETY below: still from Cassandra Nicolau's *Dance with Me*

happy.... also displaced is Edmonton's Jan Miller, founder of the Local Heroes Festival -- does that mean we'll see some Local Heroes type action in Halifax? One friendly meet-and-greet that took place was the traditional Linda Joy Busby Memorial brunch, held at the palatial co-op house of Lulu Keating and experimental filmmaker James McSwain. Busby was one of the founders of the Atlantic Film Co-op, and much beloved. She died in 1995. Another great place to hang was Wormwood's cash bar open house which took place after the screenings at night.

The programming? Lots of shorts at the Fest, which has a strong connection with Western Europe and anywhere Celtic, and divides its programmes into Eastern Canadian, Canadian and International focuses. A great 45 minute piece from Denmark was *Now or Never*, in which bachelor Jimmy, aged 60, who lives and works (building walls -- get it?) in the wild windswept hills with his cow, and socializes mostly with his stoically independent mates, decides he would like to take a wife: one who would milk a cow and keep the accounts in order. Jimmy's journey to marital stability includes his eventual realization that he might need to reconsider the attributes he assigns to good wifeliness. A very simple film, exceptionally well cast. Another particular favourite of mine was "Checkstanc", an experimental narrative about love, where a young man 'thought reads' all the people around him until finding a single woman, then makes a mad dash to intercept her. The best news, of course, is that the Best Short Film award went to the 8-years-in-the-making scratch animation *Linear Dreams* by Richard Reeves, which goes to show that non-narrative work can still get some respect.

The most LIFT-like presentation was by the Hallowe'en Society from London, UK, which showed a bunch of shorts advertised as 'rave films' in an El Convento Rico-like bar in downtown Halifax. All of the mostly black and white work was experimental, and included dance pieces, parking lot documentaries filmed outside rave clubs, in the bathrooms of rave clubs or in the bedrooms of those getting ready to go out raving. By far the most hilarious attraction was the (live action) talking penis head, singing "I Will Survive," directed by the UK's Sean Roe. The Hallowe'en society is interested in receiving work from LIFT members and as soon as I get the address we'll post it in the calls for submissions.

I did drop by the Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op, (AFCO) which was mostly in boxes as they have just moved a couple of offices over. They are only just emerging from some down time, have just hired a new co-ordinator and put in place a new Board of Directors, so the action around there was mostly unpacking. I was told about the King's Co-op, (at Dalhousie University's King's College) which has some 16mm equipment kicking around, and was well-represented by mostly short narrative film at the Festival, and there is a video co-op, where a lot of experimental work takes place. The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design offers one 16mm film course, but liases with AFCO to get equipment and to use optical printers, etc.

--Barbara Mainguy





## Lisa Hayes journeys MoscowSummer

Everyone, including myself, was shocked that a film festival would fly someone, all expenses paid, to a festival for a 4 1/2 minute film. And it's even harder to believe that Russia, of all places, would do it. Aren't they starving over there? Aren't they the ones who haven't paid their army for months?

All this aside, off I went to Moscow for 12 days. The festival treated us like VIP guests the whole time; we even had our own translator. Sometimes the film festival took a back seat to all the celebrations for Moscow's 850th anniversary. Imagine a yellow inflated Nestlé stage in front of the now-empty KGB building, with the Nestlé Quick Bunny dancing around for thousands of Moscovites, singing away in Russian about how great Nestlé is. That is something I am glad that I didn't miss. And how about Pavarotti singing in Red Square the day after Princess Diana's funeral. I couldn't afford tickets to this event, which was rumoured to start at \$300 US per person. And again people asked: how can they afford this? It's the rise of the Russian nouveau-rich! BMW's and Mercedes were everywhere in central Moscow, although I did see my fair share of boxy Ladas spewing out carbon-monoxide fumes, making the city unbearable.

One day I was invited to a round table discussion for the filmmakers. Most of the other guests were older, more established filmmakers, who were making studio films. I believe that I was the only independent present. The topic of discussion was the future of Children's Cinema, an appropriate topic for the XVII Film Festival for Children and Young People. The head table consisted of the festival director (a red faced man who was revealed to be a bit of a drinker), a 'well

known' Russian film critic (equally red faced), and a translator. I took a seat right at the front, to be close to the action. Bad move since the three of them were chain smoking during their presentation, not missing a word to light their next cigarette mid sentence. And then Cognac was served. I glanced at my watch to confirm that it was only 11:15 a.m. The festival director downed his Cognac in two quick gulps and lit another cigarette. Throughout this display, I tried to listen carefully to what was being said. They had to be delivering an important message here. After all, this whole event was being captured with four BetaSP cameras for the news and a gallery of people from the Russian media, rapidly taking notes. At the end of two hours, it seemed unanimous that Children's Cinema is important since children are our future, and that we should all make an effort to promote cinema for children. (These were the very same remarks made by the festival director in his opening address.) Then, platters of sandwiches were served, which consisted of a slice of bread topped with a piece of meat. Seeing everyone eating these open-faced meat sandwiches explained to me why I saw people at McDonald's eating their Big Mac's open faced as well.

Moscow was a city of contradictions. People don't pay rent for their apartments (if they already have one), but new people arriving in the city must pay \$2000 US per month for a small one bedroom. Restaurant meals are outrageously expensive. University Professors earn less than hotel staff. And nobody in Moscow thought that it was unreasonable for me to be a guest of the festival with a 4 1/2 minute film.

Clockwise from the left: Lisa's new Moscow friends just outside of Red Square, Lisa @ Hotel Moskva - Manezhnaya Pl, getting ready for the 850th Year Celebrations, Lisa in Gorky Park. In Moscow it's o.k. to smoke and drink conon panels at film festivals, what's a road trip without MacMoscow, Lisa runs away from a camel in front of the KGB.

# The Independent World The Independent World

## LIFT in Edmonton Clint Tourangeau in



A nipple rises angrily in extreme close-up. Fully exposed and clasped firmly by the cruel Edmonton city morning air, it quickly purples until it is as distended and worried as a thumb smashed by a hammer. The shot list calls for six more close shots of the actor's anatomy, but upon strenuous protest from the actor, the rest of the shots are abandoned and only the one shot remains -- a nipple like a beaten rosehip abandoned on the bush.

Filmmaking in Edmonton, my home town, is not just art. It's sadomasochism. And as difficult as it might be for a Torontonian to fully appreciate, sadomasochism isn't all cool whips and hell-bent-for-leather face masks. Sometimes it's just pain.

The pain is not all related to the wonders of the Northern Climate. Most of the distress of an Edmonton Independent Filmmaker is the isolation. Its modest industry not only encourages filmmakers to flee to other centres like Vancouver and Toronto, but also makes basic instructional and technical support scarce. It's difficult to account, then, for what can only be called an independent film boom in the City of Champions.

"We're bursting at the seams," beams Helen Folkmann, the amiable Executive Director of the Film and Video Arts Society of Alberta. At last count FAVA membership had swollen to 200, with 87 projects in production, including three features, from directors Bill Serochan, Norm Fassbender and John Hazlitt. "August and September of this year were the most active months in our history," continues Folkmann, a fact that seems all the more remarkable in consideration of the newest installation of Alberta's romance with the right wing which has led directly to hobbling of most of the major governmental sources of funding for the arts. "We joke that we're like the cockroaches. The big guys are hurting but we are thriving," says Folkmann.

As strange as it may seem a lot of the sudden film and video activity was catalyzed by Craig Broadcasting -- those camera-jiggling Queen street empresarios who have made millions motion sick with Bravo!, MuchMusic and City TV, and who have premiered the new A Channel out of the old Hudson's Bay building on Jasper Avenue in the heart of cold little Edmonton. In a small industry the new channel has benefited from FAVA's involvement from the ground level.

A more stalwart influence has been NSI's excellent late winter jamboree, the Local Heroes Film Festival, an event which effectively unites nearly all the independent filmmakers in the area so they can exchange ideas and discuss new penetrative attacks on the industry. It is a festival which celebrates small budgets and large visions. And it is a testament to the Festival and the city that, while budgets have become increasingly small, the visions of the artists continue to grow.

"We are growing not only in size but vision and ambition," Folkmann concludes, pointing to FAVA's own burgeoning schedule of workshops and activi-

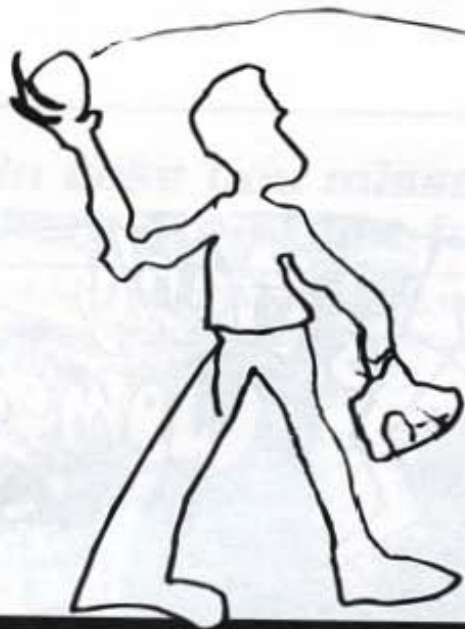
ties, including an auspicious installation at the Catalyst Theatre exploring "Personal message with impersonal medium."

Here may be the true reason behind the Edmonton Independents boom, the shrewd recognition that there is not only beauty in small stories, but perhaps interest as well. If life is a procession of minuscule moments then an artist would do well to explore those moments. There may be no medium better suited to this than a small film. And Edmonton might just finally prove for once and for all that it's ok to be small.



(l-r): J.D. Smith, Julia Jamieson, Catherine Rossini, Sid Bobb in Clint Tourangeau's *Shades of Black*

...Edmonton might just finally prove for once and for all that it's ok to be small.



# pitch

## *Pitch*

dir. Kenny Hotz and Spencer Rice

"For 3 Million dollars, you get the slicer, the foot cream, and the script."

When I was about 11 somebody, maybe a football coach, or a school principal, told me "It's not what you know, it's who you know," pure revelation at the time, naturally, but I was only eleven. Today I've come to realize that, especially in the film world, the line would reveal much more if it read, "It's not who you know, but who knows you."

I think it's safe to say that a few people have now heard of Kenny Hotz and Spencer Rice. After cold-calling several Hollywood stars, agents and producers, harassing even more at the 1996 Toronto Film Festival and making a trip down to LA to secure meets with still others, all the time with a camera crew in tow to document the pitching of their script, they have managed to capture a little attention.

Working with only 22 hours of original on-the-fly footage plus a few more snippets of staged transitional segments, such as a seemingly authentic CNE pitchman hawking their script along with the usual must-have vegetable cutters, magic knives, toe gels and other special bonus items, the two young men successfully completed their new 88' documentary. *Pitch*, now ironically being featured in the 1997 Toronto International Film Festival's Perspective Canada Series.

The documentary itself is a well edited, well produced, narrative-styled, self-reflexive work that is genuinely interesting and entertaining, if only slightly educational.

Throughout it, the two Toronto filmmakers take an assertive camera-on approach to pitching their Mafia comedy screen-

*"We got a half-page in Playback, in Canada, which was really great, but we got nothing - not a single phone call. We had a tiny article in Variety, tiny, like, half an inch, and by the end of the day there were 42 phone calls on my answering machine. In the States, it's "How can we make money off these guys." In Canada, it's "Am I going to do you a favour and take your film?"*

Kenny Hotz and Spencer Rice, directors of the Festival hit "Pitch" which showed at the Toronto International Film Festival

play, where a Mafia "don" enters a hospital for a hernia operation, but leaves instead with a sex change; a Mafia don gone horribly wrong song...

It was put best by film critic Roger Ebert who, when confronted by the duo at the Film Festival said, "This is a documentary about the pitching of your script that's really just a tool to help you sell your script."

"Ah, yes, yup."

"Now, how many seconds did it take me to see through that?"

But it doesn't matter. The duo doesn't always get along; their dynamic keeps it interesting. Their ignorance keeps it genuine. What starts out as an episode for CBC's Venture program ends up a tight, clever documentary with just enough relationship strain to keep it alive (with levity).

And, if you order now, as a special one-time bonus, you'll get not one, but two amazing additional items thrown in, you'll learn the recipe for Hotz mothers' famous super tasty hummus, plus you'll learn valuable reasons why you probably shouldn't sign any contract before you understand what the hell it actually means.

-Rob Cosgrove

# LIFT Final Report: By Victoria Hirst

## Party of Parties and Silent Auction

Well if you missed all the action you missed the party of the century.

OVER 250 PEOPLE CAME OUT TO PLAY. The Factory Theatre was packed to the gills and the bidding room was somewhat akin to a trading floor on Bay Street. Filmmakers fought over film stock, equipment packages, negative cutting and On-Line time. The bidding wars were quite fierce at times and when bidding was extended for an extra half an hour everyone was highly charged. Once the close was announced, organizers grabbed the bid sheets so that no one could make another bid on the sly. The boogie tunes started up and everyone grooved. After the door prizes the films began.

Despite all the technical glitches, projectionist extraordinaire Marcos Arriaga saved the night. Glace Lawrence introduced the films and filmmakers and everyone enjoyed the screening.

Thanks Glace!

And a great show of films.

Well done everyone!

## National Salon Des Refusés

Maintaining its traditional date the Wednesday during the Toronto International Film Festival, our screening this year was in conjunction with the Canadian Independent Film Series.

What a venue 950 seats! This was a great opportunity for the filmmakers to have their films seen on the big screen, the theatre was bigger than any they would have had access to at the Festival. Thanks to Keith Cole our wonderful publicist, CBC and City TV covered the event, the filmmakers their films and CIFS. They really earmarked the Salon as an exceptional event that works in juxtaposition to the Festival.

CIFS threw a wonderful party on the Wednesday night and we would like to extend a very big thank you to them.

The repeat screening on Saturday gave people a second chance to see the films and despite the fact that it was a glorious sunny day, 100 people came to watch.

## A success all round!

*We could not have these events if it were not for the help and dedication of the volunteers.*

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED.**



Keith Cole's *Nancy boy vs. Manly Woman* was a hit at the Party of Parties, also screened were Ruba Nadda's films: *Wet heat drifts Through the Afternoon*, *Do Nothing*, *Interstate Love Story*; Naomi Boxer's *Anna amd Ariel* and Michelle Mohabeer's *Child-Play*.

## ***In case you missed them the first chance around, there are still a few items left from the Auction:***

Many of the items went for 1/3 the original asking price. There is no denying that there were some amazing deals procured by all those who participated. So please bid some more! Call LIFT for details.

### **John Gajdecki Visual Effects**

One day (8 hours each) on the Final 2D Compositing System and credit towards blue screen rental  
Value: \$3,500.  
Min Bid: \$1,000.

### **John Gajdecki Visual Effects**

One day (8 hours each) on the Final 2D Compositing System and credit towards blue screen rental  
Value: \$3,500.  
Min Bid: \$1,000.

*Both days can be combined as one package.*

*This package is perfect if you want to do any level of blue screen special effects, smoke, lightening and more.*

### **McLear Pathé Recording and Post Production Studios**

A 3 day (8 hour day) post production audio package.  
Value: \$5,000.  
Min Bid: \$1,667

If you have ever needed to record original music and sound, this is for you. It's a shame to break this up - this includes ADR pre-mix, music recording studio and mixing. Perfect for a short film.

### **The Post Group**

2 hours On-Line services on an Edit Box.  
Value: \$1,500.  
Min Bid: \$500.  
If you only require a short On-Line time this is a great place to On-Line in comfort. If more time is needed check it out and purchase more time.

### **Deluxe Toronto**

A 4 hour mix in mono or TV stereo.  
Value: \$1,500.  
Min Bid: \$500.  
If you have recreated your sound tracks and want to combine them effectively, create a print master before shooting your optical this is the way to go.

### **International Image Services Inc.**

Image conversion NTSC to PAL, SECAM etc. Dubs from digital masters, digital restorations on masters and E washes.  
Value: \$1,000.  
Min Bid: \$333.  
Have you ever had to deliver a digital master to a broadcaster or distributor. If there are glitches on it International Image Services Inc. will fix and problems and restore as new. They know all European broadcast specifics and have international clients.

### **Colin Aguiar**

1/2 an hour of an original composed score for a feature film  
Value: \$650.  
Min Bid: \$217  
Colin would like to work on a feature and is donating the first half hour of music he composes and would like to finish the feature on a negotiated basis.

### **The Lock Up**

Prop/set rentals and/or credit towards production/post production office space complete with phones, fax and photocopier  
Value: \$500.  
Min Bid: \$167  
This is where every art department

invariably ends up in search of props and sets. This is a bargain - do you know how many props etc you can get for this?

### **Motorola**

Walkie/talkie rentals  
Value: \$150.  
Min Bid: \$50.  
If you have ever logistically needed to communicate over long distances this is your tool.

### **Emancass Leasing**

Computer/printer rentals  
Value: \$150.  
Min Bid: \$50.  
Computer on the frizz, this is your solution. Servicing the film and video industry Emancass is pro at servicing your computer needs.

### **Atlantis Communications Inc.**

A framed poster of the Traders' performers  
Value: \$50.  
Min Bid: \$16.

### **Inside Out**

2 x Closing night gala tickets  
Value: \$30.  
Min Bid: \$10.  
2 x Opening night gala tickets  
Value: \$30.  
Min Bid: \$10.

**PS. If you won a POV or TAKE 1 subscription as a door prize, please contact Victoria at 588-6059 for details on how to claim it.**

# outspoken:

I want to begin this letter by thanking LIPT and the CIPS for putting on the Salon des Refusés and giving me the chance to screen my film. I think that the salon is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of the publicity of the Toronto film Festival to garner attention for independent filmmakers who were not so lucky as to be selected by the Festival.

However I did sense that the Salon was ignored by the media. There was the odd article and a story on Movie Television, but aside from that there was very little sense that anybody around the city knew that it was going on. The Audience seemed to be primarily made up of friends and relatives of the filmmakers involved in the screening.

I believe that the reason for this has more to do with the nature of the Salon than with the way in which publicity itself was handled. The problem with the Salon is that it seems to have two mutually incompatible objectives. It is trying to take advantage of the hype surrounding the Festival to promote local filmmakers while at the same time marketing itself as a gigantic FUCK YOU! to the Festival. It claims to be showing "the films the Toronto festival wouldn't show" and the whole notion of a Salon des Refusés is a criticism of the ability of the Festival to choose films. We are saying "The Festival is so inept, biased, blind, corrupt, boring (insert any other negative adjective) that a random selection of the films they rejected is bound to produce a better lineup than theirs."

In principle I agree with this. (This should not

be taken as meaning any disrespect to those who did get in, but you see the very fact that my film did not get in indicates that their selection process is fucked (if you don't believe that the film you make is the best possible film, then why bother making it?) The problem is that this city, particularly the media, is in love with the Toronto Film Festival. It is a prominent, important, international film festival. The world comes to watch movies there. It proves that Toronto is a World Class city. Moreover, it is the bread and butter of local movie critics and entertainment editors. For two weeks every year they are read as much as sports reporters. They are not too quick to bite the hand that feeds them.

The result is that if it is covered at all, the Salon des Refusés is seen as a collection of films that aren't good enough to get into the Toronto Festival. The review in Eye magazine is the best example of this. For this reason, I think that the Salon should change its approach. Much as I personally prefer the fuck you approach (they rejected my film, see above) the primary role or the more important role of the Salon is to promote local filmmakers. I don't think it is a good idea to run head-to-head against the Festival. Rather, the Salon should be run just after the Festival when film writers still think that they're important but don't have anything to write about because Tom Cruise is no longer having dinner at Bistro 990. It should be marketed not in opposition to the Festival but as a complement to it. Not their films such, come and see ours but if you liked those films wait until you see these. I think that this approach much help us to secure a wider audience, at least until the city becomes fed up

after making a film everything else is easy..  
by Brian Stockton



letters to the editor:

I've been enjoying the recent 'summer issue', especially the articles, selling your shorts & a protocols memory. The LIFT people pictorial looks great, you guys should include more of this type of photo collage in other issues!

Best of luck everyone at LIFT

Москва, Покровский собор.  
(Храм Василия Блаженного).

Moscow, The Cathedral of St Basil the Blessed  
Moskva, Sobor Vasiliya Blazhennogo  
Moscou, La Cathédrale de Basile le Bienheureux

Sept 3/17



Hi Barb in the flight to 850  
Moscow I was trying to  
figure out why a festival  
would (y'know people are  
for a film festival for a  
4 minute film. Well... 9 1/2  
min) During the lavish opening  
ceremonies I realized it's  
bec Russians are very proud  
of their artists and are  
very supportive of the arts  
without any expectation of  
commercial profits. How refreshing! See you at the co-op

Barb Manning  
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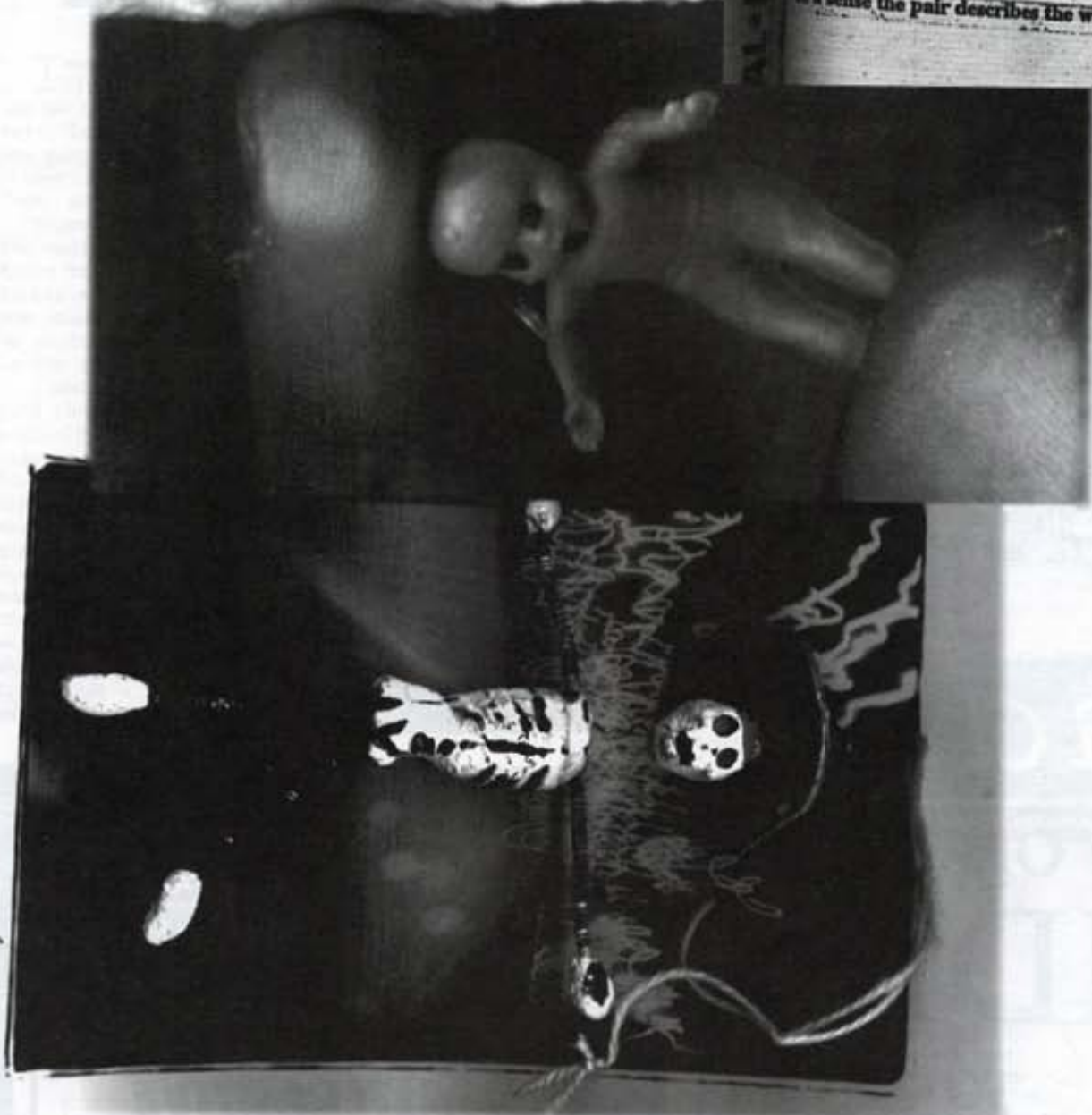
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In the binary model there is an implicit inter relatedness through opposition.

In a sense the pair describes the whole.



### Charlie And Louise

Director  
Joseph Vilmaier  
Producers  
Günter Rohrbach  
Joseph Vilmaier  
Peter Zenk  
Writer  
Novel by Erich Kästner  
Cinematographer  
Joseph Vilmaier  
Principle Performers  
Fritzi Eichhorn, Floriane  
Eichhorn, Corinna Harfouch,  
Heiner Lauterbach  
Distributor

Charlie is a rough and tumble no nonsense type of girl while Louise is tidy, well read and precise. They meet one summer at camp in Scotland and much to their surprise discover they not only look identical but they were also born on the same day in Berlin. Deciding they must be twins, they switch identities and homes. Charlie has always wanted to know her mother and Louise has always wanted to know her father. The switch is harder to keep up than they thought so the girls engineer a 'family reunion.'

Does this sound familiar?

Feature  
Germany, 1995, 35mm, 90 min., English dubbed  
Saturday, September 20, 3:00 pm • Oxford Theatre



taken from the Atlantic Film Festival guide