

LFT

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1990

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cover photo by Rogde for the play Merchants of Love produced by Gwendolyn

images 90

presents

SPEAKING NEW MEDIA

Workshops

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT
Thursday, June 7th, 1-4 pm
Fee: \$15.00

**A WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE:
RACE & REPRESENTATION**
Friday, June 8th, 1-4 pm
Fee: \$15.00

MAKING THE DEAL
Saturday, June 9, 10-1 pm
Fee: \$15.00

**INDEPENDENTS & COMMERCIAL
POST-PRODUCTION HOUSES**
Saturday, June 9, 10-2 pm
Fee: \$20.00

**PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
FOR FILM/VIDEO**
Co-sponsored by LIFT
Sunday, June 10, 10 am - 5 pm
Fee: \$25.00

FILM/VIDEO HYBRIDS
Co-sponsored by Trinity Square Video
Monday, June 11, 1-4pm
Fee: \$15.00

*More details in the LIFT May mailing!
Watch for it!*

LIFT GENIE NOMINEES

Congratulations to the following LIFT members whose work was nominated for this year's Genie Awards:

MARTHA DAVIS - *Reading Between the Lines*, nominated for Best Short Documentary

ATOM EGOYAN - *Speaking Parts* nominated for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Original Screenplay, Best Music Score.

BRUCE MCDONALD - *Roadkill* nominated for Best Supporting Actor, Best Original Screenplay.

PETER METTLER - *The Top of His Head*, nominated for Best Actor, Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Song.

STEPHEN ROSCOE - *Odyssey in August*, nominated for Best Live Action Short Drama

*The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers
of Toronto*

congratulates

IMAGES 90

and participating LIFT members

**John Greyson
Phil Hoffman
Mike Hoolboom
Brenda Joy Lem
Gary Popovich**

SHORT ENDS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Canadian Centre for Advanced Film Studies recently named its residents for 1990. Congratulations to LIFT members Lori Spring and John Greyson who were amongst the six people chosen for the directors' program.

Congratulations to Paula Fairfield who received an Explorations Grant for film scripting for her project *Voice Over*; and to Susan K. Fleming who received an Explorations Grant for film production for her project *Welcome Home*.

NEW MEMBERS

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members of LIFT:

Karen Pascal, Peter Lovick, Lisa Laing, Keith Harrick, Pete Janes, Kim Hobbs, Daniel O'Connor, Donna Marie Newfield, Mark Smith, Michael Lekes, Michael Proudfoot, Bo Jon Staude, Gary Holford, Libbie Lightstone, Michael Sack, John Gagne, Alesandra Davies, Jeremy Dudspith, Tony Johnston, Valda Svede, Randy Bak.

MORE DEALS

Congratulations to Steve Sanguedolce for getting LIFT members a discount at Filmhouse. While we're on the topic, here are some more deals:

Spot Film and Video Inc. is pleased to announce to LIFT members a 10% discount on film processing and videotape services.

Post Production will offer a discount to LIFT members, 15% off their price list.

Soundhouse will offer facilities to LIFT members at 50% off their published prices. They also have some used 16 and 35 mag stock for

half price.

Pathé is offering a discount of between 20% to 25%, depending on the size of the project and other terms. They can also provide package prices for an entire project.

If you know of any other discounts offered to members, give Greg a call at LIFT and he'll put it in the next newsletter.

SPRING SHOFTALK SERIES

The workshops in the Shoptalk series are quickly filling up, however, there are still some places available. If there is enough interest for the workshops that are already full, a second workshop on the same topic may be scheduled. Here is a list of the workshops in the Shoptalk series:

1. Basic Camera (April 3 and 5th, 7:00pm) - John Detwiler
2. Film Continuity (April 10, 7:00pm) - Nancy Eagles
3. Getting Sound on Film (April 17, 7:00pm) - Greg Woodbury/Marc LaFoy
4. Front Screen Projection Techniques (April 21 & 22, Noon to 5:00pm) - Ric Amis
5. Basic Picture Editing (April 24, 7:00pm) - Robert Kennedy
6. Basic Sound Editing (May 1, 7:00pm) - Robert Kennedy
7. The Camera As A Paintbrush (May 8, 7:00pm) - Steve Sanguedolce
8. Video Applications For Film Post (May 15, 7:00pm) - Paula Fairfield
9. Film Titling (May 22, 7:00pm) - Mike Hefferson

If you're interested in any of these workshops, make sure to sign up before they are full.

GET LISTED ON DATABASE

Forms are available in the LIFT office for the Moving Image and Sound Archives database. The information is published free of

charge and provides a permanent record of your productions.

PLEASURE DOME—CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

PLEASURE DOME is a collective drawn from the Toronto film community with a mandate to exhibit international, national and local artists' film and related work. The group is currently planning its next season (starting September 90) and would like to have direct input from its viewers in the selection of this programming. Submissions can take any form including: film requests, suggestions of interesting themes or types of films for events, requests from filmmakers to exhibit their work, proposals by independent curators to organize single events or series. Suggestions and submissions can be passed on to Pleasure Dome at 67 A Portland St., Toronto, M5V 2M9. Deadline is JUNE 1990. For more information contact Jonathan Pollard at 921-1886.

VIDEOS BY WOMEN

GIV (Groupe Intervention Video), distributor and producer of videos by and about women, are looking for videotapes (new and old) directed and produced by women to include in their collection. They would especially welcome works by women of colour and native women. For more information contact GIV at 3575 boul. St-Laurent, bureau 421, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2T7, 514-499-9840.

GRANTS FOR SOUND ARTISTS

The Canada Council has created an independent Audio Production Grants Program in order to serve the needs of artists working in the field of sound and to recognize this discipline as a form of artistic expression. The purpose of this

SHORT ENDS

grant is to encourage and promote the artistic expression and creation of works in sound through the use of electronic technology. The grants are designed to stimulate experimentation with form, content and technique. They are intended for independent professional artists working in sound who wish to produce audio works, or works in audio for radio, or works in audio for film and video. Deadlines are April 1 and September 1. For more information and applications call Jean Gagnon, Media Arts Officer, at 613-598-4356.

TEACHING POSITIONS

York University is inviting applications for an entry-level tenure stream appointment as Assistant Professor in film and video production to commence September 1, 1990. The department is especially interested in finding an individual

who will serve as a gender role model for women production students. Required are an M.F.A. or equivalent professional standing. Submit c.v. and have three letters of reference forwarded independently to the Department of Film and Video, York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, Ontario, M3J 1P3, Attention: Production Search Committee. Deadline is MAY 1.

HERETICAL IMPERATIVES—PIER PAULO PASOLINI

U of T Cinema Studies Programme is presenting this symposium on Pasolini to be held JUNE 8 & 9, 1990 at Innis College, U of T. Registration is \$15. For more info call 978-5809.

5 JOURS DU CINEMA

Montreal's Film Co-op Main Film

will once again present 5 Jours Du Cinema Independant Canadien. This is a non-competitive showcase of Independent Canadian Cinema, and is open to Super-8, 16mm or 35mm films (videotapes are not eligible). Entry forms are available in the LIFT office. Deadline for submissions is JULY 1, 1990.

CANADIAN STUDIES DIRECTORATE: FUNDING PROGRAMS

The Canadian Studies Directorate offers financial support for the development of didactic materials, designed for use at any educational level or for the general public, intended to encourage Canadians to learn about Canada. Two competitions are held each year, with April 1 and November 1 as the semi-annual deadlines for applications. Ask for more information in the LIFT office

NOTICES FROM THE COORDINATOR'S DESK

BY ROBIN EECLOO

Lots of things are happening over the next few months:

CINEGRAD 1990 - a 3 day film, video and television conference and festival profiling the work of graduating film and video students from Ontario colleges and universities. This year the event is being hosted by the Ontario College of Art and is scheduled for May 11, 12 and 13. Organized by the Ontario Centre for the Advancement of Cinema Studies, Cinegrad 90 will include public screenings, panel discussions, workshops, information displays and awards. LIFT has been invited to participate in one of the panel discussions.

From May 15 to 19 Toronto will be swarming with independent film and video artists from across Canada who will be here to attend the

Annual General Meeting of the Independent Film and Video Alliance (IFVA - AVCI). Keep these dates open as it promises to be an exciting time. The Alliance is celebrating its 10th anniversary and we anticipate this AGM will allow us a chance to recap our histories and examine our future directions. The AGM sessions will be held at the University of Toronto and the Showcase screenings will be held at The Euclid Theatre. Here's a chance to catch what's been happening at co-ops across the country, so don't miss out.

In case you haven't already made note, Images 90, Canada's only festival of both film and video organized by independents for independents, is set for June 7 to 12. Showcasing some of the most exciting, innovative and challenging new work by independent film and video producers from across the

country and internationally, Images 90 will be presented at The Euclid Theatre. LIFT is very pleased to be a program sponsor for Images 90 and we strongly urge you to take advantage of this important event. (See the ad in the newsletter on Speaking New Media, the Images 90 workshops and panels which offer vital information on the business, technical and aesthetic aspects of production).

And as if you're not already busy enough, the Annual General Meeting of ANNPAC/RACA, the Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres, happens June 7 to 9. So things will be hopping as visual artists, filmmakers and video artists from across Canada are in Toronto for this event as well. If you're smart you'll stick in town and hang out in the bars to get in on all the news and views being offered.

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LETTERS

Re: "Love and Power: Reading Between the Lines With Martha Davis", by Mike Hoolboom, February 1990.

It never ceases to amaze me that, even as we enter the 1990's, there are still sectors of our society who insist on lumping works made by women into one easy pile, despite vast differences in both form and content.

The works cited in the opening rant of Hoolboom's article (*Mary Mary* - Anna Gronau; *Inside/Out* - Lori Spring; *The Scientific Girl* - Kim Derko; *Harriet Loves* - Alexandra Gill; Patricia Rozema and *The Big Deal* [I was previously unaware of this work!]; and, *Reading Between the Lines* - Martha Davis) share two main similarities of which we should apparently be wary - technical competence and critical acclaim. It seems, according to Hoolboom, that these two characteristics form the basis of a Horrible Girl Plot which threatens to undermine the "fiercely competitive film climate" we find ourselves in.

How dare we be so bold as to reclaim the technology and take control of the modes of representation denied us for the first century of cinematic history, only to "depict one devastating containment after another". How dare we crawl out of the trenches to demand funding and distribution for our projects, rather than be content with marginalization. How dare we feel "isolation, despair and alienation" in this joyously male world in which we live and work. How dare we, indeed!!

PAULA FAIRFIELD

I would like to thank Mike Hoolboom for including me in the group of women filmmakers mentioned in his essay; "Love & Power".

Unfortunately, this attempt to construct a pernicious bourgeois *nouvelle vague* reduces five distinct films into a single homogeneous voice. Even casual consideration of the CONTENT of *Reading Between the Lines*, *Mary Mary*, *Inside Out*, *Harriet Loves*, and *The Scientific Girl* would reveal their diversity. A considered examination of the structure, approach, methods of production, cost and directors' intentions would confirm these films' political and conceptual heterogeneity.

The presumption that these films were produced for the purpose of enabling their directors to move on to feature films is incorrect. Equally incorrect are the assumptions that all these films employ conventional narrative and that technical proficiency represents an "almost aggressive" force.

Hoolboom's disdain for "a growing narrative consensus" (?) among filmmakers "with aspirations for money and power" (?) is clearly expressed. To attribute these characteristics to any group of filmmakers without specific critical analysis of their work and political concerns, is reductionist.

If these five films have anything in common besides the race and gender of their makers, perhaps it is that they do not serve Hoolboom's own personal political and artistic mandates.

KIM DERKO

I admire Mike Hoolboom's effort to discover some kind of unity amongst the five films by women directors cited in his piece on Martha Davis' *Reading Between the Lines*.

According to Mike, these films are all characterized by a thematic and stylistic uniformity that constitutes some new but seemingly very compromised moment of solidarity. The films have in common female protagonists, themes of "isolation, despair and alienation" and "a surface gloss and polish, an almost aggressive technical proficiency". Could it be that Mike is suggesting, without actually saying it in so many words, that all of these directors are romanticizing their own angst about uniformly selling out to "The Big Deal"?

I can't help but feel that it does the films and the filmmakers a serious injustice to conflate their diverse and complex handling of widely varying themes so tidily in the interests of producing a neat argument. Towards the end of his article, Mike appears to pull his not-quite-landed punch in suggesting that "these fragile gestures of empowerment demand that the role of women be re-imagined, not as part of a patriarchal economy...". Imputing a singular intention and strategy to such diverse works almost solely on the basis of their being produced by women is an act that feeds into that very patriarchal economy Mike so admirably eschews and, despite whatever good intentions, comes off as a thinly-veiled sexist gesture.

LORI SPRING

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD

BY VIRGINIA RANKIN

On February 28th, LIFT held its annual brainstorming session. This meeting was well attended by a cross-section of long-standing and experienced LIFT filmmakers from all genres. Some of those people unable to attend also sent along their comments on paper, so we were able to get a feeling for the diversity of opinions about LIFT's future. I feel that there has been one misconception that it is essential for me to clarify immediately. While LIFT has been seeking ways to serve some of those experienced filmmakers who would otherwise leave the co-op, we are in no way intending to cut down or change services currently available to all members. LIFT is not trying to *change*, but to expand.

That said, we came up with some suggestions that could benefit all LIFT members, including those who are currently drifting away. These include:

1) a festival Database - this would consist of reports from filmmakers who had attended festivals, reports of bad experiences, etc. The Database would be shared with co-ops

across the country, and would help filmmakers to choose those festivals which would truly be interested in their work, rather than spend time and money entering festivals which are perhaps looking for films in other genres.

2) an Associate/Executive Producer - not a new idea, but LIFT has never been able to find the funds for this position. The new suggestion is that, as is done in Montreal for instance, the productions pay either a percentage of monies received from funding bodies, or a flat producer's fee, to an experienced producer who would work on several LIFT productions at a time. This use of a LIFT Co-Producer would open up funding possibilities for filmmakers who do not have a so-called "track record".

3) Lobbying - LIFT will seek deals with such bodies as ACTRA and the CRTC. ACTRA could provide an across the board discount for LIFT productions under a certain budget for instance, and the CRTC could be encouraged to demand more independent programming.

LIFT will also be considering more advanced workshops, in addition to

maintaining the basic workshops.

Obviously some of these developments are a little way down the road, but we feel that the brainstorming session has given us a good idea of future possibilities.

MORE NEWS!! We are eagerly awaiting the premiere of LIFT's first official co-production. Annette Mangaard's film *A Dialogue With Vision: The Art of Spring Hurlbut and Judith Schwarz* will be premiering at The Euclid Theatre on April 29th, with a reception to follow. Your invitations will arrive by mail.

Our various committees are in various stages of activity. The fund-raising committee is currently soliciting an honorary board of directors as our first step towards corporate fund-raising. Watch out for the Gala Black and White Polo Opera Ball. Just kidding.

In closing, let me just remind you that the Board is your Board, that we do our best to represent the hundreds of members of LIFT, and that any of your concerns or ideas are welcome.

NOTICES FROM THE COORDINATOR'S DESK

you who haven't been by to LIFT recently you probably aren't aware that we've acquired MORE space. The LIFT office and staff are now accommodated in luxurious new digs at the end of the hall, freeing up our old space for post-production, meeting and workshop space. Don't worry, we do have some plans that will revitalize the old space so it won't always look as dismal as it looks right now. And to Janis and Adrienne, our thanks for the beautiful office-warming

flowers.

LIFT currently has an application in at Employment and Immigration Canada's Section 25 Program which, if approved, would allow us to employ a Publications Editor/Designer to undertake a LIFT catalogue project, and an Associate Producer position. To be eligible individuals must currently be in receipt of, or eligible to receive Unemployment Insurance Benefits. Project employees are

paid in the form of enhanced U.I. benefits (approximately \$380/wk). If approved, we hope to hire for an April 30th start date with the project running to December 14, 1990. Individuals who may be eligible and who are interested in either of the two positions are asked to submit a letter of interest and current resume to the LIFT office. For additional details on the Section 25 Program or the positions, please speak to Robin.

JOB OPPORTUNITY LIFT NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Duties include: Soliciting written material about independent film in Toronto and elsewhere, and compiling general information of value to LIFT membership; writing articles; chairing newsletter committee meetings, developing ideas for future issues, presenting relevant information and/or problems of policy to LIFT Board meetings; editing written submissions, working with writers on improving pieces; inputting material into LIFT computer; collecting stills and other graphics; proofreading and preparing text and photos for designer; designing cover; coordinating the printing and delivery of printed newsletters.

Skills required: good knowledge of independent film and related issues; good communication and interpersonal skills, good writing, editing, and typing skills, working knowledge of Mac computer, design and photography skills an asset.

Salary: \$250/month and other negotiables

Hours are flexible. Must be self-motivated.

Preference will be given to LIFT



members.

Please send resume, letter and other relevant information to LIFT NEWSLETTER, 345 Adelaide St. W., Suite 505, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1R5. For more information contact LIFT at 596-8233.

Deadline is May 1, 1990

EDITORIAL

BY GARY POPOVICH

As another swollen issue takes its place amongst your toilet readings, the traces left here can only suggest that more and more voices wish to be heard amongst the diverse doldrums most independents face. Our composted concerns again gather here, wondering whether the road to LIFT's future.

The choices facing LIFT are the choices facing the many diverse constituent groups within the co-op. If I've learned anything here, it's that a delicate balancing/juggling has been responsible for the best administrative functions of LIFT. In that balance lies the opportunity for voices of differing strengths, colours and sensitivities to resonate. Sounds like enough from me for now.

THE MULTI-CULTURAL DRAMATIC FILM FUND: ADDRESSING FILMMAKERS OF COLOUR

BY LANA LOVELL

As all independent filmmakers know, pulling together all of the funds needed to make a film is a time consuming, arduous and frustrating experience. So it's great when money comes available to expand the possibilities of completing your film.

LIFT was approached by the Ontario Film Development Corporation in the spring of '89. The idea was for LIFT to administer a \$200,000 multicultural fund over two years with \$85,000 to disperse each year. LIFT's board talked about the positive and negative sides of this

proposal and drew up draft guidelines.

In July a meeting was held at LIFT to talk to filmmakers and various communities about this OFDC money. Out of this discussion and subsequent meetings, the fund was "targeted" towards First Nations Canadians and People of Colour. These communities have traditionally been excluded by mainstream film programs.

LIFT has called for submissions for the film grants by the deadline of May 1, 1990.

Robin Eecloo, LIFT's co-ordinator,

and Lloyd Wong, administrative co-ordinator of this Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund, talked to me about the new program.

Why did LIFT decide to administer the Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund?

R.E.: The Board recognized that LIFT is not representative of the various communities so the fund provides us an opportunity to become more involved.

Who came up with the criteria for this fund?

R.E.: We tried to have a representa-

Nations, Asian, People of Colour, as well as film and video groups. There were a number of voices we were trying to include.

What is the budget for the Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund in 1990?

L.W.: It is a budget of \$117,000, \$85,000 is for production and the rest goes towards administrative costs such as rent, office supplies, telephone, publicity and the administrator's salary.

What projects get funding?

L.W.: The project has to be a film and we have prioritized the target communities as being First Nations Canadians and Visible Minorities. This project seems to have been modelled after the arts council granting bodies, so it favours already producing filmmakers. But this isn't necessarily the emphasis. We'd like to see people that haven't made

films before take the opportunity and use it. So, script development grants are also available.

R.E.: Yes, we'd like to ensure that first time filmmakers have the opportunity to access the fund and to help out we can provide them with sample budgets, information on equipment houses and labs, an idea of what a treatment is, and so on.

What has been the reaction to the fund from the film community?

L.W.: A lot of enquiries from filmmakers of colour and a lot of enquiries from Northern regions. Some reactions have fallen into the misconception that this is the kind of affirmative action program that awards on the basis of skin colour alone. That is not true, people have to put in a strong proposal and there is a jury process. Also, people have called the program reverse racism but there is no such thing.

Do you have anything to say about this reaction?

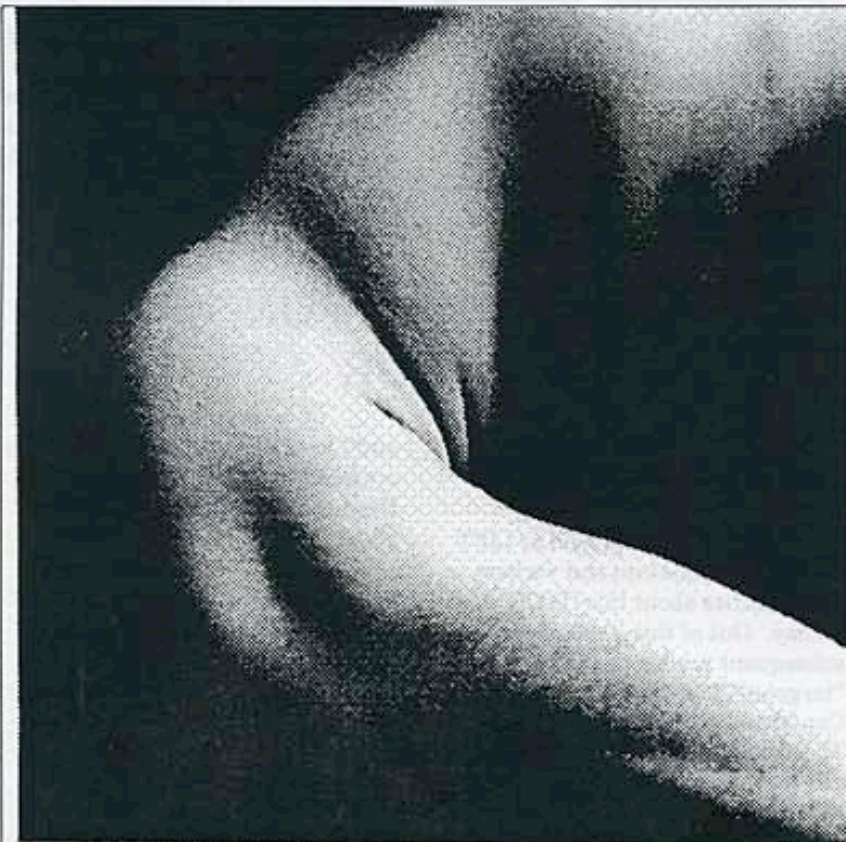
L.W.: Reverse racism can only be the case if all things are equal but as history and experience clearly show this has not been the case.

R.E.: The fund is not robbing other individuals of opportunities. Instead it is attempting to establish equal opportunities for all.

What will LIFT get out of this program?

L.W.: The fund has allowed LIFT to occupy more office space in the interim.

R.E.: As far as administering the fund, it will heighten our profile, it will potentially broaden our membership and it will support a number of exciting film projects which after all is LIFT's mandate.



NUDES

BY TOM BOWEN

The present direction of my work involves the male nude—a subject I believe requires greater public access. I'm interested in the type of hands on approach that gives me a certain closeness with the image, experimenting with hand-coated photographic emulsions.

“If the nude should fail to arouse in the viewer some vestige of erotic feeling it is considered bad art and false morals.”—Kenneth Clark.

HOW I SURVIVED THE CO-PRODUCTION - or LET'S HOPE IT SURVIVES ME



Judith Schwartz, Stephen Deme, Annette Mangaard

BY ANNETTE MANGAARD

So the LIFT co-production is finally finished and so am I - almost. Everybody wants to know how it went, and they want to see the film. To see the film - that's easy the **GRAND PREMIERE** of "A DIALOGUE WITH VISION: the Art of Spring Hurlbut and Judith Schwarz" will be **SUNDAY APRIL 29, 1990 AT 8P.M. AT THE EUCLID THEATRE** - reception to follow.

How it went is another story.

In February of 1988 LIFT invested 7,000 dollars in the film in the first LIFT Co-Production. They decided that someone should act as a liaison between the production and the Board. Five people applied and Marsha Herle was hired (after two years of dealing with me, a decision I'm sure she regrets.)

After countless (okay - I counted 54) applications to granting agencies, foundations, corporations and government departments, the Non-

Theatrical Department of Supply and Services came through with 49% of the budget. This was, explained Jack Horowitz (the main man in the DSS office), provided I could guarantee the rest of the funding and that LIFT would act as Executive Producer. No problem - we got NFB PAFPS and hired two students under employment programs - oh and of course I deferred salary.

Sometimes I think that if anything could have gone wrong with this film - it did. If it wasn't with my personal life then it was with LIFT equipment. And if my marriage broke down during the process then so did the Steenbeck (the Steenbeck was repaired - the marriage couldn't be).

The film is about the working processes of two artists, Spring Hurlbut and Judith Schwarz; but the three of us had some difficulty in getting our processes to coincide. Spring went to Barcelona for 6 months; Judith had too many deadlines to schedule in time for a film crew; and I had a full time job organizing IMAGES 89, Festival of

Independent Film and Video.

Then, a crisis. I began to question the nature of the film (big mistake - this is something you should either take care of before or after - not during production). Suddenly, I, who always thought art was the very essence of life, had a change of heart. Maybe art wasn't worth making - too much time, money, energy - too little reward.

Judith Schwarz and I spent many days discussing the difficulties of actually making art - (practical and technical aside). That intangible thing that I wanted to capture was very difficult to actually produce - never mind to shoot on celluloid. And so we went in tandem, Judith wrestling with ideas for her sculpture, me fighting for the clarity of mind to see the film.

Spring Hurlbut returned from Europe and began her sculpture in Windsor, in February 1989. The project was delayed by more red tape than anyone (except a film producer) could possibly imagine. By the time

of our first shooting day in late October, equipment and crew had been booked and cancelled 22 times (poor Greg). I called Jack Horowitz. "We would be a little behind the deadline" I explained. (The deadline was September 12th). Jack Horowitz works for the DSS but he actually returns phone calls, and not only that but he actually remembers what your film is about. My faith in government bureaucracy had been restored (somewhat). We got an extension.

So with boxes of material in hand and notes in tow I set out to find a Saviour. She came in the form of Anna Pafomow who spent 7 weeks putting together a wonderful (my words) film which explores the nature of creativity. We had 60 odd rolls of film and 20 odd hours of interviews. Somehow Anna made

them all make sense in a manner very close to the original concept of the film.

Since then I've moved four times and in fact was with "no fixed address" for three months. Miraculously none of the 60 odd cans of negative that travelled with me were lost during the process.

I could go on about how the sound mixer called me from Europe 8 hours before my mix to tell me that he was going to be slightly delayed (by four days). Or how there are four sets of titles for the film - some a little out of focus or slightly tilted. But it's almost done and I want to go to Paris for a few months.

The staff at the LIFT office has undergone many changes but throughout the two year process

they were unfailingly helpful and generous. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the labs, some of whom still have a very sexist and at times patronizing attitude towards women filmmakers. I swear if I get winked at one more time.....

The donated services and financial assistance that LIFT gave to *A Dialogue With Vision* were substantial, but of much greater value was the community support—the filmmakers who were there to look at the rushes, to discuss an idea, to recommend a crew member. Most of the people who worked on the film are members of LIFT and they were always reliable, dependable and professional. It was, as is every film, a co-operative effort and one in which not one person, but the combined efforts of many made this a film that I'm happy to have my name attached to.



Spring Hurlbut at work

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

BY DON BOOTH

Over the last few years, LIFT has matured into a sophisticated organization, providing fundamental assistance to the makers of short documentaries, experimental films and small dramas. In doing so it has become a conduit for new filmmakers to learn their craft. As these new filmmakers mature, their productions become more sophisticated and their budgets increase. Soon, LIFT's small package of equipment and grants of less than \$2000 become insignificant components of the production and the filmmakers leave the co-op. We lose them and their talent because the services that LIFT offers do not warrant the volunteer time required. However, because the core of the co-op is now strong and sophisticated, it can play an important role in larger and more complex projects. Whether they are dramatic or experimental films, animations, or documentaries, it is time for us to push our organization to support these members.

There is a natural evolution toward more complex projects, but we must not drift in this direction. We must make a conscious decision to support the complex financial and production requirements of our increasingly sophisticated membership. This move, if made with care, will improve the quality of films that pass through our organization. A LIFT film should be more than a movie that received a grant of \$1000. The end credit, "Produced with the assistance of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto", should become a stamp of uniqueness and integrity.

Larger, more complex projects require something different than expensive equipment, and a modest pool of talent. As budgets increase, the financial advantage of LIFT's equipment package becomes almost insignificant. Likewise, budgets in excess of \$50,000 derive little benefit from a production grant of \$1000. Don't get me wrong, the assistance is appreciated, but a sophisticated organization should provide more substance. I suggest that an ad hoc committee of members and filmmakers who have left to pursue larger films examine how independent films are made. The

committee should examine the relationship between broadcasters and distributors. The committee should also examine other filmmaker-run organizations throughout the world. Lastly, the committee should submit a carefully considered plan of action to the membership.

We can learn a lot from parallel organizations. I am a member of the Independent Feature Project, a parallel organization in New York. We have one essential thing in common with the IFP: the members of both organizations insist that the filmmaker retain control of the film. Because this fundamental policy places us outside of the Hollywood system, members of both organizations must find inventive ways to replace the millions of dollars that studios and broadcasters have at their disposal.

If LIFT does not pursue larger and more complex films it will remain a good place to start and a good place to leave.

Rather than raising money on behalf of its membership, the IFP supplies information and ideas. The IFP supplies complex information about various financial partners and new strategies to produce films. They work with organizations such as The Sundance Institute to study exactly how independent features are financed and produced. Since distributors are usually the principle financier of films in the United States, the IFP holds monthly "meet the distributor" sessions and a yearly market for independent features that has been crucial to the finance and distribution of such films as *Stranger Than Paradise* and *Blood Simple*. They hold seminars with top-flight producers, production managers, lawyers, accountants, and financiers. The results of most seminars are published in the monthly newsletter "The Off Hollywood Report", available at the LIFT office, or available separately on cassette and accompanied by presentation materials.

Another interesting example is the Film Fund, an American charity that raises

money to grant to important films that are too controversial to qualify for funding through more traditional channels. Their grants can amount to \$50,000. The money is raised by a board composed of influential, wealthy people with a left-wing point of view. They are often one of the first agencies to invest in important films such as *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, and their endorsement lends credibility which these films need to raise the balance of their budgets.

Here are some things we might do to make better movies:

The recently created Non-Theatrical Fund administered by the Department of Supply and Services has been crucial in financing films at the Winnipeg Film Group with budgets between \$100,000 and \$150,000. LIFT should find ways to help members get a chunk of this money.

LIFT should work to broadcast our films on television. Most important would be a way to attain broadcast licenses before a film is made. Perhaps we should negotiate with the CBC, CITY-TV, or Global to devote one late night each week to independent films. In Germany this policy spawned the new wave of German filmmakers.

Convince ACTRA to draft a true low budget agreement. One of the most crippling aspects of making low budget dramas is the inability to audition many talented actors and then choose a cast properly. LIFT filmmakers cannot issue a casting call because they cannot legitimately hire ACTRA members. Our films suffer greatly from this.

Our new charitable status might be used to attract corporate sponsors like Petro Canada.

If LIFT does not pursue larger and more complex films it will remain a good place to start and a good place to leave. We should not lose our most successful members. If we choose to accept the challenge of more expensive and more complex filmmaking, then LIFT films will make a more substantial contribution to movie making in Canada, and it will be a contribution that the public will notice.

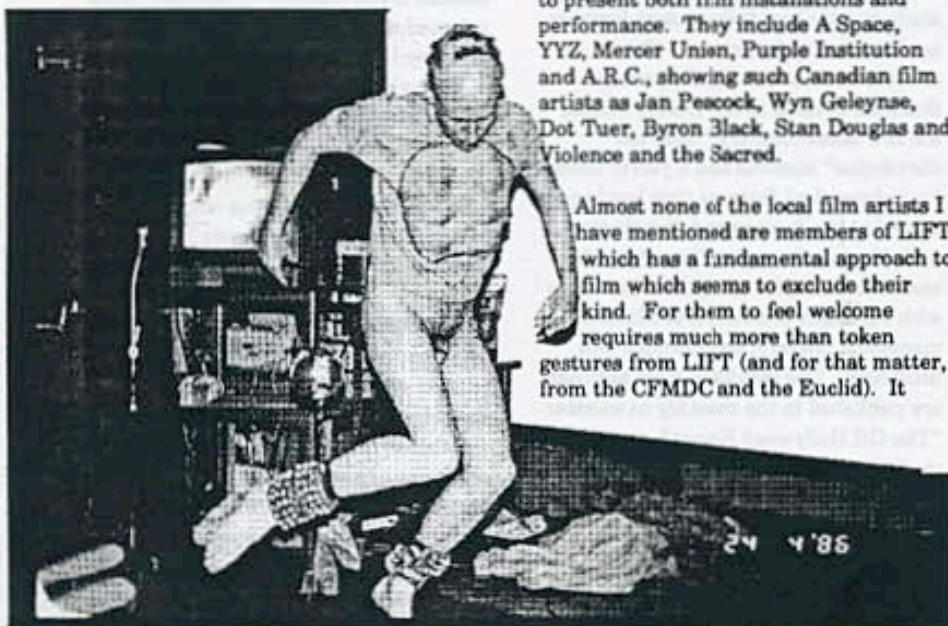
PERFORMANCE POSTPONED

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JOHN PORTER

When LIFT's affiliate membership fee went from \$15 to \$30 recently, I had difficulty deciding whether or not to renew, since this newsletter is about all that I use. LIFT is basically a 16mm equipment access service and not only do I not work in 16mm, but I already own enough equipment to produce my film art. In fact, I need very little equipment and I think that the most interesting art is produced with a bare minimum of resources, something Norman McLaren often said. When film art is handled as a so-called "visual art", when it can be produced to completion with nothing more than a \$25 regular-8 camera or a 25 cent flip-book, only then does *all* film take its place among the most creative, pervasive and enduring of art media such as performing, writing/composing, painting and sculpture.

There are great benefits to an art community when it not only allows but encourages its most modest producers. One is that just about anyone can enter the community regardless of their social or financial status, providing an endless source of fresh and provocative ideas, viewpoints and approaches. Another is that productions or presentations can easily accommodate the incorporation of other media, also at their most modest, creating entirely new hybrid formats such as film performance and film installation. This also creates very stimulating junctures between different local art communities.

To my knowledge The Funnel Artists'

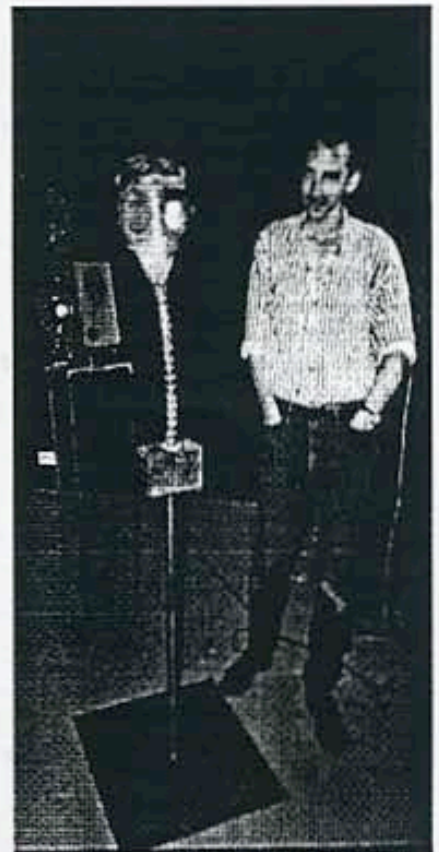


Almost none of the local film artists I have mentioned are members of LIFT which has a fundamental approach to film which seems to exclude their kind. For them to feel welcome requires much more than token gestures from LIFT (and for that matter, from the CFMDC and the Euclid). It

Film Centre of Toronto has been the only Canadian film community to actively encourage such a liberal approach to film in its production, distribution and exhibition. And during my eight years at The Funnel, I noticed that a majority of the artists were coming out of the Experimental Arts Department of the Ontario College of Art (OCA). Many performances and installations were presented by The Funnel from 1977 to 1988 by both foreign artists and such local artists as myself, Jim Anderson, Sharon Cook, Stephen Niblock, Phyllis Waugh, Bob Brown, Villem Teder, Denise Cooper and Joe McLean, Stephen Marshall, Fifth Column and Christian Morrison.

The Funnel no longer has its perfect little theatre and gallery but other venues of varying quality continue to present the occasional film performance or installation. Film venues such as Innis College, Pacific Cinematheque in Vancouver and Cinema Parallele in Montreal are usually designed for standard film presentations only, with their elevated screens, large theatres, and isolated projection booths. The Euclid Theatre and OCA auditorium at least have good stages. The best venues are small performance spaces with projection booths, such as The Rivoli, the Poor Alex and the Ice House at Harbourfront. These are sometimes used by theatre or dance organizations/events such as Cafe of Wild Culture, Danceworks, Rhubarb Festival and Fringe Festival which sometimes include film performance by artists like Gwendolyn.

Several artist-run galleries are both physically and mentally versatile enough to present both film installations and performance. They include A Space, YYZ, Mercer Union, Purple Institution and A.R.C., showing such Canadian film artists as Jan Peacock, Wyn Geleynse, Dot Tuer, Byron Black, Stan Douglas and Violence and the Sacred.



Steve Marshall At The Funnel April '88

requires a whole change in attitude toward film art which could take a very long time, if ever.

It might begin with taking a serious look at the Funnel approach to film art. For example, The Funnel was founded on regular Open Screenings (not curated members' screenings) where anyone can show up unannounced with any kind of footage, in any format. The Funnel's equipment is evenly balanced between high and low tech, between large and small format, with lots of cameras, projectors, viewers, splicers, and processing tanks. Most of LIFT's equipment discriminates in favour of artists who can afford 16mm lab services, or who have the cunning to play the grant game. There are challenging political issues to tackle (besides funding), such as government prior-approval by both censor board and arts council (which, by the way, forbids open screenings at LIFT), and artists' fees (instead of meat prices, like dollars per pound, or dollars per minute).

These are a few ideas for consideration. An organization like LIFT has a lot of potential power and can go anywhere it chooses.

ON LOCATION

BY ED MAKUCH

Ed spoke to Peter Mettler (Scissere, Eastern Avenue, and the recently completed The Top of His Head) recently on the set of Jane Siberry's new video shoot, on which Peter was cinematographer.

Peter: The Top of His Head played for two weeks at the Carlton Cinemas and had a run at the Revue and the Bloor. I just came back from Switzerland, it was shown at the festival there and is now being released there in five cities. Just yesterday, it was sold to channel Four (in England). It's opening in Montreal soon, at Berlin its in the Market and the Munich festival is interested in it.

Ed: The States?

Peter: The States is sort of virgin territory. We're just now about to deal with that.

Ed: Are you pleased with the results in *The Top of His Head*?

Peter: With the film itself, I'm basically pleased. It's a long process, 4 or 5 years starting from the writing and the funding. Basically I played with the elements I wanted to play with, explored the themes that were of interest, I worked with actors and 35mm. Basically, the creative ideas of the film were fulfilled. I guess what's hardest about the film, especially at the end, is getting it shown. Working through the system and getting people to see it is very difficult, because if it doesn't win a big prize or get a lot of publicity at Cannes before it's released here, then theatres are reluctant to show it.

Ed: Your film is more visual than narrative, not your basic Hollywood film; yet do you see yourself moving towards narrative?

Peter: It was about narrative and non-narrative. That's part of its

WITH PETER METTLER

subject matter. I'm basically concerned with the themes around that story; whatever way is best to convey them filmically is what I'm interested in. *The Top of His Head*, at the very centre was about the split between intellect and intuition and that tension. So for me intellect equates to narrative and intuition equates to the more musical sense, the more visceral sense.

Ed: Was this the first time you worked with actors on such a scale?

Peter: Yeah. In the past, actors had been used more as figures and landscape, minimal dialogue, minimal expressions. So this film had a lot more dialogue, acting, scenes, in the traditional sense of acting anyway. But I think it's still a stylized form of acting, it's not really naturalistic acting.

Ed: Did you rehearse before shooting?

Peter: Yeah, and you know we'd improvise in rehearsal or discover things in rehearsal. But by the time we'd go to shooting, the schedule was quite tight, so basically things had been decided. It was just a matter of executing. More of the improvisation was in the camera.

Ed: Was the shooting ratio high?

Peter: It was fairly high because there were scenes in the film, in the script, that didn't end up on the screen and also because of this idea of collecting images. But now essentially, I have a library. All that stuff is organized and on videotape. As well, there's images I can use in other films.

Ed: You didn't find you had to restrict yourself to the running time of the film.

Peter: There were a lot of restrictions. That's part of... the higher the budget gets, the more people are involved, and the more people are



concerned about it as a business prospect. So there are pressures to cut it down. This is hypothetical, but I think I probably would have liked it if it was a little bit longer and I think the effect of that would make it seem a little bit shorter because it's a thing of pacing. Minutes are physical time, but when you're watching a film it's really pacing that determines whether it's short or long.

Ed: You just finished shooting a Jane Siberry video. How did you get involved with that?

Peter: I've worked with Jane in various things and known her for a long time and she wanted me to shoot it. I was actually in Europe and came back to do it specifically.

Ed: You were the cameraman and cinematographer. Was there any-

thing else you were involved in creatively in the video?

Peter: Well over time we exchanged ideas, but basically it's her direction.

Ed: Are you still involved in it beyond the shooting, like the editing?

Peter: On a consultant level.

Ed: The set was a bit unusual, with the angled room. Was that something you helped develop?

Peter: It was mostly Curtis's (the art director's) idea. Because Jane wanted a room in which to work, he thought, why not spice it up, not just make a normal room up but add another dimension, which is this forced perspective. It works very well as a general undercurrent for the camera, because there's a lot of distorted perspectives in the whole shoot. There's a wheel on which action takes place, and it's shot directly from overhead and you've no bearing as to where you are. And on the wheel, for example, is a wall with a window and it looks like you're shooting it normally and it's turning around and people would be lying on it, so all sorts of gravity and space are defined. So there's one undercurrent through the whole thing—the camera can do quite strange interpretations of movement by looking at something that's moving already.

Ed: How's Jane Siberry as a director?

Peter: It was her first time. So, with first time directors often people have great visual imagination. Not having the experience, you don't know what it takes technically and physically, the limitations of physics to create that image on film. That's sometimes difficult for someone doing it for the first time. But she's very talented and has a good sense for film, good sense for music. She knows my work and I know her work, we have a good language and rapport, so we can figure out... if there's something she doesn't know she's able to trust me to see it through, through that technology

somehow. I think she was probably happier than she's ever been doing a video, from seeing the rushes. I think partially it's due to the fact that it was a lot of her ideas and that I was doing it. That combination worked.

Ed: Was it storyboarded?

Peter: No, it was very loose. It was not planned out. There were ideas, then through discussing the ideas with Curtis and myself, they became reality. The articulation of the ideas is where we came in. The director's intuitions become concrete thru the crew.

Ed: You're also going to be working with Robert Lepage. What's that about?

Peter: It's a large project called *Tectonic Plates*. It's something that takes place all over the world. The basic concept of the piece is that the earth is divided into a grid pattern; the grid is numbered and each of those squares is called a plate. In the theatre process they develop through improvisations and take scenarios that will revolve around plate 39, which may be Scotland, or plate 72, which may be Los Angeles, and they develop ideas and find links between their improvisations from all these different places. So this has been going on for two years and it's going on another two years and they perform this show in different countries around the world, collecting people as they go, collecting plates, collecting ideas, and things are shifting and it's becoming much more multidimensional. You start looking at it as a jewel from all angles.

Ed: So what's your role in it?

Peter: My role would be two-fold. One, to integrate into that theatrical space and theatrical process at a cinematic level so that in the theatre you would see cinematic images that would grow in the spirit of the working of the piece. The other level would be a finished film unto itself, a kind of adaptation of the theatre piece but not in a conventional sense where you simply recorded the piece

because of it's basic nature to start with. So it would be a film done in the spirit of the theatre piece which would be like the mother of the film.

Ed: Have you shot anything yet?

Peter: No, the money's being raised for it.

Ed: And next you're back to Europe for two months.

Peter: I'm going to Europe partially to develop two projects, babysit *The Top of His Head*, and to write and research.

Ed: These projects that you're working on, are they kind of hush, hush, right now?

Peter: Not really. They're kind of general premises. One's a documentary. It revolves around transcendence, what people do in different cultures in order to transcend their ordinary daily lives. And the film works as a series of different juxtapositions from a specific event in one culture to a specific event in another culture. It could be as diverse as jogging, heroin, gambling, meditation, skydiving. So I hope via those juxtapositions to relate impressions about the conditions of the various cultures that we find. The other film's a feature. It basically revolves around the show, *The Dating Game*. A couple wins a trip to Guatemala; it's a dark comedy, black irony.



SEX, MADNESS
AND THE CHURCH

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE
SANGUEDOLCE

BY MIKE HOOLBOOM

SS: I got a movie camera when I was 13 for my first communion, my first connection with God and film (laughs). The first thing my uncle told me was, "Start shooting right away. But never move the camera too quickly." I started off slow in high school and I've been picking up speed since. In Grade 12 I made some films and won first prize in a Kodak competition in the borough of York. Then I headed to Sheridan College to learn more about filmmaking where I made two 16mm films, slick, fast and commercial. They're consistent with what I'd go on to do later, trying to get the camera to become performative, though it was done in a more rigid way. I did some commercial work, then I got a Creative Artists in the Schools Grants to teach super-8 filmmaking at my old high school. I met up again with Carl Brown—we knew each other from high school and college. He said, "I'm going to make a 90 minute film on mental illness, would you be interested in working on it?" I was skeptical but said okay. Carl, Randy and I spent a lot of time together after that. Randy Smith was a sound person who did concrete music and wanted to get into film sound. We spent a year together working, fighting and living together. It was a forty hour a week job, researching, writing letters, talking for a year.

We based our film *Full Moon Darkness* on Thomas Szasz's book "The Myth of Mental Illness" in which he speaks of mental illness as a metaphor and of the necessity of separating psychiatry from the state. People are incarcerated against their will, and the enforced drug policy is appalling and inhuman. This is an extension of the church's power - today psychiatrists determine who is crazy, who should be shocked, etc.

Still from Rhythms of the Heart



We talked to people in the mental health establishment who agreed with Szasz but wouldn't appear on film and wouldn't write us support letters. We ended up with a group called On Our Own, a self help group of ex-psychiatric inmates (as they refer to themselves). They were publishing a newsletter called Phoenix Rising which Carl edited for eight months. In order to make the film we felt we needed to come to terms with what these people were doing, how they were living, how they felt, not just to roll in like a NFB documentary, ask a lot of fast questions and leave. So we hung around there, met a lot of the inmates and got to know them pretty well. We were close. We figured out that we wanted to interview some people for the film. Then we felt there had to be another element to the film which would consist of abstract images. The whole film was to be shot in black and white, feature length. The abstract roll would deal with Parkdale, the living conditions, the places where they went, the landscape of their surrounding, but also their inner landscape. So we started shooting that because we didn't need any people - we weren't ready to interview yet. We had a whole roll of images that dealt in some way with mental illness - the incarceration, the entrapment, living in these close quarters. A year and a half later, in early 1983, we got \$8500 from Canada Council. Then we started in on the interviews. Thomas Szasz was the first. Don Weitz, an ex-psychiatrist and ex-inmate was very

keen to speak, very powerful and outspoken. Then there were three ex-inmates, two women and a man. The last was a priest because the history of mental illness begins with the church. Foucault talked about it some, claiming that at the moment lepers disappeared from Europe the insane began to show, and that this kind of outcast had its origins in the church.

Szasz was the first person presenting the argument, the history, the pitfalls of psychiatry. He was shot in a very straight documentary way by Phil Hoffman with virtually no camera movement. Then we shot Don Weitz and the camera started to become part of the dialogue. As he became more and more enraged with the crimes against humanity (as he called them) the camera would jump closer and closer to him, following the intensity of his speech and the patterns of the room. Then we filmed John Bedford who was one of the inmates; he's very soft spoken and as he spoke he became more and more faint. When I took the magazine off the camera it flew open and I shut it in a hurry and thought, shit, we've lost it all. We got it back and he starts off properly exposed and as his voice gets fainter the image becomes more and more fogged and as he finishes, the film totally whites out. It was amazing for all that to come together. Once we finished filming it took us a week to edit.

MH: What was the reaction of the

people who were in the film?

SS: The inmates liked it because it gave them a voice, it presented their position without trying to set everyone into a hierarchy, all the speakers had equal time. That was 1983. Then I thought: now I have to make my film.

Woodbridge is a small town just north-west of Toronto that has 70,000 inhabitants, 80% of which are Italian. It's a little Italy. It's become a place where middle class Italians



frame enlargement from *Rhythms of the Heart*

can keep the dream alive, a place where they can stay together. It's hardest for the kids. Uniforms, religion and gender separation marks the Italian schools. For myself, I never knew whether I was Italian or Canadian. I started writing about Woodbridge and applied for a grant which I didn't get. Then I thought, fuck it, I'll just start.

I began shooting around the house, inside and out, showing the structural support for the institutional pressures of the community. The family and the architecture were connected. I concentrated on children because I felt they'd tie me back into the community. The film was about trying to reconcile myself with my past, about the way out of history. After shooting *Full Moon*

Darkness my camera became much more involved and subjective in filming its environment, I could shoot something that everybody sees a million times and make it my own.

MH: Do you think there's a formal parallel between the groupings of images in *Full Moon* and *Woodbridge*?

SS: Sure. The difference between the two was that *Full Moon* moved around an issue, and *Woodbridge*

came from my own experience. I moved from a Roman Catholicism that's about patriarchy and oppression into a kind of filmmaking that gave me choices. There were no choices in *Woodbridge*, only ways out.

MH: How would it have been different if you'd made the film while living inside the community?

SS: It would have been a bitter film. When I started the film I was living there, a year later I moved out. I felt the community was stifling, the machoism, the sexism, the closed circle of belief, family problems. I think the film ends quite optimistically now. I come home and there's a portrait sequence where I try to present myself to them, present them to the film. If I'd lived there it

would have been more like the tunnel sequence - running to get out. At the end of the film they ask to take my portrait and all they get is an overexposed frame of my face, which is a movie image of the flash going off; I look almost ghostly. For me it suggests trying to give myself but not being quite willing or ready yet. What remains is the gesture of our coming together, of reconciling ourselves through this last image.

What I tried to show in the other sequences was the relation between the church and the family. For instance in the baking sequence the rosary is being recited on the soundtrack, which gives their cooking a feeling of ritual. The picnic makes a very particular sexual distinction - the men are eating or lying down. The women are eating or working. And that distinction is part of the religious concept of weaker vessel bullshit. And then there's the architecture of the church that ties into the houses, the home becomes a shrine. As a kid we'd have plastic on our sofas so they could be preserved. There were whole rooms which we weren't allowed to visit. They were meant to be seen not used. Lamps came wrapped with plastic over the shades for dust in the showroom, but often we would keep the covers on; so I grew up in this whole plastic culture. It was a question of preserving and worshipping something.

The trouble I have now with *Woodbridge* is that one scene is rarely integrated with another, it's composed of episodic and individual sequences. We'll see scene a then b then c and we'd never go back. Only in *Rhythms* did that integration finally occur.

MH: But this tendency to keep things apart, to work out of episodic sequences has something to do with your apparatus. You own a CP camera which takes a ten minute roll, and over and over again you've gone out to photograph a scene or event using these ten minutes to structure a kind of expressionistic mini-drama. It's like the action painters of the 1940s, laying out their canvasses as an arena of

interaction. Their work was a kind of performance emphasizing the movement of the hand, the gesture, their signature. When it was over the canvas would bear the sign of their passing. You seem to work in the same way, using the camera as a paintbrush, joining inside and out. What you've kept returning with since *Full Moon* are these ten minute hunks that seem to speak of a single moment with an intensity and closure that's difficult to imagine hinged with other moments.

SS: In college I made shorts. *Full Moon* wasn't edited, it was strung together. *Woodbridge* was made like that as well. *Rhythms of the Heart* was the first time that integration took place. Editing was the most difficult thing for me to learn.

MH: So tell me how *Rhythms of the Heart* started.

SS: Ten days after I finished *Woodbridge* I left for Europe. Ten months into the trip I started cycling and everything changed. I thought maybe this is what my next film is about, getting away from anything that's externally imposed, like competing or making a film through government grants. I thought I would make a film about the rhythms of the landscape and the music. Cycling was revealing, it brought those things out.

During our big fights over *Full Moon Darkness* Carl would say "You're not a filmmaker, you're just a technician" and I wasn't sure. Going away allowed me to come back and say fuck this, I don't have to know, I'm just going to shoot. The first thing I shot when I got back was Niagara Falls. This scene is filled with colour and I tried to get into the mist and the colour and the constantly rising haze, while a woman is asking behind me, "Excuse me, are you finished, can I get in now?" And I'm just going click-click click-click with the camera and I said, "I waited fifteen minutes to stand here, I'm not moving for anybody." The best thing about my landscape work was losing expectations, realizing that what I wanted and what I got didn't have to be the

same. I also shot a couple of thousand feet in the summer of 1987, an hour north of Superior, not knowing where/how it would be used. It was nice, it allowed me to just shoot things without making a story or moving towards some end.

I then met up with a director, Guiseppe, who was rehearsing *La Boheme* at night with non-professionals. The opera wasn't going the way it should have, the way he envisioned it, the way Puccincci's *La Boheme* should have been performed, and he was furious. He tried to impose his vision relentlessly, never letting anyone fluctuate. I thought I could use Guiseppe as the narrator, that he could bring us in and out of the music, out of the action.

During our big fights over *Full Moon Darkness* Carl would say "You're not a filmmaker, you're just a technician" and I wasn't sure.

I was reading a lot of mythology and Jungian myths and dreamt about the saxophone, a stark looking man holding it in, letting it out, screaming alone in a room. I auditioned three or four people knowing there was no way it could be rehearsed. We had to get it in one take. Our timing was so close it was frightening. I tried to take the intensity of the music and relay it visually; as he would start to jiggle and make these fluctuating notes up and down the camera would follow, and then he began this wild orgiastic scream and the camera went everywhere all over his body and I just got shards of light changing the exposure and music while I was filming. There were really two instruments going, his sax and my camera. When he reached the pinnacle it was almost like he was dying, it was really draining, and right at the end he starts to wind down as if he's gone too far, too fast, and the aperture's opening and closing. And then he just stops and this is just when the camera's frozen on his face and he pulls his lips from

the reed and I just pan to darkness. After we did this, nobody said a word, it was almost like we had sex together; we said, okay this is it. It was a real union of picture and sound. The sax piece was a seven minute straight take.

MH: Your shooting moves between two players, your camera as a performance instrument and something else - a waterfall, forest fire, sax player, dancer. All of these are reworked and represented according to your own rhythm, your own control. Is what's going on in front of you irrelevant?

SS: It becomes totally transformed, one step removed from the original. Dance isn't dance anymore because it's on film, there's no sense of the choreography, it's become transformed into my personal visual style. It becomes colours, light, shape, movement. I think we all see things in a different way, so it becomes a way of internalizing what's going on in front of the camera, and in turn that becomes a metaphor or comment on what's going on in other parts of the film. So the camera begins to speak for me, with an image in place of the word. I think that's what the landscape work is doing, it's taking the outside and moving it through the veins. It's not important to name the falls or forest fire, they're important for their emotive power, for what they might represent. The music, the dance, the opera, everything becomes internalized and becomes a metaphor for my understanding, for what's inside.

After that I started seeing Alex. She was already in the film because I'd filmed her dancing on the rooftop in 16mm. Two months into the relationship we started filming together. We both held the camera, both equally vulnerable.

MH: How did she feel about the camera?

SS: At times it was very erotic, being in bed with the camera was like being voyeur and participant at the same time. Then it became really complicated, because we started breaking up. She was sleeping with

some other guy and I was heartbroken. Then I phoned her and said, look, I know we're not seeing each other and you're with him and that's cool, but I'm trying to finish this film. I don't have enough images, would you be interested in filming some more? I can pay you some money, it would be strictly work. But was the camera a way to reenact what we had, to create a new fiction for what I'd lost or to continue things in a way that we couldn't anymore? I guess it was a way of being able to be with her. This was two days after we broke up.

MH: What did she say?

SS: She was very skeptical. She was worried about me changing the film out of anger or bitterness, because I was so hurt. I asked her later if she thought that happened. She said no. But at the time it was really awkward. So she agreed. She came back two nights and we shot everything. The dancing, simulated sex, it was all well executed, smooth, comfortable and it worked. It's strange to bring a camera into a relationship, it gives it a fixed perspective that experience doesn't have. It takes our past and reforms it, and in turn that informs our past, so it becomes a cycle.

MH: Film and desire share a common shape, the shape of a circle. Both recycle experience, only film takes this pattern of repetitions and pushes it outside, as an object.

SS: Between the body of the film and the body of the filmmaker is personal style. Style creates repetition, it's a visual signature...

MH: ...an ordering of the image that's immediately recognizable on billboards, postcards, posters, canvas. Like making a name for yourself.

SS: Any kind of repetition suggests the name. It means re-signing yourself to what's already happened, of doing the same thing over, of going back. It may be a good thing, it allows continuity, remembering, mourning. When you pick up a camera you can't help but be

informed by what you've already done. To think of that as enslavement denies us any sense of development.

MH: I spoke with a couple of German filmmakers, both in their mid-30s, both of whom have made better than a dozen films, who find it's increasingly difficult to shoot anything. Because when they pick up the camera they feel the continuities within their own work, their predilections and preferences.



Having been consistently drawn to certain themes, framing, rhythms and movements, they feel the force of this history every time they take up the camera. There's a kind of fatalism at work they're not able to move out of. They've dealt with it by imposing restraints to jar them loose, shooting only on a bicycle, or only in a small room, or with different cameras, etc.

SS: We have the same problem with grants. When you turn images into words you have to speak about the end, of how everything fits. And it's difficult to do when you're working something out, when you're involved in a process, not for the sake of The End but for its own sake. For me my work feels more liberating because I don't feel the pressure of having to know what I'm going to do with it. For me the structure of the work comes after the shooting.

All along the story was secondary to the landscape. In terms of footage *Rhythms* is 40% relationship, 20% music and 40% landscape. It becomes the space in which the story's telling is told, the internal setting of the film. The landscape begins very peacefully, the rhythm slow and inviting. We're looking behind the eyes, into the mist. Then the camera begins to roam, moving over rock. In the cooking sequences it's more directly connected. When we're in the cooking scene we see lots of

clouds and water footage, it takes us back to the landscape work, and takes us away from the simply physical reality of the tomato, bottle, garlic and makes those things a part of the landscape as well. We don't know whether we're looking at garlic or rock, so we go from blue wall to blue sky, or smoke into mushroom. It brings that consciousness together. By the film's end there's a desperate kind of race, a frenetic search for something, trying to tie in all the earlier landscape elements of earth/sun/water/rock in a dig or search, only to end up in the same place, back inside.

The second element is the music. The music starts off very softly with the opening waterfall, it gets real aggressive in the middle in the dance sequence. The dancer becomes an extension of the pain, anger and angst that's trying to be let out in this wild dance. This is accompanied by shots of a pianist whose playing

becomes the physical manifestation of a music that's happening somewhere inside. From here we move to Alex and Steven talking about the breakup with a really soft sax piece that's very comforting, only to end up with the sax screeching and Steven alone. Then the music slows down with the last voice and piano, it takes a resigned tone over these frenetic images. It's a release and reconciliation of what's gone before.

The third element is the diary images. The first time we see them there's two newlyweds looking suspiciously into the camera. Then we get the fictional marriage and sex. Then we go to more domestic duties like cooking, sleeping, eating. Finally we end up in the kitchen with Alex and myself alone, and it's the first time we hear messages on the telephone answering machine. She's trying to talk to me on the phone, "C'mon Stephen I know you're there. Why can't you pick up the phone and talk to me?" So it's the beginning of the break-up. We're together and we're not together and the telephone serves to show the distance that technology imposes. These machines which are supposed to tie us together ending up doing the reverse. The super-8 was also a part of all that.

My answering machine messages come up while Alex and I are cuddling. I speak of our break-up, of what our relationship meant for me. The images of comforting each other comes from an earlier time. The whole scene deals with unanswered questions: Why are we together? What happened? What went wrong? And maybe these questions can't ever be answered.

MH: As you're talking in the film about a relationship that is finished, voiced-over past images of that join, it's as if we're asked to look into these gestures of everyday life, and wonder which already bears the sign of separation. It's a reminder of how ambiguous the image is and how direct the word is by contrast.

SS: It's how we've learned to speak, not like music or poetry but like accounting.

MH: You spoke earlier about the way in which a film acts to control and contain, to frame and cut out - as you continue to work on a film it has its own dictates and demands quite apart from the experiences depicted within it. The film refigures your diary images, your personal

experience according to its own needs. When you say that the film grants you a clarity, what does that mean? How is that possible?

SS: It's all a lie, it doesn't have anything to do with what's happened. I reinvent the story while trying to be fair to the people involved. The problem is that images take the place of memory, the super-8 images of my childhood are what's left in my mind when I look back. That's when the image stands in for memory and experiences. It's all there is.

I have an obsession with order and for me making work is an attempt to create order out of the mess that's around me.

MH: The film becomes an image of control, of order.

SS: In my everyday life everything is very structured, I have an appointment book, everything is neat, I know where every strip of film is stored. But in my films, it's all over the place, the way I shoot... In my life I'm trying to impose a sense of order to feel more in control. And then everything goes to hell. In the films I shoot wildly and then try to impose an order afterwards. It's the reverse of what happens in life.

MH: What about going on to shoot more personal stuff?

SS: I'm concerned about that because I've done a lot of shooting during a recent trip to Thailand and Rhonda's in it a little. I'm not sure I want the camera to be there. There's a fear of repetition, that we'll break up and I'll be left with images that I have to make sense of. I don't want that. I don't want the image to stand for the relationship which is what it did with Alex. I don't want to live through the films.



Steven Sanguedolce

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH LEWIS

INTERVIEWED BY IRIS PAABO

ELIZABETH LEWIS, animator and LIFT member, works with coloured pencils on animation bond. Her work involves metamorphoses and drawn camera moves as well as live-action sequences.

SO HOW DID YOU GET INTO ANIMATION?

Well, I went to art school in Montreal - I'd always liked movement in my painting and drawing, but somehow felt that something was missing. So when I discovered animation, that's what hooked me - my drawings were ACTUALLY MOVING!

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST FILM?

It was untitled. I'd gone to see Wolf Koenig at the National Film Board, and he suggested I do a couple of flip books. So I went away and made quite a few - free-flowing figures, horses, nudes, birds, metamorphoses. I borrowed a Super-8 camera and shot these flip books and went back to the NFB with my first film. Well, Wolf Koenig was impressed - he offered me an animation contract for a poetry series. I picked a poem by Leonard Cohen - *A Kite Is A*



Victim, and that film was completed in 1976. It was a dream come true to work at Studio A. That film just flowed out of me.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR NEXT FILM MADE?

Well, there was quite a hiatus between *Kite* and my next film. I moved to Toronto, for one thing, then I had my kids. That took a big chunk out of my artistic career. When I was ready again, I'd found out about the Ontario Arts Council grants, and made a successful application for another poetry film, *Villanelle*, from a poem by Earl Birney. I used a live-action sequence of Earl Birney in that film because he was so interesting in his descrip-

tion of how he came to write the poem. *Villanelle* took three years and two grants to make, and was finished in 1988.

SO WHAT'S ON YOUR ANIMATION TABLE NOW?

Well, I'm working on a new film at the moment, but I am not really far enough along to talk about it. Yet.

HOW DO YOU SUPPORT YOUR HABIT OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING?

That's a good way of putting it. Well, I do a lot of commercial work - animation, in-betweening, rotoscoping, and so on. It is a way of making a living. I see animation with two sides. One, where I can be the artist - the painter that I was, since I make my independent animation with the same spirit I made my paintings. But I also have this need to make money - so it's the creative urge and the eating urge. I work commercial animation which doesn't fulfill me creatively, but always offers basic enjoyment from drawing. I mean, if someone is willing to pay me to hold a pencil and draw pictures, I'm perfectly happy with that.

LET'S NOT LOSE THE EUCLID

BY ROSEMARY DONEGAN

On March 26, 1990, a community meeting was held in the Euclid Theatre to encourage continued support for the theatre. The Euclid needs to raise \$295,000 in the next few months and is appealing to those of us who care that Toronto continues to have a theatre that shows independent film and video. The following is the prepared address delivered on March 26 by Rosemary Donegan, President of The Development Education Centre (DEC).

Since its opening in June of 1989 the Euclid Theatre has become the home of audiences of independent Canadian film and video, and all multi-ethnic/racial and cultural communi-

ties. Moreover, the Euclid has become an accessible venue where individuals and special interest groups within the community can present their work and ideas to the public.

At present the Euclid's future is tenuous due to its financial difficulties. These difficulties stem from a variety of factors. This report focuses on this crisis by outlining the theatre problems and what we hope to do about them. We felt that it was necessary to do this to give our supporters a clear picture of what was happening and to assuage the rumours that are floating around.

The Euclid Theatre was first called the Community Visual Arts Theatre.

It was a project initiated by the Development Education Centre (DEC) in 1985. The rationale behind the theatre's inception was two-fold. First, it was felt by DEC that much independent film, video especially work done by lesbian/gay, Asian, Native, Black and other artists, both Canadian and international, lacked a venue in which to be presented. The commercial venues being virtually barred. Second, by creating this arena the public would acquire an alternative to commercial attractions. As public interest grew, so would the scope of independent productions. Hence it was proposed that a theatre be established that specifically catered to the needs of these artists and the community groups they represented. The Euclid

was the result.

Originally, the theatre was to be located at 229 College St.. However, due to several rental problems, a new location was found, 394 Euclid. The building is shared by a number of groups including DEC Films, Between the Lines Publishing, The Black Women's Union, and Tools for Peace, to name but a few.

Renovations to the theatre space, originally an Orange hall, allowed the Euclid to seat 190 people and to offer high resolution video, 16mm and 35mm film.

The theatre is managed by two staff members: a programmer/publicist and an administrator. They have been assisted by a programming/outreach committee which has been active and very important in its ongoing support of the theatre. But we desperately need more staff, as our present staff of Terri and Michelle are overworked and underpaid.

The Euclid's programming was established with a three-fold mandate:

1. to provide an exhibition centre for independent Canadian film and video
2. to program work from the entire range of multi-cultural and ethnic communities in Toronto and Canada.
3. to show work by international and Canadian producers examining Third World issues.

The last nine months have shown that the original mandate has been fulfilled. Work from all genres—experimental, dramatic, documentary and animation has been shown. From the experimental Pleasure Dome series, to the Black Film and Video Network, to the Irish Society's series two weeks ago and the upcoming Images '90, Toronto's independent film and video festival.

One of the unique features of the Euclid has been the exhibition of video on a large screen theatrical format, the only such facility in Toronto. This combined with the installation of 35mm projection, means we have a fully equipped

theatre.

The mandate has been accomplished through the Euclid's own programming and co-sponsorship with artists and community groups sharing costs, financial risk and profits.

Thus the Euclid has evolved into a unique international showcase and a Toronto venue of growing importance. The process has been an uphill battle, as the theatre has had BOTH to publicize AND promote the individual showings and series. While simultaneously establishing itself as a film and video "theatre" in the city.

Despite severely limited promotion budgets, the theatre runs daily listings in the Globe and Mail and publishes a monthly calendar. This requires being well organized in advance to use the various free-listings, while being flexible enough to be able to accommodate last minute changes and opportunities.

The financial picture—it is hard to tell if this is the good news or the bad news...but here it is: The construction debt is \$134,000. To complete the renovation we need \$116,500. The deficit and general operations shortfall is \$45,000. It is important to note that the reason there is such a major construction debt is NOT due to construction problems, or poorly budgeted projects, etc. After having so many problems at 229 College, with landlords, it was felt necessary to obtain some security in Toronto's inflated real estate market. So we bought into this building with two other investors. The original fundraising campaign was a great success, lots of individuals, groups and institutions supported the theatre, purchased seats and helped out in big and little ways. The major stumbling block for a project like the Euclid is inherent in the realities of the Toronto real estate market. It is the same problem that the Factory Lab Theatre, the Danny Grossman Dance Company, etc. etc. have faced in the last few years. The issue and the potential solutions have been fully documented in the Toronto Arts Council report "No Vacancy"

on the high cost of cultural facilities in the city of Toronto.

We need to raise \$295,000 in total, to be on a flat playing field (as Mr. Mulroney likes to say). We intend to raise that in the next few months to get us on our feet.

What we have learned in the last six months is the reality of how long and steady the climb is, to develop a consistent audience for a theatre which programs such a wide range of material, both nationally and internationally. But it is growing steadily. Last October-November on Saturday nights there were often only 10 to 20 people in the audience. For the last 2 months the weekends have been almost all sell-outs, with the need to add extra screenings, due to overflow audiences for particular films.

The box-office is growing—it is increasing by \$1,000 a month; people know where the theatre is, how to get there and how to find out what's on... The Euclid's programming is stronger. It is the growth in attendance and the increasing demand from community groups for use of the theatre that gives us the knowledge and assurance that the Euclid theatre is an important contribution to the city of Toronto and it is going to survive!

We are presently in the process of applying to the City of Toronto for cultural facilities funding to complete the construction and the renovations to the exterior, to the Department of Communications emergency fund for an air conditioner (an essential factor in the summer) and for funds to promote the theatre and hire additional staff to work with the local communities and film and video groups. We are looking into ways to schedule and fund independent curatorial programming and additional daytime rentals.

We are on our way and we would like to thank all the individuals and groups who have helped us so far. We're all in this together...LET'S NOT LOSE THE EUCLID.

CINEMA AND THE SEX TRADE

AN INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN

BY GARY POPOVICH

G: I've been a stripper for fourteen years and I've been a prostitute off and on for longer than that, since I was 16. I was also involved in organizing stuff like the strippers union at the end of the seventies. Then around '84, I organized a variety show that had twenty different acts. It was just for girls in the business. It was called Professional Bad Girls and Painted Ladies Present Pot Pourri, and it was a



Gwendolyn working on first film PHOTO: John Porter

party in celebration of ourselves—to counteract what the women in the sex trade were feeling, that internalizing of the negative attitudes that everybody else has towards them. It got pretty heavy around the time of *Not A Love Story*. Feminists saw sex workers as part of the problem and some feminists even to-day have a lot of difficulty between what's explicit and what's exploitive. I thought *Not A Love Story* scooped somebody out of her environment and took her to New York City and dumped her into this horrible, horrible stuff. The thing that pissed me off the most was the scene where Bonnie Sheer Klein has Fonda Peters/Linda Lee Tracey get up and do the cunt shot for the magazine. My attitude was, if the director wanted to show that she should have gotten up and done it herself because that wasn't Fonda's show. She wasn't used to showing her cunt. As far as I'm concerned there's nothing wrong with showing your cunt. Nothing wrong at all. But I felt that the filmmakers were incredibly manipulative, they wanted her to feel degraded. Whose doing the exploiting here?

G.P.: At the end of the film she's wearing that lei and trouncing around on the beach feeling all liberated and refreshed and renewed by the experience; she's turning over a new leaf. It's a very patronizing

attitude on the part of the filmmakers.

G: Very patronizing and very middle class. I don't know where these women came from that made that movie, but they didn't come from my world. At the time all of this was going down, our town was hot with pornography debates and feminists were marching in Take Back the Night Marches standing in front of strip clubs and demanding that they be closed, there was no dialogue between the sex workers and the women's movement. You had to renounce the devil and come and sit on their knee.

G.P.: How do you feel about those charges then, that those involved in the sex trade are being exploited by men's desires and attitudes, and by the business around it?

G: First of all our working conditions are often difficult, but if there's any real change going to happen then it has to come from within the community. You can't have outsiders coming in and saying you shouldn't do that and you should do this. What we needed was feminists saying: We want to help you make changes that you want. What do you need us to do? How can we help? But the basic attitude of the feminists was, "This shouldn't

be happening". They didn't want to help empower us to have control in the industry. They wanted the industry stopped.

There's nothing wrong with satisfying needs. Sex is a basic need. Unfortunately some people have more access to sexual gratification than others. And some people have more need for sexual gratification. Sometimes

people get fucked up and are obsessive and they can be a sex addict. Some guys that go to prostitutes are addicts and they blow their money the same way someone might blow their money drinking or gambling. But, for a lot of guys it's just satisfying a basic, healthy need. May be the guy's new in the country. Or new in town. Or he loves his wife and he doesn't want to have an affair, but he hasn't been laid in awhile; or they always do everything exactly the same for 25 years; they always fucked in the missionary position. Maybe he wants to try with the girl on top. I mean, I've had guys pay to just look at my cunt—they've been married, their wife had given them children, they love each other, but she won't ever let them do it with the lights on. We live in a very sexually repressed society, so naturally, sometimes fulfilling people's sexual needs becomes somewhat perverted or obsessive or fixated. But the basic right to have sexual gratification should be as obvious as people not being homeless.

G.P.: But do you feel that there is any aspect of it, as it exists now, that is exploitative?

G: Yeah, the working conditions are awful.

G.P.: How would you change that?

G: Worker control. It's as basic as that. When I organized the Professional Bad Girls and Painted Ladies Party it was in reaction to this anti-stripper, anti-sex worker stuff. Each girl could bring one friend. I'd spent a couple of months in one particular club making posters and encouraging girls to make posters, pictures, of their families, of things they loved, and stuff they didn't like. It was to help foster a sense of community and a sense of pride and a sense of history, and a sense that we're all in this together. So, I've been involved in this kind of thing and doing stand-up on the sex trade, political stand-up in bars and stuff like—I'm proud to be a prostitute. So when A-

Space did their thing exploring erotic imagery, they gave folks money to make films, erotic films. I was one of the people who was given five hundred bucks to make a movie. Other people made 10 minute movies, and we made a forty minute movie called *Out of the Blue*, subtitled *A Cozy Porn and Variety Slut Show*. And the reason why we called ourselves sluts is because we weren't paid to do it. There wasn't enough money to pay the girls to appear in the film, so they had to be sluts and work for free, for the pleasure of doing it. The premise was, "What do men and women in the sex trade find erotic?" So it was our personal pleasures rather than what the traditional audience wants to see.

G.P.: What was the reaction to that film?

G: Basically it was the arts community that came. It was shown at A-Space. Naturally they liked different things than what the girls liked in the movie. One girl that the arts community really liked was Annie, who jumped around in one of her costumes and made up little songs. It was sort of like a girl at play. And the artist people really liked her work, while the girls were saying, "What the fuck was Annie doing?" I showed it at A-Space, then in Buffalo at Hallwall's Gallery, then in

Toronto at Artefact for three shows in one night. I sold tickets up front to the girls, for them to come on this night. Some girls were disappointed because they were comparing it to a Hollywood film. It was rough, but



when I see what other people do for their first movies, I think mine was pretty darn good.

G.P.: How did you get involved in filmmaking. Were you doing other artistic activities?

G: I'd been doing stand-up, and I've taken clown classes, and I grew up doing kids magic shows. So I had a background of performance stuff. And stripping of course is perform-public good, because it's all safe sex. It's putting condoms on with your mouth, putting a condom on with your hand, showing how to cut up a condom and open it up over a cunt for eating pussy. So, I stayed up all night editing; as far as I'm concerned it was a disaster. I never even ran it through my projector. Another thing the cops had done...they probably didn't know how to show a movie and they broke the film and stuck it back together with masking tape in a couple of places. And I didn't know that, and as I'm rolling it, it goes into my projector with masking tape and bums up my freakin projector, so I hadn't even run my movie when I took it to the Purple Institution...and I had to do the voice-over live on a movie I hadn't even seen. And part of it was upside down and part of it was hairy, covered in cat hair. But out of that,

this boy, Brendhan, that I don't even know recommended me to go to an arts festival in England, and I'm going in May, and I'm representing Canada. It's called Edge 90.

G.P.: What's the project you work for called?

G: Prostitute's Safe Sex Project. We got funded from the city and from the province for this Outreach Worker Project to go around and give out condoms to other girls and talk about safe sex and stuff. Most prostitutes use condoms; so for them the message has to be a bit more sophisticated.

Girls want to know what to do if a condom breaks, how to stop your condoms from breaking, how to clean your needle, why not to share, don't use Vaseline for a lubricant on your condom, because oil will break the rubber...use a water-based lube. So, just real specific information. Prostitutes have a very low rate of HIV infection and wherever they do have it, they find out its from their personal life. They gave money to the gay community to develop their own educational programmes, so we're in the same boat. There isn't a heck of a lot of information filtering down to the street girls. Our attitude is that the girls are in a better position to teach people how to use condoms than anybody else. The health care workers say, "Use condoms." But the prostitute is the one that teaches the man how to use a condom. Most prostitutes can get the condom on before the guy even knows it's on. Go down on the guy and you'll get the condom on him. Just keep the condom in your mouth and slip it on him. Most men will wear a condom. But, it's only at the girl's insistence. I interview guys in the bars and do safe sex raps. That's part of my job. And the guys say, well, well, no I wouldn't want to insult her by wearing a condom, but if she asked me to wear a condom, okay. So, it's like, we have to do their laundry and pick up their socks

and we're the ones that have to buy the condoms, and make them wear it. If you look in the magazines, the ads are aimed at the women to buy the condoms. You don't want to wear a condom, fine, go wack off without me. There's a line from all those buttons we got from New York City: **Men, Use Condoms Or Beat It.** Because prostitutes see a lot of men and because they insist on condoms, they are the real front line workers. They show the guys you can have a good time—wasn't that a good come, and look at that, you wore a rubber, big deal. So, our attitude wasn't "We've gotta do something because these dumb broads are fucking up." Our attitude was, these girls are doing this good work all by themselves with no support. They deserve to have some credit and credibility and some free condoms.

G.P.: What do you say to them, what do you do?

G: I give them out condoms, talk about safe sex, answer questions, talk about the weather, talk about politics, talk about the sweeps, talk about getting prostitution decriminalized.

G.P.: How do they respond to you?

G: Well they think I'm an oddball, and they're glad to know I'm getting paid. If you have a stereotype of what a prostitute looks like or acts like, I don't fit it. But I've always been like that. I've been on the street doing this now since the summer, so now they're finally starting to know me—I stuck the winter out.

G.P.: How did the project get started?

G: That magazine I gave you, *Stilletto*, has got one article in there that says, "Who are these whores with the free condoms anyway?" The press was starting to blame prostitutes for the spread of H.I.V. into the mainstream straight population, into the heterosexual population. And in some places it was being used as an excuse for detaining prosti-

tutes. And the cops jumped on the bandwagon wanting more money to harass the girls more. Have you ever heard of a case where a prostitute held a gun to a man's head and said, you have to fuck me without a condom?

G.P.: How did you get involved with the NFB's 5 Feminist Minutes?



G: The girl upstairs was having a party on the rooftop, Sunday afternoon and I just happened to come up to say hello. A girl at the party named Meryn said, "Hey, Gwendolyn, you should apply for this." My Outreach territory is basically Cabbagetown and Church and Jarvis. There's two women doing Parkdale. So my 5 minute NFB film is the story about them doing Outreach in Parkdale, along Queen Street, talking to the girls.

I also got a Toronto Arts Council grant to do a new show called **HARDCORE**. It's going to be in this year's Fringe Festival. I had brought the Merchants of Love show from Ottawa here to Toronto for last summer's Fringe Festival and it went really well. I sold out all my shows and my proposal to do a second act received funding. It's going to have a movie in it too. I've been doing stuff since the early 80's. Suddenly this year...what a blessing. I got Trillium Foundation funding, then I got NFB, then I got Toronto Arts Council funding. I was stunned. Sheila has a line: "I'm not equipped for total acceptance." And that fit. It happened that this sexual contact that I'd had turned out positive for hepatitis. So I had to have a hep test. I figured if they're

going to suck blood out of me for the hep test I'll get an HIV anti-body test at the same time. I put it into my mind that I was probably positive. I got all this good luck, so I must be positive...divine retribution, whatever. You can't have everything. Then I found out I wasn't positive. Then I thought, oh, so my punishment is I have to do the work. It's like, 'you have to stick around and work.'

HARDCORE is about a therapist, psychologist here in Toronto who organized an anti-porn conference. He tried to bring in the Catholics, and the fundamentalist right-wingers aligned with the feminist community here in Toronto in an anti-porn front. It was at OISE and it was a day long event. **HARDCORE** is my experience of that day.

So it's a sex worker questioning the morality of the right wing in their anti-porn crusade.

G.P.: Have you had problems with patronizing feminists who are looking out for your good without understanding what you do?

G: It's 1990 and it's getting a lot better. There's Lynn suggesting Ottawa and Meryn suggesting I apply to the NFB. So now in the balance it's starting to be more equal. But there was a time when there was so much hostility, cause you were worse than the men, because you were collaborating with them. I've had women scream at me, "You make it impossible for women to walk down the street at night!" I walk down the street at night. So much hostility and so much anger and feeling so threatened by us. I'm not going to be bitter because change has happened. But it hasn't happened without us fighting. OPIRG, Ontario Public Interest Research Group, which was basically a university academic bunch, organized a conference on prostitution and pornography. That was at OISE too. They had all these academics and big-wing feminists talking about porn and talking about prostitution. And they invited prostitutes to be there, but instead

of putting them on the panels with the other 'experts', they had them scheduled to all be on one panel...like the freak show panel. 'If you wanna see a real live prostitute, come at four o'clock.' And the whores had to fight and say, "No fuckin' way. We wanna be represented on all the panels."

G.P.: Many of the women would be reluctant to work on a film that might expose them, or might make them vulnerable, wouldn't they?

G: It was beyond my wildest hopes the number of street girls who came through for this film. What really surprised me was how many insisted I use their real name in the credits. But the bottom line is, making this movie, giving out some condoms, it that performance mode again. The bounds are only the bounds of your own imagination.

G: Well the one thing I don't like about film compared to live performance is that, being a control freak, the thought of my movie being shown when I'm not there...I want to know if they're laughing, I want to know what they're saying in the lobby. That's what I like about showing these films with the live voices. It's like, "No, I can't send you my film, you have to bring me too." Another thing is that as a stripper you get applause every time you bend over!

G.P.: So you still get gratification in the performance aspect of being a stripper?

G: Oh ya. It's also communication. Cause I talk to the guys while I'm working with them. You basically work one guy, while the other guys become voyeurs watching you work with whoever you're working the moment. It's not just that though. It's also the wild times, it was the dope, the girls, come and go as you please, being on the fringe of society, fuck you all, we're special, we're different. Fourteen years of stripping...you go through changes.

I started out like a little puppy dog that wanted everybody to love me. You get pretty tired fast. That's when you realize you have to pace yourself. You don't do every guy in the audience. You pick and choose. And I pick who I want to work with. That's one of the fucked up things that therapy did...for awhile it made



me ashamed of what I was doing, and angry at myself. Then you hate the guys too. If you hate it, get out...or change yourself, or change the space so that it's better.

G.P.: Do you see indications that positive changes are more likely now, that things are changing?

G: Times are hard in this town. I

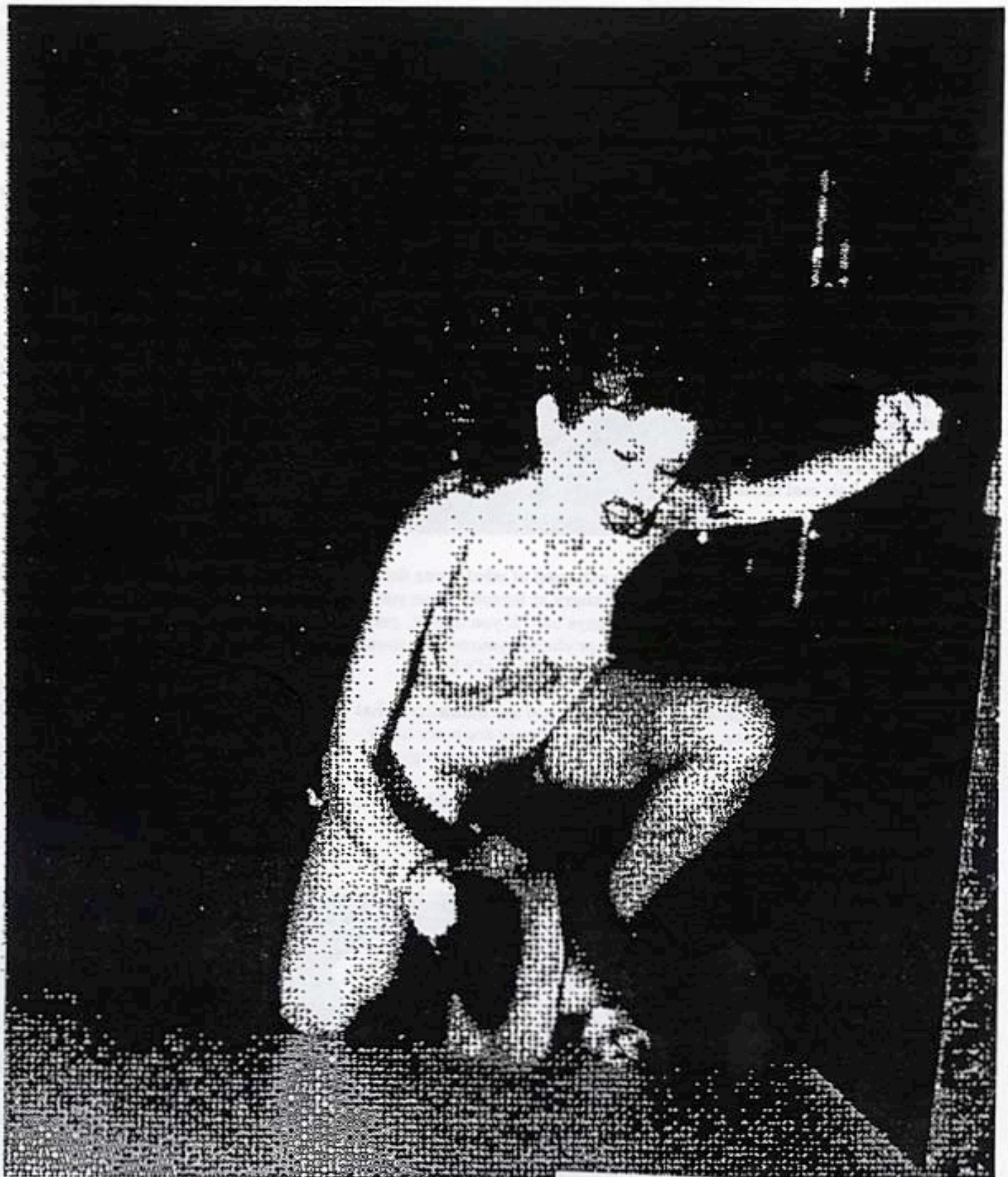
wouldn't want to be working on the street today, and I wouldn't want to be a new girl starting stripping today. It was easier when I was younger. We were paid per show, there was more room for creativity and play; we spent more time in the dressing room with each other, so there was more time for comraderie.

Now everybody's out on the floor hustling tables, just to make your money. The cost of living has gone up, but the pay for sex has gone down. Everybody's working more and harder. I notice that a lot of the girls now are doing it for the money to get a down payment on a house or whatever. We were doing it for the fun.

G.P.: Why do you think there's less money in it now?

G: Because there's more girls doing it and less clubs. The city, club owners and agents broke our union by bringing in girls from Quebec. We had over 200 clubs to work in. And when they brought in licensing in the early 80's it went to 50. Three quarters of the clubs closed, at the same time they brought in all these girls from Quebec to work for \$5 an hour and hustle the rest of your money on tables. There are clubs today that don't pay the girl any





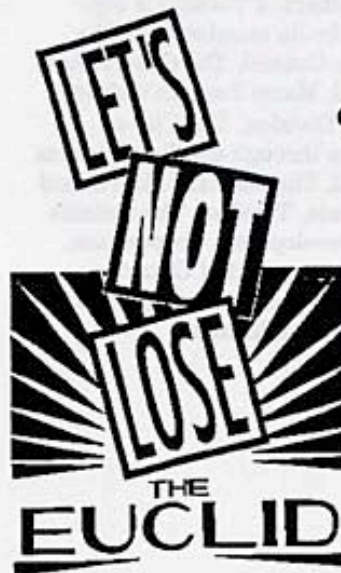
Gwendolyn in 'Merchants of Love' photo by ROGDE

thing; in fact you have to pay for the privilege of soliciting in the club that night. It's a lot harder.

G.P.: Do you feel that people are more aware of their conditions of work and are fighting for improvements?

G: Sex workers have always been aware and fighting, we just need organizing. As far as the Safe Sex Project goes, at this point there are only two Outreach workers—me and a guy. I'm supposed to do all of Cabagetown, Jarvis and Church and all of Parkdale. Which doesn't even

touch the hotel strips and people who work inside. We can only reach so many people. That's why things like the films are good...if they get shown.



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GRANT DEADLINES

CANADA COUNCIL

EXPLORATIONS

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

AID TO ARTISTS (INDIVIDUALS)

DEADLINES	RESULTS
October 1	January 1
April 1	July 1

FILM PRODUCTION

DEADLINES	RESULTS
July 15	October 1
November 15	February 1

ART BANK

DEADLINES	RESULTS
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February 1
August 1
September

mid March
mid Sep-

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

FILM PRODUCTION

DEADLINES	RESULTS
November 1	early Febru-
April 1	early July

SCREENWRITING

DEADLINES	RESULTS
February 1	early May

PROJECT GRANTS

DEADLINES	RESULTS
September 15	mid November

ARTISTS AND THE WORKPLACE

DEADLINE	RESULTS
March 1	mid April
July 4	mid August

FESTIVALS

More information on these and other festivals is available in the LIFT office.

TRENTO FILM FESTIVAL
Trento, Italy
Deadline: April 20, 1990

INTERNATIONALE MUNCHNER FILMWOCHEN
Munich, Germany
Deadline: April 23, 1990

9TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Adelaide, Australia
Deadline: April 30, 1990

MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL
N.Y., N.Y.
Deadline: May 1990

20TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CINEMA FOR CHILDREN
Giffoni Valle Piana, Italy
Deadline: June 10, 1990

13TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL ON SPORTS AND TOURIST FILMS
Nova Gorica, Yugoslavia
Deadline: June 10, 1990

5 JOURS DU CINEMA
Montreal, Quebec
Deadline: July 1, 1990

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