



### 14 Hot Locations

Oscar goes on location. A look at what *The Help* meant to Mississippi, and the impact of *The Descendants* On Hawaii.



### 17 VFX/Animation Series

VFX/animation artisans reflect on the challenges posed by their Oscar-nominated films, plus our Top Ten Quarterly Chart.

**Cinematographers & Cameras Series**  
Schiffman, Cronenweth, Phillips focus on their Academy Award-nominated work. See page 10

## The Road To Oscar: Directors' Takes

Scorsese, Hazanavicius, Payne, Fincher discuss their films

By Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—Director Alexander Payne publicly expressed his happiness over a recent Academy Award nomination—and it wasn't for any of his three this year for Best Director, Best Picture (as a producer along with Jim Burke and Jim Taylor) or Best Adapted Screenplay (with Nat Faxon, Jim Rash) for *The Descendants*. Instead he talked of Kevin Tent, whose work on *The Descendants* has earned him his first career Best Editing Oscar nomination. "I was thrilled he was recognized this year. He [Kevin] is indispensable to me," affirmed Payne, noting that Tent has teamed with him on all of his features, a filmography which also includes *Sideways*, *About Schmidt*, *Election* and *Citizen Ruth*.

Payne recalled how he came to meet Tent. The director related that years ago he asked an editor who was "too expensive and unavailable" for him at the time for other editors she would recommend. "She gave me two names," said Payne. "One was Kevin—I met him and that was it."

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Photo by Byron Gamarro, courtesy of DGA.

(L-r) Michel Hazanavicius, Martin Scorsese, Alexander Payne at DGA session

## Super Bowl: Was Online Off-Kilter?

A SHOOT Staff Report

LOS ANGELES—Cameron Day, executive creative director of gyro Denver, saw two clear-cut winners at the Super Bowl: the New York Giants, and the Chrysler "It's Halftime in America" spot, which prompted him to observe, "Apple reinvented the 60-second medium with '1984.' I believe Wieden+Kennedy has now mastered the two-minute brand resurrection."

At the same time, Day identified what he regarded as a clear-cut loser on Super Sunday. "Leaking Super Bowl ads prior to the game is a big mistake, if you ask me." He made that observation in reference to two commercials he enjoyed during the Big Game—the Jerry Seinfeld/Jay Leno Acura spot and the Volkswagen "chubby dog/Star Wars pub" commercial. Day conjectured that those two ads might have made a bigger impact on him except that he "had seen both leaked onto Facebook prior to the game."

Day was one of several creatives SHOOT sought out to get their feedback on this year's crop of Super Bowl commercials. As in years past, we chose creatives whose agencies did not have any commercials on the Super Bowl so as to get an unvarnished, apolitical perspective on the advertising. Day and his counterparts at other agencies provided their picks and pans relative to Big Game commercials last week (SHOOTonline, 2/6). Now we get their takes on the growing practice of clients previewing their

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## Spotmakers Set To Debut Films At SXSW Festival

By Robert Goldrich

AUSTIN, Texas—Over the past year, director Jonas Akerlund balanced a workload of close to 30 commercials, five music videos and a feature film, *Small Apartments*. The latter—with a cast that includes Matt Lucas, Billy Crystal, James Caan, Johnny Knoxville, Juno Temple and James Marsden—makes its world premiere at the South By Southwest (SXSW) Film Conference and Festival slated for March 9-17 in Austin.

Akerlund is one of several helmers with spot-making ties (he is repped by Serial Pictures) to have a feature-length film at SXSW this year. *Small Apartments* is a dark comedy in which a man accidentally kills his landlord, kicking off a wild journey that meshes both humor and more serious considerations. "The movie is really about hope and not giving up, opening up your mind to deal with changes in life," related Akerlund. "The film starts out like a traditional comedy with strong charac-

ters and funny moments. Yet as the story unfolds, it becomes more serious, offering a bit of a message and an emotional aspect."

Akerlund first came across *Small Apartments* 10-plus years ago. "I always loved the book. This is one of those passion projects that I've been hoping I could get made into a movie one day." One of the stumbling blocks for Akerlund was finding "someone special" to play the main character, Franklin

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## The Magnificent Seven



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By Robert Goldrich



## The Price Is Right

There's a debate over how much California's economy benefits from its Film & Television Tax Credit program. A report issued last summer by the L.A. County Economic Development Corp. and financed by the Motion Picture Association of America pegged an impact of \$1.13 for every dollar the state allocated for the program, based on the assumption that any production avail-

ing itself of the incentives would otherwise take its business elsewhere. By contrast, a UCLA study released last week estimated that a more accurate return figure would be \$1.04 after concluding that nearly eight-and-a-half percent of the subsidy went to films and TV shows that would have shot in California regardless.

Yet even with this lowered estimated return, the UCLA study supports expanding California's tax credit program to cover more projects, rea-

soning that its current "limited size" translates into only one out of five qualified applicants being able to tap into the benefit. This in turn spurs productions to seek incentives in other states, if not countries.

While the bottom line is still the pivotal determining factor in assessing the viability of tax credits, rebates

**The Descendants** has changed perceptions about Hawaii just as **The Help** has opened eyes to what Mississippi can offer on many levels.

and the like, there are other considerations that go into making the case for incentives, as reflected in this week's Hot Locations feature story focusing on the impact of *The Help* on Mississippi and *The Descendants* on Hawaii.

For example, Walea Constantinou, film commissioner, Honolulu Film Office, noted that *The Descendants* is "by far the most successful film by a local author [the film is based on the novel by Kauai Hart Hemmings]....As a result of this success, we've heard

from mainland production companies who have expressed interest in meeting with other authors in Hawaii, asking us for any finished scripts. There's interest bubbling in stories of Hawaii."

Constantinou observed that in the same way that *Bridesmaids* changed the perception of female comedy leads in a film, *The Descendants* has

up the exposure for Hawaii's creative music talent."

As for tangible benefits generated by *The Help* for Mississippi beyond production dollars, Bill Crump, chairman of the Greenwood-Leflore County Economic Development Foundation, noted that tourism is on the rise. This realization sank in for him when

he saw that a showcase prize package on TV game show *The Price Is Right* included a vacation to Greenwood to see where *The Help* was filmed.

The Greenwood community of Baptist Town also figures to benefit for years to come thanks to *The Help*. A cast and crew collection drive and a world premiere of the film in Jackson, Miss., raised \$180,000 for city revitalization, funds that will be put towards a Baptist Town community center and a mentoring program for children.

## POV



## Avoiding PCS At Sundance

*Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Pathological effect of high altitude on the human body, caused by exposure to low partial pressure of oxygen at high altitude. Symptoms resemble the flu, carbon monoxide poisoning, or a hangover.*

Closely related to AMS is Park City Sickness (PCS). Pathological effect of the Sundance Film Festival on the human body caused by exposure to: 1) Standing in ticket lines at all hours in frigid weather 2) Waiting outside (insert corporate sponsor) lounge, convincing the bouncer you're on the guest list. 3) Enduring excessive press. 4) Trudging on Main Street loaded down with corporate swag. 5) Overconsumption of indy film. PCS symptoms resemble flu, hangover, nervous tremors, shortness of breath, shortness of temper, voice loss, and inability to drag oneself out of a hotel room.

Emergen-C, Echinacea, copious non-alcoholic fluids, rest, rest, and more rest...but when is there time? Anyone attending will tell you the paramount goal was not just to get into a screening of the most buzzed about film, *Beasts Of The Southern Wild*, rather to make it through the festival without contracting PCS.

This year was my first time to Sun-

dance with my own film, *Goats*, which debuted in the Premiere's program. After 10 years to bringing *Goats* to life, it was an honor to premiere in the same program alongside luminaries like Spike Lee and Stephen Frears.

I was lucky in the past to avoid PCS, but was even more determined to not let the virus destroy this once-in-a-lifetime experience. High-rolling celeb or average festival goer, the virus doesn't discriminate. I witnessed Tracy Morgan collapse at an awards dinner before being airlifted to a Provo hospital. Well, that was the rumor: A medevac chopper landing on Main St. is a great visual. My agent arrived full of excitement, only to be reduced to a feverish mess huddled in his hotel room. One of my own cast was seen huffing an oxygen bottle all week.

Here I was, eight hours before my premiere in the thick of it, press, photo shoots, more press. The same five questions over and over: I can't tell what answer goes to which question anymore. I just finished an on-camera with the editor of *Vanity Fair* and I'm told I "passed the test!" Wow, I'm glad I didn't know it was a test. Yet, all I can think is, "Please God, let *Goats* play well tonight AND don't let me get PCS."

Hours later as I wait nervously in the Eccles Theater with festival direc-

tor John Cooper, who's generously introducing me, now all I can think of is how to get out of walking out in front of 1,400 people. If only I had PCS! I could pull a Tracy Morgan! Someone else can intro the film, and I'll be on my way to a hospital in Provo!

Alas PCS never struck. Though Cooper's introduction sounded like the "wa-wa-wa" of the teacher in *Peanuts*, I was told it was brief but flattering.

I shuffled to the podium, thanked

Cooper, thanked the festival, squinted towards the sea of people, told them that 10 years ago this month I begun work on *Goats*, and that it was a dream come true to be standing there before them. I took my seat, the house lights dimmed and the film ran. At the first place where the audience was supposed to laugh, they did, loudly.

*(Feature filmmaker Christopher Neil is repped for spots and videos by production house Honey Badger.)*

By Christopher Neil

## Flash Back

February 23, 2007 Transistor Studios, active in motion graphics, animation, viral, interactive, web and branding design, has promoted design director James Price to executive creative director of its New York studio where he teams with creative director Saiman Chow.... Lost Highway Films, a New York shop headed by executive producer Marc Rosenberg, has added directors Mike Patterson and Sasha Greer Levinson..Bond, a Noho-based editorial and effects studio, has added David Smalheiser to its editorial roster....

February 22, 2002 Todd Field—whose feature directing/writing/producing debut, *In the Bedroom*, garnered five Academy Award nominations last week—has signed with bicoastal/international @radical. media for exclusive representation as a spot helmer.... Topping the feature category at the ASC 16th Annual Outstanding Achievement Awards was Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC, for the Coen brothers' *The Man Who Wasn't There*. The Coen brothers—Joel and Ethan—are repped as spot directors by Villains...

## Insights Into Oscar-Nominated Films

Continued from page 1

Payne's remarks about Tent came during the Director Guild of America's 21st annual session in which the year's DGA Award nominees for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Feature Film discuss their movies. Held late last month (1/28) at the DGA Theater in Los Angeles and moderated by director Jeremy Kagan—with a simultaneous live video feed to an East Coast gathering at the DGA's New York Theatre—the session featured Payne, David Fincher who garnered a DGA Award nomination this year for *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, Michel Hazanavicius who that night won the DGA Award for *The Artist*, and Martin Scorsese, nominated for *Hugo*. The remaining DGA Award feature nominee, Woody Allen for *Midnight in Paris*, was not in attendance.

Allen, Hazanavicius, Payne and Scorsese are all nominated for this year's Best Director Oscar. The fifth Academy Award nominee is Terrence Malick for *The Tree of Life*.

Fincher did not receive an Oscar nomination in the directing category but his *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* earned Academy Award nominations for Actress in a Leading Role (Rooney Mara), Cinematography (Jeff Cronenweth, ASC), Editing (Kirk Baxter, Angus Wall), Sound Editing (Ren Klyce) and Sound Mixing (Klyce, David Parker, Michael Semanick, Bo Persson).

### Academy Award frontrunner

Winning the DGA Award bodes well for Hazanavicius' Oscar prospects as the Guild honoree often goes on to earn the Best Directing Academy Award. Only six times since the DGA Awards began in 1948 has the feature film winner not gone on to win the corresponding Oscar.

As for lessons learned from *The Artist* which might spark advice he'd offer to a new director, Hazanavicius observed that the popularity of the dog in the movie came as quite a surprise.

"People adore the dog. I could not expect that," he said, then conjecturing as to why. Hazanavicius observed that the main human character in *The Artist*, silent film star Georg Valentine (portrayed by Best Leading Actor Oscar nominee Jean Dujardin) is "selfish, egocentric, afraid of the future, and doesn't see a positive future" [with the advent of talkies imminent]. Yet the dog trusts him. If a dog loves the guy, audiences figure that guy has to have something somewhere. The dog thus has put himself in the center of our silent movie," noted Hazanavicius, leading to the valuable lesson for a director of "how you can tell something about a character through



Alexander Payne

another character," in this case a dog whom Hazanavicius originally viewed as little more than a means toward some comedic relief.

### 3D

Scorsese's learning curve on *Hugo* centered on 3D, and the advice it translates to for young directors is simply, "Keep an open mind about technique. It will always be about storytelling but other things are changing."

Scorsese sees celluloid film as diminishing, with new digital tools coming to the forefront. Even venues are different, noted Scorsese, observing that the big screen may soon be joined by exhibition venues like "wrist watches."

At the same time, an old-time, often taken-for-granted toy initially sparked



Michel Hazanavicius

Scorsese's visual imagination as a lad, now underscoring his love for finally getting the chance to be on the cutting edge of 3D today.

"I'm a 3D fanatic—going back to when I was a kid looking through a View-Master," he shared.

### Casting

Relative to casting, Fincher noted that he works "to find someone you can unleash as opposed to someone who needs to be coddled." Letting actors go for it, actors who can unleash their talent on a role, makes a director's job infinitely easier, he observed.

Fincher said he had that ideal performer in Best Leading Actress Oscar nominee Mara.

Fincher described the character she portrayed, Lisbeth Salander, as simply, "she's not a wound, she's a scar." Mara indeed went for it, bringing that character to life in every way.



David Fincher

Scorsese recollected that when he saw Asa Butterfield audition for the role of Hugo Cabret, he was instantly drawn to him. "He hesitated, you could see him thinking," said Scorsese of Butterfield. That reticence and penchant for thought were simpatico, noted Scorsese, with Cabret's character—a boy who was hiding, a boy who was broken inside and had to be fixed.

Similarly Scorsese saw in child actress Chloë Grace Moretz qualities that were compatible with the character of Isabelle. "She was expressive, irrepressible," related Scorsese. "I loved working with these children. He [Asa] is the heart of the picture...He was instinctual. He always dealt with the truth of the moment. He dealt with it from the other person, worked off of others. This kid was on and so was she. His reactions in the scenes with Ben [Kingsley] were true emotionally."

Payne observed that he tries not to have a preconceived notion of what emotions should look like, which proved helpful in working with young performers on *The Descendants*. He noted that with billions of people, there are billions of ways people react and express their emotions. So those feelings don't have to come out any certain way. Instead he affirmed, "I'm happy with whatever comes out if I believe it."

As for parents of aspiring child actors, Payne offered one bit of advice to foster spontaneity and believability of performance. "Make sure the child knows the dialogue but do not rehearse the child."

Payne also believes in using a single casting director rather than multiple ones with each having a specialty—one for stars, another for extras. He said he got tired of having the same discussion with three different casting directors on the same film. Instead he finds it far better to have one casting director "in charge of all of the flesh."

Of extras, Payne said he has an assistant director on "torpedo control," noting that extras paint the picture of the world you're trying to create. If one extra is off, he or she can ruin the painting. Thus having an a.d. vigilant as to the performance of extras is essential. Continuing with the "torpedo" analo-

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## Short Takes

### PALANSKY BREAKS THE "HUDDLED" FOR FIAT

Newly signed BRW USA, Los Angeles helmer Mark Palansky tears 'huddled masses' from the mundane in an artful :60, "Your Liberation" for Fiat out of GlobalHue, Detroit. The spot, which premiered at the L.A. Auto Show, features people far and wide embracing their dynamic individualism. "Your Liberation" is Palansky's first-ever commercial, coming to the spot world from features that include *Penelope* (Christina Ricci, James McAvoy, Reese Witherspoon). The spot recently debuted during the Golden Globes telecast.



"Your Liberation" opens on a man waking in bed, followed by the man feeding an infant morning milk. A voiceover begins, reciting a revised version of the famed sonnet mounted inside the Statue of Liberty, "The New Colossus;" "Give me your tired, your fed up, your bored to death huddled masses." We see shots of people at work, parties and even locked inside a computer, sleepwalking through life.

The voiceover continues, "Yearning to breathe free, yearning to break free. Yearning for so much more." We smash-cut to shot of a Fiat 500 racing through the city and countryside. More voiceover declares, "Give me your new days full of promise and hope and new possibilities. Days faraway from the bonds of sameness... give me your liberation and I will return the favor." Invigorated people painting, office cubicles covered in forest wallpaper and Fiat passengers flying kites from the 500 follow. The Fiat logo and tag "Simply more" close out the spot.

### A NEW SPY IN TOWN

SPY, a FotoKem company offering creative finishing services for commercials and feature films, has opened a new studio in Santa Monica, Calif. SPY: LA extends the capabilities of its main facility in San Francisco, and will specialize in VFX-based commercial productions. SPY: LA has already taken on a number of visually driven spots for such clients as UPS, Asics, THQ/UFC, Hillshire Farm and Canon. The new West Coast locale is within FotoKem's award-winning sound studio Margarita Mix.

Visual effects artist Scott Rader also joins SPY: LA as creative director and lead Flame artist. He previously worked at top VFX studios such as Radium, Hydraulx and Digital Domain. Rader's work on numerous television series, feature films, commercials and music videos as an Inferno artist/VFX supervisor has earned him nine Emmys, three Clio Awards, three PromaxBDA Awards and a VES Award.

SPY co-founder Eric Hanson noted the two studios are connected by a high speed network offering real-time interface between San Francisco and Santa Monica. FotoKem sr. VP Rand Gladden added, "There is synergy and scalability for our clients in the aggregation of solutions provided by SPY and Margarita Mix. The flexibility of SPY's interconnected locations and FotoKem's Burbank headquarters offers a wide range of artistic and technical support."

### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS...



Marta Stajek

NY-based post boutique Northern Lights, along with sister companies Bodega, Mr. Wonderful, and SuperExploder, have added Marta Stajek as director of business & operations. She had been freelancing as a sr. content business manager and director of business affairs after stepping down from her post as VP/director, business affairs at Digitas....CRASH+SUES, the Minneapolis-based VFX, animation, color correction and editing company, has signed EP Sven Shelgren. He has worked for such directors as Jim Johnston, John Pytko, Peter Kagan, and Paul Dektor, and for production companies including Dektor Film, Jon Francis Films, and Stiefel & Co....



## Directorial Banter; ASC/Oscar Link?

Continued from page 4

gy, Payne quipped that if you don't find out an extra was deficient until you're in dailies, then "you've been hit."

### Cutting remarks

Like Payne at the top of this story, other director panelists touched upon editing. Hazanavicius set out to serve as editor on *The Artist*, originally bringing on an assistant, Anne-Sophie Bion, who performed so well that she and the director have a co-credit on the editing of the film—as well as a shared Oscar nomination for Best Editing.

Hazanavicius quipped that during shooting everyone raves about what was captured on camera. "They say it's great but I know I will be crying in the editing room."

The director noted that he loves shooting but is seemingly always thinking about the editing. In fact, he set a desired length for *The Artist* going into the shoot and adhered to it—one hour and 40 minutes. The first cut, he recalled was two hours, and he and Bion eventually got it down to the targeted length.

*Hugo*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, and *Moneyball* join *The Artist* and *The Descendants* as this year's field of Oscar nominees in the Editing category. *Moneyball*, directed by Bennett Miller (whose commercialmaking roost is Smuggler), was edited by Christopher Tellefsen. *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* was cut by Kirk Baxter and Angus Wall, who are both known for their spot work at editorial house Rock Paper Scissors. (Baxter and Wall won the Oscar last year for Fincher's *The Social Network*.) And *Hugo* was cut by Scorsese's long-time editor Thelma Schoonmaker.

For *Hugo*, Scorsese said that Schoonmaker cut some scenes in 2D and when they were shown in 3D, the edits weren't as good as they had appeared in 2D. So all the editing was done in 3D, with Schoonmaker deploying Lightworks which has be-



Martin Scorsese

come her editorial system of choice. After multiple screenings of the work in progress, Scorsese said that he and Schoonmaker saw what needed to be done, rolled up their sleeves and tackled the project at hand.

"We attacked it. For four weeks, we didn't answer the phone. We were behind locked doors," said Scorsese who said that ultimately much of what was cut from the film was the expository dialogue and scenes. "The visuals took over in 3D," assessed Scorsese, and thus eliminated the need for explanatory exposition.

### Silent color

Hazanavicius said that the black-and-white silent film *The Artist* was shot on 35mm color film and then "color-corrected" to appear in its final black-and-white form. *The Artist's* cinematographer Guillaume Schiffman, AFC, explained that black-and-white stock was too sharp for the desired silent film era look so the decision was made to lens on Kodak color stock. (See separate Cinematographers feature story in this issue).

Schiffman earned his first career Best Cinematography Oscar nomination for *The Artist*. He is part of an Academy Award nominee field that also consists of Jeff Cronenweth, ASC for *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*; Robert Richardson, ASC, for *Hugo*; Janusz Kaminski for *War Horse*; and Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC for *The Tree of Life*.

Four of these five DPs earned nominations in the feature film category of the ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards, the only exception being Kaminski. That remaining ASC Award nom this year went to Hoyte van Hoytema, FSF, NSC, for *Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy*. This past Sunday (2/12), the ASC Award was bestowed upon Lubezki, perhaps giving him a leg up come Academy Award night.

In the big picture, *Hugo* led the way this year with a total of 11 Oscar nominations, followed by *The Artist* with 10, *Moneyball* and *War Horse* with six apiece, *The Descendants* and *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* each tallying five, and *The Help* scoring four.

In the acting categories, *The Help* got a big boost from the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards, winning three of the four categories in which it was nominated. (The four noms were the most of any feature film.) Viola Davis won the SAG Award for Best Actress while Octavia Spencer was named Best Supporting Actress. And *The Help* won the SAG honor for Best Cast in a motion picture. Prognosticators keep a close watch on SAG Award results in that actors comprise the largest voting group at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences which picks the ultimate Oscar acting category winners.

*Rango* has also performed well on the awards show circuit, arguably enhancing its Oscar prospects in the Best Animated Feature Film category, which also consists of nominees *A Cat in Paris*, *Chico & Rita*, *Kung Fu Panda 2*, and *Puss in Boots*. Earlier this month *Rango* took top honors as the Best Animated Feature at the 39th annual Annie Awards. Additionally during the Annies ceremony, the newly created "Members Favorite" award, voted on by the entire ASIFA-Hollywood community, went to *Rango*. Just a few days later, *Rango* set the pace at the 10th annual Visual Effects

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## On The Wire

### ASSIMILATE Announces Breakthrough

SANTA CLARA, CA-- ASSIMILATE, Inc. announced that SCRATCH® and SCRATCH Lab® version 6.1 have achieved never before seen performance levels in the playback of RED EPIC stereo content. SCRATCH Lab now provides DITs, DPs and directors with dailies playback and review of RAW Stereo EPIC streams, direct from the camera at a full 48 FPS.

### New ONE at Optimus Dir. Brian Johnson Helms Ford Spots

CHICAGO-- ONE at Optimus announced the addition of new Director Brian Johnson, who helmed three Ford Truck Month spots that began airing in southwest markets. Collaborating with Team Detroit/Retail First, Optimus directed, cut and finished the spots, which reflect the "Join the Stampede" theme of Ford Truck Month.

### Elias Arts Takes Over Super Bowl XLVI

NEW YORK & LOS ANGELES, -- Elias Arts claimed its stake at this year's Super Bowl, creating and producing original music for four spots, including VW's "The Dog Strikes Back" via Deutsch LA.

### 3008 Helps MetroPCS Campaign Achieve Joie de Vivre

DALLAS -- An extensively collaborative effort between client (MetroPCS), agency (The Richards Group), director (Luc Janin/Shilo) and editor (Marc Stone/3008) celebrates people living with obvious joie de vivre - free from expensive, restrictive cell contracts. The music-driven campaign features people on the move to a newfound beat with a level of reality that leaves the impression actual street scenes were shot.

### Sonisphere, iSpy Create Musical Alter Egos for ABC Show

CHICAGO-- Sonisphere, in association with the award-winning composing team at iSpy Music, kicked off 2012 with the debut of ABC's highly-anticipated reality series *Celebrity Wife Swap*. Famous spouses who signed up to swap households, children, and rules of domestic play include Dee Snider of Twisted Sister, songstress Carnie Wilson, Flavor Flav from Public Enemy, and actor Gary Busey, among others.

### DIVE, "Safety Not Guaranteed," Shining Pair at Sundance

PHILADELPHIA -- DIVE VFX teamed up with Colin Trevorrow and Big Beach Films to create the "exhilarating finale" for 'Safety Not Guaranteed', which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to rave reviews. The film, directed by Colin Trevorrow and written by Derek Connolly, won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and was recently picked up by FilmDistrict for distribution.

### Call for Entries - 2012 HollyShorts Film Festival

HOLLYWOOD -- Largest short form content fest in hollywood taking submissions for 8th Annual week-long extravaganza which takes place August 9-16, 2012. The HollyShorts Film festival showcases the top short films produced 30- minutes or less.

### 2012 AICP Show Curatorial Committee Announced

NEW YORK -- Matt Miller, President and CEO of the AICP, and Jackie Kelman Bisbee, Founding Partner/Co-Owner, Park Pictures, and Chairperson of the 2012 AICP Show announced the composition of the Show's Curatorial Committee. The Show debuts June 12th in New York at The MOMA, and entries are now being accepted.

### Cut + Run's Big Game Day: Seven Spots Edited

NEW YORK & LOS ANGELES -- Cut + Run contributed creative editorial to a total of seven Super Bowl spots, five national and two regional commercials that aired during the biggest ad day of the year. Skechers "Mr. Quiggly," Hyundai "Cheetah" and Samsung "Thing Called Love" ranked in numerous top 10 polls.

### BEEF Films' Dir Joe Schaak Shoots Super Bowl Spot

SANTA MONICA, CA -- Ad agency Red Tettemer + Partners called on BEEF Films' Director Joe Schaak to shoot Century 21's lively campaign for the 2012 Super Bowl XLVI. The new, high-energy spot, part of an overall multimedia campaign, boasts the creative wits of Century 21 Realtors through big deals with major players such as NFL Superstar Deon Sanders, American Olympic speed skater Apolo Ohno, and business mogul Donald Trump.

### Endless Noise Provides Super Bowl Music and Sound Design

SANTA MONICA, CA -- Award winning music company Endless Noise provided music and sound design for three Hyundai spots which debuted during Superbowl Sunday, as well as for a highly popular VW teaser spot (with over 13-million views on YouTube) entitled "The Bark Side."

### Oscar Nom'd Filmmaker Robin Fryday Joins Nonfiction

SANTA MONICA, CA -- Robin Fryday, director of the Oscar® nominated documentary short film, "The Barber of Birmingham: Foot Soldier of the Civil Rights Movement," has joined bicoastal Nonfiction Unlimited for representation for spots and client-sponsored documentary projects.

### Company 3 Scores at Super Bowl XLVI

SANTA MONICA, CA -- Award-winning post house Company 3 worked on 24 ads that aired during Super Bowl XLVI. Company 3 co-founder/colorist Stefan Sonnenfeld and fellow colorists Dave Hussey, Siggie Ferstl, Tim Masick, Mike Pethel and Tom Poole performed color grading on commercials for 20 brands.

### Method Provides VFX To Noam Murro Super Bowl Spots

LOS ANGELES-- Method Studios collaborated on a record seven Super Bowl commercials this year. Among the projects keeping the Method Studios teams in Los Angeles, New York and Australia busy, were three especially VFX-heavy ads directed by the 2012 DGA award-winning director, Noam Murro.

### NLs' Glenn Conte Makes Sammy Adams' World "Blow Up"

NEW YORK -- New York-based post boutique Northern Lights editor Glenn Conte teams up with director Nathan Crooker to break through the white noise of young hip hop artists in the catchy 3:05 music video "Blow Up" for Sammy Adams out of RCA Records.

For the full stories [and many more], videos, and contacts visit SHOOT Publicity Wire (SPW) at [www.SHOOTonline.com](http://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](http://www.shootonline.com/go/publicitywire).

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## VES, ADG, Sundance Award Winners Emerge As Oscar Favorites

Continued from page 6

Society (VES) Awards competition with four wins, earning distinction for Outstanding Visual Effects in an Animated Feature Motion Picture, Best Virtual Cinematography in an Animated Movie, Outstanding Created Environment (Main Street Dirt Saloon) in an Animated Feature, and Best Animated Character (Rango himself) in an Animated Movie.

Meanwhile three Best Visual Effects Oscar nominees—*Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, *Hugo*, and *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*—earned two VES Awards apiece, the biggest win coming for *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, which took the honor for Outstanding Visual Effects in a VFX-Driven Feature Motion Picture.

*Apes'* other VES win was for Caesar as Best Animated Character in a Live-Action Feature.

*Transformers* copped VES Awards for Outstanding Models and for Outstanding Created Environment (I55 Wacker Drive) in a Live Action Feature.

And *Hugo's* pair of VES wins came for Outstanding Supporting VFX in a Feature and Best Virtual Cinematography In a Live Action Feature Motion Picture.

Rounding out the field of nominees for the Best Visual Effects Oscar are *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, and *Real Steel*.

As for crystal balling this year's Art Direction Oscar, a couple of clues emerged during the Art Directors Guild's (ADG) 16th annual Excellence in Production Design Awards on Feb. 4. The top ADG honors for Period Film and Fantasy Film went, respectively, to *Hugo* (production designer Dante Ferretti) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* (production designer Stuart Craig). *Hugo* (Ferretti and set decorator Francesca Lo Schiavo) and *Harry Potter* (Craig, with set decoration by Stephenie McMillan) are both nominated for Art Direction Oscars. The three remaining nominees are *The Artist* (production design by Laurence Bennett, set decoration by Robert Gould), *Midnight in Paris* (production design by Anne Seibel, set decoration by Helene Durbreuil) and *War Horse* (production design by Rick Carter, set decoration by Lee Sandales).

Incidentally, the third major ADG feature award, in the Contemporary Film category, went to *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* and its production designer Donald Graham Burt.

### Short takes

Sundance too can be a precursor of Oscar recognition. If that proves true this year, it will be in two short film categories as *The Tsunami and the*

*Cherry Blossom* last month won the Sundance Jury Prize in Short Film, Non-Fiction, and *A Morning Stroll* garnered the Sundance Jury Prize in Animated Short Film.

Directed by Lucy Walker whose spotmaking roost is Supply&Demand

Integrated, *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* is nominated for a Documentary Short Subject Oscar. And *A Morning Stroll*—directed by Grant Orchard who helms spots via Studio AKA, London—earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Animated

Short Film.

Supply&Demand Integrated produced *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* while Studio AKA produced *A Morning Stroll*.

Academy Awards for outstanding film achievements of 2011 will be

presented on Sunday, Feb. 26, at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland Center in Hollywood, Calif., and televised live by the ABC Television Network. The Oscar presentation will also be televised live in more than 225 countries worldwide.

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Top Spot of the Week

# Director Lance Acord, Deutsch Whip A Dog Into Shape For Volkswagen

By Christine Champagne

Deutsch Los Angeles teamed with director/DP Lance Acord last year to wow Super Bowl audiences with the Volkswagen Passat spot “The Force.” The commercial was so successful—it was a *SHOOT* Top Spot, topped many favorite Super Bowl spot lists and has been seen by more than 50 million people and counting on YouTube—that the pressure was on to make another standout piece of work this year. And the agency and director delivered just that with the :75 “The Dog Strikes Back.”

Set to the James Brown classic “Get Up Offa That Thing,” the commercial centers on a fat pooch inspired to get in shape so that he can chase a new Volkswagen Beetle down the street.

“The spot is about getting back out there and finding that excitement again in your life,” according to Deutsch LA group creative director Matt Ian.

In creating “The Dog Strikes Back,” it was crucial to include a nod to last year’s “The Force” because people expected it, Deutsch group creative director Michael Kadin pointed out. (And the *Star Wars* link was teased in “The Bark Side,” released on You-

Tube prior to the game.)

But Kadin also stressed that it was important to create a spot that could air after the Super Bowl.

“We always say that if we do a good enough spot, then it can become a Super Bowl spot,” Kadin said, “and if we stay in the real world, it can run the rest of the year.” With that strategy in mind, “The Dog Strikes Back” included a tip of the hat to last year’s “The Force” via a cantina scene attached to the end. But the commercial works quite well without the addendum, and post-Super Bowl airings do not include this additional footage.



Lance Acord

In the final seconds of the commercial as it aired during the Super Bowl, we see that “The Dog Strikes Back” is being watched—and critiqued—by a bunch of aliens in the famed cantina from *Star Wars*. Darth Vader makes an appearance, too, although this time around, it is an adult in the suit, not Max Page, the little boy from “The Force.”

### Open bar

Lucasfilm gave Acord the actual floor plans and drawings from the original cantina set so that he could build a replica on a soundstage at Uni-

versal Studios, Los Angeles.

“They were very open to how we wanted to do it,” Acord said of the people from Lucasfilm, noting, “They recommended that we utilize some of their assets in the form of digital assets, maybe even doing digital composites where we would take the background from the existing film and shoot on green screen and comp our characters in. But there were a couple of things working against this idea: We had a tight edit schedule and post schedule that would have made it difficult to do in time. Plus, I really wanted to try some different things, different ideas, so we went ahead and built the set, and they were very generous in terms of offering use of the original material.”

Meanwhile, Acord was able to procure recreations of the alien costumes from Tom Spina Designs, New York.

The director/DP shot the cantina scene in one day on 35mm film. “I felt like that would best blend with what had been done [in the film],” Acord said. And when it came time to do the three-day shoot in the Chapman Woods neighborhood of Pasadena, Calif. with the canine star of the spot, Acord opted to shoot with the AL-EXA, which gave him the luxury of just being able to let the camera roll.

### The eyes have it

The dog is a St. Bernard/Australian shepherd mix named Bolt, and his eyes got him cast. “He had this sad, soulful look about him, and I thought that was important in developing the emotional arc,” Acord said. “You get a sense of self-loathing and disappointment from the dog that he’s let himself go this far.”

Bolt is actually in great shape, so Acord employed Creature Effects, Los Angeles, to create a fat suit for the dog. “We had set out to cast a dog that had a lookalike, so we were looking at purebred dogs like Golden Retrievers and Labs, dogs where you could find a fat one and a skinny one that looked a lot alike, but that got to be hard. It’s hard enough to find one good dog that you can train in a short stretch, but then to have to find two or three that would represent different stages of being overweight, and training one as well as another, that just wasn’t going to work,” Acord explained. “Then we found Bolt, and he is such a great dog, and we were like, ‘Alright, how are we going to figure this out so we can use just one dog?’”

Relying on post effects was briefly considered, but then it was deter-

mined that the schedule—the spot was shot in December—didn’t allow enough time. So, in the end, the fat suit was the best option.

Wearing the contraption didn’t impede Bolt’s performance at all. “He was amazingly focused,” Acord praised. “He had a good attention span—better than some actors I’ve worked with.”

**TOP Spot OF THE WEEK**

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CLIENT  
**Volkswagen**  
AGENCY  
**Deutsch Los Angeles.**

*Mark Hunter, chief creative officer; Michael Kadin, Matt Ian, group creative directors; Brian Freidrich, associate creative director/copywriter; Mark Peters, associate creative director/art director; Vic Palumbo, director of integrated production; Victoria Guenier, director of broadcast production; Jim Haight, senior producer; Marina Korzon, associate producer.*

---

PRODUCTION  
**Park Pictures, bicoastal**

*Lance Acord, director/DP; Jackie Kelman Bisbee, executive producer; Mary Ann Marino, executive producer/head of production; Pat Frazier, line producer. Shot on location in Pasadena, Calif. and on stage at Universal Studios, Los Angeles.*

---

EDITORIAL  
**Union Editorial, Los Angeles.**

*James Haygood, editor; Dylan Firshein, assistant editor; Michael Raimondi, executive producer; Joe Ross, senior producer.*

---

POST  
**Company 3, Santa Monica.**

*Stefan Sonnenfeld, colorist.*

---

VISUAL EFFECTS  
**A52, Santa Monica.**

*Megan Meloth, producer; Patrick Murphy, VFX supervisor.*

---

MUSIC  
**Elias Arts, Los Angeles.**

*Jonathan Elias, composer; David Gold, creative director; Ann Haugen, executive producer.*

---

SOUND DESIGN  
**740 Sound Design, Los Angeles.**

*Andrew Tracy, sound designer; Scott Ganary, executive producer.*

---

AUDIO  
**Lime Studios, Santa Monica.**

*Mark Meyuhus, mixer/owner; Matt Miller, assistant mixer; Jessica Locke, producer.*



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

A dog hits the staircase, treadmill and resists eating food scraps off the kitchen floor so he can fit through the doggy door and hit the great outdoors to chase the new Volkswagen Beetle. He fulfills his goal and winds up even getting a favorable review as a spot star from a *Star Wars* cantina patron.

**E**ver since man first began to make art, every creative person has struggled to dedicate every ounce of their being to the pursuit of great ideas. Whether an ancient Egyptian stone mason or a young bohemian staring at a blank canvas in his loft in Brooklyn, those people nobly dedicated to their craft have ignored the distractions of the world around them in favor of a higher...



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## Reflections On Work, Recognition From Peers

DPs Discuss Oscar Nominations, Major Creative Challenges and Choice of Cameras

By Robert Goldrich

One cinematographer has earned his first Oscar and ASC Award nominations.

Another is nominated for both awards for the second consecutive year—for films from the same director.

And a third lensed a short film which is in the Oscar hunt and just came off of a high-profile Sundance Film Festival win.

Here are close-up looks at Guillaume Schiffman, AFC, who shot *The Artist*, Jeff Cronenweth, ASC, who lensed *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, and Aaron Phillips, DP on the short titled *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*.

### Guillaume Schiffman, AFC

“I love American movies, American cinematographers, members of the ASC. To be nominated for an ASC Award is a dream come true that I cannot still believe has happened. I want to be there at the awards ceremony to be sure that it’s not a joke, that I have actually been nominated. Personally the recognition from cinematographers means a lot to me. As for the Oscar nomination, I don’t even want to think about it until after the ASC Awards. It’s all too much to take in at once.”

Expressing this deep appreciation mixed in with a smattering of lingering disbelief is Guillaume Schiffman, AFC, who received Best Cinematography Oscar, ASC Award and BAFTA nominations for his lensing of *The Artist*, directed by Michel Hazanavicius. (This past Sunday, Schiffman won the BAFTA Award while the top ASC honor went to Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC, for *The Tree of Life*.)

Overall Schiffman is reveling in the accolades bestowed on *The Artist* and his colleagues, citing most recently the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award for Hazanavicius and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award for Male Lead Actor Jean Dujardin.

Yet the road for *The Artist* to ASC, Oscar, DGA, SAG, BAFTA and assorted other varieties of industry awards show recognition had its bumps along the way. “For us the first challenge was to get the chance to do the movie to begin with. I remember hanging out with Michel, trying to prep this movie but not knowing

if we were going to do it. The next challenge is that in order to get the go-ahead to do the film, we had to agree to shoot it in 36 days. We accepted because we wanted the movie to get made. But 36 days is awfully tight, particularly with a period piece, with lots of sets to light, and some not easy to light for the desired effect. You had scenes like the sound test screening which was like the beginning of *Citizen Kane* with a ‘News on the March’ [newsreel]. We had to play a lot with light, shadows and black. Doing something like that under a time crunch is a major challenge.”

Key, though, in realizing the film within challenging time constraints was the working rapport he and Hazanavicius have developed over the years, first working on commercials and then on two French spy spoof comedy features, *OSS 117: Cairo*, *Nest of Spies* and the sequel, *OSS 117: Lost in Rio*.

“Michel is a great collaborator and friend,” related Schiffman. “We have done two movies before and we help each other every day. We first met years back on a movie that didn’t get made. A little later, though, he asked me to shoot a commercial for him. We spent two years working in commercials before he got the first OSS movie. He was doing comedy commercials. I learned how he likes to treat comedy, how he likes to work with actors. Yet with all this comedy, it was important to Michel how the movie looked, the framing. For the first comedy movie he wanted a 1950s look, then a 1970s style for the sequel. We recreated the lighting and the climate of the movies

of those eras but obviously *The Artist* was even more challenging.

“The challenge stems from the difference between comedies and something like *The Artist*. Comedies can be much more forgiving if the lighting is a bit off—as long as there are laughs. *The Artist*, though, is a silent drama/comedy where the lighting tells a lot—it can’t be off for even the slightest moment. You tell the story with your light, shadows, use of black. Without sound, the visual takes on an even greater importance.”

Schiffman made numerous tests of black-and-white film, and he and Ha-



From top left clockwise: *The Artist*; *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*; on location for *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*.

# CINEMATOGRAPHERS & CAMERAS



**Guillaume Schiffman, AFC**

zanavicius ultimately decided to shoot on 35mm Kodak color stock.

"The black-and-white stock," explained Schiffman, "is too sharp so we shot color and made it black and white in postproduction digital timing. For us, that was the best way to go."

The DP also credited Panavision for providing old lenses with a special treatment that helped get "the desired look and softness we needed."

Schiffman additionally cited the significant contributions made by gaffer Jim Plannette.

"I met a lot of gaffers and was being encouraged to go with one of these young guys," Schiffman recalled. "Jim was the oldest of the bunch. He started as a gaffer on *Young Frankenstein*. His father was a gaffer during the silent movie era. He knows a lot, did a great deal of research and helped me and the crew tremendously."

Schiffman said it was a great thrill to shoot *The Artist* on 35mm film, to work on the end scene since he's a self-avowed "fan of musicals—Busby Berkeley, my dad was in love with Ginger Rogers," and to shoot entirely in Los Angeles.

"Michel and I love so much the American movies. We were raised on American directors and cinematographers. We are big fans of American filmmaking. To shoot here and to have a movie that people are seeing in America is exciting."

While an unabashed lover of shooting film, Schiffman is a realist. "I've done movies in digital. I have to—it's the future. You cannot turn your back on that. I hope I get the opportunity to do more movies in 35mm film. But in the past I've used RED and Genesis. And I've just shot a feature with ARRI's ALEXA."

That ALEXA-lensed movie is *Infidels* (*Les Infidèles*), which features the work of seven directors, each addressing male infidelity in an individual sketch or story.

Included in that directorial mix is Hazanavicius. At first, Schiffman was approached to shoot just the Hazanavicius-directed segment of the feature but the DP countered that he wanted to shoot the entire project. He got his wish, and *Infidels* is slated for release in France later this month. It will also gain exposure internationally, including in the U.S. as The Weinstein

Company (which distributed *The Artist*) has purchased the film.

Schiffman was favorably impressed with the ALEXA and wouldn't hesitate to work on it again.

"In terms of skin tones and so many aspects, the ALEXA is the best digital experience I've had."

He noted, though, that the RED EPIC could also be a game changer:

Yet for the moment he's still drawn to the ALEXA in that it looks and feels more like a camera.

Schiffman, who has dual citizenship status in the U.S. and in France, also hopes to have more occasions to be drawn into the American filmmaking market.

Just prior to embarking on *The Artist*, Schiffman became a member

of the International Cinematographers Guild, IATSE Local 600. And Schiffman recently signed with the William Morris Endeavor (WME) talent agency for exclusive representation in theatrical motion pictures as well as commercials.

## **Jeff Cronenweth, ASC**

For two straight years, Jeff

Cronenweth, ASC, has earned ASC Award and Best Cinematography Oscar nominations on the strength of a David Fincher-directed film.

Last year, it was *The Social Network*; this year, *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*.

Cronenweth said he finds it "enormously honoring, flattering and

*Continued on page 12*

## D A T T N E R



### **American Society of Cinematographers Award Winners and Nominees:**

#### **MARTIN RUHE : WINNER**

##### **PAGE EIGHT**

*Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography in a  
Television Movie or Mini-Series*

#### **JOHN LINDLEY, ASC**

##### **PAN AM - "Pilot"**

*Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography in a  
One Hour Episodic Television Series/Pilot*

#### **DAVID STOCKTON, ASC**

##### **CHASE - "Narco, Pt. 2"**

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### **Art Directors Guild**

Award Nominee

### **EVE STEWART**

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### **KRIS KACHIKIS**

**2011 CINEMATOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR**

Genie Award Nominee

### **JON JOFFIN**

#### **DAYDREAM NATION**

*Best Achievement in Cinematography*

## Jeff Cronenweth, Aaron Phillips Discuss Their Respective Long

Continued from page 11

humbling to be nominated by your peers. But it's bittersweet in that any Fincher movie is the ultimate collaboration. He puts so much into every aspect of a movie and for him to not be appreciated the same way [with an Oscar nomination for Best Director] is kind of unfortunate.

Having said that, I feel that I share my ASC and Oscar nominations with him," affirmed Cronenweth. "He's such an incredible collaborator."

Landing the ASC and Academy Award nominations this year was perhaps more gratifying than in 2011, conjectured Cronenweth.

"There was such momentum behind *The Social Network*, it had so many things going for it while this [*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*] was much different. It was a longer production on a grander scale, a much more complicated movie. It was a tougher road to hoe in many respects, and to get recognition at the end of that long journey was even more satisfying and meaningful than it was the previous year."

Cronenweth noted that *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* presented "daunting lighting challenges, particularly for the final night sequence of the film in Stockholm. And just getting in tune with the sunrises and sunsets and that country's light patterns was a challenge."

Cronenweth has enjoyed a long track record of collaboration with



Jeff Cronenweth, ASC

Fincher which encompasses commercials and serving as DP on *Fight Club* (a dozen years prior to *The Social Network*), and shooting second unit for *The Game* and *Se7en*. Cronenweth first shot some insert work for Fincher on a Madonna music video, "Oh Father," back in the late 1980s. Cronenweth's father, the late, legendary cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth, ASC, served as DP on that Madonna clip.

"Somehow, probably just through pure plain genetics, I was able to match the footage shot by my father for that music video."

Speaking of his father, Jeff Cronenweth noted that the aforementioned ASC Award nominations carry a special meaning. "My journey has been a little different than most," said Jeff Cronenweth. "I have been going to the ASC Awards since I was a young adult. My dad won the very first ASC Award for *Peggy Sue Got Married* [1986]. To have grown up with the

ASC and to now have those talented artists give you a nod is monumental. It fulfills a dream for me."

Harkening back to that Madonna clip and proceeding throughout his career, Jeff Cronenweth noted that Fincher "has always been very generous, giving me opportunities that allowed me to stretch myself creatively and technically as an artist. I remember when he called me in for *Fight Club*, I thought it was for second unit. Instead David gave me the chance to serve as that film's cinematographer. It was a tremendously gratifying experience.

"Really," continued Cronenweth, "if David calls you, do you even need to read the script? Of course not—you know that the project will be worthwhile, ambitious, creative and challenging."

Pushing the envelope with cameras is something that *The Social Network* and *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* have in common. For the former, Cronenweth shot with a then state-of-the-art RED camera, which filmmaker Steven Soderbergh provided for Fincher. Cronenweth had used RED in the past but found this new iteration with the Mysterium-X chip to be advantageous.

"I believe," related the DP, "that this was the first major movie to use this new chip, which offered increased dynamic range in latitude and color, the ability to hold highlights better than its predecessor, and the capability to deal well with warm light."

Cronenweth started out lensing *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* with the RED ONE and then shifted to the RED EPIC as it became more practical to deploy through the availability of special software.

He estimated that 75 to 80 percent of the movie was shot on the RED ONE, with the balance on EPIC. "It was a great, challenging experience to see what the cameras could do, migrating from one to the other," said Cronenweth who noted that Fincher has been proactive in digital cinematography, citing his choice of Viper for *Zodiac* (with Harris Savides, ASC, as cinematographer) and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (shot by Claudio Miranda, ASC).

Cronenweth even recalled deploying the Sony F35 on a Fincher-directed iPhone spot produced by Anonymous Content a few years ago.

As for his digital experience with Fincher and others, Cronenweth observed, "It's ironic because I have always been a huge film proponent. Film cameras are still prevalent but I don't know when that might start changing as workflows, speed and ability to immediately start interacting



Aaron Phillips

with your footage push us more into the digital world.

"On one hand," he quipped, "I love not having to call the film lab at 5 a.m. wondering if I will have a job that day. The other side, though, is that because film is a photochemical process and not an exact science, there's a magic that can happen, good and bad. If you're brave enough to embrace the mystery and surprises you can get on film, that pushes you. Organically magic things can happen that you can't put your finger on. I miss that part of it."

Cronenweth also continues to be active in commercials on a couple of fronts—shooting for other helmers, and co-directing ad fare.

At press time, for example, he was lensing an undisclosed spot project for director Mark Romanek of Anonymous Content. Cronenweth continues to be handled as a DP by agent Dattner Disputo and Associates. (Cronenweth and Romanek have a history together spanning commercials and long-form fare; the DP shot Romanek's theatrical feature debut, *One Hour Photo*, which was released back in 2002.)

Cronenweth has also been directing commercials as part of a helming duo, The Cronenweths, with brother Tim Cronenweth via Los Angeles production house Untitled Inc.

The Cronenweths most recently directed pop singer/performer JoJo in a Clearasil spot. Additionally, Jeff Cronenweth shot the still photo/print portion of that campaign.

"That's the first time I've handled both the commercials and the still components of a campaign. I'd like to do more of that."

### Aaron Phillips

It was in 1995 that Aaron Phillips first met director Lucy Walker in New York. Since then, they have collaborated on varied projects over the years with Phillips lensing her package of promos for the She TV Network in Japan and a series of spots for American Express, providing additional lensing for the documentary features *Waste Land* (an Oscar-nominated film) and *Countdown to Zero*, and most recently

serving as DP on the short *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* (SHOOT, 1/20), which documents the resurrection of life in Japan following the triple disaster of a devastating earthquake on March 11, 2011, which triggered a tsunami as well as a nuclear radiation crisis. As part of the healing process, the blooming of the cherry blossoms inspire the Japanese people to persevere and start anew.

This short, which plays like a visual haiku relating a story of survival and triumph of the human spirit, recently won the Sundance Film Festival Jury Prize in Short Film, Non-Fiction, and is an Academy Award nominee in the Documentary Short Subject category.

Phillips recalled the genesis of *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom*. "Lucy was meant to be promoting her film *Countdown to Zero* in Japan and while there she was planning to make a short film about cherry blossoms which have always fascinated her and once again she invited me along as her DP. Then the tsunami struck. At first we abandoned the project but then quickly realized that this was an incredibly poignant time in Japanese culture, the extremes of nature, the rich history of the beauty and the celebration of the cherry blossom juxtaposed with the fury and destruction of the tsunami. Along with Lucy's production company S&D [Walker is represented for spots and branded content by Supply&Demand Integrated], we quickly took action and flew to Japan a few days later."

Phillips deployed his Canon 7D HD/SLR Camera and L Series zoom lenses based on his positive working experience with both in tandem.

"I had used this camera on various projects before and was quite impressed by its image quality and low light sensitivity, its 35mm motion picture sized sensor and its small size. Because the Canon 7D is actually a stills photography camera, most people recognize it as such and don't realize that we are actually shooting in lovely HD. This is a huge boon for filmmakers and the HD/SLR format has been heartily embraced."

Since the Canon 7D package wasn't obtrusive, it had, observed Phillips, "a huge influence on the Japanese people's willingness to speak with us. As we approached them, they weren't overwhelmed by large cameras and boom poles and banks of lights. It was much more personal and sensitive."

The shoot was originally planned in two phases, the first being capturing the cherry blossoms starting down south in Kyoto and then on to Hiroshima and finally Tokyo.

"Unfortunately," noted Phillips, "they were blooming very late this



The Artist



The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo

## and Short-Form Films

year and we were scrambling to find our shots with few options. All the while Lucy and James [MacWhyte, an adept translator/driver/sound assistant/jack of all trades] were arranging our next phase, which would take us up north to the areas hardest hit by the tsunami.

"There were numerous logistical questions and complications," continued Phillips. "Could we access these areas by road? Would we find accommodations? How dangerous would this actually be? Would the Japanese authorities allow us into these areas? Once again, our small crew size and our small equipment package proved to be invaluable."

The skeleton crew found itself sleeping in various hotels and ryokans (traditional Japanese inns) along with the numerous rescue and relief workers dispatched to these areas.

"There was many a night that we were awakened by aftershocks and tremors and at one ryokan we would wake in the morning and find new cracks in the walls," shared Phillips. "Having never experienced an earthquake before, it was an incredible experience and I will never forget lying on my stomach framing up a low-angle shot of a row of blooming lilies with a long row of beautifully blossoming cherry trees in the background when a 7.0 magnitude tremor struck. I looked up and saw the buildings of the city of Iwaki swaying and felt as if I were on a boat rocking in the waves. I was awestruck.

"The destruction suffered by the city of Iwaki was exceptionally graphic because it was first subjected to an earthquake, which burst gas storage tanks causing massive fires and then was inundated by the powerful tsunami. There were block after block of charred buildings, whole neighborhoods frozen in time and the sound of loose corrugated metal swaying and banging from the wind.

"And then," recollected Phillips, "we would find a blossoming cherry tree, once again presenting this powerful, poetic juxtaposition of beauty

and destruction."

For Phillips, the experience was most profound and made a lasting, heartfelt impression.

"Under normal circumstances many of the people whom we interviewed would have been celebrating the cherry blossom season but instead were dealing with the enormous challenges at hand. Many people said that the blossoms this year gave them the strength and the fortitude to press on and to not crumble under such challenges. The Japanese culture has an enormous respect for and connection with nature, which became more and more apparent in our interviews."

Phillips, who is represented by The Skouras Agency, has credits that include digital shorts for *Saturday Night Live*, pilot episodes of *Schooled* and *The Game Killers*, title sequences for such shows as *Boardwalk Empire*, *Game of Thrones*, *Damages*, and *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*, commercials for Toyota, NFL, Nike, Samsung, Sephora, Victoria's Secret and Google, and assorted music videos.

Phillips began his career as a DP shooting film, then started exploring HD and now has diversified into digital formats such as RED, Alexa, Phantom and HD SLR. "I have an understanding of and a fondness for shooting on film stock but I have embraced the new digital formats and have grown accustomed to and recognize the industry shift towards these formats," he related.

Still, Phillips recalls his days experimenting with film. While a film student at Bard College in the early 1990s, he explored "the myriad options which were available to us at the time shooting with virtually all film emulsions and experimenting with their various characteristics through pushing and pulling processing, cross-processing, optical printing, filtering black-and-white film to achieve various unique looks and playing with grain structure. I really miss the Ektachrome VNF stocks which have been discontinued by Kodak. They were so unique and painterly."



The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom

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## Oscar On Location

*Nominated Films Make Indelible Impact*

By Robert Goldrich

*The Descendants*—Oscar-nominated this year for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Leading Actor, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Editing—has been lauded for its mesh of dramatic and comedic elements. Yet there's another genre that isn't as generally acknowledged, what its director Alexander Payne refers to as a "documentary feel" relative to where the film was shot, Hawaii.

Speaking at the Directors Guild of America's "Meet The DGA Award Feature Nominees" panel discussion last month in Los Angeles, Payne observed that some have commented that *The Descendants* is engaging yet paradoxically remains "mellow" and kind of "lopes along" at times. Payne explained that this is the "feeling of life on the Islands seeping into the film." He noted that he sought to capture a sense of the "human landscape and the rhythms" of Hawaii. Part of that experience, Payne related, is the wonder of nature's beauty and "how puny" it makes you feel—but "in a noble way. You're happy to feel puny against that majesty of nature."

And while Hawaii is very much a character in *The Descendants*, so too did the film weave its way into the Islands, having a positive impact on varied fronts.

That impact jibes with Georja Skinner's title of chief officer, creative services division for the State of Hawaii Film Office. "My job is to advance the great talent that's here across all the arts, music, film and digital media sectors," she related. "*The Descendants* has done just that."

For example, Walea Constantinau, film commissioner, Honolulu Film Office, noted that *The Descendants* is "by far the most successful film by a local author [the film is based on the novel by Kauai Hart Hemmings]....As a result of this success, we've heard from mainland production companies who have expressed interest in meeting with other authors in Hawaii, asking us for any finished scripts. There's interest bubbling in stories of Hawaii."

Constantinau observed that in the same way that *Bridesmaids* changed the perception of female comedy leads in a film, *The Descendants* has changed perceptions about Hawaii, underscoring that "movies made in Hawaii can also be about Hawaii and have universal appeal. A new storytelling capacity has been revealed."

Meanwhile the music of Hawaii, showcased in the score of *The Descendants*, has picked up significant mainstream momentum, featuring the music of such legends as Gabby Pahinui, the father of modern slack key guitar. In fact at press time the movie's soundtrack had maintained its number one position on the *Billboard* world chart for five weeks and counting. "Music is clearly a character in the film," observed Skinner. "Local musicians have been able to monetize their creative talents across many platforms, from the film itself, CDs [the album is on the Sony Classics label], downloads, DVD sales. Alexander's [director Payne] music supervisor and music editor are great disciples of the Hawaiian music movement. The film has really amped up the exposure for Hawaii's creative music talent."

Slack key guitarists like Keola Beamer and Jeff Peterson recorded specifically for the movie's soundtrack. And Dondi Bastone, the alluded to music supervisor on *The Descendants*, told National Public Radio that he and Payne plan to enter the CD into the Grammy Awards competition for consideration as best soundtrack compilation.

Cast and crew were on the Islands for five months, with shooting taking place primarily on Oahu, with a week on Kauai, and a day on the Big Island. While figures aren't broken out in terms of how much money the film generated for the state economy, suffice it to say that the impact was significant, with 80 percent of the crew being local. Hawaii hosted 10 features in 2010, contributing to a landmark year in production for the Islands, with *The Descendants* figuring prominently. In 2010 Hawaii played host



*The Descendants*

# HOT LOCATIONS

to some \$400 million in filming, the state's best year ever.

Skinner and Constantinau affirmed that the profoundly positive impact of *The Descendants* on Hawaii stems from Payne's deep commitment to understand life on the Islands. They said that Payne, his cast and crew immersed themselves in Hawaii so they could do full justice to it as a character within the film. "They peeled back layers to reveal the Hawaii we here know," said Constantinau. "Personally the locals here who saw their efforts were moved. And the people here who see the film are moved. Being able to capture the distinctiveness of who we are with the emotional balance required by the film's story is the mark of a master filmmaker."

Another ripple effect of *The Descendants* has been on prospects for increased tourism. By showing sides of Hawaii that are not of the typical touristy ilk, the movie has piqued interest among travelers to experience a different Hawaii. The film has played to responsive audiences in Europe, for example, with travelers from there booking trips to the Islands, staying for longer stretches to experience the history and culture of Hawaii.

"Those of us who live here know there's something special about Hawaii. This film," said Skinner, "cracks open a little window for audiences to see that in a different, real way. That only happens when you have a very careful, thoughtful and heartfelt filmmaker who wants to tell a story well."

## The Help

*The Help*, nominated for Best Picture, Best Leading Actress and Supporting Actress Oscars, helped Mississippi, and particularly the city of Greenwood, in assorted ways beyond the dollars it directly poured into the local economy. The film also paved a path for an increased incentives package to attract future filming into Mississippi, has spurred on not only tourism throughout the state but also the development of a community center and mentoring program in historic Baptist Town, and has served to lift the spirits of many residents.

"It's the gift that keeps on giving," observed Bill Crump, chairman of the Greenwood-Leflore County Economic Development Foundation. Beyond being critically acclaimed for its artistry in conveying a substantive story, the film has made Greenwood mainstream. This realization sank in for Crump when he saw that a showcase prize package on TV game show *The Price Is Right* included a vacation to Greenwood to see where *The Help* was filmed.

"Actors and actresses in *The Help* are interviewed on talk shows and they all have positive things to say about Mississippi, its people," noted Crump. "I saw Allison Janney say she

had never been to the South before, telling people they need to go to Mississippi, that it's one of the most hospitable places on earth. You can't buy publicity like that, and it's been very high profile during the awards season. Tourism is up and it's all because of *The Help* and director/writer Tate Taylor and producer Brunson Green, two Mississippians, who wanted to bring

their film here."

Crump said that he, Green, Taylor and Ward Emling, director of the Mississippi Film Office, were among those who worked hard to put together an incentives package that made Mississippi more financially viable when stacked up against Louisiana, its main filming location competitor for *The Help*. "When Tate and Brunson

first came here to scout around, all they had was a script and a dream," recalled Crump. "They didn't have any financial backing yet. We worked with them closely to make that dream a reality for them and for Mississippi.

Aside from a day in Clarksdale and several in Jackson, Mississippi, *The Help* was shot entirely in Greenwood. The production crew was in the state

for some six months, and shot 60 days in Greenwood. Crump reported that the direct economic impact on Greenwood—sans any multiplier—was \$13 million. Conservatively, an economic multiplier of two or three could be applied to give a better handle on direct and indirect impact combined.

But the fiscal bottom line extends  
*Continued on page 16*

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## The Help Shines In Mississippi; A Look At Other Films, Locales

Continued from page 15

even well beyond that, according to Emling. Legislators, economic development people, the public at large saw first hand what *The Help* meant to the local and state economy. The impact was easy to see in that Greenwood is a small city with a handful of restaurants, hotels, bars and other vendors. "I've been talking about the impact of the film business for 21 years here—what it can do for a community," said Emling. "But *The Help*'s impact on Greenwood was the perfect case study. Suddenly I'd go to economic development conferences in Mississippi and people were believers. I'd hear statements like, 'If you don't think film-making is economic development, you don't understand what's happening in Greenwood.'"

This more widespread understanding of filming's importance to the health of the economy in turn translated into Mississippi taking action to encourage more of such activity. The incentives package improved five percent with the rebate increasing from 20 to 25 percent for local spend and nonresident payroll and from 25 to 30 percent for resident payroll. The expanded incentives package now also applies for the first time to content distributed via streaming video and the Internet. Also covered are per diems and housing allowances.

The per diem inclusion came about thanks in large part to some legwork by Crump who had the advantage of the

cast and crew being almost exclusively in Greenwood. Crump recalled one day a merchant telling him he had never seen so many \$50 bills in his life. This got Crump on the research path as he confirmed that per diems were paid in cash, mainly in 50 and \$100 denominations. Crump then went to the local banks. A typical finding was that for the six months prior to the arrival of *The Help*, one bank had deposited \$10,000 in \$50 bills. By sharp contrast, the first month *The Help* was in town, that same bank saw an influx of \$30,000 in \$50 bills. The next month, that total went up to \$40,000 and it kept climbing from month to month. "That was just at one bank—all the other banks had similar reports," noted Crump who added this was the proof that legislators required, showing that per diems were being spent locally. As a result, the state legislature approved per diems being added to the rebate package.

For Crump, the economic impact of filming hits home when reduced to individual stories. "I went to a restaurant here in Greenwood today for lunch. The owner there thanked us for bringing *The Help* into town because it helped her business so much. She said they had the best year they have ever had."

However, the positive impact of *The Help* promises to last well beyond one good year of business—not just due to the continued effect of improved filming incentives but also with tangible benefits to be realized by the Green-

wood community of Baptist Town where parts of the movie were filmed.

Cast and crew formed attachments to Baptist Town and wanted to help the community for which a revitalization program was already underway. Just prior to leaving Mississippi, the cast and crew took up a collection among themselves, raising \$30,000 to start a nonprofit tax-exempt foundation to partner with other revitalization entities. Later, *The Help* made its world premiere in Jackson, Miss., a gala event which included a reception at the governor's mansion replete with the movie's stars. The festivities raised \$150,000 for Baptist Town, with the funds being put towards the development of a community center as well as a mentoring program for children.

Crump concluded, "*The Help* represents the most positive professional experience I've ever been through from start to finish."

### The Artist

Nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Director, Lead Actor, Supporting Actress, Cinematography, Editing and Original Screenplay, *The Artist* has already cleaned up on the awards show circuit, with the DGA Award and assorted other honors. But flying below the radar is an award the film received at the end of January—the Los Angeles City Council's first "Made in Hollywood" kudo. The City of Angels proclaimed Tuesday, January 31, "*The Artist* Day" because the film is the only one of this year's nine Best Picture nominees to be filmed entirely in Los Angeles.

If *The Artist* wins the Best Picture Oscar, it will be the first film lensed in Los Angeles to do so since *Crash* (shot primarily in L.A.), which won in '06.

Among the classic L.A. lensing locations for *The Artist* were The Orpheum theater and The Los Angeles Theater downtown, the Bradbury Building downtown, the Wilshire Ebell Theater, the American Film Institute and Cicada Restaurant.

While motion pictures being "made in Hollywood" used to be the norm,

an award carrying that moniker has been deemed necessary in order to recognize films during an era where runaway production—to other states and for that matter, countries—has become commonplace.

### Featured attractions

Continuing our locations rundown, here are other films that have performed well on the awards circuit:

#### Moneyball

**Director:** Bennett Miller

Six Oscar nominations (Best Picture, Adapted Screenplay, Lead Actor, Supporting Actor, Editing, Sound Mixing)

**Locations:** Oakland, Calif. (including Oakland A's stadium), downtown Los Angeles, Cal State University Long Beach, Fenway Park in Boston,

**Film Offices:** California Film Commission, Oakland Film Office, FilmL.A., Massachusetts Film Office

#### The Tree Of Life

**Director:** Terrence Malick

Three Oscar nominations (Best Picture, Best Director, Cinematography); Cannes Film Festival, won Palme d'Or.

**Locations:** Austin, Dallas, Bastrop, Houston, La Grange, Matagorda, San Marcos, Smithville and Waco, Texas; Death Valley National Park, Calif.; Bonneville Salt Flats and Goblin Valley State Park, Utah; Hawaii; Chile; Iceland; Malta; Palau; Italy.

**Film Offices:** Texas Film Commission; Calif. Film Commission; Utah Film Office; Hawaii Film Office; Chile Film Commission; Malta Film Commission; Italian Film Commission

#### The Ides of March

**Director:** George Clooney

Oscar nominee (Adapted Screenplay)

**Locations:** Ann Arbor, Mich.; Cincinnati and Oxford, Ohio; Covington and Newport, Kentucky

**Film Offices:** Michigan Film Office, Ann Arbor Area Film Office; Ohio Film Office; Kentucky Film Office

#### Drive

**Director:** Nicolas Winding Refn

Oscar nominee (Sound Editing); Cannes Film Festival, won for Best Director; Independent Spirit Award nominee (Best Director)

**Locations:** Los Angeles (including MacArthur Park)

**Film Office:** FilmL.A.

#### Take Shelter

**Director:** Jeff Nichols

Five Independent Spirit Award nominations (Best Feature, Director, Male Lead, Supporting Female, Producers Award); Cannes Film Festival, won Critics Week Grand Prize

**Locations:** Northeast Ohio, Cleveland area, Lorain County, in & around Grafton, LaGrange, Elyria and Oberlin

**Film Offices:** Ohio Film Office, Greater Cleveland Film Commission

#### 50/50

**Director:** Jonathan Levine

Three Independent Spirit Award nominations (Best Feature, First Screenplay, Supporting Female)

**Locations:** Seattle, Vancouver, B.C.

**Film Offices:** B.C. Film Commission, Office of Film+Music, Seattle

#### Young Adult

**Director:** Jason Reitman,

WGA Award nomination (Best Original Screenplay); National Society of Film Critics nomination (Best Supporting Actor)

**Locations:** Minneapolis, Rogers and Sherburne County, Minnesota; New York City, White Plains, Long Island and Nanuet, NY

**Film Offices:** Minnesota Film & TV; New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & Television Development; The City of New York Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting; Nassau County Film Office

#### Hello I Must Be Going

**Director:** Todd Louiso

Sundance Film Festival nomination for Grand Jury Prize

**Location:** Westport, CT

**Film Office:** The Office of Film, TV & Digital Media, CT Dept. of Economic & Community Development



The Help

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From top left, clockwise: *Hugo*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, *Real Steel*, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, DirecTV's "Hot House," *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, Volkswagen's "Black Beetle."

## The Awards Show Circuit

The road to the red carpet isn't carpeted. Instead it's often an uncharted path—or sometimes there's no path to begin with, necessitating that filmmakers construct one to meet assorted creative and technical challenges.

So *SHOOT* looked to gain further insights into the path taken and its journey, tapping into VFX and/or animation artisans who were behind several of the notable projects to emerge this awards season, such as:

- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, nominated for the Visual Effects Oscar.
- *Hugo*, an Academy Award nominee in the Visual Effects category, and earlier this month the winner of two VES Awards—for Outstanding Supporting Visual Effects in a Feature Motion Picture, and for Outstanding Virtual Cinematography in a Live Action Feature.
- *Real Steel*, which earned a Best Visual Effects Oscar nomination.
- *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, also nominated for a Visual Effects Oscar as well as recipient of two VES Awards—for Outstanding Visual Effects in a Visual Effects-Driven Motion Picture, and for Outstanding Animated Character (Caesar) in a Live Action Feature Motion Picture.
- *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, Academy Award-nominated for Visual Effects, and a two-time VES Award winner—for Outstanding Created Environment in a Live Action Feature Motion Picture, and for Outstanding Models (Driller) in a Feature.
- DirecTV's "Hot House," one of the spots that helped director Noam Murro of Biscuit Filmworks earn the DGA Award as Best Commercial Director of 2011. Out of Grey New York, "Hot House" was also nominated in the VES category for Outstanding Compositing in a Broadcast Program or Commercial.
- And Volkswagen's "Black Beetle," one of the commercials that helped director Dante Ariola of MJZ earn his sixth career DGA Award nomination. The spot came out of Deutsch LA.

*SHOOT* posed the following question to VFX artisans involved in these projects:

**What was (were) the greatest creative and/or technical challenge(s) from a visual effects standpoint posed by your Oscar, VES or DGA-nominated work?**

Here's a sampling of the feedback we received:



**Matthew Butler, Digital Domain, VFX supervisor, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*** (ILM was the lead VFX house on this film; DD's Butler is one of the movie's Oscar-nominated artists.)

*Transformers: Dark of the Moon* brought Digital Domain back together with director Michael Bay and ILM. It also brought the franchise to audiences in stereo 3D for the first time. Our primary tasks were to create and animate a number of new and returning characters, a sequence where protoforms rise out of the Moon's surface and escape through a space portal, and one featuring live-action skydiving soldiers bailing out of flaming helicopters and flying over a destroyed Chicago.

That "Birdmen" sequence had several challenges. Michael knew that he wanted to shoot it with an overcranked camera—at 120 fps. Creatively that hyper-slow motion is beautiful. Technically, it's incredibly complex. The plate was shot monoscopically, because of the high-speed camera, which meant we had to dimensionalize it later. There's a completely CG aircraft, on fire, falling through the frame right in front of the audience's eyes. Creating fire and fluid simulations that were shown in slow motion meant being completely exposed. Because of the detail in that CG Osprey and associated fire and smoke, we wanted to avoid dimensionalizing the CG work. So, instead of turning over the whole shot for conversion, we designed a CG camera and gave our Stereo Group the specs to match, so they could dimensionalize the plate elements only. We then integrated our CG elements into it.

The "Moon Portal" sequence was challenging in that the moon's environment has no atmosphere, with dynamics and visual attenuation that are different from Earth's. It's quite beautiful but smacks of unreality. To achieve a more believable look we used real elevation map data to generate accurate topography, and studied the moon in hundreds of reference photos. For animation, we had to consider that gravity on the moon is 1/6th of Earth's, so the protoforms had to move according to the laws of physics without appearing to run in slow motion.

Also, the movie was shot with many different cameras—stereo digital F35s, anamorphic 35mm film mono, spherical 35mm film mono from the Spacecam work and stereo SI-2K as well as 16 mm color and black-and-white. Because Michael wanted the Decepticon vision to feel real and hand-held, we also had video. Each format has its own idiosyncrasy, and we developed approaches to accommodate for their differences and to integrate all of this footage as seamlessly as possible.

*Continued on page 20*

**Oscar VFX nominees discuss challenges as do artisans with a hand in DGA spot win, nomination**

**A SHOOT Staff Report**

## VISUAL EFFECTS &amp; ANIMATION

	TITLE	VISUAL EFFECTS/ ANIMATION	AGENCY	PRODUCTION
1	 Bing's "Bumble-Less"	<b>Bent Image Lab, Portland, Ore.</b> Ken Lidster, dir.; Ray Di Carlo, Tsui Ling Toomer, EPs; Kara Place, sr. prod.; Keith Rice, prodn coordinator; Octavia Hunter, a.d.; Dan Ackerman, DP; Jerold Howard, Joe Mello, animators; Greg Arden, art dir.; Evan Stewart, art coordinator; Matt McKenna, puppet lead; Kimi Kaplowitz, Marty Easterday, Brandy Cochrane, Hazel Malone, puppet fabrication; Samala Coffey, Maeve Gallahan, jr puppet fabrication; Kate Fender, puppet costumer lead; Sarah Frechette, puppet costumer; Gary McRobert, armaturist; Sam Niemann, storybd.; Abbey Paccia, Stephen Bodin, Traci Cook, 2D; Brian Peitrowski, models; Perri Harding, Mich Conklin, modelmakers; Tony Candelaria, sculptor; Keenan Keeley, Loren Candela, set fabrication; John Kirkley, set dresser; Jeremiah Brooks, set fabrication PA; Christina Owen, scenic lead; Becky Steele, Mattie Bowden, Derek Bourcier, Renee Staeck, Jesse McManis, Katlin Kennedy, Stephanie Loftis, art PAs; Lane Clark, PA; Jenny Souza, data wrangler; Brent Heise, editor; Orland Nutt, compositor, colorist. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Dragonframe stop motion animation software; Photoshop, Illustrator)	None	Bent Image Lab Ken Lidster, director
2	 U.S. Paralympics' "Words—Own Your Life"	<b>MiniVegas, Amsterdam, London, Los Angeles</b> Luc Schurgers, creative director; Maarten Boon, managnig director; Ellen Utrecht, exec producer; Roben Schlikker, Klaas-Harm de Boer, 3D artists/animators; David Zaretti, compositor/online operator. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Maya, Nuke)	Ignited, bicoastal	Green Dot Films, Santa Monica, Calif. Luc Schurgers, director
3	 Wrigley 5 Gum RPM's "Choose Your Energy"	<b>Mirada, Los Angeles</b> John Fragomeni, head of FX & animation; Patrick Nugent, executive producer; Zack Tucker, VFX supervisor; Kaan Atilla, creative director; Matt Thunell, sr. VFX producer; Andrew Ashton, compositing supervisor; Kevin Lau, art director; Kevin Gillen, Houdini FX lead; Isaac Irvin, lighting lead; Chris Noellert, sr. Flame compositor; Brett Reyenger, lead compositor; Joseph Cross, John Dickenson, Vance Kovacs, Giancarlo Lari, Justin Yun, concept artists; Mark Brinn, Jing Zheng, Cosimo Galluzzi, Teodros Hailye, James Levy, Jacklin Yoo, designers; Frank Lin, deigner/ animator; Alex Cannon, Mike Warner, previz/animation; Bryan Repka, modeler; Chris Duncan Ben Neall, texture artists; Tim Clark, matte painter; Charles Storniolio, Jens Zalzal, Houdini FX animators; Brandon Lester, Ovi Bogdan, Carlos Fueyo, Kenny Jackson, Ryan Taylor, lighters; Montana Casey, Bob Chapin, Josh McGuire, Mark Robben, Nuke compositors; Graham Herberster, Dylan Jutt, Michael Maker, Jared Sanders, Sam Winkler, tracking; Elissa Bello, Megan Gaffney, roto; Jef Aquino, Smoke/ conform. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Maya, Houdini, V-Ray, Nuke, Flame)	Energy BBDO, Chicago	Motion Theory, Los Angeles Jon Favreau, director
4	 Coca-Cola's "Catch"	<b>Animal Logic, Sydney</b> David Scott, dir., Feargal Stewart, CG supervisor/character surfer; Georgie Uppington, producer; Sandra Mondange/ Julie Podolski, coordinators; Charles Santos, art dir./character concept artist/matte painter; Michael Halford, environment concept artist/matte painter; Kim Taylor, environment concept artist; Don Walker, Lianne Hughes, Kevin Peaty, storybd; Stefan Literini, JP Molloy, character modellers; Adam Ryan, Darek Oczak, character riggers; Martin Newcombe, Nerys Lincoln, Camela Cheng, Mark Robinson, character surfacers; Sebastian Gourdal, Anita Breitbarth, Aaron Hoffman, environment surfacers; Kurtis Richmond, Cartel Artists, matte painters; Pablo Plaisted, Ned Walker, Tim Rowlandson, Alfie Oliver, animators/ layout & previs artists; Andrew Hunt, layout & previs artist; Mathieu di Muro, animation lead; David Williams, Joe Helmore, Jhon Alvarado, animators; Miles Green, FX lead; Phil Wittmer, Sotiris Bakosis, Larry Townsend, FX artists; Yann Doray, Flame compositor; Samuel Chynoweth, colorist; David Burrows, David Scott, editors. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Zbrush, Photoshop, Mari, XSI, Maya, RenderMan, Nuke, Inferno, Nucoda)	Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, Ore.	Animal Logic, Sydney David Scott, director
5	 Chevy Silverado's "2012"	<b>Method Studios LA</b> Rob Hodgson, sr. VFX supervisor; Benjamin Walsh, VFX sup./creative dir.; Jason Schugardt, CG sup.; Gabby Gourrier, VP of prodn; Stephanie Gilgar, EP/head of prodn; Krystina Wilson, VFX prod.; Anastasia Von Rahl, coordinator; Dominik Bauch, lead compositor; Kevin Sears, lead lighter; Fabio Zapata, tracking sup.; David Parker, Nicholas Kim, David Lockwood, Jodi Tyne, compositors; Chris Sanchez, concept design/matte painting; Dylan Cole, Ev Shipard, Zach Christian, matte painting; Daniel Linger, Jason Bond, Deluxe Digital, roto/paint; Lersak Bunuperadah, Greg Stuhl, Alex Whang, PUNE modeling; Frida Sahono-Jozwik, Jamie Wheeler, texture; Jonathan Mack, FX; Geroge Saavedra, rigging; Benjamin Mattern, animation; David Lo, Chris Brown, David Godwin, Itg.; Tom Stanton, Luis Rodriguez, Daniel Erikson, Apirak Kamjan, Del Depiero, tracking; Julia Macmullen, editorial. <b>Method Studios, Sydney</b> James Rogers, VFX sup.; Andrew Robinson, EP; Jayne da Costa, VFX prod; Mike James, Danny Janevski, David Woodland, matte painting; Gabriel Reichel, compositor; David Orman, Ben Tanti, roto. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Maya, Houdini, Flame, Nuke, Photoshop, Mari, ZBrush)	Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco	Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles Noam Murro, director
6	 The Partnership at Drugfree.org's "Sheep"	<b>Passion Pictures, New York, London</b> Peppermelon-Tomas Garcia, director; Tomas Garcia, art director; Fernando Sarmiento, exec producer; Laura Pettinari, producer; Martin Dasnoy, animation director/TD/particles & hair-grass fx/storyboard; J.F. Mackeprang, assistant director and editor; Juan Molinet, character design; Miguel Cortina, Julio Velazquez, animators; Flavio Greco, additional art; Federico Ben Cosentino, additional art/digital sculpting; Franco Carlesimo, particles & hair-grass FX; Ignacio Godoy, composition. <b>(Toolbox:</b> 3ds Max)	Wing, New York	Passion Pictures Peppermelon-Tomas Garcia, director
7	 Nissan LEAF's "Singing Sockets"	<b>MPC (The Moving Picture Company) LA</b> Asher Edwards, exec producer; Jenny Bright, producer; Jake Montgomery, lead Flame artist; Trent Shumway, Flame artist; Jonah Austin, Yas Koyama, CG artists; Mark Holden, Smoke artist. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Maya, After Effects, Nuke, Flame)	TBWA\Chiat\Day, Los Angeles	MPC Creative, Los Angeles Dan Marsh, director
8	 MINI USA's "The Best Test Drive Ever. Period."	<b>The Mission, Venice, Calif.</b> Michael Pardee, executive producer; Rob Trent, creative director; Joey Brattasani, lead compositor; Ryan Meredith, producer. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Flame, Maya, V-Ray)	Butler, Shine, Stern & Partners, Sausalito, Calif.	Tool of North America, bicoastal. Erich Joiner, director.
9	 NBA's "Happy Together"	<b>Brickyard VFX, Santa Monica</b> Patrick Poulatian, lead VFX artist; Chris Sonia, Mandy Sorenson, Evan Paras, VFX artists; Linda Jackson, producer; Jeff Blodgett, exec producer; Diana Young Gomez, head of production. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Flame)	Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco	Brickyard VFX, Santa Monica.
10	 The California Endowment's "Transform"	<b>Gentleman Scholar, Santa Monica, Calif.</b> Rob Sanborn, exec producer; Tyler Locke, producer; William Campbell, lead 3D artist/VFX supervisor, lead compositor; Matt Lavoy, VFX supervisor/lead compositor; Mike Tello, Heather Aquino, Joseph Chan, James Levy, Sang Shin, Taekyu Kim, designers; Ben Grangereau, Jean Choi, Ian Mankowski, Young Rho, Greg Gangemi, 3D artists. <b>(Toolbox:</b> Photoshop, Maya, V-Ray, After Effects)	Preditorial, Los Angeles	Gentleman Scholar Will Johnson, William Campbell, directors.

## Bumble Beelines Its Way To Top Of Year's First Quarterly Chart

Bent Image Lab-produced Bing spot akin to spirit of classic Xmas TV special *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*

### A SHOOT Staff Report

"Bumble-Less" is more.

Indeed in the case of this client-direct Bing spot, intentionally going for "less" from a technical standpoint—even during a stretch when stacked up against visually sophisticated Super Bowl commercials—proved to be the fast track leading to the top of SHOOT's first quarterly VFX/Animation Top Ten Chart of 2012.

Bumble, a.k.a. the Abominable Snowman, stars in "Bumble-less," marking his modern-day return from the classic, longstanding stop motion animated TV special *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*.

Directed by Ken Lidster of Portland, Ore.-based Bent Image Lab, the :30 commercial finds the beast trying to instill fear into a couple of elves, but his roar isn't what it used to be, and they laugh at him.

Determined to get his monster mojo back, Bumble consults the Bing search engine. Typing "scary monster" into the search field, he quickly locates some helpful videos that help bring him back to frighteningly normal. Inspired by what he sees, the furry, scruffy white creature goes back outside, sneaks up on the unsuspecting elves again and scares the daylights out of them.

"Decide what your holidays will look like with Bing," a voiceover intones at the end of the spot.

There was no advertising agency

involved in the making of "Bumble-Less." Bent Image Lab worked directly with the client, including Sean Carver, director, brand entertainment at Microsoft, Bing.

Initially, Lidster directed four viral videos—"Bumble-Less," "Hot Yoga," "Social Search" and "You Won't Believe This." But Bing liked what they saw so much that they asked the Bent Image Lab crew to go back into the studio and lens more scenes so that they could expand the viral videos—ranging from 22 to 25 seconds in length—into :30 television spots, according to Bent Image Lab executive producer Ray Di Carlo.

"It was very exciting for us because we love these characters," Di Carlo said, noting Bent Image Lab has revived the Rudolph gang for various projects over the years. That said, the Bing assignment marked the first time that Lidster personally got to take the reins of a production featuring the iconic characters, and the director wanted to make sure that Bumble as well as the others looked like they did in the famed television special.

Lidster and his team of animators did their homework, taking the time to watch *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* again—and, surely, they've already seen it numerous times—just to ensure "that everybody was completely on board with the style and how they stood and how they spoke and moved," the director said.



**Ken Lidster**  
Stopped in its tracks

"Bumble-Less" certainly appears as though it could have been excerpted from the original show even though the techniques used in stop-motion today differ greatly from back in the 1960s. "The technical side has advanced miles and miles away from where it was back then. We have systems now to check out how the animation is going as we are working, and we get instant feedback. That whole side of it has evolved even in the last five years," Lidster said, adding, "Five years ago we were using completely different setups and film, and now everything is completely digital."

One thing you'll notice if you look back at *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* is that the characters don't always

move so smoothly. Keeping that in mind, Lidster went for a clunky feel in "Bumble-Less."

"When you see Bumble hiding behind the hill, and he jumps out, it is not super smooth animation," Lidster pointed out, stressing its importance. "If it was, it would feel incorrect."

Lidster, DP Dan Ackerman and their team shot "Bumble-Less" in five days. The production starred a Bumble who stood about 14 inches tall. He had a mechanical armature at his core, housed in a foam body that was covered with fur.

Bumble's feet could be screwed down to the set to keep him in place, and all of his fingers could be articulated. "There is no clay anywhere," Di Carlo noted.

### Scary videos

Besides animating Bumble and the elves for "Bumble-Less," Lidster also had to create the two "scary monster" videos Bumble finds on the Internet. Lidster purposely lowered his production standards for both.

"We wanted the first one to look like a child had done it at home and videotaped it with his parents' camera," he said. "But as soon as we got the thing set up and we started lighting it, we

thought, 'This looks too good.' So we turned on the fluorescents and got a table lamp and blasted it with light so it would look like a kid did it."

The second video was equally as terrible—again, on purpose.

"The second one was supposed to look like it was from a bad TV puppet show. We did a few takes of it, and it just looked great. So we did another couple of takes where the puppet gets lifted too high, and you can see the arm of the guy who is actually operating it," Lidster said. "Now that made it funny."

The director had quite a bit of story to tell in a mere 30 seconds between the initial set-up, the two videos and the final scare.

"That was difficult, but that's what happens with commercial animation. It's like that," Lidster said. "You're always trying to cram stuff in."

Additionally, there were certain restrictions on how the Rudolph characters could be portrayed. "When you use these franchise characters, they're not allowed to actively sell stuff," Di Carlo explained. "So what you're seeing is that in these particular spots, the Internet is just part of their lives. They're not recommending it. They're just using it."



"Bumble-Less"

LOS ANGELES	VANCOUVER	NEW YORK	LONDON	SYDNEY	MELBOURNE

2012 SUPER BOWL HIGHLIGHTS  
CHEVY | 2012 SILVERADO  
KIA | DRIVE THE DREAM  
PEPSI | KINGS COURT  
TIME WARNER CABLE | ENJOY BETTER ANTHEM

2012 YES NOMINATIONS  
FOR OUTSTANDING VISUAL EFFECTS  
JAMESON | FIRE  
KIA | SHARE SOME SOUL

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## Delving Into Creative, Tech Challenges Of Award-Worthy Work

Continued from page 17



**Ben Grossmann, Pixomondo**  
VFX supervisor, *Hugo*

The greatest technical challenge on *Hugo* was also a creative challenge, as we had to adapt our techniques to reflect Marty's [Martin Scorsese's] vision for early filmmaking. *Hugo* revolves around the pioneer of our craft, Georges Méliès, and as such, we wanted to pay homage to him as much as possible. It gave us a great challenge to do things differently and create some of the visual effects the way he would have.

Méliès was a genius. We didn't fully appreciate his work until we really started studying his films during pre-production. Once we had absorbed his body of work more fully, we came away with the inspiration and techniques to tackle many of the film's visual challenges. Rather than immediately jump to the latest technology to tackle every challenge Marty gave us, we started with the simplest and oldest methods first, and worked our way to the modern day approaches as a "last resort."

For example, we had to create a shot where Sasha Baron Cohen is dragged by a train, but we had a train that couldn't move. In Méliès' films, he would create the illusion of something moving or growing by actually moving the opposite thing. So instead of moving the train, we built the set around it on wheels, positioned actors and props on it, and moved the platform. It gave us a convincing, nearly in-camera solution to a 100-year-old problem.

Another scene required a wind-up mouse to give a directed performance. Rather than make a computer-generated mouse, we opted for another old Méliès trick, stop-motion animation. The mouse prop was animated and photographed one frame at a time, to create the illusion of movement, and then composited with the live-action performances of Sir Ben Kingsley and Asa Butterfield. We also used a lot of fun old tricks—like miniatures and timelapse photography—that swept us into the spirit of Méliès' work and helped create the essence of the film. Although there was cutting-edge technology employed to create the stereoscopic VFX, we approached everything the way we thought Méliès the Magician might have if he were here today and that is a big reason *Hugo* has resonated with audiences.



**Erik Nash, Digital Domain,**  
VFX supervisor, *Real Steel*

*Real Steel* is set in the very near future; it just happens to take place in the world of robot boxing. As such, the visual effects effort was geared toward creating a seamless and unquestioned reality to serve as the setting for our father and son story of redemption. The boxing robot conceit had to be realized so as to be absolutely plausible and integrated into the live photography, leaving no doubt in the audience's mind that these robots are real.

Legacy Effects built three animatronic robots that were essential to the realism that director Shawn Levy wanted for interactions between the father, son and their robots. They also served as an invaluable reference for the CG counterparts we developed at Digital Domain. Making the practical and CG robots indistinguishable—making the steel real, was a big challenge.

In addition to the three CG robots created as counterparts to the animatronic robots, Digital Domain modeled and animated nine additional CG robots. Making the boxing matches between these eight-foot tall CG robots feel authentic was a major undertaking, and we designed a virtual production workflow to help us achieve that goal. Working with Giant Studios we first motion-captured the fights (using keyframe animation to remove the rehearsed feel of fight choreography), shot them virtually, and edited the sequences, creating extremely detailed pre-vis to guide principal photography. We brought our motion capture team and hardware with us on location to Detroit. This enabled Shawn and the camera department to shoot the boxing matches using Simul-Cam to make the pre-captured fight animation visible through the shooting camera, in the practical environment, with complete spatial and temporal accuracy. This gave us the potential to imbue the fight cinematography with a visceral immediacy impossible to achieve shooting empty plates in a traditional manner.

Another key creative challenge was to enable the audience to connect with the lead robot, Atom, without the benefit of dialogue or facial expression. Atom's character arc had to be communicated through subtle body movements and personal interactions outside the ring. All three parties involved in creating his performance—puppeteer Jason Mathews of Legacy Effects, MoCap performers Garrett Warren and Edie Davenport and the Digital Domain animation team—had to make Atom an appealing and sympathetic character through the uses of subtle and nuanced body language alone.



**Tom Bussell, head of 3D, The Mill;**  
Volkswagen's "Black Beetle"

When a project is predominantly based around animation, our strong relationship with director Dante Ariola meant that he was happy to take a leap of faith trusting us creatively and technically. The reality of such a quick turnaround and so much CGI in a commercial like VW Beetle is that it only comes together in the final few days, and with the spot debuting during Super Bowl 2011, the pressure was on. The biggest challenge Dante presented us with was getting the hero beetle's design just right. In a car commercial with no actual car, we needed our beetle to subtly reference the VW Bug's design without the insect feeling too engineered. Although our brief was to create an insect that behaved like a car, it was important to stay anatomically correct in order for the animation to be believable.

If you look closely, you can make out subtle shapes in the beetle's shell that act as wheel arches, the eyes are headlamps and the silhouette from the profile is very similar to the VW's design. To achieve this, we studied nature documentaries on insects and gathered slow motion footage, building our digital insects with this in mind. We also referenced iconic movie car chases including *Starsky and Hutch*, *Fast and the Furious*, *The Matrix* and *Bullet*. Another big creative challenge was ensuring all of the FX around the action looked realistic. We created eight main insects and in cases like the mantis and ants, tweaked each to be unique. For all the other insects, we matched them to how nature intended them to be. That was the easier part...

We wanted to go that extra step to ensure the texturing was as close to nature as possible so approached London's Natural History Museum. They helped us find the specific creatures we needed so we could take high-res photographs that would then be used to texture our CGI insects, combining these stills with hand painted textures in Photoshop to get the final result. We then took the model back into ZBrush to add the final details before rendering in XSI and Mental Ray.

All of the background FX were done in Maya and we added particle atmosphere like pollen and small flying insects. Again we used references from various elements, such as radio-controlled cars skidding through dust to cars driving through the desert, although we had to use some artistic license here to ensure we gave the necessary drama Dante's script needed.



**Dan Lemmon, Weta Digital,**  
VFX supervisor, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*

We had a number of significant challenges in making *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. On the technical side, we had to adapt our performance capture system to work in a live-action shooting environment, which meant making it more portable, more flexible, and reconfiguring our hardware so that it could work outdoors in broad daylight. We switched from a passive reflective marker system to an active LED marker system that flashed intense bursts of infrared light directly from the performers' bodies. That allowed the markers to punch through the bright ambient light levels of the outdoor sets. We also revamped our systems so that it took far less time to set up and calibrate a performance volume, and we used new techniques to mask out problematic objects in the scene like shiny cars or bright lights. These advances enabled us to work in cramped and cluttered sets as well large open spaces, and helped us quickly build new performance volumes each time the motion-picture camera moved to a new setup.

Our biggest creative challenge was to preserve the actors' performances while making them look as much like real, present-day apes as possible. One thing we did was use arm extensions anytime the performers were moving quadrupedally. These extensions served to lengthen the performers arms by about 10 inches, bringing their proportions and the orientation of their bodies closer to that of real apes. We also made a number of small modifications to Caesar's facial design so that he could more closely match Andy Serkis' facial expressions. There are obviously big differences between the facial anatomy of a chimpanzee and a human, so the challenge was to sneak in bits of Andy wherever we could without making Caesar look too human. We adapted Caesar's eyes to include folds above the upper eyelids that more closely matched Andy, and we added complexity to Caesar's eyebrows, giving them a slight crease that we saw in many of Andy's facial expressions. That allowed us to translate Andy's performance more directly across to Caesar while still preserving Caesar's "chimpanzee."



**David Vickery, Double Negative Visual Effects,**  
VFX supervisor, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*

It was obvious from the outset that the hugely varied creative and technical hurdles being posed to visual effects by *The Deathly Hallows part 2* were going to be some of the most challenging of the series so far.

Creative industries like ours are driven by rapid technological developments. It's inevitable that at some point after any project, whether its six months or two years later, you will look back at your hard work and know you can improve on it. Part of the beauty of *Harry Potter* is that it's kept letting us go back to it. *Deathly Hallows Part 2* was the eighth movie in the series, and we have worked hard to make each one more spectacular than the last. Directors and movie goers alike quite rightly expect everything to be "better" than last time and being asked to continually re-invent ideas does not get any easier with experience.

One of the brand new visual effects challenges on *HPATDHpt2* was Hogwarts. For each of the previous seven films, Hogwarts has been primarily realized through a combination of practical locations; Art department fabricated sets and scale miniatures, much of which did not exist any more. Shooting the battle of Hogwarts using the existing 1/24th scale miniature would have required many hundreds of model shots. Set pieces would need to be rebuilt at multiple scales and in many states of repair. A shoot of this magnitude would have cost the production many months of painstaking motion control work. The solution for *Deathly Hallows Part 2* was to replace the Hogwarts miniature with a fully digital counterpart.

Vital collaboration with the art department produced over 1,400 architectural blueprints that were the result of over 10 years worth of set construction and miniature builds. VFX had the daunting task of sorting and cataloguing these drawings. The 3D build effort required more than two years worth of modelling and texturing for a team of over 30 artists. The school itself was made up from over 74 individual 3D buildings modelled to three levels of detail. All of which combined to create an asset built from more than 7 million polygons, covering a virtual landscape that stretched for over seven miles.

In order to realize this digital set in a detailed enough way to serve as the arena for the series' grand finale, no detail could be left out. The team referenced heritage castles and cathedrals around the UK in order to model the digital school as it would have been physically built. In the computer we constructed roofs from individual slate tiles all supported by 3D batons, joists and rafters. Towers contained winding stone staircases with beautifully detailed handrails. As we destroyed the school, this wealth of detail we had built into really helped bring it to life.

**Michael Wynd, visual effects supervisor, MPC LA;**  
*DirecTV's "Hot House"*

*DirecTV's "Hot House"* was the fourth of the "frozen moment"-themed commercials that we'd produced at MPC LA, but the first that we'd completed with Noam Murro directing. Our first challenge was to provide Noam the ability to tell the story as he wished without getting too bogged down in the technical issues demanded by postproduction. We wanted to keep the camera fluid without imposing shots to be either locked off or motion controlled, and we needed to develop the means by which we could place the observer and child talent into the inferno without them wearing any fire protection. This basically meant the requirement to create fire where there was none. Creatively the issue was to resolve just how to get in and out of the frozen moments, a topic that was common to all the commercials in the series. Noam's collaborative approach meant that we all had a clear understanding of what was to take place on the shoot and what expectations were being placed on the visual effects.

Noam's team of DP Simon Duggan, Bruce McCloskey's production design, along with the special effects provided by Full Scale Effects presented us with the foundation upon which to build a great commercial.

Obviously the frozen fire was an enormous technical challenge. We used Maya's fluid tools to create many of the fire elements and it was interesting to see in our initial tests just how fluid-like frozen fire actually looks. Some very fine tweaking was required to ensure that the frozen fire actually looked like fire and not a liquid.

The shoot itself was spectacular. Buildings on a sound stage set on fire...repeatedly! Between takes we were literally waiting for the smoke to clear.

From that point forward our task was to enhance the elements that were provided and where necessary, create a blazing inferno in a room that wasn't set alight. MPC's toolset of Flame, Nuke and Maya all came together on this project. Fire, smoke, debris, embers, shadows, highlights, reflections and breaking structures were all digitally created or enhanced, then tracked into the live-action footage to produce the final product.

# SXSW Lineup: Narrative & Documentary Features, Shorts, Panels

Continued from page 1

Franklin. “The question for me was always, ‘who is the guy brave enough in Hollywood to become Franklin?’ A few years ago I cast my eyes on Matt Lucas, an English actor, mostly known for the U.K. TV series *Little Britain*. I liked what I saw and promised myself that if he wants to do *Small Apartments*, I would somehow get this film made. I sent him the book and the script, and got an instant response from him that he wanted to do the movie.”

It took another year or two to get the film going. Favors had to be called in so as to make production viable within a limited budget. “We decided to shoot in Los Angeles, which might seem odd to some in that it can be more expensive to produce here. But it was a good decision because this is a character-driven film and we needed a strong cast,” noted Akerlund. “We aimed high on the cast and when you’re asking actors to do you a favor and work for less, you’ve got a much better chance if all they have to do is roll down the hill and shoot in L.A. rather than them having to fly to Canada, Prague or somewhere else.”

This will mark Akerlund’s first time attending SXSW. “I’m not much of a film festival guy,” he related. “Yet I’ve heard about South By Southwest the past two or three years, even got some phone calls from friends who were there and told me I would enjoy the experience. From what I’ve heard, it seems that it’s becoming what Sundance used to be, which sounds like it could be a good place for a weird movie like mine.”

Akerlund said that another “good place” for him is the spotmaking arena. “It’s what I do the most of and without my experience in advertising, there’s no way I could have done movies and documentaries. Commercials have helped me in collaboration, creatively and on the practical side.”

## Marley

Feature filmmaker (*The Last King of Scotland*), documentarian (the Oscar-winning *One Day in September*,

last year’s YouTube movie *Life In A Day*) and commercial director Kevin Macdonald will see his documentary on musician Bob Marley—titled *Marley*—make its North American debut at SXSW. *Marley* just had its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival.

Macdonald—who’s repped for spots by Chelsea in the U.S. and Rogue Films in the U.K.—first became intrigued by Bob Marley while shooting *The Last King of Scotland* (for which Forest Whitaker won a Best Leading Actor Oscar) in Uganda. “Some of the actors took me into the slums and I saw quotes from Bob Marley on the walls. His message and music have remained relevant. He still speaks to the oppressed in all corners of the world. Yet there’s a strange lack of knowledge about him, even with his universal appeal. He’s a major icon of popular music who comes from a developing world country, which makes him completely different. He resonates with people who don’t have someone to connect with. He came from absolute poverty. His great lyrical songwriting ability and poetic skills—along with his life experience—enable him to speak to the dispossessed.

Made with the support of the Marley family, Macdonald’s documentary tells Bob Marley’s life story, featuring rare footage, performances and revelatory interviews with those people who knew him best. Macdonald credited one of the film’s exec producers, Steve Bing, “a producer with a deep passion for Bob Marley,” as being instrumental in making the documentary a reality.

Macdonald regards SXSW as the ideal festival for his film. SXSW also includes Music (3/13-18) and Interactive (3/9-13) Fest components. SXSW’s film and music orientations, said Macdonald, make it the perfect venue blend for *Marley*.

## Rundown

Among the other filmmakers with spot production community ties who are showcasing films at SXSW are:

- Emmett Malloy, half of The Malloys directing duo repped by HSI Pro-



Kevin Macdonald

ductions for spots, is debuting the feature *Big Easy Express*, which invites us aboard a train ride unlike any other with the likes of Mumford & Sons, Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros, and Old Crow Medicine Show.

- Documentarian Joe Berlinger, repped by @radical.media for spots and branded entertainment, will screen his *Under African Skies*, chronicling the return of Paul Simon to South Africa where he explores the incredible journey of his historic Graceland album, including the political backlash he received for allegedly breaking the UN cultural boycott of South Africa, which was designed to end the Apartheid regime.

- Brian M. Cassidy and Melanie Shatzky—repped for spots by Washington Square Films as the duo Brian and Melanie—directed and wrote *Francine*, which will make its North American premiere at SXSW. The film stars Oscar winner Melissa Leo (*The Fighter*) in the title role, struggling to find her place in a downtrodden lakeside town after leaving behind a life in prison.

- Director Jessica Yu—who’s handled by Nonfiction Unlimited for commercials—directed the SXSW entry *Last Call at the Oasis*, which makes a compelling argument for why the global water crisis will be the central issue facing the world this century.

- Director Matt Piedmont’s feature filmmaking debut, *Casa de mi Padre*, will be screened at SXSW. *SHOOT* covered the Spanish-language com-

edy, which stars Will Ferrell, in its American Film Market coverage several months ago (*SHOOT*, 11/18/11). PRETTYBIRD reps Piedmont for commercials and branded content.

- Matt Lenski, who recently joined Supply & Demand Integrated, breaks into the documentary short films program at SXSW with his *Meaning of Robots*, which is about a 65-year-old man, Mike Sullivan, who has spent the past 10 years shooting an epic stop-motion robot sex film in his apartment. Supply & Demand produced *Meaning of Robots*. Lenski met Sullivan after hiring him to build a miniature set for a Burger King spot out of Crispin Porter+Bogusky. *Meaning of Robots* recently made its world premiere at Sundance.

- Daniels (Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, a duo repped for spots by PRETTYBIRD) directed Battles’ music video “My Machine” which centers on a man’s seemingly never ending fall down an up escalator.

- Keith Schofield, whose spotmaking roost is Caviar, will have his Duck Sauce music video “Big Bad Wolf” screened at SXSW.

- Trish Sie (repped for commercials and music videos by Bob Industries) co-directed with the band OK Go and Pilobolus the OK Go clip “All Is Not Lost,” slated for SXSW screening.

- Bill Plympton, who directs spots via Acme Filmworks, debuts his animated short *Summer Bummer* in

which a guy daydreams about what could be lurking in his backyard pool.

- Julia Pott, who’s with the animation studio Hornet, will have her animated short *Belly* screened.

- Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, who direct spots and branded content under the Henry & Rel banner via Moxie Pictures, will showcase their documentary short *A Brief History of John Baldessari* at SXSW. The short profiles Baldessari, the godfather of conceptual art. Tom Waits narrates.

## Sessions

SXSW will also feature various panel discussions of interest to the ad and filmmaking communities. For example, the SXSW Interactive Festival has a session titled “Credit vs. Collaboration: The Organization Divide.”

The session will center on the “stark contrast between ‘owning’ an idea versus collaborating in an open structure,” read the program synopsis. “It’s often the root of the divide between ‘traditional’ and ‘digital/new media’ people. Because good ideas evolve into better ideas through collaboration and open input, organizations that can effectively bridge these camps are the ones that will survive.”

Featured speakers at this session, slated for Monday, March 12, are Azher Ahmed, sr. VP/director of digital operations for DDB, and Jonathan Sackett, executive VP/chief digital officer of DDB Chicago.



Director Jonas Akerlund looks through the viewfinder.



Bunny Wailer, from the documentary *Marley*

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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](http://www.twitter.com/SHOOTonline).

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Further app details & FAQs at:  
[www.SHOOTonline.com/mobile](http://www.SHOOTonline.com/mobile)

SHOOTmobile



Cameron Day



Carolyn Hadlock



Matt MacDonald

## Creatives Chime In On Big Game Ads

Continued from page 1

spots online prior to their broadcast debut on the Super Bowl. More than half of this year's Super Sunday advertisers put their commercials online well before the NBC telecast—spurred on in part by the success VW had doing this in 2011 with “The Force,” which still has online life with some 50 million hits and counting, sandwiched around an acclaimed run on last year's Super Bowl.

Carolyn Hadlock, principal and exec creative director at Young & Larimore, Indianapolis, related, “I have mixed feelings about it. On one hand, I like the Super Bowl as a live event. I remember how last year's Chrysler spot and tagline ‘Imported from Detroit’ came as a complete surprise.

“It will be interesting to see how many spots generally in the top 10 for the Super Bowl were previewed ahead of time,” she continued. “We've seen research that a degree of familiarity can translate into likability. Did those commercials seen ahead of time benefit from being familiar?”

Hadlock found efforts to mesh broadcast and other screens most intriguing, including Coca-Cola's “Polar Bears” campaign through which people could watch the game online with two bear characters—one rooting for the Giants, the other the New England Patriots. The characters react to the game in real time as we're in their cave hanging out on Super Sunday. “I found that social strategy most interesting but I haven't heard much buzz about it.”

Coca-Cola reported there was considerable buzz—to the tune of some 600,000 people who watched the bears watch the Super Bowl.

### Two worlds

Matt MacDonald, executive creative director of JWT New York, doesn't view online exposure prior to the Super Bowl as a game changer. “It defuses excitement for the advertising community but not for the general public—they are two separate worlds,” he said. “Look at the *Ferris Bueller* ad for Honda. It had the most viral views prior to the Super Bowl last time I checked. Even if it drew 10 million people virally, in the big picture that is still only a fraction of the Super Bowl audience on TV. So most of America was seeing that commercial for the first time during the telecast.

“By contrast, everybody in advertising had previewed the commercial. We're looking at the spots as soon as they're online. For the ad community, the Super Bowl is supposed to be like Christmas. But it felt like the gifts were already unwrapped with the online previews. Most of the general public, though, didn't feel that way.”

Evan Fry, chief creative officer of Victors & Spoils, Boulder, Colo., was the exception to the rule—an ad man who didn't bother to watch any of Super Sunday spots online prior to their broadcast. “I guess it's a sign of the times when clients are jumping the gun in order to get what they perceive as more bang for the buck. They can't wait for their commercials to be reacted to during the game and see what the buzz is that night or the next day. If I had a client on the Super Bowl, I would say wait, give viewers the chance to be more surprised. To show the work ahead of time strikes me as kind of lame.”

Jay Giesen, executive creative director at Brunner, Pittsburgh, said, “It

seems the attempt to create buzz on YouTube is somehow a way of validating the high cost of being an advertiser so the thinking is why not take advantage of another way to get your brand out there. It used to be that you would create the buzz by protecting the idea, not letting it be revealed before the game.”

Giesen observed that it works either way—preview or surprise—as long as the commercial is good. It all comes down to the work, he affirmed. If it engages the audience, it will do so online and on TV.

Mark Pollard, VP of brand strategy for Big Spaceship, Brooklyn, N.Y., observed that many Super Bowl advertisers missed the online boat, focusing on previewing ads when they should have been more concerned with the online dynamic during and after the Big Game. “One thing that stood out for me was lack of story [in the Super Bowl commercials], which made the follow through to other screens more a matter of mechanics. Go online to download this app or get an offer or something else. I read somewhere that 60 percent of people were watching on a screen in addition to television, which makes it perfect for telling a story on TV and then going online to get more dimension to that story, the next chapters, more about the characters. But that didn't happen too much.”

The preoccupation with previewing commercials online struck Pollard as “one-upmanship,” a race to find whose ad is generating the most buzz before the game? “I thought we had moved beyond that. The real opportunity is to build stories in unexpected ways over every channel.”



Evan Fry



Jay Giesen



Mark Pollard

## street talk

Los Angeles-based Boxer Films has signed director Erik Almás. An accomplished still photographer—who is repped by Vaughn Hannigan and has worked with such clients as Toyota, Microsoft, Puma, Nike, Hyatt and The Ritz-Carlton—Almás is looking to expand his storytelling to moving pictures via Boxer...James Franco, who received a Best Leading Actor Oscar nomination last year for his work in *127 Hours*, has directed his first ever ad campaign for 7 For All Mankind Jeans. Born from an art film imagined and created by Franco in collaboration with the brand's creative agency, Lipman, the unorthodox campaign is a multimedia experience that embodies

the brand's California roots and “forever cool” aesthetic. The campaign debuts with a short teaser video, which was shot from behind Franco's POV. The campaign will feature a number of cutting-edge print and digital assets and will culminate with a full-length feature film to be released in May. The campaign features Henry Hopper (son of the late actor Dennis Hopper), Lily Donaldson, and Nathalie Love (daughter of *Teen Vogue's* editor Lisa Love)...Editor Diego Panich, who's been repped stateside by New York-based Wild(child) Editorial for the past two years, is now stepping up his commitment to the U.S. market, relocating from Argentina to New York to join the Wild(child) roster. The timing of his move is good given the acclaim he's received in the U.S. and internationally for his cutting of Volkswagen's “Duel” out of DDB Argentina, and Norte Beer's “Photoblocker” for Del Campo Saatchi & Saatchi, Buenos Aires....Australian studio Fuel VFX has added sr. producers Kate Stenhouse and Samantha Daley to its commercials team...

## rep report

N.Y.-based production and post company humble has secured rep Lisa Gimenez to handle the West Coast.... Harpoon Pictures, N.Y., has signed Sylvia Barrera to rep the company's Hispanic division. Barrera will handle the company throughout the East Coast and Midwest markets. Prior to starting her rep company in 2008, Barrera

was a producer for Grey's Hispanic agency Wing as well as GlobalHue and Lopez Negrete....Indie firm OPTIONS continues its commitment to the digital space by adding social media experts Social Control to its roster for representation on the West Coast. Additionally OPTIONS now represents Jafbox Sound for the West Coast and Midwest territories....ALL Crew Agency, Burbank, Calif., has signed DP John Stanier, BSC, for exclusive representation. Stanier recently wrapped a Firestone job and has to his credit hundreds of commercials for such clients as McDonald's, U.S. Air Force, Jockey, Ikea and Coors Light. Stanier is also available as a director/camerasman through ALL Crew; he has directed automotive spots for the likes of GMC and Mercedes-Benz as well as assorted tabletop/food commercials...

## bulletin board

- >February 25/Santa Monica, CA: Film Independent Spirit Awards. <http://www.spiritawards.com>
- >February 26/Hollywood, CA: Academy Awards. <http://www.oscars.org/awards/academyawards>
- >March 8-18/San Diego, CA: San Diego Latino Film Festival. <http://www.sdlatinofilm.com>
- >March 9-18/Austin, TX: SXSW. <http://sxsw.com/attend>
- >April 14-19/Las Vegas, NV: NAB. <http://www.nabshow.com>
- >April 18-29/New York, NY: Tribeca Film Fest. <http://www.tribecafilm.com/festival>



## How Did These Talented Directors Get Their Careers To The Next Level?



**They All Entered SHOOT'S Annual New Directors Search at [WWW.SHOOTONLINE.COM/GO/SEARCH](http://WWW.SHOOTONLINE.COM/GO/SEARCH)**

Each year the final reel is screened for 425+ agency, studio, TV & production industry decision-makers at SHOOT's Annual New Directors Showcase Event at the DGA Theatre in NYC (May 17th this year). Plus Directors in the Showcase are invited to attend full day SHOOT Directors/Producers Forum & New Directors Showcase Event at NO CHARGE! Plus Showcase Directors are heavily promoted in print and online at [NDS.SHOOTonline.com](http://NDS.SHOOTonline.com).

### SHOOT'S 10th Annual New Directors Search Is Underway!

# New Directors Wanted

## Enter For Chance To Be Selected for Major Showcase Event at DGA

**Do You Have What It Takes To Be The Next Hot New Director? Don't Let This Great Opportunity Pass By!**

SHOOT is conducting a worldwide search to discover the best up-and-coming directors who, based on their initial work, show promise to make positive contributions to advertising and/or entertainment in its traditional and emerging forms. The search is conducted by SHOOT's editorial staff with input from ad agency creatives, heads of production, production company heads and established directors.

After the best work is selected SHOOT will compile the **2012 SHOOT New Directors Showcase Reel** and interview the directors for a special feature that will appear in SHOOT's May 18 issue, PDF version, HTML e.dition, and on SHOOTonline & [nds.SHOOTonline.com](http://nds.SHOOTonline.com), bringing worldwide attention to the work and the directors. In addition, the work will be screened for an audience of key ad agency, commercial & entertainment production industry decision-makers at **SHOOT's 2012 New Directors Showcase Event at the DGA Theatre in New York City on May 17**. Coverage of the event will appear on SHOOTonline and the weekly SHOOT>e.dition in May and in SHOOT Magazine in June. The showcase reel will be posted on [nds.SHOOTonline.com](http://nds.SHOOTonline.com) and will remain live for

a full year. See the 2011 New Directors Web Reel at <http://nds.shootonline.com> The directors selected for the Showcase came from diverse backgrounds. Some first established themselves on the agency side, while others were DPs, feature filmmakers or film students. The shared bond is great style and vision, whether it be reflected in comedy, visuals or storytelling.

#### ENTER SHOOT'S New Directors Search Today...

Don't miss out on what could be a big step towards being noticed by companies that can represent you and ad agency & entertainment industry executives that can hire you. Eligibility: Directing any type of advertising or entertainment content professionally less than 3 years.

#### What Work is Eligible to Enter?

**Category 1** Traditional Broadcast: television spots, spec work, cinema ads, branded content, music videos, trailers, broadcast promos

**Category 2** Alternative Media Content: webisodes, spots created for online, mobile-phone content, in-game ads, advertising, virals, alternate reality gaming, ads created for PDAs

**Category 3** Film/TV Entertainment Content: feature films, independent films, short films, TV programs

Directors can submit work completed during 15 month period of Jan. 2011-March 2012. (excerpts from shorts, longform film or other entertainment fare should be NO MORE than 5 minutes in length)

Submissions must be posted via online entry form -or- postmarked by March 31, 2012 if submitted by mail

**Entry Fee** \$85.00 for first piece of work, \$35.00 each additional entry from same director.

**Entry Forms & Details at [www.SHOOTonline.com/go/search](http://www.SHOOTonline.com/go/search)**



#### New Directors receive priceless career-making exposure!

*"Being included in the SHOOT 2011 New Directors Showcase was absolutely brilliant for me, as it tempted the smart people I did not know, but desperately wanted to see my film, into watching it! As a result, I met the guys at Interrogate and Spy Films. It quite literally started a commercial career for me, and that's the straight truth."*

Elizabeth Orne  
2011 New Director  
Interrogate and Spy Films



*"It was quite an honor being included in SHOOT Magazine's New Directors Showcase! It gave me great exposure, opened a lot of doors and eventually lead me to a home with kaboom."*

Matt Fackrell  
2011 New Director  
Kaboom



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