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Bookshelf

GEORGE L. GEORGE

The use of computers for animation graphics has brought a new visual dynamism to television commercials and shows, and enriched spectacularly the panoply of film special effects. The full scope of this development is explored by Cynthia Goodman in *Digital Visions*, an inspiring book whose lucid text and superb illustrations define the achievements of this creative process and its potential. (Abrams, NYC, \$29.95/19.95).

A thoroughgoing survey of television production techniques, *Today's Video* by Peter Utz itemizes and describes the specifics of the equipment required and its uses for the successful taping of shows and programs. The technical and creative aspects of production are covered in an explicit and well illustrated text that addresses itself mainly to the kind of video predominant today – the small studio with relatively inexpensive equipment and limited production crew. (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NY, \$49.95).

In a tightly reasoned rebuttal to Marshall McLuhan, Brian Winston contends, in *Misunderstanding Media*, that new technologies – telephones, television, computers and satellites – fall prey to what he calls “the law of suppression of radical potential,” and, far from converting a divided world into a “global village,” they become the victims of entrenched interests. Winston argues cogently that the information revolution is an illusion based on a misunderstanding of electronic media, their development, diffusion and present form. (Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, MA, \$22.50).

Soviet filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, who died last year in Paris, wrote *Sculpting in Time*, an artistic testament that sums up his concepts of cinema’s aesthetics and social roles. Combining autobiography and creative inspiration, Tarkovsky traces the inner stimuli of such films as the long-suppressed *Andrei Rublev* and his 1986 Swedish production, *The Sacrifice*, whose visionary Bergman-like mood defines human relationships in a higher form of spiritual life. (Knopf, NYC, \$22.95).

In *Five American Cinematographers*, Scott Eyman explores the part that highly respected cameramen played in the progress of film art and technology. His probing interviews with Karl Struss, Joseph Ruttenberg, James Wong Howe, Linwood Dunn and William H. Clothier record well-informed opinions on the development of camera techniques and production methods, and provide personal recollections of the personalities and work habits of such directors as Charlie Chaplin, George Cukor, John Ford, William Wellman, Sam Peckinpah and Orson Welles. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$25).

Articles published in *The International Photographer* between 1929 and 1937 are assembled by Anna Kate Sterling in *Cinematographers on the Art and Craft of Cinematography*. Written by such eminent ASC members as Hal Mohr, Ray Rennahan, Karl Struss and Tony Gaudio, they deal with technical and esthetic problems, document the filming of *Intolerance*, *Hell’s Angels* and *Trader Horn*, the advent of wide screen and sound, and early Technicolor lighting equipment. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$17.50).

Insightful memos made for his personal use by French director Robert Bresson appear in *Notes on the Cinematographer*. They reveal an artist’s search for the nature and values of “cinematography,” the creative *auteur’s* craft, as distinct from the director’s affinity to theatrical staging concepts. (Quartet/Merrimack, Topsfield, MA, \$7.95).

Union front hot as NABET opens

VANCOUVER – The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, NABET, has opened a film and video production local in Vancouver. Local 800, which has 270 carded members, is headed up by business agent David R. Kelly, a former IATSE cameraman/director of photography.

While NABET 800 has existed since 1971, Kelly says the decision to open an office came after inquiries from producers in the United States and Eastern Canada.

“We’re a viable alternative to IATSE,” he told *Cinema Canada*. “NABET has a feature and video basic agreement which isn’t carved in stone. We will tailor our agreements, crew-wise and whatever, to the producer’s requirements. The ACFC is a mixed local, they cover camera but to

my knowledge at the moment they don’t have any directors of photography on their books.”

“George Chapman (IATSE’s business agent) is in a strange position at the moment. I know for a fact that George, through the B. C. Film Commission and through his position representing IA members, has had more inquiries regarding shooting than he’s been prepared to crew or suggest other unions crew. The IA isn’t the only game in town. I believe the reason production is kept at a certain level and goes to IA is because of union constitution and by-laws where a local has seniority. You have, say, eight senior members across the board,” he said.

“What George is saying... he can only guarantee eight qualified IA crews. At the same time there is a huge number of NABET crews which are available. It’s rather strange to me because I know that this local can put five crews out.”

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