

British Columbia

Andrea Fatona

THE WEST COAST has witnessed an emergence of many First Nations filmmakers and filmmakers of colour over the past few years, working in a range of styles and with a variety of approaches to the question of identity. Issues of funding and access to media institutions remain at the forefront of the discussions, often as important as the production of images themselves.

Several artist-run centres and institutions have moved to reflect a broader range of Canada's cultural make-up, beginning by putting racial and gender equity programs in place. Video In's First Nations Access Program and Racial Equity Video Access Media Project are two of the more successful models. Other programs include the National Film Board Pacific Centre's Women's Equity Program, which assists in both skills acquisition (through an apprenticeship program) and financial awards for projects.

The general critique from media artists here concerns the profound lack of programs to enable an artist to see a project through from concept to completion. In addition, mentoring programs are needed. In Visible Colours, an organization for women of colour and Aboriginal women founded in 1989, is responding to the need to develop grant writing skills.

Filmmaker Mina Shum is set to direct her first feature, *Double Happiness*, funded by Telefilm, B.C. Film and the National Film Board. First-time filmmaker Karin Lee is completing *My Sweet Peony*, experimental filmmaker Dana Claxton is in post-production, and Selina Williams

(*Colour Corrected*) will have a new film ready by summer.

Again, I must stress the continuing difficulties in gaining access to the means of production and in getting the work out to the viewer. However, the level of optimism is growing, and with the increase in films by people of colour and First Nations people has also come a decrease in gender disparity.

Prairies

Marjorie Beaucage

THE ABORIGINAL Film and Video Art Alliance has just completed production on six public service announcements about self-government. The package is scheduled to be released at the Banff Television Festival this June. Three emerging directors (Angie Campbell, Ruby Marie Dennis and Joane Cardinal-Schubert) and senior director Gary Farmer, were able to put their vision forward through this project in partnership with the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Independent production remains a struggle for Aboriginal people. Still, new artists have found access to the



From Sea to

Angirag, from the series Nunavut, produced by ZACHARIAS KUNUK and NORMAN COHEN