



8 Hot Locations Series

A number of state and foreign film commissions hit Hollywood last week, showcasing their wares at AFM and the AFI Fest.



15 HPA Award Reflections

Winners and nominees discuss the creative challenges posed by—and the lessons learned from—their HPA-recognized work.

Visual Effects/Animation & Postproduction Series
Our quarterly VFX/Animation Chart, top entry backstory and industry news. See page 12



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Then, Now & Looking Ahead

Perspectives From RPA's Larry Postaer, SapientNitro's Hilding Anderson

By Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—Borrowing the “Then, Now & Looking Ahead” moniker from our series of articles last year leading up to SHOOT’s 50th Anniversary, we now commemorate the beginning of the industry’s next 50 with observations from an agency veteran, Larry Postaer, whose ad industry tenure just turned 50—and whose shop, RPA, turned 25—and a look to the future from Hilding Anderson, SapientNitro’s sr. manager of research & insight, who edited a recently released report, “Insights 2012,” which examines consumer marketing trends and digital technologies.

For Larry Postaer, it’s been a time to reflect on the business—prompted in part by his two aforementioned anniversaries, and brought home by the release of his book, “Pickett, Plunkett and Puckett. My 50 Years in Advertising.” Pickett, Plunkett and Puckett were his first “clients” as part of his senior year ad sales curriculum at the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism—the three “P’s” were owners of a lumberyard, a Dairy Queen and a men’s clothing store, respectively.

After graduating, Postaer moved into retail, and ended up writing for the Sears catalog. He later landed his first agency job, serving as a copywriter and then creative director at Stern, Walters and Simmons, Chicago. He enjoyed a lengthy tenure there and his eye for young, smart talent caught the eye of Keith Reinhard at the then Needham Harper & Steers, Chicago, who hired some of those promising ad artisans. So why

Continued on page 4



The Short and Feature-Length Road Leading To Oscar

By Robert Goldrich

Editor’s note: This is the second installment of SHOOT’s continuing “The Road To Oscar” series. This week, we meet the filmmaking talent behind a much anticipated feature film and a short which is one of eight to make the Academy Award Short Subject shortlist.

LOS ANGELES—Janusz Kaminski is no stranger to the Oscars, winning two for Best Cinematog-

raphy (*Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler’s List*) and having been nominated four times (the other two noms being for *Amistad* and *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*).

Three of those Motion Picture Academy-recognized films were directed by Steven Spielberg. Kaminski has shot all of Spielberg’s features since 1993 starting with *Schindler’s List*. At press time, Kaminski was on location filming Spielberg’s *Lincoln*, which explores the life of President Abraham

Lincoln and his battle with Congress to pass the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.

Prior to *Lincoln*, Kaminski lensed the Spielberg-directed *War Horse*, which won’t be released until December 25 yet is already generating considerable Oscar buzz based on such elements as Spielberg’s involvement and the movie being based on a beloved Michael Morpurgo novel which has already spawned an international hit play currently

Continued on page 6

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Top row, left to right: Curtis Clark, ASC; Richard Crudo, ASC; Daryn Okada, ASC; Dennis Dillon, DP; Francis Kenny, ASC

Bottom row, left to right: Cassie Brooksbank, Senior, USC School of Cinematic Arts; Cameron Combe, Student Filmmaker, Cal State Long Beach; Brian Smith, Award-winning Photographer; Brooke Mailhot, Cinematographer

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A Better Blossom

This week, the second installment of our ongoing “The Road to Oscar” series appears, and these first two previews share an inspiring common ground that’s a departure from the red carpet, glitz and glamour norm typically associated with the Academy Awards. Consider the feedback from directors Chris Weitz in last month’s (10/21) SHOOT feature and Lucy Walker in this issue—both

their projects contain a greater sense of purpose, sharing human stories that offer insights into related issues.

Weitz directed *A Better Life*, which has generated Oscar buzz for lead actor Demian Bichir who portrays undocumented immigrant and hard working single dad Carlos Galindo. The movie centers on Galindo and his efforts to make a better life for himself and his teenage son. It’s also a story about a father desperately trying to reconnect with his son in order to keep

him from getting pulled into the local gang life.

Although *A Better Life* had a limited life in release, it’s taken on other lives, transitioning Weitz from the filmmaking phase to the advocacy phase. “People in the political community started seeing this film,” he said, “and became interested—the National

“For me, there’s so much more at stake in this film due to what it’s about. It means a great deal to me that Demian be nominated.”

Council of La Raza got interested, as did the National Hispanic Caucus. We had a screening at the congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s annual meeting. The film connected with those advocating for immigration reform...It’s not a political film per se. But people from think tanks have told me, ‘You can pause this film at about 20 points—one relates to the Secure Communities Act, another to The Dream Act, another to the position of immigrant workers in our society.’

“The story, though, is a human one,” continued Weitz. “No one comes out and states a political position. The characters are just doing their jobs. There’s no villain per se. The heroism is often quite quiet.”

Weitz related that in its own way, *A Better Life* “addresses what is going to be the biggest social issue of our time

move onto a short film, *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*, directed by Walker, and which is one of eight entries to make the Oscar Documentary Short Subject shortlist.

The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom plays like a poem showing how the people of Japan are coping with the devastating earthquake which hit

the country on March 11, resulting in a horrific tsunami and nuclear radiation crisis. For many, the inspiration to persevere and come out the other side hopeful and renewed comes from the ancient Japanese cherry blossom which grows in the spring, signaling a new beginning.

Though the disaster in Japan was recent, Walker observed, “It’s already being forgotten. My hope is that the documentary will keep what happened front and center.”

POV



Technological advances in communication and sharing information—cloud computing, mobile platforms, custom software, wireless networks—have brought about fundamental changes to the way we do business in the creative industry. As software engineers, we thrive on this type of innovation. We’re constantly seeking and building new technology solutions to help us enhance and improve the way we work, and the way our clients work.

Unfortunately, new technology is often perceived as replacing an existing invention and forcing the user to take up something unfamiliar. Acquiring new skills, changing behaviors and regaining a comfort with technology can feel threatening for those used to an established way of doing things, even if that way is inferior. So how do you encourage and ease technology adoption for those reluctant to change?

Within the creative industry, technology has made a telling impact on the entire business process, from sales to production to post. In fact, the software tools used for managing workflow and sharing digital assets have evolved considerably, driven by the growing demand from industry leaders for more

Embracing Change

features, more functionality, more customization and more integration.

New technology has fostered the design and development of software solutions that give production companies, agencies, music houses and other service providers 360 oversight to their sales activities, reel library, presentations, project workflow, web content and analytics. The ones in the creative industry using these platforms see them as mission-critical, redefining the way they do business.

Many users in the creative industry are hindered by what they view as the unrecoverable costs of time and money when learning new technology. But they are much more likely to accept and participate in technology change if they understand how it can positively impact their jobs.

Rich analytics built into the latest media management tools gather critical data on reels—when and if they were opened, viewed, forwarded, how many times, and whether a spot was watched partially or in its entirety. For sales reps, it’s valuable info about client tastes and sensibilities and helps them fine-tune their pitches and adjust sales strategies.

Additionally, users like producers, directors and designers can build comprehensive online presentations containing video, music, or document

files, to boost collaboration with clients and give them opportunities to comment and approve projects on-the-go.

Because there are so many parties involved in creative projects, and therefore many important users, company leaders must convey a sense of urgency to get everyone to engage and adopt new technology. This means clearly explaining why change is needed, for example, to save time, to increase productivity, to decrease

costs, to improve accountability.

Competition is fierce in the creative industry. Technology has significantly affected the big picture and makes change mandatory for organizations to maintain a competitive edge. The future prosperity of companies in the creative field will rely on tech-savvy professionals who embrace and leverage technology to their advantage.

—Brian Atton and Jay Brooks are founders/owners of Simian.

Flash Back

November 17, 2006 The Mill, the London and NY-based commercial VFX/post business that also encompasses BEAM.TV, plans to open a facility in Santa Monica to service ad clients....Nice Shoes has brought three of its longtime artisans—colorists Chris Ryan and Lez Rudge and VFX artist Rich Schreck—into its company ownership circle....Feature filmmaker Rob Cohen has joined the spot roster of Anonymous Content....Venice, Calif.-based production house Roses Are Blue is changing its name to Caviar Los Angeles to correspond with that of its parent company, Caviar Belgium....

November 16, 2001 Bedford Falls, part of the Stoney Road family of commercial houses headed by Michael Romersa, has entered into relationships with four feature filmmakers for spot representation: James Ivory, Norman Jewison, David Zucker and Nigel Cole....Believe Media has signed director/DP Carolyn Chen.... Director Alex Turner has joined Link Entertainment for commercial representation. He comes over from Zero 2 Sixty Productions....

Postaer, Anderson Provide Context For Industry's Evolution

Continued from page 1

not hire the guy who had the vision to give those ad folks their first career breaks? In line with that thinking, Reinhard brought Postaer aboard to run what amounted to half of Needham's creative department. Five years later, Postaer came West to join Needham's L.A. office. Five years after that, Needham, Doyle Dane Bernbach and BBDO formed Omnicom with a resulting conflict that meant Needham had to resign the Honda automobile business. So in Oct. 1986, Postaer and Gerry Rubin struck out on their own, launching Rubin Postaer & Associates (now known as RPA) with Honda as its flagship account.

A lot has changed in Postaer's 50 years in the ad biz. He noted that the computer has impacted advertising perhaps more than any other industry, "with the exception of NASA and space exploration." Some of that impact has been positive—for one, it's meant that ad creatives need to be smarter, with their expertise having to span more than TV, radio and print, extending into the brave new online and social media world, and integrating communication across those platforms.

And that expertise must also run a vast production gamut. On one hand, there are the sophisticated high-end technologies reflected in the likes of 3D and HD. On the other, there are stories for which production quality is not quite as essential, with content filling laptop and smartphone screens.

Still, at a time when expertise must be more far reaching than ever, creatives, observed Postaer, can find themselves confined on other fronts. "In the old days, you didn't start a job until someone gave you a job ticket or job number," he recalled. "Now, you can't do anything without a strategy statement. Strategy statements are fine, they can sharpen creative focus. Clients have agreed to a certain focus and the storyboard should address that. But the creative process can sometimes be negatively affected. There's less room for good old intuition, which has been reduced to playing second fiddle."

Sans intuition, classic RPA spots like "Stealth" for the Honda CRXsi and "Art Gallery" for the Accord wouldn't have been made, said Postaer. For example, the inspiration for the former—comparing the sexiest, zippiest and most youthful Honda car, the CRXsi, to the not yet unveiled U.S. military's stealth bomber—came while driving on a Los Angeles freeway. An excerpt from Postaer's book reads: "Rarely, though, does a big idea shine through your windshield as you drive up the 405 in the company of your two creative stars.



Larry Postaer

"[Bob] Coburn saw it first. 'Check out that license plate,' he drawled.

"In front of us was a CRX, black, maybe two years old. The clever owner's vanity plate read 'STLTH.' It might've read 'BINGO,' so quickly did Bob and Gary [Yoshida] begin to free associate."

Today at many agencies, the intuition-based idea of unveiling a realistic looking stealth bomber—before anyone knew what it would look like—and putting a car ahead of it wouldn't have flown, said Postaer. "But back then, we just went with it."

And as it turned out, the stealth bomber in the commercial wound up looking amazingly like the real aircraft when it was rolled out months later, a resemblance reported on during the Nov. 22, 1988 edition of ABC's *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*.

Along with intuition, human interaction can at times be a casualty of contemporary "new media"/staying-ahead-of-the-curve practices. Postaer commented on a *Los Angeles Times* story about the launch of the McDonald's Channel, a digital network with original content targeting the restaurant chain's dine-in customers. Included in the programming mix will be fare from reality TV maven Mark Burnett and his digital production company Vimby.

The initiative represents a 180-degree turn from what Postaer remembers during his years working on the McDonald's account at Needham, Harper & Steers.

"I think Keith Reinhard came up with the creative mantra 'Food, Folks and Fun' for McDonald's," related Postaer. "It's what guided us in many respects. That was the foundation for everything. Now, you stick television sets in McDonald's and that nice little moment of a conversation between dad and son is lost. We marketed McDonald's as a place for those moments—where families have a meal, talk, laugh—not where you're watching a TV monitor."

Postaer regards Reinhard, now chairman emeritus of DDB Worldwide, as a mentor.

"Earlier in my career, I had a boss who was highly animated and opinionated," recalled Postaer. "Then I

started to work with Keith—an extremely patient man, unflappable, always able to reason with clients without arguing. I had been a bit argumentative when I was younger. Under his wing, I learned to cool it and be more open. Keith is an extremely honest person, a forthright guy who would stand between you and the bullets. He protected his creative people so they could do their best work. Gerry [Rubin] and I have always tried to do that [at RPA]."

On the latter score, Postaer who is co-chairman and co-founder of RPA, said, "Yes, the client matters. But if we feel something's right, we will go to the mat for it in a civil, friendly way. Also, over the years, we turned down a number of clients we didn't feel either had a product we could be proud of or who were very difficult. Gerry always says, 'If I can't take the product home to my wife, there's something wrong.' We took a pass on certain video game companies whose blood and guts games were a turnoff. We shied away from self-styled geniuses—namely a number of movie company clients. You have to get 'bad people' to take care of bad clients and we didn't want any part of that. We want good, dedicated people—and a creative culture that supports and protects them."

Future speak

Sapient Nitro's "Insights 2012" is the inaugural edition of what is planned to be an annual report from SapientNitro, launched at the behest of the agency's clients who want a better handle on relevant marketplace trends and developments—and where they may lead in terms of business opportunities in the years ahead. SapientNitro is well positioned to pinpoint such trends and opportunities in that it creates user experiences for many leading brands (Coke, Unilever, et al) and has multinational reach with 20 offices worldwide. Hilding Anderson edited this first edition and shared some highlights with *SHOOT*.

Anderson cited a blending and blurring of the digital and physical worlds, a prime example of that coming from Tesco, a grocery store chain in South Korea, which provided consumers with a mobile app enabling them to shop at virtual stores installed in subways. Tesco placed giant posters on a series of subway stops during rush hour—floor-to-ceiling depictions of actual store aisles replete with milk, meat, produce and assorted other products you'd expect to find in a supermarket. Each product included a QR code, allowing subway customers to shop via their smartphones while they're waiting for the next train. The groceries would then be delivered



Hilding Anderson

within two hours to the smartphone user's home. This initiative sprung out of research revealing customers' desire to avoid rush hour in the supermarket. As a result of its virtual stores, Tesco increased its online sales by 130 percent, becoming the country's number one online grocery store.

"That's what the world will start to look like as smart phones are in the hands of more people," related Anderson. According to data cited in "Insights 2012," people now spend on average 32 minutes a day using mobile Internet services, and more than 15 billion apps have been downloaded from the iTunes App Store alone. Customers are consuming these mobile experiences on both phones and tablets, at home, at work and on the move, and are looking for experiences that are fun, useful, usable and/or convenient. Customers are also becoming increasingly comfortable transacting on mobile devices. But even when that's not the case, consumers are using mobile to research products both at home and in -store—laying the groundwork for purchases that are transacted via mobile or more traditional means.

The SapientNitro report, though, acknowledges drawbacks: 90 percent of apps are deleted after 30 days, and 38 percent of people are not satisfied with their favorite brand's app. The mobile web doesn't fare much better; 25 percent of people would not revisit a retailer's mobile site after a bad experience, and 75 percent of the U.K.'s top retailers do not have mobile-optimized versions of their website even though people spend three-and-a-half times longer and look at three-and-a-half times as many pages on optimized sites, compared with non-optimized.

Major movement is also afoot in transmedia storytelling, according to "Insights 2012." "Brands increasingly are exploring from a multi-channel perspective a conversation with the customer," related Anderson. "A story must go beyond one channel and arc through different platforms. We're trying to connect the dots across those channels for our clients. Companies are increasingly going to be creating engaging stories that span these different channels."

The SapientNitro report read, "Brands will succeed when they understand the proper media mix, allow stories to run free, take their own shape, empower liquid content, and understand that their brand experience is the sum of all the little moments—and they need to make each one of them count."

"Insights 2012" also contained observations and assessments for various parts of the world. In North America, for example—as written by Justin Barkhuizen and Rob Murray, strategists at SapientNitro NYC—the key opportunities for marketers in the next year to two years are: "Marketers will have an e-identity crisis; smart marketers will find a successful solution. They will be challenged by the everyday barrage of content, options and opinions their consumers face. They will understand that iPads and smartphones consume more data than PCs. And that data is ingested in large part through apps.

"Smart marketers will also understand application—that content is being chunked into packets of digestible experiences. And they will adopt an '86/4,' not '24/7' mentality; they will realize they are no longer fighting for dayparts or a share of 24 hours, but for the 86,400 seconds in a day."

As for the most important social platforms in North America and why, Barkhuizen and Murray identified:

- Facebook. Its hush-hush music platform, Instagram-esque photo filters, and video chat innovations show that the leader is aware (unlike MySpace) that it needs to evolve to stay on top.
- Twitter. They are the de facto live search provider, and continue to make the proposition make sense for brands with their "sponsored" suite of products.
- YouTube. The world's number two search engine is simply a synonym for online video, and is a continually leading innovation in the display world. Their latest suggestion? Maybe they're the best place to test new shows before sinking millions of dollars into production and network expenses.
- Foursquare. The race to own check-ins is over. Foursquare won—hence the demise of Facebook Place. Innovations include their masterstroke American Express deal, opening up monetization opportunities and silencing the cynics.
- And Google+. This platform cleverly exposed a chink in Facebook. It has a bunch of features, and is integrating them into their properties pretty well. There's a lot riding on this—including becoming the number one web destination again.

Short Takes

“UNWATCHABLE”: A MUST-WATCH SHORT

The directing duo DarkFibre—who recently joined Pictures In A Row for representation in the U.S. market (*SHOOTonline*, 9/27) while continuing to be repped in the U.K. by Blackjack Films—has rolled out an online film called *Unwatchable* as part of a controversial campaign in conjunction with UK’s Save the Congo.

Approximately five minutes long, the short is an allusion to the atrocities being committed in the Congo every day over “blood minerals.” The film aims to highlight the link between these minerals imported from the Congo used in electronics, in particular mobile phones, with the use of rape and murder as weapons of war in the country. Shockingly honest and open about the terrible crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by armed gangs (which includes the torture and murder of more than 5.5 million men, women and children since 1998), the film is hoping to alert people to the number of Congolese raped and murdered every day.

Unwatchable graphically portrays the true story of a Congolese woman, Masika, who with her family is brutalized at the hands of armed militia. She and her daughters are gang-raped, while her husband is savagely mutilated and murdered. There is, however, a twist in the course of the plot, as the powerful re-enactment switches the setting from Central Africa to an idyllic rural setting in England. It forces viewers to consider how they would react if this violence were occurring in their backyard. The film has generated controversy and media coverage since its debut, and can be seen at www.unwatchable.cc.

Dark Fibre consists of Ishbel Whitaker and Marc Hawker who earlier served as creative directors at BBH London....



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FAVORABLE JURY VERDICT FOR DOCU SHORT

The Thing That Happened, a documentary short directed and produced by director Andrew Walton, won the Grand Jury Prize for best documentary short at the United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) in Palo Alto, Calif last month and had its N.Y. premiere at New York’s Documentary Festival in early November.

The 20-minute documentary profiles the Hope North Secondary and Vocational School in northern Uganda. Founded by Okello Sam, a victim of rebel attacks, the school is a refuge for children caught in the crossfire of Uganda’s civil war – those who were orphaned, forced to be child soldiers, or left in abject poverty. The film focuses on the many challenges facing Hope North’s teachers as they try to help the children build a positive future.

Walton, a commercial director repped by Identity, produced *The Thing That Happened* independently with the help of private donors and fiscal sponsorship from non-profit Arts Engine. The director raised \$10,000 to cover travel costs for himself and DP Jeff Stonehouse to spend three weeks filming at the school in Uganda, and collaborated with others who donated time and resources including The Whitehouse, Identity, Gramercy Post, Adam Horowitz of the Beastie Boys, and musician Michael Rohatyn....



Tom Aberg

for 22 years. His credits include spots for MasterCard, the Dallas International Film Festival, Publix, Neiman Marcus, and the Texas Lottery....Dallas-based Post Asylum has hired Jessica Smith as editor. Smith brings more than eight years of creative editorial experience to Post Asylum. She most recently served as an editor for 3008 in Dallas and prior to that was employed with Fast Cuts....

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Editor Tom Aberg has joined Fast Cuts, Dallas. Aberg is known for having maintained his own shop, Tom’s Easy Way,

Kaminski, Walker On “Road To Oscar”

Continued from page 1 on Broadway.

The story centers on the remarkable friendship between a horse named Joey and a teenage boy, Albert, who tames and trains the horse. They are forcefully separated due to World War I and the film follows the extraordinary journey of the horse as he moves through the war, touching, changing and inspiring the lives of those he encounters—British cavalry, German soldiers, a French farmer and his granddaughter.

The horse’s journey is an odyssey of joy and sorrow, high adventure, hope, tenacity and loyalty.

Kaminski noted that both the book and the play were more from the horse’s point of view while the movie provides a context that is “slightly more objective.”

“The biggest challenge for me as a cinematographer was to convey the essence of the story—the relationship of the horse with the youngster,” related Kaminski who was drawn to the opportunity to again collaborate with Spielberg, and saw the “tremendous potential” of the movie upon reading the book and seeing the play.

“This was the chance to do an epic movie with a wonderful story,” said Kaminski. “It was also the chance to do a period piece and be involved in creating several distinctly different worlds while shooting primarily all exteriors in England. We start in an idyllic world where the boy meets the horse and progress into the dramatic and gritty reality of World War I. The amazing, emotional story, the spectacular landscapes, the beautiful costumes, a period piece with different worlds—it was a dream come true for a cinematographer.”

The everlasting dream for Kaminski has been his longstanding relationship with Spielberg.

“He is a wonderful storyteller,” said Kaminski of the director. “We’ve had a professional relationship that has evolved into a friendship and deep collaborations. I enjoy his company personally and professionally. It’s been a great ride for eighteen years.”



Janusz Kaminski

Meanwhile Kaminski is on a journey of his own, having broadened his artistry into directing. He recently wrapped *American Dream*, the third independent theatrical feature film he’s directed.

Plus Kaminski continues to direct commercials via production house Independent Media (Santa Monica and London), among the latest being a Mazda campaign as well as a Fancy Feast spot.

The latter deftly tells the tale of the relationship between a newlywed couple, with a cat serving as an integral character rather than merely an accessory in the narrative.

Between the wrapping of *War Horse* and his embarking on *Lincoln*, Kaminski had been primarily directing commercials. It’s a discipline he enjoys for the challenge of telling a story in a short time frame as well as its collaborative nature spanning crews and different advertising agency creatives and producers.

Kaminski brings to his directing assorted lessons and experiences from his work as a cinematographer collaborating with such directors as Spielberg (on such other notable films as *Minority Report*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *Munich*, *The Terminal*, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Adventures of Tintin*), Julian Schnabel (*The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*), Cameron Crowe (*Jerry Maguire*) and Judd Apatow (*Funny People*).

Blossoming career

It’s been an eventful year for director Lucy Walker. In February she at-



Lucy Walker

tended the Oscar ceremony as a nominee for Best Documentary Feature on the strength of the acclaimed *Waste Land*, which told the story of Brazilian artist Vik Muniz and the catadores (recyclable materials collectors) who made their way from a massive landfill to a renowned auction house in London by transforming refuse into works of contemporary art.

Accompanying Walker on Academy Awards night was catadore Sebastiao Carlos dos Santos who since his childhood had toiled as a garbage worker in a landfill.

“He went from the world’s largest trash dump in Rio de Janeiro to the largest Red Carpet on Hollywood’s biggest night,” observed Walker, underscoring the transformative power of a documentary.

The transformative theme is also most evident in Walker’s latest endeavor, *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*, produced by Supply & Demand Integrated, the production house which signed Walker for commercials representation worldwide back in January (*SHOOTonline*, 1/27).

The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom recently became one of eight films to make the Oscar Documentary Short Subject shortlist. Of these eight contenders, three to five will earn 2012 Academy Award nominations.

“It’s a tremendous honor to be included in the shortlist,” said Walker. “The Documentary Branch of the Motion Picture Academy selects those entries that make the shortlist. The filmmakers in that branch are my heroes, people I’ve looked up to for some time. It means a lot to me to earn recognition from them.”

The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom plays like a poem about the people of Japan and how they are coping with the devastating earthquake which hit the country on March 11, resulting in a horrific tsunami as well as a nuclear radiation crisis.

For many Japan residents, the inspiration to persevere and come out the other side hopeful and renewed comes from the ancient Japanese cherry blossom which grows in the spring, signaling a new beginning, a new opportunity.



The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom

The beauty of the cherry blossoms is fleeting in a given season yet as one prudent native observes, "Awareness of transience heightens our appreciation." The cherry blossom trees have a healing power, fostering the belief that each year the trees blossom, the flowers will oversee progress as devastated cities will steadily be rebuilt and move closer to being whole again.

Walker has long been fascinated by and admired the Japanese cherry blossoms—so much so that she had originally planned to direct a short film centered on them during a promotional trip to Japan for her earlier documentary film titled *Countdown to Zero*. The trip was scheduled for late March 2011.

"I was up for a short, beautiful uplifting film after a big project like *Waste Land*," she recalled. "I saw it as a welcomed change of pace, a different course to chart. So I called Kira [Carstensen, Supply & Demand Integrated partner/executive producer] to see if Supply & Demand would be interested in producing it. It turns out Kira also has an obsession for the cherry blossoms. She came aboard to produce the short and got Supply & Demand behind us for the project, helping to make it a reality."

However, the project took on a much greater weight when the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster hit Japan.

"My first thought, upon being horrified as the news unfolded, was we can't do our film anymore," said Walker. "It wouldn't be right. This poor country is suffering too much to bother it by filming there. But my second thought, which we acted on, was that we were more needed than ever to be there. It was the perfect time to support Japanese culture and people, to express solidarity with the community that is suffering, to be there to see what we could do to help, to make a film that perhaps could help them in some way, to share their stories with a larger audience. Fortunately, Kira, Supply & Demand and I were on the same page and we proceeded."

Still, there were logistical hurdles to clear. Japan was hit by sweeping power blackouts, a water shortage and tremendous anxiety.

Walker and a small nimble crew nonetheless managed to make their way into Japan as scheduled in late March and shot through early April, followed by a return trip in mid-April in order to capture on film the budding cherry blossoms.

Helping immeasurably in terms of dealing with the logistics for the first trip was a friend of Walker, a *London Times* correspondent in Japan, who figured out a way for the skeleton crew to somehow access the devastated region at a time when seemingly all routes were cut off and rental cars

and gasoline were scarce.

Also integral were Supply & Demand Integrated principals Tim Case and Charles V. Salice who immediately provided the necessary funding for the short documentary and served as its executive producers.

"We couldn't have worked so quickly to get there and start filming without their sponsorship. There

was no time to go through traditional avenues in order to raise funds," said Carstensen. "The trip so soon after the tsunami hit just wouldn't have been possible otherwise."

Director Walker worked closely with Carstensen and DP Aaron Phillips on the short which, beyond making the shortlist, has other accomplishments in store.

"The triple disaster of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation in Japan was so recent but it's already being forgotten," noted Walker. "My hope is that the documentary will keep what happened front and center. We are working on a fundraising angle to help the people of Japan. And plans call for the film to be part of a celebration next year marking the 100th

anniversary of the gift of the cherry blossoms from Japan to Washington, D.C. We're also looking at a worldwide broadcast of the film on the anniversary of the disaster next March."

Meanwhile Walker's commercial-making career is also gaining considerable momentum at Supply & Demand Integrated. She recently di-

Continued on page 22



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Hot Locations: The American Film Market, AFI Fest 2011

Film commissions stay on message at pair of industry events; incentives prevalent in the discussion

A SHOOT Staff Report

LOS ANGELES—While film commissions are in the business of marketing hot locations, the art of marketing them was put into high gear at two hot

locales last week—Santa Monica and Hollywood, the respective venues of the American Film Market (AFM) and the American Film Institute's AFI Fest 2011. A case in point is the Montana Film

Office which hosted a filmmakers reception at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel during the AFI Fest while also participating in the American Film Market. Montana Film Office man-

ager Sten Iversen was meeting with the filming community at both events which too are linked and have been for eight years running.

Per that linkage, films selected for

the AFI Fest 2011 were also represented at AFM. The association between AFM and the AFI Fest (the festival partner of AFM) is billed as connecting art and commerce, broadening opportunities for participants at both events.

Beyond pitching established producers and directors, Montana also served notice that the entry deadline, Nov. 30, for its "Pitch the 406" competition, which targets new filmmakers, is fast approaching. The contest invites aspiring filmmakers to pitch the Montana Film Office on why their project should be made in Montana. The three-minute video pitch can take varied forms—from a straight-forward-look-into-the-camera sales spiel to a sample scene from the proposed project or an ambitious trailer. The winner receives \$20,000 in lighting, equipment and crew time to make his or her film in Montana. Entrants will also gain exposure before a judging panel comprised of Hollywood veterans such as Marty Katz, former executive VP in charge of motion pictures and television for Walt Disney Studios. Competition info is available at scout406.com. Contest winner will be announced the first week of January.

Exhibitors

Foreign film commissions were prominent among AFM exhibitors, including representatives from Colombia, Croatia, Mexico, Argentina, Bavaria, Korea, New Zealand, Quebec, Thailand, Rio de Janeiro, and Saskatchewan. Stateside participants included Central Louisiana, West Virginia and Michigan.

Several were aggressively promoting tax credit programs, including Saskatchewan, Canada, with an incentive covering both Saskatchewan labor and outside non-Saskatchewan above-the-line wages. A sample calculation on a \$10 million film with Saskatchewan expenditures of \$7.5 million and some rural lensing yielded a total tax credit of \$2.875 million.

Indeed the role of incentives in film financing was a hot topic at AFM, underscored by an AFM Conference Series finance panel discussion moderated by Joe Chianese, sr. VP, tax, business development and production planning for Entertainment Partners. The Incentive Solutions Group of Entertainment Partners finds its clients the right incentives for their productions, looks to get maximum return from incentives, facilitates the incentive process and expedites the realization of incentive benefits. The Incentive Solutions Group also provides expertise in selling transferable film tax credits for the optimum competitive price.



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HOT LOCATIONS

As earlier reported (*SHOOT*, 8/19), Chianese affirmed that incentives have become a pivotal factor in determining not only where projects get shot but also at times if those projects will come to fruition. He noted that it would be fiscally irresponsible for producers not to take incentives into consideration when planning projects.

While budget shortfalls throughout the U.S. have translated into cutbacks in filming incentives for a number of states, these same states have often retained enough of their packages to continue generating filmmaker interest. Michigan was at AFM courting producers despite recently instituted restrictions on its precedent-setting 42 percent refundable tax credit. Though Michigan's annual cap on incentives was dramatically decreased to \$25 million, there appear to still be some appealing enticements for those qualifying feature and TV programs that have direct production expenditures and/or Michigan personnel expenditures of at least \$100,000 per the latest measure (Senate Bill 569) before the legislature. (Commercials are not eligible for Michigan incentives.)

Indeed a number of states with threatened drastic cutbacks have seen their programs fare better than originally projected. For example, New Mexico preserved more of its incentives package than had been expected, with the reduced \$50 million cap generally regarded as a positive development. The New Mexico program still includes a 25 percent refundable tax credit on qualifying projects. Commercials are eligible for New Mexico incentives.

As for recent activity, Lionsgate last month announced the start of production on director Kim Jee-Woon's *The Last Stand* across locations in New Mexico and Nevada. The action suspense film has a cast featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Zack Gilford, Forest Whitaker, Luis Guzman, Rodrigo Santoro, Johnny Knoxville, Jaimie Alexander and Eduardo Noriega.

Economic impact

As for what filming can mean to a community, consider the new Superman movie *Man of Steel* which has already translated into an estimated 550 jobs for Illinois workers.

"This film," said Governor Pat Quinn, "is a great example of how the impact of film and television productions is far reaching in the Illinois economy, benefiting everyone from local restaurants to the carpenters, truck drivers, caterers and custodial staff who make them possible."

Man of Steel began production in late July in and around Plano, IL, which was transformed into Clark Kent's hometown of Smallville. Production moved to Chicago in September. The film stars Henry Cavill as Superman/Clark Kent, Amy Adams as Lois Lane, Kevin Costner and Diane Lane as Clark's parents, Laurence Fishburne as Daily Planet editor Perry White, and Russell Crowe as Jor-El, Clark's biological father.

Illinois' film industry saw a record \$161 million in spending in 2010, which topped the \$155 million tallied in '07 and represents a 54 percent increase from '09. Earlier this year, Governor Quinn helped dedicate a new soundstage development, Cinespace Chicago Film Studios, which will further enhance Illinois as a production destination. When fully built out, the studio will include 1.2 million square feet on the near southwest side of Chicago.

Illinois offers a 30 percent tax credit to filmmakers for money spent on state goods and services, including wages paid to Illinois residents. Since its inception, the Illinois Film Tax Credit has helped bring over \$500 million in revenue to the state and more than 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

Film commissioners

In other related lensing news, Nick Maniatis is settling into his role as director of the New Mexico Film Office after being named to that post some five months ago. He previously was the executive director of the New Mexico Independent Power Producers.

Maniatis succeeded Lisa Strout who took the reins of the Massachusetts Film Office on June 15. A native of Lexington, Mass., Strout started her nearly 30-year career in the Commonwealth, working on local film and TV projects. As director of the New Mexico Film Office, she was instrumental in attracting such high-profile Hollywood movies as *No Country for Old Men* and *3:10 to Yuma* to the state.



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

Scene from a promo for Montana's "Pitch the 406" competition.



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Top Spot of the Week

The Glue Society, Wieden+Kennedy Hit the Ground Running for Nike

By Christine Champagne

A woman is running and running and running through the city in *Some Time Together*.

No one is forcing her to run in this 1:05 web film created by the Portland and São Paulo offices of Wieden+Kennedy and directed by The Glue Society, which is represented by bicoastal/international Park Pictures. In fact, the woman could stop at any time, but wearing Nike's LunarGlide+ 3 Shield shoe makes it way too easy for her to just keep on moving.

And that's the point of the film. "The product we're focused on is Nike's LunarGlide shoe, which, simply put, is really supportive and comfortable. It means you can run more in these shoes. A lot more. Take that literally, and your friends and family would have to, well, adjust to your new lifestyle," said W+K Portland copywriter Dylan Lee, noting, "We also aimed to highlight the fun of running."

Thankfully, everyone we see in this obsessive runner's life proves to be extremely accommodating.

Her parents run alongside her to let her know they miss her; her local barista dashes out of a coffee shop to

hand her an espresso; and she doesn't miss a second of choir practice because her fellow vocalists are willing to sing on the move.

The only person who seems concerned about this non-stop running is her boyfriend, who jogs next to her and confesses that he is worried they aren't spending enough time together.

But the woman continues to run, and as the sun sets, her mom catches up to her and drapes a jacket over her shoulders. "Don't catch cold, sweetie," mom says as her daughter runs off into the night.

The spot ends with the tagline: Never stop running.



Gary Freedman

Absurdly believable

"It's a funny idea—that this girl lives her life running. I liked it as soon as I read it," said The Glue Society's Gary Freedman, who helmed this job. "It's absurd but kind of believable at the same time. I like things like that."

Casting the spot was a challenge in that the primary performer had to not only run but also act.

"The bar was set high. She had to be a real runner. She had to be a good actor. She had to be very likable so our

hero didn't come across as blowing off friends and family," Lee said.

An actress/runner named Tiffany Sheppard won the role.

"She probably ran 25k in two days of shooting and didn't complain once, so we were very lucky to have found her," Freedman said.

FYI: Freedman is not a runner. He describes himself as "more of a slow walker."

Freedman and his crew, which included DP Tobias Schliessler, shot *Some Time Together* in Vancouver, B.C., with production support provided by Vancouver's Capital Media.

"It's the first time I've been there, and I very much enjoyed working there. It's quite similar in a way to Sydney, which is where I lived before New York," Freedman said. "So I felt quite at home working there."

Like the runner in the film, Freedman was constantly on the move. "The approach was to create this sense of continual motion, so we shot her with Steadicam from a little golf buggy," Freedman shared.

"My main goal was to be as nimble as possible so we could reset and do multiple takes to get a range of performances. Of course, it's never as quick as you'd like, but on the whole it worked well. In a sense, the biggest challenge of the shoot was that we needed to create the sense of her running in a lot of different places, so we had to do lots of small location moves in a limited time."

Cinematic journey

Guillermo Vega, a W+K São Paulo creative director who served as the art director on this project, credited Freedman with making the film a true cinematic journey.

"He wanted to show the runner was a real person running all the time," Vega remarked. "He made the characters look natural, and that was what he wanted, too. He was also great to work with. We shot really fast and light, moving around the city to make the spot feel bigger."

Editor Kyle Valenta of bicoastal Joint was on location throughout the Nike shoot, making valuable contributions, according to Vega.

"He was on production with us, so we were able to discuss edit options as we shot," Vega said. "He was fundamental to the structure of the film, moving a couple of things around to make it more fluid."

It was Valenta who came up with the novel idea to use the Nelson Riddle track "Lolita Ya Ya" to accompany

the commercial.

"The track lets the dialogue come through, and it has just the right amount of quirkiness to help set the tone," Lee said.

As previously noted, *Some Time Together* is a web film. Part of a global campaign, it's running on Nike's digital and social channels along with a series of interviews with members of the runner's family and friends, also shot by The Glue Society.

In addition to the web film and interviews, Nike is supplementing its latest campaign with online "Never Stop Running" challenges aimed to inspire the Nike running community.



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

An obsessive runner is fortunate that everyone in her life is so accommodating, content to connect with her while she's on the run, which is seemingly always. The Glue Society directed this spot, collaborating with a creative team from Wieden+Kennedy's Portland and Sao Paulo offices.

TOP Spot OF THE WEEK

CLIENT
Nike.
Agency
Wieden+Kennedy, Portland and Sao Paulo.

Alberto Ponte, Ryan O'Rourke, creative directors; Icaro Doria, Dylan Lee, copywriters; Guillermo Vega, art director; Ben Grylewicz, executive producer; Andy Hedman, Felicia Hedman, producers.

PRODUCTION COMPANY
Park Pictures, bicoastal/international.
The Glue Society, director; Tobias Schliessler, DP; Jackie Kelman Bisbee, executive producer/owner; Dinah Rodriguez, executive producer/head of production; Justin Pollock, executive producer; Michelle Currinder, line producer. Shot on location in Vancouver, B.C.

PRODUCTION SERVICES
Capital Media, Vancouver.
Christian Allen, executive producer; Keely Stothers, managing partner.

EDITORIAL
Joint, bicoastal.
Kyle Valenta, editor; Patt Brebner, executive producer; Shelli Jury, post producer; Patrick Carroll, assistant editor.

VISUAL EFFECTS
A52, Santa Monica.
Megan Meloth, VFX supervisor; Paul Yacano, Flame artist.

AUDIO
Eleven Sound, Santa Monica.
Jeff Payne, Charlie Keating, mixers; Caroline O'Sullivan, producer.

PERFORMERS
Tiffany Sheppard, Tracy New, Ricky Laciani, Sharon Mason, Allan Thain, Morgan Taylor, Dustin Schwartz.

The Best Work You May Never See

A Bent Take On The Monster Movie Genre

To usher in the annual Oregon Lottery Thanksgiving Raffle, Portland-based animation studio Bent Image Lab teamed with agency Borders Perrin Norrande, Portland, for a spot starring a Godzilla monster movie-inspired turkey consisting of currency. The money bird, who clomps through the streets of downtown Portland, was created via the deployment of two ancient puppetry art forms.

Directed by Bent's Paul Harrod, the :30 titled "Turkeyzilla" begins with a large, dark shadow looming over the city. As people stare in amazement, a huge turkey made entirely of American greenbacks descends upon Portland. "Instead of running in terror from the monster, people are actually chasing after it," said Harrod. "Everybody wants some of that turkey money." Turkeyzilla clumsily stomps through the city, narrowly missing several Oregonians including a bicyclist grabbing a fistful of turkey dollars, and a vacuum-armed woman sucking bills off of Turkeyzilla's dollar dressed coat. The spot ends with Turkeyzilla stomping down the Portland waterfront, chased by enthusiastic residents.

Designed and built by Bent art director Kimi Kaplowitz and puppeteer Sarah Frechette, Turkeyzilla is a combination of Czech style marionette and Japanese Bunraku style puppetry.

Puppetry

A traditional style of Japanese puppetry, Bunraku began in 1684 and involves three puppeteers at one time visibly controlling and manipulating the movement of a puppet via rods attached to the puppet's hands, head, legs and feet. In contrast, Czech marionettes employ one puppeteer utilizing a central rod and strings to control the puppet. Turkeyzilla is animated using a few different combinations of rods and strings. In the Bunraku style, Turkeyzilla's head sits on a static rod controlled by the first puppeteer's non-dominant hand. Another rod goes through the top of his body and is controlled by the puppeteer's dominant hand. The turkey's feet are controlled by a second puppeteer with rods attached to either the front or the back of his feet depending on the direction the turkey is walking on camera. For certain shots the rod had to be transferred from the top of the body to the back of the tail, necessitating a third puppeteer.

Turkeyzilla's wings are worked marionette style. A ring loops around the puppeteer's thumb and attaches to strings that run from the ring down to either wing. The puppeteer can then move his/her thumb, manipulating the wings to flutter.

Frechette explained further, "What we did was modify these two traditional forms of puppetry to create a turkey puppet with movement and the personality needed for filming a television commercial."

Multiple disciplines

The spot itself is a combination of live action, CG, and miniatures. The turkey, money and other elements filmed on blue screen at Bent Image Lab were composited into the spot. The dark grainy quality, music and graphics were added later.

The money falling from Turkeyzilla and floating

to the ground is both live action and CG. To create the movement of the live action money, the crew blew fake cash around with a leaf blower and fan and shot it on blue screen. It was then composited into the live action plates. The live action footage stood as reference for the 3D money created in 3D Studio Max. The 3D bills appear in certain scenes.

To create the shot of Turkeyzilla tripping over Portland's World Trade Center sky bridge, Bent's art department created a miniature of the bridge. Harrod and team then shot Turkeyzilla tripping over the bridge on blue screen at the studio. It was later incorporated into the shot with the live plate of the two World Trade Center buildings bookending the frame. Every detail was considered, even down to Turkeyzilla's reflection on the windows of the buildings.

Some visual effects were done through old school means such as for the scene where the bicyclist reaches up and grabs a fistful of cash off the turkey. In reality he drove by a tall pole that had money attached to it and grabbed the money off of the pole. Later in postproduction the turkey was composited in to replace the image of the pole so it appears that he took the money directly off of the Turkeyzilla monster.

credits

Client Oregon Lottery Agency Borders Perrin Norrande, Portland, Ore. Terry Schneider, creative director; John Heinsma, copywriter; Scott Fox, producer. **Production** Bent Image Lab, Portland. Paul Harrod, director; Ray Di Carlo, Tsui Ling Toomer, exec producers; Darren Demetre, producer; Jackie Fitzgerald, production coordinator; Sol Burbridge, art director; Evan Stewart, art department coordinator; Sarah Frechette, lead puppeteer; Kimi Kaplowitz, puppet builder/puppeteer; Tony Candelaria, modelmaker/puppeteer; Jim Dunn, key grip; Jean Margaret Thomas, gaffer. **Visual Effects** Bent Image Lab Fred Ruff, technical director; Josh Cox, CG artist; Evan Thomas Phillips, lead compositor; Jalal Jemison, colorist. **Post** Bent Image Lab JD Dawson, editor; Shawn Wight, assistant editor. **Music** Killer Tracks, Los Angeles Steve Birch, additional instrumentation **Audio** Limbocker Studios, Portland Lance Limbocker, sound designer/audio post mixer

Turkeyzilla gives a new meaning to "money shot."



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

Have the Last Word!

The Countdown Is On For SHOOT's December 16th Year-In-Perspective Issue

- > **On The Record: Perspectives on 2011**
Agency creatives and production execs share their reflections on lessons learned from 2011 as well as what they deem to have been the year's most significant developments.
- > **Off The Charts: Best Work of the Year**
SHOOT's picks for the year's true Chart Toppers—the very best work culled from our quarterly Top Ten Tracks and VFX/Animation Top Ten Charts PLUS SHOOT identifies its selections for the Top Spot and Campaign of the Year.
- > **SHOOT Advertising Agency of the Year**
SHOOT selects its pick for Ad Agency of the year based on which agency made the biggest positive impact in '11 in terms of brand building, creative, and successfully weaving its clients into the social fabric of mainstream and pop culture.
- > **Music & Sound / Top Ten Tracks Chart**
Final 2011 quarterly music & sound section plus Top Ten Tracks Chart highlighting the past quarter's most notable work.
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A SHOOT Staff Report

Animation studio Bent Image Lab—with a body of work spanning commercials, music videos and shorts—is making its first foray into long-form fare, co-producing *Jingle All The Way*, a stop motion animated TV special for Hallmark Channel. Directed by Bent partner Chel White, *Jingle All The Way*, part of Hallmark Channel's "Countdown to Christmas" programming block, is slated to air Friday, November 25 (7 p.m. ET/PT, 6C). Based on an original Hallmark Gift storybook, the show was produced by Bent exec producer Tsui Ling Toomer, with exec producers including Bent partner Ray Di Carlo, Hallmark Properties' Jodi Schade, Diana Larson Stuart and Shawn McClaren, and Hallmark Channel's Chad Harris.

The story is about a sweet Husky pup who is in need of a home. At a Christmas tree farm, he meets a boy named Andrew who gives him the name of Jingle since he loves the sound of jingle bells. The two instantly connect, but Andrew is unable to keep Jingle and drives away with his family. Jingle embarks on a journey to find his friend and along the way meets up with a wise cardinal, a determined dog catcher and a jolly man in a red suit who help him on his journey.

This marks the first time Hallmark has brought one of its original storybook characters to life on TV. Jingle, a Hallmark interactive plush dog, is sold with its own storybook in Hallmark stores. When the story is read aloud (either by a real person or via a narrator from the Jingle interactive app) the Jingle plush dog reacts, barking and singing as Jingle does in the story. "The ability for a parent or loved one to sit down and read this book [to kids] and have the dog respond to their voice... that was a great idea," said Harris who is Hallmark's sr. VP of integrated marketing and new media. "It's a magical personal experience and we started thinking... wouldn't it be amazing if we could bring this story to television?"

Produced in stop motion, the production also relied on Bent's CGI/Visual

FX department. Bent's CG supervisor Fred Ruff explained, "Production shot all the buildings that the [puppets] interact with on stage and we added atmospheric nuance and the set extensions. Our post department can take a street that is only 12 feet long and make it look 40 to 50 feet long."

The production was able to utilize position point rendering passes to help with various compositing effects in Nuke.

"What we are doing is actually using layers of data pixels instead of color

pixels," added Ruff. "So instead of rendering RGB for Red, Green and Blue we are actually storing X, Y and Z locations per pixel... when we composite, we work with that layer data in 3D space and this gives us a lot more control." In a scene where Jingle sees the town of Pineville for the first time, the crew needed a creative solution to turning the town's lights on at different moments. "We worked with our composite team to figure out how each light location would be handled, and when in the sequence to bring each area of lighting on," said Ruff. "We were able to do that really quickly in composite instead of trying to animate it in fully realized CG and re-render it every time."

Bent's extensive experience in stop motion animation, CG acumen and comprehensive "under one roof" approach to production allowed them to finish in roughly 25 weeks.

"Today stop motion has the benefit of using both older analog and

modern digital technology," said director White.

"The goal is to keep the wonderful hand-made quality but augment it in ways that accentuate the beauty."

Method extends its creative reach

Method Studios has been growing both geographically, by adding facilities in Vancouver, Sydney and Melbourne to its existing locations in Santa Monica, Ca-



POST, VISUAL EFFECTS & ANIMATION

lif., N.Y. and London, and by increasing the breadth of its service offerings.

Formerly known primarily as a commercial visual effects house, in 2011 Method completed VFX on more than 20 feature titles and added cinematic, motion graphics and design services to its toolbox, as well as a concept team in London, providing work and expertise ranging from sketch ideas to fully executed concepts.

Dan Glass, Method Studios' executive VP/sr. visual effects supervisor, reported the recent launch of Method Design. Located within Method facilities in Santa Monica, Atlanta and



Chel White

Australia, Method Design is a natural adjunct to its core visual effects work. Method Design focuses on design,



Dan Glass

motion graphics, title sequences, animation, 2D and 3D motion media design, and other services in commercial and feature markets.

RokIt Studio, also a Deluxe business whose recent credits include the main title sequence for *Captain America: The First Avenger*, and its talented artists are now part of Method Design and located within Method's Santa Monica facility.

"By adding to our core visual effects services and aligning with sister facilities such as Company 3 for color grading," noted Glass, "we offer our clients collaborative and best-of-breed creative solutions throughout the entire production process."



Jan Korbelen

Curious expansion

Curious Pictures has been busy over the last few months retooling its visual effects department, expanding its commercials roster, producing some out-of-the box work, venturing into mobile innovation technology like augmented reality and even launching a film production and distribution company, according to Jan Korbelen, managing partner of Curious.

The visual effects department has expanded into Europe with the addition of a 50-person studio that will complement all elements of visual effects work being done in the Curious New York studios. Thanks to its expanded firepower in Europe, Curious



Mark Driscoll

ous will be able to respond creatively and financially to the changing needs of the market.

Curious has also added award winning commercial director Randy Roberts to its roster.

Roberts brings a breadth of experience with live action and visual effects that make him the perfect addition to the Curious talent ensemble. Roberts is currently shooting a three spot live action/visual effects package for a New York City advertising agency.

In addition to world-class visual effects, Curious Pictures got back to basics doing a full hour episode for the

Continued on page 14



Jingle All The Way



METHOD STUDIOS

LOS ANGELES

VANCOUVER

NEW YORK

LONDON

SYDNEY

MELBOURNE

An Opening In Vancouver, Feature Shots, Stereoscopic Content

Continued from page 13

SyFy Network show *Eureka*. Using anime, *Looney Tunes* style graphics, photo-real CGI and stop-motion, the show is a homage to the various forms that animation has taken over the last 50 years. The Christmas-themed show is scheduled to air in December.

On the film side, Curious just launched a new affiliate film distribution company at AFM, Cargo Entertainment, to distribute, finance and produce feature films in the \$8MM to \$35MM range. The first film for Cargo is an action thriller to be produced in Puerto Rico.

On the mobile and interactive front, Curious Pictures has been expanding in the area of augmented reality. The technology is heavily mobile friendly (smartphones, tablets) and allows for the interactive integration of animation and 3D into the physical world, effectively creating a multimedia bridge with endless possibilities.

LOOK up north

LOOK Effects, under the aegis of president Mark Driscoll, has opened a production facility in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, complementing its studios in L.A. and N.Y. The Vancouver studio's first project will be Summit Entertainment's *Warm Bodies*.

Digital effects supervisor Mat Krentz will manage the new facility. The Canadian native has worked with LOOK on a handful of projects since 2006. He brings to the Vancouver office almost a decade of visual effects experience, initially as a compositor and most recently as digital supervisor on the recently released *Tower Heist*.

For over 14 years, LOOK Effects has implemented and handled digital-effects solutions for feature film, episodic television and special venue projects. LOOK's feature film credits include *Captain America*, *Fast 5*, *Limitless*, *Black Swan*, *The King's Speech* and *Step Up 3D*. TV credits include *The Finder*, *Harry's Law*, *Bones*, the Emmy-nominated effects for *Life After People*, and all of the effects for the final season of *Lost*.

Ntropic inks Zourntos

According to Jim Riche, who came aboard Ntropic as executive producer over the summer (SHOOT-online, 8/17), the VFX house will be adding to its New York office capabilities by bringing on creative director/sr. Flame/Inferno artist Steve Zourntos effective Dec. 1. Zourntos has been at such shops as Click 3X, Crossroads/89/Headlight, and most recently Manic. He will collaborate closely with Ntropic creative director/founder Nate Robinson as well as such



Zvia Eldar

talent as Andrew Sinagra, MB Emigh and Marshall Plante.

Ntropic opened its Manhattan office in late summer to complement its full-service operations in Santa Monica (where Riche is based) and in San Francisco.

A Bank of New York Mellon commercial, "House of Cards," was the first project to tap into all three Ntropic studios with edit and color completed in New York City, computer-generated imagery in Santa Monica, and then original music and final compositing in San Francisco.

Gravity rises

Karin Levinson, VP of features and TV who launched Gravity's L.A. operation last year, and Yuval Levy, recent-



Jim Riche

ly promoted to VFX supervisor, have overseen Gravity's VFX contributions on four major feature film releases. Most recently, Gravity produced more than 200 VFX shots as the lead effects house on Universal Pictures action comedy *Tower Heist* for director Brett Ratner and VFX supervisor Mark Russell, according to Gravity CEO/chief creative officer Zvia Eldar.

Additionally, Gravity produced more than 130 visual effects shots for Warner Bros.' *Crazy Stupid Love*, more than 350 visual effects shots for Warner Bros.' comedy *Arthur*, and served as lead visual effects house on Universal Pictures' romantic thriller *The Adjustment Bureau*.

New York-based Bob Samuel, Gravity's chief marketing officer/executive producer who heads the commercials division, has seen a dozen spots come through the shop in the past three months, including the direction and



Greg Lyons

production of fully animated '30s promoting Hasbros new *Battleship LIVE* and *Monopoly LIVE* electronic board games, working directly with agency Uproar! Samuel has also been building Gravity's talent pool, hiring Alex Postelnicu as creative director.

And Gravity's digital division, headed by chief digital officer Win Peniston, has over the past nine months partnered with Recyclebank to design and produce multiple projects, including the "Green Your Home" and "Green Your Vacation" microsites, as well as numerous "Learn-and-Earn" modules with such Recyclebank partners as Dove, Suave, Nestle Purina, Tide, Cascade, Pampers and Kashi. Gravity Digital is also working with Recyclebank to develop more game



Sean Henry

modules for its own brand, as well as additional brand partners.

Stereoscopic Rockettes

Reel FX, which maintains studios in Santa Monica and Dallas, delivered seven-and-a-half minutes of stereoscopic CG content for "Humbugged: Rockettes to the Rescue," a unique featured attraction within the "2011 Radio City Christmas Spectacular—The Rockettes' Magical Journey," which opened last week (11/11).

The Reel FX content is featured on a massive 3D LED wall on stage during the show. Reel FX producer Greg Lyons, digital supervisor Glo Minaya and sr. visual effects supervisor Augusto Schillaci worked closely with "Radio City Christmas Spectacular" show director and choreographer Linda Haberman and MSG Entertainment's senior vice president of productions Larry Sedwick from the conceptual



Chad Hutson

and pre-pro stages through to the final dress rehearsals.

The goal was to achieve seamless integration between the stereoscopic imagery and live-action performers while providing audiences with a new entertainment experience.

Leviathan diversification

Chicago-based studio Leviathan—which started a little more than a year ago and was primarily focused on visual effects and animation for TV commercials, broadcast design and the like—has diversified into the experiential realm.

Leveraging its visual effects and CGI capabilities in new ways, the company's work for musical artist Amon Tobin's ISAM Live Tour (the



Damien Henderson

partner Bodega, a bicoastal production house representing directorial talent, thus enabling Mr. Wonderful to enter into working relationships with advertising agencies as a directing collective while also being able to service Bodega's varied projects from a design, animation and/or visual effects perspective.

"This arrangement allows us to leverage the best of what we have to offer, and extend that expertise via whichever capacity the client wants," related Damien Henderson, Mr. Wonderful's exec producer.

Calabash goes Thermo Scientific

Perhaps best known for its track record of animation work for several iconic brand characters for General Mills (the Trix rabbit, the Lucky Charms leprechaun), Chicago-based Calabash Animation has extended its creative reach with several recent longer form projects, including the viral ad "More Than A Freezer" for Thermo Scientific which centers on a bacterial love story set to the Boston rock classic "More Than A Feeling."

Calabash was also, according to EP Sean Henry, behind several animation sequences seen in the basketball documentary *On The Shoulder of Giants*, produced by NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, as well as an online film for Eternal Descent, a virtual band created by musician/writer of the Eternal Descent comic book Llexi Leon.

Steele's graphic performance For 3net

Steele Studios, the Culver City, Calif.-based studio headed by co-founders Jo and Jerry Steele, has wrapped a massive on air stereo 3D graphics package for 3net, the joint venture 24/7 3D TV network from Sony, Discovery and IMAX.

Designed, created, composited and delivered by Jerry Steele and his team, the 3D graphics components consist of more than 60 elements and include main logo opens, IDs, promotional and sponsored elements, interstitials, promo opens and closes, and assorted other transitional and supplemental pieces.



Jerry Steele

two last shows are scheduled for Nov. 23 and 24 in London) has generated mainstream media coverage as well as interest from major ad agencies, according to partner/executive producer Chad Hutson.

For example, Leviathan recently presented at the Leo Burnett "Leovation" innovation event.

The studio has also just been invited to present at Autodesk University, which will take place at the end of November in Las Vegas.

Every show on the Amon Tobin ISAM Live tour has sold out, and the show was nominated for "Best Live Act" in the 2011 Association of Independent Music (AIM) Awards.

Mr. Wonderful

New York-based motion design and effects studio Mr. Wonderful, a Northern Lights VFX/animation partner, has as its newest family



Post Perspectives/ Creative Challenges

(L-r) *Cars 2*, *The Help*, Lenovo's "Anthem," Nissan's "Value of Zero" and American Express' "Conan-Curtain."

A brief acceptance speech isn't enough. And that's a luxury afforded just for those who win. What about those who are "merely" nominated? The fact is that it's a high honor to attain nominee or award winner status yet for both there should be a place to reflect on the work and share with others what made it special, what creative challenges were met, what was learned from the experience.

That's where our survey of nominees (and a couple of winners) comes into play relative to the 2011 HPA Awards which were presented last week (11/10) during a gala evening ceremony at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. The Hollywood Post Alliance's competition recognizes the achievements of post-production artisans and their creative and technical contributions to the creation of motion pictures, commercials and television programs.

Those receiving HPA recognition, who span such disciplines as color grading,

editing, sound and compositing, are deserving of a chance to discuss their work. So we posed a couple of multi-pronged questions to select nominated artists:

1) *What was (were) the greatest creative and/or logistical challenge(s) posed by the work which earned you a 2011 HPA Award nomination, and how did you successfully meet those challenge(s)?*

2) *Clearly one project informs others down the road. What lesson(s) did you take away from your experience on your HPA Award-nominated work?*

(See SHOOTonline, 11/11 for a full rundown of HPA Award winners.)

Here's a sampling of the feedback we received:

2011 HPA Award nominees reflect upon their recognized work

A SHOOT Staff Report



Erik Emond, editor,
Outside Edit + Design, New York
HPA-nominated work: *Outstanding Editing-Commercial, Lenovo's "Anthem"*

1) I would say the greatest challenge posed by the Lenovo "Anthem" spot was making it feel like a cohesive piece despite the variation in source footage. Once it was figured out what footage would be licensed and what needed to be shot, we worked in conjunction with the production company to compose the shots that we would be working into the edit. The spot is about "doing" and from an editing standpoint, this spot was truly about movement and relationships, and with that in mind I worked towards making "Anthem" a cohesive 60 second piece. In the end the footage, music composition and color all worked together to make it an emotional spot that could help set Lenovo apart from other computer companies.

2) My biggest takeaway from this project is just a reinforcement of how important the creative process is in making something that people will react to. Working with talented people on what would become "Anthem" from nearly its inception is something that was invaluable in its realization.



Siggie Ferstl, colorist,
Company 3, Santa Monica
HPA Award-winning work: *Outstanding Color Grading-Commercial, Nissan's "Value of Zero"*

1) The "Value of Zero" spot was designed to show a rapid series of "zero"-shaped objects in order to promote the concept that the Nissan Leaf has zero emissions. We see all sorts of images that suggest that same shape—a manhole cover, pieces of machinery, a tire hanging from a tree, a pregnant lady's belly. Everything was shot very cleanly and it was important for me to color that way too—pure and real, with colors that are rich and playful but not overly saturated.

The challenge for me as a colorist was to help lead the viewer's eye right to the "zero" shape so it would register immediately within the fast cuts but without getting too stylistic with heavy vignettes to make that work. I used the DaVinci Resolve to create keys and build a lot of windows around different portions of each image and that let me subtly push the background back and bring the "zero" forward.

In the shot of the tire hanging from the tree, for example, the tire, which was in the shade, got a little lost because of the bright background. So I created a number of complex keys and windows to darken the background and bring up the tire just enough to shift the balance in the image without losing the natural, clean quality the job called for.

Continued on page 16

Reflections From Artists On Features, TV Series, Commercials

Continued from page 15



Jason Fotter, co-founder/VFX supervisor, FuseFX, Burbank, Calif.

HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Compositing-Television for No Ordinary Family, the "No Ordinary Double Standard" episode.

1) The work on the mist man involved all the challenges of character animation combined with full fluid dynamic simulation. Fluid Dynamics, whether it's Fire, Smoke, or Mist are always a challenge in visual effects. FuseFX had been fine tuning our in-house Fluid Simulation Software, and the Mist Man for *No Ordinary Family* was an excellent opportunity for us. We did match moving of the live action actor in many shots and then transitioned into a fully keyframed performance. We did many iterations and evaluated the character performance as base geometry before we ever generated any mist passes. Based on extensive testing and development, we had a good feel for how the mist simulation would behave before we actually did any simulations. In addition to the base model, the character was augmented with extra geometry and particles, which

were animated both procedurally and through key framing. We also did substantial modeling of surrounding geometry and people to make sure the Mist interacted with its environment. In real life Mist does not have any mass, but this character needed the ability to attack and hold Stephanie (Julie Benz) against the wall, as well as escape through vents and doors, and come out of a shower head. We ended up with an anthropomorphic type of character for the "attack" scene. The human shape gave us the ability to hold Stephanie up against the wall and at the same time keep the Mist qualities of his character that matched the other more fluid like scenes.

Once we had a sim, the task became about lighting, shadow generation, rendering and compositing. Realistic lighting on smoke (or mist in this case) is critical to making it look natural and fit into a scene. That includes volumetric lighting with self-shadowing, global illumination and shadow casting from the mist to objects and people in the scene. The tracking and modeling of surrounding objects and people allowed us to get shadow casting to work as well as global illumination. Multiple Mist passes along with velocity channels were rendered out to give maximum control in the composite. Very intricate roto was needed to get the mist to interact with the scene and other characters.

2) The Mist Man was a fun project for us. Normally these kinds of visual effects are saved for features with long schedules and significant development time. Episodic TV is very fast paced and FuseFX is always pushing the envelope to what is possible for TV. Successfully creating a full CG Fluid Character is just one more thing that we are able to say, "yes we can do that." We are now regularly providing CG Smoke and Fire for our clients. The Mist Man for *No Ordinary Family* helped us to streamline our Fluid Simulation Process, and what once was a "Let's see if we can do it practically" conversation has turned into a "Let's just make the element to have full control over what we want it to do."



Mitch Gates, CG supervisor, Encore Hollywood.

HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Compositing-Television for Necessary Roughness, Pilot episode

1) The series *Necessary Roughness* is about a sports therapist and portions of the pilot episode take place during a football game. The scenes were shot inside the Georgia Dome, an enormous stadium, and we at Encore were charged with turning a few hundred real-life extras into tens of thousands of spectators.

I went to the Georgia Dome and worked in close cooperation with the first unit crew. While they shot the action on the field, the VFX team assembled the extras and positioned them in long rows in the stands with bluescreen material behind them. We had them do various actions, such as cheering, sitting, standing or holding up signs.

When we returned to Encore in Hollywood, our technical directors Charley Carlat and Changsoo Eun used our 2D and 3D software to first separate out each shot of each extra, resize and reposition them all and randomize their movements. Then we composited these many thousands of "extras" together with the shots that first unit had taken of the football action against empty stands.

2) Probably the most valuable lesson we learned was to watch out for extras who want to ham it up. When you're doing work like this, you definitely do not want one person to stand out from the crowd!



Chris Ryan, partner/colorist, Nice Shoes, New York.

HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Color Grading-Commercial, American Express' "Curtain"

1) The greatest challenge was coming up with a look that captured the cinematic nature of the piece without overshadowing the performance of Conan (O'Brien), the cinematography, the amazing screenplay, the sharp editing or the direction. Sometimes the color will have a tendency to overwhelm the other elements on a project like this which creates a creative imbalance. This piece was a great throwback to classic, big advertising and I wanted to make it look special.

I used the Baselight to blend a Film Print curve into the natural image. I felt this allowed for a rich, classic movie look that was subtle at the same time.

2) That I wish people still made commercials like this. Big idea, great locations, great writing amazing photography and crisp direction without the need to fall back on FX gimmicks or snarky humor.



Tom Sartori, colorist, Fotokem, Burbank, Calif.

HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Color Grading-Television, Breaking Bad, the "Box Cutter" episode

1) *Breaking Bad* began with the pilot lensed by the Oscar-winning cinematographer John Toll, ASC. The visual approach has always been to make the show "striking and real." When Michael Slovis, ASC took on the series, the goal was to "intensify the characters and situations" presented when the drug underworld meets suburbia. High contrast cross/backlighting, handheld camera, and disturbingly beautiful compositions all add to the strong visual statement. Shooting 35mm film from day one has been a must, enabling the clarity and contrast that is sometimes difficult to achieve with digital acquisition. My biggest challenge on the series is to color correct and match over 500 shots in an eight-hour day, so being "glued to the chair" is a requirement. After 28 years of coloring features and episodics, it is still a pleasure to work with the talented artists in the industry. And the team from *Breaking Bad* is stellar in every regard.



Stephen Schaffer, A.C.E., editor, Pixar Animation Studios, Emeryville, Calif.

HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Editing-Feature Film, Cars 2

1) Probably the biggest logistical challenge on *Cars 2* was the shortened production schedule. We navigated this challenge by delegating a lot of the daily responsibilities that would normally fall in the director's lap, to the department leads. This way we were able to considerably filter some of the smaller decisions down before they were put in front of our director.

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Stephen Schaffer, *continued*

One of the biggest creative challenges on the film was the number of story changes throughout the production of the film. At Pixar we believe in doing what's best for the film, which sometimes means making changes late in the game. These changes required all production teams to adapt their review and working styles, particularly in editorial. Fortunately, my personal working style as editor fit perfectly within this process, and I was able to work fast and effectively to make the necessary changes immediately in the Avid. As a result, our director John Lasseter was able to see re-edits quickly and almost instantly. This became very important, especially toward the end of the film, as John's time was precious and critical.

2) To me, the biggest overall lesson learned would be that each film needs to go through the full process, and that there are no short-cuts. Although a sequel would seem to be "easier" to make with pre-established characters, *Cars 2* not only had numerous new characters, but this film was a completely different genre than the first *Cars*, with multiple worldwide locations that required the same, if not more, attention and time that any new project would warrant.



Steven J. Scott, supervising digital colorist, creative director and VP of EFILM, Hollywood, Calif.
HPA Award-winning work: Outstanding Color Grading using a DI process—Feature Film, The Help.

1) There were a number of ways we could have gone with this 1960s' era film, but [DP] Stephen Goldblatt opted for a straight forward color correction without period treatments. He wanted this story of times past visually grounded with the look of the here-and-now. The actresses had entirely different skin tones. The challenge in a situation of that nature is to balance out skin tones to showcase each actor equally, without

them looking like they have a light window on them. I accomplished this by animating shapes for their faces to isolate and re-light on them in a natural way. This helped to bring out the subtleties in their eyes and the full range of expressions that were the heart of their performances. In one scene, Viola Davis' character is on a darkly lit street, where she could have faded into the background. I brought the street lights and pavement down and opened her up so we could witness the angst and panic in her face. I learned the importance of subtlety and nuance in performance, and the careful work needed to light someone convincingly—all without showing your hand.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS



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- CineSync remote review and note capture
- Encoded 24 ft. Technojib camera crane
- Pre-rigged, motorized lighting grid with iPad dimmer control
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- Aspera encrypted, secure, high speed file content delivery worldwide
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- Storage and support rooms accessible through fiber link



Jun Zhang, lead compositor, Brainstorm Digital, Brooklyn, NY
HPA-nominated work: Outstanding Compositing-Television, Boardwalk Empire, the "Family Limitation" episode.

1) The biggest challenge for us on this project was probably how we could create such a large complex Atlantic City boardwalk set extension convincingly in a 2 and 2.5D compositing realm. Ideally, we would use our fully built 3D environment and probably add a crowd system. But given that we had a very specific schedule and budget to finish a large shot, that became impractical. Instead, we carefully examined each shot and only used 3D for the most problematic areas. For the rest we utilized Nuke's powerful 3D system and basically rebuilt the set with projections. It took some time to set up initially, but by reducing the 3D render time and putting control in the hands of our compositors, we were able to get a much faster turnaround for revisions.

2) The complexity of post production is that no matter how well you plan when shooting, there are always unexpected circumstances when it comes to post. What we have to do is plan to the best of our abilities, but always keep an open mind and be prepared to alter our approaches. With the right details in the right places, it doesn't always take the most elaborate setup to produce an outstanding scene.

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VISUAL EFFECTS & ANIMATION

	TITLE	VISUAL EFFECTS/ ANIMATION	AGENCY	PRODUCTION
1	 Twinings' "Gets You Back To You"	Psyop/Smuggler, bicoastal, London Kylie Matulick, creative dir.; Neysa Horsburgh, EP; Mark Knockles, Jenn Dewey, Amanda Miller, Hillary Thomas, prods.; Kyle Cassidy, 3D lead; Dan Vislocky, animation lead/pre-vis anim. Danny Koenig, Julie Lenoble, compositing leads; Cris Kong, compositor; Vinny Dellay, Josh Weisenfeld, storybds; Danelle Davenport, storybd colorist; Paul Kim, lead design; Andrew Park, Georgia Tribuiani, Kenesha Sneed, additional design; Rie Ito, Ibtisam Ahmed, modeling & texturing; Sean Kealey, rigging; Blake Guest, pre-vis animation; Minor Gaytan, Chris Meek, Jacob Frey, Sashdy Arvelo, Yvain Gnaibro, Todd Akita, animators; Katie Yoon, David Chontos, David Barosin, Barry Kreigshauer, Hao Cui, Roman Kaelin, Eric Rosenthal, Andreas Berner, 3D; Stephen Holbrook, rotoscope; Kiel Gnebbba, Wayne Hollingworth, Brian Alvarez, water & particle FX; Victor Garza, cloth FX; Song Kim, Dylan Spears, Melvina Wong, Kendra Ryan, 2D animation; Brett Nicolletti, editor. (Toolbox: Maya, Photoshop, AE, Topaz Labs [Photoshop Plugin], TVPaint, Flame)	AMV BBDO, London.	Psyop/Smuggler Psyop, director
2	 Chipotle Cultivate Foundation's "Back To The Start"	Nexus, London Johnny Kelly, director; Cedric Gairard, Chris O'Reilly Charlotte Bavasso, exec producers; Liz Chan, producer; Claire Thompson, Alistair Pratten, production managers; Matt Day, DP; Mark Davies, 3D previs lead; Max Halstead, camera assist; Gary Cureton, character animator; Matt Cooper, set animator; Alasdair Brotherston, John Taylor, compositors; Graham Staughton, production designer; Gordon Allen, Ben Côté, Joe Kirton, art dept.; Elizabeth Day, studio mgr; (Toolbox: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Indesign, Adobe After Effects, Autodesk 3D Studio Max, Dragonframe, Real Viz Matchmover) Artem, London Gary Faulkner, model rigger; Joe James, model assistant.	CAA/Chipotle, Los Angeles	Nexus Johnny Kelly, director
3	 Nokia's "Gulp"	Aardman Animations, Bristol, U.K. Sumo Science (Ed Patterson and Will Studd), directors; Toby Howell, DP; Stephanie Owen, producer; Danny Gallagher, Nick Miller, production assistants; Holly Marlow, production coordinator; Mark Hewis, production manager; Tim Faulkner, location manager; Jamie Wardley, sand art director; Andy Moss, Tom Bolland, sand team; Lisa Butler, first assistant director; Sam Morris, Erica Pownall, camera assistants; Nat Sale, gaffer; Ian Jewels, Lex Tully, Spark; Paul Reeves, camera data; William Todd, pixilation artist; Inez W, Nick Herbert, Merlin Crossingham, animators; Helen Javes, props maker; Sion Lane, Paul Galloway, props; Jim Lewis, senior post artist and grade; Spencer Cross, Paule Quinton, Dan Blore, compositors. (Toolbox: Stopmotion Pro, Nuke, Final Cut)	Wieden+Kennedy, London	Aardman Animations Sumo Science (Ed Patterson and Will Studd), directors
4	 French Rail Network's "RFF"	Paranoid Projects, Paris. Thierry Poiraud, director; Pascale Scetbon Pallatin, exec producer; Christophe Guyon, DP. BUF Compagnie, Paris Lucas Salton, VFX supervisor; François Bonniere, Jeremy Robert, modeling/mapping; Romin Bavent, Johan Mai, Lorenzo Serran, Sylvain Simao, Cem Olcer, render/compositing; Pascal Etangsale, SFX artist; Adrien Servadio, Hugo Aymerich, Flame artists; Marie Balland, VFX producer. (Toolbox: Flame, a series of BUF proprietary tools)	W Ajust, Paris	Paranoid Projects Thierry Poiraud, director
5	 Jameson Irish Whiskey's "Hawk of Achill"	Framestore New York James Razzall, exec producer; Laney Gradus, head of production; Alex Thomas, lead Flame; Maryanne Butler, Tom Leckie, Flame artists; Sabrina Tenore, Jihyae Ham, paint & roto; James Dick, 3D supervisor; Seth Gollub, animation lead; Diarmid Harrison-Murray, Spencer Lueders, Michael Dunkley, Christina Lum, Irene Kim, John Montefusco, Kelly Chang, Jenny Bichsel, Michi Inoue, Min Cho, Jesse Flores, lighting/technical/FX team; Ben Fox, Tyler Heckman, Rob Dollase, John Veleee, Sash Arvelo, tracking & animation team. (Toolbox: Houdini, Maya, Framestore proprietary bird rigging & feathering tools for Houdini & Maya; Mantra, Mental Ray, Nuke, Flame, Photoshop, Mudbox, Mari, PT Gui, 3D Equalizer, Boujou)	TBWA\Chiat\Day, New York	Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles Noam Murro, director
6	 Volkswagen's "Flyboy"	Fuel VFX, Sydney Paul Butterworth, Brian Kranz, VFX supervisors; Celia Nicholas, exec producer; Erica Ford, VFX producer; Colin Ware, Joe Wu, modeling; Tess Boughton, texturing; Gerard Vok, Cara Gately, rigging; Bem Stock, Richard Skelton, Sean Dollins, Alana Stock, Lucas Pozzey, Nathan Sheldrick, camera tracking; Ray van Steenwyk, lead animator; Alex Goodwin, Lucas Tooth, Craig Baxter, Gael Matchabelli, animators; Bryn Morrow, feather shader; Bryn Morrow, lead lighter; Pawel Olas, Kane Elferink, Sebastian Greese, Natalia Gubareva, lighting; Matthew Greig, Sam Cole, lead Nuke compositors; Chris Davies, Owen Longstaff, John Kitching, Denis Scolan, Simone Riginelli, Alex Lay, Nuke compositors; Karen Fabling, Flame compositor/colorist; Carlo Monaghan, Flame compositor. (Toolbox: Baselight, Syntheyes, Maya, Shave & A Haircut, Renderman, Nuke, Flame)	DDB Mudra, India	Goodoil Films, Sydney Hamish Rothwell, director
7	 Gears of War 3's "Dust to Dust"	Digital Domain, Venice, Calif. Ed Ulbrich, president, commercials; Tanya Cohen, EP; Vernon Wilbert, Jr., VFX supervisor; Melanie La Rue, sr. prod.; Chris Fieldhouse, prod.; Richard Morton, CG supervisor; Todd Miller, editor; Zach Christian, matte painter; Cody Williams, motion graphics; Niles Heckman, previs; Derek Crosby, TD; Adrian Dimond, TD/rigger; Ryan Apuy, Lee Carlton, Daisuke Nagae, Dave Carlson, David Liu, Desiree Lundsferd, digital artists; Rick Glenn, lead animator; Kevin Culhane, Scott Kravitz, animators; Jason Mortimer, lead FX artist; Ken Jones, Adrian Graham, FX artists; Rafael F. Colon, lead Nuke compositor; Aruna Inversin, Nuke compositor; Jeff Heusser, Flame; Gary Roberts, virtual prodn. supervisor; Gaby Rios, mocap sup.; Damon Shelton, sr. mocap pipeline engineer; April Warren, lab sup.; Alia Dong-Stewart, Ronaldo Benaraw, Ryan Beagan, mocap artists. (Toolbox: Virtual camera/virtual prodn, Maya, VRay, Nuke, Naiad, Houdini)	twoffteenmccann, San Francisco	Smuggler, bicoastal Adam Berg, director
8	 Nissan Frontier's "Landing Gear"	Zoic Studios, Los Angeles. Chris Jones, executive creative director; Ian Unterreiner, Erik Press, executive producers; head of production; Jennie Burnett, producer; Lori Talley, post coordinator; Steve Meyer, VFX supervisor; Tim Bird, Flame; Andy Wilkoff, 3D supervisor; Brian White, 3D lead/previs; Anthony Han, Brian Lee, Jerry Weil, Scott Rosecrans, 3D generalists; Dave Funston, modeler; Michael Theurer, Dacklin Rawlings, tracking leads; Peter Sidorjak, compositor; Jason Bergman, Nate Overstrom, lead compositors; Andrea Hernandez, Todd Groves, Madalina Bland, roto/paint. (Toolbox: Maya, VRay, Nuke, Flame)	TBWA\Chiat\Day, Los Angeles	harvest, Santa Monica Baker Smith, director
9	 Cat's Pride's "Pass Out Cat"	MPC, London Paul Branch, producer; Christopher Antoniou, VFX supervisor; Fabio Zaveti, VFX supervisor/VFX artist; Stefano Salvini, 3D production manager; Ajai Verghese John, Andrea Falcone, Andrew Brooks, Anthony Bloor, Benjamin Syiem, Charlotte Tyson, Chrys Aldred, Dameon Boyle, Daniel Kmet, Dominic Edwards, Heather Goodenough, Inigo Vimal Roy, Jason Brown, Jason Ivimey, Robert Hesketh, Kunal Sarkar, Maurizio De Angelis, Megha Thakar, Neil Griffiths, Prashant Nair, Raju Ganesh S, Remi Cauzid, VFX artists; Franck Matellini, 3D editorial; Alex Lovejoy, Louisa Cartwright, versioning; Jean-Clement Soret, telecine. (Toolbox: 3D Maya 2011 with MPC's proprietary software Furtility, Nuke, Baselight)	Doner Detroit, Southfield, Mich.	MPC Creative, London Jake Mengers, director
10	 Toyota Prius' "People Person"	Eight VFX, Santa Monica, Calif. Jean Marc Demmer, VFX supervisor; Baptiste Andrieux, Shira Boardma, exec producers; Donna Langston, VFX producer; Raphael Mosley, Andy Davis, Mathieu Caulet, Yann Mallard, Stephane Allender, Marcelo Pasqualino, Dave Stern, Joe Chiao, Tony Petitti, Colleen Smith, compositors; Giancarlo Lari, Vania Alban-Zapata, 3D supervisors; Mathias Jourdes, Shuichi Nakahara, Kevin Culhane, Oliver Arnold, 3D artists; Marianne Magne, Chris Fregoso, Natalia Schklier, roto & paint; Douglas Scruton, VFX coordinator. (Toolbox: Maya, V-ray, Combustion, Nuke, Flame, Flare)	Saatchi & Saatchi LA, Torrance, Calif.	The Sweet Shop, Culver City, Calif. Mr. Hide, director

Psyop Weathers Stormy Sea To Gain Top Slot In Quarterly Chart

Twinings' "Gets You Back To You" offers a painterly sojourn from adversity to calm for AMV BBDO, London

A SHOOT Staff Report

In a small boat on a stormy sea, a woman navigates what at first is a tumultuous ride, losing an oar and left with but one to paddle her way to safety. She hangs in there but seems to be fighting a losing battle until nature intervenes with wings from above.

Indeed a flock of gulls enters the picture and lifts the boat above the churning waves, eventually landing the craft on much more subdued, peaceful waters.

At this point, we see some fish, the woman can even dip her hand in the water in a soothing, relaxing moment. As the boat approaches the shoreline, someone is waiting for her.

The woman steps out of the boat; we see her foot plant in the sand underwater amidst coastal life.

The person who greets her looks strangely familiar. It turns out to be her "other self."

The two converge as one as a super reads, "Gets you back to you," accompanied by the Twinings Tea logo.

Even in the animation spot's early tumult, there's an awe-inspiring beauty as if we're watching a moving painting which has captured nature in all its power and splendor—and later in its restorative calm.

As the nuanced piece unfolds, so too does the realization set in that we are witnessing the woman's emotional journey from the hectic machinations of everyday life—as mother, wife, worker, daughter, sister and friend—to eventually returning to one's inner self, as

if taking a moment to enjoy who she is, to recharge, relax, reflect and put life into context.

Titled "Gets You Back To You," this television :60 was directed by the Psyop collective of production house Psyop/Smuggler for London advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers (AMV) BBDO.

The spot earned the number one slot in SHOOT's quarterly Visual Effects & Animation Top Ten Chart.

The commercial broke last month during *The X Factor* and is part of an ambitious campaign that hopes to inspire women, no matter how busy they are, to take 10 quality minutes every day to focus on, enjoy and reconnect with themselves. Twinings Tea can prove to be an ally in that restful, rejuvenating undertaking.

"Take 10 with Twinings" encourages women to set aside a little time for themselves—to have a cup of tea, to garden, listen to music, read a book, anything that will help them reconnect with who they are.

Brush strokes

The animation style was inspired by a range of traditional paintings by artists and illustrators. The looseness of brush strokes with hard and soft edges reflected several of the painting principles Psyop sought to bring to the animation.

Attaining this painterly feel was a daunting challenge, considering that the piece was predominantly animated in 3D, in Maya, with the excep-



Kylie Matulick

tion of some splashing water effects and other key nuances, which were contributed by 2D Flash animators at Psyop/Smuggler.

The final look is facilitated by a combination of playing the action back at a lower frame rate, and the render/composite style that was the means to the desired painterly end.

"The biggest challenge was achieving that feel and mood of a painting," affirmed Kyle Cassidy, 3D lead for Psyop/Smuggler on the :60. "We deployed 3D for the general imagery but used Photoshop, AE Filters and Topaz Labs, which is a Photoshop plug-in, to help bring that painting quality to each frame."

Cassidy noted, "There was a lot of layering to take those 3D renders and make them look as though they were painted by hand."

The Psyop ensemble had to go back and render passes that seemed unorthodox. There were spec and diffuse passes that were generated to be "wrong" but when filtered they

achieved the exact quality needed for the filters to grab onto.

Lighters even intentionally made passes that didn't fit standard practices. However, it became evident that these additional layers would eventually gel and enhance the post filters being applied.

Atypical passes, noted Cassidy, became the path to take in order to achieve the desired look, tone and feel of the message.

"Water and ocean surfaces, such organic subjects, can change throughout scenes," observed Cassidy. "A frame will look great, you start your look development and as the shot goes through, everything changes substantively. The foreground elements in relation to the water can change—with the filtering we would use, we'd lose certain detail. So we had lighters make passes over patches of water and sort of would 'Frankenstein' all these things together."

"It was quite a process—rotating lights in the wrong direction to get certain glints on the water surface," continued Cassidy. "But it was all done in line with the sense you develop of what's going to work and what's not. You very much sense what feels right and natural."

Furthermore, Psyop had two of its traditional 2D artists—Kendra Ryan and Dylan Spears—go over the top of the imagery and produce some more free flowing and stylistic effects that enhanced the spot as a whole.

Designers and art directors also

chipped in to smudge edges frame by frame in order to loosen up the sharpness of the 3D renders, again contributing to that creatively sought after painterly depiction.

2D/3D collaboration

"The process was a great collaboration between 2D and 3D," related Cassidy who noted that from the get-go the Psyop/Smuggler artists knew that 2D would be deployed for such elements as the water splashes and the accents on the birds in flight.

However, during the course of collaboration, it became clear that 2D touches could also prove to be important elsewhere.

"Around the edges of the water and the boat, we originally planned to achieve the desired look with 3D and filtering," recalled Cassidy. "But the filters weren't working the way we had envisioned in those particular cases. So 2D came in to handle subtle drips off the edge of the boat and off the edge of the oar as she's rowing, as well as the tips of the waves and some of the scene with her foot under water, the sand coming out from the end of the boat."

As for the alluded to "smudging," Cassidy explained that the edges of the girl and the boat were so sharp in 3D, so perfect, sharply shaped and designed, that it was tough to sell as a 2D painting.

"So our designers and art directors," said Cassidy, "smudged those edges down, making them seem as if someone had actually painted what we're seeing."

Cassidy noted that Psyop creative director/director Kylie Matulick was at the helm overseeing the entire job, orchestrating a delicate balancing act of disciplines and techniques. That deft creative leadership, said Cassidy, permeated throughout the project and positively impacted all the artists who were involved.

The commercial was produced in roughly two-and-a-half months, with a lot of design, styleboards and treatments done up front, and 2D and 3D artisans experimenting early on.

The painting unfolded to the almost lyrical musical accompaniment of "Wherever You Will Go," a song performed by Charlene Soraia.

While the full Psyop/Smuggler contingent is credited in SHOOT's quarterly Chart, the full agency creative team is not.

The AMV BBDO creatives included executive creative director Paul Brazier, copywriter Diane Leaver, art director Simon Rice, and planners Bridget Angear and Michael Lee.



Matt Piedmont's Film Scores At American Film Market (AFM)

Continued from page 1

tent by PRETTYBIRD, where he has directed spots for the likes of Pepsi, Al Steak Sauce (featuring rocker Meatloaf) and 7-Up (starring David Spade).

Piedmont first became widely known in the ad arena when DDB Chicago hired him to write and direct short series for the short-lived yet ambitious bud.tv online entertainment channel. The work caught the eye of HSI Productions which signed Pied-

mont for commercials. When HSI executive Kerstin Emhoff went on to co-found PRETTYBIRD, Piedmont joined her there.

Piedmont got the DDB gig based largely on his TV series chops as a writer for *Saturday Night Live* from 1996-'02. It was during his tenure at SNL that he met and became collaborative with Ferrell as well as fellow writer Andrew Steele.

"Back then, Will had the idea to do

a movie entirely in Spanish," recalled Piedmont. "That's the kind of fearless, daring guy he is. I loved the idea and Andrew finally got around to writing a story which is funny but it's also emotional and cinematic. The comedy isn't over the top for laughs. Instead there are elements of romance and emotion that give the comedy some serious grounding. And we have some serious international stars in the cast like Gael Garcia Bernal (*The Motorcy-*

cle Diaries), Diego Luna (*Y Tu Mama Tambien*), Genesis Rodriguez (*Man On A Ledge*) and Pedro Armendariz Jr. (*The Mask of Zorro*)."

Ferrell stars as Armando Alvarez who has lived and worked on his father's ranch in Mexico his entire life. As the ranch runs into financial problems, Armando's younger brother Raul (portrayed by Luna) shows up with his fiancée, Sonia (Rodriguez). At first it seems that Raul's deep

pockets will save the ranch. But when Armando falls for Sonia, and Raul's business dealings turn out to not be legit, all hell breaks loose as they also find themselves feuding with Mexico's most feared drug lord, Onza (Bernal). Other notables in the cast are Efrén Ramirez (*Napoleon Dynamite*) and Adrian Martínez (*Kick-Ass*).



Matt Piedmont

All the *Casa De Mi Padre* cast members speak Spanish in the film, with the aforementioned exception of Offerman who's best known for his work on the NBC series *Parks and Recreation*.

Having exhibited his directorial talents on the web series he created, *The Carpet Brothers*, and then on HBO's *Funny or Die Presents*, which had him again working with Ferrell, Piedmont got the chance to helm *Casa De Mi Padre*, reuniting him with Messrs. Ferrell and Steele.

Acknowledging that going into the project, he, Steele and Ferrell knew little Spanish, somehow it all worked out. "Will had to learn Spanish and was on tightrope act every day as an actor. His acting was amazing in that he had to perform in a completely different language. He had a language coach helping him with pronunciation and was able to convey the feelings of the character. As for me, the script was written in English so I absorbed the script and knew what the tone, feel and mood of each scene needed to be. Directing it in Spanish was a little less of a miracle than you'd imagine. I knew the emotion and integrity of every scene was there, having only to make sure that there were no words mispronounced."

During the AFM, Pantelion Films—a Latino Hollywood studio which maintains a partnership with Lionsgate Entertainment and Grupo Televisa—announced that it acquired the U.S. rights to *Casa De Mi Padre*. Pantelion plans to release the film stateside on March 16, 2012.

"We cannot imagine a better
Continued on page 22

On The Wire

SIRONIA Wins Austin Film Fest Audience Award

SAN FRANCISCO & LOS ANGELES - kaboom productions and director brandon dickerson's debut feature film SIRONIA world premiered at the recent Austin Film Festival, where screenings were packed to capacity and the film received the coveted Audience Award.

Leviathan Supports Dir. Schneider, Factory Design Labs

CHICAGO - The principals of design-focused production studio Leviathan detail their collaborations with HELLO! director Paul Schneider and creatives from advertising agency Factory Design Labs and The North Face.

Howling Music Scores Hit with YouTube Audience

NASHVILLE - Howling Music's David Grow has co-written and produced a new single and music video featuring American Idol finalist Matt Giraud and pop singer Lindsey Sky in her recording debut. The music video version of "My Love Screams," which Grow also co-directed, has attracted nearly 2 million views on YouTube in ten days.

Comedy Director Dennis Dugan Heads To Crossroads

LOS ANGELES - Crossroads has added filmmaker Dennis Dugan to its impressive roster. Long considered one of the industry's top comedy feature directors, with classics such as "Happy Gilmore" and "Big Daddy" to his name, Dugan now brings his talents to commercial film production.

Oprah, Sheen & Trump Join Forces For Valley Trust

NEW YORK - Karlin+Pimsler has harnessed the power of Bill Gates, Charlie Sheen, Oprah, Donald Trump, and, even a U.S. President, to endorse the cash advance services of Valley Trust. This humorous spot features regular people with celebrity names...all who have used Valley Trust's services.

Colorist Brian "Crash" Carlucci Joins Filmworkers

CHICAGO - Colorist Brian "Crash" Carlucci, whose work spans four continents and is a frequent collaborator of some of the world's top ad agencies and commercial directors, has joined Filmworkers, Chicago, as Senior Colorist.

Caleb Hepler of the Whitehouse Wins Camp Kuleshov

CHICAGO - "Shark Song," the sweet, affectionate trailer, for a fictional film, created by Assistant Editor Caleb Hepler of the Whitehouse, Chicago, won the top prize at AICE Chicago's Camp Kuleshov trailer editing competition.

mcgarrybowen, Sonic Union Deliver For Droid Razr

NEW YORK - NY/Chicago-based mcgarrybowen and Bikini Editorial editor Avi Oron chose NY-based Sonic Union mixer Steve Rosen to deliver futuristic espionage in the new action-packed :60 "Payload" for the Verizon Wireless Droid Razr. The spot is directed by Biscuit Filmworks' Noam Murro.

Gravity, UPROAR! Bring 'Battleship LIVE' Spot to Life

NEW YORK - For client Hasbro, Gravity has produced a stunning, action-packed, 30-second animated spot which brings the "Battleship Live" board game to life. Gravity produced the spot through agency UPROAR! The "Battleship LIVE" spot was part of a larger package that Gravity produced for Hasbro and UPROAR!.

Optimus Editor Cuts "Don't Follow Me (I'm Lost)"

SANTA MONICA, CA - Optimus Santa Monica announced that Editor Erin Nordstrom cut the film "Don't Follow Me (I'm Lost)." Director William Miller's upcoming documentary about rock musician Bobby Bare Jr. Produced by Lee Baker, the film follows Bobby Bare Jr. who, fighting his way out from the shadow of his famous father with a rock all his own, attempts to redefine what it means to be a touring artist today.

Cinedeck EX, Sony F3 Camera Star in Bijan's Horror

NEW YORK - The combination of Cinedeck EX with Sony F3 cameras enabled "The Ghost Of Goodnight Lane" production to solve budget, performance and space constraints during the shoot, with Cinedeck EX also delivering a fast uncompressed, file-based camera-to-post workflow for the editorial and VFX teams.

Fox Sports & MJZ Debut 'Football Is Better On Fox' Spots

LOS ANGELES - MJZ director Craig Gillespie has teamed up with Fox Sports Marketing to introduce a series of commercials for their "Football is Better on Fox" campaign. The spots ("Orchestra," "Pereira Babies," "Zen Garden," "Terry's Head," "Nightclub" and "3rd Man") features comedian actor JB Smoove as he demonstrates why the NFL is, now, better than ever on the FOX network.

pigFACTORY Signs Phil Collen of Def Leppard to Deal

LOS ANGELES - Independent music publisher pigFACTORY Music just signed Phil Collen of Def Leppard to a worldwide publishing administration deal.

Wild Plum & Dir. Darren Aronofsky Team Up PSAs

LOS ANGELES - The latest TV campaign from The Meth Project, directed by Darren Aronofsky and produced by Wild Plum, takes an uncompromising look at the reality of meth abuse. Created by ad agency Organic, the spots aim to reduce first-time meth use asking, "What do you know about meth?"

Sonixphere Captures The True Harley Spirit

CHICAGO - Sonixphere recently created soundtracks for a webisode series for Harley Davidson that provides answers to the question, "What makes a motorcycle true?" Done through Digitas, Chicago, the web series is part of Harley Davidson's ongoing Ride Free campaign.

'Glee' Finds The Department of The 4th Dimension

LOS ANGELES - The Department of The 4th Dimension (The D4D) has signed comedy-dialogue director Eric Stoltz to its roster. Having found success directing *Glee*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Nip/Tuck* and *Boston Legal*, actor/director Stoltz is joining The D4D to helm television spots and advertising content for the web.

RUSHES Hi-Def Video Equipment Auction Sale Set

LOS ANGELES - Joseph Finn Co., Inc. will conduct a hi-def (HD) equipment auction of RUSHES. The auction will take place from from the Crowne Plaza Beverly Hills, 1150 South Beverly Drive, Los Angeles, CA, Tuesday, December 13th, 2011, at 10 A.M. P.S.T. as well as online via webcast.

Stephen Arnold Scores Pacquiao-Marquez PPV Promo

DALLAS - Stephen Arnold Music provided music for spots promoting Top Rank Boxing's pay-per-view presentation of the Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez bout.

Company 3, Method Join Forces for "Tower Heist" Post

NEW YORK - The New York facilities of Company 3 and Method Studios, both subsidiaries of Deluxe Entertainment Services Group Inc., made use of their close and collaborative relationship for the post work on Universals' "Tower Heist."

Seth Tabor Joins Katabatic Digital as Exec Producer

NEW YORK - To manage the business side of its growing client base, Seth Tabor has joined Katabatic Digital as executive producer.

Director Eric Saarinen Joins Bully Pictures

LOS ANGELES - Director/cameraman Eric Saarinen, a winner of five Clios, a Cannes Grand Prix and numerous other awards for excellence in advertising, has joined Bully Pictures for exclusive national representation.

'Rent Me' App Alters How Gear Rentals Done

FOLSOM, CA - Honey Badger Software released "Rent Me" a new app available on the iTunes App Store. Rather than allow a small contingent of rental agencies to determine an appropriate range for gear pricing, users can employ 'Rent Me' to determine their own pricing that is right for them.

For the full stories, videos, and contacts [and many more] visit **The SHOOT Publicity Wire (SPW)** at www.SHOOTonline.com. SPW is a publicity news release distribution service for the filmmaking, commercialmaking, television, cinema, and online & mobile video production and postproduction Industries. To get info on SPW and to post your news release visit www.shootonline.com/go/publicitywire.

Director Michael Cuesta: From Showtime To Spot Time

After wrapping first season of *Homeland*, filmmaker returns to commercials arena via The Artists Company

By Robert Goldrich

NEW YORK—After wrapping the first season of Showtime's acclaimed *Homeland* as a series executive producer as well as the director of multiple episodes—including the pilot and season finale—Michael Cuesta is now returning to his own long-time “homeland,” commercialmaking via The Artists Company.

Cuesta has a window of availability that could extend as long as until spring 2012 to direct select commercials and branded content/entertainment assignments, and he hopes the success of *Homeland* might broaden the scope of the advertising work for which he's considered.

“The irony is that I always wanted to get more into storytelling and dialogue-driven commercials. I got that narrative opportunity in cable and features,” related Cuesta. “Years before I did any independent filmmaking or premium cable series work, my commercials were more of the vignette, pretty pictures variety. I love that work, want to continue it but at the same time would like to spread my creative wings more in terms of the type of commercials I attract. Perhaps *Homeland* will further evolve how I'm thought of by advertising agencies and clients.”

Homeland certainly makes a strong case for Cuesta's storytelling and dialogue prowess.

The Fox-produced series stars Claire Danes as a bipolar CIA agent who believes that a recently discovered POW in Afghanistan has been turned by al-Qaeda. The show centers on her obsession with this suspect, who is universally regarded as a hero.

“It's been a great experience with my approach rooted in a *Manchurian Candidate*-like style; a more contemporary comparison would be *Michael Clayton*,” observed Cuesta. “My approach is much more psychological and less action TV-driven. *Homeland*



Michael Cuesta

is more complex than *24*, more character driven.”

Cuesta, writers Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon are exec producers of *Homeland*. Gordon served in a more supervisory capacity while Gansa has been “in the trenches” on the show, according to Cuesta.

“My relationship with Alex has been the best collaboration I've ever had with a TV show runner,” affirmed Cuesta who sees a changing of attitude toward TV series directors starting to take shape.

“I'm with hard-core TV people on *Homeland* who truly appreciate directors. Old school television was often of the mindset that TV was purely a writers' medium. But with the emergence in recent years of premium cable shows like *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire*,” observed Cuesta, “we're seeing cinematic series that have allowed more of a directorial vision, leading to television directors being regarded more widely as valued creative people.”

Feature/TV pedigree

Cuesta is no stranger to television shows or for that matter to Showtime. He directed and produced the pilot for *Dexter* a few years back, and executive produced and directed several episodes in that Showtime hit series' first season.

Showtime in turn introduced Cuesta to Gansa and Gordon, set-

ting the stage for their coming together on *Homeland*.

Cuesta has also been active on the theatrical feature front. Earlier this year his narrative film *Roadie* made its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival and was well received.

Roadie is a coming-of-middle-age tale centering on a man who lived his rock 'n roll fantasy as a roadie for Blue Oyster Cult but eventually had to return to his childhood home to face some unfinished business and a series of frayed personal relationships. Essentially he has to confront what he sought to escape with his now ended rock industry gig.

Roadie is scheduled to be available via Video On Demand next month, followed by a limited movie theater run in January.

The director's prior notable theatrical features include *L.I.E.*, which was nominated for the Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize back in 2001 and for Independent Spirit Awards for best director, best feature and best first screenplay; and *12 and Holding*, nominated for the Independent Spirit's John Cassavetes Award in 2007.

Cuesta's mix of television and feature film experience has informed his commercialmaking, enabling him to bring more back to the ad discipline. For example, he noted that his TV series endeavors have made him even more adept at working within budgetary constraints.

“There's no time and limited resources in series work,” related Cuesta. “I've been lucky enough to have some great scripts but you have to realize and do justice to them on a quick turnaround. It's an experience that I think will make me more nimble [in commercials].”

Affirming that he's “aching to get back into commercials,” Cuesta noted that his professional roots are in the advertising business.

“I was an advertising photographer

long before I became a director and filmmaker,” he noted. “I know how to work with advertising agencies. I know what they go through to get concepts approved. I grew up in the business. I've missed the craft of commercials, of working with agency creatives and producers. Agency people are much easier to work with compared to network and studio people generally. There's a great sense of creative collaboration. I'd like to think that the success with Showtime will prove relevant to the agency community and have us collaborating again.”

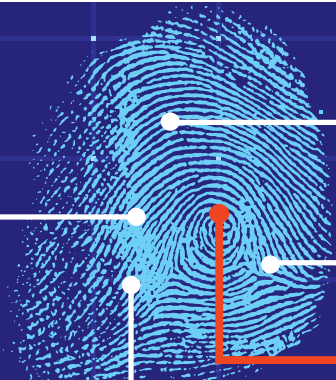
Among Cuesta's other TV series exploits have been directing the pilot and an episode of the CBS prime-time series *Blue Bloods*, helming the operatic-style pagan wedding finale of *True Blood* in its second season, and directing multiple episodes of HBO's *Six Feet Under*.

As for the assorted commercials he's directed over the years, Cuesta's spot filmography includes such clients as Ford, Dove, State Farm and the Ad Council, the latter including some emotionally moving public service work on teen alcoholism.



Homeland

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Film Buyer Attendance Rises At AFM

Continued from page 20

ing him with pronunciation and was able to convey the feelings of the character. As for me, the script was written in English so I absorbed the script and knew what the tone, feel and mood of each scene needed to be. Directing it in Spanish was a little less of a miracle than you'd imagine. I knew the emotion and integrity of every scene was there, having only to make sure that there were no words mispronounced."

During the AFM, Pantelion Films—a Latino Hollywood studio which maintains a partnership with Lionsgate Entertainment and Grupo Televisa—announced that it acquired the U.S. rights to *Casa De Mi Padre*. Pantelion plans to release the film stateside on March 16, 2012.

"We cannot imagine a better vehicle than *Casa De Mi Padre* to demonstrate how a Spanish language film can appeal to a broad mainstream audience," said Pantelion CEO Paul Presburger. "We are enthusiastic about joining forces with NALA Films on this project and feel that Will, Matt and An-

drew have proven that if it's funny, we all laugh in the same language."

Bustling market

Casa De Mi Padre was one of assorted projects generating buzz and business at AFM which ran from Nov. 2-9.

Produced by the Independent Film & Television Alliance (IFTA) and founded in 1981, the AFM is a marketplace where production and distribution deals are closed. During the eight-day event, it's projected that in excess of \$800 million worth of deals was finalized—on both completed films as well as those in various stages of development and production.

The AFM saw its turnout of buying companies rise eight percent to 718 from 664 in 2010; buying executives up seven percent to 1,523 as compared to 1,417 last year; and overall attendance climb four percent to 7,988 versus 7,695 a year ago. Furthermore industry attendees, the category that accounts for all non-buyers/sellers, jumped 21 percent to a record 2,402 from 1,988 in 2010.

The latter might be attributable in part to the AFM's first Conference Series which featured panel discussions on such areas as production, financing, marketing, distribution and pitching. These sessions drew sold-out audiences ranging from 600 to 700.

Also well intended were Industry Conversations, which included sessions with producer Lauren Shuler Donner and director Rob Reiner.

During the course of AFM, 415 films were screened, including 69 world premieres and 310 market premieres. Twenty-eight films were presented in 3D.

The main venues for AFM this year were the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel and the Le Merigot Beach Hotel. There was some talk that the AFM would be moved to downtown Los Angeles in two years, a change of venue that reportedly didn't sit well with a significant number of buyers and sellers—so much so that a petition was circulated expressing support for keeping the event in Santa Monica.

—By Robert Goldrich

The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom

Continued from page 7

rected an American Express project for Crispin Porter+Bogusky, centered on a shoot in Austin, Texas, during Small Business Saturday.

Furthermore, at press time, Walker was slated to embark on an ambitious Liberty Mutual "Responsibility" job revolving around Olympic athletes for Hill Holliday, Boston.

Walker affirmed that she has developed a special bond and rapport with her colleagues at Supply & Demand Integrated, based on both their television commercial and short documentary collaborations.

On the latter front, she observed, "It's been so gratifying to have Supply & Demand believe in my vision,

instantly commit to the short film and make it possible. It has been a great, uplifting experience."

However, there's bitter to go along with the sweet. For *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*, Walker wrapped her second shooting sojourn in Japan on April 20, the day her friend, heroic war photographer/journalist and documentary filmmaker Tim Hetherington, was killed while covering battles between rebels and Libyan government forces. He was 40.

"Right after the Academy Awards [in February—he too was nominated for Best Feature Documentary, on the basis of *Restrepo*, which he co-directed], Tim headed out to work in Libya," recalled Walker.

Hetherington was killed in Misrata, a city in western Libya. He was there to continue his ongoing multimedia project to highlight humanitarian issues during time of war. Hetherington's alluded to 2011 Oscar nomination was shared with director Sebastian Junger. Their documentary, *Restrepo*, was about a platoon of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

Hetherington's death hit Walker extremely hard. The two knew one another dating back to their days as undergraduate students studying at Oxford University.

They came together again earlier this year—sadly, for what turned out to be the last time—as fellow nominees on Oscar night.

street talk

Bicoastal Arts & Sciences has added documentary director **Todd Krolczyk** whose "Half Pipe Proposal," a :60 for Nike E6, was honored in the Spec Spot category of this year's AICP Show. Krolczyk is currently working on his first project for Arts & Sciences as well as a short documentary about musician **Mary Timony**. Krolczyk studied at Art Center College of Design and built his directorial portfolio while also working in advertising as both a creative and producer....Chicago-based integrated production company **Utopic** has signed directors **Alex Beh**, **Kevin Banna** and **Al Wyatt** for commercial representation. Wyatt is a former agency creative, having been a creative director at **BBDO Chicago** and **Energy BBDO**. He had most recently been directing via **59 Films**. Banna's roots are in photography; he then transitioned into the director's chair. Beh had been with **ONE at Optimus**. Beh, Banna and Wyatt join a Utopic directorial roster that also includes **Michael LaBellarte**....**The Mill, London**, has hired **Jon Chads** as its business development director-creative. He comes over from London agency **BMB** where he served as head of broadcast....**Adam Hauck** has joined entertainment marketing agency **Trailer Park** as executive producer for the interactive, TV, menus and content division. He brings extensive experience producing on-set content and EPKs for the industry's top studios, and has longstanding relationships with directors including **Joe Carnahan**, **Joss Whedon** and **Judd Apatow**. Hauck's recent credits include DVD/EPK content for *The A-Team* (Fox Home Entertainment), *The Pineapple Express* (Sony Pictures) and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* (Universal Pictures), as well as DVD content for *LOST* (Walt Disney Company)....

report

Dattner Disputo and Associates has added three DPs, a production designer and a costume designer to its roster. The cinematographers are **Jason McCormick** (whose ad clients include Apple's iPad 2, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S), **Ivan Abel** (spots for EA Games, Ikea) and **Marco Mazzei** (Coors, GMC). The production designer is **Chris Goodmanson** (Budweiser, Comcast). And the costume designer is **Nadine Haders** (with TV credits such as *Leverage*, *Raising The Bar*)....**Montana Artists Agency** has signed DP **Byron Werner** who recently wrapped the movie *Phantom* directed by **Todd Robinson**. Werner is currently available for spots....Production designer **Kevin Kavanaugh** has completed principal photography on **Christopher Nolan's** *The Dark Knight Rises* (shared credit with **Nathan Crowley**), and is again available for commercials and features through **The Skouras Agency**....**Daniel Lynch** has joined **Xytech** as general manager of its London office. He will lead U.K. sales and operations for the company which specializes in facility management software for the broadcast and media services industries. He comes over from **Associated Press**....

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Notes: The SHOOT Mobile Web App is built with HTML5 and takes advantage of the best of this cutting edge technology. "Buzz" is the thoughts of the industry, from a list of movers & shakers' tweets curated by the editors of SHOOT, chosen from followers of SHOOTonline's Twitter page at www.twitter.com/SHOOTonline.

Further app details & FAQs at www.SHOOTonline.com/mobile

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bulletin board

- >November 28/New York, NY: Gotham Independent Film Awards. <http://gotham.ifp.org>
- >December 1/Boston, MA: AICP Show. www.aicp.com/show/tour_dates.html
- >December 1-4/Nassau, Bahamas: Bahamas Int'l. Film Festival. www.bintfilmfest.com
- >December 7/New York, NY: NYWIFT Muse Awards. www.nywift.org
- >December 8/New York, NY: ADC Holiday Party. www.adcglobal.org
- >December 8/Hollywood, CA: AICP West Holiday Party. www.aicp.com/store/holidays-west-2011.html



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