

By far the most celebrated film about German history at the festival was the Austrian documentary, *Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*, an audience prize winner. The film's subject is Traudl Junge, Hitler's personal secretary. It caused a stir on its own, but it became even more controversial when Junge died shortly after the film's premiere. Several people told me that they could sense the Junge's will to live ebbing as they were watching the film. However, the most impressive contributions were from South Korea. Jae-eun Jeong's *Goyyan-gileal butaghae (Take Care of My Cat)* is an exquisite drama about five young women, all recent high-school graduates, who try to hang on to their friendship despite the pressures of adult life. Layered and full of beautifully observed moments, the film is sweetly sympathetic to even its least likable characters. For example, a pompous and insensitive young office worker is humanized when she gets her surprise comeuppance. It is also lightened by unexpected moments of comedy. *Take Care of My Cat* recalls Shunji Iwai's international breakthrough, *Love Letter*, but in place of Iwai's lush, sombre romanticism, Jae-eun substitutes a subtle social conscience mixed with a well-developed sense of the collision between adolescent dreams and adult responsibilities.

At the other end of the aesthetic scale is Ki-Yong Park's *Camel(s)*, a black-and-white digital video production that suggests Abbas Kiarostami's more demanding and formalist work. Ki-Yong drops us into the action with little or no explanation of who his two middle-aged characters are. Clearly they're involved in some sort of assignation, but the

real focus is on their desperation and inability to communicate. When they finally make it to a hotel room, they wind up having a distanced and furtive encounter that leaves them lonelier than they were initially. The film is ferociously claustrophobic, not simply because the principals are confined to cars and restaurants or because Ki-Yong refuses to cut away or let us look away, but because it's penned-in quality perfectly mirrors the character's anomie.

There was a very sizable Canadian contingent at this year's Berlinale, including Catherine Martin's *Mariages*, Carl Bessai's *Lola*, Anne Wheeler's *Suddenly Naked*, Mike Hoolboom's *Tom*, Lynne Stopkewich's *Lilith on Top* and three Kinderfest entries: Guarav Seth's *A Passage to Ottawa* (which won a special mention from the Crystal Bear jury), Peter Markle's *Virginia's Run* and Maria Sigurdardotir's Canada/Iceland co-production, *Regina*. Stopkewich's underrated look at Sarah McLachlan's brainchild was part of an intriguing, markedly different subset of films concentrating on music. Wim Wenders's *Ode to Cologne* pays homage to local rock legends, BAP, and Mika Kaurismaki's exuberant *Moro No Brasil* is a history of Brazil's regional variations on the samba. Slyly funny (a blond giant, Kaurismaki seems like the classic fish out of water as he careens around the Brazilian countryside, interviewing musicians) and ferociously rhythmic, *Moro No Brasil* was probably the best example of and most seductive argument for the festival's theme - accept diversity.

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## Les 20e Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois

MONTRÉAL 2/15 -24/02

By Claire Valade

Founded in 1982 by a group of québécois filmmakers, critics and artists eager to promote and honour their peers, the 2002 Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois marked its 20th anniversary by simply doing what it has always done best: celebrate and recognize new emerging talents in all fields of the medium as well as seasoned veterans or those whose body of works beg to be re-examined, such as Jean-Claude Labrecque and the late Gilles Groulx. In addition, this year the Rendez-vous also took the opportunity to underline the 25th anniversaries of two other important Quebec institutions; the Montreal-based independent distributor Cinéma Libre and production company La Coop Vidéo de Montréal.

The past year was marked by many trends. For one thing, multi-tasking seemed to be the operative word in Quebec cinema. Actors stepped behind the camera, including Stephanie Morgenstern, who impressed with her Prix Jutra-winning short, the intriguing mood piece *Remembrance*, and Robin Aubert, who explored a rough and marginal universe rarely tackled in Quebec cinema with his short *Les Frères Morel*, co-directed with Daniel Grenier. Screenwriters and playwrights took to directing for the first time, including Émile Gaudreault with his megahit *Nuit de*



Catherine Martin's *Mariages*.

*noces*, winner of the 2001 Golden Reel Award, Michel Monty, with the interesting short drama *Adieu Grosny*, and Chilean-born Daniel Diaz, with his well-received short, *Nada*. Also acclaimed documentary director Bernard Émond switched to fiction for his heart-wrenching drama *La Femme qui boit*, which earned the Best Actress Prix Jutra and Genie Awards for Élise Guilbault's riveting portrayal of a lonely alcoholic. Others, it seems, wanted to diversify their artistic output in as many ways possible. Artistic director André-Line Beuparlant, whose name appeared on the credits of two of 2001's most important films—*Mariages* and *La Femme qui boit*—also directed two documentaries, the short *Elvis l'Italiano* and the acclaimed feature *Trois princesses pour Roland*, a harsh and gripping yet incredibly tender cinéma vérité-style portrait of three generations of women stuck in a vicious circle of abuse, violence and poverty.



Jean-Claude Labrecque

A slew of directors even offered more than one film for the public's viewing pleasure such as renown art-documentary filmmaker Philippe Balauqc with the children's fantasy *Hugo et le dragon* and the art documentary *Les Couleurs du sang*; up-and-coming director Denis Chouinard with *L'Ange de goudron* and the documentary tribute *Voir Gilles Groulx*, which opened the festival; Francis Leclerc with his debut feature *Une Jeune fille à la fenêtre* and the short *Quand tu vas être mort*, co-directed with Rosa Zacharie; the ever-prolific Donigan Cumming with *My Dinner with Weegee*, *Wrap* and *A Short Lesson*; experimental video and installation artist Marie-Lynda Bilodeau with *Les Châtelains* and the whimsical *Garde-robe*; veteran filmmaker Richard Jutras with the documentary *Les Conteurs de vues animées* and the short fictions *Flagrant Délit* and *Pawn Shop*; and last but not least the ever-present Jean-Claude Labrecque, whose output was so tremendous in 2001 – whether as director (*Le RIN*), cinematographer (*Mariages*, *La Femme qui boit*) or even as a subject for a film, *Jean-Claude Labrecque, cinéaste du contemporain*, directed by his son Jérôme – that a special tribute was deemed necessary to mark the richness of his accomplishments in a career spanning four decades.

Working from the idea that having access to a pool of talent and resources is much better than trying to do everything alone, a number of (mostly) young filmmakers are coming together to pursue similar artistic goals. They include the

KINO collective, which produces often inspired films made on shoe-string budgets and in ridiculously short amounts of time, and the Quebec-based production company Spirafilm, which has always advocated collaboration between its members or through special projects such as the Vidéographe's 30th-anniversary collection of short films, *Quand j'ai eu 30 ans*. Also pooling talent is the new Radio-Canada television series *Entrée côté court* that commissions short films from various directors. Some of the most noteworthy films in this trend include Philippe Falardeau's surprising KINO short *Ça c'est Laurence*, Philippe Gagnon's well-written *Vous êtes ici*

for Spirafilm, as well as *Entrée côté court's* interesting *Hyperacousique* by Normand Bergeron and *Mensonges* by Louise Archambault.

In the end, the 2002 edition of the Rendez-vous confirmed more than ever the emergence of a new creative ebullience in Quebec cinema. In retrospect, what were 2001's cinematic landmarks? André Turpin's acclaimed sophomore effort and multi-Prix Jutra Award-winner *Un crabe dans la tête*; Catherine Martin's stark and beautiful first feature *Mariages*; Denis Chouinard's complex immigration drama and award-winning debut feature *L'Ange de goudron*; ever iconoclastic experimental documentary filmmaker Donigan Cumming's gripping and disturbing *My Dinner with Weegee*; political activist and veteran director Pierre Falardeau's surprisingly nuanced patriot drama *15 février 1839*; photographer and music video director Lyne Charlebois's brilliant first short fiction *Quel jour était-ce?*; video artists Nelson Henricks's and Dennis Day's wonderful experimental shorts *Planétarium* and *This Narrative Is Killing Me*; Hugo Latulippe's and Marielle Nitoslawka's controversial in-your-face documentaries *Bacon, le film* and *Bad Girl*; and last but not least *Yellowknife*, the beautiful second feature from a remarkably gifted filmmaker, Rodrigue Jean (*Full Blast*). What more can one ask from an event that year after year gives us a chance to see one last time the films that truly marked the past year.



# FESTIVAL



Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary

## The National Screen Institute's FilmExchange

WINNIPEG 2/23 - 3/2/02

By Wyndham Wise

Winnipeg in February. Only in Canada, you say, would they hold a film festival in Winnipeg in February. Known as Local Heroes, Winnipeg last year (not to be confused with Local Heroes, Edmonton, which is still a going concern in March),