

People



PHOTO: MARNI GROSSMAN

Mary Young-Leckie gets the Spirit

TORONTO—Mary Young-Leckie first worked for her future husband, Keith Leckie, as a production assistant on CBC's *Cross Bar*. Now, Mary has produced Keith's script for *Where The Spirit Lives*, a \$2.6 million television film for Spirit

Bay Productions, the producers of the successful series of the same name.

"After graduating from York University," Young-Leckie told *Cinema Canada*, "I was a production assistant, then a production secretary because I knew how to type. I became a production coordinator when the film industry was booming with bad Canadian movies." Later she joined Paul Stevens and Eric Jordan at Spirit Bay Productions. "It was a two man operation and I was their inhouse production manager, office manager, and most valued single employee." She left in 1985 to have a baby boy and came back to work as an associate producer on the last four episodes of *Spirit Bay*. Then she became partners with them on *Where The Spirit Lives*.

"I wanted to do something

with a native theme after *Spirit Bay* and I was very excited about doing something on the Residential Schools. Keith had written six of the *Spirit Bay* episodes and he has a very good understanding of the native story and the native character. I knew being producer and working with my husband would be really tough, but it worked out really well."

The film was shot on tape and originally slated to premiere on the CBC in the fall. However, when Mary asked Norman Jewison to view their film, he was so moved with what he saw that he offered to lend the production half the money needed to strike an optical print for Toronto's Festival of Festivals. Wayne Clarkson at the OFDC matched the money, and *Where the Spirit Lives* was

accepted as a eleventh hour entry in the festival. The film tells the tale of a young Blackfoot girl who is abducted from her village to be "educated" in the notorious Christian Residential School system.

Samuel: a "hurtful film"

MONTREAL—If Julian Samuel has his way, his film, currently in the research stage, will answer the controversial *Disparaitre* directed by Jean-Francois Mercier and aired on Radio-Canada, Feb. 12.

The Pakistani/Quebec filmmaker says such a "hurtful film" should be answered by a



member of (one of) the minorities that it attacks. This, he proposes to do with *The East in Quebec* a documentary about the Pakistani/Indian presence in Quebec.

"If state money was used to produce an ideological vehicle to traumatize and terrorize us and if Canada calls itself a democracy then it should give me as much money if not twice as much to counter this film," says Samuel.

Samuel is working with a research grant from Société Generale des Industries culturelles (SOGIC). He plans to complete the film scenario this month, and take another four months to research several narratives.

"I am not going to rush into this," says Samuel, who proposes to interview, among others, Mercier and Lise Payette, the narrator of *Disparaitre*.

As well as taking a dispassionate and analytical look at his subject, Samuel says a hint of comedy is an essential element for reaching an audience.

"As a selling point, I might include a curry recipe with fresh coriander."

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John Walker: Under the dark cloth

TORONTO - Toronto filmmaker John Walker met Paul Strand in Paris just a few years before Strand died. Walker, a photographer by training and filmmaker by inclination, was strongly attracted to this early pioneer, who Susan Sontag has called America's greatest photographer, and whose centenary will be celebrated next year with exhibitions in Europe and the United States. Walker hopes to have his feature documentary, *Strand - Under the Dark Cloth*, screened on the festivals circuit to accompany the revival of this American master.

"Strand developed the modern aesthetics in American photography" said Walker. "He broke from the romantic, pictorialist tradition and applied the principals of abstraction and cubism. He was also a radical filmmaker.

He had to move to Europe in 1950 during the McCarthy period. There he worked with screenwriters like Cesare Zavattini, the neo-realist, and pioneered the photobook with text which is now common, but then it was a very new form.

"At first I went to see him out of interest in his work, and when I discovered his filmmaking background, I became interested in making a film. When he died in 1976, I left the project. I didn't want to make a film about someone who had just died." Walker went back to the idea in 1982 and since then he has slowly put the film together. "It's a process of discovery. Strand said to me that you have to have something to say about the world. I went to look for what he had to say about the world. It was an exploration for me about the man and his work. *Under the Dark Cloth* is a metaphor for his personal life. He didn't talk much about himself. His own life and his relationships with women (he had three wives) was very much hidden. One ultimately finds Strand in his work."

Born in Montreal, Walker became president of the camera club in high school, and went on to do studio work in Montreal. In the early seventies he became a cinematographer with Crawley films in Ottawa. In 1981 he directed first film - a portrait of the artist Jack Chambers - with Atlantis.

Subsequently, he became part of the *Winter Tan* collective and continued to work on *Strand*. Now he is researching a series on global communications entitled *Distress Signals*, which is a co-production with the NFB, CBC, Channel Four in England, and John Walker productions.

«Van Gogh» Rubbo preparing next film with Demers

MONTREAL - Award winning film director Michael Rubbo is busy in the basement painting forgeries of the work



of Vincent Van Gogh. The paintings match the originals in size, materials and detail, and will be featured as the originals in Rubbo's next film *Vincent and Me*.

Scheduled to shoot this Fall, this Canada/France co-production is tale number 12 in Rock Demer's *Tales For All* series. It was written by Rubbo who,

after making films at the National Film Board, directed *The Peanut Butter Solution* and *Tommy Tricker* for Demers.

Rubbo says his passion is for Van Gogh and not for painting forgeries.

"Five years ago, I saw a Van Gogh exhibition in New York and began to paint. I learned to paint through him. He had a very fresh way of painting whereby he did it all in one sitting with wet paint on wet paint."

Van Gogh was an ecologist, a nature painter, says Rubbo. This explains why he had to be quick.

The screenplay was inspired by the same New York exhibition and by the fact that Rubbo's 12 year-old son was equally overwhelmed by Van Gogh.

"I thought if my son can get so interested in this person maybe other children will."

The film will have adult appeal as well, says Rubbo.

"The idea of that determination to push on when everybody tells you your on the wrong road is one we can relate to."

Rubbo says he had a choice of good reproductions but he preferred the idea of oil and canvas in his film.

"I'm also doing the painting of Gauguin which Van Gogh never did."

Rubbo adds that he doesn't think Van Gogh would have been a good film director because he was too much of a loner.

Appointments

NEW DIRECTORS FOR NSI

MONTREAL - Linda Callaghan, Joan Pennefather and Michael Spencer have all joined have been appointed directors of the National Screen Institute.

Callaghan is an Edmonton-based entertainment lawyer and an associate member of the Alberta Motion Pictures Industry Association.

Pennefather is the Interim Film Commissioner of the National Film Board of Canada.

Michael Spencer was one of the founders of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (Telefilm Canada's predecessor) in 1968.

MASSE APPOINTS CBC DIRECTORS

OTTAWA - Nancy Juneau has been appointed for a five-term and Don Hamilton has received a three-year appointment to the board of directors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Robert Giroux has been appointed to the National Film Board.

Juneau, a former Radio-Canada journalist is a member of the provincial consultative committee on official languages in New Brunswick, a member of the provincial advisory committee on woman and the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Hamilton is president of General Communications Corporation Ltd. and of Ocean Pacific Broadcasting Inc.

Robert Giroux, is the deputy minister of Public Works Canada.

The appointments were announced recently by Marcel Masse, minister of communications.

OHAYON GETS NOD FROM QUEBEC PRODUCERS

MONTREAL - Charles Ohayon is the new president of the Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec.

The president of Films 24, and former head of the association's tax reform committee, was elected at the annual general meeting of the APFVQ during the Montreal World Film Festival.

Ohayon, who rigorously opposed the reduction of the Capital Cost Allowance for Canadian film in Michael Wilson's White Paper on Tax Reform, says he is still committed to getting more favorable and longer term tax policies where Canadian film producers are concerned.

"We need alternative tax shelters and longer term tax regulations," says the new president who hopes to raise the profile of the 98 member association, and be heard by the federal government.

The members of the general council of the APFVQ are: Rock Demers of Productions La Fete, vice-president; Francine Forest of Cleo 24, head of the feature film section; Lorraine Richard of QuébecAmérique, television section; Francois Dupuis of ACPAV, documentary section; Micheline Charest of Cinar, technical industries section and Pierre Lalande head of the public messages section.

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