

THE FUTURE OF BC FILM

5 YOUNG DIRECTORS THAT ARE LEADING THE WAY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERRI POTRATZ

Each year, five directors are selected for the Kick Start program, awarding each with \$20,000 to make a 10 minute short, plus post production assistance from Rainmaker Digital Pictures, Post Modern Sound, Finale Editworks, and Sharpe Sound. It's a great opportunity for aspiring filmmakers with a bit of experience in the industry to pair up with an established industry mentor and make their "calling card" film. Notable alumni include Mina Shum, Julia Kwan, Aubrey Nealon, Gary Burns, Guy Bennett, and Trent Carlson. Backed by the Directors Guild of Canada and BC Film, this program is respected for the high-quality films that are consistently produced, and the 2006 Kick Start films added only more credence to that fact. Here's the lowdown on the chosen directors and their recent films:



DAN LEE WEST (27)

Lee West moved to Canada from Australia when he was 16 and spent his teenage years harbouring a jealousy of the old ladies at the movie ticket counter. When his parents stopped shelling out cash, he followed his wildest dreams and became an usher at Famous Players, supplanting his envy of old ladies with a jealousy of friends who knew more about movies than he did. So he signed up for an intensive year-long program at Vancouver Film School.

His Kick Start film *The Visitor* is an engaging drama about a father going to find the young daughter he's never met, and Lee West took the opportunity to toy with narrative and the manipulation of time, a process he feels is a more accurate representation of human thought patterns. Matt Hastings acted as mentor and Sian McArthur produced the project.

Lee West's recently been directing a documentary about infamous film director Uwe Boll; but while that project is on hiatus he's putting the finishing touches on his first feature script.



KRYSHAN RANDEL (27)

Born in B.C., Randel began filming at the age of six. He has always felt motivated to tell stories and film is his favourite medium. Randel attended Capilano College, but found inspiration by doing: he produced The 24 Hour Film Contest and the Great Canadian Commercial Contest, in addition to directing more than 40 shorts.

"A standout guerrilla filmmaking moment for me was directing the short film *The Bully Solution* in 48 hours, which has since won the Bloodshots Film Festival and enjoyed a great festival run."

His Kick Start short is entitled *Glimpse*, about a heartbroken woman who foresees the outcome of future relationships. Delivering both laughs and insight, Randel worked with mentor Scott Smith and learned how to keep it simple and adhere to his initial goals. Watching his films with an audience gives him a thrill, and until he can get his hands on a feature-length project Randel will continue to learn by doing and make as many movies as he can.



JERICCA CLELAND (35)

Arriving in Vancouver four years ago after living in the U.S. and abroad, Cleland previously worked as a staging and camera artist at Pixar Animation, where she fell in love with film and all the creative people involved. She's worn many hats, taking story, film, art and acting classes, as well as teaching film: "I... continue to find myself refreshed and invigorated by working with students."

After a friend recommended she apply for the Kick Start program, Nicholas Kendall mentored for *The Weight of Light*, a story centred on a teenage street girl and the nature of self-determination despite obstacles. Cleland had previously tackled working with children and animals, and wanted to challenge her skills by directing teens and managing a serious script. She was proud to see it all come together on set, especially with the tight deadline and sensitive subject matter she was working with.

She's currently the cinematographer on *Space Chimps*, has several feature scripts and a documentary in various stages of development, and anticipates sending *Weight* out to festivals soon.



SPENCER MAYBEE (29)

At age six Spencer made *The Head Machine*, a stop motion film using Plasticine, to impress an older girl. His desire to mould compelling stories has only multiplied since that fateful moment in day camp. Originally from Toronto, Maybee studied writing and film at UVic, then completed the CFTPA internship program before moving to Vancouver to pursue filmmaking.

Paul Christie got on board to produce *L'Oiseau Mort* with mentor Keith Behrman. The film reveals more of itself with each viewing: "Every time I try to give a quick synopsis, it takes a different shape... I like movies that don't force an idea, but rather show just what you need to 'get it' and allow you to come to your own discovery."

Maybee feels rewarded when sitting with the audience and crew and feeling their reactions, and being taken more seriously by his parents, "who no longer think I'm a dilettante."

The film screened at the Vancouver International Film Festival and is heading to the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival this month.