

# L\FT big at festival



**Atom Egoyan**  
The Adjuster

Best Canadian Feature Film



**John Greyson**  
The Making of "Monsters"

Best Short Film

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## L. I. F. T.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that our Annual General Meeting is fast approaching (Nov) and so you should begin thinking about **nominations** for the 1991/92 Board of Directors. A lot of hard work lies ahead to steer the co-op through the rocky 1990's and lead us forward during these times of fiscal restraint. We need innovative minds and tireless bodies to do this. **Associate and Full members hold voting privileges and are eligible for election to the Board.**

As well, **volunteers** are needed from amongst our membership for the numerous **LIFT committees** (equipment, fundraising, lobbying, newsletter, programming, script development & workshop committees). Your year long commitment to a LIFT committee counts as your annual **volunteer hours** as well as providing an important and much needed contribution to the running of LIFT.

# LETTERS TO THE MINISTERS

September 5, 1991

The Honourable Michael Wilson (M.I.N.T)  
Tower B 5, 125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario

Honourable Michael Wilson:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto, which represents over 400 independent filmmakers, about the possible expansion of the free trade agreement to include culture.

The independent filmmaking community strongly opposes any action by the American government to bring culture back to the free trade talks.

In a world already dominated by the United States cultural product, we feel we have a right to reflect and control our own cultural sovereignty. Yet we hear US trade representative Carla Hill does not accept cultural exemption, seeing it merely as a form of protection. She feels culture should be included in the discussions on the trading scene. Is culture a trading commodity, we think not.

In a country so occupied by defining its culture how will it be possible to continue our search of who we are, if culture is not ours to control?

The filmmaking community is strongly urging assurance from our federal government that it will keep culture off the table in free trade talks.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. We look forward to receiving a written response to our concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

Louise Lebeau  
Secretary of the Board, LIFT

October 10, 1991

The Honourable Perrin Beatty  
Minister of Communications  
Journal Tower North  
300 Slater St., Ottawa

Dear Minister,

During this time of constitutional reform I am truly excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for a "new" Canada; a Canada that reflects progressive and responsible ideals for a multicultural nation. I believe that we live in a country abound in social, artistic and cultural richness and I have every hope that our potential will continue to be explored and developed. Yet at the same time I know that these dreams are not easily come by, not only as an individual, but also as a community and a nation.

It is too often the case that the most important issues of a political body are the ones that are the least apparent, and for that matter, the least popular. Without taking away from the importance of many other national concerns, I feel that the value of art and culture (to both individuals and nations) is extremely underestimated. The arts of a nation is a reflection of the aspirations of its people. Without art, a nation is weak in spirit, and cold in the heart. The creative instinct is the most basic of all human behavior and it should be nurtured and set free to soar.

Any federal policy that would dismantle a national cultural agency such as the Canada Council has to be seen as regressive. The Canadian government has played a important role in developing the arts in this country by recognizing artists as a national resource and by fostering a system of growth and creativity. Your support of this cultural agency is vital to the future of our nation. Please do not let our spirit slip away.

Sincerely,

Wayne Snell  
Editor, LIFT Newsletter

# LIFT

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 91

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Wayne Snell

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

LIFT is supported by its membership, The Canada Council (media arts section), The Ontario Arts Council, Metro Toronto Cultural Affairs Division, The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, The National Film Board of Canada, Telefilm, The Ontario Film Development Corporation, The Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture and Communications.

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

Letters to the editor can be sent c/o LIFT, 345 Adelaide St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5V 1R5

## Office update...

LIFT would like to take this opportunity to welcome **Michelle Mohabeer** to our staff.

Michelle began work with us on October 3rd as our new **Administrative Co-ordinator** for the **Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund**.

## You don't say?

If you're starting to develop a new film project, we'd like to know! If you're gearing up for production, heading towards post, or just completing a film, we'd like to know that too...or...if you've received a grant or an award, or one of your films has recently been in a festival or exhibition, we'd like to pat you on the back and update our records at the same time.

ALSO, a lot of this information is important for LIFT; as support material for grants; as resource information to prove to funders and policy makers the amount of activity that goes on in the independent film community; to update our catalogue; to update your file, and so on and so on.

Even if you move, we want to know, so please forward a change of address notice to the office along with your new telephone number for the crew list.

## DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Members are reminded that the LIFT office is always in need of your help. We are particularly anxious to develop a roster of volunteers who are **able to dedicate 1 day each week or 1 day each month to the co-op**. Equipment maintenance, updating membership records, invoicing, bookkeeping, updating the festival database, etc. If there are any members who are available to commit to a regular pattern ... contact the LIFT office to discuss your schedule of availability.

# LIFT filmmakers win BIG at Festival of Festivals



Congratulations to LIFT members:

John Greyson's **THE MAKING OF "MONSTERS"**, won the National Film Board Award for Best Short Film — \$2,000 cash and \$2,000 worth of film processing from the NFB.



Atom Egoyan's film, **THE ADJUSTER**, won The Toronto City Award for Best Canadian Feature — a cash prize of \$25,000 which Atom turned over to Vancouver filmmaker John Pozer (**THE GROCER'S WIFE**)



Bruce MacDonald's film, **HIGHWAY 61**, was runner up to **THE FISHER KING** in the Carlsberg Light Peoples Choice Award.

*In the December issue of the LIFT Newsletter, D M Owen will reveal to us his views on Canadian feature films in this year's Festival of Festivals.*

# Multicultural films on the go

by Sandy Greer

Kal Ng and Kwoi Gin are LIFT members and two of the recipients of the Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund grants for 1991. This fund is made possible with the financial participation of the Ontario Film Development Corporation, and administered through the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto. Both filmmakers recently described the current status of their projects to me over the phone.

Kal Ng is working on a film titled *Stories of Hide the Wind; The Soul Investigator*. This film is part of a 3-film series in which several dramatic stories focus on the theme of the end of the world. Ng describes *The Soul Investigator* as storytelling by a narrator combined with images to persuade the viewer to consider the different possible meanings of "world's end".

Ng's film project evolved out of a quest for his own personal identity, as a Chinese or foreigner, he says, in a developed country. In searching for his identity, Ng recognized the need to see the bigger picture. This expanded into a reflection upon the future of the world and how humans will express their identity within it. At the same time, Ng felt compelled to put his exploration in a theme that would interest a large audience.

Ng observes that people's notion of "world's end" usually relates to an external event, such as a nuclear meltdown. On the other hand, he suggests that it relates to an internal transformation of individuals, which is more intangible and possibly in the spiritual realm.

Ng, who works as a freelance architectural draughtsman, is now fine-tuning his completed script before he begins to shoot *The Soul Investigator* in early November.

Kwoi Gin's film, *Dark Sun, Bright Shade*, was motivated by the massacre in Tiananmen Square two summers ago. "I was involved in student rallies after the massacre," says Gin, "and I met a lot of people who were involved in it."

Gin began to write his film script from a political point of view, and then changed it into a more personal piece. He does not consider himself a

political person. The massacre, however, deeply touched him and awakened his own Chinese identity after living more than half his life in Canada. "The people that were dying were a part of me."

The dramatic format focuses on personal relationships in a story that Gin hopes will engage the average person. "I don't want people to forget it," he adds. The relationships will provide insights to this particular history and conflict.

The history of Tiananmen Square goes back to the early 1900s when student demonstrations first began to take place there. Gin says that in the film he mentions those people who participated in these early demonstrations, including ordinary workers, who are still in prison. People outside China are not aware of this fact, he adds, because the 1989 massacre was the first time that the western media was able to film the event and show it to the world.

A few documentary clips shot by one of Gin's friends will be included in the dramatic story that focuses on two friends and the relationship that one of them has with his traditional Chinese father. "I'm using that relationship as an allegory about the relationship between the present regime (in China) and the people. The present regime, to me, represents feudalism and all the old traditions that haven't changed. I'm using images also from traditional Chinese opera, and it deals in reality and fantasy. Sometimes the father appears as the first emperor who had the worst reputation as a tyrant leader, just as the father treats his son as somebody who has to do what he wants."

One thing holding up production, says Gin, whose script is complete, is trying to find a cast of characters. He had hoped to shoot the outdoor scenes this past summer, but his posted advertisements received few responses. Jokingly, he says that only kung fu experts seem to respond, believing that the film would focus on martial arts or Asian crime. Also, the population of Asian actors in Toronto is limited, and his budget is not enough to be able to hire professional actors.

Next issue, Sandy will look at some other activities of Multicultural grant recipients.

## OAC'S 'FIRST PROJECTS' GRANT HIGHLIGHTS BIGGER BUDGET

The Film/Photography/Video Office of the Ontario Arts Council is boosting its funding to current programs by \$580,000. The new funds stem from the \$7.5 million increase to base funding which the OAC recently received from the government of Ontario (ref June 1991 LIFT Newsletter). The Film/Photography/Video Office received an increase of 39% over its previous base budget bringing the new budget to just over \$2 million.

### FIRST PROJECTS PILOT PROGRAM

The office will be enlarging the budgets of its existing grant programs as well as adding a new program, called First Projects, intended to assist emerging film and video artists. This pilot program is provided to assist artists undertaking their first film and video projects.

"This new program is a reflection of recommendations that have been made to the office from various representatives of the media arts community. We are very pleased to have new funds that will make it available," says officer David Craig.

Anyone considering applying should contact the staff of the Film/Photography/Video Office directly to discuss their project before submitting an application. The first deadline for applications is: December 2, 1991. Phone (416) 961-1660 or toll free 1-800-367-0058 for further information.

NOTE: Because this is a pilot project, the results of the first competition will be evaluated before further deadlines are announced.

*"We took a roller coaster for ten days, you and I. At first there was just one of us but as the days wore on I had to split off from you, you took it all to heart, you were so impressionable. You became that which you identified with."*

There was a wave washed over the city and my life. At first the thought of so much all at once... all those films for free, it was a gift, and I was appropriately ecstatic. But what it takes out of one. Each film demanding in it's own fashion. Coercing, seducing, whispers into my psyche "bend your mind, your heart, this way, towards and away from, twist the memory of your own experience, see it my way, live my life with me, live two hours with me, live the moment with me, feel me, emote." It was the same all over the world; writers, directors, producers, actors, entire crews of film artists had gathered their resources onto this slim medium to bring me to this vicarious state. Days of Being Wild, The Body Beautiful, Edward II, Elizabeth Smart: On the Side of The Angels, Relax, Up The Junction, The Adjuster, Young Soul Rebels... It seemed, as I turned to look at others in this crowded room, that I was not alone, they too had been emotionally defeated. We stick out our thumbs. We enter the vehicle of a stranger. We do not know where they are going. We like it that way. Sometimes we are sexually molested, or carressed. Most often we are manipulated. But we leave the theatre with our physical bodies intact, our mental transformation causing us to view them from another angle, in a difficult light. Is this not virtual reality?

# filmic dialectic

## 'monsters' challenges the formula

by lika thorne

Many theorists have commented on the effect of narrative form on our lives. Reading about it isn't the same as *realising* it.

*When I was seventeen I began 'reading' fashion magazines, Vogue and Elle, Flare, Taxi...I took them into my bedroom, my wardrobe, my language and on occasion I would criticise particular articles or mock frustration at their facile pettiness. Eventually I stopped looking. I spent my money on food, rent, books and films and I never really missed them. Not long ago, an acquaintance had an issue of Vogue on her desk. I hadn't looked at one for five or six years. I scanned and saw with eyes open. Nearly all the models are white, bulimic, with skin of a brand new plastic. Their poses are outrageously submissive, their dress upwardly classist and exclusionary whether in the office or in bed. The focus of the issue I held in my hands was of haute couture inspired by the cultural motifs of many first nations, and yet all the models were of European descent. It was theft. I was hit in the gut. Sudden. I couldn't believe I had engaged with this shit for so many years — formative years.*

### narrativity: conviction, addiction, condensation and resolution

I asked her what is the problem with a well constructed narrative? She said "It's so persuasive. It presents enough answers on a continual basis that it subdues my desire to analyse what I'm subjecting myself to. Eventually it erodes my ability to question at all. Then it's like a part of me doesn't exist and I don't even notice 'cos I'm experiencing this simulated fulfillment. Notice how smokers can go without a cigarette for two hours if the movie is entertaining... A beautiful story will condense and resolve the enchanted moments of a life into two hours. It was so intimate, you came to know them, you fell in love with them, their cause was your cause, you burn for them. Afterwards you are left alone as confused as ever about your own endless banality and you wonder. If you lived that fast, if you did those things, would it make a difference?"

Feature filmmaking is an addiction. At the Festival you see a few filmmakers being lauded for their ability to spin a yarn in an hour and a half or so and it makes you think, what's so particular about their story that it deserves all this attention. The scene is so hierarchically hyped up; it makes me sick. I hate Entertainment Tonight. Why do I even care? There must be something that I am attracted to? Maybe it's the money. That's why the media pays attention to you in the first place. For the most part, they couldn't give a shit what your work is like. It takes a lot of discipline not to be sucked into that form. I mean, I guess, for some people it just comes naturally."

"What comes naturally, the discipline or the formula?"

The power of narrative is partially created by the society it is accepted by. It is involved in a public dialogue that makes me feel as though making a feature film is the best way to voice concern. The lineups before, the discussions afterwards, all prove our obsession with this form. You forgot there was any other way to speak, and when you remembered another form, an internal form, a 'let's not speak of it' social form, you realized that very few would listen and you ask yourself, which compromise hurts more?

Watching all those big movies gave me a sugar high. I was wasted, shaking and hyperactive and all I wanted was more sweet escapism after the buzz wore off. These fictional features made it easy for me to ingest information without criticality, so much so that I couldn't eat knowledge any other way.

When they dragged me back to the experimental films, the documentary collages; I politely ate with my eyes fixed on dessert. But as the festival wore on I began to relish a good savoury, a film in which I didn't have to relinquish my critical faculties or emotional dignity in order to be fulfilled. These films never numbed or seduced me. They like me as I am; alert, conscious, part of the viewing process.

Writer and filmmaker John Greyson's *THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'* utilised a myriad of distancing devices. This allowed me to continuously reconsider and keep track of my own reaction to the film. The film, a constant layering of 'fact' within fiction, uncovers the precarious nature of narrative forms. *THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'* by John Greyson is about a promotional "making of" documentary by Lotte Lenya, a black lesbian director whose unyielding role leads the way for our Queer Nation. She is documenting a fictional CBC musical, directed by intellectual rivals Bertolt Brecht and Georg Lukacs, 'MONSTERS' is about the life and death of Joe, a gay white high school teacher who was murdered by six white teenage boys in High Park, Toronto. The made for TV film 'MONSTERS', while focusing on the events surrounding the murder and the trial, takes a look at the construction of various forms of masculinity; from malignant war toys (in this case, Barbie and Ken) to gay promiscuity and many versions in between. Before I begin to describe any one scene I think it's important that you recognise the compact nature of this film. Even though *THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'* is only 30 minutes long it is dense with information. Greyson's techniques of referencing and layering create connections which reverberate throughout the piece. When I focus on one issue, I undermine the meanings evoked by an examination of the whole.

Audiences



*THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'*

written and directed by John Greyson, produced by Laurie Lynd  
starring Lee MacDougall as the actor playing Joe McGuire and  
Stewart Arnold as the actor playing his lover Vince



The Making of 'MONSTERS'

A (fictional) Promotional Documentary by Lotte Lenya (Narrator  
Tabora Johnson)

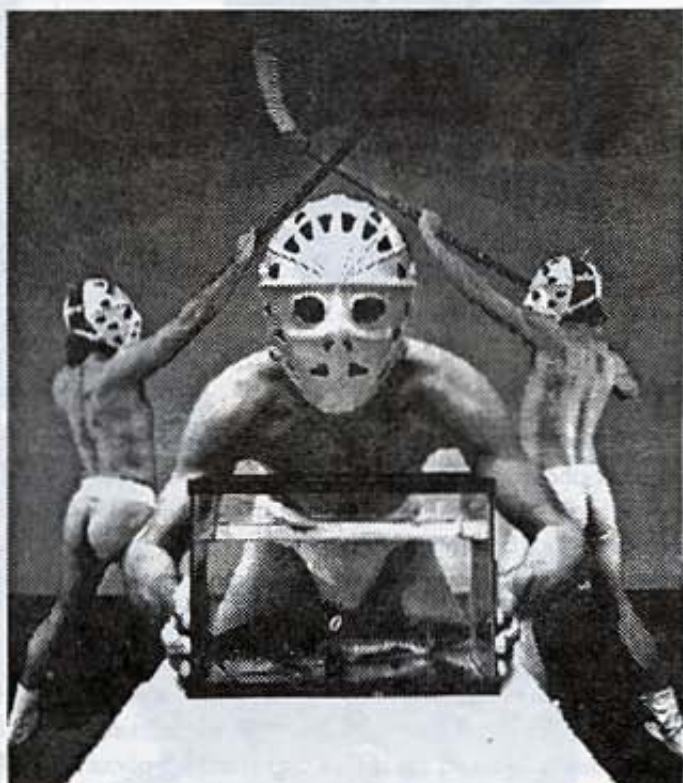


'MONSTERS'

A fictional CBC movie of the week musical produced by socialist  
realist Georg Lukacs (David Gardner) and directed by Bertolt Brecht  
(a catfish)



On June 21, 1985, five teenage boys attacked a gay man in Toronto's High Park and kicked him to death. Though they were charged with first degree murder, they were eventually convicted only of manslaughter, and were out of jail less than three years later.



Still from *THE MAKING OF MONSTERS*, by John Greyson  
All photos by Guntar Kravis

In the park, after Lukacs and Brecht have had an ideological+stylistic conflict, the set is wrapped for the day and the actors head home. Walking through High Park where the murder would have taken place, the 'real life' actors, playing Joe and his lover Vince, have a songspiel about monogamy and promiscuity.

In Brecht -Weil style...

Actor/Vince: Are you into park sex?

Actor/ Joe:

*I have always kept my sex in the bedroom, parks and tea rooms are foreign to me,  
I have never had the need for adventures, what's the problem with monogamy?  
There's a truth that we ought to remember, the best sex always takes the most work  
I am always looking for a loyal lover, all I get are promiscuous jerks...*

Chorus'

Actor/Vince:

*I have had several lovers in this lifetime, they didn't comprehend the two types of sex  
One is for the man you memorize, the other is for the ones you forget  
A lover is the house that you live in, the tricks are the stores where you shop  
A lover is the station that you're tuned to, but sometimes you will need to channel hop!*

In a monogamous society, promiscuity is a bad word and there is very little room for the idea of mixing the two. If indeed "your lover is the house that you live in", then don't we shop in order to add wealth and warmth to our house (given capitalist complicity)? The fulfilment of fantasy through anonymity can stimulate unearthed areas of one's sexual and intellectual psyche. Intimacy outside of a monogamous relationship can lead to a breakdown of trust when both parties are riddled with fear of losing the other, of losing their 'self', or if fidelity is one of the few keys to their commitment (or if one person can get dates and the other has to stay at home alone all the time) or, or...

John Greyson is participating in a discussion towards breaking down the social trap that the monogamy-promiscuity polarity defines.



Vince (Stewart Arnott) sings 'I Hate Straights'

*In Britain, the weekly Channel 4 programme OUT concerns issues of interest to several lesbian and gay communities. I've heard that at least a couple of episodes have taken up the Monogamy - Polygamy - Promiscuity debate. Filmmaker Derek Jarman (EDWARD II, a brilliant film which took up Queer Nation's commitment in a very different way, played at the glorious Uptown I this Festival of Festivals) suggested that some of the alternative structures of intimacy found within the gay community could be considered to solve some of the problems inherent within contemporary heterosexual relationships (not that this was their main concern). In Canada, it seems, even though there is no need to cater to a strait hegemony, most relationships (and our subconscious/constructed desires) are still based on that corrupt hetero-monogamous model, the nuclear family.*

Given the forbidden nature of gay positive sexuality (or any positive sex) on television; there is some twisted logic to the notion that homophobic adolescents pumped up on Terminator would be attracted to the 'park' as a place to agress their confused and perhaps latent sexuality. The cast and crew of THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS' challenge the violent yet prudish homophobia of contemporary pop-image culture by creating two 'rock videos' within a mock made-for-TV movie (is this a big enough hint of how we could subvert what we are seeing at home?). The Hockey Night in Canada sequence is tough and sexy, contradictory and a total turn on. If some men could admit to the intimate and sexualised nature of their play then perhaps they wouldn't have to spend hundreds on a wooded retreat into archetypes and hankerchiefs.

Except for Lotte Lenya who is a wry narrator, historian and occasional critic, women don't play a huge part in THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS', yet their involvement in the structure of Joe's life/story and Queer Nation is integral. There is a scene where Joe's mother is washing the dishes and speaking about homophobic hypocrisy to her friend and to us. She speaks of the way





Clare Coulter as Joe's mother

our society celebrates the 'naturalness' of young lovers having sex in the field, but if the lovers are of the same sex, then by the standards of 'normal' people and the courts, homosexuals deserve to die. It was an emotional scene for me, but Greyson immediately pulls back and focuses on Bertolt Brecht (the fish) who is openly disgusted by the sentimentality and refuses to continue shooting the scene. It was somewhat of a shock to be drawn in by the drama and suddenly be reminded of how I had been set up by the form. How my buttons were so easy to push and how cheap those emotions really are. What pulls me from sentiment to cynicism and back is the necessity of the scene. His mother was articulate and honest. The fact that Joe had come

out to his mother and she had come to terms with his homosexuality in relation to society and her own sexuality made it a profoundly heartening moment. Greyson offers a certain amount of puritanical disapproval on the mother's part to make her position believable. But it is obvious where her sympathies lie. The bitterness of her delivery speaks of a new found hatred of 'normality' and the systems which hold it firm.

But hold on a second. Is this fiction or documentary? Who wrote this script? Was Joe's mother always this clear, is every mother this understanding? What about the hundreds of lesbians and gays who are disowned by their parents when they come out? Within the two parent family, is the mother supposed to take on the responsibility for making peace between generations, for creating the father's acceptance? How did she get to be so level headed when her environment is probably rife with homophobia and misinformation?

By creating a strong dramatic moment, Greyson accesses a part of us that is most open to change. By counteracting it with immediate criticism, he employs us to question our own opinions, our changing positions and the forms we wrap around our body.

John Greyson is showing *THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'* along with some of his favourite films as part of *The Director's Carte Blanch Series* at the Cinematheque Ontario at 7pm on Saturday November 23, 1991. This evening includes Ngozi Onwurah's exquisite film *THE BODY BEAUTIFUL* which premiered at the Festival of Festivals and should not be missed.

Thanks to John Greyson, Susan Norget, The Festival of Festivals and Mehernaz Lentin at The Canadian Centre for Advanced Film Studies.



Lotte Lenya (Taberah Johnson) sings *Bash Back Baby* for the conclusion of *THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'*

# SWEET TALK 16



Adrienne Mitchell



Janis Lundman

**TALK 16** is a feature length documentary co-directed by LIFT members **Janis Lundman** and **Adrienne Mitchell**. Response to the film's premiere screenings at the 1991 Festival of Festivals was extremely enthusiastic. Picked up for distribution by Alliance, **TALK 16** will open in Toronto on Friday November 15, 1991. LIFTer **Gail Mentlik** recently talked with Janis and Adrienne and the following interview was aired in part on CKLN's **FRAMELINE** on September 6th, 1991.

**Gail Mentlik:** Tell us your objectives in making **TALK 16**.

**Adrienne Mitchell:** **Talk 16** is a movie, we don't want to call it a documentary. It's a movie that follows the lives of five teenage girls for a year. They're from completely different backgrounds and they all turn sixteen during the course of the year. We got this idea basically because, I think it was one day

Janis and I were walking along Yonge street and we walked past this clump of very intimidating looking teenagers hanging out in front of this hostel who we thought were making strange comments to passers-by. This made us think it's time we got to know this group again. I mean becoming an adult you sort of close the doors to the world of young people.

**GM:** Why was it important for you to focus exclusively on women?

**Janis Lundman:** Partly because we're women, we're feminists. We found a lack of coming of age films on young women. That was something we wanted to address as well in **Talk 16**. There just wasn't a lot out there on Adolescent females when we started doing research. The films that had been done with young women were 10 to 15 years old. Most of the recent films were all done with males. Even a lot of the feature films that you see now, the coming of

age films are with young boys, and the girls that are in there are the girlfriends, the cheerleaders or something. They're not the focus of the film. And we felt that we didn't know what was happening with young females.

**GM:** There are five women in the film. Tell us about them.

**JL:** They come from very different cultural, social and economic backgrounds. We wanted to get some sort of cross-section, to get a sense of what was out there in terms of young females. We have a Korean girl, Helen. She is a born-again Christian and a straight-A student who wants to be a doctor. We also have a girl whose family is from Guyana, Rhonda. She wants to be Canada's first black actress. We have a girl, Astra, who at the beginning of the film starts off at home and then runs away, is on the streets for a while and comes home, moves out. The cycle she moves in she's trying to break,

trying to figure out who she is and how to survive. The fourth girl, Erin, attends private school and a lot of her friends are quite well off. And then we have a girl who is our comic, Lena, our stand-up comic. One minute in the film you can be at a born-again Christian retreat and the next minute you can be with a girl visiting her boyfriend in jail.

**GM:** Could you talk about the process of finding the five girls in the film.

**AM:** I think the whole research process took about six months. We interviewed about 350 girls in metro Toronto. What we did was videotape them. So we had 15 minute interview tapes of each girl and we asked them general questions (about) hobbies ... boys, school, we zeroed it down to about 20. What we did was take the tapes of these 20 girls and we began to show them to various friends and colleagues and people who were not in film. What happened was there was a group that kept standing out, and we zeroed in on about 7 or 8 of them, following them around with video cameras so they got a sense of how it would be to be followed around with a video camera. Some didn't feel very good about being followed around with a video camera. The parents of some of the girls did not want to become involved, so it finally just narrowed itself down to the five girls in the film today.

**GM:** How did you get these girls to be so comfortable and honest with you in terms of revealing very personal and intimate matters? How was that trust built up?

**AM:** Largely because we had such a long research period. We spent a couple of months before we started filming on film, filming the five girls on videotape, hanging around them with the video camera, getting them used to us, getting them used to the process of being

filmed. We largely choose young women who would tell it like it is. There are young women out there who are shy, maybe can't communicate as effectively as these five girls. It was important that they were honest and they could somehow get it out in the open.

**GM:** Let's talk about the shooting schedule of the film, because you shot this film over a period of a year. In terms of you, the filmmakers, and a crew following the five girls around, how did it work? It all seems very logistically complicated.

**JL:** There were 55 shooting days in all. We would shoot 3 or 4 times a month. We would call the girls at least once a week,

### *"Teenagers are so unpredictable and ...self-absorbed"*



sometimes more to find out what was happening with them. We would try to plan shots as much as possible, which would be easy to do if we were going into classrooms, because we could plan a week in advance. But if something happened that afternoon or the next day we would have to scramble and get a crew together and be there to shoot them. Their lives were not going to be put on hold for us. When Astra disappeared the first time we spent a couple of weeks trying to find her. When we finally found her, we had to run downtown and start shooting her with her friend and she gave us explicit instructions

not to go inside the coffee shop with her because her friends didn't want to be filmed. They were all wanted by the police. Other things like that. We shot fifty hours of footage. And there's less than two hours. It's very difficult, very hard choices to make in the editing.

**GM:** You opened this up earlier. I would call Talk 16 a high risk documentary...

**AM:** You see our grey hairs, (laughing) well this is all because of TALK 16...

**GM:** Because you're following five subjects around for a year, it seems you can do all the research in the world, completely prepare yourself, and choose the right subjects and still not be sure if you're going to get what you want because there's so many day to day variables and uncertainties.

**AM:** There is no control, that's what it is (laughing). We want to do dramas now. Control, control...

**GM:** How did you minimize and deal with the unknown factors, and take control of this high risk situation?

**AM:** One of things we did was keep a very close eye on the girls. Even when we weren't filming, we were phoning constantly, talking to them, finding out what was going on. If any of them seemed a little, you know, like they were going to leave town, we would be there and get a sense of what was going on. So because we maintained very intimate contact with them, we sort of minimized the risk to a certain extent. If we lost touch with them then the risk might increase. We were really concerned that some of them might just drop out of the film. That was our main concern. Teenagers are so unpredictable and very self-absorbed. To make this sort of commitment is a very

big deal. Don't be fooled, the medium does not hold the allure and glamour that it did for young people. They easily got bored of us after a short while. So we had to constantly stay in touch. And the thing was that they liked us, it was just great, as Janis said, for them to have someone to talk to...

**GM:** And they trusted you?

**AM:** Yah they trusted us, and for some of the girls it was good for their self-esteem to say they were involved with a movie. There was one girl, poor Lena—no one would ever believe her. She showed them photographs and they still wouldn't believe her. Even when we showed up at her school they thought it was for someone else, we were walking around with the camera and they couldn't believe it was for her.

**GM:** High risk also in the sense you don't know what's going on in their lives...

**JL:** It was very scary in a sense because we were choosing these five girls and we had no idea what would happen to them during that year. Maybe nothing would happen to any of them.

**AM:** That's something we couldn't control. We just choose five girls who we thought would be captivating to watch even in an interview situation. Even if things didn't happen to them they would still hold the film because of their ideas and thoughts, their outlooks. That was the only thing we had to go on.

**GM:** Looking back on the experience of making a film like TALK 16 what would you say was the most difficult: the planning, the shooting or the editing?

**AM:** It's the post-production ...

**JL:** ...because we think that we

just spent a almost a year raising the money and doing the research and then another year shooting and six months of editing and we finally have a film and we think it's over, but this is not the reality of the situation. It's more technical problems like getting the film launched and finding a distributor and doing publicity...

**AM:** ...contracts, release forms, all this sort of thing. It's because the film was shot over a period of a year. We have so many different kinds of film stocks that we used. This

***"I think everyone should see this film so they can get an insight and a clue as to what's going on with that generation..."***

presents alot of difficulties for labs, timing, incredible amount of difficulties for the negative cutter. And we had to constantly deal with this hassle. It's very hard to shoot over a period of a year. All these technical variables. We're almost there, we just have to get the 35 mm blow-up and we're set.

**GM:** The two of you co-directed TALK 16. How did this work?

**AM:** It worked out really well. What happened was that each of us had a D.D. Day, Designated Director Day. And we would alternate, one day Janis would direct and talk to the cinematographer, while we would constantly consult. The next day I would direct and speak to the cinematographer and consult with Janis. We just alternated. It worked out really well that way.

**GM:** Who do you see as the audience for this film?

**AM:** I would say parents/adults would really benefit. Female teenagers and sensitive male teenagers.

**JL:** I think everyone should see this film so they can get an insight and a clue as to what's going on with that generation... for young girls to know that they're not alone, so they know they are not the only people going through this.

*Janis Lundman is a film graduate of York University and a founding member of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto. She has produced and directed a number of short films and videos including Las Aradas for which she won the 1985 Canadian Short Film Showcase award and Close your Eyes and Think of England which was purchased by First choice, CBC and Channel Four in Britain.*

*Adrienne Mitchell, a graduate of the Ryerson film program, has worked as a producer, director, and cinematographer on various independent drama and documentary projects. In 1988 she produced, co-directed and co-wrote the children's drama Heart of the Forest, which aired on CBC, and won an honourable mention at the 1988 Adelaide Children's film festival in Australia. In 1989 she was associate producer for the CBC Documentary series Ken Dryden's Home Game. Adrienne was also the Cinematographer on Janis' film Close Your Eyes and Think of England. In 1988 Adrienne and Janis formed their own production company Back Alley Films and immediately started working on TALK 16. Having completed TALK 16, their first feature film, Adrienne and Janis currently have one documentary and two dramatic films in development.*

# Cruel Rhythm

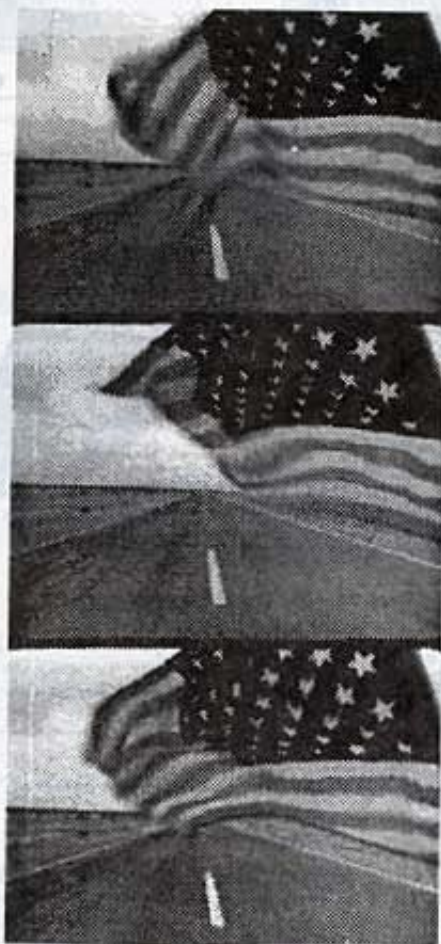
by Andrew Munger

Regina filmmaker Richard Kerr's new film "Cruel Rhythm" is concerned with many of the same themes Kerr developed in his last film "Last Days of Contrition." Although not as finely honed as "...Contrition", "Cruel Rhythm" is a challenging and provocative work.

With "Cruel Rhythm", Kerr returns to the landscape of his fascination; the desert of the American southwest, specifically the Mojave, and the desert metropolises of Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. Kerr proves the adage that no one knows and understands American culture better than Canadians. While "...Contrition" was about war culture in general, "Cruel Rhythm" is about the culture of a specific war; "Operation Desert Storm".

Visually Kerr blends a portraiture worthy of masters Paul Strand and Robert Frank, with a literal and figurative layering of ideas, images and sound to synthesize an articulate, impassioned anti-war message. Kerr is a filmmaker who is always "waiting for the light".

Rather than documenting the horrors of the war itself, Kerr prefers to reference it in a variety of aural and visual cues; voices of television and radio commentators (like Dan Rather of CBS News) who (to quote Chomsky) 'manufacture consent' for American genocide; a chilling pre-invasion pep talk by 'Desert Shield' commander Norman Schwarzkopf; dialogue from Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" ("I love my rifle; I am nothing without my rifle"); and the isolated voices of anti-war protesters. The film's opening and closing images are



From LAST DAYS OF CONTRITION

of exploding fireballs in a tropical jungle; the aesthetic beauty of destruction, as in Coppola's "Apocalypse Now". I have seen the face of horror, and it is American foreign policy.

Kerr's visual reference is more Robert Frank than Paul Strand. His documentation of the banality of America is insightful, and evokes comparisons with some of Frank's best work. Two sequences are particularly noteworthy; a tableau featuring an immense American flag draped above a decaying urban storefront, pedestrians passing in slow motion, oblivious to that overloaded symbol of nationhood; a collection of

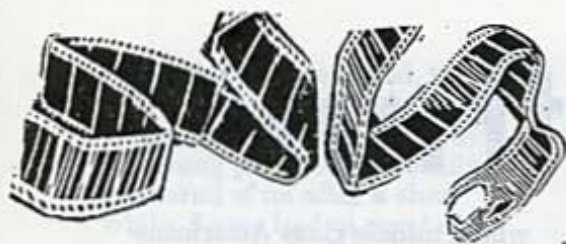
white, middle class Americans drifting (on a moving walkway?) past desert palms, as oblivious as their urban counterparts. An unquestioning nation of followers, Nixon's "silent majority".

Kerr is perpetually fascinated with the image of the American flag. He overlays the "stars and bars" with photographs, live action and other elements to replace its frightening, loaded symbolism with a menacing graphic quality.

As with "...Contrition", the sound collage Kerr employs is stunning and meticulous. Ever the perfectionist, he claimed still not to be happy with the sound mix, and is planning further refinements to diminish the specific reference to "Desert Storm". "Desert Storm" is of course not the exception, but the rule of American foreign policy.

Despite his claims to the contrary, Kerr is one of the more openly political filmmakers working in the experimental mode. He sacrifices none of the formal rigour in his polemic. His use and manipulation of sound and image remains as challenging as any in contemporary Canadian cinema.

Although he was born and spent many years making films in Ontario, Richard Kerr has truly come into his own since his self imposed exile in Saskatchewan. His too infrequent visits to Toronto are always welcome events. One is scheduled for **Thursday, October 31, 7:00 PM** at Martin Heath's "Cincecyle", where he will present a program of three new films; "Cruel Rhythms", "The Machine in the Garden", and "Plein Air Etude # 1".



## CONGRATULATIONS

...to **LIFTer Edie Steiner** who recently received an Award of Excellence in Direction at the Atlantic Film Festival for her experimental documentary **PLACES TO STAY**. Edie's film was also sold to CBC Canadian Reflections and will be aired sometime in the near future.

...to curators **Kika Thorne** and **Marnie Parnell** whose selection of films from **TOKEN AND TABOO** will be screened at **Hallwalls Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y.** on Saturday, November 30th. Anyone interested in attending the screening can call **Laura** at **LIFT** for more information.

... to **Don Haig** of Film Arts, for recently being awarded the **Peter Herrndorf Media Arts Award** for lifetime achievement in the arts, sponsored by **CFMT-TV Ltd.**, and presented on behalf of **The Arts Foundation of Greater Toronto**.

## CONGRATULATIONS, THANK YOU, ETC...

Summer Shorts, **LIFT's** outdoor screening/bbq was held on August 24th on **Ward's Island**. **LIFTERS** who took the **Ferry** over to the **Island** had the pleasure of eating **barbequed corn**, drinking a few **beers** and watching **films** under the stars. A **BIG** thanks to all the **volunteers**, especially those of you who met at **8:30 am** on a **Saturday morning** for set-up, to the **filmmakers** who kindly let us screen their **films**, to **William** for donating his services as a **projectionist**, and most of all to **LIFT's** **Programming Committee** who worked so hard to organize a **fabulous event!** What about next year.....

Thanks also go out to all of you who braved the **TTC strike** and made it to **LIFT's Party of Parties**.



## CARTE BLANCHE

Cinemateque Ontario is offering a new ongoing series which, as the title suggests, offers "carte blanche" to Toronto filmmakers to programme their own evening of films at the Cinematheque. The only rule being that their own work must be included in the programme. Inaugurating the Carte Blanche series are two contrasting programmes by lift members **Barbara Sternberg** (Thursday, November 14, 1991 at 7pm) and **John Greyson** (Saturday November 23, 1991 at 7pm). For details call Cinematheque Ontario at 967-7371 or check their fall calendar.

## short ends

## UPCOMING FESTIVAL DEADLINES

- Black Maria Film & Video Festival**  
West Orange, New Jersey  
Deadline: Dec. 15
- Clermont-Ferrand It'I Short Film Festival**  
Clermont, France  
Deadline: Nov. 4
- Cretell International Women's Film Festival**  
Cretell, France  
Deadline: Dec. 15
- Festival Tous Courts**  
Paris, France  
Deadline: Nov. 1
- Local Heroes**  
Edmonton  
Deadline: Nov. 22
- Media Mix Super 8 Film Festival**  
New Brunswick, New Jersey  
Deadline: Dec. 1
- Miami Film Festival**  
Miami, Florida  
Deadline: Dec. 1
- Montreal It'I Festival of Films on Art**  
Montreal  
Deadline: Nov. 1
- Poetry Film and Video Festival**  
San Francisco  
Deadline: Nov. 29
- Santa Barbara It'I Film Festival**  
Santa Barbara, California  
Deadline: Dec. 1
- Sundance Film Festival**  
Los Angeles  
Nov. 1

## WELCOME NEW LIFTERS

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Mark Alfano        | Sheenah Andrews           |
| Frank Bertucci     | Myroslav Bodnaruk         |
| Laurence Bortnick  | Robin Burgoyne            |
| Ernesto Camera     | Michael Carroll           |
| Andrew Chang       | Vee Christodoulou         |
| Marie Collins      | Israel Dazquez A.         |
| Robert Deleskie    | Zoe Druick                |
| Paul Edwards       | Thanos Gadanidis          |
| Marc S. Green      | Felice Gorica             |
| Eric Harding       | Richard Harrison          |
| Helen Hatzis       | Arlene Hazzan-Green       |
| Lise Higham        | Don Hunter                |
| Christene Kelsey   | Lisa Lightbourn           |
| James MacSwain     | Carol Mark                |
| Heather McKinnon   | Kari Measham              |
| Mikki Mikkellstrup | Jason Milus               |
| Tom Nicholson      | Stephen O'Keefe           |
| Julie Ouelton      | Alexander Plata           |
| Carol Robinson     | Susan Rynard              |
| Elizabeth Schroder | Mark Tollefson            |
| Graham Webster     | Raphael Worrick           |
|                    | Paul Vella                |
|                    | Warner Bros.              |
|                    | Library & Resource Centre |



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# images

FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT  
FILM & VIDEO

# 92

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline: January 15, 1992  
Entries must be accompanied by an  
Images 92 entry form

Direct enquiries & submissions to:  
Northern Visions  
67A Portland Street, #3  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 2M9  
(416) 971-8405

Northern Visions is committed to screening work which is innovative, challenging and on the leading edge of production in the independent sector. We are also committed to the exhibition of expressions which reflect the broad range of races and sexual orientations within all communities of Canada.

# LIFT CLASSIFIEDS

## JOB OPENING

**COORDINATOR**  
**Images Festival of Independent Film and Video** requires a Co-ordinator of Programming to oversee all aspects of programming and publicity. This position is full time for 6 months and part time for 4-6 months. Strong organizational, communication and writing skills essential. Mac literate and bilingualism an asset. Previous knowledge of film & video a must. Salary range \$16,000 - 18,000. Apply in writing before October 24, 1991 to:

Hiring Committee  
**Images Festival**  
67A Portland St. Suite 3,  
Toronto M5V 2M9

## FACULTY POSITION

**Assistant Professor** of film and video at the **University of Massachusetts**, Amherst, beginning September 1992. Two year non-tenure-track position with preference given to video/filmmakers experienced in teaching theory and production with low-end technology. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference and sample syllabus for a course you have taught or would like to

teach (no tapes or films please) by December 1, 1991 to:

Catherine Portuges, Chair  
**Five College Film Council Search Committee**  
**Five Colleges, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 740  
Amherst, Massachusetts  
01004

## ACTOR

Boomer the Clown available for work on films and videos. Magic, juggling and balloons. Call Martin 633-3514.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The **National Educational Film and Video Festival** is now accepting documentaries, dramatic features and shorts, animation, film and video art, student documentaries and narratives and more for their 1992 festival. Send your submission before December 2, 1991 to: National Educational Film and Video Festival, 655 Thirteen Street, Oakland, CA 94612. Application forms are available in the LIFT office.

## WANTED

To buy a Fisher Price video camera. Andrew 535-1475.

## DEALS! DEALS! DEALS!

- ✦ **FILMHOUSE** is offering LIFT members a 20% discount on COD orders upon presentation of the LIFT membership card.
  - ✦ **PATHE** 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.
  - ✦ **SOUNDHOUSE** will offer a 25% discount for services and 10% for materials. Payments must be made on a COD basis and sessions will be booked on a "bumpable" basis.
  - ✦ **DISCOVERY PRODUCTIONS** will offer a 15% discount on audio post production work.
  - ✦ **SOUND MIX** will offer a discount to LIFT members, 15% off their list price.
  - ✦ **P.F.A.** will offer a 15% discount to LIFT members on C.O.D. orders.
  - ✦ **SOUND TECHNIQUE** film & video sound finishing for \$80.00 per hour, master mixes for \$40.00 per hour and customs by the sound doctor.
  - ✦ **SPOT FILM AND VIDEO INC.** offer a discount to LIFT members of 15%.
- If you know of any other discount offered to members, give Greg a call at LIFT.*

Oct. 91

# LIFT MONTHLY SCREENING

monday october 28th 8pm at cinecycle



Daniel O'Connor  
THE JUGGLER

8 min col 16mm sound black comedy/drama

*A short drama about what happens when a young couple returns home from the theatre to discover a juggler performing in their apartment*



Allyson Woodroffe  
THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE

10 min b/w & col cine-poem

*A visual poem within a winter's journey, inspired by the words of Petrarch and set to music by Monteverdi*



Mara Ravins  
VELVEETA AFTERNOON  
30 min col sound black comedy

*Martha, an older woman who runs a shoddy northern motel (and steals sexual items from her clients to fight evil) invites her only guest, a young city woman, to lunch...*



Vicky Peters  
INDUSTRY AND CONVENIENCE  
7 min b/w sound narrative

*A fairy tale about a two-headed monster serves as an allegory for the discovery and exploitation of North Americans.*



I DIDN'T ASK TO BE BORN SO FUCK YOU  
25 min col sound pixilated film

*A comedic look at the existential situation.*



# LIFT

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