

on-screen backed by the snaps, crackles and pops of an optical sound-track being manually pulled back and forth past a projector's sound bulb. "Similar to DJs with their turntables," enthused Reeves. "Just such raw energy on-screen." Very nice, very nice, as the late, great NFB animator Arthur Lipsett would have said.

With packed houses at the screenings and standing-room capacity at 28 workshops, not only did Ottawa 2002 set new records for attendance, but it also redefined itself in other directions. "I got a little sick and tired of seeing the same old Sjvankmajer, Quay Brothers, McLaren that you see at festivals," admitted Chris Robinson, OIAF director. "I went an extra step to find people within the circle of the animation world not as well known. So this year's retrospectives focused on such lesser-known talents such as Dumala, David Ehrlich and Peter Woloshen—a Montreal avant-gardist who had been painting directly on film for 20 years in relative obscurity. He even admitted to not knowing of the festival's existence until recently "because I hide a lot."

Complementing such exposure in competition was the addition of the non-narrative category. "Certainly with the big four or five animation festivals, we're the first to do it," says Robinson. "It simply did not make sense for narrative stories to compete with non-narrative. They're different animals." This once again put into the spotlight the rough-around-the-edges spontaneity of films like Reeves's own *1:1* and Woloshen's *Ditty Dot Comma* and *Bru Ha Ha!*, as well as the simple, but mesmerizing digital motifs of Adrian Lokman's play of light and shadow in *Barcode*. Even the narrative films were pushing their own boundaries. Piotr Sapegin's *Aria* took a new twist on Gilbert and Sullivan's *Madame Butterfly*, where the lead character undergoes an act of stop-motion deconstruction, by literally baring its own armature. Christopher Hinton's *Flux* (which won for Best Narrative Short) takes a skewed look at a domestic dilemma, splattering its erratic ink-splotch characters across the screen in a result that's half-cartoon, half-Rorschach test.

Two awards for humour, as well as a special jury mention were given to Andrew Horne's *Leunig: How Democracy Actually Works*, a one-minute exposé about where our civic votes actually go, although the biggest laughs and cheers went to Igor Lazin's *The Little Cow*, featuring a small cow swinging and singing in a tree for three minutes straight (that's it). Mixing humour and pathos went a long way in *Tornehekken* (Best Film for Children), a touching Norwegian cut-out film about the effects of wartime on childhood, as well as in the British commercial *Cartoon* (winner for Best Commissioned). Featuring a squash-and-squeeze figure bullied to death by his abusive live-action father, it effectively contrasted Tex Avery-inspired antics with real-life domestic violence. Finally, a well-deserved Grand Prize went to Robert Bradbrook's *Home Road Movies*. Combining live action with airbrushed *Popular Mechanics* illustrations, it delves into the relationship between a father and the family car, reminiscent of the art deco parody paintings of *New Yorker* artist, Bruce McCall.

The only downside to this year's competition was the category of television series. Entertaining as they were, given the wide exposure *Teacher's Pet* and *SquareBob SpongePants* can get on YTV or Teletoon, such episodes seemed an unnecessary commercial intrusion into the

festival's more independent spirit; although, Genndy Tartakovsky's *Samurai Jack* (Best Television Series) works very well on the big screen. Nonetheless, it provided a well-deserved showcase for animation's wild man John Kricfalusi. Featuring commercials, Webtoons and episodes of *Ren & Stimpy* and *Mighty Mouse* too raunchy or politically incorrect for the networks, the screening displayed yet another edge to this year's festival, that of uncensored comic revelry, free of all the liberal constraints of good taste. You hasn't lived until you see Yogi and Ranger Smith engage in a man-to-bear wrestling match coloured in *really* homoerotic overtones in *Boo Boo Runs Wild*. Kricfalusi himself perhaps summed it all up best: "Cartoons are meant to be fun. Santa Claus never feels guilty. He doesn't give asparagus for Christmas."

31ST MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA AND NEW MEDIA

10/10-20/02

By Claire Valade

The audience numbers were significantly up at this year's FCMM, with reportedly close to 100,000 visitors of all sorts taking Ex-Centris, the Cinéma du Parc and Cinémathèque Québécoise by storm for 11 straight days. Each section of the festival enjoyed its round of sold-out screenings, more than any year before. Press coverage was extensive, diversified and highly appreciative, as critics generally hailed the overall selection as one of the most impressive in years: a gathering of the best and most thought-provoking titles from the world's most important festivals combined with a number of prestigious tributes—luminaries Michael Snow and Gena Rowlands; British television screenwriter Dennis Potter; French documentary filmmaker Nicolas



Peter Mettler's *Gambling, God's and LCD*.

MONTREAL



Gena Rowlands in *Gloria*.

Philibert; Canadian video artist Nelson Henricks; and Polish animator Jerzy Kucia—and North American premieres.

Above all, friends of the FCMM, old and new, answered the call without fail and sent their striking and unusual works. English-Canadians and Quebecers intrigued many with their unique cinematic and artistic visions such as Guy Maddin's *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*, Manon Labrecque's *Silences nomades*, Robert Morin's controversial *Le Nèg'*, Peter Mettler's *Gambling, Gods and LSD*, which was awarded the Best Documentary Prize, and Carlos Ferrand's *Casa Loma*, which received a special mention from the documentary jury. French legends Raymond Depardon with *Un Homme sans l'occident*, Agnès Varda with *Deux ans après*, and Chris Marker with *Le Souvenir d'un avenir* (co-directed with Yannick Bellon) shared screens with the likes of younger talents such as Loïc Connanski (*Empire II: Le Retour*), Pierre Carles (*Enfin pris?*) and Delphine Gleize (*Carnages*).

Aki Kaurismäki's *The Man without a Past* opened the festival and Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention*, which received the Special Jury Prize, seduced the public while regulars like Alexandre Sokurov (*The Russian Ark*), Robert Cahen and Rob Rombout (*Canton la Chinoise*), Larry Clark and Ed Lachman (*Ken Park*), Jia Zhang-Ke (*Unknown Pleasures*), Abbas Kiarostami (*Ten*), Werner Schroeter (*Deux*), Todd Haynes (*Far from Heaven*), Pedro Almodóvar (*Hable con ella*) and contemporary art-house darling Eija-Liisa Ahtila (*Love Is a Treasure*) displayed their strengths with a renewed intensity. And let's not forget Abderrahmane Sissako, the Mauritanian filmmaker who had delighted audiences a few years back with his charming *La Vie sur terre*, who went on to win this year's Louve d'Or, or Golden She-Wolf, the festival's most prestigious prize, with his remarkable *En attendant le bonheur*. Many made the trip to meet with Montreal audiences, including Atom Egoyan, Larry Clark and Elia Suleiman, as well as notable jury members, Stanley Kubrick's producer Jan Harlan, *Kandahar* star Nelofer Pazira and French digital filmmaker extraordinaire, Alain Escalle.

Festival landmarks and highlights? Obviously, judging only from the works, artists and filmmakers already mentioned, the festival had many. It started red hot, with its symbolic black she-wolf howling on crimson posters and T-shirts everywhere, and ended in scintillating white, under the very first snowfall of the season. Passion versus reflection; blood and turmoil versus water and innocence in all their incarnations; fiery red versus luminous white: without a doubt, these were this year's FCMM's true colours and the embodiment of the event's two poles of attraction. Many selected works referred to these thematic images, while some even made them integral parts of their stories and narratives, from Balthasar Kormakur's promising *The Sea* and Quebec first-time feature filmmaker Kim Nguyen's uneven but interesting *Le Marais*, to Philippe Grandrieux's haunting *La Vie nouvelle* and Atom Egoyan's troubling *Ararat*; from Alanis Obomsawin's essential *Is the Crown at War with Us?* and the provocative collective work *11'09'01*, to Japanese documentarian Seiichi Motohashi's beautiful *Alexei and the Spring* (winner of the Critic's Prize for Best Documentary) and Dennis Potter's still more relevant than ever *Blue Remembered Hills*; from the impressive art direction of the short *La Dernière voix* by Montreal up-and-coming genre directors Julien Fonfrère and Karim Hussain, to the exquisite simplicity of Nicolas Philibert's *Être et avoir* and the gripping political comment of Stéphane Elmadjian's short *Je m'appelle*, which got a special mention from the short film jury.

Long-time festival organizer and senior programmer Claude Chamberlan realized one of his greatest dreams by bringing Gena Rowlands to Montreal for a four-day whirlwind tour. The surprisingly accessible American independent film legend spoke to a room full of hyperattentive fans in Ex-Centris's aptly named Cassavetes Theatre. Contemporary art legend Michael Snow was given a major tribute by the festival and the Daniel Langlois Foundation. He was seen enjoying encounters with audiences at the retrospective screenings of his films and the launch of the new DVD devoted to his entire body of work. And last, but not least, the audience roared with laughter at the staggering social comment of festival favourite Michael Moore's in-your-face but indispensable documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, winner of the Audience Award.