

SHOOT

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This Week



ScreenWork

Columns

DGA Names Biscuit's Noam Murro Best Commercial Director Of 2004

Helmer Wins Honor On Strength Of Work For eBay, adidas, Starbucks

By Robert Goldrich

BEVERLY HILLS—The third time proved to be the charm for director Noam Murro of Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles. Having been nominated each of the last three years for the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award as best commercial director, Murro finally broke through and won the coveted honor during a gala Guild ceremony last week (1/29) at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills.

DGA judges named Murro the best spot helmer of 2004 on the basis of three entries: Starbucks' "Glen" for Fallon, New York; adidas' "Carry," out of TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco; and eBay's "Toy Boat" for Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco.

In accepting the award on stage, Murro made some brief remarks. However, his opening sentence suggested he might be more longwinded. "Thirty second commercials—twenty-minute speech," he quipped, eliciting a round of laughter.

Murro then thanked a succession of people by first name, including Biscuit Filmworks' executive producer Shawn Lacy Tessaro, producer Jay Veal, Gary Feil who was first assistant director on "Carry" and "Toy Boat," James Giovannetti, first assistant director on "Glen," and editor Avi Oron of Bikini Edit, New York. (Oron cut all three entries.) Murro concluded by thanking his father, adding, "I love you all."

Backstage Murro told *SHOOT* that the award is "a fantastic honor," noting that he was gratified just to be nominated. At the same time, he expressed some tongue-in-cheek relief that he won and thus won't be deemed the "Susan Lucci" of commercial directors—the reference being to the actress who was a perennial daytime Emmy nominee but seemed destined to never win the award.

Five Winners Have Grand Time At NY Festivals

By Kristin Wilcha

NEW YORK—The 47th annual New York Festivals held its TV Cinema & Radio Advertising gala on Thursday, Jan. 27, at the Hudson Theatre in New York's Millennium Broadway hotel. A total of five Grand winners were selected.

Wining the Grand for best campaign was a trio of spots for the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival.

The ads, "Love Scene," "Good Cop/Bad Cop," and "Establishing a Character," were created by agency Taxi, Toronto, and directed by Tim Godsall of untitled, Toronto. (Godsall is repped in the U.S. by Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles.) An entertainment promotion gold was also awarded to the three spots.

Scoring the Grand win for best commercial was Aerolineas Argentinas' "Shadow" out of J. Walter Thompson,

Buenos Aires, and directed by Javier Blanco of Compania Cinematografica, Buenos Aires. The ad additionally won a Gold World Medal for corporate image.

"Kids on Steps," for Volkswagen, out of DDB Group Germany, Berlin, won the Grand for best cinema commercial. Sebastian Strasser of Cobblestone Filmproduktion, Hamburg, directed the spot. The ad also won a gold in the

HPA Retreat: Broadcasters Report on HDTV Picture

By Carolyn Giardina

PALM SPRINGS, Calif.—Broadcasters and industry leaders offered an overview and update on HDTV in the U.S. during last week's Hollywood Post Alliance (HPA) Technology Retreat in Palm Springs, an annual event celebrating its 10th anniversary. Not surprisingly, the conclusion was that HD content availability has grown dramatically, and HD interest from advertisers continues to lag far behind.

The major broadcast networks all reported that all or a majority of their

Annie Top Spot: Acme's "Interview"

By Robert Goldrich

GLENDALE, Calif.—United Airlines' "Interview," directed by Wendy Tilby and Amanda Forbis of Acme Filmworks, Hollywood, for Fallon, Minneapolis, topped the spot category at the 32nd annual Annie Awards competition, which recognizes outstanding achievements in animation. The Annies were presented by the Burbank-headquartered International Animated Film Society (ASIFA-Hollywood) during an awards ceremony

Blind Spot

There's a lot to like in the New York State and New York City filming incentive packages. There's also a lot not to like based on what's not in these anti-runaway production initiatives.

Signed into law by Gov. George E. Pataki (R-N.Y.), the state program calls for New York to contribute \$100 million over the next four years (\$25 million annually) in order to provide a 10 percent tax credit on below-the-line production costs for certain qualifying projects shot



in New York State.

To be eligible for the state incentive, the production company has to book 75 percent of the project's stage work in the State of New York. This means that projects cannot get tax credits simply by lensing New York exteriors and then heading elsewhere.

Feature films, television movies, TV pilots and TV series episodes are eligible for the tax break, which has already taken effect. Two TV shows—Fox's *Jonny Zero* and NBC's *Law & Order: Trial By Jury*—were among the first to tap into the incentive.

New York City has followed with its own credit to work in tandem with the state initiative. The city production

tax incentive, which is tied to the state legislation, offers a five percent refundable tax credit to those filming in New York City. The program is funded by an annual \$12.5 million allocation.

Clearly the anti-runaway credits represent a progressive step for New York, demonstrating the state's and the city's commitment to attract and retain more production, which is key to the health of the economy. Increasing the amount of filming activity also helps to ensure the health of the state's production infrastructure spanning its talent pool, facilities, resources and services.

So what's not to like? As alluded to earlier, the rub lies in what the incentives don't cover: namely commercialmaking, an industry synonymous with New York and Madison Avenue, deemed by many as the bread and butter of the Big Apple's filming economy.

The exclusion of commercial production from landmark pro-filming

legislation comes as other states such as Illinois, Louisiana and Mississippi have made concerted efforts to court the advertising business, passing aggressive tax break legislation to spur on commercial production within their borders. There's also talk that California is considering a proposal to do the same as part of a new broad-based, anti-runaway push (*SHOOT*'s "Street Talk," 1/28, p. 22).

To be sure, the strengthened infrastructure that New York's anti-runaway program will likely bring about bodes well in terms of a ripple effect for the state's spot biz. But the advertising industry deserves better than a ripple of relief.

Indeed commercialmaking continues as a major contributor to New York's fiscal wellbeing. Furthermore the spot community has come up to the plate repeatedly to support the state and city on assorted fronts. One effort that readily comes to mind is the marshalling

of ad industry and spotmaking resources in support of the drive to bring the 2012 Summer Olympics to New York City. The Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP), along with other industry factions, have played pivotal roles in the pro-bono creation of films and spots designed to help New York land the Summer Games.

In our Border Watch series last week, AICP president and CEO Matt Miller related that there were several factors behind why spots were not included in the original anti-runaway legislation (*SHOOT*, 1/28, p. 20). He noted, however, that legislators are very much aware of spotmakers' concerns and the hope is that the situation will be rectified.

Indeed no anti-runaway initiative is complete without commercials—and without accounting for an advertising industry that is starting to meaningfully diversify into other emerging forms of content.

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EDITORIAL

Publisher & Editorial Director • Roberta Griener

203.319.0141 • rgriener@shootonline.biz

Editor • Robert Goldrich

818.884.2440 • rgoldrich@shootonline.com

Senior Editor/Creative & Production • Kristin Wilcha

203.319.0141 • kwilcha@shootonline.com

Sr. Editor/Technology & Postproduction • Carolyn Giardina

310.581.5750 • cgiardina@shootonline.com

Reporter/Associate Online Editor • Emily Vines

323.874.4659 • evines@shootonline.com

Contributors

Fred Cisterna, Tom Soter, Christine Champagne

Production & Circulation • Gerald Giannone

203.319.0141 • ggiannone@shootonline.biz

OFFICES

Main Office • 21 Charles Street #203 • Westport, CT 06880

203.319.0141 • Fax: 203.319.0338

West • 6520 Platt Avenue, #575 • West Hills, CA 91307

818.884.2440 • Fax: 203.319.0338

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Meet The Commish

By Emily Vines

SEATTLE—Suzy Kellett, managing director of the Washington State Film Office (WSFO), has been part of the film commission community for almost 25 years. Her first post was deputy director at the Illinois Film Office, where in 1982 she was promoted to director. In '96, she moved to the WSFO.

In a conversation with SHOOT, Kellett discusses the state of filming in Washington and issues affecting the film commission community in the U.S.

SHOOT: How have you seen film commissions overall, and then specifically Washington's office, change over the years?

Kellett: Illinois was a bigger business, it was located in Chicago, it had a lot of business, it was fast. We were doing multiple productions at the same time, it was very location driven. And the industry executives we worked with were creatives who had a passion for



Suzy Kellett
Managing Director
Of The Washington
State Film Office

this industry, loved the story, loved the locations; it was really fun. It was starting to get competitive, got more competitive and we sort of liked the thrill of the game. I had eight staff and we were busy a lot of the time. The woman who had preceded me had started the Illinois Film Office so I was able to build off what she had started and then we really took off. Periodically we'd get kind of nudged by whatever was going on in the industry but for the most part it was wonderful and exciting and fast paced.

And then I came to Washington and this was the beginning of the Canadian move and it's actually been sort of a slide ever since. With the beginning of globalization, the Canadians started to have an impact with the exchange rate and their incentives. We are three hours south of Vancouver, which makes us a bit of a poster child for them. Washington felt the impact of Canada almost faster than anybody, although I had tasted it in Chicago because Chicago looks like Toronto.

So we had had a couple of years where Toronto's impact was beginning to be felt in Chicago; we were doing a lot of sharing and competing with production. But then it started, once I came to Washington, this sort of steady growth of the Canadian film industry.

SHOOT: How have you adapted to the increasingly competitive marketplace?

Kellett: Lots of places are interchangeable, it's very competitive on the world stage to keep production coming in so that's meant that we've had to recreate ourselves—sort of a hybrid of our former selves. I think those film offices that sit and wait to do business as they always have are going to have trouble. You have to expand and diversify and figure out other ways of doing business or generating new kinds of business in your area.

SHOOT: Explain what you mean by hybrid.

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TOP SPOT
OF THE WEEK

Animated Characters Let Their Hair Down For Dove

Teaming With Turner Studios, O&M Restyles Wilma Flintstone, Velma Dinkley And Jane Jetson

By Christine Champagne

Rather than hire drop dead gorgeous models with perfectly silky manes to appear in “Three Women” (:30), which promotes Dove Styling hair care products, Ogilvy & Mather (O&M), Chicago, cast real women.

Well, real animated women—*The Flintstones*’ Wilma Flintstone, Velma Dinkley of *Scooby Doo* and Jane Jetson from *The Jetsons*. “Even though these are cartoon characters, they were selected because of the fact that they represent real women,” explained O&M North American creative director Maureen Shirreff. “We could have easily selected Wonder Woman, Brenda Starr and Betty and Veronica, but they seemed to land on an image of more stereotypically beautiful women. We wanted to continue in the Dove use of women who represent everyday women.”

In the spots, which combine cel animation produced by Turner Studios, Atlanta, and tabletop product shots helmed by director Mark Klein of MK Films Corp., Chicago, Wilma, Velma and Jane complain about their respective hairstyles. “My hair has been stuck in the Stone Age,” Wilma laments.

“Jinkies, my hair doesn’t move!” Velma declares.

“My hair doesn’t feel free. I don’t feel free,” Jane opines.

By the end of the spot, each of the ladies is much happier, having achieved looser, livelier hairdos by using the Dove Styling products appropriate for their hair type.

LADIES FIRST

Created by the legendary Hanna-Barbera animation studio, all of the characters in “Three Women” are now owned by the Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) division of Time Warner—O&M had to negotiate with the TBS’s Cartoon Network for permission to use the icons. Once that permission was obtained, O&M hired Turner Studios to animate the characters. “We were very excited about the



CLICK POSTER TO VIEW "THREE WOMEN"

possibilities for this because it was pushing these characters outside of their normal cartoon behaviors,” remarked Erika Lindberg Feldstein, a senior project producer with Turner Studios.

“It was kind of fun to see them with their hair down—literally,” added Turner Studios lead animation director Mike Schultze. “Really, they’re icons in cartoon land and then to change them like that made them a little bit more sexy. It was fun to play around with that.”

According to Shirreff, the creative team at O&M also enjoyed playing makeover mavens, debating what type of hairdos would suit Wilma, Velma and Jane while keeping in mind the Dove Styling tagline “Unstick your style.” “The thing we’re trying to talk about is, you can get the style you want but your hair will be able to move,” Shirreff noted.

“That was probably the biggest back and forth on this job—getting that hair to look the way they wanted it to look because that was what it was all about,” Schultze said.

To help communicate their wishes on Velma in particular, whose short, page boy hairdo presented less options, O&M sent Turner Studios video of O&M employees with various short hairstyles for inspiration.

While trying to please O&M, Turner Studios also had to respect the history and behavior of the characters. “Part of what helps us do that is we actually work directly with Cartoon Network as well, and they have people over there that are expert in those characters,” Schultze explained. “They can rein us in if we have gone beyond what they feel is comfortable for that character.”

Turner Studios created the characters utilizing traditional cel animation, although the process has been somewhat updated. “The characters were all hand drawn like they have always been, but we don’t cel paint anymore. In other words, we’re not drawing on the clear cels anymore and painting the cells. All the painting is done in the computer now,” Schultze shared, pointing out that the computer is able to paint the cells “probably twenty times faster” than a person could.

When it came to voiceovers, Turner Studios led O&M to voiceover artists experienced in portraying each of the characters—Tress MacNeill voiced Wilma; Mindy Cohn was Velma; and Lauri Fraser did Jane.

It was helpful to have talent that knew each woman well, Shirreff said. “The talent gave us some nice cues—like when Jane kind of laughs. We never wrote that. That came from [Fraser, the woman who voiced Jane] saying, ‘Well, this is what Jane would do.’”

As for music, O&M has established a tradition of producing sophisticated soundtracks for Dove spots and continued on that course with “Three Women.” “Of course, we listened to music from *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*,” Shirreff said. “But we knew right away that it was not appropriate because, after all, these women are spokespeople for Dove.”

With Dove’s musical direction in mind, O&M instructed composer Michael Lande of Music Orange, San Francisco, to whip up a track for “Three Women” that was sophisticated with a touch of intelligent

Client

Unilever’s Dove Styling hair care products

Agency

Ogilvy & Mather (O&M), Chicago.

Joe Sciarrotta, executive creative director; Maureen Shirreff, North American creative director; Gabe Usadel, art director; Josh Kemeny, senior copywriter; Adele Testore, producer; Carrie Nagle, account supervisor; Cheryl Maluta, broadcast business manager.

Production Company

Turner Studios, Atlanta (cel animation).

Mike Shultze, lead animation director; Bob Callner, executive producer; Erika Lindberg Feldstein, senior project producer; Vella Torres, cel production manager; Sam Leyja, Jai Husband, Dino Fritz, animators; Pat Epstein, digital paint/composite director.

MK Films Corp., Chicago.

Mark Klein, director (tabletop); Noreen Szeluga, executive producer; Joe Mosko, line producer.

Editorial

PPS (O&M’s in-house facility), Chicago.

Matt Golin, editor.

Post

The Filmworkers Club, Chicago.

Michael Mazur, colorist.

Music

Music Orange, San Francisco.

Michael Lande, composer; Blaise Smith, executive producer.

Audio Mix

Avenue Audio, Chicago.

Mark DeVos, mixer; Ryan Pribyl, assistant mixer; Heidi Holtz, producer.

Cow Pokes Fun For Anchor Dairy Spread

Director Peter Coffin Of Passion Paris Asks, "What's In Your Tub?"

By Robert Goldrich

Consider it Burns and Allen with a bovine twist. A couple of CG cow characters, Anchor Cow and his younger sidekick Moo, are the straight man and the ditzy punch-line deliverer, respectively, in this :30 titled "Look Out" for Anchor Spreadable, a buttery like dairy spread, via London agency Clemmow Hornby Inge.

The two CG cows interact in a live-action setting. The spot opens with Anchor Cow standing under the shade of a tree. A twig falls on his head, causing him to look up where he surprisingly finds his buddy Moo sitting on a tree branch, looking intently into the distance.

"What are you doing up there?" Anchor asks Moo.

"I'm looking for additives," says Moo, an offbeat explanation ripe for a

George Burns-like response ("Looking for additives, Gracie?").

Indeed Anchor incredulously replies, "Looking for additives?"

"Yes, you get them in buttery flavored spreads, but not in Anchor Spreadable," relates Moo.

"Do you actually know what additives look like?" queries Anchor.

"No, but there's a strange thing over there that looks like a cloud with legs," notes Moo.

"That's a sheep," says Anchor.

The spot then ends on a product shot of an Anchor Spreadable package. A voiceover then asks, "What's in your tub?"

The core creative team at Clemmow Hornby Inge consisted of art director Micky Tudor, copywriter Brian Turner and producer Enca Kaul.

Peter Coffin directed "Look Out"

via Passion Paris, an office recently opened by Passion Pictures, London. Coffin helmed the live action while also directing and animating the characters. The live-action DP was Jean Poisson. The live-action line producer was Alexandre Meliava. Emilie Walmsley and Nicolas Trout were producers in the U.K. and France, respectively. Hugo Sands was the executive producer for Passion Pictures.

"It was important to me that the live action was shot using the style of a hand-held camera, like a documentary," said Coffin. "I find that CG characters which are composited into hand-held live action initially look quite surprising to the viewer and enable us to believe in them as real characters more easily than if the camera is locked off." The spot deployed a Sony 750 HD camera. The CG models were built and animated in Maya. The animation was rendered and composited



Click Poster To View "Look Out"

using proprietary tools at Paris studio MacGuff Ligne.

Passion Paris maintains a partnership with MacGuff Ligne, which enables Passion to access MacGuff's animation and effects artisans, tools and resources. Working via MacGuff was a contingent of artists that included: CG modeling artists Virgine Taravel and Mathieu Trintzius; CG animation artists Kyle

Balda, Frantz Vidal and Mirco Tomadini; renderers Fabien Pollack, Selim Draia and Mathieu Gross; and composers Sebastien Rey and Celine Allegre. Visual effect supervisor was Etienne Pecheux. Postproduction coordination at MacGuff was handled by Laleh Sahrai, Christelle Balcon and Catherine Bernet.

Voiceover artists were comedians Stephen Fry and Tony Robinson.

"Art"

Click Poster To View "Art">

Men are from Mars. Women are from Venus. Ah, the difference in the sexes. This :30 for Mendocino Brewing Company's Red Tail Ale goes to tongue-in-cheek extremes—which some might regard as disturbing—to show us what happens when these two worlds collide.

We open in an art gallery where a man and a woman are standing in front of a sculpture. The woman pontificates about the piece: "The way the Cambodians display their sculptures as bulbous, coiled and in torture is so haunting," she relates.

The man is silent. His facial expression seems distant.

The spot continues to follow the couple as they walk together outside. Even though the setting has changed, not much else has. The woman is still talking about the art, while the man doesn't say a word.

"They seem to be deriding the notion of global beauty yet portraying life's circle as colorless," she says.

Next, our "happy" twosome is seated on a living room couch. The woman talks about the sculpture representing "human incompleteness

and yearning for wholeness." The man has a glazed look on his face, as if he's being subjected to torture.

Suddenly, his head literally explodes, and its innards splatter all over the woman and the furniture. The decapitated man remains seated on the couch, next to his distraught female companion.

A supered explanatory slogan then appears against a dark backdrop: "Men are brewed differently."

This is followed by a second message, "So are we," accompanied by a bottle of Red Tail Ale.

"Art" was directed and shot by Timothy Kendall of Effigy Films, Santa Monica, for Colby & Partners, Santa Monica. (The director has since linked with HKM Productions, Hollywood). Kendall also served as editor, visual effects artist and sound designer on the job. Kevin DeSouza served as executive producer and producer for Effigy.

The creative team at Colby & Partners consisted of president/executive creative director Rick Colby, associate creative director Jason Sperling, art director Niraj Zaveri and producer Amburr Dilday.



Online editor was Ernie Smith of Crush, Santa Monica. Rob Sciarratta of Company 3, Santa Monica, was the colorist.

Principal actors were Ben Koldyke and Lana Parilla.

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Burger King Flips For *The Apprentice*

Restaurant Chain Launches A New Burger Through NBC Reality Series.

By Christine Champagne

The day after the second episode of the third season of *The Apprentice* aired, millions of Americans were craving Burger King. That's because a new Burger King sandwich was cleverly featured in a task on NBC's hit reality show during which two teams of aspiring apprentices each had to run a busy Burger King restaurant in Manhattan for a day and sell a new Burger King sandwich. The team that sold the most won. (FYI: In this case, Net Worth, a team made up of high school graduates, beat out Magna Corporation, a team comprised of college grads.) Then the day after the episode aired, Burger King began selling the winning team's burger—in this case the Western Angus Steak Burger—for a two-week time period.

Of course, there is always some amount of risk when a company ventures into the branded entertainment arena, but judging by the reaction of the press (publications ranging from *The New York Times* to *USA Today* covered the initiative) and the public (how many of you found yourselves lured into your local Burger King after seeing the episode?), Burger King's collaboration with *The Apprentice* was a hit.

Interestingly, Cindy Syracuse, Burger King's senior director for national promotions and sponsorships, noted that the main goal of the promotion was not to drive sales. "The premise around the promotion was really about creating a social connection and being relevant," Syracuse shared. "I did not enter this promotion saying, 'This is going to drive huge traffic and sales' because you don't really know. It's not the purpose. The purpose is to be a contemporary brand that people are talking about and thinking about differently. And if, by the way, I can sell more Western Angus Steak Burgers, well, that's a great benefit, but it wasn't the objective of going into this."

It is obvious that Burger King wasn't content with the idea of simple product placement on *The Apprentice* and went to great lengths to make the task it took part in exciting—even turning over operations of two of its restaurants to the show's contestants. "That's a big leap operationally for a brand to take," Syracuse reflected, laughing.

Meanwhile, Burger King also created six new products specifically for the two teams to choose from. "We didn't have any of those products in the works [before agreeing to do the show]," Syracuse said.

That meant hustling to deliver. Given the short timeframe, Burger King's executive chef Calvin Harris created the six new products using pantry items already on hand at each of the company's nearly 8,000 restaurants. "Mark Burnett Productions [the company that produces *The Apprentice*] was completely blown away by what we were doing," Syracuse reported. "Every step of the way they were like, 'Wow. No partner has ever done this.'"

Burger King even went as far as to produce a custom commercial that aired within the show. Titled "Boardroom," the :30 found Donald Trump firing a Burger King employee. Created by Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B), Miami, the spot was directed by Martin Granger of bicoastal Moxie Pictures, and was almost indistinguishable from the episode as it was set in Trump's famous boardroom.

Additionally, the Burger King Web site recreates the task featured in *The Apprentice* online, allowing users to create and market their own product and enter to win a trip.

Looking back on her decision to work with *The Apprentice* (Burger King worked directly with the show's producers to arrange and execute the project), Syracuse said it was a no-brainer. "With my promotions, I try to base it on my own experience, and I'm a huge fan of *The Apprentice*," Syracuse said, noting that creator and executive producer Mark Burnett, the mastermind behind *Survivor* and the upcoming *The Contender*, produces "content that is extremely relevant and motivating to my consumer."



Characters Let Down Hair For Dove Spot

talk about hair products."

whimsy.

Lande, who has composed music for numerous Dove spots over the past three years, likens the resulting track he created for "Three Women" to that of an Italian film score. "They reference a lot of Italian soundtracks [in the music for Dove spots], so we were trying to keep in that genre," Lande said, making note that his composition was performed by live musicians with "some electronic dabs" included in the mix.

CARTOON CALL

Not surprisingly, O&M has gotten a generally enthusiastic reaction to the "Three Women" spot, which appeals to consumers through the use of classic, down-to-earth characters we've come to know and love over the years.

In terms of execution, "Three Women" is not only a huge departure for Dove but "a huge departure for any hair care company," Shirreff maintained. "I don't believe anybody has ever used animated characters to

And while the use of animated characters is new for Dove, the use of real women isn't, Shirreff said, citing Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty" advertising effort, which seeks to offer a wider definition of beauty and inspire women to celebrate themselves. "They are really trying to call into question how beauty has been portrayed for so long," Shirreff commented.

Noting the preponderance of models with lusciously gorgeous hair that we see in so many spot campaigns for hair care products, Shirreff said, "Anybody who works in the beauty business knows that this is totally unachievable. Nobody has hair like that. We don't have stylists waiting for us in the wings. So it is about time we portrayed that every woman has her own beauty potential. We want her to celebrate that, and we want to provide products that are going to deliver. But what we don't want to do is portray impossible beauty standards. People have really had enough of that."

Kellett Discusses State of Filming In Washington

Kellett: Well originally in Chicago, we just sat and responded, we did a lot of heavy marketing to the industry but we were very busy and it was responding to lots of big studio productions and television. Television in America started to slip tremendously in the mid-90s to where Vancouver had the majority of the movie-of-the-week business so that piece, that segment of the industry, started to disappear and then features started going into Canada and elsewhere.

So now we are very focused on indigenous production, the lower-budget independent, we do a much greater focus on commercials, we're moving into video games. Washington is a magnificent place for the video game industry and because we've got two of the big publishers in Nintendo and Microsoft we've got a lot of game developers. And we do a lot of motion picture scoring here, so we really are sort of an interesting hybrid of music, postproduction, video games and then the traditional forms of production.

SHOOT: *I saw on your Web site that there are a number of incentives. Do any of them speak directly to spot filming?*

Kellett: We have some sales tax exemptions, which are available right now [for commercials]... What we did for commercials in the past year is we put out a roads CD with 96 images of Washington State roads. That was specifically geared to car commercial shooters and it's been very well received. We've hand delivered it to 34 companies in Los Angeles, we have mailed it out. We have taken it out nationally and internationally, and made sure that car commercial producers know what Washington has and that we really want this business. But it too is going over [elsewhere], we are seeing the commercial business drop away too. They are following the money as much as anybody else.

SHOOT: *Besides runaway production, are there other key issues facing film commissions*

generally and then Washington State in particular?

Kellett: Well what's facing people nationally is that we have to continue to justify our existence. And when we are losing business and not bringing in the dollars we used to bring, then states that are facing lots of economic challenges and looking for places to cut will look at film commissions and we've lost some around the country. We have to justify our existence like everybody else and when people take production elsewhere, it makes us harder to be here. My fear has always been that when the industry disappears, you also lose the infrastructure. And if at some point in time, the industry should turn around and production should come flooding back to the United States, there are going to be places where filmmakers may have trouble putting up crews and getting the support they need because they left—the industry couldn't survive, companies went out of business. For those states that have lost their film offices, if you film there you are going to have to go back to making movies the way you did in the late '60s and early '70s, which is figuring it out yourself because there is no point of contact. I will say film commissions have proven their worthiness. Rarely does a big picture, and even medium-sized picture, go out on location without contacting a film commission.

What some of us face is that because many of us are located in state government, lower budget independent filmmakers are reluctant to talk to us because they feel that we will regulate them or will turn them into labor or will control them in some way and won't let them exert their artistic freedom. So we constantly are working to make our office a safe place for all filmmakers to come and work but it's an ongoing issue and many film commissions face it.

SHOOT: *So how do you try to reach out to those people [indie filmmakers]?*

Kellett: We're very aggressive about this. We work and co-sponsor various workshops, we speak with a lot of the not-for-profit, film-related

organizations. We put out a newsletter. I send out lots of information that is passed on to me in the film office. I have a huge distribution list of local filmmakers and I am constantly sending things to them about all kinds of topics. It's about relationship building and having them learn to trust us and spreading the word that it's okay to work with us... really, it's a good deal.

SHOOT: *Do you tend to attract a certain type of commercial production?*

Kellett: Yes, we do a lot of catalog shoots, a lot of outdoors stuff, cars, skiing. When you think of Washington, you think of people on ferries, people in nature, outdoor kayaking, climbing, that kind of thing.

SHOOT: *What would you say the state of spot filming is in Washington right now?*

Kellett: I would say that the state of spot filming in a lot of places is dropping. It's cyclical. We are doing a lot of still photography work, a lot of catalog work. We are doing car work, but we're seeing a little bit less of it because they're able to go to Canada and elsewhere in the world. That's because some places are so cheap. It is cheaper to go overseas to shoot than it is to shoot in the United States, which is sad.

SHOOT: *It seems to be an ongoing problem.*

Kellett: It's never going to end. I think this is an industry that is going the way of the garment industry, the steel industry, the timber industry, it's just happening to us. And I really do think the heyday of America's control on the motion picture industry is never really going to come back. I think it's always going to be this way. There's always going to be somebody faster cheaper, whatever. It's why this incentive game that is now being played everywhere in the United States, once you enter that game you can't ever win it because someone will always up the ante. So my feeling is bloom where you are planted, make yourself the best



Suzy Kellett

possible place you can, as inexpensive and efficient as possible, and then go after the business that you can realistically go after and not waste your time on things that are like banging your head against a wall. And that's kind of where we are.

SHOOT: *And diversify?*

Kellett: Exactly.

SHOOT: *What are the hottest locations for commercials right now?*

Kellett: People love to have roads along water, they love mountain passes, winding roads. The wheat fields here are always popular, they're a brilliant emerald green in the spring and then they turn this luscious, endless gold in the late summer. So we do a lot of wheat fields, we do a lot of mountain passes, mountain roads, we'll do water. The rain forest over on the Olympic Peninsula has been popular. And because we have so much forest, you'll see a lot of car commercials with people up in forests.

SHOOT: *Earlier you were talking about the different commissions throughout the country being threatened by state budget cuts and I read that Washington State also faced that in 2003?*

Kellett: We faced it twice actually. We faced it in 2002 and 2003, of being completely cut. It didn't happen because the industry stepped up and went after the legislature and at one point, they [the

Kellett On Film Commission Issues

legislature] said, “God, can you call these people off?” And I said, “No, I can’t until you’ve decided you are going to keep the film office, we have to keep going.”

They [industry members] were amazing, they were down there. They were lobbying. I mean what happens is that most of us in this business need to—take us for instance—put a Washington face on what is perceived as a very Los Angeles industry. And when we are talking to legislatures, they often think, offices that support the film industry, it’s kind of like corporate welfare because all they know is the kind of money major stars and directors are pulling down and the kind of money that movies are making. And they’re saying, “Why are we supporting this industry, they’re doing just fine.” So you need to remind the legislature and councils or whoever are the funding sources that this isn’t what it’s about. This is about Washington workers, crew members, actors, support services staying alive by servicing these industries.

SHOOT: *So how is the state film office faring now after those threats?*

Kellett: We’re fine. There are only three of us here [on staff]. We’ve got a very small budget, but we run a very lean, efficient, fabulous operation actually. We are on the speed dials of some production houses because they just know that they are always going to get a very fast response. And they just love to talk to us when they are in the bid process, which is a great compliment. I want to be on everybody’s speed dial.

SHOOT: *It doesn’t sound like there are any new incentives on the horizon.*

Kellett: We’re working on it. The industry is exploring now getting an incentive put together but we have a state that’s complicated constitutionally. I mean there’s no way to get an incentive that every state in the United States can have because every constitution is different and every state has restrictions on what it can do. So the industry is in the process of exploring what may be possible here, yes, and they would love to introduce something this session.

SHOOT: *But you said earlier that it’s dangerous to go down the road of incentives, right? That you’ll never win that game?*

Kellett: Well, you know what, but it’s the game, it’s the way it is being played today and to not do it is a guarantee the industry won’t come. So you’ve got to do something, you can’t do nothing, but always know that you’re going to be back for more because somebody else will always do something greater.

SHOOT: *Can you discuss specifics regarding any possible upcoming incentives?*

Kellett: We’re trying to work on a sales tax, on a tax credit, but we don’t have a state income tax so we’re going to have to be creative at how we establish this....The industry is working with the department of revenue and some different agencies to figure out what may be viable. You really have to see what your state can and cannot accommodate. I mean if you look at New Mexico, they have oil and gas reserves that they’re using to support the industry. Most states are not generating money off oil and gas reserves. Louisiana is selling tax credits; they’ve been successful.

SHOOT: *So how do you envision the office down the road? How do you see its future developing?*

Kellett: Will we get the feature business back? I don’t know. I’d love to have steady commercial work. I would like to have the Northwest be a center for independent production because it is very creative here, lots of writers. You know the personality of Washington State, kind of the frontier, maverick, independent spirit really aligns with the spirit of the independent film producer. And the industry here really appreciates it, the vendors have accommodated all levels of budget, they’ve been amazing. We’ve actually put together an indie-producers deal, which we just introduced at Sundance for productions a half-a-million to three [million dollars] and the vendors are offering all kinds of breaks to companies that meet certain criteria to work here. So it’s things like that. I think we are going to become more immersed in the game industry. I’d love to see that grow. I’d love to become more involved in music. The city of Seattle is very interested in music. And it may just be that we’re going to have to change a little bit how we’ve thought. It isn’t going to be movies and television all the time, it’s going to be other things, and it should be because times and industries change.

street talk

□ **Fred Rheinstein**, chairman and primary owner of Hollywood-headquartered **The Post Group**, told **SHOOT** that he has entered into an agreement in principle for a stock sale of **The Post Group** to **Matt Cooper and David Cooper**, owners of **Lightning Dubs** and part of Hollywood-based **iO Films**. **Rheinstein**—who said plans call for him to remain with **The Post Group** as vice chair—reported that the parties to the deal are in an accelerated due diligence phase....**Rooftop Edit** has opened in New York, with a talent base that includes veteran editors **Ed Kisberg** and **Geno Tulchin**, **Smoke** artist **Anthony Forte**, audio mixer/sound designer **Chris Russomanno** and assistant editor **Jeremy Ambers**....**Sound designer Jon Klok** plans to re-launch the **Audio Lounge** in Venice, Calif. He has spent the past three years working on varied projects in his native Denmark. The **Audio Lounge** is slated to open its doors on March 1. **Klok’s** background includes working as a sound designer for **Machine Head**, Venice, then partnering in the former **CHKW** and next becoming part of **Audio Lounge** during its first go-around.... Editor **Michael Saia** of New York-based house **Jump** is wrapping up work on the **Jerry Bruckheimer**-executive produced feature **Glory Road**, directed by noted spot director **James Gartner** of Santa Monica-based **GARTNER**. At press time, **Saia** was slated to again be available for commercials in early February....

rep report

□ **Rhinofx**, New York, has hired **Lorin Munchick** as in-house business development manager. Focusing on East Coast and European representation, **Munchick** will work in-house alongside **Jay Braddock**, who shares East Coast repping responsibilities as well as handling the Texas market....New York-based **Christopher Zander** and **Diane Patrone** of **The Family** are now representing bicoastal **Transistor Studios**, a company known for DVD, Web, print and motion design in the commercial, broadcast and entertainment fields. Also on the **Family** roster is **Backyard Productions**, Venice, Calif., and Chicago, a sister shop to **Transistor**....**Michelle Brunwasser** has launched independent firm **MB & Co.**, New York; the new venture has taken on East Coast spot representation for New York-based animation and design house **FlickerLab**. **Brunwasser** formerly served as general manager and director of business development for **Sideshow**, New York. Prior to that she was director of business development at **Postworks**, New York, and earlier VP/gm at now defunct **The Anx**. She is best known for her lengthy tenure at the since closed **Tapehouse Companies**, which was a New York mainstay operation....**Dattner Disputo and Associates**, Los Angeles, has signed DP **Sam Levy**, who is currently shooting the feature **Head Trauma**, and DP **David Stockton**, presently working on **CSI**, for exclusive representation. DP **Danny Hiele** has wrapped lensing on **Wannabe** and is again available for spots via **Dattner Disputo and Associates**.....

bulletinboard

- Feb. 3-13/Brussels, Belgium: **Anima 2005**. www.awn.com/folioscope....
- Feb. 4-13/Miami: **Miami International Film Festival**. info@miamifilmfestival.com; www.miamifilmfestival.com....
- Feb. 4-13/Victoria, B.C.: **Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival**. www.vivf.com....
- Feb. 10-20/Berlin: **The 55th International Film Festival**. www.berlinale.de....
- Feb. 11-27/Portland, Ore.: **The 27th Portland International Film Festival**. www.nwfilm.org/festivals/festivals_nav.html....
- Feb. 18/Sydney, Australia: **51st Sydney Film Festival** call for entries deadline. www.sydneyfilmfestival.org....
- Feb. 23-26/Greensboro, N.C.: **University of North Carolina at Greensboro Carolina**

VES Honor Roll

How Did They Do It? Spot Nominees Discuss Their Work

By Kristin Wilcha

The Visual Effects Society (VES) has nominated three spots for the 2005 award in recognition of outstanding visual effects in a commercial. The winner will be announced and honored—along with recipients of visual effects awards in film,

television, video games and music videos—during a gala event for the third annual VES Awards later this month.

Each nominated ad is a wonder of seamless visual effects, painstakingly achieved. While all the spots were for air in the U.K., companies from London, the U.S. and Canada, created effects in the ads. *SHOOT* talks to the artisans behind the nominated work, to get a feel for what went into creating each.

“TREE”

Daniel Kleinman directed “Tree” for Johnnie Walker out of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH), London. The spot was produced via now-defunct Large; Kleinman now works through Kleinman Productions, London. Effects for the ad

were created by a team of artisans at FrameStore CFC, London. Credit goes to: William Bartlett and Murray Butler, lead composers; Jake Mengers and Andy Boyd, lead animators; and producer Helen Stanley.

In the ad, a tree uproots itself from its home in a forest, and travels

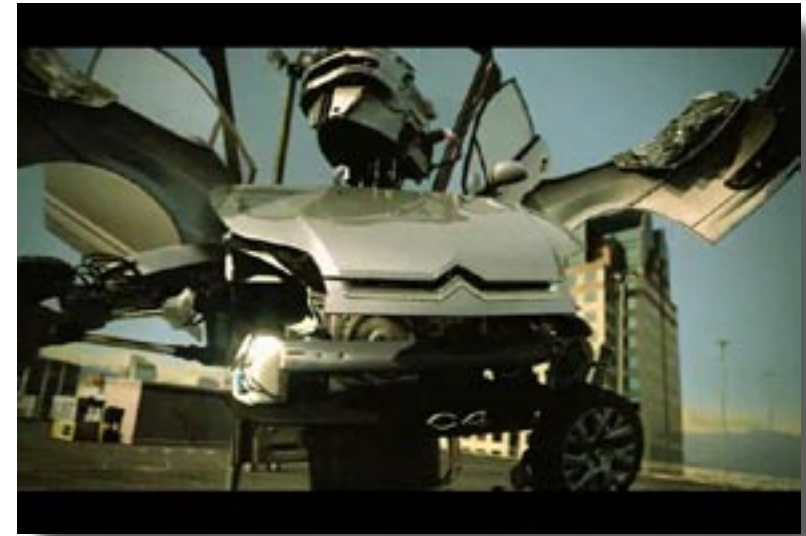
through the countryside, eventually winding up in the city, where it then settles itself in front of an office building. The



13-Visual fx

VES Honor Roll: Spot Nominees

Click Poster To View "Transformer"



theme is meant to underscore the long-running Johnnie Walker tagline “Keep Walking.”

Butler, who recently relocated stateside to the New York office of FrameStore CFC, notes that Mengers and Boyd “did a lot of work in developing a photoreal tree, which I think was the real big challenge. It involved creating leaves that were all separate geometries that could be lit, and shaded, and...have everything that an organic tree has.”

Butler, who attended the shoot with Williams, relates that creating the tree’s movements involved a great deal of developmental work prior to the shoot. While shooting, an animatronic tree was used. “We were going to use it in the close-ups,” reports Butler. “We were going to blend [the animatronic and CG elements], so we wouldn’t be so dependent on the CG shots [for close-ups]. Even though the tree was working quite well, we ended up replacing almost all of those shots with CGI, because we found that the CG was standing up to being quite close to the lens. Not that there

was anything wrong with the animatronic tree, but it meant that we could animate it a bit more carefully with the other scenes.”

Maya was utilized to create the tree, while Butler and Murray used Inferno for the compositing. If “Tree” wins the VES award, it would represent a hat trick of sorts for FrameStore, which has taken the top honor in commercials each of the first two years of the VES competition. Last year, the effects shop scored the commercial honor for “Fish,” also for Johnnie Walker and BBH, and directed by Kleinman. And the company won the award in ’03 for Xbox’s “Mosquito,” also helmed by Kleinman for BBH.

“NETWORK”

Joseph Kahn directed “Network,” for British Telecom out of Exposure Films, London, for agency St Luke’s, London. (Kahn is repped stateside via bicoastal HSI Productions.) Effects for the spot were created by a team at Café FX/The Syndicate, Santa Monica. The artisans from the shop included: David Lombardi lead CG artist/visual effects supervisor; Richard Mann, producer; Kevin Prendiville, Flame artist, and visual effects supervisor Eric Durst.

The spot—which involves several effects scenes—demonstrates how British Telecom, a.k.a. BT, uses its vast information network to service the needs of customers. In “Network,” business takes place in a large city—the catch being that products and services being delivered to and from people are flying through the air in different

environments.

Lombardi notes that creating effects for the spot took about five months—the actual post work took about three months, with an additional two months to create animatics. Lombardi was also on the set for the spot.

“Network” involved both 2-D and 3-D effects, and were created using programs such as LightWave, Maya, Boujou, Synthesize and Fusion. Flame was also used on the spot. One would imagine that creating a spot with as many effects shots for an agency in London would make the approvals process somewhat difficult. Problems with approvals were minimal, reports Lombardi; he and his team of artisans were able to post work-in-progress using Café Synch, a proprietary approvals system, which allowed for real-time collaboration with the London creatives.

Lombardi thinks that “Network”—with its numerous vignettes and “complex CG environments—has a good shot at winning the VES honor.

“TRANSFORMER”

“Transformer,” for the Citroen C4 automobile out of Euro RSCG, London, was directed and edited by Neill Blomkamp of Spy Films, Toronto. The Embassy Visual Effects, Vancouver, B.C.—in which Blomkamp is a partner—created the spot’s effects.

The ad, which makes extensive use of motion capture, shows a car on a roof-top parking lot that transforms itself into a robot made of car parts—doors, windows, etc. The robot dances around, then transforms itself back into a car.

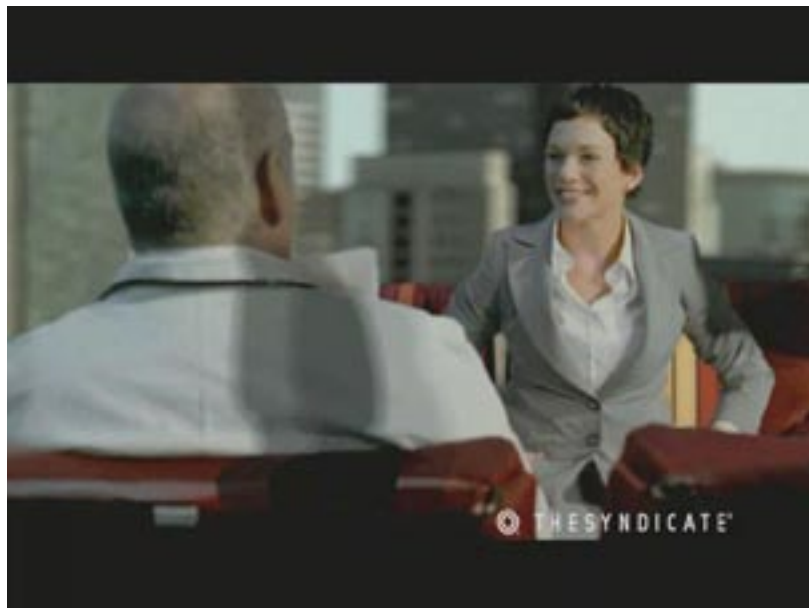
Blomkamp relates that in order to make the

CG seem as real as possible, he motion-captured choreographer Marty Kudelka—who has created routines for the likes of Justin Timberlake, Janet Jackson and Jennifer Lopez. Kudelka’s moves were later used to animate the robot. “[The spot] was all CG, and we wanted to make it look as real as possible,” notes Blomkamp. “I’m a big fan of realistic CG.”

After the motion capture shoot (at Blur Studio, Santa Monica), the car itself was scanned, and the data brought back to The Embassy. There, Blomkamp created the robot, giving it the moves from the choreographer’s shoot. To create the environment around the car, Blomkamp related that he and his team used HDRI—high dynamic range imagery, which lights 3-D scenes to look real. “Nothing was eyeballed or simulated or guess-work,” says Blomkamp. “It was all mathematically correct.”

Winston Helgason, founder of The Embassy, served as producer on the spot, and notes that it took about five weeks to create the spot.

The team at Embassy included: Blomkamp and Helgason, as well as Trevor Cawood, visual effects supervisor/CG artist, and Simon Van de Lagemaat, animator. To achieve the look of the spot, the team used Vicon’s motion capture system, Modo, LightWave, and Apple’s Shake.



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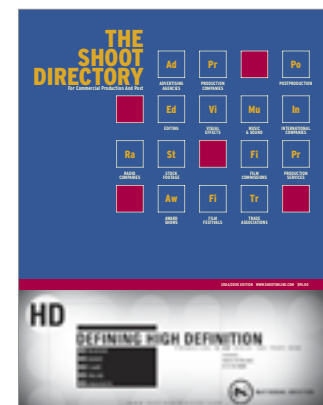
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TM Motion Picture Equipment Rentals has opened up another facility at the Los Angeles Center Studios. TM will be the exclusive supplier of Grip, Lighting and Generators for the stages at Los Angeles Center Studios. Tom D. May, President/Owner, and Jeff Arnone, Executive Vice President, commented that TM along with Los Angeles Center Studios have major plans in the works to provide a more personalized operational service to producers and crews.

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