

FILMPRINT

The Magazine of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto Volume 25 Issue 4 July 2005 \$4



Eva's Peace: A Portrait of Eva Ziemsen

Brian Stockton's Adventures in 'Scope

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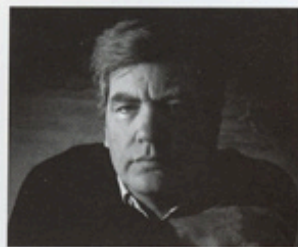
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(above and cover image) Production stills from *Maricones (Faggots)* by Marcos Arriaga

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Masthead



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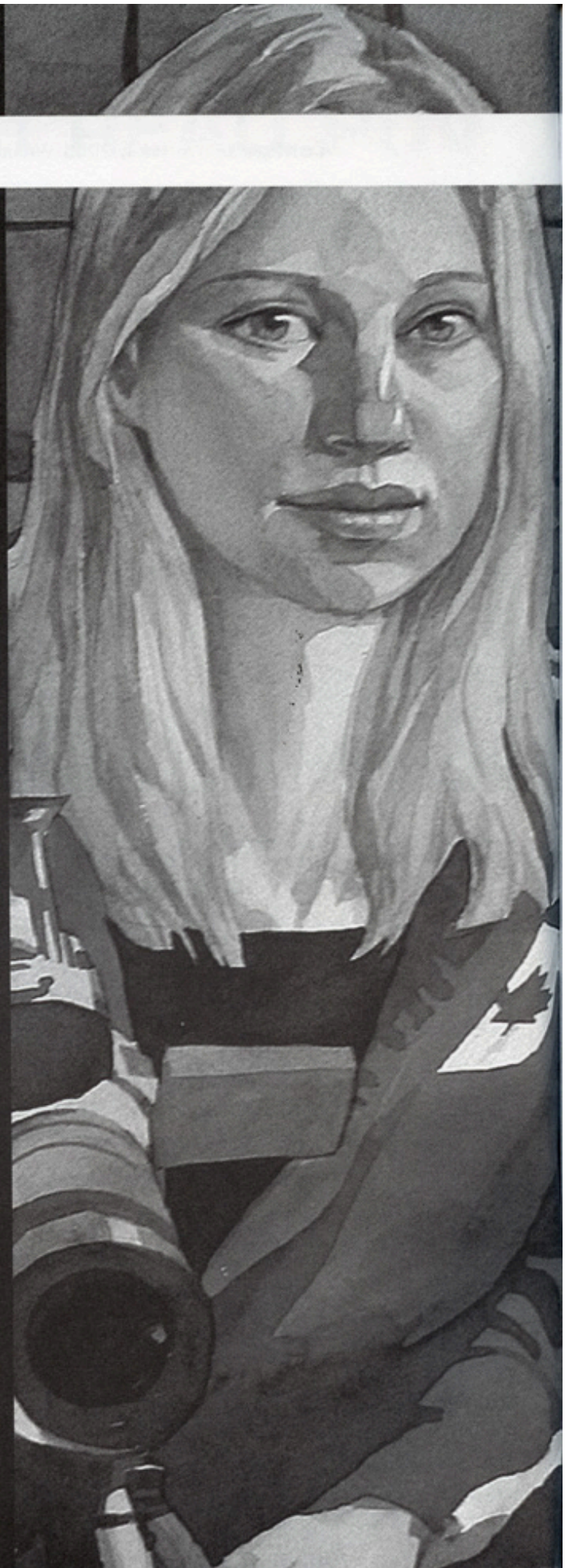
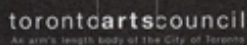
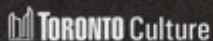
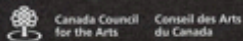
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The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto is a non-profit charitable organization that provides Toronto's vibrant independent filmmaking community with affordable access to production equipment and post-production facilities, educational services, film screenings and much more. For over two decades, LIFT has played an integral part in advancing and promoting the art of independent filmmaking in Toronto.

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Message from the Executive Director

Roberto Ariganello

When I first started working at LIFT back in 1998, there was a widespread belief among media artists that film was quickly declining as a viable art form. Seven years ago, Mini DV and non-linear digital editing systems had quickly established themselves as practical alternatives for producing time-based art. The prevailing mood at that time was that LIFT would have to change quickly to remain a significant force in the local media arts community. I remember one suggestion at the time was to replace all the existing flatbed suites with Premiere digital editing systems or rent out digital video cameras. Fortunately, we did not make that mistake.

The new digital technologies arrived and made a significant impact in our community. Schools quickly divested themselves of film equipment, and, through corporate partnerships, acquired new digital technologies. Artist-run video production centres lost a significant portion of their membership when members realized they could affordably purchase their own cameras and editing systems. LIFT, however, flourished during this period, and, in fact, grew significantly (especially over the last couple of years) despite the seemingly never-ending “advancements” of digital technology. Truth be told, advancements in digital technology had positive effects on film art production at LIFT.

A good example is the realm of animation. Approximately ten years ago, digital animation quickly replaced analogue production methods in the commercial domain. The animation that you see today in cinemas and, especially, on television, is created digitally. Advancements in digital animation have created a remarkably different and pronounced visual style in our world. The large, cumbersome Oxberry camera quickly became obso-

lete for commercial animation production. Yet, rather than the Oxberry being carted to the scrap yard, there has been a resurgence in its use precisely because it is no longer part of the commercial realm. The Oxberry creates a visual quality or “look” that is absent from mainstream media and which is entirely different from the animation that is created by digital technology. Moreover, filmed animation appeals to artists who work in other disciplines and employ artisanal techniques. Photo animation, rotoscoping and collage filmmaking have all experienced a resurgence at LIFT—and in international independent filmmaking, as well—thanks largely to advancements in digital technology and the commercial popularity of video.

As video emerges as the dominant commercial medium, the tools of filmmaking have become liberated, so to speak, and a re-emergence of old school techniques like optical printing, camera-less animation and hand processing have been embraced by a new generation of artists. The separation between film art and video art has never been more apparent. Yet, there is still a prevailing myth that film art has something to do with Hollywood and is not an art form—despite the generations of extraordinary artists who have explored and contributed so much to the medium over the past 100 years. It is not surprising, therefore, to read in the spring issue of *Canadian Art* magazine an article by Tom Sherman pontificating on the merits of video as the predominant medium of the 21st century. As played-out as the argument is, Sherman raises it to such a hysterical level that one wonders if he’s on the payroll of Sony and Panasonic. Video is the all-encompassing art form, Sherman concludes, genetically superior to all others—especially film. Sherman can’t resist writing off experi-

mental film (he lumps all film in with commercial cinema) as “...being eclipsed by video art.” This sort of trivializing of our art form is both quaint and disturbing. Every couple of weeks I read somewhere or encounter someone—the Chicken Little of the art world—who will try to convince me that film is a dying or dead. There is always some old (or young) fool out there who likes to advise artists that they are wasting their time with film. Usually these folks are completely blind to the differences between film art and video art.

What is more appalling than Sherman’s tedious Darwinian praise of video is the ignorance on the part of the *Canadian Art* editorial staff. Apparently, they are unaware that film is a unique art form inherently different from video and permitted (or even solicited) Sherman’s outlandish claims. Sherman is the sort of tired intellectual—he’s worked for the Canada Council in the 80s and even received the Governor General’s Award—that editors assume know what they’re talking about. The editors themselves appear blithely unaware of the long tradition of Canadian artists who have worked in the film medium. (Call me—I’ll give you a list.) Perhaps *Canadian Art* might wish to consider changing its name. At least until it has a better understanding of the Canadian film art scene.

Roberto Ariganello
Executive Director

THE HARD SLOG — “The whole film thing is based on tremendous work,” says filmmaker Eva Ziemsen. “Are there bumps in the road? It’s all bumps, and then there are gigantic mountains that are the films. You climb up the mountain and then you look out and see the view. Those are the few moments where it’s great. You’re at a film festival and everybody loves it, or somebody cried, or someone says she’s going to talk to her parents again after seeing your film. Then you’ve got to walk down the mountain: make sure all the distribution is wrapped up or maybe you’ve made back some of the money, which you can spend to make the next film. You’re tripping down the mountain and then onto the next bumps on to the next film. It’s hard so you’d better love the process, the hard work, the ritual.”

EVA ZIEMSEN



(left) Painting of Eva Ziemsen by Rudolf Stussi

THE REALIST

As Ziemsen talks she occasionally gazes out the window of the bustling College Street café where we've met. It's a sunny, and occasionally rainy, Sunday afternoon. Ziemsen's gloomy talk of the hard knocks of the film industry belies her pretty, blonde hair, blue eyed appearance. She is petite, youthful, but quickly annoyed by people, particularly within the industry, who make assumptions about her based on her looks. She's often pegged as an aspiring actress. She proudly, even defiantly, responds with "No, I'm not an actress; I've made seven films. And I'm working on my feature." Ziemsen describes filmmaking as 95% rejection, and argues that, for female directors, filmmaking is all the more difficult. While Ziemsen admits some of the assumptions are hurtful, she's ready to challenge and, ideally, change people's viewpoints: "Sometimes people think I'm pessimistic because I say things that sound depressing, but I just think I'm being realistic. I'm a realist and I'm opinionated. I don't sugarcoat anything. I just speak the harsh truth."

THE START

Born in Munich, Germany, Ziemsen spent part of her childhood there until she and her family fled to Canada six days after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Fearful of radioactive rain clouds travelling from the site of the catastrophe to nearby countries and aware of the horrific effects of nuclear contami-

nation on children, Ziemsen's mother, a doctor, was quick to get the family as far away as possible. They ended up in Nova Scotia but the cost of leaving Germany so abruptly was crippling. Ziemsen remembers eating nothing but noodles and ketchup her first few months in Canada and owning only two outfits. They eventually went back to Germany to organize their affairs and then finally returned to make Canada their home. Years later, still deeply affected by the environmental tragedy and her family's rapid emigration, Ziemsen made an animated film called **Child of Chernobyl** in which the first words are, "Today my toys have to play outside without me."

"Another reason why we came to Canada was that the school system in Germany was very narrow-minded. There was still a lot of anti-Semitism in southern Munich. My mom's side of the family is Jewish," says Ziemsen. "I don't think I would have been a filmmaker had we stayed. My brother and I were not doing very well in that kind of a structure. My mom didn't want to watch us struggle for the next thirteen years."

Ziemsen recalls learning English from Spielberg's **E.T.** and deciding, at eight years of age, that she wanted to be a filmmaker after her father told her that directors get to boss people around. She has long since learned the truth, finding that a director is like an on-set ambassador whose role is to keep everybody happy.

THE INDECENT PROPOSAL

Ziemsen thrives in harsh reality. It's when she is pushed to the limit that she can conjure a solution to the most impossible of tasks. If you want to push her into action, just tell her some-

"I hope filmmaking is beyond just expression... ...I'm not just making a film

thing's going to be excruciatingly difficult. She will be all the more driven to prove naysayers wrong. "Eva, you're crazy' is so normal for me to hear, especially with the Lars thing," she laughs. "I was on the phone to his production company, being rejected to go there. I hung up and looked at my master's colleagues and said, 'They don't want me to come, but I'm going!'"

The "Lars thing" refers to her meeting with renowned **Dogville** director and notoriously media-wary Lars von Trier. She had been trying for months to meet with the Danish filmmaker. Faced with rejection from Zentropa, von Trier's production company, and encountering the skepticism of her fellow film master's students at Goldsmiths College in London, England, Ziemsens's "dare-me-to" reflex had been provoked. She decided to make the trip to Denmark to meet with her idol and prove everyone wrong: "When I prepared for that whole adventure, I knew everything about him. I found out he doesn't ever travel and he doesn't like media. I had watched every film ever made about him and every film he'd ever made. I read everything that was available on him. I already knew his standard answers; so I knew what not to ask if I actually got the interview."

It was mad enough that she was going to confront such a notoriously prickly director, but on top of that she was going to make an offer that, she hoped, von Trier could not refuse. "I was going to offer to do the interview naked," she says.

THE NAKED MOMENT OF TRUTH

Yes, in the nude. The idea was so outrageous that it gained national atten-

tion. On the front page of the *Globe and Mail's* entertainment section, the story of Ziemsens's naked ambition and her subsequent meeting with the director were thoroughly documented. In the article, Ziemsens explains that her offer to bare herself in front of von Trier was an empathetic gesture, and that, by revealing herself so explicitly, he was free to do the same: "In doing that, I hope he would understand that I understood him."

The moment of truth, not surprisingly, proved difficult. Doubt began to seep into her psyche. She had arrived in Copenhagen, and it was raining. She was wandering the streets alone, unsure where she was supposed to be going. It was a Friday so the chances of von Trier even being in the office were slim: "On the day of, I didn't want to go. I was... not scared, but I didn't want to put myself out there like that. I had been told not to come. Nobody was backing me. In fact, everybody thought it wouldn't work. I talked to myself and said here's the choice: do this now. There is no way around it. There are no excuses. You have to do your best and that's what you're here for. You have to do this right now. You take a gamble, you take a risk. And in my case, I was very lucky."

She arrived at von Trier's headquarters with guns blazing and her camera rolling and then promptly asked to take a seat. A photographer who was buzzing around the studio that day asked Ziemsens what she was going to do with the film and she said, "Nothing." Her intention had never been to make a film: "I did it because I was inspired by him." After waiting for a few hours, she was afforded twenty minutes of von Trier's time. She was able to do the interview fully clothed. "I did not have that many questions

for him. It turned out to be more of a conversation," she says. Ziemsens is tight-lipped about the documentary, but reveals **A Conversation With Lars Von Trier** will unfold in chapters: "On Making Film," "Reality," "Authenticity," "Dogme 95" and "Setting Things on Fire."

Perhaps Ziemsens has picked up some of von Trier's media apprehension: "There were some really bad online things that came out after the *Globe and Mail* article. There was a blog that said 'Stalking and Stripping for Lars von Trier.' Stalking is totally inaccurate and offensive. It's suggesting things that are clearly untrue. I was very pissed off about that. I became really defensive. I ended up writing a letter to Lars clarifying things because I didn't want his wife to be reading something like that. With the Internet there is no censorship; anybody can write anything."

Despite the misrepresentations, Ziemsens counts her meeting with the auteur as a major accomplishment of her time in Europe. Indeed, she secured Zentropa as a producer of her first feature film **Sarah's Peace**.

THE MONEY

Ziemsens is currently travelling the bumpy road of making **Sarah's Peace**, which is based partly on her family's history. A film that explores forgiveness, acceptance and peace, she hopes to travel to Mongolia and shoot footage on the Trans-Siberian railway where some of the film's story unfolds. Ziemsens admits that the financing of this film will be a challenge. With her short films she had always been able to fund her projects herself, but she has entered a different playing field with the feature. Until recently, her film

because I want to experiment with a certain format. I want to it to say something.”

budgets have been fairly modest, but then most, if not all, of her money goes to her filmmaking pursuits. On an exchange in Australia (Ziensen was then a student at York), she discovered her priorities were much different than those of her fellow students: “All of my friends there went out every weekend, buying tons of vodka. I wasn’t drinking at all. At the end [of the exchange], I was putting down serious dough for shooting these films and my friends would ask ‘How can you do it, Eva? Why do you spend so much money on your films?’ I said, ‘You add up how much money you’ve spent on booze and I’m sure my film is cheaper than that.’ I don’t think I have ever spent much money on my films. I don’t have a car. A manicure? I probably haven’t had one in forever. I don’t go out much. I don’t drink at all. I don’t spend money on those kinds of things. You choose what you put your money to.”

“How can you do this, Eva?!” is just a variation of “Are you crazy, Eva?” But some of the protests are warranted. Not every project that Eva has embarked on has been a shining success. At least one of the films that she shot during her exchange down under will never see the light of day. She is a self-confessed footage hoarder and compulsive shooter: “Filmmaking hinders me a lot in actually living. People have asked me if I can put down the camera for one second and I’ve answered ‘No, I can’t.’ I actually developed a hand injury from holding the camera. The Sony PD 150 doesn’t have a shoulder mount... Now I have to wear a brace when I hold that camera.”

THE GOOD FILM

Ziensen’s first short, *Air Cadet*, was a Super 8 film in black-and-white and

colour. It was about her brother’s love of flying. It was her first step in learning what made a good film for her. “I had all these naive, cliché ideas of what made a good film,” she says. Ironically, she received the most clichéd advice of all when it comes to any creative endeavour: make something you know about.

“A good film says something. I like to watch a film and get a message. My philosophy for filmmaking: a very good film is a complete film. There should be complete synergy between content and form. Whatever your story, you have to choose the right format. And vice versa: you can already have an idea for a format, but you have to find the right story for it. I think it’s good to do a story about something very specific and something that you know a lot about and that you care about. That’s what Lars said to me too. Lars’ opinion was if some people like your work, they’ll buy tickets and you can make some more films. If they don’t, they don’t. But you can’t cater to them. He said if you think you know what an audience wants, then you’ve lost everything. You can’t think you know what an audience wants. The only thing you can do is stay true to yourself.”

Ziensen is adamant that this is not stuff for your friends and family. Film needs to reach out and do something in the hearts and minds of the viewers. She talks of film activism and her hope to go to the tsunami-stricken regions of Indonesia. Filmmaking, for her, seems a frivolous occupation in light of the pain and suffering in the world; she wants to contribute to a greater cause. “Some people make films for self-expression, but that’s when I start to feel guilty,” she says, almost deflated by the idea of justifying her livelihood.

“I hope filmmaking is beyond just expression. It should stand as a document. The work should have some kind of an influence. I’m not just making a film because I think it will look cool or because I want to experiment with a certain format. I want to it to say something. I love when film can create discussion and awareness and inspiration for other people to do something in their lives.”

Eva Ziensen plans for *Sarah’s Peace* to go into production in about a year. She is also working on a “making-of” documentary of the same film, to be called *Eva’s War*. *Conversation with Lars von Trier* is in post-production. She aims to have the film ready for upcoming film festivals. ■

Selected Filmography

A Conversation with Lars von Trier, 12 minutes, MiniDV, colour, 2005

Captured, 10 minutes, MiniDV, colour, 2003

Child of Chernobyl, 4 minutes, Super 8, colour, 2001

Mama & Papa, 6 minutes, 16mm, B&W, 2001

Fortune, 8 minutes, MiniDV, colour, 2000

ADVENTURES IN 'SCOPE

Whenever I pick up the new Cinematheque Ontario schedule, I am always particularly delighted when I see the words, "new 35mm 'scope print." Anamorphic 35mm, a.k.a. Cinemascope or just 'scope, is my favourite film format.

'Scope was created in the 50s as a means of producing a wide-screen film image, something everyone was experimenting with at the time to produce a more dynamic image for the cinema. The other major wide-screen format developed at that time was 1.85:1 (1.66:1 in Europe), which was created by simply cropping the top and bottom of a standard 35mm, 1.33:1 frame to create a wide picture. This is really easy to do and requires no special equipment per se, so it was and is the most common wide-screen film format. But it's also very wasteful, because with that system large amounts of celluloid are not used, and the size of the picture area is reduced. Plus, the image is only moderately wide in appearance.

Which is where 'scope comes in. 'Scope uses anamorphic lenses to squeeze twice as much picture onto the standard 1.33:1 frame. Instead of standard round lens elements, the elements are elliptical. When this squeezed image is projected using a lens that unsqueezes the image, you get a wide screen image up to 2.66:1, although it is generally limited to 2.35:1 by camera and projector masks.

And even though I'm also a fan of large film formats like 70mm and IMAX, for my money, anamorphic 35mm is the best thing out there. For one thing, it has become a universal standard. Because of the large number of feature films shot in anamorphic 35mm since the 50s, every cinema that can show 35mm can show 35mm

'scope. 70mm projection has become almost nonexistent, and the image is generally not quite as wide, usually only 2:1. The super-large negative of IMAX is certainly an attraction, but the expense of so much celluloid is generally prohibitive. And the screen ratio, if it even matters at such an enormous size, is 1.33:1, just like TV and film in the old days. In terms of the possibilities for composition, I much prefer the wide image.

Toronto filmmaker Ryan Redford is also a 'scope aficionado, so I asked him his thoughts about shooting his new short film in 35 'scope. "Well, the film [I'm making] is called **Lake** and it's about a man and woman who are journeying towards a mythical lake that can wash away despair. It's essentially a travel movie, with the characters trekking through the wilderness for

three days. So it was crucial, visually, that the audience get a sense that these two people have truly gone somewhere. And that's what anamorphic lenses perhaps do best: give a grander sense of place and space."

Redford continues. "While all my films have relied upon landscapes in one way or another, this particular story was to take place almost entirely outdoors. So my cinematographer, Boris Mojsovski, and I figured if ever we were going to shoot in Cinemascope, this would be the project to do it. We had inquired about using anamorphic lenses for my previous film, but due to money and scheduling restraints, we ended up sticking to 1.85/spherical lenses. This time out, knowing that the story really lent itself to a widescreen format, we vowed that we would shoot anamorphic come hell or high water, and that the money would just have to be taken out of some other area of the budget.

I suppose I should note that I'm an advocate of shooting on film. Unabashedly so. I appreciate the immediacy of video (and of course, the cost). But in terms of creating images with a lyrical/painterly/otherworldly quality to them, well, film is still unrivaled. Film shot in Cinemascope especially. And, really, that's what I'm always aiming for with my films: a certain lyricism and otherworldliness."

As Ryan alludes to, the other major thing about 'scope is the sense of size and place. The larger your negative (or even imaging chip) the larger the sense of scale, and a spectator's immersion in your landscape. Super 8 and 16mm are wonderful, intimate formats, but neither can give you the sense of scale that larger formats offer. The biggest trend in Hollywood these days is to shoot in a format called Super 35,



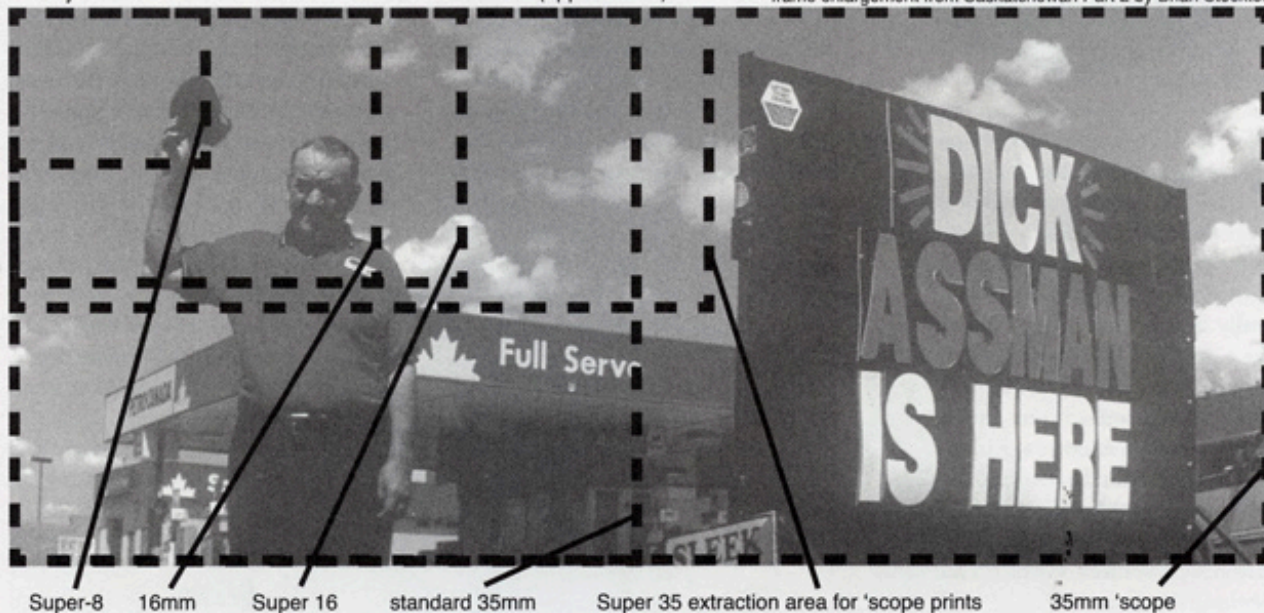
(top) Squeezed, (bottom) Un-squeezed: 'Scope uses anamorphic lenses to squeeze twice as much picture onto the standard 1.33:1 frame. Instead of standard round lens elements, the elements are elliptical. When this squeezed image is projected using a lens that unsqueezes the image, you get a wide screen image up to 2.66:1, although it is generally limited to 2.35:1 by camera and projector masks.

Brian Stockton

Brian Stockton is a Toronto-based filmmaker and teacher who is working on a series of personal documentaries about growing up in Saskatchewan. Parts Three and Four are currently in post-production.

What you see with a normal lens in different film formats (approximate)

frame enlargement from Saskatchewan Part 2 by Brian Stockton



which, like Super 16, utilizes as much negative area as possible by recording picture into the soundtrack area. But just like Super 16 it's not a release format, so you have to extract the picture area you want by optical printing or digital scanning. The advantage of this format is that you can use standard spherical lenses which are lighter, smaller and less expensive, but still output to the ultra-wide 2.35:1 'scope ratio. The downside is that you lose the sense of scale I've been talking about, because you're basically just cropping your 35mm frame and your negative area is much smaller than true 35mm 'scope. **Titanic** was shot in Super 35, which is the one of the reasons, for all of its spectacular scenes and effects, it lacks the epic feeling that it's going for. Look at any frame of a film like **Lawrence of Arabia**, which was shot in 70mm, and **Titanic** looks very pale in comparison.

As you can see in the diagram, a 'scope extraction from a Super 35mm negative is closer in perceived size to Super 16 than it is to 35mm 'scope. The beauty of 35mm 'scope is that because the image is basically squeezed twice, the "virtual" size of the negative is very much like the actual size of 70mm film (2x35=70). What you see with a normal lens in 35 'scope is very similar to what you see with a normal lens in 70mm. Looking through a Super 8 camera is like looking through a peep-hole, whereas 35 'scope is more like looking through a window.

Of course there are issues when working in 'scope, particularly in the realm of lower-budget productions. The lenses are bigger, heavier, slower, more expensive, and harder to get. Your only options in Toronto right now are Clairmont or Panavision, and, even then, your choice is limited because you're competing with big

budget Hollywood features for a small number of available lenses. In my work I've also used a lot of animation stand footage and optical printing, and since those things don't usually come with a standard 'scope solution, you have to improvise. Despite the problems I'm hooked on the result, and I encourage any filmmakers thinking about shooting in 35mm to consider the 'scope option. ■

VIEWFINDER NIZO SUPER 8 CAMERAS

In my previous columns I wrote about two very exciting 16mm cameras (the Bolex Hi6 and an Auricon Pro 600 Special), one which I was familiar with, and one which I had never ever really seen before the preparation of the article. However, this issue's installment of "Viewfinder"—the name change reflects our anticipation that the technical coverage in this column will eventually encompass more than cameras—is different than the previous two, because I have chosen to introduce a subject of which I am particularly fond.

Forgive this indulgence, but Super 8 is what precipitated my interest in making my own films and collecting cameras. If I were forced to pick a favourite camera, it would probably be one in the family of Super 8's, and, more specifically, probably one in Braun's Nizo family and, even more specifically, probably the Nizo S-801. To me, there is something both very ordinary and very magical about almost all of the Nizo Super 8 cameras—with a legendary history befitting their reputations. It's difficult to isolate one reason for my appreciation; perhaps it is the elegance, precision and sophistication of the cameras' mechanical engineering, or the fact that the Nizo (as an entire line of cameras) is so easy and fun to use, or maybe it's just that they produce such beautiful results. Whatever it is, I hope that my sentiments will encourage you to rent one from LFT if you haven't already done so and don't own one yourself. Sure, there are plenty of other

great Super 8 cameras out there, all with drastic and nuanced differences (and also available for rent at the LFT camera office) but for the purposes of this installment of Viewfinder, I'd like to focus on the Nizo.

Understanding the versatility of the Nizo, most of which were produced in the 70s, is, in some ways, much like understanding the versatility of Super 8 filmmaking itself. The best part is that there isn't too much preparation needed in order to take full advantage of this versatility. Knowing your Super 8 film stocks, of which there are only a handful really—the discussion of the discontinuation of old stocks and the introduction of new ones is a favourite subject among Super 8 enthusiasts—and the basics of focusing a lens are enough to get started. Film stock is supplied in 15m./50ft. cartridges (or "carts" as they are referred to colloquially) which have an approximate duration of two minutes and forty-five seconds and are extremely affordable. Some are light-balanced for interior use (tungsten) and some for exterior use (daylight). In either case, you simply pop your cartridge into the chamber on the camera, set your exposure level, focus the lens and you're off to the races. This is fairly common to most Super 8 cameras, but what makes the Nizos different from all the rest are the incredibly cool special features that accompany almost all of its models, especially the high-end ones.

It would be impossible to cover the complexity, history and subtle differences of each Nizo in a column as brief as this. However, the features which are common to most Nizos are best exemplified in the following models: the S-480, S-560 and the S-800, all of which were introduced in the early 70s. These are the most common models,

and, in some cases, the most sought-after and most cherished by Super 8 enthusiasts and filmmakers. The design of the 480, 560 and 800 were altered in the mid-70s, and became the S-481, S-561 and S-801 models. Then again, later that decade, they were modified and released as the S-481 macro, S-561 macro and the S-801 macro, all which, obviously, featured macro capabilities.

Both the S-480 and the S-481 have an 8mm to 48mm f/1.8 Schneider 2-speed zoom lens, while the S-560 and the S-561 both have a 7mm to 56mm f/1.8 Schneider 2-speed zoom lens. The S-800 and the S-801 both have a 7mm to 80mm f/1.8 Schneider 2-speed zoom

Nizo.
The best get better.



One: A second metering system, that automatically sets time exposures of as long as a minute, for beautiful time even at twilight.

Two: A control that compensates for backlighting. One push of the button and the aperture's automatically opened one stop so you get great footage even when the light's behind your subject.

Three: A cubic release socket, for automatic lap dissolves at a distance.

Improving a Nizo is never easy. So the people who build them find little ways to make your filming even more rewarding. Like designing a whole information center into the viewfinder, so you can see while you're shooting what aperture you've got, what focal length your lens is set at, whether the film is in place, even whether the film is advancing. Add the little touches to the big ones—the crisp Schneider Xenogon lens, the silent power zoom, the Intermeter, the astounding Nizo quality and workmanship—and you've got a Nizo.

And nothing but a Nizo. Nizos come in several models: the 801, with 11.4:1 zoom, the 561, with 8:1 zoom, the moderately-priced 481, with 6:1 zoom, the all-out professional Nizo 800P, with precision sound/synch system, the 1500L, with the longest zoom ratio among popular priced XL's.

BRAUN

Daniel Albahary

Daniel Albahary is a Super 8 and 16mm aficionado. He has worked in the production industry, shoots Super 8, and will shoot his first 16mm short film this fall. His company NI Motion Digital produces and distributes motion picture content for the web.

lens, and the additional capability of macro close-up focusing when used in conjunction with the special Nizo Ultrawide angle lens attachments. Although they may have different lenses, the following is common to them all: single frame, 18fps, 24fps, and 54fps. You'll also find, usually on the right side of the body, the built-in intervalometer used for filming time-lapse sequences which can range from one frame per second to one frame per minute. Imagine the possibilities! For example, I shoot long sequences of time-lapse photography with a Nizo all the time (battery consumption is amazingly low it seems), and even made an elaborate stop-motion animation film using only the S-801 Macro, Ultrawide Lenses, and a mini tripod. I chose the camera, specifically, however, for the results it produces.

Each model has a manual variable shutter that can be locked in the half-closed position, and which also can be locked in the fully open position to make time exposures. This is great when used in conjunction with the intervalometer. Set up near a busy highway at night using this feature and the cars you've filmed racing by will, when projected, appear as continuous streaks of light. (You'll find, however, that some of the better Bauer Super 8 cameras have this feature already built-in, and are, in fact, much easier to use than the Nizo.) Each model also has a flash synch PC contact, 5 pin DIN

for synch-sound via Nizo cable, electric remote release, and a lock run setting. The f-stop is displayed in the viewfinder with an over/under warning, and the cameras have built-in light metering. On most of these models, there is a lap dissolve button for a

which tended to operate far more quietly than the above cameras because, of course, they were designed to record sound. These cameras are fantastic if you still wish to record on-location sound in conjunction with your Super 8 camera because they hardly make any noise at all (you won't have to "barney" the camera at all, to reduce the sound of the film motor). Finding Super 8 sound film, however, is now quite difficult.

The Nizo cameras are ridiculously cool, and it would be impossible to enumerate all their features here. The best thing is to rent one from the LIFT camera office and go experiment with it. You'll find it to be easy but challenging, intricate but mesmerizing and you'll produce images that astound friends, colleagues and peers. In the process, you'll learn more about the Nizos, more about Super 8, and introduce yourself to a world of endless movie-making possibility. Have fun.



54 frame lap dissolve which automatically fades out, rewinds film and then fades in again—a fantastic method for producing in-camera effects. Each has a removable battery pack for the drive batteries, which makes it easy to have another battery pack loaded and on standby when shooting on location.

It is worthwhile to note that Nizo also produced sound cameras: for example, the 4080 and 6080 models,

(above) **NIZO Pro 800**, the flagship of LIFT's inventory of Nizo Super-8 Cameras; (left) "Nizo, the best get better"—A vintage ad for the Nizo line from LIFT's collection of Super 8 Filmmaker magazines.

BILL 158:

In April 2004, in the landmark ruling of *R. v. Glad Day*, the *Theatres Act* governing the classification (and possible censorship) of all films and videos screened in commercial cinemas and sold in retail outlets was considered unconstitutional. The court has recently given the Ontario provincial government until August 31, 2005 to "disentangle" itself from its censorship powers. The court's ruling states that the *Theatres Act* violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by permitting the Ontario Film Review Board to refuse films that do not meet the test for criminal obscenity; by establishing a system of pure prior restraint that forbids the exhibition or distribution of films that have not first been approved by the OFRB; and, finally, by creating a system of prior restraint that applies to audiences of all ages rather than to children only.

Censorship in Ontario began in 1911 when the province created the Ontario Censorship Board to deal with the new, powerful medium of cinema. One of their first celebrated acts of censorship involved banning the American flag from any films projected in Ontario cinemas. Today, Bill 158 only relates to the public exhibition of films in cinemas and videos (including games) rented or sold in stores. It does not have jurisdiction over the Internet, which has become the main distribution channel of video games and pornographic material and one that is easily accessible by the youth of Ontario. It is anticipated that over the next five years, the Internet will emerge as the distribution system for all commercial time-based work.

Media artists who work with film or video are the only segment of the artistic community that are required to submit their artwork for prior approval. Writers, painters, sculptors, photographers and all other artists are not obliged to submit their work for approval or classification. It is this discriminatory component of Bill 158 and its previous incarnation (the *Theatres Act*) that is inherently unconstitutional. Justice Russell Juriansz ruled, in April 2004, that the board's required approval of films violated freedom of expression guarantees in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There are no significant changes in Bill 158 to suggest that it will not be struck down by the courts again. The Liberal government is loathe to discard Bill 158 because they do not want to appear soft on pornography in the eyes of Ontario voters.

The Honorable Minister believes that submitting films for prior approval does not represent a burden to our sector and that the review process would only take a week. The Minister has apparently never worked at a film festival where submissions often arrive just days before a screening. Any sort of submission process to the Ontario Review Board is an incredible burden. Imagine sending original Super 8 films to the ORB for review? Would you trust them to properly thread any kind of motion picture projector? Are filmmakers required to make video dubs of all their work?

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MAY 16 2005

Dear _____

Thank you for your e-mail dated April 18, 2005 regarding the Film Classification Act, 2004. I apologize for the delay.

I appreciate receiving your input on matters that affect the film and video community.

The overriding objective of Bill 158 is to enable filmmakers and their families about the age an audience requires that films be submitted for review and approval by the Board (OFRB) before they can be publicly exhibited.

Bill 158 provides the basic legal framework for the regulation of film exhibition and distribution. Operational details will be developed in future regulations to allow for timely response to change and future flexibility. It is intended that the regulatory framework be carried forward in the regulations under the Act.

Your letter indicates that the practice of submitting films for review by your sector. However, it should be noted that films are subject to a classification fee and can be submitted for review at a cost, other than the cost of film delivery. This e-mail outlines the regulations that are to be developed.

I am advised that on average, the OFRB issues classification decisions within one week after its receipt. The significant barriers to the film classification process are:

On the issue of exemptions for festivals, these are the classification requirements on the condition of the exhibitor. However, films shown at these festivals may be voluntarily submitted to the OFRB, for a fee charge to the distributor. This means that films shown at these festivals can be exhibited to children and all ages audiences as an art form and encourage community access.

The OFRB is a community-based board that makes classification decisions in accordance with nationally harmonized classification guidelines, such as the depiction of violence, language, etc. In consultation with other provincial classification guidelines to keep pace with content that is appropriate for viewing.

The proposed Film Classification Act, 2004 has been developed in consultation with distributors, retailers, theatres, as well as the video community. This new legislation meets the needs of consumers for a safe and informed film marketplace.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your e-mail and thank you for taking the time to write.



Declassifying the Film Classification Act

The Ministry of Consumer and Business Services is responsible for Bill 158 despite the fact that it affects literally thousands of film and video arts which have been funded by the Ontario Arts Council—an arm's-length agency of the Ministry of Culture.

This letter is actually a form letter sent to members of the media arts community in Ontario who contacted the minister in opposition to Bill 158. The Honorable Minister graciously apologizes for the delay in his response, but chose to wait until after the Justice Committee reviewing Bill 158 adjourned before communicating with media artists. In fact, he refused to meet with any independent film artists or representatives media arts organizations opposed to Bill 158.

2005 concerning Bill 158, the Film
the delay in my response.

On April 20, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy accepted submissions concerning Bill 158, including one from the past Chair of the OFRB who wrote, "In a world of instant communication, it is incumbent upon government to take a leadership role in protecting our most precious commodity, our children."

rs that are important to Ontario's independent

nable consumers to make informed choices for
ge and content suitability of films. This
r and classification by the Ontario Film Review
y exhibited or retailed.

rk for classifying films and regulating film
stails such as exemptions will be set out in
changes in the marketplace and to ensure
ulations currently set out under the Theatres
nder Bill 158.

Film festivals do not have to submit films to the Ontario Film Review Board as long as they do not allow anyone under the age of 18 to attend. The Images Festival in Toronto, for example, exhibits hundreds of film, videos and installations that are entirely appropriate for Ontario youth, yet the festival is forbidden to allow anyone under the age of 18 to view them. Ironically, all media arts festivals throughout Ontario are strongly encouraged by the arts councils (Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and regional arts councils that provide funding), to expand their audiences and engage in youth outreach.

ubmitting film to the OFRB creates a burden to
that films wholly produced in Canada are not
submitted to the OFRB for classification at no
This exemption will continue to be set out in

ssues a classification and returns film to the
t. Therefore, it is unclear to me what
rocess may impose.

The Liberal government has been heavily lobbied by the video gaming industry to allow self-regulation and classification of all video games. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) has created ratings that are designed to provide information about video and computer game content. The ratings include: Early Childhood, Everyone, Everyone 10 And Older, Teen, Mature and Adults Only. All video games are easily available to the youth of Ontario over the internet.

hese events will continue to be exempt from
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stivals that are intended for younger audiences
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: films classified as being suitable for younger
d all audiences to promote the appreciation of
inity and cultural development.

hat makes classification decisions in
assification guidelines, taking into account
piction of violence, sexual activity, coarse
provinces, the OFRB regularly updates its
contemporary standards of acceptable and

4 has generated positive support from film
the video game industry. I am confident that
nsumers, parents and businesses for a fair,

Why can't all artwork be classified using the same standards? Wouldn't consumers, parents and businesses feel safe and informed?

your concerns. Once again, thank you for

Sincerely yours,

Jim Watson, MPP
Minister



The above information was culled from the media coverage of Bill 158 and correspondence between the Canadian Civil Liberties Union and the Government of Ontario. Bill 158 passed third-reading in the Ontario Legislature in May, 2005 and will become law very soon.

NIAGARA CUSTOM LAB

Filmmaker or not, it's an amazing experience to visit the Niagara Custom Lab in Toronto. Now located at a southerly bend of Dufferin Street, just a few blocks south of College Street West, Niagara ("the film lab for artists") is one of the premiere film labs for all types of filmmakers not just in Toronto, but internationally. In the words of owner Sebastjan Henrickson: "What makes this lab unique is our focus on fulfilling the more demanding needs of artists, independents, students or old masters from around the globe still interested in pushing the limits of this endangered medium."

Run by Henrickson for over fifteen years, Niagara used to be located, unsurprisingly, on Niagara Street. Having moved its physical location, the lab also shows every sign of continuing to move forward service-wise, assisting student and independent filmmakers by processing most of the stocks that none of the larger labs won't, or can't, process. This has enabled Henrickson to carve out a niche within the filmmaking community, whereby he can work with filmmakers on an extremely intimate level, helping them to produce their art—with really little regard to the size of the project. Without a lab such as Niagara, it is likely, some of us would be at the mercy of the larger, commercial labs—who tend to charge a small fortune for their services. Worse yet, we might not be able to shoot with some of the stocks we do. (There's a reason custom is part of the lab's name.) Niagara is very popular with university film students as well; students at Ryerson and Montreal's Concordia University often send their films to the lab.

Niagara's been a great resource for student and independent filmmakers,

beyond just processing film. While Henrickson has enabled many filmmakers to process their film stocks cost-effectively and without minimum foot-counts, he has also selflessly trained others to become successful lab technicians. In fact, on some occasions, people have volunteered at the lab just for the opportunity to learn how to process film.

Merely describing that process is one thing. But to see it in action is quite another. The air in the lab itself is filled with the odour of film chemicals; the rooms replete with sophisticated processing machines and contraptions so strangely elaborate they could have come from a Tim Burton film. Visiting the lab, and seeing how motion picture film is actually processed (a technique which hasn't really changed over the years), is, to be blunt, very cool—no matter how much technical knowledge you possess. Watching apparently endless strips of film passing through deep rinsing and drying tanks, and then being spooled onto a projection reel is, for someone who appreciates the emulsion process as much as I do, akin to a sugar addict watching donuts pass through a glazing machine.

Niagara is currently one of the few remaining Canadian labs still processing 16mm, both colour and black & white stocks. They also provide work prints, answer prints and fully timed release prints. Also offered is cross-processing and bleach bypass to colour stocks. Furthermore, aside from processing other Super 8 stocks at only twenty dollars per cartridge, Niagara is the "only lab in Canada running Kodak's new Super 8 negative stock." And, as their website indicates, "we are also not afraid to push process your film as many stops as you want, to either save an under exposed shot, ease off for something that got blasted, or push it just to fatten up those little grains till they pop off the screen!" This summer the lab will be offering negative cutting services, title creation and some optical effects. As cool as it is, before visiting the lab check out www.niagaracustom-lab.com, where you'll find a list of all the services offered as well as pricing information.

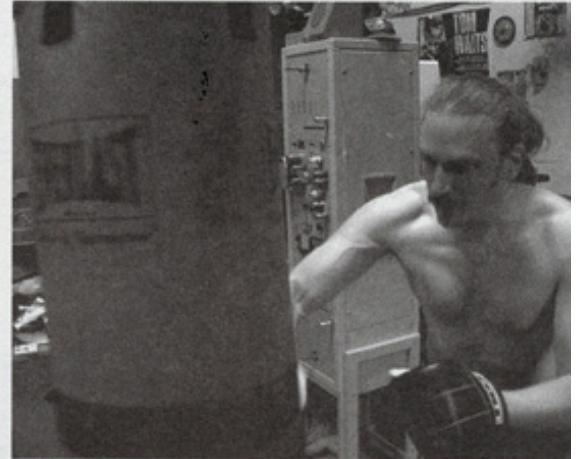


Daniel Albahary

Daniel Albahary is a Super 8 and 16mm aficionado. He has worked in the production industry, shoots Super 8, and will shoot his first 16mm short film this fall. His company NI Motion Digital produces and distributes motion picture content for the web.

The Art of the Keel

(left) The machinery of Niagara Custom Lab;
(top) Henrickson unwinds on the heavy bag;
(bottom) Sebastian Henrickson at the controls.



Elizabeth Etue

Elizabeth Etue is a writer and producer. She is the co-producer and co-director of *She's Only Six* which will be broadcast on CBC's *Rough Cuts* this fall.

Where there's a *Will* There's a *Grace*

An interview with Justine Pimlott

Fruit fly, queen magnet, fag hag. They are the ultimate accessory for any self-respecting gay man: the female best friend. Justine Pimlott's documentary, **Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men**, narrated by Carole Pope, focuses on three such couples—two from Toronto and one living in San Francisco. Matt and Cynthia met while students at Ryerson almost 30 years ago. Their relationship has survived the Bathhouse Raids, boyfriends and Cynthia's current battle with breast cancer. Denis and Dana met at chiropractic college in Toronto. Dana was the first person Denis came out to. He thought at the time he could have an intimate relationship with Dana. She disagreed. Kevin and Dodie have been close friends since the late 1970s; both are well-known experimental writers. After an AIDS scare, Kevin chose to give up a part of his gay identity. He and Dodie were married in 1986. Pimlott intersperses the doc with boisterous bits from Margaret Cho's comedic sketches on the joys of fag hagdom, along with a quick romp through decades of film and television references to these "sexual predators." *Fag Hags* premiered at the 2005 Inside Out Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival. It will air on CBC Newsworld's "The Passionate Eye" in September, 2005.

Justine Pimlott: I think platonic love is a big element of these relationships....



Elizabeth Etue: What kind of documentary is *Fag Hags*?

Justine Pimlott: I think it's a social documentary. People in it are marginalized. And it is an unexplored part of the cultural consciousness. It eludes stereotypes since the relationships in the doc are not easy to define. The documentary is a combination of social issue and pop culture phenomenon. As a director that is one of the areas that interests me—people who are on the margins of society.

EE: How did it develop?

JP: My partner and I attended a fundraiser for *Inside Out* which was showing some new episodes of *Queer as Folk*. The audience was full of straight women who were very vocal about lusting after their favourite gay male character. One woman said she took the bus from London, Ontario just to see these previews. She was given permission by her husband to attend the event.

EE: What was your process in choosing the "couples?"

JP: We ran ads in the *Globe and Mail* and gay press like *Fab* magazine asking for replies from real-life "Will and Grace" couples. It was interesting because it was always the gay male

who would contact us, never the female. We were also looking for something dramatic in the relationships. One couple dealt with cancer, another couple was married and the third were contemplating having children but with their respective partners included in the child rearing.

EE: You intersperse the doc with scenes from comedian Margaret Cho and her views on being a fag hag. She was outrageous and hilarious, more of what I expected of the topic. Why didn't we see more of her?

JP: She didn't want to be interviewed since she feels the material in her show covers that subject.

EE: *Will & Grace* contains elements of the fag hag story, but also explores the neuroses of gay men and parodies heterosexual men. I think people like the outrageousness and playfulness of these relationships which is part of the appeal of the show. But, in many ways, fag hags and gay men are both outsiders; is this part of the bond they share?

JP: I think platonic love is a big element of these relationships. There is unrequited love since there is not usually a physical aspect to the relationship. I think emotional intimacy is a big attraction, and the boundaries are definitely blurred. Dodie and Kevin were not the classic fag hag story since [in those] most of the men still identify as gay. But Kevin had consciously given up part of that identity by marrying Dodie. The historical definition is extremely negative in the same way that "fag" and "dyke" were used to discredit gay men and women. I think it was meant to silence both gay males

and hetero women and make them feel ashamed.

These relationships also developed in the early 80s and there was no language to describe the relationship. It was prior to both women's and gay liberation. We used the term fag hag in order to be provocative since these couples are pushing the boundaries in every sense.

EE: Why do you think *Will & Grace* is so popular?

JP: Gays and lesbians are consumers and part of a marketplace. These producers are tapping into an audience. They can make money from these stories. The ironic thing is although this relationship is on national television there is very little tolerance for gay relationships including gay marriage. Margaret Cho says if you enjoy *Will & Grace* you should be voting for gay marriage in the US.

EE: Don't you think there is a novelty aspect to *Will & Grace*? It is a window into a very esoteric hidden world.

JP: Yes, I think that is true also.

EE: I didn't really see the point of the group *swish*—Straight Women in Support of Gay men. It seemed a chance to get some publicity during Gay Pride. And why not support lesbian women?

JP: *swish* is very new. They do fundraisers and are also supporting gay marriage.

EE: In your doc, the term fag hag takes on a more layered meaning than in the common parlance, which is basically a kooky woman who hangs

... I think emotional intimacy is a big attraction, and the boundaries are definitely blurred.



with gay men for the buzz and attention of men. Why do gay men have het women as friends? What are the advantages for them?

JP: I think it allows gay men to express their female side. For Denis, his best friend Dana was there for him when he came out as a gay man. It is a platonic friendship which is very joyful, very playful and unencumbered by sex—almost like girlfriends. Het men are losing out on this element. I think women's sexuality is more fluid than men's.

EE: Doesn't it say something about the gay male world? The emphasis on hyper sexuality, the lack of intimacy?

JP: I think, if you are talking in terms of the extremes in the gay community, then yes, that is probably true. The fact is that gay men are socialized as men. In the case of Denis and Dana, he said he had gone farther with Dana in their relationship than he had with a gay man. As Dana says at the end "Our relationship is as strong as fucking Kevlar." In the case of Dodie and Kevin the AIDS crisis was one factor. Dodie was a safety net for Kevin.

EE: What was your impression of the status of fag hags in both the gay community and the straight world?

JP: These women felt a lot of shame and judgment around the relationship in the gay world. There is still the idea that these women can't get a man.

EE: Any sense of the number of fag hags or their preponderance in the gay world?

JP: No. We didn't get any stats or details in the course of our research.

EE: Is there a male equivalent to fag hag like lesbo boy or something?

JP: Lots of lesbians identify with men, but they also reject heterosexual men in terms of their romantic partners so there's no lesbo equivalent. There are some new names for fag hag now like "rainbow goddess," "gal pal" and, of course, another less derogatory term is, "fairy princess."

EE: Carole Pope did the narration. How did she get involved?

JP: We wanted someone iconic plus Canadian and identifiable. She loved the idea and said "I'm perfect for this."

EE: Margaret Cho's comments were a bold and punchy way to end the doc. She celebrated the joys of hanging with the pretty gay boys who were so much more evolved than straight men, or, as she said, "the only males she would talk to." She also talked about fag hags being the backbone of the community—which could mean a number of things.

JP: Yes, and she has lots more things to say about fag hags in her show.

EE: Why do het women like gay men? What are the advantages for them?

JP: I think all these women have also found something they couldn't find with a straight man. For Dana, she didn't like the vulnerability with men around sex. It is also difficult to be friends with a straight male. There is sometimes insecurity with their female partners. These heterosexual women also see themselves as a political ally for gay men. They can take the message of how fabulous they are back to the straight world. There is a need for alliances.

Images this page: (top) Dodie and Kevin, (bottom) Dana and Denis. (masked heart images, both pages) stills from **Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men**.



The SUPER 8

PHOTOGRAPH BY
DANIEL SHERMAN

ROBERT KENNEDY

❶ What kind of films do you make?

Mostly low-budget short comedies. Which are sometimes funny ha-ha and sometimes still kinda funny but with other layers.

❷ What are you working on now?

I'm trying to figure out a film to "remake" for the Splice This Super 8 Film Festival in early July.

❸ What's your preferred medium? Super 8, 16mm or 35 mm?

Super 8 or 16. Haven't really done any 35.

❹ How do you finance your work?

All the Super 8's are self-financed, although a couple of titles have wound

up paying for the whole lot through broadcast licenses. The 16's largely through the arts councils.

❺ How are you distributing your work?

CFMDC mainly. I also had an agent for a while but my last email to them bounced.

❻ How does LIFT benefit you?

Amazingly inexpensive rentals of good quality cameras, etc.

❼ What's been your worst filmmaking experience?

Probably when I was shooting the Hidden Cameras for my new concert doc **Pulling Out the Stops** in a chapel and blew all the electricity. It was

tense—especially since the guy who eventually signed them had flown all the way from the UK to see the show and was in the audience. Now I know why you should hire an electrician.

❽ Best?

Same film. I got to meet and know a bunch of really great people through it all.

LIFT's **New Directions in Cinema Series** presents a retrospective of work by Robert Kennedy on Saturday, July 9, 8:00 pm at Latvian Hall, 491 College Street, Toronto.

Six Strategies to Ensure Your Baby's Acceptance into Film Festivals

As filmmakers, we toil and sweat over our films much the same as a parent does with a child. You've conceived your idea, birthed it into being and nurtured it through the rough cuts, guiding it into maturity to the best of your ability. And, like every parent, when the child is ready, you eventually have to release it into the world. As much as you'd like to, you can't control how warmly your baby will be received, but you can certainly prepare it for a splashy entrance that will get it noticed. So now that you and baby are ready to bid adieu to one other, let's explore the many strategies available to ensure your loved one makes it into the world of film festivals.

Thousands of films are submitted to festivals all over the world. Roughly 3000 are submitted yearly to Toronto's Worldwide Short Film Festival and for the larger festivals the numbers double. What makes some films stand out over others? The most basic strategy is also the most difficult: you must have an original, insightful and compelling story. Shane Smith, Artistic Director of WSFF sums it up succinctly: "We're looking for films that inspire, that provoke an emotional/physical response... [films] we feel everyone should see because they're so damn good!" Raindance Film Festival's

Director, Elliot Grove, seems to agree: "We look for films that tell a story." Moreover, the competition is so fierce that your story has to stand out somehow from the rest. Using fresh ideas (or even old tired ones with different techniques to illustrate them) can put you one step closer to that elusive festival acceptance. Aside from telling a great story your production values also need to be up to par. If you're making a narrative film, hiring good actors to bring your story to life is crucial. This is also true of your sound quality; you want those good actors to be heard. Many novice filmmakers place paramount importance on the image while neglecting their sound recording—and sound quality can definitely make or break a film.

The next strategy is an obvious one, yet it's amazing how many filmmakers overlook this stage when they are caught up in the creative process of making a film: research. Do not submit your film to a festival without first doing research. You would not buy a car, a computer or even a dog without researching the model, make or breed first, so why would you send your precious baby to a festival you know nothing about? There are many important elements to research when thinking of submitting to a festival.

Always examine a festival's website or previous year's catalogue. This will ensure that you're submitting the kind of film that a particular festival screens. Research the films that were considered successful by the festival (whether award-winners or critically acclaimed), and, if they are similar in nature to yours, then your film's chances are greater. Always aim for a festival where your film fits in. Some things to pay attention and adhere to are: does your film qualify for the festival? In other words, is it the right length, genre and is the subject appropriate for the festival? What are the entry fees and can you get a discount? (It certainly doesn't hurt to ask.) What is the festival's selection process and how many times will your film get screened? Many festivals require worldwide and North American premieres. Read the fine print of the guidelines to ensure that you don't shoot yourself in the foot and disqualify your film from a favoured festival by screening at another one first. (Berlin and Cannes, for example, have specific rules about this.) Another point to consider during your research phase is what does the festival have to offer you the filmmaker? Is there a marketplace where industry folk can view available films? What kind of press/celebrity attendance can you expect? For many filmmakers, one goal in entering the festival circuit is to make a deal/sell a film, and get exposure for the filmmaker (via interviews) so that he or she can make his or her next deal/film. If there are no industry executives and no press coverage at the festival the chances of reaching that goal are slim to none. If you care about your film, take the time to research each festival. Thorough research will save you time, money (shipping/entry fees) and

countless hours of frustration and heartbreak.

The next strategy goes hand in hand with good research: be impeccable with the application procedure. A word to the wise about entry rules: read them carefully and follow them to the letter. That's why they are called entry rules. If you can't follow directions properly and package your film accordingly it shows a lack of concern for your film's future. And festivals take notice.

No filmmaker should enter the realm of film festivals without some kind of festival game plan. It is here that you will use all that wonderful, useful material you compiled during your research. To prepare such a plan, use spreadsheet software like Excel and give your plan a title such as "Festival Strategy." Down the left-hand column, start with the names of the festivals you researched to which you intend to submit. Along the top you can place headings such as "Date Submitted," "Festival Dates," "Entry Fee," "World/North American Premiere Preferences," etc. Be as creative as you like and enter in as much information as possible that would be helpful to your strategy. Generally speaking, a basic festival strategy list begins with the "majors" that attract high-profile industry people and have markets (festivals such as Berlin, Cannes, Sundance, Toronto, Rotterdam and Venice). Next would be "mini-majors," which are also excellent festivals for launching a film and are still brimming with celebrities and industry types (Tribeca, San Sebastian, Karlovy Vary and Locarno). Following that are the "city festivals" (London, Edinburgh, Cambridge, Telluride, Montreal, San Francisco, etc.). These festivals draw

only a few industry executives and press, yet are still great festivals to submit to. Topping any list for the independent filmmaker should also be festivals such as Raindance, Slamdance, Indie Fest in Chicago and the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival. These festivals also lure a great number of industry people and press, and, more importantly, they are known to treat submitting filmmakers with great care and integrity. Finally, every festival strategy should include the "niche" festivals, festivals that are smaller but which cater to specific audiences such as gay/lesbian, Asian, Latin, and women. There will always be exceptions to the rule. Each filmmaker must choose wisely the most appropriate festivals for each individual film they submit. The aforementioned festivals are only suggestions, and filmmakers should tailor it to his/her own specific needs. "Basically, filmmakers need to be realistic about the type of film they've made and plan a festival strategy accordingly," states the *WSFF's* Smith.

Once you've completed your festival strategy, it's time to begin the submission process. First, you must guarantee that you package your film properly. As you start to prepare your submission packages, make sure that you have followed all the application procedures (crossing every "t" and dotting every "i" accordingly). Do not add anything the festival hasn't asked for. Forget cutesy or charming tactics

that might have worked in your favour while trying to convince the police officer you weren't really speeding. It won't work here. The only chance you have to present yourself like the professional that you are is by delivering a properly packaged film. Once you've done that you can then check off each category on your strategy list and send off your film package. It is very important to get out of "filmmaker mode" here and get into the "marketing yourself/your film" mode. Professionalism goes a long way, and your submission will show how much attention you put into it. Avoid making costly mistakes. Make the presentation of your film package impeccable for the receiving festivals.

So, you've finished your film, making sure it's the most compelling story you could deliver. Great job! You've done your homework diligently, prepared a brilliant festival strategy, ensured your application was perfect and packaged your film accordingly. You've gone out on a limb and sent your baby into the world for acceptance. Now what? You wait. That doesn't mean you sit around, biting your nails down to the quick while you are assaulted with paranoid thoughts of how much everyone hates your film. Or, in order to ward off a barrage of negative thoughts, perhaps you've indulged in whimsical fantasies of becoming the next Spielberg or Brakhage. Try to remain as grounded as possible and let the thoughts come

Thousands of films are submitted to festivals all over the world. Roughly 3000 are submitted yearly to Toronto's Worldwide Short Film Festival and for the larger festivals the numbers double. What makes some films stand out over others?

HATEFUL

and go as they please, without getting all warped by them. Move onto your next project. The waiting becomes more tolerable that way. And then amidst the chaos of life and your newest baby, you get an email or a letter. Sweat clinging to your pits and hands slightly quivering, you open the letter and scan to the bottom. "Thank you for your submission..." blah, blah, blah. "At this time we regret to inform..." blah, blah, blah. Rejected. Our next strategy is not really a strategy but more a lifeline of advice. We've all dealt with rejection and gotten through it. There's no point "sweating the small stuff." Different strokes for different folks. It's nothing personal. Chris Kennedy, programmer for the Images Festival says, "It's difficult to be a media artist. It takes commitment and an ability to deal with rejection." Hence, rejection is part of being a filmmaker, and learning to handle it comes with the territory.

But what if that letter you opened doesn't end in rejection? Congratulations! Your baby has just been accepted into a festival. What to do now? Breathe in, breathe out, then pack your bags and head out to the festival. Whatever you do, though, go prepared. In other words, find out what other films and filmmakers have been selected for screening and learn a thing or two about them. When you arrive at the festival see other films. John Cooper, Director of Programming for Sundance, stresses this: "Nothing impresses me more than a filmmaker who can speak about films other than their own." Getting your film into a festival is one thing. Impressing the pants off them while there is another. You want the festival to remember you. For a filmmaker, there is nothing greater than carving a path for themselves and for their future babies to walk through. Armed with this knowledge, you're sure to do just that. ■

Another spring, another Inside Out Festival of Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered, Bisexual, Questioning, Queer-Positive, Undecided Youth and Harmless Heterosexual Film and Video.

What would all us misfits do without Inside Out? Send our work to Images? Might as well put your film in a blender (that way, it will at least look like an Images film).

This year, we gender criminals were treated to the usual assortment of live-ly parties (which I forgot to attend), special VIP brunches hosted by wealthy homosexuals (to which I was not invited), limitless numbers of fascinating screenings (one of which included work by me, so I had to go), big American movies about loving homosexual families (not worth discussing, but they do get the condo fags past the turnstile) and lectures by important queer theorists (beyond comment).

I wisely kept my viewing this year to short works by local filmmakers—that way, if I didn't like something, I could hunt down the auteur and heartily congratulate them on their wonderful work, fingers crossed behind my back. Sometimes, I even meant it. But before I go down the list of my faves and raves, let's talk about me and my work. I'm not getting paid for this article, so I've got to get something out of it.

If you missed my short masterpiece **Hate**, you are already sore from kicking yourself in the behind, as the post-screening word-of-mouth has been nothing short of stellar, indeed near-hysterical. Those who attended the screening spoke of experiencing the kind of life change you normally only hear about from chemotherapy survivors. Or people who've been mauled by mountain lions.

Hate is a nasty three-minute dia-

tribe about me, my fat ugly body, the art world, the film festival circuit, stupid gay men and their stupid gay films, more about my ruined body, and my dislike of Swedish animation. Oddly enough, people found it funny. I meant every word! Visually, **Hate** is a simple affair—a slow, black-and-white pan from naked head to in-the-raw toes of my aforementioned devastated corpus. Yes, you get to see my penis and yes, it's my best attribute. Someday, I'll get a date out of this movie, but only if they play it with the sound turned off.

Hate was screened in a program called "Queer and Loathing," and the programmers really meant business with that title. All but two of the other films were angst-ridden potboilers from Europe and the United States—films carrying the morose, decidedly dated message that being gay leads to sadness, violence, and even murder. Trust me, it ain't that glamorous.

Now, I kind of understand why an American homosexual living under the Bushiban would resort to violence. If anything, it seems like the best policy. But what, exactly, a homosexual in France has to complain about is beyond me. The French invented homosexuality. Paris is lousy with the mincing monsters. What's the big traumatized deal? (I did learn something very interesting, however, from one of the French films, a Gallic **East of Eden** entitled **Embrasser Les**

RM Vaughan Goes Inside INSIDE OUT

RM Vaughan

RM Vaughan is the author of many books and even more short films. Collect them all!

Hate, RM Vaughan

Tigres—they have trailer parks in France! There's hope for them yet.)

The best film of the night was a little gem from Winnipeg called **Around Sanford**, which was something of a cross between David Lynch and one of those CBC shows about poor people who live in the country. You know the kind, where the boys wear knee socks, all the ladies are named Violet, and there's never enough money to send little Tommy to McGill.

Jeff Erbach's film takes all that homespun nonsense and turns it on its cabbage leaf ear. The main character, a hunky, sulky sort, doesn't like fags. Fine, most people don't. But his little demon friend, whom only he and we can see, is a little more active in his dislike. Local homos get clawed to death by this pointy-eared evangelical, to hilarious effect. The reason this film works so well is that not one moment of it is to be taken seriously, and the laconic, even comatose acting perfectly matches the film's surrealist tone. I loved **Around Sanford** because it was a film about homophobia in which nobody learned to be tolerant and there was no healing. Just like real life, but with a homunculus.

The other treat of the night was Wrik Mead's stop-action comedy **Filth**, starring the lovely Will Munro and the manly Don Pyle, two local music/art celebs who undoubtedly dropped a number of pressing com-

mitments to star in this film. Munro, who looks like a gender-transitioning Ingrid Bergman, plays the naughty call boy-cum-housecleaner, and Pyle the Burl Ives-like john. As Munro undresses to begin his sexy domestic worker routine, Pyle's all-white home (a nice stab at the sterile decorating style favoured by today's smarter fag) turns into a mud pile, and Pyle himself melts before our very eyes. There's a not very subtle message here—gay men who aspire to respectability are kidding themselves—but some audiences actually do need to be hit over the head with a mallet.

Other highlights of the festival, all locals, included Guntar Kravis's hilarious **I'm Afraid of You**, which was chock a block with hometown acting

talent; my pal Michael Achtman's **Doggie Bag**, another razor sharp swipe at Toronto's complacent and pampered gay A-list (but do they even go to Inside Out? I guess they go to the parties) and Robert Kennedy's vibrant music documentary **Pulling Out the Stops**, a film that accomplished something I thought impossible: it got me to listen to an entire Hidden Cameras song without screaming. Now that's the power of cinema! ✖



Bulletin Board

Upcoming Funding Deadlines

Canada Council
1.800.263.5588
www.canadacouncil.ca

Grants to Film and Video Artists
- Research/Creation Grants
- Production Grants
- Scriptwriting Grants
Deadline: October 1, 2005

Travel Grants to Media Artists
Deadline: Ongoing

Ontario Arts Council
416.961.1660
www.arts.on.ca

Grants to Media Artists:
Mid-Career and Established
Deadline: October 3, 2005

Grants to Media Artists: Emerging
Deadline: December 15, 2005

Chalmers Professional
Development Grants
Deadline: December 1, 2005

Integrated Arts
Deadline: November 1, 2005

Toronto Arts Council
416.392.6800
www.torontoartscouncil.org

Media Arts Grants
Deadline: November 15, 2005

Calls for Submissions

**National Film Board of Canada's
Reel Diversity 2005:
A Competition for
Emerging Filmmakers of Colour**

The NFB, in partnership with CBC Newsworld, is seeking proposals for documentaries by filmmakers from visible minority groups. This competition is only open to Canadian citizens or landed immigrants and all applicants must have at least one credit in a key creative role in a completed video or film production of any type. Full-time students are not eligible. The following material must be included: a completed application form (which can be downloaded at <http://www.nfb.ca/reeldiversity>); a 2-4 page proposal describing your subject matter or story, identifying the film's target audience(s); your statement of intent indicating professional and personal goals (max. 2 pages); resumé of academic and/or professional experience specifically related to video and film production; video cassette or DVD of completed work(s), accompanied by the following information for each work: title, year completed, original format, running time, brief synopsis (maximum ten lines) and role(s) of the applicant; you don't need to submit a budget, but keep in mind that there is a maximum budget per project of 200,000, including all costs from initial research to delivery of completed production. All proposals should be suited to a TV-hour English-language documentary. All applications can be sent to an NFB studio near you. In Ontario, please contact: Silva Basmajian, Executive Producer, National Film Board of Canada, 150 John Street, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3C3, Tel: 416.973.6856, Fax: 416.973.7007, Deadline: July 15, 2005

**Rendezvous with Madness
Film Festival**

Get your entry in now! The Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival is an annual film festival that presents features and shorts touching upon the facts and mythology surrounding mental health and addiction. Each program focuses on a different theme. Post-screening panel discussions involve filmmakers, artists and people with professional and personal experience with mental illness and addiction. For more information, visit www.rendezvouswithmadness.com.
Deadline: August 15, 2005

Classifieds

Call for Submissions: Herland Feminist Film and Video Festival is now accepting submissions for the 2006 festival in Calgary. Contact Tamrin at herlandfestival@telus.net, 403.245.3441, or visit www.herlandfestival.com for details.

Classified ads (30 word maximum) are available to LIFT members for the low rate of \$10.00, and to non-members for \$30.00! (Please note, the discounted fee for LIFT members applies only to personal listings regarding cast/crew calls, personal sales, screenings announcements or similar notices—classified ads for goods and services will be billed at the non-member rate) for more information, please contact the LIFT office at 416.588.6444.

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Kodachrome Super 8 Stock to be discontinued! Kodak is incredulously discontinuing Kodachrome Super 8 stock. The new colour reversal film Ektachrome 64T, pitched as a replacement for Kodachrome Super 8 stock will not meter correctly in most Super 8 cameras, will cost much more to purchase and process, and cannot replace the unique features of Kodachrome. Nothing compares to the colour saturation and archival longevity of Kodachrome. Please take a moment to sign the online petition at www.petitiononline/k40/petition.html to encourage Kodak to reverse this decision and keep Kodachrome in production.

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