

SHOOT®

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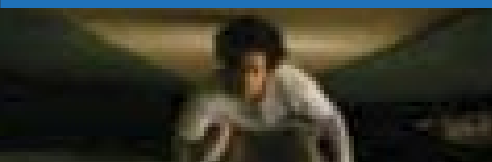
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This Week



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Directors Series

Directors Realize “Dreams”; Sony Debuts 10 Shorts For '05

Bayer, Gartner Are Among The Helmers Who Reflect On The Hi-Def Lensing Experience

By Carolyn Giardina and Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—As *SHOOT* went to press, the 2005 series of “Dreams” shorts was about to debut at the DGA Theater in Los Angeles. The March 23 screening will be followed by a New York premiere on April 5 at the Ziegfeld Theater. Prior to the L.A. premiere, *SHOOT* caught up with several of the directors who reflected on their “Dreams” experience.

This is the fourth year of the annual “Dreams” program, which is presented by Sony Electronics Broadcast and Production Systems Division, and Young & Rubicam (Y&R). Though there was a recent parting of the ways between Y&R and the Sony account, they agreed to continue to work on this year’s “Dreams” project which was already well underway at the time of their business split.

The “Dreams” program turns noted spot directors loose to reflect their creative vision in shorts shot with Sony 24p HD

cameras. The theme for this year’s series is “Flight.” Director/cameraman Samuel Bayer of bicoastal RSA USA said that his creative vision for the short *Max* could not have been fully realized without the hi-def camera. Written by Bayer and JP Danko, *Max* stars Robin Wright Penn and a young boy, Max, who has cerebral palsy. The short delves deeply into the close-knit, profound relationship between a mother and child. In this case, the parent is dealing with not only taking care of her son, but also financial hardship.

“Without the HD camera, there’s no way I could have gotten the kind of performance we got from Max,” related Bayer. “By having a camera that could run continuously for something like fifty minutes—running nonstop, never cutting—we were able to capture the boy in a more spontaneous manner. The situation of having a camera that you can’t hear running, that’s not intimidating, helped us in this case of working with a boy who

An Anonymous Ad Alternative: V3

By Robert Goldrich

CULVER CITY, Calif.—Operating below the industry radar the past four months, V3, under the aegis of veteran executive producer Sylvia Kahn, has produced several jobs—spanning broadcast commercials, Web-based fare, viral ads and special venue pieces—which have deployed the talents of up-and-coming directors. Launched

by bicoastal Anonymous Content as a specialty division, the Culver City-based V3 serves as a resource to the ad agency community. V3’s charter is to provide production solutions to agencies, encompassing such areas as their client-driven initiatives for alternative advertising and marketing forms.

Andy Traines, executive producer of Anonymous Content’s

commercialmaking operation, said that V3 was formed in response to a changing advertising landscape, in which branded entertainment, video on demand (VOD), viral content, Web pieces, mobile communications, and point-of-purchase exposure are gaining momentum. The challenge for mainstream spot production companies, he related, is determining how to best meet the needs

Dir. Cocciolo Joins Spot Shop Tool

By Robert Goldrich

SANTA MONICA—Noted ad agency creative Harry Cocciolo has decided to embark on a directorial career, joining bicoastal Tool of North America for exclusive representation. He has already wrapped his first job under the Tool banner: a :60 (with a :30 version) for the San Francisco Zoo, out of BBDO West/San Francisco. Titled “Tail,” the spot is featured in this week’s “The Best Work You May Never See” gallery.

Cocciolo’s last staff position was at San Francisco agency See where he

TWC Signs Top Gunn Int’l. Director

By Robert Goldrich

SANTAMONICA—Suthon Petchsuwan of Matching Studio, Bangkok—the world’s most awarded commercials director of 2004, according to the Gunn Report—is making his first stateside production company foray, entering into an agreement with Santa Monica-based Thomas Winter Cooke (TWC) for exclusive representation in the U.S.

Just a few select directors have placed

AP News

Talk about shortlists—directors Frank Budgen of Gorgeous Enterprises, London; the Traktor collective from bicoastal/international Partizan; and Suthon Petchsuwan of Matching Studio, Bangkok. These are the only helmers to rank among the top 25 most awarded directors each of the past six years in the annual Gunn Report. Based on a compilation of key award show results, the Gunn Report encompasses



more than 30 TV/cinema competitions. From this research, the Gunn Report has annually named the industry's top production houses, directors, ad agencies, commercials, campaigns and clients.

While Budgen and Traktor are familiar names in the stateside market, Petchsuwan has hovered below U.S. industry radar. But Santa Monica-based production company Thomas Winter Cooke (TWC) is looking to change that, having signed the director for exclusive representation in the American ad market. (See story, p. 1).

Thomas finalized the deal during a trip this month to the eighth annual Asia Pacific Advertising Festival (AP Ad Fest)

in Pattaya, Thailand. He made the trek based on his interest in Petchsuwan's work and the assessment that the director's storytelling sensibilities would translate well to U.S. advertising.

While he found what he expected in Petchsuwan and was able to successfully secure the helmer, Thomas also discovered much he hadn't anticipated. He described the AP Fest as a mini-Cannes, with less of the carousing, a depth of notable work, a record high attendance drawn from different parts of the world, and a formal "Fear No Change" theme.

The latter held poignancy in light of what the region has been through recently, most notably the tsunamis that brought death and devastation to coastal communities across South Asia. Additionally, Southeast Asia is currently coping with a bird-flu scare.

AP's "Fear No Change" also brought new directorial talent to the fore,

as five helmers from different markets (China, India, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand) made short films based on that theme. The films were screened for festival delegates, with some of the work impressing Thomas.

Speakers at the AP event included marketing executives from McDonald's in China, and Procter & Gamble in Asia, Australia and India.

The festival competition drew in excess of 4,000 entries, including more than 1,000 TV or cinema spots, nearly 200 film craft entries and another almost 200 interactive pieces.

Taking the AP's top Best of TV prize as well as a Gold Lotus Award was "Husky Girls" for Tokyo's Ajinomoto Stadium, created and produced by Dentsu, Tokyo. Directed by Dentsu's Jun Kawanishi, the ad features a young Japanese man who has seemingly arrived in bachelors' paradise, a city inhabited by beautiful women. The

only turnoff is that all of them speak in coarse, hoarse voices. They got that way by cheering during soccer games at Ajinomoto Stadium. So the man ends up dating a far less attractive looking woman with a normal voice.

The aforementioned Petchsuwan also scored at the AP competition, with "Balloon"—a spot he directed for Twin Lotus Herbal Toothpaste, out of agency Ongoing, Bangkok—winning a Gold Lotus Award.

According to the Gunn Report, Petchsuwan was the world's most awarded commercials director of 2004. But he's not the only Thailand-based helmer to perform well. Ranking second in '04 was Thanonchai Sornsriwichai of Bangkok production house Phenomena. There was a tie for third place among three directors: Budgen; Traktor; and Antoine Bardou-Jacquet of Partizan Midi Minit, London and Paris.

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Design of the Times

By Billy Pittard

State Of The Business

ago. I knew I absolutely loved the creative challenges of bringing graphic messages to life. I knew I was working in a wild new frontier. I knew the tools would evolve. I knew the demand would soar. What I didn't foresee was that the road would get quite so bumpy.

After a wonderful long run, the Y2K/dot bomb flattened my business and the broadcast design industry in general. The sudden drop of demand for broadcast design services meant that there just wasn't enough work to go around. Numerous companies were pitching for every little piece of work. It was a very tough time.

As the media and entertainment business has recovered from that period,



Billy Pittard
is president
of PI

problems.

Spec work continues to be a cancer that prevents the broadcast design industry from becoming as healthy as it should be. You may not hear a lot of people complaining about spec out in public because design companies don't want anyone to see their pain. To maintain market appeal, design companies feels the need to always look and act confident and prosperous – when in fact spec work creates a lot of losers and is a major financial burden on the entire industry. The good news is that the "cancer" seems to be in remission – although we're still a long way from a clean bill of health.

Perhaps the bigger challenge faced by broadcast design firms is price

pressure. Budgets are a fraction of what they were a few short years ago, but client expectations are still very high. Desktop production tools have made it possible to get the work done at much lower costs, but there simply isn't enough in the budget to do breakthrough design. Low budgets force designers to do what they can turn around quickly and without a lot of creative development. The market seems to be placing more value on economy than on creativity. Things are starting to get a little stale.

I looked at websites and montages for many broadcast design companies to prepare for this article. I was struck by how much similarity I saw.

For whatever reasons, an awful lot of montages from different companies are looking the same. I hesitate to mention the notable exceptions for fear that it will cause others to imitate those reels. Most of the montages I looked at just merged

into one big blur. I can't help but imagine the same thing happens when clients look at reels. Demo montages are always a challenge, but design firms need to practice more thoughtful, purposeful creativity in their preparation.

A greater concern is the similarity of look of the work. 2D graphic images in 3D space are one of the more evident flavors of the moment. I suspect a number of factors are driving this sameness. The first suspect is technology. Everybody is using the same basic tool set so the tools are probably dictating much of the design direction. Design schools may be another factor in driving sameness. As Dan Pappalardo of Troika described it to me, schools seem to be more focused on software training than teaching design. Students are graduating with good technical skills but minimal

AICE Chicago Chapter Celebrates Fourth Annual Trailer Park Festival

Assistant Editor Glorily Velez Of Optimus Tops This Year's Competition

By Emily Vines

CHICAGO—This month, the Chicago chapter of the Association of Independent Creative Editors (AICE) held its fourth annual Trailer Park Festival at Dante's, a bar in the Windy City. The festival features trailers cut by assistant editors from AICE member companies. This year, participants could choose to cut a trailer for one of the following films: *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003), which won an Academy Award for best editing, *Gigli* (2003) or *Modern Romance* (1981).

In past competitions, the participants did not have a choice of films to cut. The previous selections included *Chicago*, which won an Academy Award for best editing in 2002, *Black Hawk Down*, which won the Oscar for editing in 2001, and *Gladiator*, which was nominated for an Oscar in 2000 for best film editing and won best picture.

"We thought, in addition to the Academy Award-winning film, that *Gigli* and *Modern Romance* would be fun to choose from," said Kathryn Hempel, founder of the festival and editor/partner at Cutters, Chicago.

Another twist this year was that the assistant editors could choose to "sell" or "spoof" the movie they chose. Editor, fellow festival organizer and emcee of the event Jeff Landsman of Swell, Chicago, said he approached Hempel at last year's screening about the spoof option. He noticed that people had done it for fun that year and proposed incorporating it in this year's competition.

The grand prize winner, Glorily Velez, of Optimus, Chicago, chose to spoof *Gigli*. The trailer is cut like an old, silent, black-and-white film and opens with the following words on screen: "The studio is proud to present the most engaging story

of the year."

For placing first in the contest, which had 28 entrants, Velez won Avid Xpress Pro, which Avid and Midwest Media Group donated, a \$200 gift certificate to Virgin Megastores, \$100 in \$1 bills, and a Smokey Joe Weber grill. Velez also received the Trailer Park trophy which is passed from winner to winner each year.

The five runners up were Mark Butchko of Optimus; Tim LaDolce, Outsider, Chicago; Jimi Jo Meretzky, Avenue, Chicago; BJ Moore, Cutters; and Michelle Orzechowski, Swell. These five winners each received \$200 and Virgin Megastore gift certificates worth \$25 each.

The final prize, the Tent City award, is for a winning trailer cut by someone who is not an assistant editor yet. This year Brain Hepner, an intern at Cutters, won that honor and received \$50 and a \$25 gift certificate to Virgin. Describing this award, Hempel said, "You're not quite in the trailer park, you're kind of nearby because they're not official assistants yet."

The judges were Masayo Kaneko, Swell; Steve Morrison, Foundation, Chicago; Greg Sunmark, Red Car, Chicago; Jill Bzibziak, Outsider; Tim Kloehn, Optimus; and Nadia Hennrich, Cutters. Hempel removed herself from judging this year to eliminate any implication of impropriety if Cutters were to fare well in the competition.

Next year, Hempel is planning to hold the festival in the summer and hopefully include an outdoor screening for a competition that she said has become the event of the year for editors and assistants. "It's very validating for people to get recognition for their work, especially with assistants," she noted. "I think that's why it's been successful. It celebrates and acknowledges their work and also pushes them."



Grand Prize Winner: *Gigli* Spoof
Click poster to view.

Moxie Launches In London; Laren Named Managing Dir.

By Robert Goldrich

NEW YORK—Bicoastal Moxie Pictures has extended its reach across the Atlantic, opening a U.K. operation in London under the aegis of managing director Dawn Laren, who comes over from Studio, London, where she served in the same capacity.

The move provides Moxie with a production foothold in Europe, and paves the way for Moxie to secure select jobs from U.K. agencies for its entire roster of directors, except for Martin Granger who already has U.K. representation via Bikini Films, London.

Director Dan Levinson, a Moxie founder, related that setting up a company operation “across the pond” made more sense than linking with an established production house in the U.K. “Our directors enjoy working with us and we wanted to ensure that same relationship and environment for our projects overseas.” He noted that securing Laren was key given her homegrown reputation and connections in the U.K. market.

“Our goal,” stated Laren, “is critical

acclaim and growing a vibrant and exciting domestic concern with both local and non-U.K. talent that is absolutely accepted within the London community.”

Moxie president Robert Fernandez described Moxie/London as being “the next step in the development and evolution of the Moxie brand.” He added that Moxie’s directorial roster has generated high demand internationally. “We recognize the importance of the market in the global commercial production community,” said Fernandez, “and we want to be a part of it.”

While its mainstay business is commercialmaking, Moxie has also branched out into branded entertainment, as chronicled in *SHOOT*. The company has a working relationship with IMAX to produce a documentary film centered on this year’s Volvo Ocean Race, a competition that spans the globe. Moxie is also teaming with *Glamour* magazine on “Reel Moments,” which entails the making of up to four short films based on real-life experiences of the publication’s readers (*SHOOT*, 2/25, p. 1).

Liberty To Spin Off Ascent Media Group

By Carolyn Giardina

ENGLEWOOD, Colo.—Liberty Media Corp. (NYSE: L, LMC.B), headquartered in Englewood, has announced plans to spin off a separate company comprised of its ownership interests in Santa Monica-headquartered Ascent Media Group and Discovery Communications. Ascent is the parent company of such commercial postproduction brands as Company 3 (Santa Monica and New York), R!OT (Santa Monica, New York and Atlanta), Method (Santa Monica), Filmcore (Santa Monica and San Francisco), Encore (Hollywood) and Rushes (London).

The transaction—expected to occur

during the second quarter of this year—is intended to be tax-free to shareholders and Liberty Media, and would create a new publicly-traded company called Discovery Holding Company (DHC).

This would once again make this group of companies a publicly traded entity. In May 2003, Liberty purchased the remaining shares of then publicly-traded Ascent, making it a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media.

Formerly known as Liberty Livewire Corp., Ascent was formed as a result of the 2000 and ’01 acquisition of The Todd-AO Corp, Four Media Company, Video Services Corp, certain operations of SounDelux

“Basketball” Scores At New York ADDY Awards

Overall & McQuoid-Directed American Standard Spot Takes Best Of Show/Broadcast Honor

By Kristin Wilcha

NEW YORK—American Standard heating and air conditioning system’s “Basketball” won Best of Show/broadcast at the New York ADDY Awards, which were held earlier this week (3/22) at New York’s Sky Club. “Basketball” was directed by the team of Overall & McQuoid, Richard and Simon, respectively, of bicoastal Go Film for Foote, Cone & Belding New York. “Basketball,” along with American Standard’s “Fetch,” each won a Gold ADDY in the retail products category.

The New York ADDYs, presented by District Two of the American Advertising Federation (AAF), bestowed upon Ogilvy & Mather, New York, and client American Express the Grand ADDY award for continuing excellence in advertising. Saatchi & Saatchi, New York, won the Governor’s Award, presented to the shop that wins the most Gold ADDYs across print and broadcast.

Grey Worldwide, New York, and Saatchi & Saatchi, New York, scored five Gold ADDYs each. Three Dairy Queen spots, “Tongue Tied,” “Baby Bjorn” and “Napkin,” won honors for best campaign. “Tongue Tied,” “Baby Bjorn” and “Sharing” each individually earned a Gold honor in the restaurant category. Baker Smith of harvest, Santa Monica, directed all four spots. Rounding out Grey’s broadcast honors was Starburst’s “Backflip,” which was honored in the food category.

Saatchi scored its Gold honors across several different categories. General Mills’ “Adoption,” directed by Jim Sheridan and produced via bicoastal Moxie Pictures won a Gold in the food category and in the cinema category. A spot for Ariel detergent, “Tag,” directed by David Alcalde of Propaganda Producciones, Madrid, scored a Gold in retail products. A Gold for health and beauty went to Old Spice’s “Empty Desk,” directed by David Shane of bicoastal/international Hungry Man. Rounding out Saatchi & Saatchi’s honors was a Procter & Gamble’s “Bugs,” directed by The Brothers Strause, which scored a Gold ADDY

for elements of advertising/animation or special effects. Hydraulx created animation for the spot. The Brothers Strause are with Santa Monica shop Tight.

O&M scored a total of four Gold ADDYs. Two ads for American Express, “Optometrist” and “Ellen,” garnered Gold in the professional services category. David Kellogg of bicoastal Anonymous Content directed “Ellen,” while Bryan Buckley of Hungry Man helmed “Optometrist.” Additionally in the category, O&M won a Gold for IBM’s “Prodigy III” directed by Joe Pytka of Venice, Calif.-based PYTKA. Rounding out O&M’s broadcast Gold wins was a cinema honor for “Gangsters,” promoting the Tribeca Film Festival. Brendan Gibbons of Hungry Man, and John O’Hagen, who recently shifted his representation from Hungry Man to bicoastal RSA USA, co-directed the ad.

Kirshenbaum Bond + Partners, New York, also won four ADDYs. Three spots for the Ad Council—“Couch,” “Lion” and “Band,” each one a Gold recipient for public service; the trio also earned a public service campaign Gold.

The Kaplan Thaler Group, New York, won three Gold honors. Two spots for Foxwoods Casino Resort, “3 of a Kind” and “Bluffing” won Gold awards for travel. David Levin of Hungry Man directed the ads. The spots, along with “Royal Flush,” also directed by Levin, won a Gold ADDY for best campaign.

Cliff Freeman and Partners, New York, won two campaign Golds, both for Snapple. The first honor went to “Bob/Lunch Ladies,” “Natalie/Dog” and “Tuckey/Single Twin.” The second campaign Gold went to “Bob/Kids,” “Brian/Dentist,” and “Tuckey/Junkyard.” Chris Smith of bicoastal Smuggler directed the Snapple work.

Deutsch picked up a pair of Gold honors: one campaign Gold for the Chiclets spots “Growing Up,” “5 Dirty Words,” and “Kung Fu.” Mike Overbeck of Wild Brain, San Francisco, directed the animation ads. Deutsch

Editorial/Production House Hybrid: Teak Motion Visuals

Ex-Goodby Staffer's New Venture Makes Mark In Spots, Web and Special Venue Fare

By Robert Goldrich

Last October, Greg Martinez ended his 10-year tenure at Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco—the first three as a broadcast producer, the last seven as its director of internal postproduction and production. In the latter capacity, his responsibilities included overseeing the agency's in-house GSP Post operation.

Martinez's decision to leave was triggered in part by due diligence he had done over the previous months on behalf of GSP Post, which was contemplating a diversification of its editorial arm into online. Martinez had been demoing a Smoke room, but ultimately GSP chose not to take the online/finishing plunge.

However, the process piqued Martinez's interest. He became intrigued by the notion of breaking out on his own and opening a company encompassing offline, online, finishing, visualeffectsandproduction. Via GSP, Martinez was active in varied disciplines, including producing spec work and some budget-challenged fare for the agency, such as "Y2Cud," a Jeff Goodby-directed spot for the California Fluid Milk Processors Advisory Board that gained airtime. The ad was a humorous takeoff on the then brewing Y2K hubbub.

After exploring prospects for his own shop, Martinez made the commitment, securing financing and formally opening Teak Motion Visuals in San Francisco some five months ago. He is the majority partner in the venture. While it is boutique-sized, Teak has grown steadily over a short span, with key new staffers, as well as independent artisans who work regularly at the shop. The staff additions are executive producer/partner Jan Frei, who had served as executive producer at Red Car, San Francisco, and lead editor/partner Bob Spector, a mainstay in the San Francisco editorial community.

Prior to Teak, Spector had a brief stint at Red Car, San Francisco. Earlier he was with Jigsaw, Los Angeles, but he is best known for his long tenure as a partner for 10 years in Bob 'n' Sheila's Edit World, a San Francisco editorial house that closed in 2003 (*SHOOT*, 9/26/03, p. 7).

Spector's editing reputation is grounded largely in comedy and dialogue work, including such Super Bowl advertising as the high-profile Budweiser "Lizards" campaign out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. He also cut that agency's longstanding talking chicken campaign for Foster Farms. Among Spector's other assorted credits are spots for such clients as Yahoo!, S&W, Sprint, Pine-Sol and The Learning Channel.

At Teak, Spector has edited several projects, including a spot promoting LucasArts' Star Wars: Episode III game for agency Butler, Shine, Stern and Partners, Sausalito, Calif., a T-Mobile commercial for Publicis, Seattle, and regional McDonald's via Hoffman Lewis, San Francisco. At press time, Spector was about to cut a campaign for Southwest Airlines, out of GSD&M, Austin, Texas.

Like Martinez, Frei's industry roots are in agency soil, having served as a producer at Chiat/Day (now TBWA/Chiat/Day), San Francisco. She then moved over to the post studio side of the business, becoming a staff producer at now defunct Good Pictures, and then joining Pomegranit Editorial, San Francisco, as executive producer. In '00, Frei was recruited to help open Red Car's San Francisco office.

PRODUCTION

Additionally, freelance editor Tony Saxe works regularly at Teak. Saxe had been an assistant editor at FilmCore San Francisco and has now graduated to full-fledged cutter. His first major job at Teak was a package of Saturn commercials tied into the Gravity Games, an extreme sports competition.

Martinez produced the spots via Teak for play at the Gravity Games venue, the Copper Mountain Resort in Colorado. Teak acted as full service production company on the job, handling shooting (blue screen with an HD 24p camera), editing, compositing and finishing.

Goodby, Silverstein & Partners' creative Dave Laden directed the Saturn work. Additionally, Teak has served as the production company for director Laden on some Internet spots for Saturn and Goodby, Silverstein & Partners.

Teak is also committed to collaborating with

agency artisans on creative pet projects, according to Martinez, who related that during his 10 years at Goodby, he heard assorted ideas from colleagues for shorts and documentaries that never got off the ground. Martinez hopes that Teak can facilitate these creative callings, helping to make such projects a reality. Currently, Teak is producing a documentary piece about a short white man training himself to slam dunk a basketball. The director and producer on the project are, respectively, Margaret Johnson and Hilary Bradley who both work at Goodby. Teak has also been named postproduction company on an independent feature, *The Village Barbershop*, written by Chris Ford, a copywriter at Goodby. Spector is slated to edit the film.

While Teak counts Goodby as one of its steady clients, the hybrid editorial/production house is an independent venture and not affiliated with the agency. Martinez's longstanding relationship with Goodby has helped translate into business from that shop for Teak. Similarly, Frei's and Spector's connections have yielded projects from their varied clientele over the years.

In addition to production and offline editing, Teak offers Smoke services and has been active in conforming and finishing work, as well as visual effects. Martinez has secured a couple of independent

artisans who work regularly for Teak, Smoke artists/online editors Treena Loria and Michael Angelo. In fact, Teak recently handled online for the San Francisco Zoo's "Tail," out of BBDO West/San Francisco, which is covered in this week's "The Best Work You May Never See" gallery. Teak has also done Smoke work for such clients as the San Francisco International Film Festival out of Young & Rubicam, San Francisco, and the Partnership For A Drug-Free America via Goodby. Loria and Angelo are both experienced in visual effects. Angelo recently wrapped visual effects for U.S. Postal Service spotwork that required 40 hours of heavy compositing in the Smoke.

Teak has additionally made its facility available to out-of-town editors coming to cut projects in San Francisco. The shop has hosted such cutters as Avi Oron of Bikini Edit, New York, Hal Honigsberg of Chrome, Santa Monica, and Jim Hutchins who at the time was with Nomad Editing Company, Santa Monica. (Hutchins has since launched his own Los Angeles shop, HutchCo.)

As for the Teak moniker, Martinez confessed an affinity for the South Pacific lifestyle and culture, as reflected in the shop's décor, which includes much bamboo and a definite Tahitian feel. From a business model perspective, Martinez said he's motivated by the chance to be engaged in different roles on different projects, which is why Teak operates as a hybrid production/post shop. He even occasionally edits projects. For example, at Teak, Martinez cut the pitch video for Butler, Shine, Stern and Partners that helped it win the Sun Microsystems business.

TWC Lands Top Gunn Helmer

in the top 25 per the Gunn Report's annual tally each of the past six years: Frank Budgen of Gorgeous Enterprises, London (who's repped in the U.S. by bicoastal Anonymous Content); the Traktor collective of bicoastal/international Partizan; and Petchsuwan. The Gunn Report, which is a compilation of award show results, covers more than 30 TV/cinema competitions. From this research, the Gunn Report has annually named the industry's top production companies, directors, ad agencies, commercials, campaigns and clients.

Petchsuwan, who speaks English, broke into the directorial ranks in 1993 with Matching Studio. He came over to the production company from the agency creative side of the business. He was an art director at Kenyon & Eckhardt, Bangkok, and then a creative director at SSC&B Lintas, Bangkok. For Lintas, he worked on such accounts as Unilever and Caltex (Texaco).

Much of Petchsuwan's directorial fare is people-based storytelling ranging from humor to poignant pieces. His number one directorial standing in the '04 Gunn Report was on the strength of such comedic work as the Soken DVD Player campaign ("Kill Bill Kill Bill," "Titititanic," and "X-X-X") for Euro RSCG Flagship, Bangkok, and Unif Green Tea's "Worms," out of BBDO Bangkok.

The Soken commercials tell the tale of how a malfunctioning DVD player, with incessant skipping, starting and stopping, can have a profoundly negative effect on its owners. In "Kill Bill Kill Bill," a white-collar guy corners a co-worker in the office kitchen to tell him about the *Kill Bill* DVD that he rented. But he keeps freezing in mid-sentence and repeating himself over and over again. "Then she sta...sta...sta...sta...stabs one of the gangsters," he describes. "Suddenly, suddenly, suddenly." The other guy is clearly perplexed. The explanation is that the first man's DVD player is fraught with technical glitches. Soken DVD's tag is simply, "Plays smoothly." The other two ads

in the package are similarly themed, to great comedic effect.

Unif Green Tea's "Worms" takes us out to a field where cartoon father and son caterpillars are climbing up a tea plant. The dad urges his lad to climb to the top where the best leaves are—but a human has beaten him to that destination. The child caterpillar sobs that it wants the top leaves. However the human tealeaf picker isn't about to relinquish this choice crop. The caterpillar resorts to hypnotism but the person mightily resists. The exchange underscores that Unif Green Tea is brewed from only the best leaves.

According to Gunn Report research, the Soken campaign was the third most awarded TV/cinema spotwork in '04. Unif Green Tea's "Worms" was right behind, tied for fourth.

TWC partner/executive producer Mark Thomas became familiar with Petchsuwan's work and sought him out during a trip earlier this month to Thailand. There Thomas attended the Asia Pacific Advertising Festival. During the festival, Thomas' overtures to Petchsuwan and Matching Studio proved successful, as the TWC exec finalized the deal to rep the director in the U.S. Thomas believes the director's filmmaking sensibilities and storytelling/comedy prowess will translate well in the American advertising market.

Petchsuwan said, "The chemistry with TWC feels good, which leads to good ideas and good work." TWC's connection to the film industry through partner/co-founder Ralph Winter (producer of such movies as *X-Men* and *X-Men 2*) also proved appealing in that Petchsuwan harbors feature directorial ambitions.

The signing of Petchsuwan continues what has been a far-reaching international scout for directorial talent on the part of TWC. Thomas and Winter recently went to London and came back with three directors: Seamus Masterson, Elliot Hegarty and Martin Brierley (*SHOOT*, 3/11, p. 1). The latter has moved stateside. TWC also continues to represent its U.S.-based roster of helmers: Jeff France, Michael Fueter, David Jellison and Greg Kiefer.

TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK

TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK

TBWA/Chiat/Day Sleepwalks Into The Night For Adidas

Director Spike Jonze, Sea Level Bring Agency's Wildest Dreams To Life

By Christine Champagne

While most sleepwalkers amble aimlessly around their homes, tripping over furniture and stepping on the family pet, the sleepwalker featured in a new adidas spot titled "Hello Tomorrow" (:90) literally creates a wild new world with every step he takes in his Adidas_1 shoes.

Created by TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco, and directed by Spike Jonze of bicoastal/international Morton Jankel Zander (MJZ), with visual effects produced by Sea Level, Venice, Calif., "Hello Tomorrow" opens



on a man awakening late at night to find himself in a dark bedroom furnished with only a bed and nightstand. Adidas_1 shoes roll out of the blackness and onto his feet, lacing themselves up.

Clad in his shoes and pajamas, the guy gets up, leaps through a just-created bedroom door and lands in a world that unfolds as he runs along. His solitary journey takes him from city streets to forests and even finds him encountering a bear before finally making his way back to bed. The adidas tagline "Impossible is Nothing" is seen at the end of the commercial as the shoes tumble into blackness.

SHOE BUSINESS

The spot demonstrates—in a visually remarkable fashion—how the adidas_1 shoe works. Billed as "the world's first intelligent running shoe," the adidas_1 is

equipped with an in-sole computer that is capable of making five million calculations per second and then adjusting heel cushioning in response to changes in running surface.

While the adidas_1 is a high-tech product with engineering that rivals that of any electronic gadget on the market, Chuck McBride, TBWA creative director North America/executive creative director/copywriter, didn't want to force viewers to wade through tech mumbo jumbo in any spot that would be made to promote the shoe. Rather, he aimed to tap into the imagination of viewers; thus he formulated the idea of a sleepwalking adventure of sorts.

McBride's concept was certainly imaginative—not to mention ambitious—and could have failed miserably if it weren't executed properly. Therefore it was key to get the right director to tackle the assignment. McBride was thrilled that Jonze, whom he has worked with often, proved willing and eager to take the job.

Jonze, who could not be reached for an interview, enhanced "Hello Tomorrow" in numerous ways, according to McBride. For example, Jonze came up with the idea of having the adidas_1 shoes roll up to the guy as he sat at the edge of his bed. "That was a great touch," McBride praised, noting that he was open to any and all ideas that Jonze threw at him.

In turn, Jonze was also interested in hearing McBride's thoughts, McBride reported. "He's very into his craft, but he's not very political," McBride remarked. "There is space for you to be in there, too."

Meanwhile, Jonze worked closely with Sea Level visual effects supervisor Ben Gibbs, another frequent collaborator, getting him involved early on in the process. "It is amazing to see how these two work together," TBWA executive producer Jennifer Golub remarked. "They were truly interested in creating something new."

IN THE BLACK

What is particularly interesting about "Hello Tomorrow" is how so much of the spot finds the man running in blackness, with the environment bleeding into the scene in bits and pieces. "Image makers are sometimes more caught up in creating information,



Chuck McBride

whereas it is oftentimes more about what you do not show," Gibbs commented. "I think black space is underutilized in the TV medium. It's about creating an image that leads the imagination to expand upon it."

Like Jonze, TBWA and the client were willing to take a walk on the dark side—so to speak. Gibbs credited McBride, Golub and TBWA creative director/art director Joe Kayser with imposing "very few restrictions on the process."

Coming up with music to complement the incredible visual imagery featured in the spot was a challenge. McBride said that the commercial called for a track with vocals and "simple instrumentation so that the idea of scope and loneliness came through in the music, too. I was adamant that we didn't do ad music. I said, 'Make a great song, and then let's lay it up against the picture, and if that makes it better, it's our song. If it doesn't, let's make another song.'"

With that in mind, Sam Spiegel (Jonze's brother) of Squeak E. Clean, Los Angeles, composed a dreamy track performed by Karen O of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

Haines Hall of Spot Welders, Venice, Calif., cut "Hello Tomorrow" into :90, :60 and :30 versions. "Some people have told me that they like the sixty-second better, which is interesting because they are all ad people," McBride mused, "and I go, 'That's because it's the time frame you're used to.' I'm a big champion of the ninety-second. The client [in this case] was game to create something unique, and how often do you have a story that could become a little film? This certainly had that kind of gravity to it."

Client
adidas

Production Company

Morton Jankel Zander,
Los Angeles

Spike Jonze, director; Ellen Kuras, DP; David Zander, executive producer; Vincent Landay, executive producer/producer. Shot at Los Angeles Center Studios.

Agency

TBWA/Chiat/Day,
San Francisco

Lee Clow, chairman/chief creative officer worldwide/executive creative director; Chuck McBride, creative director North America/executive creative director/copywriter; Joe Kayser, creative director/art director; Jennifer Golub, executive producer.

Editorial

Spot Welders, Venice, Calif.

Haines Hall, editor; Ted Felter, assistant editor; Konda Mason, postproduction supervisor; David Glean, executive producer.

Post/Visual Effects

Company 3, Santa Monica.

Stefan Sonnenfeld, colorist; Missy Papageorge, producer..

Sea Level, Venice

Ben Gibbs, visual effects supervisor; Brian Buongiorno, lead Inferno artist; Christel Hazard, 2-D artist; Steffan Schubert, CG artist; Amy Russo, visual effects producer; Celest Gilbert, executive producer.

Audio Post

Framework Sound,
Santa Monica.

Ken Dahlinger, mixer.

Music

Squeak E. Clean, Los Angeles
Sam Spiegel, composer.

Principal Talent

David Douglas.

Tail Wags The Tale For The San Francisco Zoo

Director Harry Cocciolo, BBDO West Elicit Empathy In Whimsical, Bittersweet :60

By Robert Goldrich

By Robert Goldrich

Having empathy for a person to the point where you're not only rooting that she finds happiness, but also feeling like you should be right behind her in line to go to the zoo is part of the magical effect of this lyrical :60 (with a :30 version) directed by Harry Cocciolo for BBDO West/San Francisco. Titled "Tail," this spot for the San Francisco Zoo marks the first for Cocciolo since he formally decided to jump from the agency creative side of the business into the directorial chair, joining bicoastal Tool of North America (see story, p. 1).

We all can relate to feeling isolated from others at given times in our lives. And this piece gently tugs at that heartstring through a girl, played by Hailey McCann, whom we see walking to school. In this case, it's a physical oddity that sets her apart—she has a long fur tail that sticks out from under her skirt. A mailman sees her walking towards him and peels away, clearly freaked out by the sight. From the sweet girl's facial expression and body language, we can see that she is sadly familiar with the postman's reaction.

She then gets aboard a school bus only to have the door shut too soon and trap her tail. Though the scene has a dash of the comical, you at the same time shudder to think what a school bus full of kids have in store for this different girl. The bus driver opens the door to free the girl.

Next we're taken to school. It's lunchtime and a bunch of girls are sitting at a table, talking, having fun and socializing. Alas, in the background, our tailed schoolgirl has a large table for one. She sits alone, eating a sandwich. Later we see her on the playground.

As other kids play and frolic, she is again alone, seated on a seesaw.

This tale of loneliness underscores how sometimes kids can be the cruelest of all, particularly when someone is different—so much for individuality.

However, the tale takes a positive turn with a chance meeting as she walks home from school. She looks up to see another girl, who also has a tail. It turns out this new girl is standing in line with her dad in front of the San Francisco Zoo. A smile comes to the first girl's faces, the veil of isolation is lifted, and she gets in line with her newfound friend.



Click Poster To View "Tail"

A voiceover then asks, "Are you one of us?" The San Francisco Zoo logo comes up, accompanied by the tagline, "Join Zoomanity."

The creative team from BBDO West consisted of executive creative director/copywriter Jim Lesser, art director Sakol Mongkolkasetarin, copywriter Neil Levy, supervising producer Rob Sondik and producer Chad Garber.

Cocciolo's support team included Tool executive producer Jennifer Siegel, head of production Amy DeLossa, and producer Jeff Tanner. The DP was Mark Plummer.

"Though we see a girl with a tail, the story

is about everyone," related BBDO's Lesser. "We've all felt like outcasts at one time or another until we meet someone likeminded, feel a sense of belonging, and find a place that's right... This story required just the right touch from the director, and Harry [Cocciolo] immediately came to my mind."

"Tail" is the San Francisco Zoo's first television advertising, according to Lesser. The spot helps to relaunch the zoo, which has just completed an extensive renovation.

Ben Longland of Nomad Editing Company, Santa Monica, edited "Tail." Susye Melega and Nicole Steele served as executive producer and producer, respectively, for Nomad. Online editor was Mark Everson of Teak Motion Visuals, San Francisco. Colorist was the mono-monikered Sparkle of Complete Post, Hollywood. Audio post engineers were Eric Eckstein and Joaby Deal of One Union Recording, San Francisco. Music composer was Paul Bessenbacher of Emoto, Santa Monica.

“The City”

By Robert Goldrich

We open on a close-up of a female mannequin—but we’re not looking through a department store window.

Instead we’re in a busy diner. The camera then reveals that the restaurant staff and customers are all mannequins. Burgers are cooking on the grill and are clearly on their way to being burnt in that there’s no one to tend to them but lifeless mannequins.

The camera then reveals a banner headline on the front page of a discarded newspaper: “Mannequinism Linked

To Political Activity.” The spot next takes us outside to city streets, with mannequins in various slice-of-life poses. But humanity intervenes, as young people enter the scene, circulating flyers that urge us to prevent mannequinism. A yellow flyer is placed on the windshield of a car, with a mannequin seated in the driver’s seat. Flyers are tucked under the arms or in the pockets of mannequins standing on sidewalks.

As the young humans canvas the streets with the flyers, waving a flag against mannequinism, a voiceover relates, “Protect yourself from mannequinism. Vote, volunteer, stay informed. It’s easy to get involved.” The Web site address www.fightmannequinism.org then appears on screen.

This Ad Council PSA is part of its youth civic engagement campaign in conjunction with the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Created by WestWayne, Atlanta, the campaign encourages 18-to-24-year olds to get or to stay involved in their communities.

“The City” was directed by The Guard Brothers (Tom and Charles) of bicoastal Villains. Richard

Goldstein executive produced for Villains. Producer was Matt Caltabiano. The spot was shot in location in Los Angeles by DP Tami Reiker.

The WestWayne team consisted of chief creative officer Scott Sheinberg, executive creative director Steve Baer, art director Joel Davis, copywriter Kevin Botfeld and director of broadcast/producer Connie Newberry.

Editor was Nick Lofting of Union Editorial, Los Angeles. Union’s Todd Iorio was online editor/Flame artist and Josh Eichenbaum was audio post mixer. Colorist was Mike Pethel

of Company 3, Santa Monica.

Music composer/arranger was David Wittman of bicoastal Elias Arts, with the shop’s Dean Hovey serving as sound designer. Marit Tinguely executive produced for Elias.



Click Poster To View "City"

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ReelWorks Plays Cat And Mouse For CouponCode.com

Flash Animation Short Film “Salon” First In A Series Called “Metro Tails”

By Christine Champagne

You don't have to spend a lot of money to produce branded content that works. That's the lesson learned by watching “Salon,” an adorable short film produced for CouponCode.com by ReelWorks Animation Studio, Minneapolis.

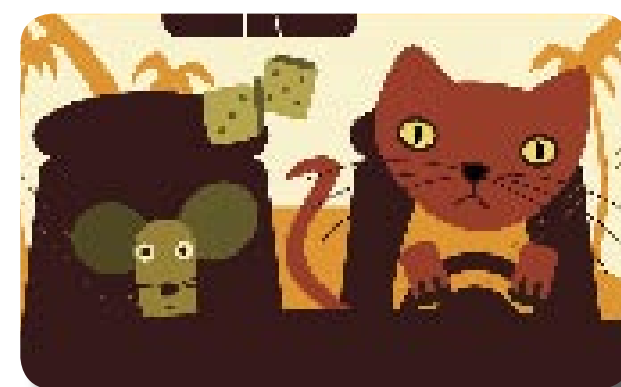
The Flash-animated short follows Fay the cat and Lindvall the mouse as they visit a local hair salon run by Selma, the metro chicken. Given that cats are vain creatures that love to be groomed, Fay is hoping that Selma will give her a fabulous new hairstyle. Selma doesn't disappoint her, but Fay does go into shock when she gets the bill for Selma's services. Luckily, Lindvall saves the day when he hands his cat companion a discount coupon from CouponCode.com.

In just one minute and 29 seconds, “Salon” depicts the benefits of using CouponCode.com, which offers consumers coupons for discounts on various products and services, and will likely serve to draw visitors back to the site as “Salon” is the first in what will be a series of shorts under the banner of Metro Tails.

According to ReelWorks executive producer Audrey Robinson Favorito, the project was “a blue sky assignment.” Dave Simmons, president of CouponCode.com, simply instructed ReelWorks to create a short film that was funny, quirky and edgy. The rest was up to them.

“It was a unique opportunity for us, and it was really interesting to see how our creative team responded to such an open-ended assignment,” Favorito shared.

“With any blue sky assignment, finding a starting point is the hardest part,” according to Todd Hemke, who wrote the story and designed the look of the short, which he co-directed with Morgan Williams. “The process began [with me] staring into space over my computer monitor asking the question ‘What should I do? What should I do?’ over and over.”



Ultimately, a chicken randomly came to mind. “Chickens have always been amusing to me, so I ran with it,” Hemke reflected. “From there it was a matter of letting other random thoughts guide the way—such as putting a fur coat on the chicken and finding friends in a cat and mouse. The stories [for “Salon” and future shorts in the series] developed in a similar way—a visual gag or scenario would come to mind, and I would try to build a story around it.”

From there, the project became more of a collaborative effort with storyboards further

developed by ReelWorks' Bruce McFarlan. Color models were developed using Adobe Illustrator to reflect the client's interest in a Southwestern color palette with rich and warm tones. Contrasting colors were used to separate the inside spaces from the outside.

Once Simmons approved everything, it took the ReelWorks team, which also included producer Neha Upadhyaya Lang, about three weeks to complete the project.

Then Alex Berglund of Echo Boys, Minneapolis, composed music to accompany the

short, while Tom Lecher did the sound design.

While ReelWorks, which has been in business since 1981, is known for producing commercial fare, the company is certainly interested in delving further into the branded content arena, according to Favorito.

For his part, Hemke enjoyed the creative freedom this particular piece of branded content offered. “All in all, I enjoyed working on this project because there was no time limit set for the film,” Hemke said. “It was a chance to have fun with trying to tell a story.”

SHOOT®



DIRECTORS ISSUE
spring edition 2005

DIRECTORS
spring edition

Welcome to *SHOOT*'s spring directors issue. In this edition, we take a look at directors who have made an imprint on the advertising landscape in recent months, as well as some new faces.

"In Focus" examines the relationship between the director and cinematographer, and what a director looks for in a DP—besides availability. A successful collaboration with a DP can bring to life a good creative idea and lead to a stellar spot.

Profiled in the issue are some familiar faces—like Samuel Bayer of RSA USA and Errol Morris of Moxie Pictures. As well, there are some relatively new faces, like Brendan Gibbons of Hungry Man and Christian Loubek of Anonymous Content. From France, Thierry Poiraud talks about co-directing with his brother, as well as his solo gigs, which have been garnering him considerable attention stateside.

Speaking of new faces, continuing its long standing commitment to finding new talent, *SHOOT* salutes emerging directors in the May 13 issue with coverage of its third annual new directors showcase.

Enjoy the spring directors issue, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

Kristin Wilcha
Senior Editor/Creative & Production



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Photo credits

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In Focus

Directors discuss the DP relationship.

By Kristin Wilcha

Producing a spot involves a number of people, all of whom have close-knit working relationships. The agency creative director, art director and copywriter collaborate closely to come up with a spot, while a director interprets that vision. In most cases, a spot couldn't come about without a director, and a director couldn't execute his vision without a director of photography. While some spot helmers such as Samuel Bayer of bicoastal RSA USA and Lance Acord of Park Pictures, New York, serve as their own DPs, most directors rely on a trusted core of cinematographers to help bring a spot to life.

"It's a collaborative medium, a collaborative effort, and that's the nature of the beast," says Noam Murro, partner/director at Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles, of the process of creating ads, and working with DPs.

Earlier this year, Murro received the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award for best commercial director of 2004, on the basis of three spots, eBay's "Toy Boat," out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, Starbucks' "Glen," out of Fallon, New York, and adidas "Carry," from TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco. Barry Peterson shot "Toy Boat" and "Carry"; Robert Elswit shot "Glen." Both DPs frequently work with Murro,

When asked what he looks for in a DP, Murro quipped, "a good one," adding, "The history shows that I feel that this is a very important bond, and while it's certainly not a Catholic marriage, I like the fact that that I know the same people, that I work with them for a silly long period of time. Of all the fantastic people that comprise my work ... these are my heroes."

Successful collaboration with a DP is the key to creating a successful spot, noted the directors *SHOOT* spoke with, though few work exclusively with just one DP. Reasons vary, one is availability—a particular DP may be booked on other spot assignments or a feature film, and therefore unable to shoot a particular job. Another is a particular type of job, say an effects-heavy ad versus

a performance-based spot. Directors also like to work with more than one DP to inject variety into their work. Kevin Thomas, partner/director at Thomas Thomas Films, London, estimates that he works with DP Bob Hughes on about 70 percent of his jobs, including Citibank's "Outfit," out of Fallon, Minneapolis, which won last year's Emmy Award for best primetime commercial. In the remaining thirty percent of his projects, Thomas works with other DPs. "I think there are advantages in working with the same guy, but there are disadvantages as well," he explains, "and that's why I think you need to keep it a little bit

fresh. Bob and I [have a shorthand]—we don't even have to talk a lot of the time. He just knows exactly what I want, how I want to frame something. He just kind of reads my mind, which is an advantage."

The directing team of Speck & Gordon—Will and Josh, respectively—of Omaha Pictures, Santa Monica, have been collaborating fairly regularly for the past year with DP Anthony Wolberg on spots such as Emerald Nuts' "Exaggerating Dad," out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, and Geico's "Reality Show" via The Martin Agency, Richmond, Va. And while the pair do work with other DPs, they note that working continuously with Wolberg helps crystallize their vision. "The thing that's great about Tony is that he challenges us," explains Gordon. "He challenges our expectations of how to do things, and it's a good thing for us ... the end result is always a little unexpected, which is what we like."

Speck relates that continually working with a particular DP can help a director as his style evolves. Working with the same DP, he explains, can have great benefits, particularly "when it still feels creative and exciting and you're growing [as a director]—that's when you want to continue that relationship." Wolberg is currently shooting a four-spot Miller Lite package for the directorial duo.

Thomas notes, however, that working continuously with the same DP can



In Focus

make a director a little too comfortable. “The disadvantage is that if you just use someone all the time,” he continues, “it can get a bit cozy. Everybody is always learning, and I think you can get to a stage where you sit back a little bit, and it

gets cozy and relaxed, and you start to think, ‘Am I pushing myself here? Am I doing what comes easy to me, or should I be pushing myself into the unknown a bit?’ I think when you work with someone new, it does make you think differently, and keeps you on your toes a little bit. I think that’s why you’ve got to have that balance.”

Thomas is currently shooting a Geico job out of The Martin Agency, Richmond, Va., which Hughes is shooting, and recently wrapped work on a four-spot Nike package for Japan. Rodrigo Prieto, a DP who works in both spots and features (*Alexander*, *8 Mile*, *Amores Perros*), shot the Nike work, which



Baker Smith

was out of Wieden+Kennedy, Tokyo. Thomas also collaborated with DP Brendan Galvin on “Kick Off,” for the United Nations Landmine Action Committee, out of agency The Brooklyn Brothers, New York.

Baker Smith, partner/director at Harvest, Santa Monica, notes that he tends to book a DP for a certain stretch of time—he jokes that he works with a different DP each quarter, and relates that most of the projects from the latter part of last year were shot by DP John Shwartzman, including Bud Light’s “Wardrobe Malfunction,” out of DDB New York. Smith recently finished work on *Le Roi*, his short film for the Sony “Dreams” project, now in its fourth year, which puts Sony’s high definition cameras in the hands of commercial directors who direct short films under a common theme—this year’s is “Flight.” The shorts debuted this month in Los Angeles, with a New York screening in April. Bill



Starbucks' "Glen," directed by Noam Murro. Click poster

Pope, whom Smith has worked with for over 10 years, shot the film, which centers on two escaped convicts who steal a car and hit a butterfly, leading them to debate the symbolic meaning of the act.

Director Bryan Buckley, a partner at bicoastal/international Hungry Man, jokes that he work with whichever DP “says I’m the funniest—I’m just kidding.” On a more serious note, Buckley relates “it’s an instinct of who you think is right for the project. And the feature guys like Dante [Spinotti] or Russell [Carpenter], or John [Lindley] or Elliot [Davies], those guys are constantly rotating on pictures, so you have to



Kevin Thomas

In Focus

understand that you're going to lose them for huge chunks of the year.

"Generally speaking it works out where at least one of them is available, he continues. "And I like to rotate it. You look at a project, and I think who could be good for it, and I expand beyond the basic list too. I'm always looking at new DPs."



Bryan Buckley

Buckley recently directed a Mini Cooper campaign, out of Crispin Porter + Bogusky, Miami—which included the spot "Counterfeit Mini"—and a Wrigley's project out of BBDO Chicago, both of which he shot with DP Scott Hendriksen. Buckley is currently working on a package for Orange, out of Mother, London, with DP Adam Beckman. He also directed several Super Bowl spots, including FedEx's "Top Ten,"

through BBDO New York, and Godaddy.com's "Broadcast Hearing," out of the Ad Store New York.

FEATURE CROSSOVER

All of the directors canvassed have worked extensively with cinematographers who move between spots and features. DP Pope, who frequently works with Smith, shot all three films in the *Matrix* trilogy. In most cases, whether a cinematographer has feature experience isn't a huge consideration.



Click poster to see United Nations' "Landmines," helmed by Kevin Thomas.

"Normally, I think if you're really good, it doesn't matter if you've done films or if you've done commercials," states Thomas. "You're either good or you're not."

Most of the feature cinematographers the directors work with have extensive experience in spots—for instance, Rodrigo Prieto, who shot Thomas' upcoming Nike work, also DP'd Ameriquest Mortgage Company's Super Bowl spots "Mini Mart" and "Surprise Dinner,"

out of DDB Direct, Los Angeles, which were directed by Craig Gillespie of bicoastal/international Morton Jankel Zander (MJZ).

Buckley also frequently works with feature DPs—Carpenter shot films such as *Titanic*, as well as the upcoming *Monster In Law*, while Spinotti has shot, among others, *After The Sunset*, and *Red Dragon*.



Click poster for "Wardrobe Malfunction", directed by Baker Smith.

"Sometimes the wrap against feature guys," notes Buckley, "is that either their coming in for the money, or they work slow, and it's the opposite actually—they work fast."

Buckley also relates that when working with a DP, he often tries to match the job with the cinematographer. For example, if he is working

In Focus

on a spot that involves special effects, he looks for someone, like Carpenter, who has extensive experience with greenscreen.

Speck & Gordon had a similar situation late last year, which led to their working with Roberto Schaefer, who shot *Finding Neverland*. The pair directed a spot for Coca-Cola out of Berlin Cameron/Red Cell, New York, which included a scene set in the 1800s, a look Schaefer captured with success in the film.



Speck & Gordon

AGENCY INPUT

While agencies generally ask who a director will use as DP, few question the director's selection. Smith notes that early on in his career agencies wanted to know more about the DPs he was using, but now trust his decisions, although they will inquire as to which cinematographer is shooting a particular job. Speck & Gordon have had similar experiences as they've become more

established directors.

Buckley, too, notes that DP selection was "a really big deal" earlier on, although he notes that if an agency or client is looking for a very specific look, they will focus more on DP selection, particularly for a project like a car ad. "The last time I got a major DP question was on Chevy, about a year ago," relates Buckley, referring to the Chevrolet package out of Campbell-Ewald, Warren, Mich., that included the spot "Soap," which debuted on the 2004 Super Bowl telecast, and was shot by DP Hendriksen. "The look [of the car] was so important to them."

FINDING CHALLENGES



Click poster to view Mini Cooper's "Counterfeit Mini," directed by Bryan Buckley.

Speck & Gordon note say that they value the relationship with DP Wolberg because he tends to approach his work a bit less traditionally than others. "The approach is sometimes a little less conventional," says Speck. "It's a good meeting in the middle because sometimes it's nice to be pushed away from the tradition of how you approach things, and have people challenge that."

Smith, who likes DPs that tend to mix things up a bit, relates a key piece of advice—it's always important for a director to listen to a DP.

What matters most, however, is that the cinematographer have a vested interest in the spot's outcome. "I think no matter what DP I have involved, I want them to have their head in the game," concludes Buckley. "[You don't want anyone] there just to get a paycheck, and that's really important. ... You just want people who really care."

Samuel Bayer

Taking flight.

By Christine Champagne

Samuel Bayer, who after well over a decade as a director/DP remains noted in particular for his highly visual, complex productions, has done some outstanding spot work in the past year, including “Sled” for Mountain Dew out of BBDO New York; and “Digital Joy” for Microsoft/Intel via Deutsch, New York.

Last year, the director/DP, who is represented by bicoastal RSA USA for spots and by RSA USA’s clips division Black Dog for music videos, also added acclaimed music videos for Good Charlotte (“Hold On”) and Green Day (“Holiday,” “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” and “American Idiot”) to his list of credits, which also include landmark music videos such as Nirvana’s “Smells

Like Teen Spirit.”

But we haven’t seen his best work yet, according to Bayer, who says we should be on the lookout for the film he directed as part of the “Dreams” program, which is presented by Young & Rubicam (Y&R), New York, and Sony Electronics’ Broadcast and Production Systems Division and is now in its fourth year.

Bayer was one of 10 directors selected to shoot short films with Sony 24p HD cameras on the theme of “Flight.” “This is absolutely the best thing I have ever done in my life—better than any music video, better than any commercial,” proclaims Bayer, who wrote the script for the film. “It’s the most heartfelt project I’ve ever done.”



Samuel Bayer

At the time of this interview Bayer was still finishing his film and wasn’t at liberty to divulge too many details, although he did reveal that the four-minute film centers on a woman (Robin Wright Penn), and an 18-year-old kid with cerebral palsy.

“I don’t think music videos or commercials offer the opportunity that this format gives a filmmaker,” says Bayer about why he agreed to participate in the “Dreams” project. “There are four minutes. There’s no product, and you get to tell a story—make people feel something, try to get an emotion out of somebody. That’s a powerful concept that is attractive to a director.”

There is something in it for Sony, too. They get filmmakers hooked on their HD camera: Bayer, who describes himself an “old school” filmmaker with an attachment to the 35mm cameras he owns and uses in his work, admits that it was an eye-opening experience for him. “It’s going to revolutionize our business,” states Bayer. “I don’t want to sound like the poster child for HD cameras.

“It doesn’t do me any good as a guy that has 35mm cameras and loves filmmaking, but you can shoot nonstop for an hour without turning the [HD] camera off,” Bayer continues. “There’s a lot of freedom there.”

While Bayer can’t wait for the world to see his “Dreams” film, he is also excited about a campaign he recently shot for New Balance out of the Boathouse Group, Needham, Mass. “It represents a return to my roots,” Bayer says, explaining that the campaign, which features interviews with real high school athletes and coaches about why they take part in sports, “is the complete antithesis of celebrity-endorsed advertising.”

Bayer is also particularly enthusiastic about the New Balance work because it is getting harder and harder for him to find commercials that he is interested in directing these days. “Sometimes I look at the field of American advertising, and

I think it’s depressing,” Bayer says. “I think there was actually better work ten years ago than there is now.”

Still, he soldiers on in the spot world. “As cynical as I may sound sometimes, I love this business,” Bayer says.

NEVER SAY NEVER

He wasn’t loving the music video business so much last year: In fact, he proclaimed to *SHOOT* that his clip “Hold On” for Good Charlotte would be his last (1/16/04, p. 7). So it came as a surprise when toward the end of 2004, Bayer jumped back into the music video scene, helming not one but three clips for Green Day, and he is set to direct yet another for the band.

Why the change of heart? “For a variety of reasons,” Bayer says. “I loved the record [*American Idiot*]. I met the guys, and I loved them.”

Given his quick about-face, is this the last time that Bayer will swear off a genre of work? “No, I think it’s important to say never. Then you’ll get what you want,” he says laughing. “I’m like the Cher of music videos. You know how Cher always has a farewell tour? I’ll keep having farewell tours every year, and then maybe they’ll drag me back.”

Aside from a re-ignited interest in music videos, Bayer is also making his way toward directing his first feature film. He currently has two films in development, including a remake of a film titled *Vanishing Point*.

Not surprisingly, Bayer is routinely asked why he has yet to make a feature film after all these years. The director/DP says that he has passed on numerous films in large part because he didn’t want to helm the “comic book” fare typically associated with music video directors who make the transition to feature films.

“I’m not going to name names,” Bayer says. “But for every David Fincher [who is represented for spots by bicoastal Anonymous Content], there is another director who did a really bad movie and will never get another movie because



Click poster to view Microsoft/Intel's "Digital Joy."

they had their shot.”

Meanwhile, Bayer also acknowledges that he hasn’t always had the best reputation, displaying what he calls a combination of “naiveté and arrogance” in his 20s and 30s. “I always hear things from crew members of other people in Hollywood that I’ve got a difficult reputation,” Bayer candidly states, “and it’s like, ‘Look, I am the first to admit that I probably burned a lot of bridges in Hollywood.’”

Now older and wiser at the age of 43, Bayer believes he is truly ready—on many levels—to make a feature film. “I’m proud of what I did [in the past], but I know a lot more now. I think you mellow out a bit as you get older,” Bayer muses. “You have a lot to prove when you’re young. When you get a little bit older, you’ve got less to prove to others and more to prove to yourself.”



"Boulevard of Broken Dreams" by Green Day.

Brian Beletic

Unstoppable direction.

By Art Smith

Brian Beletic's career trajectory seemed unstoppable this past year, thanks in large part to the adidas spot—aptly titled “Unstoppable”—that he directed out of TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco.

The :60 features Houston Rockets guard Tracy McGrady—one of the NBA's leading scorers—facing an army of surprisingly formidable foes as he torpedoes towards the basket. “Unstoppable” opens on a shot of McGrady on the practice court with his real-life trainer Wayne Hall, who stands on the sidelines. Hall tosses the ball to McGrady, who, dressed entirely in black, then begins to hurdle up the court. Suddenly, the action slows down and a Lilliputian-sized army clad in white and gold begins its mission to bring down “the giant” by any means possible.

The resourceful warriors attempt to ensnare McGrady in ropes. When that doesn't do the trick, the mini-soldiers expand their attack, coming at McGrady from all angles. Reinforcements arrive on foot, from land vehicles and via helicopters that drop paratroopers from above. Soon there are hundreds of the determined fighters swarming McGrady. Still, he perseveres and jams the ball through the hoop despite the best efforts of his foes. Then, just as McGrady slam-dunks the ball, the troops vanish from sight. It's then that the viewer realizes the tenacious masses existed only in the athlete's head. McGrady then runs back down the court to get another pass from Hall as Adidas' “Impossible is nothing” tagline is splashed across the screen.

Beletic, who directs via bicoastal Smuggler, is quick to share kudos for “Unstoppable” with Jeff Cronenweth,



Click poster to see "Unstoppable" for adidas.

the director of photography on the spot; Brad Parker, the digital effects supervisor at Digital Domain, who supplied the necessary CG effects; Maury Loeb of PS 260, New York, who cut the spot; Ren Klyce of Mit Out Sound/M.O.S., Sausalito, Calif., who created the ad's sound design, which included roaring land vehicles and the menacing hum of approaching chopper; Geoff Edwards, the art director at TBWA/Chiat/Day, and everyone else involved in the intricate shoot.

“Unstoppable” seemed tailor-made for Beletic—who despite describing himself as a pacifist, does possess quite an impressive knowledge of military maneuvers. Beletic believes his fascination with militaristic tactics definitely caught the attention of the TBWA/Chiat/Day honchos behind the spot. “I was sketching out elaborate battle plans in my treatment and so they were aware of how much energy and attention to detail I was pouring into it,” he explains.

I WANT MY MTV

Beletic was born in Dallas and knew from fairly early on what he wanted to do with his life. “By the time I was in college I knew I wanted to direct and I knew I wanted to be at MTV,” he explains. “Practically everything I did for a few

years there was related to my getting a job at MTV.” In 1997, at 22, and having just graduated from Los Angeles' Loyola Marymount University, Beletic achieved that goal, getting a job at the network.

He describes the gig as being an invaluable experience that offered him quite a prolific training ground. “There were times [at MTV] when you might write the script yourself, pitch it to your boss, get it approved, have it receive a budget and then you'd take it down to a line producer, shoot it in five days, and boom it was on air,” he says, still in awe of the rapid turnaround time. “You were responsible for almost everything and a year and a half in that environment, right out of film school, was an amazing opportunity.”

Beletic churned out countless :30 promos for the network, and also directed his first music videos. By 1999 Beletic signed with now defunct Satellite, where he helmed more spots for MTV via Modernista!, Boston, more music videos and a particularly memorable Reebok commercial titled “Defy” via Berlin Cameron/Red Cell, New York.

The “Defy” spot featured images of people defying convention, for instance dogs are shown escaping cages, a woman photocopies her posterior and a sumo wrestler tries to leap over a pommel horse. After each of the scenes the word “defy” is shown in front of “convention,” “expectations,” “physics” and “the media.” The spot is a favorite of the director's, as is the music video for the new Fatboy Slim single “Don't Let That Man Get You Down.”

“The Fatboy Slim video just came out and hasn't really gotten any attention yet because it is only playing in Europe,” Beletic explains. “It's about a guy named Don the Racist, who dies at the end of the video. He gets killed six different ways in six different endings—including getting run over by a car, drowning in a pool with Paris Hilton and getting stabbed by a Vietnamese bookie. MTV is airing all six versions, so the idea is that depending on what time of day you're watching, you'll see Don die a different way. It's very cool.”

Beletic also earned kudos in 2004 for his directorial efforts on “Anthem,” a standout :60 for Sprint out of Publicis & Hal Riney, San Francisco. The commercial features a funky band performing a catchy musical tribute titled “Business Is Beautiful.” The song plays over scenes illustrating how integral Sprint and its products are to today's businesses and ends with the onscreen statement: “96% of the Fortune 1000 use Sprint.”

It's been a busy year for the affable director, who keeps the bulk of his “stuff” in New York City, but spends a lot of time shooting in Los Angeles. However, he managed to find time to continue working on what may be his most important project to date: A movie script. “It's complex,”



Brian Beletic and friends.

he explains of the in-the-works script. “It's entertaining, funny, sophisticated and it is very personal to me because it encompasses exactly what my interests and style are into two hours. Over the last year I've gotten to do some great work with very creative, collaborative and receptive teams. I love that, but this movie represents so much to me because it is not my interpretation of someone else's script, it is basically mine from beginning to end and that is just...awesome.”



Brendan Gibbons

Brendan Gibbons

Breakout success.

By Christine Champagne

It didn't take Brendan Gibbons long to conclude that what he really wanted to do was direct after he joined Ogilvy & Mather (O&M), New York, in the 1990s as a copywriter. In fact, he recalls walking onto the set of his first commercial shoot in '97—it was a spot for IBM directed by the late Ted Demme—and having an epiphany.

“When I stepped onto that set, I realized how much I really wanted to direct. It was magical to me,” Gibbons reflects, “it would take years for anybody else to share this belief, but I had a belief that I could really do it. It made sense to me.”

So Gibbons, a native of Summit, N.J., who received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass., began educating himself about filmmaking. His schooling came from the set of the television commercials he worked on, and his professors—so to speak—were the likes of director Joe Pytko, who helms spots via PYTKA, Venice, Calif.

“Every shoot I went on, I attached myself to the director, and I tried to develop a bit of a relationship so I could learn as much as I could,” says Gibbons, who is now with bicoastal/international Hungry Man. “I took it really seriously.”

As he learned more about the craft of filmmaking, Gibbons, who rose up the ranks at O&M to become a creative director, began tackling directing projects, and he quickly proved he had talent: In '00 while shooting spots that he had created for a New York theater company, Gibbons had his actors run some lines he had written for a Miller Lite spec spot.

His superiors at O&M as well as the client liked what he did, and Miller Lite bought the spot and ran it on television. “It gave me a jolt of confidence that the first time I ever rolled the camera as a director I was able to sell [the spot

I shot] to a national brand and have it run on national TV,” Gibbons shares. “It gave me a little bit of legitimacy in my head.”

Still, Gibbons felt that he needed to keep learning before he could launch a full-time directing career, so he stayed at O&M and simultaneously directed a variety of projects over the next few years, including a spec spot for Sprite titled “Ali/Thirst” that intercut shots of Muhammad Ali in his prime with interviews with aspiring young boxers. (While the client liked the ad, according to Gibbons, it didn't run because of budget considerations.)

As for more recent projects, last year Gibbons shot a Sprite campaign that ran on the Internet and featured the character Thirst, a hip doll with a love of Sprite. (The job was run through Oil Factory Films, Beverly Hills, Calif.)



Click on poster to see CNN.com's "E-raq."

He also co-directed two gorgeously cinematic trailers, “Gangster” and “Love Story,” with John O’Hagen, who was then with Hungry Man—he recently signed with bicoastal RSA USA—for New York’s ’04 Tribeca Film Festival.

TAKING THE PLUNGE

It was after completing the Tribeca Film

Brendan Gibbons

Festival project that Gibbons finally felt ready to embark on a full-time directing career. Subsequently, he left O&M and signed with Hungry Man in the summer of '04.

As for why he joined Hungry Man, Gibbons says, "Hungry Man is the right place for me for a couple of reasons. One, the tenor of the spots that this place has done historically is kind of in line with my sensibility as a director and as a writer. It's also a place that was founded by people who come from the same [agency] background as myself, and there is a whole tradition of guys who have done what I am doing here."

Gibbons was also eager to be surrounded by true filmmakers. "I worked with Steve Hayden [O&M vice chairman/president] for years, and I remember one time he told me, 'Make sure that you don't just concentrate on making funny things. Be a filmmaker as well,'" Gibbons says, noting, "That's another thing that the guys here at Hungry Man do. It's not just about making something funny: It's about being a filmmaker, so I put as much energy into the film as into trying to make something funny."

Once on board at Hungry Man, Gibbons

found success right out of the gate as a full-time director, helming a dryly humorous campaign for CNN.com—executive produced by Hungry Man managing director Stephen Orent—in which CNN anchors and correspondents including Anderson Cooper, Wolf Blitzer and Christiane Amanpour deliver news and information to various individuals not through the television screen but in person.

For example, one spot titled "E-raq" finds Amanpour answering a woman's questions about Iraq and becoming increasingly frustrated as the woman continually mispronounces the name of the country, calling it "Eye-raq" despite the fact that the newswoman has repeatedly informed her that it is "E-raq." The kicker has the clueless lady mangling the pronunciation of Chechnya.

Publications ranging from *The Wall Street Journal* to *SHOOT* (12/03/04, p. 7) highlighted the work, which came as a pleasant surprise to Gibbons. "I wasn't expecting to be legitimized on this kind of scale so quickly," he acknowledges.

FYI: We will soon see more CNN.com spots directed by Gibbons. He recently creative-directed and co-wrote six new spots with his collaborators

on the previous CNN.com campaign, Guy Barnett and Callum MacGregor, partners/creatives directors at agency The Brooklyn Brothers, New York.

The new spots star anchors previously featured—Anderson Cooper, Soledad O'Brien and Lou Dobbs—and new faces Aaron Brown, Bill Hemmer and Miles O'Brien.

Like the previous spots in the CNN.com campaign, the ads are humorous, although Gibbons teases, "We stretched the boundaries of the campaign a little bit. I didn't want to just continue doing the exact same thing."

"CNN understood the need to push the campaign," Gibbons adds, noting that CNN's Andy Mitchell, Scot Safon, Drea Gillogly and Sean Houston were great clients. "They wanted to make it bigger. They were like, 'This is great. What else can we do here?'"

Already snatching up plum directing assignments, it isn't surprising to hear that Gibbons is quite satisfied with how his full-time career as a director has begun. "I absolutely love what I'm doing," Gibbons says, acknowledging that he does think about what might be down the road. "Of course, every director is interested in directing different



"Weather" for CNN.com.

kinds of things. I would love to do a film, and as a writer I have never stopped writing different things. There are a couple of short films I want to shoot, and there is a longer piece I'm working on now that would be great."

However, the director stresses that his feet are firmly planted in the present. "I don't think of this as, 'I'm doing my commercial time and waiting to go out and do films,'" Gibbons says. "Where I am right now is a really good place."

Craig Gillespie

Funny business.

By Bill Dunlap

In the roundup of post-Super Bowl ad critiques this year, the general consensus was that the sleeper hits of the annual extravaganza were a pair of spots for Ameriquest Mortgage Co. created by DDB Direct, Los Angeles and directed by Craig Gillespie of bicoastal/international Morton Jankel Zander (MJZ).



Craig Gillespie

There was little buzz going in. Ameriquest was a first-time Super Bowl advertiser in 2005, and mortgage lenders in general aren't known for high-profile, comedy-

based advertising. The spots, "Mini Mart" and "Surprise Dinner," set up situations in which the actions of a key character are misconstrued badly in situations that turn comedic in the end. The advertiser's tagline: "Don't judge too quickly. We won't." In "Mini Mart," a guy on a cell phone walks into a convenience store while discussing the price of a new deck: he feels that the person on the other end is being "robbed." As he is chatting, the store's owners overhear him, and believing they are being held up, begin to attack the would-be thief—with



"Click to see Dinner" for Ameriquest.

pepper spray, a baseball bat, and a cattle prod. In "Surprise Dinner" a guy goes over his

girlfriend's apartment to cook her dinner. As he's preparing pasta sauce, her large white cat knocks the pan over, splashing tomato sauce all over. The guy, who's been chopping onions with a large knife, picks up the sauce-splattered cat—at the same time, his girlfriend walks in the door, to see her sweetie holding the now red-and-white cat, and wielding the knife.

GOOD IDEAS

Gillespie recalls that he and the agency creatives weren't overwhelmed by the prospect of doing spots for the big game. "I try to not worry about the context of where a spot is going to be playing," he explains, noting that while a venue such as the Super Bowl is high pressure, staying true to the idea of the spots was of paramount importance. "At some point you might think it should look a little more high production, but I just felt I had to stay true to what I think serves the idea best. We went hand-held and it's a little grittier looking so that we feel like we're really there and we don't telegraph that the comedy is coming."

As a former agency art director and a recognized hand with comedy, Gillespie is often drawn into highly collaborative situations, but in this case the agency had very definite ideas of how to execute the spots, Gillespie says. "They were very open, but at the same time the ideas were really fleshed out. In 'Minimart,' where the guy says, 'I hate to tell you this, but you're getting robbed,' that was all there. The question that came up was what happens once that line is said, what does the store clerk do?"

Gillespie gave them several choices. "I did that ending where he gets maced and then one where he gets maced and then clubbed, and then electrocuted. We even had a stunt guy get rigged and thrown into a rack of stuff with a harness and then the cops turn up. I wanted to make sure they had a lot of choices on how far to take it and where

Craig Gillespie

the punch lines were.”

In “Surprise Dinner” “[the agency team] had a really tight storyboard,” relates Gillespie. “I just upped it a little bit by having the pot spill all over the floor so there was lot more red sauce on the floor. They really embraced it and went with it.”

There were two other spots in the campaign, “Parking Meter” and “Mother-in-Law,” with the idea being that the two favorites would get the Super Bowl nod. “I believe they tested them,” Gillespie says, “and they ended up picking my two favorites anyway.”

While the humor in the Ameriquest spots is mostly performance-based, Gillespie also embraces physical humor. In the Altoids spot “Mother Tongue,” out of Leo Burnett USA, Chicago, an explorer in a primitive culture has nice things to say about an Altoid given him by a native, but the words translate badly and the native looses a snare that hurls the explorer upside down to tree-level heights.

“There are certain things that make me laugh,” Gillespie says. “I’m very tough on physical comedy. It has to be done without cuts, sort of trying to make the toughest critic laugh rather than going to the lowest common denominator. ‘Mother Tongue’ is a morph between an actor and a dummy on wires, and back to the actor again. There’s no cut.”

His prowess for directing physical comedy is also on display in a spot called “Fast Acting,” out of Arnold Worldwide, Boston, for Gillette’s new body spray for men, called Tag. In the ad, a guy in a store sprays himself with Tag, and attracted by scent, a woman in the next aisle attempts to pull him through the shelves, while another attempts to tackle him. More women join the pile-up; the spot’s tagline: “Introducing Tag body spray for guys. Consider yourself warned.”

A big part of Gillespie’s deft touch with comedy is his attention to casting. “I’m always trying to find actors who just let the situation

be funny rather than the actor trying to steal the moment because they’re too comedic in their reactions or the delivery of their lines,” he explains. “It takes a little bit of a leap of faith. You’ve got to be committed to the idea, that the idea in itself is really funny and let that be what stands out as opposed to having the actor steal the moment.”

FEATURE PLANS

A native of Australia, Gillespie came to the States on a full scholarship to the School of Visual Arts in New York, where he studied advertising and graphic design. After eight years on the agency side, the bulk of it at BBDO New York as an art director, Gillespie made the jump to directing 10

years ago, first with now disbanded Fahrenheit, later with the now defunct Coppos Films and, for the last four years, with MJZ.

From the beginning, he was drawn to directing, but attempts to do it from the agency side were always rebuffed. “I kept trying to do some 16mm stuff on the side, hoping to get a break, maybe to shoot one of my own commercials, but it wasn’t happening,” he recalls. “I wound up using my own money and shooting two spec spots on 35mm. I built some sets and got them done. I got signed from that.”

The Ameriquest, Altoids and Tag work will likely be Gillespie’s last commercial work for a while, as he is scheduled to begin shooting his

first feature in April. The film, *Mr. Woodcock*, to be distributed by New Line Cinema, stars Billy Bob Thornton in the title role as an overbearing high school gym teacher engaged to marry a woman played by Susan Sarandon, whose grown son, played by Seann William Scott, is appalled by the idea, as the gym teacher made life hell for a generation of students, and returns home to stop the marriage from happening.

Gillespie hopes for a career mixing movies and commercials. “I love doing commercials,” he says. “Every one is a different chance to experiment and try pushing the envelope and doing new things. As for features, I’ll see what happens there.”

John Immesoete

Embarking on a full-time directing career.

By Art Smith

John Immesoete began his career in advertising on the agency creative side of the business some 15 years ago. It wasn't until several years ago, when he began dabbling as a spot director, that he started to question where his career was headed. "The more directing jobs I did the more comfortable I got and the more I wanted to leave the agency, behind and just go out on my own," explains Immesoete, who was a group creative director at DDB Chicago, and is now a director with Backyard Productions, Venice, Calif.

Immesoete, along with Greg Popp, a group executive producer at DDB, co-directed several spots for Bud Light and other Anheuser-Busch products. Last year, the pair directed Budweiser's "Mr. Silent Killer Gas Passer" and "Mr. Giant Taco Salad Inventor," which teamed with "Mr. Way Too Much Cologne Wearer" (directed by Noam Murro of Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles), to win a series of accolades. Among the awards the ads received were: a Gold Lion at the Cannes International Advertising Festival, a pair of honors at the London International Advertising & Design Awards, a Gold Clio, and an ANDY award.

The humor-driven commercials illustrate Immesoete's keen sense of comedy. He masterfully elevates subject matter that, in the wrong

hands, could have spiraled into lowbrow material. In "Mr. Silent Gas Passer," for instance, a voiceover sets up the action by explaining: "Today we salute you Mr. Silent Killer Gas Passer. Last night you had the enchilada combo platter; this morning, the three cheese omelet with broccoli; this afternoon, you're a ticking time bomb." Just then a '80s era, Steve Perry-esque rocker reiterates the spot's title in a haunting ballad-like tone. The scenes show a man living up to his titular moniker everywhere from a crowded car and packed elevator to a business meeting and his girlfriend's sofa. His flatulence continues to offend everyone around him as the voiceover finishes: "So crack open an ice cold Bud Light, oh ninja of the nasty, and while you're at it, crack open a window." "Mr. Giant Taco Salad Inventor" salutes the inventor of the taco salad, which despite having a bit of lettuce, is of highly dubious nutritional value.

According to Immesoete, the star of "Mr. Silent Gas Passer" went all out for his art. "The guy in the commercial thought it was fun to really fart in the scenes of the crowded elevator, car, etc. instead of just *acting* like he was," he says. "The other actors just loved him." The spot added to an already impressive reel that included spots for such high-profile clients as McDonald's and Nintendo.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Buoyed by his directorial success, Immesoete vacated his post as a group creative director at DDB and ended 2004 by inking a deal with Backyard for representation as a director. "I really hadn't enjoyed my job that much for awhile until I started directing," he says candidly. "It was time to decide what I wanted to do with the rest of my career and working life. By running a creative group and directing I was really sort of leading a double life. It was time to either pursue an executive creative director position, or move into full-time writing/directing and since creating made me happier I chose to go the latter route."

Immesoete's deal with Backyard offers many opportunities for creativity, including those in branded entertainment venues and in spots that will allow him to participate in the writing process. One such project he recently worked on was a Bud Light spot titled "The Lady" that aired during the Super Bowl. "Lady" was done via DDB Chicago and Seed, a Backyard satellite company that, according to Immesoete, will act as a conduit for projects where he also serves as creative director "as often as the opportunity presents" itself going forward.

Not bad for a guy who humbly claims his ad training consisted of watching "too much TV, too many movies and a lot of commercials.

"I went to journalism school with a degree in writing and English," he continues. "I took improv training at Second City and other than that most



John Immesoete

of what I know I've learned through reading, watching and doing. I read an article on Ed Zwick once where he called directing 'the best school you'll ever be paid to attend.' He talked about how he treated every job as an opportunity to learn, how he was able to dive into a subject all the way and be paid to do it, what an incredible privilege that was. I feel the same way and that's how I intend to treat my opportunities."

And there are many opportunities currently at Immesoete's fingertips. "I'm very busy right now," he happily explains. "I'm directing commercials, I'm writing for ad agencies and for Seed, I'm working on a number of screenplays for the studios in addition to developing a script of my own, I'm trying to put together a documentary and I'm talking to a publishing company about a book idea."

And that's not all the Renaissance man has on his plate. Immesoete also managed to squeeze a sitcom development deal in between the time he exited DDB and landed at

Backyard. The proposed series is a joint venture between Immesoete and *Just Shoot Me* creator Steven Levitan based on an egotistical football player named Leon—a character who was featured in a series of ads for Budweiser that Immesoete created and co-directed with Popp. The pilot will be produced through 20th Century FOX TV and has already received a commitment from NBC.

"My ultimate goal is to be a sort of jack-of-all-trades," he shares. "Simply put, I hope I can do more things I want to do and less things I don't want to do. I admire guys like Spike Lee, Woody Allen, the Coen Brothers, Judd Apatow—great storytellers who tell very personal stories in a variety of mediums. I'd like to work more in television, film and other windows that are becoming available and I'd also love to continue working in advertising. What appeals to me most is the idea of taking the things I've learned in one area and applying them to another."

Christian Loubek

Drive on.

By Art Smith

There's nothing like a near-death experience to put things into perspective. That's what director Christian Loubek learned while shooting a spot in the new Saab campaign for Lowe, New York, via bicoastal Anonymous Content. "On one of the location scouts I asked to drive my producer Pete Vitale's sporty BMW," explains Loubek. "Minutes later I drove it right into another car. It was terrible all the way around and looked like a scene from *CHiPs*. When I came to, Pete was acting like Erik Estrada pulling people out of burning vehicles and such. Luckily, everyone was alright.

"The car accident had an immediate effect on the set," he continues. "It infused a 50mph blast of perspective right into the shoot. Suddenly, all those little prickly details seemed a little less prickly. [Art director] Simon Bowden and [copywriter] Mark Ronquillo, who were lovely to work with from the start,

would come up and begin with a rationale behind something and I'd interrupt: 'Sure, as long as no one dies, let's try it.' The incident contributed to what was already a collaborative environment and created spots that I am very proud of."

ONE OF A KIND

The launch spot in the Saab campaign is titled "Lost." It opens on successive images of people as they're coming to the realization that the assorted things they possess are not so unique. First we see a woman searching for her house in a community where all the homes are identical; then an office worker is seen wandering aimlessly through a sea of office cubicles; a woman trying on a dress realizes that several other women in the dress shop share her taste, and finally, a confused man stands at the airport luggage carousel watching as an endless array of black suitcases—all the same size and shape—parade past him. The images are accompanied by a hauntingly cheerful muzak-type melody that plays over them.

The images continue to come, with the woman still hoping to find her home and the businessman trying to locate his cube. A voiceover begins to explain: "In a world of sameness, you can still maintain your identity." Just then,

the opening chords of a very recognizable song from The Who begin to play as a man in a parking structure filled with identical black cars watches a standout vehicle, a sleek silver Saab convertible, gracefully zigzags its way out of the sea of identical autos. As the car pulls out of the man's sight, the words to that classic Who song are heard: "I'm free, I'm free."

The Saab package, which also includes "Baggage Claim" and "Dressing Room," are the perfect showcase for Loubek's directorial skill set. They feature the stunning cinematography he brings to all of his work as well as a high concept and imagery that stays with the viewer long after the screen has faded to black. "My natural tendencies are to veer towards, clean, considered and print-quality work, and I think those adjectives can be used to describe 'Lost'."

INDIE ROOTS

The affable director's story begins in Seattle, where he "was lucky enough to have friends who were involved in film." That close proximity to the industry provided the then teenaged Loubek with the opportunity to work on sets at a very early age. "I was interested in photography from as far back as I can remember," he says. "And watching over the shoulders of some very talented cinematographers was an invaluable experience for me."

Loubek's real-world education continued outside of film school, on the sets of various independent "no budget" films that afforded him the chance to serve as a cinematographer himself. "It was great," he remembers. "I got to live many places and do many things and that eventually led to my directing commercials around 2000."

By 2002, Loubek was ensconced at bicoastal HKM Productions and gaining international attention for his work as director/DP on "Turbo"—a Volkswagen



Christian Loubek

Turbo S spot out of Arnold Worldwide, Boston. The :60 made enough of a splash around the world to land Loubek in the 2002 Saatchi & Saatchi's New Directors Showcase, which is presented during the Cannes International Advertising Festival.

Today, Loubek might best be known for the car spots—including commercials for Volkswagen, Citroen and Saab—which meld metal and chrome into mesmerizing visuals. However, his reel also includes Tillamook's "Beigeland," out of agency Four Stories, Portland, Ore., a skin cancer PSA for the Association of American Dermatologists ("Beach") and a McVities Biscuits ("Crumbs"), both out of Publicis, New York, as well as a Sprint campaign out of Publicis & Hal Riney, San Francisco, among other offerings.

"I didn't set out to direct commercials, I sort of fell into it and I'm glad I did," he explains. "Viewers are smart, smarter than we sometimes give them credit for. You have to make interesting commercials

that become more interesting on multiple viewings to really get their attention and keep it. I love that challenge."

Loubek may have stumbled into the ad arena but now that he's there, he sees endless possibilities. "As technology advances, there is opportunity for increasingly sophisticated approaches to advertising," he theorizes. "One of my first directing assignments was an interactive CD-Rom that played like a video catalog for Eddie Bauer. I also worked with Digital Kitchen [Seattle and Chicago] to do the opening credits for *Six Feet Under*," he relates. "Those kinds of projects are interesting because they get you thinking in terms of how you might present something filmatically. I'd love to do more stuff in that direction in the future. Also, Anonymous Content's feature film division is blowing up right now and that offers me a great introduction to movies. The challenge now is finding the right material. That's definitely the next step."



Click poster to view "Lost".

Errol Morris

Reel life.

By Bill Dunlap

No director worth his salt wants to get pigeonholed into a certain style, and Errol Morris is no exception. The problem for Morris is that he is so well known for his feature documentaries, that it's sometimes easy to overlook his diverse and voluminous output of commercials.

Morris's credentials as a documentarian are impeccable. His most recent feature film—*The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons From the Life of Robert S. McNamara*—won the Oscar last year for best documentary. The film, and previous documentaries like his first, *Gates of Heaven* in 1978, and later efforts like *The Thin Blue Line* in '88, *A Brief History of Time* in '92 and *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control* in '97 have had some of the film industry's most prestigious awards heaped on them.

He's done pretty well in the commercial arena, too, operating out of bicoastal Moxie Pictures, which he joined at the beginning of the year after several years with bicoastal/international @radical.media. Morris left @radical.media for Moxie in part to continue working with Moxie partner/executive producer Robert Fernandez, who had previously been with @radical.media.

Among the accolades his spot work has earned in an Emmy Award for best primetime commercial for the '01 PBS spot "Photobooth"—built around an opera-loving guy with a talent for flip-card animation—out of Fallon, Minneapolis.

"In advertising, people like to imagine that you do one thing or that your work represents one skillset," Morris says. "I think of myself as a filmmaker.

For a while I was trying to avoid material based on real people [in commercials] just simply because, you know, I can do that, and I think I can actually do it as well as or better than anybody. But, is that what I want to be doing all the time? The answer is no. I would rather have the opportunity to do a whole variety of different work."

The kinds of jobs he likes to point to include the PBS work for Fallon, the "Miller High Life Man" campaign for Wieden + Kennedy (W+K) Portland, Ore., and the more recent Sharp Aquos spots that anchor the integrated "More to See" campaign out of W+K, New York. "What I do primarily in advertising is tell stories," Morris says. "I tell stories in a believable way. Sharp is visual storytelling. The PBS material is a perfect example of material that is classic storytelling with pictures. It's much more like a feature than a documentary. Sharp is exactly the same way. I enjoy it. You could even say that Miller is visual storytelling. It's across the board."

The Sharp spots—"The Key," "The Pool" and "The Tooth"—were part of an integrated campaign for the Sharp Aquos television set. The spots weave a cinematic mystery, set in a country estate, involving a beautiful woman, an older man in a swimming pool and a careless driver in a Volkswagen Karmann Ghia, and are designed to lure viewers to Sharp's Web site, moretosee.com, where users were able to read blogs written by three characters involved in a hunt for three mystery urns, as well as review product information on the Aquos LCD television. There is absolutely nothing in the Sharp spots to suggest

they were directed by a documentary filmmaker.

And the Miller spots, while using the distinctive voiceover of Doug Jeffers and offering manly vignettes with real-life insights, are clearly not cinéma vérité; Morris isn't just a director who has done some High Life spots—he done literally hundreds, all for W+K, Portland. "How many people," he asks, "can say they've worked with the same campaign and more or less the same people for seven years? I think we've shot, my guess is, well over one-hundred spots now. I've got forty or fifty on my website."



Errol Morris

He's also helmed some 60 spots for Citibank and Fallon that he characterizes as "pure visual storytelling." Morris's reel also includes the Nike spots "Myzel" and "Bernard" out of W+K, Portland, and Apple's "Ellen Feiss" and "DJ Qbert," part of the "Switchers" campaign out of TBWA/Chiat/Day, Los Angeles, all of which are straight, into-the-camera testimonials. "I would say that represents a small part of my work," Morris says of spots like those for Nike and Apple, which involve real people, and more closely resemble documentary-style efforts. "I get calls for it very often, but I rarely do it—for variety's sake, if nothing else. There are certain clients for whom

I want to do it, where I know there are going to be stylistic opportunities in what we're doing to make it an interesting job. Apple is one of them that I'm delighted to be involved with."

And last year, Morris put himself in the spotlight with a series of political testimonials for MoveOn.org from real people who had voted for President George Bush in 2000, but who were voting for John Kerry in 2004.

DOCS TO ADS

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and doing graduate work at Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley, Morris started making documentaries, but it wasn't until his third film that he started getting ad work.

"I never really thought about advertising until people approached me following the release of *The Thin Blue Line*," he says. "I wish I had known about it a lot earlier. It would have made life a little bit easier."

He didn't pursue it avidly though until 1998. "When I joined @radical.media everything changed," he says. "I went from shooting two or three campaigns per annum to doing many, many, many. I have lost count."

Interestingly, it took a while for most agencies to catch on that Morris could do spots in a straight documentary style. The awakening came with his post-9/11 campaign for United Airlines and Fallon. "I went through years and years of advertising work before people realized I could interview people," he says. "That happened almost accidentally. I was shooting a campaign for United Airlines. This was the weekend that Bush invaded Afghanistan and we lost all of our locations at O'Hare airport. We were going to be paid and sent home. I suggested, 'Look, let's bring these people,'—real people



Click poster to view "The Key" for Sharp.

that we had cast—into the studio. This is a historic moment. Without any doubt these people have strong feelings about their airline, their jobs, what's happened to the country. We should talk to them and make a campaign based on this material.' I've been doing this for years in my films, but this was the beginning of an awareness in the advertising community that I did this kind of work." That, and a short intro of interviews he did for the Academy Awards in '02, registered with Apple CEO Steve Jobs and Morris was hired for the "Switchers" campaign.

Morris's most recent work is a campaign for State Farm Insurance out of DDB Chicago. "It involves real State Farm agents, real stories and actors," Morris explains. "It's a combination of a lot of the things I do—real people, actors, visual storytelling—and I think they're very funny."

At 57, Morris plans to continue to do spot work, but the big news from him is that he is in development on some non-documentary features. "My intention is to branch out into dramas," he says, declining to elaborate much. "I have a horror movie in development that we're anxious to do."

And in truth, it's not a stretch for him. "Many of the techniques used in all of my documentary films are much, much more familiar to feature filmmaking," he says. "The reenactments in *The Thin Blue Line* are what caught people's attention. I often describe my films as having three parts, sick, sad and funny. It's not one thing to the exclusion of everything else."

Noam Murro

Third time is the charm.

By Christine Champagne

The third time was the charm for director Noam Murro of Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles. After being nominated for the best commercial director award each of the last three years by the Directors Guild of America (DGA), he won the honor on the strength of three spots: Starbucks' "Glen," which was created by Fallon, New York; "Carry" for adidas out of TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco; and eBay's "Toy Boat" for Goodby Silverstein & Partners (GS&P), San Francisco.

Asked how he felt about the DGA win, Murro reflects, "I am grateful. I think it's fantastic. You are judged by your peers, and it's the greatest compliment."

Murro is no stranger to winning awards. Since he began directing in 1994 while he was an associate creative director at the now defunct advertising agency Goldsmith Jeffrey, Murro's work has garnered Gold Lions at the Cannes International Advertising Festival, Clios, ANDYs and Addys among other prizes as well as honors at the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP) Show. In fact, Murro earned the most honors at last year's AICP Show—picking up a total of eight. He also lectured at the event.

Looking back on the numerous award-winning assignments he has tackled in recent years, Murro shares, "I'm in a fortunate position to do good work, and a lot of good work has come



Click poster to view "Toy Boat" for eBay.

my way. I'm not trying to be patronizing, but I do believe that each one of them is my baby, and I do my best for all of them. They're all dear to me in different ways."

A SPOT IS BORN

Of course, every great spot grows out of a good idea, "or at the least the seed of a good idea," Murro clarifies.

And those good ideas come from the agency creatives Murro works with, the director says, stressing, "The great things that we are able to do together start with their great work."

However, as the agency creatives who work with Murro know, he has a way of finessing even the best idea they've come up with—making it even better. Case in point: Murro helped shape the structure of a series of spots, including "Seal" for Orbitz, which was a *SHOOT* Top Spot of the Week (4/30/04, p. 10), that he directed last year out of Young & Rubicam (Y&R), Chicago. The spots found adults playing hide-and-seek with a seal, a Hawaiian fire dancer and Las Vegas showgirls to

illustrate the travel Web site's enhanced search functionality.

At the time, Y&R creative director/copywriter Ken Erke related that it was Murro's idea to open each spot with the seeker counting, "four, five, six, seven..." before calling out "Ready or not. Here I come!"

"Not everyone was going to start with the [seeker] counting, but he said that in order to know it's a very easy process [to find information on Orbitz], you have to show the beginning and the end," noted Erke. "Without showing the counting, you don't know how long ago the search started. But if you show the counting, and then the ultimate quick find, the metaphor is stronger, and he was right."

GOOD HUMOR MAN

In addition to having an innate sense of how best to structure a spot, Murro also has a knack for comedy. This ability is evident in everything from his quietly silly Orbitz spots to "Watercooler," the superbly dry promo he directed for HBO last year that depicted how the watercooler business was saved by HBO churning out so many "watercooler shows," sparking workplace discussion around



Click poster to view Adidas' "Carry."

watercoolers and the drinking of water from watercoolers.

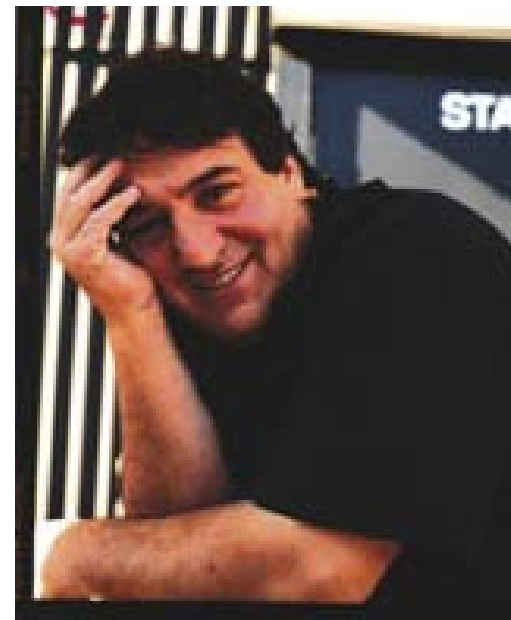
FYI: Murro pitched the idea for "Watercooler" directly to HBO and credited Jamie Barrett and Mark Weneker as creative directors on the project. Barrett and Weneker are with GS&P as associate partner/creative director/copywriter and art director, respectively, but it should be noted that "Watercooler" was a freelance project not done under the aegis of GS&P.

A promo that ran about one-and-a-half minutes, "Watercooler" certainly showed that Murro is capable of working beyond the boundaries imposed by the :30 spot. Might he be open to expanding his directorial repertoire to include the ever-increasing number of branded entertainment projects out there?

"Sure," the director says. "Listen, it's all about content. It always has been. It always will be. If the content is good, they'll find a way to broadcast it. If the content is bad, they probably won't find a way to broadcast it. It's all about the quality of what's inside of it, and that's what I am interested in."

By the way, will Murro ever direct a feature film? "Yeah, I think that's in the wings. We're almost there," he cryptically states, declining to elaborate. At one point, Murro had been attached to direct the recently released *The Ring 2*, but that deal ended when he and DreamWorks/SKG reportedly decided mutually to part ways.

Back to the previously discussed tenor of his spot work, Murro isn't all laughs, of course. He is equally renowned for his ability to mine emotion from a story as illustrated by "The Noses." Created by Fallon, Minneapolis, the spot combined Murro's comedic skills with his more sensitive side, depicting



Noam Murro

a family with bulbous—not to mention noisy—noses. While being saddled with huge noses caused difficulties for each member of the family, their noses also allowed them to make beautiful music together during family vacations at Holiday Inn.

Then there was the strictly sentimental eBay spot "Toy Boat," which tells the touching story of a boy losing a beloved toy boat to the sea only to reclaim it years later as an adult after spotting it on eBay.

More recently, Murro directed a wonderfully warm spot for DirecTV titled "Forward" out of BBDO New York that linked the evolution of television from its birth to the present with the life of an average guy, presenting the various stages of his life accompanied by the sights and sounds from classic television series and events of the respective eras.

"The work has been diverse and interesting," Murro acknowledges. "I am grateful for that, and I think I am continuing to evolve. The true satisfaction of this whole profession is the ability to keep evolving. I don't want to do the same thing twice. I am adamant about that."

Thierry Poiraud

Directing solo and with the family.

By Art Smith

It's not easy tracking down director Thierry Poiraud. However, *SHOOT* managed to do just that via email when the on-the-go Frenchman found himself with a few spare moments while shooting in "a remote part of the globe." The interview happened thanks to Claude Letessier—co-owner of Paranoid Projects (formerly Entropie), Paris, and Paranoid Projects: Tool. The former entity represents Poiraud and his brother/frequent co-director Didier in Europe, while the latter company handles them in the U.S.

The Poiraud brothers have been making noise both here and abroad for years but recently, thanks to his solo work on some high-profile spots for Hewlett-Packard ("Into the Printer" for Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco), DirecTV ("Anticipation" and "Kite" for BBDO New York) and Pepsi ("Maze" via BBDO)—Thierry Poiraud got a bit of the spotlight all to himself.

Hewlett-Packard's "Into the Printer" is an effects-driven ride through the process by which a printer creates photographic images. The commercial focuses on a neighborhood copy shop where individuals come and go and conduct business. The twist: The action is unfurled in a left-to-right camera motion that mimics the way a color printer operates. The camera then delves inside an H-P inkjet printer to provide a glimpse of the 36,000 drops of color that move through nozzles we're told are a third of the size of a human hair per second. The spot ends on the H-P logo and the tagline, "Invent."

DirecTV's "Anticipation" serves up similarly stunning visuals, with televisions in various locales—from living rooms and bars to gyms and electronic stores—seen independently repositioning themselves towards windows or the outdoors. Images of the eager TVs keep coming as a voiceover explains the pilgrimages: we learn that DirecTV will soon deploy a satellite that will deliver more than 1,500 high definition stations to homes across the country (hence the TVs' zeal to face skyward). The intriguing ad ends with the question, "Your TV is ready, are you?"

Pepsi's "Maze" features a guy going through a maze, coming upon a slice of pizza, which he eats, and a Pepsi, which he drinks. In a bit of role reversal, it turns out that the guy's timing and response is being studied by life-size mice, who after putting him through the maze take the



Thierry Poiraud

Pepsi drinker and plop him into a habitat with other test subjects—including a guy running on a hamster wheel.

Each of the spots possess the kind of childlike awe and Tim Burton-esque style of storytelling that Poiraud utilizes so masterfully. His inspiration, he says, is derived from a combination of his dreams and the surreal creature-type movies Hollywood churned out in the 1950s. Thierry describes himself, and his brother Didier, as being a couple of "big children" at heart and believes that shared sensibility is at the heart of their successful directorial partnership. "Since day one, we've worked as this sort of polymorphous entity," Thierry explains jokingly of his frequent collaborations with Didier. "It might seem complicated to some, but it is simple: Neither of us is solely responsible for any specific aspects of a project. We just bounce ideas and visuals off one another and get our answers in each other's eyes. It is a very honest and organic process. That's the way we've worked since day one."

The siblings' close working relationship has also allowed both to venture out on their own from time to time. "Our partnership is built on something more solid and positive than competitiveness or sibling rivalry," says Thierry, who adds that he and Didier always confer with one another before embarking on solo projects.

FRENCH CONNECTION

Thierry's story begins in Nantes, Bretagne, France, where he and Didier found themselves taken with offbeat, over-the-top movies. The two went on to study animation and film at the Beaux-Arts School in Paris and later teamed to helm short films (*The Wild Loafer* among them). By '95, the Poirauds' work caught the eye of Letessier, who was intrigued by the way the brothers "combined dark humor with live action, animation and



Click poster to view Pepsi's "Maze."

visual effects" to tell their stories. He suspected the duo would shine in the commercial realm—a suspicion that proved correct. Since then, the brothers have brought their unique talents to spots and campaigns for clients such as Hollywood Gum, Sony PlayStation, Orangina and Canon Airbus, among others, via Entropie (now Paranoid Projects), Paris. Paranoid Projects: Tool is a satellite of bicoastal Tool of North America. Per a reciprocal representation deal, Paranoid Projects directors are repped stateside via Paranoid Projects: Tool, while the Tool of North America directors are repped in France by Paranoid Projects. In 2001 the Poirauds made their U.S. debut with "Twister," for MasterCard. The ambitious, live-action/visual spot teamed Thierry and Didier with McCann Erickson, New York, and marked the first time the directing team had worked on a project specifically for the U.S. market. The vivid :30 homage to *The Wizard of Oz* featured a destructive tornado hurdling towards a small house. It exemplifies the kind of surrealist splendor evident in much of their work, which according to Thierry, wouldn't

be possible without the help of frequent collaborators at visual effects house BUF Compagnie, Paris. "BUF has been instrumental in allowing me to really push the limits and explore new visual territories," explains Thierry. "DirecTV, for instance, was a shoot that really benefited from BUF's involvement. Their CGI work was an integral part of that project."

Another of Thierry's recent projects (this one a joint venture with Didier) is the French feature film *Atomik Circus - Le retour de James Bataille*. **It also relies heavily on effects, and brings** starfish-like creatures (capable of decapitating drunk partygoers) and face-sucking aliens to life.

In addition to the movie, Thierry recently completed an Impulse spot for Bartle Bogle Hegarty, London. He is currently shooting a Peugeot 206 spot via BETC Euro RSCG, Paris. Didier, meanwhile, just wrapped two spots for Canal+ out of BETC Euro RSCG, Paris. The siblings are scheduled to team up yet again on what is described as "a video and light installation" that will be featured in the streets of Paris in May.

Tarsem

Style and substance.

By Bill Dunlap

Tarsem is back. Well actually, he was never really very far out of the mix. But with the Nike spot “Masks” for Wieden + Kennedy (W+K), Portland, Ore., the director helmed his first big American spot in quite awhile.

Tarsem, who directs via bicoastal/international @radical.media, acknowledges that his work has not been seen much on U.S. television lately, but he attributes it to jobs in other parts of the world, work on a long planned movie project and the desire to stay close to a



Tarsem

European girlfriend.

“When you work as globally as I do,” he says, “it looks sometimes like you disappear and then you come back. Sometimes the Europeans think I’ve gone on a hiatus because I’ve been doing back-to-back jobs in America. Right now, I just thought suddenly, let’s catch up on some American stuff.”

W+K wanted Tarsem to participate from the earliest point in “Masks,” which is important for him. The agency planned the spot as a visual :60, a length he prefers. In the spot, promoting Nike Pro Apparel, a handful of American athletes—New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera, Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, Chicago Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher, Minnesota Twins center fielder Torii Hunter, and St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Albert Pujols—get on their game faces in the form of primordial masks. The spot’s tagline: “For warriors.” “The [creatives] came up with this idea that when you go into a battle it’s all about intimidating the other person,” explains Tarsem. “It’s your little war dance. How you see yourself is one thing, but how your opponent sees you when you’ve got adrenaline pumping out of your ears is a different character altogether. The idea was a play on that.”

GAME FACE

After the W+K creatives settled on the mask concept and five athletes from professional baseball and football for the spots, Tarsem asked them to describe each athlete’s strengths. “I told them to write down five words for each character and we will design the masks around them,” he relates. “For the pitcher from New



Click to view “Surf” for Pepsi.

York”—reliever Mariano Rivera—“he’s a closer, you can’t see where he’s going to sting you from. It’s like a scorpion. And then I got Eiko Ishioka, who is a personal friend, to design them.” (Ishioka is an art director and designer who won an Oscar for costume design for *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* and worked on Tarsem’s ’00 feature *The Cell*.)

Because shooting fell around the Christmas and New Year holidays, the production came to the athletes, rather than doing the shoot in one location. “We came up with something real simple, tunnel vision, the corridor you enter when you enter an arena,” Tarsem says. “You’re standing there and then you are given a ball and what would happen? What gets your adrenaline going? Once that happened, a particular character would come out of it.”

Because he was shooting in different locations to accommodate the athletes’ schedules, Tarsem kept the look uncomplicated. “We had to travel to them, so I knew what we were making had to stylistically look very simple,” he relates. “So I went with one set of lighting and we flew all over the country.”

One thing Tarsem was very clear on was that the masks would not be computer generated. “It had to feel very textural,” he says. “For each person, we designed each piece, and in each case we played around a little bit and then put it on the guy.”

Tarsem notes that while he works with CG, it can at times, be a frustrating process. “I love CG when it’s done

correctly,” he says. “But it’s so rarely ever done correctly that I can spot it from a mile, and it breaks all the magic for me. When somebody like [David] Fincher does it, it’s great. It just looks brilliant. With most people, the schedules are so tight, you end up with shit.”

Tarsem likes to do as much as possible in camera, but he is no stranger to effects. He is quick to point to a couple of Pepsi spots, “Surf” and “Carlos,” he recently directed for Almap BBDO, São Paulo.

The spots put international soccer stars on a beach, where they combine incredible ball handling with surfing, flying off big waves as they make great shots and passes. “Most of the guys didn’t know how to swim,” Tarsem says. “None of them can surf. I got each guy for three hours on a runway near Madrid. I had to figure out how to make it happen. I had to make it look like we got these guys on a great island and shot it easily. That was the take on it. Anybody who looks at that, I will bet you money, they won’t look at it and say ‘CG.’”

Although the players are well known in the territories where the ad is playing—Brazil and globally—Tarsem’s goal was to have viewers who don’t know the stars look at it and say, “‘OK, a bunch of guys on a beach.’”

“Then you know you’ve succeeded,” he continues. “The surfing spots, I said, should look like to anybody who doesn’t know them, a bunch of guys surfing and keeping the ball up, and if they do know these guys, it would be, ‘I didn’t know these guys could surf,’ so when you go for a brief like that it’s very difficult because CGI cannot save you if it looks wrong. I challenge anybody to look at those ads and tell me what is CGI and what’s not.”

The director has been busy with Pepsi of late: he recently helmed a package of ads, featuring Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez and David Beckham. The ads created by CLM/BBDO Paris use music and soccer to promote the soft drink. He also directed an ad meant for the Super Bowl—“Charity,” for Lincoln’s Mark



Click to view Nike’s “Masks.”

LT luxury pick-up truck, out of Young & Rubicam Detroit, Dearborn, Mich.—that was pulled shortly before the game. The ad shows a priest lusting after a the truck; after complaints, the carmaker opted to not air “Charity.”

VIDEO DAYS

Tarsem, a native of India—his surname is Singh—came to America to study film, ending up at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, Calif. “I wanted to do documentaries first, but I had the worst documentary teacher in the world and I ended up in music videos,” he explains. “I just loved doing music videos first, then I got a little bored with them and I moved to commercials, and just ... loved them.”

These days, Tarsem is finishing up his film project, which he is not describing in much detail. “It’s my film, my personal film,” he says. “It will probably be finished by the end of the year. I financed everything and made it myself,” he relates. “It’s a small epic, in a very personal style, but the story is not personal. Everything I’ve wanted to do is in it. I’ve had it for twenty-three years. Ten years ago I wrote it. I’m directing it, producing it, but I’m definitely not in it. I’m not interested in being on that side of the camera.”

And that’s the way Tarsem envisions working for the foreseeable future: Commercials with an occasional movie. “I’m loving it,” he exclaims. “I’d pay them to do exactly what I do, and fortunately they pay me.”

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PRODUCTION SERVICES

street talk

□ As SHOOT went to press, Tewksbury, Mass.-headquartered **Avid Technology** (NASDAQ: AVID) entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Mountain View, Calif.-based **Pinnacle Systems** (NASDAQ: PCLE). The deal, a combination of cash and stock, is valued at \$462 million and is expected to close in the second or third quarter of this year. Following the closing, the parties expect that Pinnacle's professional products will enhance Avid's broadcast production pipeline. In addition, Pinnacle's consumer video business will form the basis for a new consumer video division at Avid, providing the company with an immediate avenue into that segment. "By acquiring Pinnacle's consumer video business, Avid will be able to tap into the next generation of video editors while they are still learning their craft," Avid president and CEO David Krall said in a released statement. "This creates a very large potential customer base for Avid's future. At the same time, we believe that Pinnacle's professional broadcast offerings will fit seamlessly with Avid's business, extending our end-to-end broadcast solutions with servers and on-air graphics products." For editing professionals, one product to watch may be Pinnacle's Cinewave HD, which provides HD capabilities to Avid's rival, Apple's Final Cut Pro....**Director Noah Marshall** of Auckland, N.Z.-based **The Sweet Shop**, is exclusively represented in the U.S. for commercials by **Notorious 24:7**, Santa Monica. In a "Street Talk" item last week about Czar Films (with offices in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels and New York) entering into a cross representation deal with The Sweet Shop, Marshall was mentioned as being on the latter company's roster. According to Notorious 24:7, Marshall is not part of that Czar/Sweet Shop arrangement in the U.S. territory. At press time, the director was prepping for a campaign via Notorious 24:7....**Director Harald Zwart** has come aboard bicoastal **Villains**. He has already wrapped a Villains-produced Scope commercial for Saatchi & Saatchi, New York....

rep report

□ **Stu Sternbach** has been named head of national sales for **Breathe Editing**, New York. He continues to maintain New York-based independent rep firm **Pangea**, which has just signed **Engine Pictures** in D.C. for East Coast representation....**Marshall Grupp Sound Design and Music**, New York, has secured **Maureen Butler** of **Mo Butler & Associates**, Chicago, to handle the Midwest....**Global Production Network (GPN)**, a Los Angeles-based firm that handles production service companies from around the world, has added to that roster by signing **Axis Media-Germany**, for exclusive North American representation....**DP David Wagreich** is now available exclusively through **Lyons Sheldon Prosnit Agency**, Los Angeles....**DP Fredrik Callingard** has signed with **Innovative Artists**, Santa Monica, for representation in spots, music videos and features....**Production designer John Hammer** is now exclusively repped for commercials, music videos and features through **Radiant Artists**, Los Angeles....

bulletinboard

- March 30-April 2/Wilmington, N.C.: **11th Annual Cucalorus Film Festival**. www.cucalorus.org....
- March 31-April 3/Madison, Wis.: **7th Annual Wisconsin Film Festival**. www.wifilmfest.org....
- March 31-April 3/Vail, Colo.: **2005 Vail Film Festival**. www.vailfilmfestival.org....
- March 31-April 4/Ashland, Ore.: **Ashland Independent Film Festival** at the Varsity Theatre. (541) 488-3823; fax: (541) 488-7782; info@ashlandfilm.org; www.ashlandfilm.org....
- April 1-10/Chicago: **2005 Chicago International Documentary Festival**. www.chicagodoc-festival.org....
- April 4/Los Angeles: **Association of Music Producers (AMP) call for entries deadline for the 2005 AMP Awards for Excellence in TV Commercial Mixing**. Liz Myers, (310) 546-3505; www.ampnow.com....