

LIFT

FEBRUARY 1992



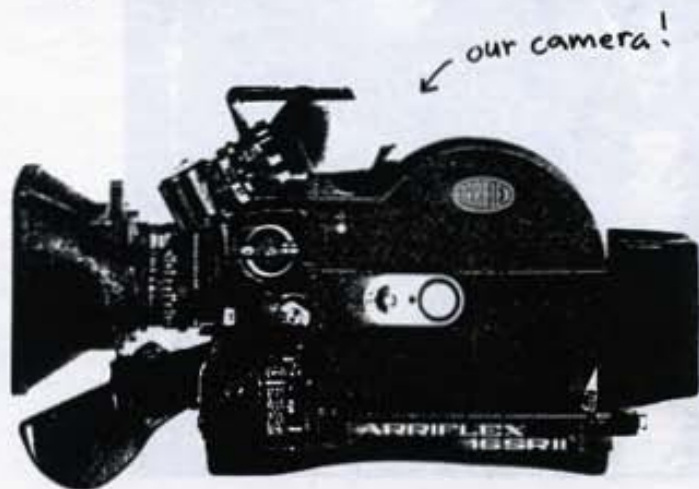
Still from *The Huaorani Get Lost in a Film* by LIFT member John Hickey (see back page)

WE HAVE FOUND AN ARRI SR!!!

It's only six years old and it's an SR11, but we still need to raise enough money to purchase it. We have a commitment of \$15,000.00 from the Canada Council and we've done pretty good on our fund raising ventures but we're still short.

So if you want to rent a really versatile, industry standard LIFT camera at a fraction of industry prices, read on!

We are currently employing a system of pre-paid bookings such as the one successfully used to help us acquire the Oxberry. If you are shooting a film this year and are interested in having access to an Arri SR at a fraction of commercial rates, do not delay...call today! Talk to Greg at LIFT for more details.



SURRENDER

your articles, cartoons,
photographs, letters and opinions
to the LIFT Newsletter...

We can always use your contributions to the LIFT Newsletter to help us cover what is going on in the independent film community in Toronto, and around Canada.

Any material sent in about LIFT life, or of interest to the independent film community, will be considered for publication. Although we cannot guarantee your work will be published, we will give each contribution our careful consideration.

All contributions by LIFT members will be counted towards your volunteer hours. So help us tell it like it really is!

Editing position available!

The LIFT Newsletter is looking for a new editor (preferably one that can spell!). The job is available to all LIFT members. Responsibilities include: organizing volunteers, chairing meetings, assigning articles, coordinating production, arranging sponsors; and more ...

Take my job...

After almost two years of editing the LIFT newsletter, I figure it is time to turn the wheel over to someone else — could that be you? Are you a LIFT member active in the independent film community? Are you journalistically inclined, Mac literate or just plain literate? Do you enjoy sleep deprivation and like to work hard for a few measly bucks (yes, you get a small honorarium) and have you got ideas and notions on how you could do a better job than me?

Great! Then you can take my job ... but not so quick! Of course you must run a road race by sending in your RESUME and a COVERING LETTER to the LIFT office c/o the Newsletter Hiring Committee before 5pm Friday March 6, 1992... if you don't know the address by now, too bad, you lose!



Welcome new LIFTer!

Claire Coltsmann started this month as the Development Coordinator replacing Laura McGough. Claire comes to LIFT with extensive fundraising experience and a keen desire to make her mark in the non-profit arts community. We would like to extend all our best wishes to Laura who has accepted a job as Video Curator at Hallwalls in Buffalo. Good luck to both Laura and Claire!

LIFT Super 8 Club to hold Open Screening in April...

Saturday, April 11, 8pm to be exact! Sign up at Cinecycle, 317 Spadina Rear-by donation.

This could be a reason to get some work started or finished or a good opportunity to project work in progress. You don't have to be a LIFT member to show your work, you just have to sign up at 8pm. We will be using a gentle projector, so you can show your originals (please make sure that splices are nice and smooth, if they feel bumpy on your fingers or stick out of the edge, then redo them). There will be sound capability: cassette, on film (mono or stereo) or live through a microphone, etc....

If you haven't begun a film but you'd like to make one for this screening then I suggest that you shoot in black and white as Kodachrome takes a month to get processed. Both Black & White (\$15) and Kodachrome (\$25, processing included) cartridges are available at West Camera (514 Queen W. at Portland St.). B&W is processed every Friday, 10 am, at Robert Allen Film Lab, 1st floor, 317 Adelaide for about \$10. Look forward to seeing your work. K.T.

LIFT

FEBRUARY 1992

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Wayne Snell

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Fund Coordinator:
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New Exec!

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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. Phone: 596-8233. Fax: 596-8413.

For information regarding the Multicultural Dramatic Film Fund, call 596-6749.

LIFT

Strong national presence necessary for Canada's arts and culture

An Ontario Arts Council news release on January 22, outlined a joint statement made by six arm's-length, provincial arts funding and advisory bodies. The statement was in response to the federal government's constitutional proposals with regards to culture and the arts, as set out in *Shaping Canada's Future Together: Proposals*. Here is that statement:

"The role and purpose of national cultural institutions and structures in Canada are central. We urge all participants in the constitutional debate to strive for a constructive dialogue, taking into consideration the critical importance of arts and culture in reflecting our collective identity. In doing so, we must ensure that the process is a democratic one which recognizes and accomodates the diverse voices and views of artists.

"We firmly believe in the necessity for a strong national presence in culture and the arts in Canada, through both political and financial support by the federal government of our national institutions, including the Canada Council, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Telefilm and the national museums.

"We reaffirm our commitment to the principle of arm's length funding in the cultural sector in order to allow artists an effective voice, independent of political pressure. To this end, the presence of independent institutions which engage and support artistic expression throughout Canada is essential. At the core of this argument is a continued strong federal commitment to the Canada Council.

"While it appears that the federal government intends to reaffirm the above principles in the constitutional

reform package, we are concerned by the ambiguity surrounding some of the federal cultural proposals with their potential to compromise these principles.

"Our concerns are:

- A lack of definitional clarity as to the federal government's ultimate role and responsibility in cultural matters in a renewed constitution. It is not clear how the federal government will ensure continuing responsibility for existing national cultural institutions, with the possible transfer of Residual Power to the provinces.

- Bi-lateral negotiations could lead to a fragmented cultural sector. Within a new constitutional framework, we believe it is possible to recognize the distinct cultural aspirations of the province of Quebec or any other region and the native peoples of Canada while retaining a strong national cultural identity.

- Moving federal support to the provincial level is contrary to the practice of shared responsibility. The latter has served the needs of Canada's artists well. Shared funding should instead be strengthened to ensure access by all Canadians to participation in Canada's artistic life.

"We believe that if Canada's national identity is to reflect the coming together of rich cultural histories and traditions, the above issues need to be addressed in such a way as to reinforce a wide and substantial federal presence in the area of culture and the arts."

This statement was signed by: the Ontario Arts Council, the Manitoba Arts Council, the New Brunswick Arts Board, the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, the Prince Edward Island Council for the Arts, and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

SAEED

This is the story of one man's emigration from Iran and his attempts to establish himself with help from his uncle. *Saeed*, which was screened at CineCycle on January 27 as part of the LIFT monthly series, is a skilfully crafted film that combines dramatic pathos with the surreal.

Written, produced and co-directed by LIFT member, Mehra Meh, *Saeed* is a story loosely based on the experiences of an Iranian refugee, known to Meh. But co-director Marc LaFoy said they wanted to avoid a documentary approach and tell a story.

The film follows Saeed (Ali Koushkani) as he enters a strange and threatening new country: Canada. It begins with him being interviewed by an immigration officer at the airport. As the officer (James Knapp) interrogates him, Saeed becomes increasingly paranoid — and this sense of terror and insecurity increases as the story unfolds. Koushkani plays the timid refugee very well. His experience and his human condition is central to the story.

Saeed certainly brings into focus the point of view of the refugee as outsider. We often hear of refugees who, while attempting to forge a new life in Canada, suffer long if not permanent separation from loved ones left behind. In *Saeed* this separation is poignantly illustrated, by the haunting image of Saeed's loved one who appears during two sequences in the film, effectively transporting the viewer into Saeed's imagination. This is a compassionate reminder of the right to life and dignity of all refugees.

When asked how it worked out co-directing *Saeed*, LaFoy explained that Mehra Meh, being fluent in the Iranian language Farsi, worked with the actors while he concentrated on the technical side. "Sometimes it was bizarre trying to adjust to the time delay between giving a direction, waiting for translation, and then finally having the actor react," says LaFoy. Nonetheless, this is one collaboration that clearly resulted in a uniquely styled and compelling film.

The fact that there is very little English dialogue in the film placed an emphasis on the need for powerful images. The cinematography of Angelos Hatzitolios, utilizing low- and wide-angle shots, lends a Kubrickian intensity heightening the suspense that characterizes this film.

Ali Koushkani composed and performed a superb musical score which suffuses a dreamlike quality and at times a



Ali Koushkani as Saeed

vibrant discord into the scenes. Koushkani, of Kurdish origin, lived in Switzerland for some time before emigrating to Canada.

Saeed received a Genie for Best Short Film of 1991. The directors, have received thumbs up from The Berlin Film Festival and have just sold the film to CBC's "Canadian Reflections" series.

The film reveals the process and experience of entering Canada as a refugee. A secondary goal was to give perspective to the rights and privileges we as Canadians so often take for granted. It is a clever juxtaposition of fantasy and reality that keeps the story unpredictable and makes for an intriguing film. This is aided by the fact that Saeed's true identity remains a mystery. Even in the final scene we are still pondering this question.

Saeed was recipient of a 1990 grant from the LIFT/OFDC Multi-cultural Dramatic Film Fund. Production began in 1990. Saeed received PAFPPS assistance from the National Film Board. In 1991, a LIFT Production grant contributed towards completion costs. Other monies came later from the Secretary of State for Multi-Culturalism and the Canada Council. *Saeed* will be screened at upcoming film festivals.

by Chris Beauduane

CINEMATHEQUE LIBRARY

an unheralded resource for film buffs

by Francisca Duran

It would be impossible to explore everything in the Cinematheque Ontario Film Reference Library in just one visit. My tour of the place proved to be a rewarding, albeit, overwhelming and precarious experience. There is a dangerously large amount of information in the library. I imagined myself easily avalanched by the boxes and shelves the stuff is stored in, and on.

Located at 70 Carleton Street in the Old Warner Brother's Building, the library is yet another result of the April 1990, Ontario Film Institute's fusion with the Festival of Festivals, forming Cinematheque Ontario. The library follows Cinematheque's philosophy, in that it was set up for the study and appreciation of a variety of film practices and disciplines. It receives funding

from federal and provincial government sources, and is not formally linked to Toronto Public Libraries or to any university libraries.

The first two rooms, which are open to the public, contain film reference books, card catalogues; various stages of computerization and current periodicals and journals on display. There is also a small viewing room for films on video. The walls are decorated with portraits of Canadian filmmakers from the past two Festivals, like Atom Egoyan, Deepa Mehta and Ann-Marie Fleming along with others, like Claude Jutra.

The library's collection is non-circulating. Anything you don't see out on display is staff accessed—and there is a lot of it. Several rooms downstairs store information in every space possible. Michael Anderson, full-time staff member, admitted that the staff is, "Not sure of everything we have, but we'd be happy to look for anything you want". It was this kind of honest and attentiveness which made my visit pleasurable.

Available are about 1000 video titles, mostly easily obtainable Hollywood classics, because, as Michael says, "We have a deal with Sam the Video Man". There is, however, a good foreign selection, and some Canadian films. The stock was compiled



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CINEMATHEQUE
ANARCHY AND
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ONTARIO FILM THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERM.
THE CONSCIOUSNESS INDUSTRY
A BRIEF AND INCOMPLETE CHRONOLOGY

The recently folded *Independent Eye* is one of many publications that is available at the Cinematheque Library

from OFDC, OFI, NFB and Cineplex donations, some Festival of Festivals preview tapes, like Darrell Wasyk's "H"; harder to distribute films from previous Festival of Festivals like, "Chinese Ghost Story"; and others from Spain, Latin America and China. There are also a variety of rarer, donated films available on PAL video format. As well, if you need to find out about the existence of a certain video tape, the library has a videologue which is updated weekly to include production titles that are available and where you can purchase them from.

"We'd like to acquire more Canadian independent productions, but they're difficult to obtain", says Michael. He also adds that if filmmakers want to donate shorter films on video tape for public use, the library would appreciate it, as would library users. The library's viewing facilities accommodate 1/2"VHS, 3/4", beta and laser disc, PAL, SECAM or NTSC formats. Call to book a viewing time.

In terms of the printed word...

The Cinematheque Library has 135 current journal titles which were donated by Ontario Film Institute (OFI), but the collection has been expanded by 1/3 since the opening of Cinematheque. You will also find bound back issues of most journals dating back to 1969 when the OFI opened. The most complete collection (on microfilm) are the "Variety" magazines which date back to the early 1900s.

In addition, there are 20-25,000 books and scripts. The available scripts are either published copies or screenwriter's drafts. The library will also gladly take on any scripts donated by filmmakers, scriptwriters or anyone else. David Cronenberg, for instance, donated "three boxes that had



been piling up in his garage for years and years that he felt were going to waste". Inside the boxes were video tapes, script drafts, production notes, clippings and stills.

Perhaps one of the most interesting collections that I found, are the vertical files. They consist of 60,000 information files categorized into "Film Titles", "Personalities" and "Subjects" and contain press clippings, stills, portraits, program books, biographies and publicity information.

As well, the library boasts 25,000 stills which can be reproduced, 2000 slides, festival program books, information about various film institutions, a list of organizations and production companies, College and University information and course reading lists, bulletin boards posting events of interest, and 6000 posters.

Long term expansion plans for the Cinematheque Library include a

move to a larger location since they share space with the Festival of Festivals offices. For now they have their hands full with computer cataloguing and reorganization. An audio station for the 5000+ soundtrack recordings and taped interviews on 12" LPs and cassettes they have is also on the agenda as is a possible inter-library linkage with Cinematheque Quebec.

Right now, Ryerson students make up the majority of users, but I'd argue that anyone interested in any film topic, would find the library an invaluable resource.

Hours
 Mid September to mid May
 12-5 pm Monday and Friday
 Tues thru Thurs 12-8pm
 May thru August 12-5pm
 Mon-Fri
 Telephone (416) 967-1517
 Fax (416) 967-0628

Lori Lansens has one of the rarest of jobs of the new generation of Canadian cinema; she's a full time screenwriter. Almost all of the good scripts in the best Canadian films of the last half-dozen years are by directors, some of whom even produce; Arcand, Egoyan, Rozema, Wheeler, Madden. Don McKellar occupies his unique position of fleshing out dialogue for Bruce MacDonald's rock'n roll scenarios, and I guess Paul Quarrington deserves mention for his co-writing credits on *Perfectly Normal* and *Giant Steps*. No one really occupies the position of 'working screenwriter' in the same way as the prodigious Lansens.

Lori Lansens is probably best known for her script *South Of Wawa*, which premiered at this year's Festival Of Festivals. Yet she and her partner (and other half) Milan Cheylov, are filmmakers in their own right, having made three short films together; *He Ain't Heavy*, 1990 and *Jimmy's Coming*, 1991, both of which were written by Lansens and directed by Cheylov.

This past fall Lori directed her own first short film *Tessa*, and hopes to make another one based on a short story she has written called *The Night I Was Wed*. In addition to this prolific output, she has completed two screenplays since writing *South Of Wawa*. One is an adaptation of a collection called *The Elizabeth Stories* by Isabel Huggan set in Southwestern Ontario. This script is scheduled to go before the cameras this year for Accent Production's Susan Cavan, who produced *South Of Wawa*. Her other script, slated to be the first feature by Lansens/Cheylov's Bootleg Films, is called *The Big City* and is said, by everyone who has read it, to be one of the most remarkable scripts currently circulating. I talked with Lori about her work at her and Milan Cheylov's apartment on February 4, 1992.

Writing Canadian Cinema

An Interview with Lori Lansens by D. M. Owen

D.M. Owen: So, when did you decide to write films?

Lori Lansens: It was shortly after the workshop of *Visiting Rights* (an early Lansens' play script) that I sat down and I couldn't get this character out of my head, and because I'm from a very small town and I worked at a doughnut shop, the path was suddenly so clear. I wrote *South of Wawa* with great ease and speed, although I'd never written a screenplay before and I

even borrowed one of Milan's *Edison Twins* scripts (a TV series in which Cheylov acted) because I didn't know that you had to write: Interior. Kitchen. etcetera.

DMO: At that point you weren't quite so intimidated as when you started out writing fiction?

LL: No, I realized at a certain point, and I'm not even sure when, that there aren't any rules, I only had to do. I wrote *South Of Wawa* very quickly.

DMO: How long did it take to write it then, the actual process?

LL: The actual process of writing the first draft was about a month, which is fairly extraordinary...

DMO: How much material came out of the previous script?

LL: Out of *Visiting Rights*? None. Not a single line, not a single idea, just the character, and that has certainly influenced me in the fiction and the screenplays that I've written, because for me it's about

character first. They dictate to me, more than I dictate to them. They do what they do, because they are what they are...

DMO: But you wrote it in a month. That's dialogue... the whole kit and caboodle?

LL: The whole kit and caboodle, but I'm a complete maniac when I'm on a writing jag, and saying a month is a little ambiguous. What was that? One hour a day? Two hours a day? This is 12 hour days and cartons of cigarettes and much too much coffee and insanity and really living all of my waking hours in that town with those people. So to be fair it was a very concentrated month.

DMO: How do you write. Do you get up every morning and write for 3 hours? Do you go on binges?

*LL: I treat writing as a job. I get up every morning and I have very specific routines that I follow and I'm at the computer. Incidentally I wrote *South Of Wawa* longhand, in that month as well.*

DMO: Not even on a typewriter?

LL: Not even on a typewriter. After, I rented a typewriter so that someone else could actually read it.

DMO: Keep that manuscript in good shape, that's my advice.

LL: I get up every morning and I'm at my computer by 9 o'clock.

DMO: Monday to Friday?

LL: Usually Monday to Saturday. I take Sundays off and have long conversations with friends and family, and do other things.

DMO: You write in the morning?

LL: Yes. I get up every morning and I'm there by nine. I break for lunch. I go back and I work until five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. On writing jags, I'm obviously



"I love my job, I get up every day and I'm excited about the possibilities, about what will happen..."

working much, much later, but I don't leave the desk until I feel the work day is finished. I feel guilty if I leave the desk at three o'clock in the afternoon.

DMO: Do you find you can write for all those hours?

LL: Yeah because... it's difficult to convince other people that you're writing when you're looking out the window. But sure, I mean a ten hour day might yield a page, or ten pages or a single line that I'll keep, but I'm there. And if I'm having trouble with the screenplay I'm currently working on and that's not working, I go back to the short story and if that's not working I go back to that other short story.

DMO: Hemmingway has a saying about writing: there are three rules; you must write today, you must write tomorrow, and you must write the day after that.

LL: It's strange that you should mention Hemmingway,

DMO: That discipline thing always reminds me of that one.

*LL: I read the *Snows of Klamajaro* and there's a line in the story where a man is dying of a gangrenous leg and says something to the effect of 'now he would never write all the things that he's saved up to write until he could write them well enough' and it truly inspired me because I too for a long time thought "I'm not good enough, I'll*

wait until I'm good enough," and (her voice much less audible) where does that leave you?

DMO: When you quit the Globe you had enough focus to just start writing like that?

LL: Yeah. I felt that that was the only way that I could do it, that the discipline is difficult, but it's all you have.

DMO: You're your own boss.

LL: You're your own boss, and there's a television in the next room, and a fine meal to be cooked.

DMO: And books to be read...

LL: Books to be read, but it's work, it's my job. I feel enormously lucky: I love my job, I get up every day and I'm excited about the possibilities, about what will happen; where will my characters go today? I laugh with them, I weep when they do,

DMO: What year was it written?

LL: That would have been '89. It was finished in '89. Along with another partner, Milan and I tried to get the film off the ground, tried to produce and direct it ourselves, and that scenario didn't work out. But because of that scenario, Susan Cavan, who was at Alliance at the time, got her hands on the script and really liked it and was in the process of leaving Alliance to form Accent. She decided to make it as her first feature, so within a year of having written it, it was on its way.

DMO: She optioned it for how long?

LL: She optioned it for two years, and got it off the ground within one year, which was wonderful.

DMO: So is the option the same thing as selling the whole rights to it?

LL: You're selling the rights to a

eleven dollars (from Lori's first published short story *Fred and Marna*) and then there was the *South Of Wawa* cheque and not much in between. For many years I wrote 'on spec', as they say.

DMO: What did you do for a living then?

LL: I worked as a waitress, on and off, and again the year and a half that I was an actress, I made a great deal of money, so that was good.

DMO: Did you do many revisions, and who initiated them?

LL: Essentially the producer initiates revisions. Writers are loathe to initiate revisions, for the most part.

DMO: Obviously you felt the script was finished.

LL: I felt that it was finished, but on the other hand you know what they say about works of art; you don't finish them; you abandon them. There's always tinkering that you want to do. There's always something you see that you can change. Now I think that the very first draft of *South Of Wawa* was very close, but there were a few structural changes that needed to be done.

DMO: That you felt needed to be done?

LL: That I felt needed to be done.

DMO: And what were they?

LL: Because it's an ensemble piece, it was difficult finding the focus. I'd really gone off with eight major characters, and I dealt with all of their stories, and it was very difficult to find a through-line with so many major stories and major characters. So the focus was Cheryl Ann. She was the character I most identified with and I felt most compelled by, and so she became the focus.

"It's natural for the writer to want to control things ... but I think that it's sort of futile to expect to be the boss when there is a producer and director involved ... it can be a frustrating experience."

and it's wonderful.

DMO: It's a good gig.

LL: It's a great gig. Avoiding honest labour.

DMO: How long then from the time you were finished South Of Wawa 'til the time it was produced? And how about the long journey that have been?

LL: That was an interesting journey.

DMO: What year was it finished? It was shot in...

LL: It was shot in the fall of '90, so it was finished then.

producer to try to put it on.

DMO: Well when they put it on do you then sell the whole product, or is it effectively sold by that option? Do you get paid again?

LL: You get a very nominal sum to option the right to a producer, then there are payments for revisions, extra drafts, what have you. It's on the first day of principal photography, when the film goes, that you get the big whopping cheque that sends you flying, especially for a first-time writer. It's the first time I was ever paid in any big way. I mean there was the

DMO: How do you feel then about the script you actually finished, and the movie?

LL: I really like the movie *South Of Wawa*. I think it's poignant and entertaining and on many levels it captures my intentions. But at a certain point for a screenwriter it stops being 'your script' and becomes somebody else's movie. Decisions are made—not necessarily better or worse—that you wouldn't have made. It's natural for the writer to want to control things. You want it to be exactly the way it was in your head. But I think that it's sort of futile and silly for a writer to expect to be the boss when there is a producer and director involved, and that's why I'm directing now; because it can be a frustrating experience.

DMO: How did you find directing something for the first time? That was your first time?

LL: Yes.

DMO: Film or stage?

LL: Film or stage it was my first time. I loved it. It was the ultimate power, and isn't that what it is all about in many ways.

DMO: Control.

LL: I really enjoyed the process. It was a little bit difficult because I did the art direction, such as it is, and I was also the costume mistress, the wardrobe mistress and make-up person and all of that sort of thing, so that was great for me. I loved the experience of directing and I'm itching to do it again.

DMO: The night I was wed? This fall?

LL: No I mean this is, of course,

pending funding, but I hope that I'll be supported. Milan and I, as a matter of fact, made our first two short films with our own money from *South Of Wawa* and again I think it was an invaluable experience, because when you are dealing with your own money you

time I was also working on *Jimmy's Coming*, because we're filmmakers and we want to continue in this 'wonderful world' of showbiz. I'd also been commissioned by Susan Cavan to write the adaptation of Isabel Huggan's *The Elizabeth Stories*.



South of Wawa

have to be organized. *Tessa* was the first that we got money to make, that was from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council Explorations program as a first time director, and I'm obviously grateful for their support and for the National Screen Institute in Edmonton. This is how the whole thing started with the Local Heroes Festival: they offer prizes of four thousand dollars based on scripts targeted to audiences fourteen to eighteen. That's how *Tessa* came to be. Actually the Local Heroes Festival this year is screening both *Jimmy's Coming* and *Tessa* and we're flying out to attend the festival.

DMO: So even when *Wawa* was in production you had another project?

LL: We shot our first short film *He ain't Heavy* the spring before *Wawa* was produced, and during that

DMO: Is that a Canadian novel?

LL: It's a collection of short stories. It's actually set in a Southwestern Ontario town which sounds like it might be Kitchener or Ingersoll, or one of those towns, and it takes the main character, Elizabeth, from the time she's three until she gets out of Gärten, which is the fictitious town. It's been a real challenge to adapt, obviously, since it's short stories.

DMO: To make it into a single narrative?

LL: To make it into a single narrative I decided to deal with one summer in this young girl's life. I thought that eleven was a wonderful age. I finished the last draft actually just a couple of weeks ago and I'm really excited by it. As far as I know, their plans are to get it into production this summer.

DMO: That's a much longer writing period than Wawa.

LL: Much longer.

DMO: Because it's someone else's material? Do you find it less pleasant because it's someone else's material?

LL: I like to believe that I have made it my own - that I've claimed it and made it my own. So I don't really think of it as someone else's material. I was connected to the book because I grew up in a place like Elizabeth did, and I guess, on some levels, I was a little bit like her. The difficult thing was not the art of it, it was the structure, it was

"The Big City is essentially a nightmare ... where fears manifest themselves as huge hairy men and women who speak in rhyme."

being true to the book; trying to capsulize episodes into one summer, episodes that actually occurred from the time she was three until the time she was sixteen, what can work, what won't work.

DMO: So when did you write Big City, and for someone with such a rural perspective was the Big City...

LL: The Big City is a departure from the small town stuff that I've written. I like to call it a cross between Alice In Wonderland and The Road Warrior. It's the story of a boy who yearns to become a man. It's his eighteenth birthday but he doesn't know what being a man is and he makes a wish. His wish is granted. He wants his life to be different and he's thrown into this place called the Big City. The place is essentially a nightmare, his allegorical nightmare, where his

worst fears manifest themselves as huge hairy men, and women who speak in rhyme. The characters are very peculiar and, like the Wizard of Oz, they are all drawn from his real life. He goes to the big city and his goal, although he doesn't know it, is to confront his fears. He realizes clothes don't make you cool, muscles don't make you strong, and learns that being a man is about being yourself.

I'm still a young writer and I don't want to be slotted into Small Town Drama. I didn't write *The Big City* just as a departure; I wrote *The Big City* because it's a story that

intrigues me and I thought this was the best and most exciting way to tell this story. Another thing different about this picture is that it's told in pictures. It's a story told in pictures and that's something that I did consciously. If I can tell it in pictures I do it, instead of dialogue.

Milan and I are really excited about the *The Big City* and are in the process of fund-raising right now, and as all filmmakers do, we're coming up against a lot of obstacles.

DMO: Have you got a distributor?

LL: We had a distributor who was very excited by the film and who saw it as a film that would make money. The main character is a teenager, a young man, and because it's really wild and funky we felt that we would be reaching a teenage audience which is one of the largest cinema-going audiences

in North America and which I don't see a lot of Canadian films trying to reach.

DMO: Where is Big City? Is the 'Big City' Toronto?

LL: It's a mindscape. The Big City isn't 'The City'. He goes to the big city in his head. He's from a small town called Charity Lake.

DMO: He moves to the big city?

LL: He goes to the Big City in his head.

DMO: Ah, then you envision the visuals of it being shot in the city?

LL: I envision the visuals of it being shot on sets. I think of it very much like the German Expressionist films of the nineteen twenties, and again, it's really different. I think we're reaching for something unique.

One thing I will say about the frustration of being a screenwriter, is that I think there are few people who know how to read a screenplay. The more prose in a screenplay, the more direction there is, as opposed to dialogue, the less they get it. I think that's true in *The Big City*. I've found that people skim-read *The Big City*. Because there's so little dialogue, it's a difficult read. It's pages upon pages of prose.

DMO: Of visual description?

LL: Of visual description, of action and place.

DMO: And you find people don't get it?

LL: Some people don't get it, but again this is a real stretch. I think that it's something really unique and different and it's very exciting because of it. We're going to make the film, by hook or crook.

South of Wawa opens commercially at the end of April.

TWIFT TELEVISION PRODUCTION TECHNICAL WORKSHOP SERIES 1992

In February and March 1992, Toronto Women in Film & Television (TWIFT) will be offering an exciting training opportunity.

Together with the CBC National Training & Development Dept., TWIFT has started a series of workshops to be funded by Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC).

Trainees will have the opportunity to join a job shadowing program and receive a modest weekly allowance from EIC if they are not currently receiving unemployment insurance.

These workshops are open to women who are employed or unemployed. Workshop and travel fees are subsidized by EIC according to existing EIC guidelines. If you're eligible and think you'd be interested, you can get more information by getting in contact with Debbie Nightingale & Assocs., 45 Barclay Road, Toronto, M3H 3E2, by phone at (416) 638-5423 or by fax at (416) 398-2872. Remember, selected applicants are required to attend the entire workshop.

Congratulations LIFT members: Recipients of 1991 Toronto Arts Council Grants to visual artists

Dennis Day (\$10,000) for "Auto Biography", a 15 minute video about growing up gay in Newfoundland and about "remaking the past and reinventing the future."

Anna Gronau (\$12,000) will collaborate with First Nations artist Shelly Niro on a short experimental film using the Columbus quincentenary as a springboard for the conflicts and contradictions experienced by an Iroquois girl.

Keith Lock (\$12,000) will direct "Small Pleasures", a 75 minute dramatic film set within the milieu of expatriates from mainland China as they adjust to life in Chinatown.

Mehra Meh (\$8,755) will direct "Siblings", a short dramatic film about the relationship between two Iranian-Canadian siblings.

Annet Sears (\$8,755) will direct "Abide By", a half hour dramatic film about a retired couple who, as cleaners with LOTSA (Liberation of Thoroughly Seditious Acts Symbolizing the Oppression of People), liberate jockey lawn mowers and other artifacts offensive to African ancestry.

Still from THE COMB: FROM THE MUSEUMS OF SLEEP,
selected by John Gagné for Carte Blanche



CARTE BLANCHE

The second edition of the Cinematheque Ontario's ongoing series which offers "carte blanche" to Toronto Filmmakers to programme their own evening at the Cinematheque, the only rule being that their work must be included. LIFT member **Helen Lee** will be showing her own *Sally's Beauty Spot* amidst "tough, funny and moving films" by women on Friday February 21, at 7pm. LIFT member **John Gagné** will be showing three of his own formalist films along with classics of the French and German avant-garde cinema.

SHORT ENDS



★ SHORT ENDS ★



GRANT DEADLINES

Canada Council

EXPLORATIONS
January 15 • May 1
September 15

AID TO ARTISTS
(INDIVIDUALS)
October 1 • April 1

FILM PRODUCTION
July 15 • November 15

ART BANK
February 1 • August 1

Ontario Arts Council

FILM PRODUCTION
November 1 • April 1

SCREEWRITING
February 1

ARTISTS AND THE
WORKPLACE
March 1 • July 4

VIDEO PRODUCTION
February 1 • August 15

Toronto Arts Council

GRANTS TO VISUAL ARTISTS
Fall '92

WELCOME New LIFT members

Steve Nijjar • Dennis Day
Darcy Hoover • Nadine Valcin
Noah Cowan • Don Brierly
Colin Ward • Midi Onodera
Dean Hannas • Jennifer Chang Alloy
James B. Rait • Thomas M. Bellisario
Nancy Winsor • Jerry Drozdowski
Mary Mitchell • Derby Crewe
Peter Wiszniewski • Pamela Saioni
Joseph Chambers • Geoff Isaac
Richard Chambers • Emily Visser
Sberyl Trachter • Jennifer Mashingaidze
H. Lee Fredericks • Lynne Valeriote
Joy Corion • Camille Hernandez-Ramdar
Vipin Kumar Sharma • John Whitcher
Melanie Aguila • Evan Georgiades
Damian Kindler • John Kalangis
Henryk Burtal • Duane Arnott

Congratulations LIFT members: Recipients of Canada Council Explorations Grants

Monica Bider \$6,000 "Trophy Hunting".
John R. Hopkins (\$7,000)
"Johntson...Johnston"
Michael O'Hara (\$10,000) "Donuts,
People and their Dreams"

1992 SUMMER INSTITUTE OF FILM AND TELEVISION

From June 14 to 19, Algonquin College in Ottawa will host a series of workshops for film professionals included amongst the 40 Canadian and international guests are Wim Wenders and Gus Van Sant. There are cards available at the LIFT office to send away for a catalogue.

UPCOMING FESTIVAL DEADLINES

Houston International Film & Video Festival. Deadline: March 6, '92
First Halifax Lesbian and Gay Video & Film Festival. Deadline: March 16, '92
The VIII Troia International Film Festival. Deadline: March 31, '92
10th International Children's Film & Video Festival. Deadline: April 1, '92
39th Sydney Film Festival. Deadline: March 31, '92
XIXth Festival of Films and Television Programs on the Environment, (EKO FILM '92) Prague. Deadline: March 15, '92
38th International Short Film and Video Festival Oberhausen. Deadline: March 1, '92
28th Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival. Deadline: March 22, '92
13E Festival International du Jeune Cinéma. Deadline: February 28, '92
Humbolt International Film Festival. Deadline: March 3, '92
U.S. Industrial Film and Video Festival. Deadline: March 1, '92
Seattle International Film Festival. Deadline: March 15, '92
4th International Animation Festival in Japan. Deadline: March 21, '92
* 15th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. Deadline: March 15, '92
* Festival applications available at...

LIFT CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

Fisher Price video camera. Call Andrew 535-1475

Carole Griffith, a new member, would like to offer her services. 593-0408

Filmmakers wanted: by exciting new theatre company to make film on theatre progress and to film concerts. **Mary:** 408-4900 or 928-1801.

Cheap video editing for rough cuts. 2 Mitsubishi decks—SVHS u80 and VHS u32. Loft in comfy downtown house \$5.00/hour. Call **Judith** or **Sandra** 867-1697.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

National Educational Media Market is looking for new documentaries and educational media for non-theatrical distributors seeking acquisitions. Works in progress are welcome. **Deadline** for submissions is **April 10, 1992**. 655 13th Street, Oakland, California 94612-1220 telephone (510) 465-6885 Fax (510) 465-2835.

WORKSHOPS

D. Nightingale & Associates Ltd. presents three "not to be missed" film/TV workshops for Spring 1992. These workshops are designed to benefit both the experienced and those who are just starting out. Workshops are scheduled to take place at Wallace Avenue studios. Cost is \$195.00 +G.S.T. and includes materials.

Don Simens: Producing Low- and Ultra -Low Budget Feature Films. April 11 & 12.

Michael Hauge: How to write and sell your screenplay April 25 & 26.

Mark Litwak: How to Succeed in the Movie Industry May 2 & 3. For more information contact: D. Nightingale and Associates Tel: (416) 638-5423 Fax: (416) 398-2872.

NEW GRANT DEADLINE

Guidelines and application forms for the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund (This is the successor to the DSS Non-Theatrical Film Fund). Deadlines for applications are: January 31, April 1, July 2 & November 2, 1992.

LIFT PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE



is looking for films by LIFT members to show at Monday Night Screenings

We need: new work by old members, any work by new LIFT members, old work by LIFT members that has never been shown before at a LIFT screening.

Your work can be in any format. If you are in post-production of your film, we would also like to know about it. Drop off a note for us at the LIFT office.

DEALS! DEALS! DEALS!

- **FILMHOUSE** is offering LIFT members a 20% discount on COD orders upon presentation of the LIFT membership card.
 - **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.
 - **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 PRODUCTS** 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.*

Y Y Z

1087 QUEEN STREET WEST, TORONTO • M6J 1H3 • (416) 531-7869

FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 14

SADIE BENNING:

A PLACE CALLED LOVELY

JOLLIES

ME AND RUBYFRUIT

"Benning smashes the invisibility of queer teenage sexuality by giving it a voice"

Karl Soehnlein, Outweek

FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 14

JENNIFER MONTGOMERY:

AGE 12: LOVE WITH A LITTLE L

HOME AVENUE

"... a bracing plunge into memory and truth, sexual identity and representation."

Manohla Dargis, The Village Voice

YYZ TIME - BASED ART

LIFT MONTHLY SCREENING



The Huaorani Get Lost in a Film

by John Hickey (53 min/col/doc)

About the effects of 20th century oil exploration, the missionary intervention on the Huaorani people of Amazonian Ecuador and their sometimes violent attempts in countering this growing cultural encroachment.

8pm Monday, February 24, 1992

CineCycle, 317 Spadina Ave.

(rear entrance, between D'Arcy and Baldwin)

LIFT

345 Adelaide Street West
Suite 505
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 1R5
416-596-8233