



LIFT

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THE LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO
VOLUME 23 ISSUE 3 JULY 2003

RUBA NADDA EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL STAN BRAKHAGE IMAGES 2003
HOT DOCS THE PARADISE INSTITUTE



Ward's Island Picnic and Screening

Saturday, August 9th, 2:00pm - 10:00pm



Ward's Island Picnic and Screening

at the Ward's Island Club House (100 yards straight off the Ward's Island docks)
All are welcome to join us! During the day, we'll be grilling food and serving suds!
When the sun sets, the projector rolls for a screening of LIFT members' films!

For up to date information on LIFT events visit our website at: www.LIFT.on.ca

Or contact: Michael Barker, Communications Coordinator, at 416.588.6444 or by email at Communications@LIFT.on.ca

LIFT Outloud!

LIFT OUTLOUD is LIFT's popular new script reading series that gives filmmakers a chance to test-run their scripts, and actors a chance to hone their chops. The 2003 LIFT Outloud schedule is:

Thursday	July 3 rd	7pm
Thursday	August 7 th	7pm
Thursday	September 11 th	7pm
Thursday	October 2 nd	7pm
Thursday	November 6 th	7pm
Thursday	December 4 th	7pm

All events take place on the LIFT mezzanine at 37 Hanna Ave., Suite 301

For more information contact:
lifoutloud@hotmail.com



LIFT now offers Affiliate Organization Memberships

**Artist Centres, Community groups
and Non-Profit Organizations**
are invited to join LIFT as Affiliate Organizations.
For an annual fee of \$120, this affiliate membership entitles subscribers to:

- Free event and call-for-submissions listings in the weekly LIFT ebulletin
- A 10% discount on newsletter ads
- The ability to rent LIFT equipment for exhibitions or screenings.

For more information contact Michael Barker at:
Communications@LIFT.on.ca

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LIFT The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto July 2003 Volume 23, Issue 3

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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 screenings and 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, and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

Articles published in the LIFT newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Co-op members or the Board of Directors.

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Anyone with suggestions or ideas, please call the LIFT office or email: newsletter@lift.on.ca



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR



To the good folks at LIFT,

A note to say that I enjoyed your Digital Issue newsletter and agree with many of the conclusions reached by your various writers. No, DV isn't a replacement for celluloid (personally, I prefer video images originated on film). But, ideally, isn't filmmaking about placing whatever medium you use at the service of your aesthetic vision/story? Following this criterion, I've seen DV that looks transcendently beautiful and film that looks like crap. That my piece or yours is shot on this material rather than that isn't a guarantee of much. DV also offers opportunities to many who mightn't otherwise mix it up in the movie making world. The ability to give voice to ideas is spread around a little more, never a bad thing.

Two further comments: there remains a hint of romanticism among some of your writers for the old hands-on-the-film thing. As a hand-challenged individual who spent a lot of time at LIFT and elsewhere cutting celluloid and mag stock, I have to say that I view digital editing as a blessed evolutionary step. And note to Sarah [Abbott]: for me, the primary intermediary in translating ideas from the mind to the screen isn't the hand, but rather, the eye.

Best regards,

ROSS TURNBULL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHARLES STREET VIDEO

LIFT Online

The new LIFT website is online!

The new website features up-to-date news and events listings, current equipment and store ratesheets, an online community forum, improved online crewlists, a complete schedule of available workshops and courses and much more!

www.LIFT.on.ca

Are you web-savvy and coding-comfy?
Interested in joining the Website Committee?

Contact Michael Barker at:
Communications@LIFT.on.ca

LIFT

Workshops and Courses Spring - Summer 2003

With classes covering everything from basic camera theory*to 35mm cinematography and a range of formats (Super 8, 16mm, Super 16 and 35mm) LIFT film workshops and courses are sure to be of interest to both beginning and veteran filmmakers. A complete workshop schedule is available online at:

www.LIFT.on.ca

For more information contact:
Workshops@LIFT.on.ca



LEAP OF FAITH:

AN INTERVIEW WITH RUBA NADDA

By SARAH ARMENIA



Long-time LIFT member Ruba Nadda has recently made the leap from ultra low-budget shorts and features to her first industry produced feature. Ruba's short films were shot guerrilla-style and on average cost her \$500 each to make. In contrast, the budget for her current feature film is just under a million dollars and is being distributed by Mongrel Media. Tracey Boulton is producing, with Atom Egoyan serving as her Executive Producer. Internationally acclaimed actress Arsiné Khanjian is starring alongside Michael Riley (*Punch, Power Play*), Simon Abkarian (*Ararat, Truth About Charlie*), and Ruba's frequent star and sister Fadia Nadda. As if that were not enough to keep her busy, Ruba's upcoming projects include working on two feature scripts: *The Champagne Room*, for which she has received a Telefilm Screenwriters Assistance Grant, and *Hayat*, which has development money from Telefilm and City TV. Sarah Armenia met with Ruba to talk about her projects both past and current.

SARAH ARMENIA: Can you tell me a bit about your background?

RUBA NADDA: I studied literature at York University, but decided I couldn't make a living writing short stories. So I thought, What else can I do? I wanted to get into film, but didn't want to study for four years, so I went to NYU for two months, then came back to Toronto and started making films.

SA: Your short films have shown at festivals around the world. What do you think explains their international success?

RN: I've been thinking about that a lot, actually. I think it is because my stories are not just Canadian stories, they are universal. I think that is why they have traveled so far, because I know most shorts don't. Shorts usually go to a few festivals and then they die. Right now I have four retrospectives happening around the world. I think people like the fact that they are very human. Here, many of the shorts that are made are like mini-features, with a beginning, middle and end and character development; short filmmakers use their shorts as a calling cards for a

feature. Whereas my shorts are five minute vignettes and are very much about human relationships. I think in Europe they really appreciated that because it was refreshing. At the time I wasn't thinking about when I would direct a feature, I was just thinking about shorts.

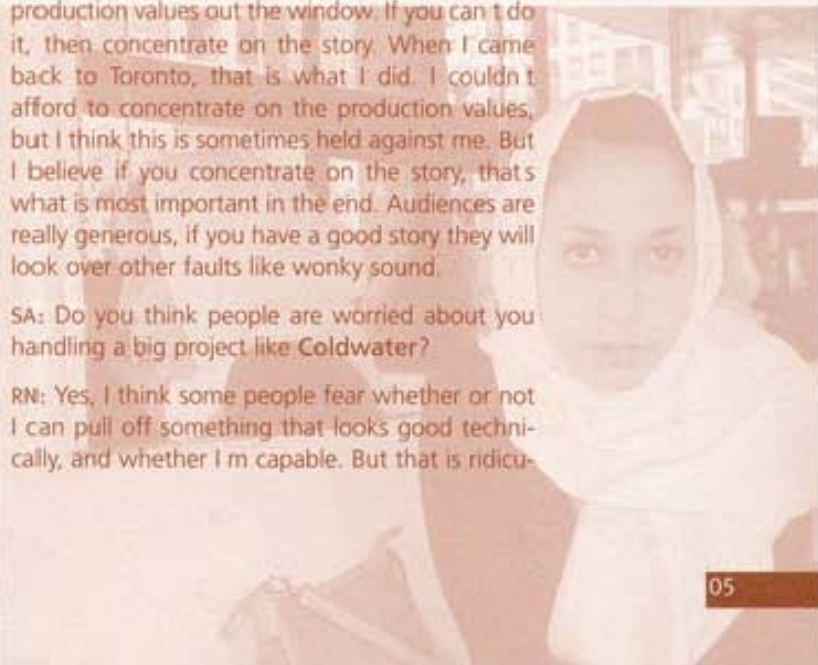
SA: Can you tell me about the making and reception of your shorts in Canada?


RN: I was taught filmmaking in the States, and one of the first things we were taught is to throw production values out the window. If you can't do it, then concentrate on the story. When I came back to Toronto, that is what I did. I couldn't afford to concentrate on the production values, but I think this is sometimes held against me. But I believe if you concentrate on the story, that's what is most important in the end. Audiences are really generous, if you have a good story they will look over other faults like wonky sound.

SA: Do you think people are worried about you handling a big project like *Coldwater*?

RN: Yes, I think some people fear whether or not I can pull off something that looks good technically, and whether I'm capable. But that is ridicu-

stills: Ruba Nadda; Laila Nadda in *Coldwater*





lous. You hire a professional crew.

SA: How does your budget influence the stories you tell? Or does it?

RN: At first it didn't, luckily enough the ideas fit into the budget. For *Do Nothing*, I only had five hundred dollars and two rolls of film, and we shot it in an afternoon on one street corner. For my latest feature, I definitely took budget into consideration.

RN: Your previous features *I Always Come to You* and *Unsettled* look at the relationships of Arab sisters. Can you talk about these films and what happened with their distribution?

SA: The problem with both films was that we shot on 16mm, but couldn't afford to blow up to 35mm. *I Always Come to You* was shot over four months on weekends and, for what it's worth, I think it looks good. For *Unsettled* I got a grant from the Canada Council, and we took a month off and shot. But with both cases they couldn't go anywhere because I didn't have a 35mm print. It's been really hard to see them sitting on the shelf, but I learned so much from making them. I would have been so nervous going into *Coldwater* if I hadn't made those two features. Realizing the films were going nowhere was a really hard choice to come to. You have to throw something against the wall, and if it sticks, it sticks, if it doesn't you have to move on. That's the hardest thing to do. To this day I look at the stills of those movies and it kills me.

SA: Can you talk about the transition from films that typically cost you five hundred dollars to your latest feature, *Coldwater*, which has a much bigger budget?

RN: After *Unsettled* I got to the point where I realized it is hard for film festivals to show features from unknown directors, films that don't have a distributor backing them. *Unsettled* ended up sitting on my shelf because I didn't have the proper backing for it. I made a promise to myself that I wouldn't do it again I couldn't spend money and time on something that wasn't going to show. I reached a crossroads in my life: I couldn't keep working full-time and making films, I was burnt out. At that same point, I received a call from Telefilm saying that they

wanted to meet me and talk. And I found out that you can get development money from Telefilm, which enables you to take time off and write your script.

I took a year off and wrote the script for *Coldwater*. I sent it to Atom Egoyan, who then came on as Executive Producer, and the doors just flew right open after that...This film has been a real learning experience. It's been hard because I'm coming from independent films that are so underground, and now it's very collaborative. It has been good but difficult. I'm excited because now I can wear my director's hat. Before when I made films, I was the production manager, caterer, art director everything.

SA: What are some of the artistic intentions behind your films?

RN: I think I'm really obsessed with identity and the way people react to each other. With my shorts I was interested in showing vignettes of people's lives. What I wanted to do was show that Arabs are exactly the same as WASPs in many respects. With *Coldwater*, what I want to do is break down the mythology [around Arab culture]. I've lived in the Middle East and I'm also Canadian, so I have both perspectives. I have to tell it right without clichés, I feel like I have a duty. One thing all my films have had in common, including *Coldwater*, is that the main characters are always outsiders. And that all relates back to my upbringing my family and I have always been outsiders, and you can see that in my films.

SA: How did the story for *Coldwater* develop?

RN: For a long time I've wanted to do a love story. I always wanted to do a story of an Arab Muslim woman who falls in love with a Canadian man and overcomes cultural boundaries with her family etc. The style I wanted wasn't like my shorts meaning grim. I realized that I had to make Toronto look beautiful. It is a dramatic romance and it is actually kind of funny. This is the first time you see this Arab culture on the big screen, so I wasn't about to make fun of it. I had to be very sensitive about what this woman was going through, and her family I felt I had to be very careful and responsible.

SA: Who do you feel responsible to?

RN: I feel responsible to my parents and myself. I'm not sure how the Arab community will take it, but I don't feel anything but love towards my culture.

SA: Are you nervous about the reception of the film?

RN: Strangely enough, no, because I am kind of content knowing that ethnic dramas are now working. You see the success of *Monsoon Wedding*, *Bollywood Hollywood*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, so many films that audiences are now interested in seeing. I think audiences have gotten tired of your standard generic film. They want to see other cultures. I am making this film for Toronto, so I hope people will like it and that they will want to see it. And I think they will. I think people will like it. It's different. When I was thinking what kind of feature I wanted to do, I kept thinking what kind of movie I want to see. I came to the realization that I didn't want to see something that was depressing, or perverse, I wanted to do something that is real and that can reach everybody, even though it is about Arab culture.

SA: Arsin e Khanjian and Michael Riley are starring in the film. How do you feel about working with established actors?

RN: Some people have asked how I'm going to direct professional actors. They are human beings as long as there is trust and communication, there is not going to be a problem, and there hasn't been so far. They don't speak a different language than my other actors. I'm not nervous; I think because I know what I'm doing. I've already made two features and I've done every aspect in a film possible; I've made fourteen films. Arsin e has been wonderful, and Michael Riley has been amazing. I have a vision I always have, so I'm not nervous. But I am nervous about reviews, because I want the film to do well. There are a lot of expectations of me. I don't want to let guerrilla filmmakers down, because I have my first big break. I don't want to disappoint Atom [Egoyan] because he has been so supportive. We have been through some really tough times, and he has been wonderful.

SA: Tracey Boulton, your producer, said the two of you have a partnership. Can you talk a bit about your relationship?

RN: Tracey is not just my producer, she's my partner in the film. That means that I don't work for her and she doesn't work for me. We work together. She has sacrificed and compromised just as much as I have on *Coldwater*. We have both spent the greater part of last year investing our time and pocketbook into making this film happen. She's been there creatively and emotionally for me. Even though we might not agree on everything, we always have the film and more specifically the story in mind. At the end of the day, both our hearts, not just mine, are involved in making this film. So often a producer is not given enough credit for a film. I've always believed in partnerships and looking towards the future. If Tracey doesn't kill me while shooting, see us working together on many more films together. Relationships are everything in this business. And at the end of the day, in my heart, I trust her.

SA: What's next for you in the following months?

RN: At the moment, I am in the midst of working on a few scripts I have in development. I am also flooded with work on *Coldwater*. We are hoping to start principal photography late in the summer, so I've already started rehearsals, meeting with my DOP to start designing the look of the film, figuring out costumes, and so on. I like to be prepared. I figure you have to be extremely organized on a low-budget film.

SA: Where would you love to show this film? Or what would you hope the next step would be for you after this film?

RN: I definitely want to show this film in festivals like Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Rotterdam, and of course at the Toronto Film Festival. I am really looking forward to having the film show in theatres here in Canada. That's going to be so exciting! The next level would be to make an epic film that cost a hundred million dollars and is set in Morocco. That would be great. That's my goal.

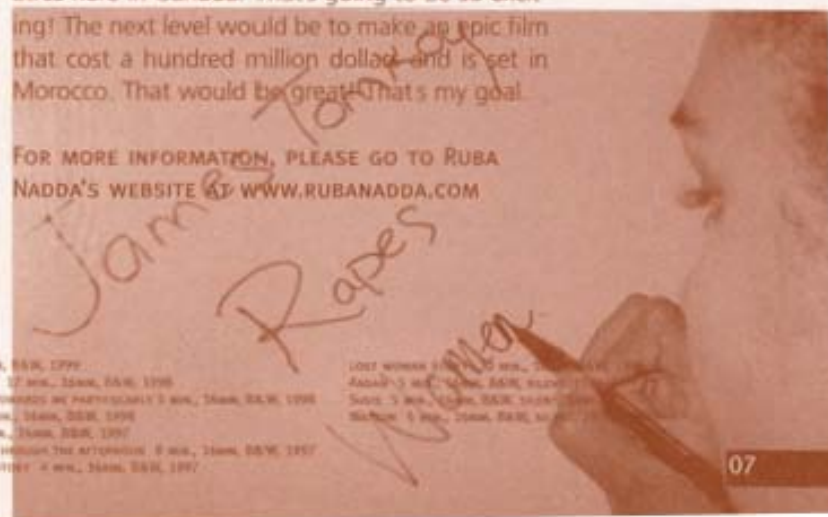
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO RUBA NADDA'S WEBSITE AT WWW.RUBANADDA.COM

FILMOGRAPHY:
UNSETTLED 30 MIN., SUPER 16MM, 2001
I ALWAYS COME TO YOU 30 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 2000
BLACK SEPTEMBER 5 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1999
BLUE TURNING GREY OVER YOU 5 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1999
I WOULD SUFFER COLD HANDS FOR YOU 3 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1999
LAILA 5 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1999

SLUT 5 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1999
BARASCUS NIGHTS 17 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1998
THE WIND BLOWS TOWARDS ME PARTICULARLY 3 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1998
SO FAR GONE 3 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1998
SO NOTHING 4 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997
WET HEAT DRIPS THROUGH THE AFTERNOON 8 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997
INTERSTATE LOVE STORY 4 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997

LOST WOMAN 10 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997
ANAD 3 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997
SUN 3 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997
BLACK 1 MIN., 16MM, B&W, 1997

stills (left to right):
Laila and Ruba on
location for *unsettled*, the wind
blows towards me
particularly; *slut*



A LONG WAY FROM THE SHIRE: MY ADVENTURES AT THE EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

By SAMUEL K. LEE

Formerly Local Heroes, the Edmonton International Film Festival has ramped up its caché by getting global. When I found out my film *How to Make Kimchi According to My Kun Umma* was going to screen there, I decided to go. It had been a while since I'd travelled, and for some reason, I thought going to Edmonton would be a nice getaway from the hellish winter this nasty city (a.k.a. Toronto) had been putting us through.

Which is how I found myself in Edmonton in the middle of March. I had visions of a prairie utopia.

EDMONTON, MARCH 12:

I get off the plane and it's minus fourteen degrees Celsius. It's not so bad, I tell myself bravely, at least it's not Toronto. As I try to put my hood on, a button snaps off. A cold wind whistles around my ears. I realize that for the rest of my stay, my hood will be completely useless to me. Damn.

I wonder who is supposed to pick me up. I see no signs, so I ask a shuttle bus driver, "Are you going to the Varscona?" (the hotel where I'd been set up). He shakes his head, no. So I hang about in the waiting area trying to fix my hood, distracting me from my anxiety. Just before I truly have an anxiety attack, a bearded man with a limo-driver's hat approaches and asks me if I'm Samuel. I've been found! He directs me to a fellow driver whose name is Ted, I think. Ted has been looking for me. Ted also has a beard (but no hat). Maybe it's all the beards, or maybe it's the cold, but things are starting to feel a little surreal as I follow him towards a shuttle bus. Then he walks past the bus, up to a stretch limo and opens the door for me. Is that my ride? Yes! I've arrived! I chortle to myself. (Okay, so it turns out that the limo was rented for Billy Boyd the actor who played Pippin in *The Lord of the Rings* and was just left over for me, but I'm not complaining.) Things are looking up.

At the hotel, there's a phone message for me. I feel so important! I am so important! It's Patty

McIntosh, the festival producer, and I'm to get up early the next day for a trip to a school where there will be an educational screening of *Kimchi*.

MARCH 13:

Korean filmmaker Park Kwang-su walks past me in the lobby (the festival is showing a retrospective of his work). I'm too shy to speak to him.

I meet two other Canadian short-filmmakers, Andrew Erin (Toronto/LA) and Chloe Leriche (Montreal); both are also having educational screenings with me. Through the miraculously sunny, plus five-degree weather, the three of us, along with Patty McIntosh, take a drive out to the Victoria Composite School. I fall in love with the place—it's just like the show *Fame* (minus Leroy). There's music in the halls, artwork everywhere, and I'm green with envy that I didn't get to go to a school like this. We screen our shorts to the television class of fourteen-year-olds and participate in a Q&A afterwards.

Later I make my way to the Princess Theatre, one of the main festival screening venues. On the way I pass historic Albert's Pancake House on Whyte Avenue, and make a mental note for tomorrow's breakfast. Mmmm, pancakes...

My film is in a program called Canadian Shorts 4. For some reason, it goes on first (although it wasn't scheduled to do so), but the curtain hasn't gone up yet, so the rising curtain obscures the first few moments.



The colours are out of whack and everything looks washed out—it's as though they made a bad dub and decided to screen that. Turns out the festival has been having problems with the projectionist. Sadly, there was nothing they could do about it (since the

still: Molly Parker
in *Marion Bridge*

bastard owned the Princess Theatre), but Kimchi was well received nonetheless and a few people commented on it during the Q & A.

In the evening I make it out to one of the gala presentations, **Marion Bridge**, which, as of this writing, is in wide release here in Toronto. It stars Molly Parker, who I get to hang out with, making me feel cool.

After **Marion Bridge**, a strange troupe of festival attendees forms and we make our way to the hotel, where we whoop it up on the sixth floor. The group includes Molly Parker; her husband Matt Bissonnette and his filmmaker partner Steve Clark (screening their feature **Looking for Leonard**); Brian Johnson from MacLean's magazine; and a bunch of young filmmakers including Corey Marr and Josh Wilder OMDC calling card recipients whose short, **You Might be the Youngest**, stars Valerie Buhagiar.

We have an impromptu screening in the hotel room, which Molly Parker dubs the Edmonton underground film festival. Chloe shows a bunch of her films, and Andrew encourages me to show mine. This is the third screening I've had in Edmonton in one day! Filmmaker Mieko Ouchi, from the short film selection committee, laughs the loudest during my short. Molly likes it and that makes me feel even cooler. I later ask her if she would consider doing a short with me, and she gives me her manager's contact information.

As the party ends, Billy Boyd (a.k.a. Pippen) emerges from the elevator looking dazed. He has forgotten which is his room, and as he makes his way down the hall he tries his key card in every door. I ask him if he needs any assistance (he is a hobbit, after all, and they sometimes need guidance). When he finally does find his room, there are some strange shenanigans afoot. I catch a glimpse of females (yes, that's plural) cavorting about inside. You're a long way off from the shire, Pippen.

MARCH 14:

I wake up hung over and hence quite eager to hit Albert's Pancake House; I've had dreams of pancakes and scrambled eggs. On Whyte Avenue, crowds of people are milling about, TV reporters are doing stand-ups, and there's a fire truck blocking off the street. Albert's Pancake House has burned down during the night. The animals

in the pet-store above have all died. The whole block is now a black, smouldering mess. Amidst all the tragedy, all I can think about is, Now where am I going to eat? I have a sausage Pobby a local delicacy at Daddeo's.

I meet up with Chloe and two Vancouver Film School students, Patrick and Anthony, for a trip to the West Edmonton Mall. It's exactly as I expect it to be cheesy and grotesque. Like the legends from the CNE, their indoor roller coaster has killed people. There's a huge water park with labyrinthine slides and a wave pool, where I witness a family having a nutritious lunch of Doritos and Coke. There's also a small pond where they house not one but two dolphins. Apparently, the dolphins have offspring and eat them.

Later, Dave Thomas (from SCTV, not the Wendy's dude) hosts a symposium and it's hilarious. It's the second symposium I attend (the other being on the various labour unions in the Alberta film industry yawn). The man who's most famous for being Doug Mackenzie is brilliant, and it's heartening to hear his stories about the many setbacks he's had and how he's overcome them. I leave feeling uplifted and convinced to soldier on.

MARCH 16:

On the final day I board the plane back to Toronto, happily ruminating on my adventure west. I drank too much and I'm still detoxifying, but despite (or perhaps because of) the surreal elements of my trip, I'm now a big fan of Edmonton. Maybe it is a prairie utopia after all. Go Oilers!



LIGHT YEARS: STAN BRAKHAGE MEMORIAL EVENTS IN TORONTO MARCH 28 TO APRIL 18, VARIOUS LOCATIONS

BY VICKY CHANEY GAGNON



Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. STAN BRAKHAGE, METAPHORS ON VISION

On March 9, 2003, the film community lost one of its most esteemed and prolific artists. Stan Brakhage, a cornerstone of the avant-garde film, created almost 400 films in his lifetime and worked tirelessly to further the expansion of film as an art form. His filmic themes encompassed epic myths, shimmering lights, an autopsy, visions of the afterlife, haunted ruins, sexual fantasies, war as a media event, the ache of childhood memories, travel, nightmares, the ritual origins of sports events, angels, and all the aspects of family life.¹ We were privileged in Toronto to have a series of memorial events that commemorated the vastness of Brakhage's oeuvre, including a marathon run of rare works and testimonials by close friends and filmmakers inspired by his work.

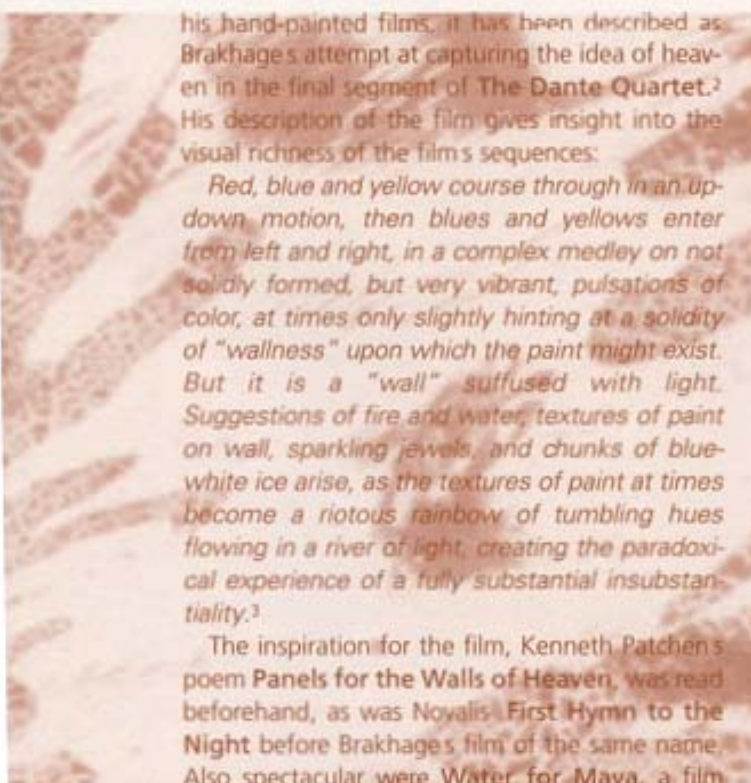
Cinematheque Ontario presented a two-part evening in celebration of Brakhage's life, with an eclectic programme of films including *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959), showing a young, exalted Brakhage experiencing the wonders of birthing; *Loud Visual Noises* (1986); *Made Manifest* (1980); the beautiful hand-painted *Coupling* (1999); the stunning light-infused *Creation* (1979); as well as an excerpt from Jim Shedden's documentary, *Brakhage* (1993). Audio tapes were played, including *The Domain of Aura* from *Faust Film: An Opera Pt.1* and *Unnamed (For Friends in General)* an excerpt from a Charles Olson poem, *In Cold Hell, In Thicket*, which was followed by Brakhage's reflections on how the poem illuminated his life. We were treated to a charismatic testimonial by Kathryn Elder, who spoke of Brakhage's love of the mystery novel and how he would (very frequently!) send her some from Colorado.

Fyerson University hosted the second part of the event, with offerings by local filmmakers encouraged by Brakhage's vision. Films by John Price, Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, Kelly Egan, Greg

Boa, Annie MacDonell, Kara Blake, Thanin Chan and Shauna MacDonald, among others, were interspersed with a few Brakhage gems, namely *Song 27* (1968-9) full of sparse landscapes in a meditative tone and the gorgeous hand-painted *The Dante Quartet* (1987). It was a moving evening with a poetry reading by Bruce Elder and a testimonial by Pruska-Oldenhof, who read from the 1955 Brakhage essay *Make Place for the Artist*. Garin Torossian played a haunting piece of Armenian music, *Ter Voghomya* (God Forgive Us), traditionally played at the end of mass, in recognition that the music's aura would have appealed to Brakhage.

The Images Festival, in conjunction with the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, presented an epic series of Brakhage films as part of its annual cinematic offerings. The screenings were programmed by Bruce Elder to parallel the stages in dying, and as a way to acknowledge that Brakhage had reached the stage of acceptance of and reconciliation with his own death. The breadth of the work was extraordinary and touched upon many phases of Brakhage's development as a filmmaker from the early psychodramas to the lyrical and mythopoetic genres, and finally to the hand-painted works. Alongside the Brakhage classics *Dog Star Man* (1964), *Anticipation of the Night* (1958), *The Way to Shadow Garden* (1955) and *Scenes from Under Childhood Pt. 1* (1967), there were some rarities here such as the graceful hand-painted *Panels for the Walls of Heaven* (2002), which was shown in tandem with the Vancouver Island Trilogy: *A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea*, *The Mammals of Victoria* (1991), and *The God of Day Had Gone Down Upon Him* (2000). Brakhage viewed *Panels* as a continuation of this photographic trilogy, so it was superb to see the breathtaking film as he intended. The longest of

still: *Mothlight*
(1963) by Stan
Brakhage



his hand-painted films, it has been described as Brakhage's attempt at capturing the idea of heaven in the final segment of *The Dante Quartet*.² His description of the film gives insight into the visual richness of the film's sequences:

*Red, blue and yellow course through in an up-down motion, then blues and yellows enter from left and right, in a complex medley on not solidly formed, but very vibrant, pulsations of color, at times only slightly hinting at a solidity of "wallness" upon which the paint might exist. But it is a "wall" suffused with light. Suggestions of fire and water, textures of paint on wall, sparkling jewels, and chunks of blue-white ice arise, as the textures of paint at times become a riotous rainbow of tumbling hues flowing in a river of light, creating the paradoxical experience of a fully substantial insubstantiality.*³

The inspiration for the film, Kenneth Patchen's poem *Panels for the Walls of Heaven*, was read beforehand, as was Novalis' *First Hymn to the Night* before Brakhage's film of the same name. Also spectacular were *Water for Maya*, a film painted in 2000 in honour of Maya Deren's intimate relationship to the sea, and *Unconscious London Strata* (1981), a dark study of Westminster Abbey.


Films in which Brakhage worked closely with sound were also featured, such as *I... Dreaming* (1988) (soon to be released on the Criterion Anthology of Brakhage films) an ethereal study of light, with images of a contemplative Brakhage staring far off into the distance. Joel Heartling's sound collage of scratchy vinyl recordings of mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani (singing the 19th century songs of Stephen Foster) created a swelling emotional experience that was at once delicate and moody. This was followed by *Boulder Blues and Pearls and...* (1992), with a soundscape by Rick Corrigan that Brakhage used to accentuate the formalism of this abstract film.

A highlight of the screenings was *23rd Psalm Branch* (1967), Brakhage's response to the war in Vietnam, which was rendered appropriately intimate by the small image size of the regular 8 projection. Part of the larger thirty-one part *Song Cycle* Brakhage made in the 1960s when his 16mm film equipment was stolen from his car in New York City, *23rd Psalm Branch* is the longest

of the cycle at over 60 minutes, and is largely considered his most far-reaching use of 8mm. Part I is a study of war, while the second part is a searching into the sources of Part I. Also worth mention is the *Jesus Trilogy and Coda* (2001), which Brakhage presented in person a few years back in Toronto. This hand-painted abstract trilogy, with its rich palette hinting of blood and flesh, draws inspiration from the Passions and concludes with a meditation on death that is even more moving in the wake of his recent passing.

Stan Brakhage's death is an immense loss, the end of an era. To quote Jonas Mekas and judging by the intimacy of the posts on *Frameworks* in the weeks following his death, the force of nature that was Brakhage will be missed dearly by many. In a classic Brakhage gesture, he left us with the beginning of yet another film, *The Chinese Series*, composed of 35mm black leader scratched via fingernails from his bed in the final days of his life. The film was to end wherever he did and yet, his presence cannot really end, for each viewing of a Brakhage film only serves to renew the immeasurable potency of art again and again...

stills: *Purgation* (from *The Dante Quartet*) (1987), by Stan Brakhage (under text and far right); *Mothlight*



MANY THANKS TO PHIL SOLOMON FOR ASSISTING ME WITH SEVERAL BRAKHAGE MUSIC CREDITS AND TO R. BRUCE ELDER FOR INSIGHT.

1. Siney, P. Adams. *Jusqu'à son dernier souffle*. *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 578 (April 2003): 50-1.
2. Ciccone, Patrick. *God's Vision: The Last Films of Stan Brakhage*. *Columbia Daily Spectator* (April 11, 2003): 3. *ibid*.

IMAGES 2003: A CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENT IMAGEMAKING

BY JULIANA SARAGOSA

The Images Festival's 16th year (April 10 to 19) was filled with films, videos and installations from Canadian and international artists. Each year, Images celebrates independent media art for ten days. The festival takes submissions through an open call, as well as curating programs that relate to current events, post-modern culture, art, politics and society. The calibre of the work is always very high. As a festival of time-based artwork, don't expect any Hollywood stars although quite a few local art stars get their chance to shine! There was a lot to see at Images this year, and unfortunately I didn't have time to see everything. That would have been impossible, regardless, because some events were scheduled at the same time as others. It was hard to decide what to skip, and a few times I think I made the wrong decision. I chose to see Bill Morrison's *Decasia* instead of going to the Fastwrrms event *Shagbat* at the Paul Petro Gallery. *Decasia* is a film made entirely from decomposed found footage, set to an ear-wrenching musical composition. The film images themselves are very beautiful, but the sound is an unbearably screechy build to nothingness. Not for those with sensitive ears!! The *Shagbat* event sounded like a lot of fun full of interesting things like tarot readings and a ritual in the basement that was recorded on a live feed up in the kitchen.

I think I made the right choice in going to the *Modified 8* opening reception instead of the program *Sorting the Evidence*. Although I didn't hear any reports on that program, the *Modified 8* opening was something not to be missed! It featured two live performances: 10 Super 8 projections. Mary-Teresa Lawlor screened her beautiful underwater light reflections with live violin accompaniment. It was magically enticing. And later, Peggy-Anne Berton told stories as she manually adjusted the speed of her home movies, with a live soundtrack by DJ Richard Vermeulen. Berton creates a sense of nostalgia reminiscent of campfire storytelling, while at the same time exploring the idea of the home movie as a vehicle for one's own personal stardom. She does regular screenings at the Cameron House if you'd like to see her in performance.

Other programs that incorporated live elements included *Negativland* and the closing night show, *Hop-Fu*. In *Negativland*, Mark Hosler gave a lecture on *Creative Media*

Resistance, showing clips from *Negativland*'s music videos and playing samples of their music. Culture jammers *Negativland* attempt to infiltrate the media through any means possible by creating their collage works of music from media sources, making commercials and playing pranks on newspaper journalists. They take an anti-corporate stance in appropriating media, and don't let anyone get in their way (even U2). *Hop-Fu* was a fun way to end the festival, with DJs OX and Excess spinning and scratching to the kung fu movie *The Prodigal Son*. They blend the two genres of hip-hop and kung fu perfectly. Although not a huge fan of kung fu movies, I found this presentation interesting and exciting. I could practically feel the punches!

The student programs, *F is for Film* and *V is for Video*, were stronger this year than they have been for the last few. It was nice to see the film program move beyond film school narrative and feature some more experimental work. Highlights include Ga lle Denis' *Fish Never Sleep*, a digital animation of an insomniac who prepares sushi; and Mamiko Shitoris' *Fireworks*, a hand-made Super 8 film that emphasizes the gorgeous grain of the medium. Video highlights include Andrew Palkovic's *Hanging From Cliffs for an Hour* an honest suburban snapshot of a son trying to talk with his somnambulant mother and Jillian Lockes' *Catchstatic*, a beautifully haunting piece made from early home video.

Harun Farocki, the featured artist this year, showed three politically powerful movies. *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* is an examination of the gaze and its effect on the World War II Holocaust. He looks at how photos were gathered by the U.S. airforce what they saw, and, more importantly, what they didn't see. *How to Live in the German Federal Republic* is a collage of bizarre footage ranging from birth instructional videos to strip club rehearsals and other training videos from German TV. It is a fascinating portrayal of the effects of market-culture on everyday life.

My two favourite programs of shorts were *You're Soaking in It!* and *Seven Circles of Hell*. The latter was a late-night screening of horrific works. *Hollywood Inferno (Episode One)* by Laura Parnes is a suburban noir set in hell. A teenage girl meets a screenwriter, and they make a plot. Presented in split screen, we see their sub-



conscious devilry at work. Inspired by the work of Genesis P-Orridge, Parnes presents us with a brilliant taboo-breaking video. **The Provider** by Matt Smith also confronts taboos. A man provides his children with brain-like food that he harvests from hairy scrotums hanging from the ceiling of a remote house inhabited by mute old women a truly bizarre look at survival in a post-apocalyptic world. Not for the squeamish! The topper for the night (ironically, Good Friday) was Martha Colburn's **Skellehellavision**. Hand-manipulated porn footage turns into an animated collage film with cocks as crosses a brutally honest take on how Christianity affects pornography. The early screening that night was **GUH Meets M l i s**, which included some bizarre devilish films by Wrik Mead (**Grotesque**) and Shawn Atkins (**The Travelling Eye of the Blue Cat**). The most rebelliously fun Good Friday I've spent in long time.

You're Soaking in It! was an excellent program of shorts that push the boundaries of movie-making. **Dacari and Donell's Demo Tape** by Jonnie Ross uses subtle video effects to create a humorous home demo video for two little budding stars. Ross' impressive techniques make it look as if the video is degrading slowly before our eyes. **I Am a Boyband** takes Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay further along in his series of music videos featuring himself. He duplicates himself times four to create an entire boyband, complete with choreography and backup vocals. What a talented boy! This program contained two pieces by prominent LIFT members Jeff Sterne and Francisca Duran. Jeff's piece **Bear Girl, Dog Boy** is a semi-autobiographical cut-out animation about how a dog and a bear find true love. Duran's **She Was So Young Back Then** isolates one scene from **Fast Times at Ridgemount High** in order to explore sexuality in teen movies. She innovatively uses the TV scan lines from filming off a monitor to emphasize the blow job action.

Unfortunately, the **Minutes Movies** screening didn't live up to its hype. The program featured 23 new pieces by local and Canadian artists, each a minute long. It opened with three videos on the theme of the miniature. One of them, **Drum Solo**, was cute for about one minute. Liliana Porter videotapes wind-up figurines and creates short musical segments with them. After the first few, we get the point 19 minutes of cute was enough to make me cringe with torture. The minute

movies themselves were a mixed bag it's a difficult task to create meaning and capture attention in one minute. Some of the most successful were Jowita Kepa's abstract video painting **I** and Jason Ebanks and Ingrid Veninger's **Up**, which manages to tell an emotive story in just one minute and look beautiful. **The Green Swell** by Thea Faulds is very sweet, the punk production quality adding just the right touch to an endearing story about a girl who covers her house in a giant green jello to cheer everyone up. Other strong pieces were LIFT members Gail Mentlik's **One Minute at the Consulate**, John Price's **Farewell**, and Francisca Duran's **Retrato Oficial**.

The installations have been a part of Images for three years, and they still seem to take a back seat to the screenings. Attendance at openings was low, and the catalogue information about them was hard to understand. They seem to be a support to the film and video screenings, rather than a part of the festival on their own. The few works that stood out this year were the **Modified 8** exhibit at the Harbourfront Centre and **The Rules of the Game** by Gustavo Artigas. Artigas confronts the idea of shared space by putting a basketball game and a soccer match on the same court. Debra Solomon's **Artist-Astronaut** was also interesting, but possibly only for those of us who want to be astronauts. I'm glad I made it for the debriefing, where everyone shared their ideas of what they would create as artists in space. (It was also very informative about the potential for artists to become astronauts. There is one!).

Video was very prevalent at the festival; I fear that film production seems to be slowly disappearing as people discover home editing software. We need to make more films! The Super 8 exhibit was reassuring, but it seems like it's going to be an ever growing struggle for those of us who continue to work in celluloid. It was interesting to see some of the video work becoming more formalist in its experimentation, such as Jeremy Bailey's **8.7 MB**, which explores compression in video editing. The **Modified 8** event, together with the other expanded cinema events such as **Negativland**, **GUH Meets M l i s** and **Hop-Fu**, were the most exciting programs of the festival. I'm happy to see a move towards more performative events at Images perhaps next year there will be some performance art too, which would be very cool.

stills: **Cats Amor**
by Martha
Colburn (facing),
Decasia by Bill
Morrison (top),
**Images of the
World** by Harun
Farocki (bottom)

THE SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR NEXT YEAR'S FESTIVAL ARE SEPTEMBER 19 FOR INSTALLATION WORK AND NOVEMBER 7 FOR FILM AND VIDEO. VISIT WWW.IMAGESFESTIVAL.COM FOR ENTRY FORMS.

HOT DOCS: CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE FILM LOVER'S SOUL

BY CAMERON A. STRAUGHAN

No, **Hot Docs** is not a B-movie you'd find in the adult section right next to **Naughty Nurses**. However, a documentary a day can help keep the doctor away. **Hot Docs** is the ideal comfort food for those who are tired of mainstream Hollywood trash, and there must be a lot of ailing people out there. In the last three years, attendance at the festival has doubled. Celebrating their tenth year, the **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival** (April 25 to May 4) featured some fine films.

Live Forever (John Dower, UK) drew the largest crowd of anything else I attended. It is an entertaining, humorous look at the rise of Brit Pop in the mid-90s. The film focuses on Oasis, Blur, and Pulp, with of course Noel Gallagher providing the bulk of the memorable quotes and humorous asides. Although Suede are suspiciously absent, the combination of thorough research, great interviews, concert footage and video clips is a crowd-pleaser.

7th Heaven (Steffan Strandberg, Norway) is by far the most technically accomplished and beautifully filmed documentary I saw. It combines interviews with reenactments, film with digital video, and experimentation with arty dream sequences. An intimate portrait of 75-year-old artist Lars Kristian, who insists that he is a 25-year-old girl named Tatjana, it proved to be much more than just a freak show at the subject's expense. Instead, it moves from droll humour to deep introspection as it covers topics like acceptance, belief, faith, life after death, and the source of artistic expression. The only flaw is that, aside from a few stills showing that Kristian was a cross-dresser since his early teens, we have no idea why he is the way he is. But the omission is understandable, as the focus of the film is on the artist's individuality and his sources of inspiration. For Kristian, **7th Heaven** is acceptance, and his search for it is both moving and humorous.

Rockets Redglare! (Luis Fernandez de la Reguera, USA) is a bare-bones documentary about cult actor Rockets Redglare, who appeared in such films as **Down By Law**, **Mystery Train**, and **Talk Radio**. Shot on DV, with harsh lighting and rough sound, it proves that you don't need a lot of money to make a thoroughly engaging


documentary you just need an interesting subject. Rockets Redglare proves to be just that. A consummate storyteller, his anecdotes and stories often cracked up the audience. During one particularly funny scene, the camera man laughed so hard during filming that you can see the camera shaking. While some of Rockets' more X-rated memories caused some audience members to leave, his tragic story is compelling. During some of his recollections, you could hear a pin drop in the theatre. The film is assisted by excellent interviews with Jim Jarmusch and Steve Buscemi, both of whom worked with Rockets. In the end, it is a sad, heart-wrenching, and oddly moving portrait of a complex, self-destructive man who could have been a great actor.

Two interesting but flawed films were **Bruno S. Estrangement Is Death** and **Wanted**. Like **7th Heaven**, **Bruno S.** (Miron Zownir, Germany) focuses on a true eccentric. Bruno's performance in Werner Herzog's classic **The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser** elevated him from psychiatric patient to international movie star. The film looks at his return to obscurity and poverty. However, unlike **7th Heaven**, there are exploitative elements. Many scenes only serve to demonstrate how out there Bruno was, and the inclusion of Bruno taking a bath is truly questionable. In addition, he is interviewed by a bizarre, androgynous fellow who resembles Iggy Pop. Despite these problems, the documentary is bold and unwavering. The production was wracked with legal and crew problems, and no one was interested in financing a film about a has-been German actor. Interestingly, Werner Herzog, upon viewing the film, wished he had granted an interview to Zownir.

Wanted (Kim Hopkins, UK) focuses on the unsolved murders of eight Sioux Indians on a reservation in the badlands of South Dakota. The film was pitched three years ago at **Hot Docs** (proving that their programs work!). With director Kim Hopkins appearing within the film as an investigative journalist, the film becomes an interesting combination of **Cops**, **The Thin Blue Line**, **Thunderheart**, and **Lone Star**. Unfortunately, the **Cops**-like footage goes on for too long, and while the two-films-in-one structure a murder



still: Steffan Strandberg's **7th Heaven**



mystery and a slice of reservation life may be a selling point, I found it distracting. I wished instead that the murder mystery had been the focus. Like many films at the festival, **Wanted** combines film and DV and was edited digitally. Split screen is used a lot, so much so that the technique becomes monotonous and intrusive.

The overuse of digital effects marred other films at the festival. **EVO** (Oliver Hockenhull, Canada) is billed as a state-of-the-art digital essay reflecting on the history and future of evolutionary theory, from Darwin to famed naturalist Stephen J. Gould. Chock full of needless, excessive digital effects and incomprehensible robotic voices, the film completely alienated the majority of the audience and failed to give any real insight into evolution. During the Q&A period, the audience let Hockenhull know exactly how they felt. Much to my surprise, Hockenhull became incredibly defensive and hostile towards the audience. At one point, he suggested that if people wanted to learn about evolution they should watch Discovery Channel. He also challenged disappointed audience members to make their own film about evolution(!). The audience responded by telling Hockenhull not to talk down to them. One audience member put it best if the film

was supposed to be truly experimental, then make it just that and go for the gusto.

This brings me to a general observation about many of the works screened at Hot Docs. I think that documentary filmmakers now have too many digital effects and tricks at their finger tips, and don't know how to use them with restraint. I found most of these toys simply distracting. A good example would be the talking head shots in **Wanted**, **Echelon**, **The Secret Power**, and **EVO**. Normally, an interesting subject, a well-done interview, and good B-roll will make a documentary work. However, many filmmakers are spicing up their talking head shots with filters, split screens, distortions, and many other distractions. This only diminishes the power of what the interview subject has to say. Perhaps this is a sign that ADD, currently infecting everything from video games to commercials to big-budget action films, is slowly creeping into documentary films. I only hope that once the novelty of these digital effects wears off, documentary makers will learn to trust their subjects, and their audiences, again.

THE PARADISE INSTITUTE: ILLUSION OF CINEMA? EXHIBITION AT THE POWER PLANT, FALL 2002

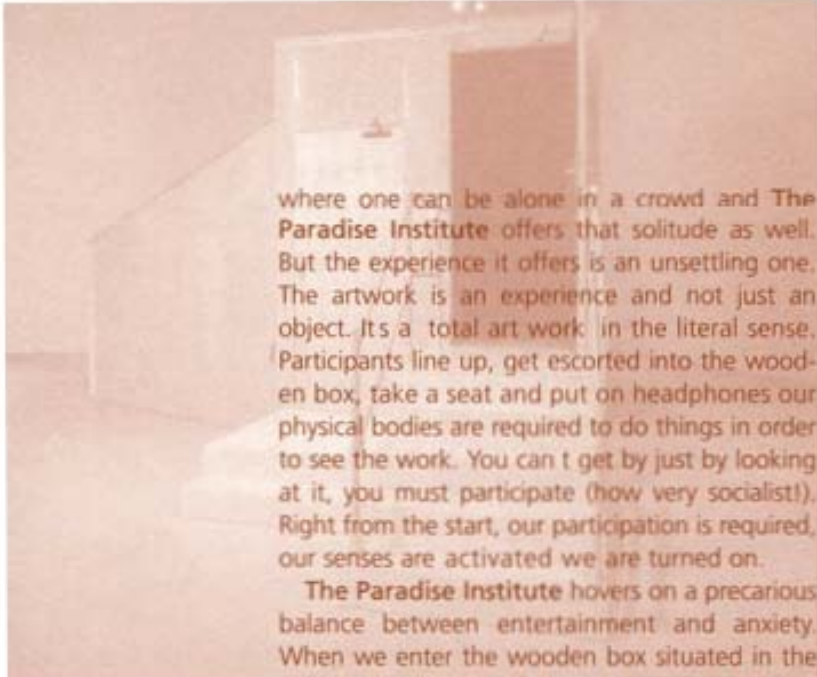
BY JULIANA SARAGOSA

One of the last things one would expect to find in a contemporary art gallery or museum is a movie theatre. The cinema is a place where people go to be entertained, to let the day-to-day bustle fade away and get absorbed by a story that takes them away from reality. An art gallery, on the other hand, makes us aware of the world, it educates us, makes us think and question ourselves and the world. We act differently in a gallery setting, our voices get hushed, we concentrate on the work before us and we bring all of our previous experiences to what we see. In both settings, the movie theatre and the gallery, we are absorbed by what we see and hear, our senses are stimulated, encompassing us and making us think beyond our current situation.

What Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller do

with **The Paradise Institute** is much different. They make us aware of ourselves, we become self-conscious of our actions and we become aware of where we are. It is similar to what John Cage and the other Fluxus artists were doing in the 70s and 80s, but instead of boring us with silence and long, repetitive performances, they entertain us with short fragments of sound and picture. It's like Fluxus for the MTV generation.

The Power Plant is a much more subdued, institutional setting than its original exhibition at the 2001 Venice Biennale, giving a somewhat clinical experience of the work more of the institute, less of the paradise. In a more crowded setting like the Biennale, I think it would feel more like a retreat from the hordes of people into a paradise of safety and security. A movie theatre is a place



where one can be alone in a crowd and **The Paradise Institute** offers that solitude as well. But the experience it offers is an unsettling one. The artwork is an experience and not just an object. It's a total art work in the literal sense. Participants line up, get escorted into the wooden box, take a seat and put on headphones our physical bodies are required to do things in order to see the work. You can't get by just by looking at it, you must participate (how very socialist!). Right from the start, our participation is required, our senses are activated we are turned on.

The Paradise Institute hovers on a precarious balance between entertainment and anxiety. When we enter the wooden box situated in the gallery, the illusion of cinema is before us, but because we can't immerse ourselves in a narrative that is outside of ourselves, we become anxious and self-conscious. We have taken a trip outside of the gallery setting into another dimension. But, it's not the cinema, it's an imitation. The theatre appears huge, but we are aware of how tiny and intimate it really is. The illusion doesn't fool us, because illusion has been stripped away. Through the headphones, we hear theatre sounds the audience chit-chatting and munching popcorn. Then the movie begins, with audience noise still beside us. The binaural microphones that Cardiff and Miller use to record the audio give something of a surround sound effect, with sound coming from different angles on the stereo head-sets. The video's story is disjointed, it creates no narrative that we can follow. The fragments of the story refuse us entry into that world. A real film would let us into the characters' psyches, we become part of the story. [T]he illusion of reality is only achieved by the relatively large distortions of actuality. (Robert Arn, artscanada).

The movie that **The Paradise Institute** exhibits pushes us away from the imaginary world of narrative and keeps us in reality. The artists ignore cinematic conventions we are presented with flawed performances by the actors (both on-screen and off), visual clichés like a burning barn, and amateur sound techniques. While sound editors of film incorporate layers and layers of sound effects to create an illusion of reality, Cardiff and Miller use only their field recordings which are full of loud wooden floor creaks and muffled dialogue. The use of video (as opposed to film), the lack of lighting technique, and the cheap special

effects prevent the hypnosis that usually occurs when lured into a highly stylized movie. We're made aware of the flaws. The mini-cinema of **The Paradise Institute** is a tantalizing and seductive object that soothes and frustrates at the same time we want there to be a movie inside that we can escape to, but it's not there. We're left empty as the experience ends and we're asked to leave.

In the end, **The Paradise Institute** is an artwork about Cinema the pleasure of watching movies, sitting in a theatre with people you don't know and escaping to an unknown world. The terms paradise and institute both refer to cinema; cinema is a paradise and an institute. They are very loaded terms, with a multitude of meanings. They bring to mind everything from the big business of Hollywood to the very personal experience of watching a movie. The fragments of the story that we see are signifiers for the stories that have been shown throughout the history of the movies.

Movies are full of images that we've seen a million times before, but yet we go back time and time again to watch the same stories unfold on the same screen, the same way. Cardiff and Miller play on this by mocking it. Everything is compressed and miniaturized; the movie is only ten minutes long. Combined with the pseudo-surround sound and the bad acting, it's pure camp. This cheap imitation of a movie theatre experience is a subtle mockery of the grandiose monstrosities of the movie theatres that we go to today. It's so mini that it's subversive. It turns the big business of movies, especially movie distribution, on its head. Movie theatres are all spectacle, but we go to forget our surroundings. **The Paradise Institute** is a simple wooden box that makes us aware of our surroundings. The story fragments are snapshots of memories making us nostalgic. On the edge of a new millennium, Cardiff and Miller create a work that anticipates the end of the movie-going experience as we know it, and ushers in a new era of looking at movies and looking at ourselves watching movies. In **The Paradise Institute**, we are citizens of a future world taking a theme park ride that shows us what we used to be.

SARAH ARMENIA has just started production on *Inhaled*, a 5-minute short about a young woman who inflicts bodily harm when her life spirals out of control. She is also in pre-production on *Le Maschere di mio Papa* (*The Masks of My Father*), a 10-minute short about a young Italian man who discovers a chest full of theatre masks his father once owned.

MALCOLM ROGGE is currently working on *MARIKA!*, an adaptation of a novel that he has been working on for 2 1/2 years. The feature-length script is being worked on with Toronto-based actors Sarah Couture-McPhail (Djun & Marijke), Micheline Marchildon (Inertia), Megan Dunlop (Parsley Days) and others, and will be presented at the next LIFT Out Loud in July.

CHRISTINE WHITLOCK is in pre-production for two 90-minute projects to shoot next year: *Murder on a Tall Ship* is being adapted from a play she wrote, directed and produced on a Tall Ship on June 23, 2001. *White Teeth*, a low-budget horror, has been cast to start shooting in January 2004. For information, contact Christine at women.who.excel@twcn.org.

TONY ARNOLD has almost finished shooting *Blue Moon*, a 16mm short about a guy who finds a discarded sex doll on a beach and what happens during a full moon.

MW MARTIN QUESHI is in post-production on his second short fiction, *Alien Insemination*, is a 10-minute silent drama about a black lesbian virgin seduced by an alien who is the father of Christ.

JONATHAN DOWLER is in post-production on *Terminal*, a 20-minute drama set in a bus terminal that tells the tale of a nurse, her lover, a lowlife, his friend, a player, his target, a mother, her son...and a guy who knows people like he knows coffee. For more info visit www.bolttomend.org.

CHARLES KASSATLY is in post-production on two documentaries which he directed and produced. *The Paradox* is about an eight-year-old Muslim boy and his grandmother, taking care of a rundown Jewish cemetery/Synagogue in downtown Beirut, Lebanon. *Halewtak ya lbnan (To Your Beauty, Lebanon)* is the story of twelve talented artists residing in Beirut, Lebanon.

PAULETTE PHILLIPS is working on a series of film installations titled *The Secret Life of Criminals*. Several new pieces will be shot on film this spring and summer. The series includes: *The Floating House* (16mm on DVD, 2002); *Ecstasy* (2-channel digital video, 2001); *It's about how people judge appearance* (16mm on DVD, 2001); and *Secret Life* (digital video, 2000). The work has shown at Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art (London, England), the Turin Film Festival and Wandelhalles Arsenal/Armoury, K. In Germany.

SU RYNARD's latest project is *Bug Girl* (6 min, 16mm & video), an ecological fable about a ten-year-old girl and her search for her lost cat. When she accidentally

swallows a bee, her journey transforms into a visual tumble through nature, biology, and consciousness.

ON THE SCREEN

Congratulations to STEPHANIE MORGENSTERN, whose film *Remembrance* (directed and starring Stephanie, produced by Paula Fleck, DOPed by Mark Morgenstern) was nominated for a Genie award in the category of Best Live Action Short!

ALEXI MANIS *Luminous* (4 min, 16mm 2001) and IZABELLA PRUSKA-OLDENHOF'S *Song of the Firefly* (5 min, 35mm 2002) screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival in January.

At *Inside Out in May*: JULIANA SARAGOSA, locks part 2: *dread execution!*; KEITH COLE, *I Think I'm Coming Down with Something*; SCOTT BERRY, *fagtactics*; ALLYSON MITCHELL and LEX VAUGHN, *Pink Eyed Pet*; ANNE BORDEN and GAIL MENTLUK, *Rub*.

At the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival in June: CHRISTINA ZEIDLER, *ssssssssss*; CAROLYN WONG, *Yin Yin /Jade Love*; IZABELLA PRUSKA-OLDENHOF, *Song of the Firefly*; SAMUEL K. LEE, *How to Make Kimchi According to My Kun-Umma*; and RYAN FELLOWAN, *Folk*.

Recent and upcoming screenings for ANNE BORDEN and GAIL MENTLUK's *Rub* (1.5 min. Super 8 b&w, 2002) include: *London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival*; *Miami Lesbian and Gay Film Festival*; *Pink Screens, Brussels*; *Belgium*; *Freiburg Lesbian Film Festival*, Germany; and *Outfest*, Los Angeles Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

GAIL MENTLUK recently completed *One Minute at The Consulate* (1 min, 16mm silent 2003) for the Images Festival's Minute Movies program in April, with production support from LIFT. The film is an exploration of absence and presence and the passage of time.

TARA SAMUEL'S *Brooklyn Love* (3.5 min, video 2002) premiered at the Light Plays Tricks Film Festival in Kingston, Ontario in May. Written, directed and starring Tara and edited by MATT FLÜGGER WOLFE, *Brooklyn Love* is a secret look at the Flatbush mating dance. Tara and Busterhouse Productions have also recently produced *Rachels Cut* (6.5 min, video 2002) based on a short story by Jenna King and *T n A* (3.5 min, video 2002), about existential graffiti and the girls who swing it (directed by Tara and written, shot and edited by Matt Wolfe).

DANIEL COCKBURN curated a program of shorts for the Available Light Screening Collective in Ottawa. The program, titled *Cinema Na vet*, is a selection of transmissions from... imagemakers itching to give you guided tours through their personal realms of formalism, minimalism, emotionalism, and imagination, including CHRIS GEHMAN and ROBERTO ARIGANELLO'S animation *Contrafacta*.

On June 10 The Loop Collective presented a screen-



still: Marikal by Malcolm Rogge; Bug Girl by Su Rynard

ing of experimental shorts as part of a multi-media exhibition *Patching History: The Other Strings of Women's Lap Craft*, which included works by LIFT members CHRISTINA BATTLE, ELIDA SCHOGT, and CHRISTINA ZEIDLER.

CAROLYN WONG's short film *Yin Yin/Jade Love* was awarded the Outstanding Canadian Short Film Award at this year's Reel World Film Festival in Toronto, and screened at Innis Town Hall as part of Asian Heritage Month. In June it showed at the 26th Asian American International Film Festival in New York, and will be part of the festival's touring program.

Madd Dog: A Documentary, produced and directed by CHERALYNN BRIGHTON, is the story of one of the voiceless and homeless that we step over every day on our path to work. *MADD DOG* shares his take on the meaning of life, and how to really enjoy bubble baths. The film premiered at Bloor Cinema in May as part of *Pre / View*, a festival for some of Toronto's newest filmmakers. For more information: homepage.mac.com/cheralynn.brighton/.

Giving Hamilton a LIFT: On May 27 The Staircase Theatre in Hamilton hosted a screening and artist talk organized by NATHAN FLEET, which featured works by LIFTers NATHAN FLEET, TIM DASHWOOD, CHARLES KASSATLY and STEFAN CHIARANTANO.

MICHAEL APPLETON recently completed *Callback*. Starring MARA BARTOLUCCI, KATE YORGA, and GUIDO SILVA, the short is about women seeking revenge on men behaving badly. For more information and to see the trailer visit www.mfilmpictures.com.

Produced at a residency in Banff, CHRISTINA ZEIDLER's *Bulk Bin* is a time-based web project that plays with the theme *Sweet Consumption*. Christina made a new video every weekday from April 28 — May 2 and broadcast the results at bulkbin.banff.org. The project is available as a CD-ROM by contacting the artist at muddyknuckles@hotmail.com.

VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD

THANKS TO ALL THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE HELPED OUT RECENTLY:

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LIFT'S NEWEST MEMBERS

(FROM MARCH 1 — MAY 23, 2003)

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LIFTNEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Some of you have noticed the extraordinary amount of change that has occurred in the neighbourhood surrounding LIFT. The Irwin Toy Factory will soon be converted to fashionable condos; a supermarket and Canadian Tire store are slated for completion within the next few months in the open space behind LIFT; and a new road will be built in the laneway on the north side of our building. The changes, however, are not limited to just the exterior of LIFT. We have begun the process of redesigning our facilities that we believe will improve the quality of your film projects.

We have completely renovated the Pro Tools suite to include an ADR room, rearranged the suite to improve the sound mixing potential of the room, and created a machine room that will contain the sound components that produce that annoying hum that sound mixers like to complain about. Drop by and check out the Pro Tools suite when you get a chance. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the planning and construction of the new room. It was built by LIFT members!

We have started the process of converting the optical printer in the animation room to the Oxberry 35mm camera. This will allow members to blow up their films to 35mm from regular 8, Super 8, 16mm and Super 16mm. 35mm has always been considered too expensive for do-it-yourself filmmakers, yet it is still the best visual film format and it is universally accepted throughout the world. LIFT now has the tools available to either create a 35mm film or to finish on 35mm. The goal at LIFT is to give our members the option to employ any film format that they desire to fulfill their creative vision.

In keeping with our goal of making all film formats available to our members, we look forward this fall to resurrecting regular 8 filmmaking. This long-forgotten film format predates Super 8 and was extremely popular in the first half of the 20th century. We have some great cameras and some out-of-date R-8 Kodachrome film that still looks terrific. Keep an eye out for more details about the One Take Regular 8 Film Festival in the next issue of our lovely newsletter.

Times are certainly changing in the neighbourhood, but film will always live on at LIFT. Shine it on,

ROBERTO ARIGANELLO

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

Hello LIFT members! The Annual General Meeting has come again. The AGM is a meeting where all Full and Associate members are encouraged to come and participate in the decision-making of the organization. This is the one time where you get to vote on the recommendations that the board has made throughout the year. It's important for you to come to get your voice

heard every vote counts. It's also a good opportunity to meet the members of the board of directors and ask questions. We will present our report of the year and vote for new board members there are four positions open this year. All Full and Associate members are eligible to run. If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact either Roberto or myself. It's a two-year commitment and comes with duties and responsibilities. It's a rewarding way to contribute to LIFT and it can be fun sometimes too!

This year was full of changes and lots of hard work. We've been trying to develop the board and move towards more self-sufficiency over the past few years. This year we got the help of a consultant, Judy Wolfe, to help put us on track and to sort out the goals and the future direction of LIFT. We would like to encourage more filmmaking as digital video and home editing grow in popularity. Part of this initiative was the hiring of a new Executive Director, Roberto Ariganello who's been instrumental in the growth of our workshops. We're going to place an emphasis on the art of filmmaking with more hands-on courses and events such as the \$99 Film Festival, which encourage the creation of more films. This is an exciting time for LIFT to grow as we define ourselves in a digital world.

I hope to see you all at the AGM on Wednesday, July 30 at LIFT.

JULIE SARAGOSA, CHAIR

MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

It's great to be back at LIFT as your new membership coordinator. I know that the co-op has been through many changes in recent months and I am honoured to be a part of its growth and new future. Don't be shy, drop by the office to see what's new. I look forward to seeing some old faces and meeting new ones.

RENATA MOHAMED

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIFT OUT LOUD

Script Readings at LIFT at 37 Hanna Ave., Suite 301 in the mezzanine. LIFT's popular new script-reading nights give filmmakers a chance to test-run their scripts, and actors a chance to hone their chops. (Contact liftout-loud@hotmail.com for more info.)

Thursday, July 3, 7:00pm

LIFT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, July 30, 7:00pm at 37 Hanna Ave., Suite 301 in the mezzanine. LIFT Full and Associate members are encouraged to attend and vote.

WARD'S ISLAND PICNIC AND SCREENING

Saturday, August 9, 2:00pm on... at the Ward's Island Club House (100 yards straight off the Ward's Island docks). All are welcome to join us! During the day, we'll be grilling food and serving suds. When the sun sets, the projector rolls for a screening of LIFT members' films!

SHINE IT ON: 10TH ANNUAL SALON DES REFUSÉS AND SILENT AUCTION

Wednesday, September 3, Doors open at 7:00pm, Screening at 8:00pm at the Latvian House, 491 College Street (one block west of Bathurst, on the south side). Two great LIFT events in one night! The Salon des Refusés is LIFT's celebration of films rejected by the Toronto Film Festival. The silent auction is LIFT's biggest fundraiser of the year, and a great opportunity to get super deals on film products and services.

GET INVOLVED

Joining a committee is a great way to get involved, meet new people, gain experience and at the same time earn those precious volunteer hours. Please call the office (416.588.6444) to confirm meeting dates before heading down to LIFT.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Join the Newsletter Committee if you are interested in the direction of LIFT's Newsletter or in writing for the Newsletter. Members receive 20 volunteer hours for committee service. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at the LIFT office; call the office to RSVP. Next Meeting: 5:00pm, July 6, out of office (August meeting cancelled)

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Special Events Committee is looking for new members to help organize upcoming events, as well as our bi-monthly Artist Talks. Committee members receive 20 hours for participating in this endeavour. If you're interested in joining the committee or want more informa-

tion, call 416.588.6444 or email office@lift.on.ca.

Next Meetings: 6:15pm, July 31, August 28

LIFT RADIO COMMITTEE

LIFT Radio is broadcast every Wednesday from noon to 1pm on CIUT 89.5fm (webcast on www.ciut.fm). The Radio Committee invites you to join the production team to help produce interviews, reviews, announcements and features. Committee meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month.

Next Meetings: 6:30pm, July 29, August 26

WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

The Workshop Committee is looking for new members to help design and promote the 2003 workshops hosted by LIFT. Committee members receive 20 volunteer hours for participating in this endeavour. If you are interested in joining the committee or want more information, call us at 416.588.6444. If you have suggestions for any kind of film workshop, let us know by email at workshops@lift.on.ca.

Next Meetings: 6:30pm, July 17, August 14

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Seeking members with web design/scripting skills for the newly formed LIFT website committee. Members receive 20 hours for committee service. Designers, programmers and other techies are welcome! Interested members should contact the office at 416.588.6444 or via email at communications@lift.on.ca.

Next Meetings: 6:00pm, July 29, August 26

LIFT SUPER 8 CINE CLUB

LIFT's new club meets the last Friday of each month to screen Super 8 films that have been shot and edited by fellow LIFT members. The screenings will take place at LIFT or other casual settings downtown. The purpose of this club is to talk about our work and to give feedback to other Super 8 filmmakers. If you're interested in joining, please call Christine at 416.469.4273.

Next Meeting: Last Friday of every month July 25, August 29

EQUIPMENTNEWS

MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEW TECH COORDINATOR

Well, I've been given the opportunity to become a full time staffer at LIFT, sharing the tech job with Vanessa and I'm very happy and excited. Working here this last year has been really great; I've been blown away by the energy, the resourcefulness and the vast amount of independent creativity this community has, and have enjoyed meeting and working with every one. To those

who don't yet know me, come on in and say hi sometime.

There are so many people involved in making LIFT run the way it does it's amazing, and we've really been getting a lot done lately. Recently we cleared out the storage space behind the Pro Tools suite (a bigger job than you might imagine), and turned it into a nice recording room with a window into the studio, and one for a video display. Now you can record clean voice-overs or acoustic music while watching your picture. You can loop sections of location sound dialogue for ADR, or gather the materials you need and record folly. We have a mic stand with a boom arm, an Audio Technica condenser mic, a set of headphones, and a panel that provides us with four XLR mic sends to the mixer, and four 1/4" trunk lines / headphone jacks. While we were at it, we took the opportunity to redesign the mixing room making it into an overall better working environment. The racks, dubber, CPU and drives are now in a small machine room, and the speakers have been lowered and placed further away from the desk with the video monitor centered between them.

A lot of people helped out on this project, so thanks to everyone involved in making this happen, and a special thanks to Gord Creelman who spearheaded the job, and Alan Moy for his expertise. And to everyone who wanted to be using the room while all this was being done, thanks for your patience.

Also, just to let you know what's in the works, we are currently getting a super 16 projector made for our aerial optical printer. Once it's built, we plan to move the printer component over to our 16/35 Oxberry Pro, allowing LIFT members to optically print from regular 8, Super 8, 16mm, and Super 16 to either 16mm or 35mm an amazing array of possibilities for a variety of work.

This summer feels like a good time for making films, so I hope to see you soon.

GREG BOA

**EQUIPMENT RETURNS ARE 10AM TO 12PM.
EQUIPMENT PICK-UPS ARE 2PM TO 5PM.**

Keys and Swipe Cards can be signed out between 10am and 5pm. This schedule is in place to ensure that we have ample time to deal with our many other responsibilities.

NEW STUFF IN THE EQUIPMENT ROOM!

NEW PURCHASE

Four brand new Matthews 40 grip stands with Rocky Mountain bases. These stands have a sliding leg that rises up, allowing you to place the stand on a set of stairs or any uneven surface. Stand and arm rent for \$3/day to Full members and \$5/day to Associate members.

NEW RECORDING ROOM

A 4.8 x 8.3 recording room has been built beside the Pro Tools suite. The room has a video display, a window to the studio, an Audio Technica 4050/CMS condenser mic, headphones, four XLR mic patches to the mixer, and four trunk lines/headphone jacks. The rates are still the same as they were before: \$10/hr for Full members, and \$20/hr for Associate members (or from midnight until 8:00 am, \$7/hr and \$14/hr).

MORE RAM IN MEDIA 100 COMPUTERS

Each computer has been upgraded from 256MB to 768MB of RAM, something that will be particularly noticeable to all you After Effects users.

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

BLOOR CINEMA VIDEO VAUDEVILLE

The Bloor Cinema proposes to the independent film community a bi-monthly screening of your movies. Video Vaudeville is not a competition; there will never be a best director or best writer. Video Vaudeville is purely an opportunity for the audience to gain a wider perspective on motion entertainment, and most importantly it is an opportunity for you the filmmaker to receive wider exposure and to showcase your talents and creativity.

We want Comedies, Dramas, Thrillers, Documentaries, Mockumentaries, Stop-motion and Computer Animation, Super 8 and DV, Handmade and Hand-processed, Student and Personal; as long as the movie has been made in the independent spirit, we want it at our screening. Essentially there are NO boundaries!

If possible, please format your video to VHS, SVHS or DVD. Video Vaudeville will be geared toward short films but don't let that stop you from sending us your feature lengths; as we said there are NO boundaries. We want your films on our screen!

The first screening depends on your response, so please send us your movies sooner than later; we want to get this show moving! If you have any questions please email videovaudeville@yahoo.ca. Send submissions and contact information by mail or in person to: The Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. West, Toronto ON, M5S 1Y3

Deadline: Ongoing; July 15 for the first screening

CABBAGETOWN SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

September 3, 2003

No entry fee required. Films should be no longer than 15 minutes. Application forms are available from the Festival office, phone 416.921.0857, or visit www.oldcabbagetown.com.

Deadline: July 25, 2003

17TH LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

October 22 — November 6, 2003
For submission guidelines please visit:
www.bfi.org.uk/showing/festivals/fff/index.html
Deadline: July 25 (postmark)

X INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL OF BARCELONA

November 14 — 22, 2003
Barcelona's most important showcase of independent films from around the world. L'Alternativa's aim is to establish a platform for the promotion and distribution of films, which for their innovative character, are unable to find a way into main exhibition and distribution circuits. What's more, the Festival is a lively and important meeting place for filmmakers, producers and distributors. Accepted original formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Betacam and DV, with a screening copy on 35mm, 16mm, Betacam SP PAL or mini DV PAL. For more information and an entry form, visit: www.cccb.org/alternativa/
Deadline: July 31, 2003 (postmark)

52ND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG

November 20 — 29, 2003
The Newcomers Festival, known worldwide for occupying a very particular place within the international festival scene, and called by the press 'little Cannes' and the most surprising German festival after Berlin, will fight the cause of the young arthouse film in 2003. Guidelines and entry forms are available at www.mannheim-filmfestival.com.
Deadline: August 8, 2003

TIE: THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA EXPOSITION

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, USA
TIE seeks films that challenge popular and conventional modes of cinema. From hand-made and physically altered films to extraordinarily subversive and obscure compositions, TIE selects only the highest calibre of experimental cinema by avant-gardists who are dedicated to the film medium.

Preview copies must be submitted in VHS format (NTSC or PAL) for consideration. Additionally, the final screening format must be a film print (8mm, Super 8, 16mm, 35mm) if the entry is selected. All lengths of film are accepted for consideration. We strongly urge filmmakers to submit their film as soon as possible to help ensure the possibility of selection. For a printable submission form and guidelines, please visit: www.experimentalcinema.com. A nominal entry fee is required.
Deadline: September 1, 2003 (postmark)

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILMS OF BILBAO

The 45th Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Films, under the theme 'Understanding Between Men through Pictures', will be held in Bilbao, Spain from November 24 - 29, 2003. For more information and entry forms visit: www.zinebi.com
Deadline: September 15, 2003

IMAGES FESTIVAL

For 16 years, Images has exhibited and encouraged the work of artists producing film and video outside of mainstream commercial production and distribution systems and aesthetic conventions. Images is committed to an expanded concept of film and video practice: alongside its film and video screenings, the festival embraces a wide variety of practices, including performances, installations and new media. Full entry guidelines and forms will be available in late July at www.imagesfestival.com.
Deadlines: Installations: September 19; Film & Video: November 7, 2003

UPCOMING FUNDING DEADLINES

CANADA COUNCIL

1.800.263.5588; Fax: 613.566.4390
www.canadacouncil.ca

Grants to New Media and Audio Artists
Deadline: October 1, 2003

Travel Grants to Media Artists
Deadline: Ongoing

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

416.961.1660; Fax: 416.973.9650
www.arts.on.ca; info@arts.on.ca

Aboriginal Arts
Deadline: September 15, 2003

Chalmers Arts Fellowships, Chalmers Professional Development Grants (Call OAC for details)
Deadline: January 15, 2004

TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

416.392.6800; www.torontoartscouncil.org

Media Arts Grants
Deadline: November 20, 2003

TELEFILM

416.973.6436; www.telefilm.gc.ca

Canada Feature Film Fund
Deadline: September 2, 2003

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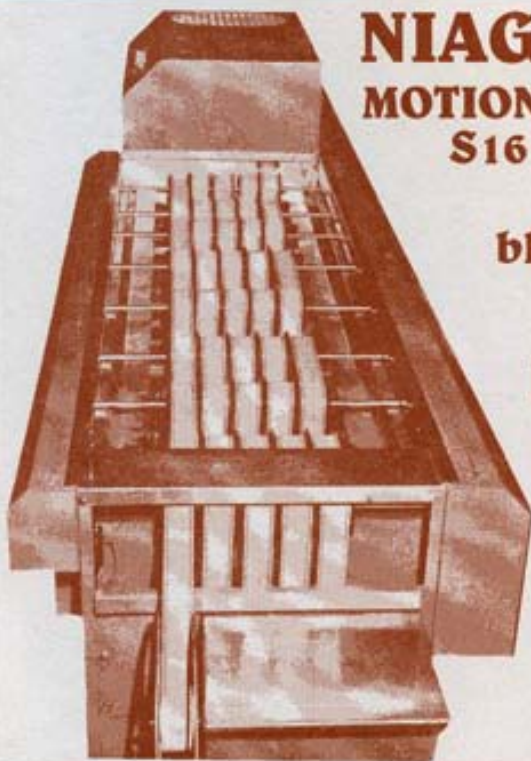
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