



contents

2

EDITORIAL NEWS-IN-BRIEF

3

INTO THE REEL WORLD Film School & Alrick Riley's "Concrete Garden"

4

REPORTS

TWENDE!; European Connections; Oberhausen

6

BLACK CANNES

A report from the world's famous film festival

8

UPDATES

The latest on the black British film scene

11

THE INDISPENSABLE INFORMATION FEATURE Three Producers

14

WISHFUL FILMING

John Akomfrah on black film aesthetics and audience demands (Part Two)

15

SHARKS & CHARLATANS

Black Distribution - Fear & Loathing in New York

NOTICEBOARD

16

LETTERS

VOL1 Issue No2 Summer 1993

Summer Screens

EDITORIAL by June Giovani

Summer time is graduation time and in our second issue of the BFB, we look at the latest in student work with a feature on Alrick Riley's CONCRETE GARDEN and a list of black graduation films in our Updates section.

The Indispensable Information Feature, this issue, focuses on the role of the producer. We profile THREE PRODUCERS and hear what they have to say about their experience in the UK industry. The nature of the UK film industry will always be on the agenda so read John Akomfrah's comments and opinions on the current black British film scene in his article WISHFUL FILMING as well as the report from the Cannes Film Festival.

We also give information on some of the developments in the industry which provide initiatives and opportunities for fresh talent seeking ways into television and film. Read below about the London Production Fund set up as a regional project fund. Let's hope it will be successful and become a model which other

regions might choose to adopt.

Our NOTICEBOARD is featured for the first time in this issue, so check it out for application deadlines, calls for papers and job and education opportunities.

Changes in television continue and one of the important ones to be recently announced is the forthcoming departure of Alan Fountain from his post as Senior Commissioning Editor of the Independent Film & Video Department at Channel 4. Fountain, whose department commissioned the SOUTH series, ELEVENTH HOUR, screened world cinema seasons and played a key role in the establishment of the Workshops and Collectives in the 1980's, is the last remaining member of Channel 4's original commissioning team. With the increasing importance of acquiring financial profits, let us hope that the support of new and innovative talent, which the department is well known for, will not be sacrificed. However Fountain still has a year to go and the fate of his colleagues, Rod Stoneman and Caroline Spyri, have not yet been decided. John Willis,

Controller of Programmes, is keen to reassure the independent film community that the department which he describes as an "engine and laboratory" for Channel 4, will continue to "push back the boundaries for broadcasting". He also adds that the new appointee will need to share the Channel's commitment to the strands which the it already takes prides in i.e. the commitment to gay and lesbian programming, women filmmakers and the work of black and other ethnic groups. It will be interesting to see how Fountain's successor will choose to interpret those priorities.

news - in - brief

BLACK ARTS VIDEO PROJECT The Arts Council have announced the winners of the 1992-93 commissions. Five newcomers have been chosen - Hi Ching, Kuljit Chuhan, Tanya Read, Erika Tan and Marina Warsam who will each receive £5 000. £1 2 500 has been awarded for more experienced directors to Ruhul Amin, Nasser Saleem Aslam, Barinder Kalsi, Smita Malde and Pier Wilkie. Details of projects in development on page 7 ■ ■ ■ **BLACK SCREEN** the BBC Screenplay scriptwriting competition has been successful in choosing twelve writers to develop work with BBC script-editors, six of which will be made into final 60 minute dramas. Instigated by script-editor Frances Ann Solomon, Phase 1 takes place between June and August and Phase 2 between September and March 1994 where six scripts will be chosen and developed. ■ ■ ■ **LONDON PRODUCTION FUND** has been set up by the BFI and the LFVDA and is worth over £200 000 this year. Sponsored initially by Carlton and C4, it aims to help raise money from broadcast and non-broadcast companies to spearhead new media productions. It will foster a wide cross-section of creative work from broadcast co-production to non-broadcast art films and video. Carlton's first project has been announced - six half-hour documentaries and six half-hour dramas open to new writers and directors. Other projects will be announced later in the year. The fund is managed by the LFVDA and co-ordinated by Maggie Ellis and Felicity Oppe. Tel: 071 637 3588 ■ ■ ■ **DNH** The BFI and PACT have been involved in a series of meetings with Peter Brooke of the Dept of National Heritage to aid the publication of the government's white paper on the UK film industry. PACT's Film Strategy Group prepared six papers on strategies and issues for UK film production and suggested ways of increasing

investment in the industry by £3-4 million. Throughout the year, Peter Brooke will also be meeting with other bodies and individuals from different sectors of the film industry ■ ■ ■ **ADRIAN WOOTON** has been appointed new Head of BFI on the Southbank. He starts his appointment in August. Adrian is currently director of Broadway, the regional film theatre in Nottingham ■ ■ ■ **STEVE MCINTYRE** has taken over from Maureen McCue to become Head of the London Film & Video Development Agency. He spent between 1987 and 1991 at the BFI Planning Unit and prior to that was film programmer at the Phoenix Arts Centre in Leicester ■ ■ ■ **NEW PRODUCERS ALLIANCE** is a new support organisation for producers. With fees considerably cheaper than PACT at £30 for corporate affiliate members and £15 for affiliate members per year, readers may be interested in contacting the organisation. They organise events and provide a network for national and international producers. Contact Sue Richards 081 892 4477 Fax: 081 891 0168 ■ ■ ■ **PRATIBHA PARMAR** has been awarded America's prestigious Frameline Award for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to lesbian and gay media. Four films were screened during the evenings presentation on June 22nd including an excerpt from her latest production *Warrior Marks*. See IN DISTRIBUTION for details ■ ■ ■

2 Front Cover: Still from Alrick Riley's "Concrete Garden". Photo by Brian Benson

INTO the Reel World

Term has ended and another batch of new black filmmakers graduate. The BFB profiles Alrick Riley's graduation film and gives you the run down on the latest in black British film creativity.



velop his craft which included a stint writing for the comedy series "Desmond".

"Before the National Film School changed its policy, there was very much an ethos of not only growing as a filmmaker but as an individual and that may not take three years it may take four or five. The Film School was very much into supporting that and you graduated on the film you wanted to make and more importantly which you were ready to make".

This is the National Film and Television School - the place where your wildest dreams can come true and be placed onto celluloid. The film being shot is Alrick Riley's short graduation film "The Concrete Garden" set in London in 1965.

Alrick has based the Concrete Garden on his sister's experience as a young girl arriving in England alone to join the family she had almost forgotten and to acquaint herself with those members she had not yet met. It is a story about new beginnings but also about the pain of having to let go.

"The Concrete Garden" is nearing completion and Alrick is ready to put the Film School experience into perspective.

"Going to the Film School isn't easy. It's very important when you go to know what you want to get out of it. One of the problems with the School is that most of us are coming from an 8mm or video background and suddenly you have this ultra-expensive equipment, 16mm cameras and edit suite to operate. The technology can blow some people away. You have to remember that you are there for a purpose and that is to make films. One of the things that I have learnt is that at the end of the day, filmmaking is very creative and very technical and if you want to tell universal stories that inevitably involves compromise in the way you choose to tell those stories. Some people at the Film School may not be very progressive in their thinking and they could put barriers in your path without realising that those barriers are cultural. At the same time you have to be aware as a filmmaker to listen to why they don't understand your idea. You are then forced to make some very hard and fast decisions."

It is a frustrating fact for some that British educational establishments can often be culturally restrictive for black students. What would Alrick say to aspiring filmmakers who are wary of entering film school for that reason? "Well if they worry about that they will have a tough time making films in the real world as it requires constant negotiations with institutions. This is one quick way to learn about that, in an institution where you have to make films. Going to Film School is scary but ultimately you have to learn to make your own decisions including when and if you want to compromise.

Alrick entered in 1986 as a documentary filmmaker and two years later changed course to specialise in Fiction Direction. In the following five years he has undertaken a variety of different tasks helping him to extend his knowledge of the film industry and de-

Martha Brown as Marcia (top right); Simon Wilkie (D.O.P) and Alrick Riley on set (left); Part of Marcia's England home. The home was constructed in a studio at the National Film & Television School (right). Photos by Yvonne Salmon.



Forthcoming Graduation Screenings: Goldsmiths 14/15 July Riverside Studios; NFTS 12/14 July BAFTA; For info on volunteering for the National Film & TV School call: 0494 671234. Details of 1993 Graduate and Student Films see Updates Section Page 10



Anne Mungai: TWENDE! participant
Photo by Yvonne Salmon

TWENDE!

African Professional Women & Cinema Saturday 17th April 1993

This conference which took place at the National Film Theatre, brought together six guest filmmakers from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco and Tunisia and four filmmakers from the UK. It provided a rare opportunity to focus on African women filmmakers and to talk about their work and their priorities. The event took place in the context of the Africa At The Pictures festival held at the NFT during April which involved a small selection of films touring to 10 cities in the country during April and May.

The panellists first tackled questions of representation during which Neja Ben Mabrouk of Tunisia argued that there has been a visible change in the style of films by male Tunisian directors to actually appropriate qualities dem-

onstrated in women's films. Ngozi Onwurah, argued that she was against any form of 'ghettoization' or restraint along race or gender lines in terms of how she as a filmmaker chooses her production team. Debate revolved around whether all-female crews are necessary or desirable in some situations, how biased perceptions of African woman-hood influenced production relationships and the status of women in the industry.

The second half of the conference tackled the infrastructures for film or the lack of them and the access available to women in the various countries. Tunisia and Burkina Faso are countries with national film policies, yet Fanta Nacro was the first woman in that country to shoot on film. She argued that both the film school (IDAHEC), which no longer exists in Burkina, and the possibility of learning on video, were significant factors which helped increase access for women to the audio-visual medium. Meanwhile, Anne Mungai of Kenya cited the lack of a national film policy as a problem and, once developed, a resolution which honours the access and potential of women in film has to be included. She also mentioned the need for collaboration and support from the UK for Anglophone African film similar to the production assistance which France gives to Francophone African countries.

Izza Genini of Morocco who has distribution and exhibition experience as well as production, felt documentary to be a format usually more accessible to women and that any opportunity for such access should be taken as a first step.

EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS

14th May - 17th May, Birmingham Rep Theatre.

The European Connection Seminar was organised with inter-national and inter-European collaborations. Instigated by the Cultural Diversity Unit of the Arts Council, the conference was devised through

Film and Video, based in Ghana with an active chapter in Kenya. The latter had recently organised a film week in Nairobi where women met and criticised each other's work in a supportive forum as well as organised public screenings. The other Pan African Professional Women in Cinema founded during the FESPACO 1991 Film Festival, is in the process of organising itself as a continental forum for collaborative action on all aspects of women's participation in film including actresses. Both organisations are open to women from the African diaspora and wish to encourage such links.

The filmmakers also took part in meetings with other organisations while here. In order to encourage an exchange with institutions which have resources and potential for production and acquisition, information-sharing sessions at the BBC and Channel 4 took place. At the BBC, they met twelve editors and producers in the Documentary and Drama departments and, at Channel Four TV, with four Commissioning Editors in Drama and Current Affairs Departments. They also met with a representative from the Centre for Development Communications. • June Givanni

going on.

Finally Ansell Wong, as rapporteur had the unenviable job of (to coin a conference cliché) "reducing the heat and increasing the light" and expertly condensed four days of debates, views and discussion into a twenty minute summary. Along with further suggestions and objections, this formed the basis of a mission statement which included the basic aims and objectives of a Migrant Arts Network and plans of action. The conference report is available from Peter Blackmon/Carol Morrison of the Cultural Diversity Unit, Arts Council 071 333 0100. • Gaylene Gould

OBERHAUSEN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

April 22nd - 28th 1993

The 39th Oberhausen Short Film Festival held in Germany this year, claims to be the oldest one of its type in the world. As well as running competitions and for the first time opening its ranks to accept video formatted films, it held a Special Programme entitled Cultural Confrontation. The pre-publicity material stated "...film as a medium of the 20th Century and specific cultural product of industrial nations becomes a means of cultural self assertion for suppressed minorities...it is important to pay attention to the 'other points of view' of people and groups forced to the margins and to the specific aesthetics of each of these differences and to use them as critical potential". Poignant words for a film Festival based in Germany with some of the most

'suppressed minorities' on its doorstep. To compliment the Cultural Confrontation conference, there was a retrospective of the work of Channel 4's "South" series, a presentation of work from German and Southern continent co-productions, and screenings from the Film and Television Institute of Puna. There were also Black British films screened and the Festival invited and was attended by a variety of black filmmakers from Britain and the US including Reece Auguste, Ngozi Onwurah, Orson Nava, Louise Decoteau and Alrick Riley. Below is a report from Alrick giving his views, expectations and misgivings of the Oberhausen's Special Programme.

I wondered what the festival's criteria might be and why our films were not in competition. Who decided that our films were to constitute a completely separate programme and why were our screenings frequently better attended than those for the competition. Black filmmakers were present from the West Indies, Canada, Britain, Africa and the USA but none from Germany. Why?

I think these questions are bound to arise when programmes are chosen along nebulous themes of ethnicity rather than a well thought out context for the festival as a whole.

By the end of the week, I felt Oberhausen needs to decide what kind of festival they would like to run. Only then will they be in a position to set parameters for programmers and exhibitors. •



Participating at Oberhausen (L-R) June Givanni, Portia Cobb, Irene Zeinabu Davis, Coco Fusco, Phil Mallory Jones, Alrick Riley
Photo by Eiko von Schwitzsch

After two days attendance at both the competition and Confrontation of Cultures screenings questions started to be raised by many of the black filmmakers present. The Confrontation of Culture selection had been put together by representatives from the countries concerned and delegates of the festival. Surprisingly, no one seemed to know just what Confrontation of Culture meant within the context of Oberhausen.

Nubian Tales

Specialists in
Black Film:
P.R., Marketing,
Exhibition &
Distribution.

NUBIAN
magazine

Volume 3. Out Now.

For further information contact
Nubian Tales on 071 287 1963

ANAND PATWARDHAN
ANNA CAROLINA BELL HOOKS

COCO FUSCO ELIA

FELIX DE ROOY GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY

SPIVAK GUILLERMO G.

HAILE GERIMA HORACE OVE

ISAAC JULIEN JOHN

JOYCelyn SAAB KUMAR SHAHANI

LAYLEEN JAYAMANE MICHAEL

NGUGI WA THIONG'O

NORMA ALARCON PAUL

PEARL BOWSER ROGER BARTRA

SAFI PAYE SRIDVANSHU

STUART HALL TRIX WORRELL

WINSOME PINN

ZOHRA SEGAL...

...have all enjoyed attending Third Cinema Focus

Find out what's happening this year
Third Cinema Focus

Birmingham International Film & Television Festival
Central House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2JP

Tel: 021 616 4213 Fax: 021 616 4392

Black CANNES



L'HOMME SUR LES QUAIS. Dir: Raoul Peck. The first Caribbean film to be selected for the CERTAIN REGARD competition. (L-R) Jennifer Zuber & Patrick Rameau

If there's one thing that Cannes is useful for, it is the chance to preview a range of material from all over the world, a good proportion of which will, sooner or later, end up on your large and small screens. This year's festival featured 23 films in the main competition, 19 features and 6 shorts in the 'Certain Regard' competition. The Director's fortnight organised alongside the festival featured 16 films and there were in addition numerous market screenings. Featured here is a selection of those black films, people and events in Cannes this year.

Caribbean

The highest profile was the latest feature from the Haitian director, **Raoul Peck**, whose film *L'Homme sur les Quais* (The Man By The Shore) was given its world premiere at a festival gala event. The film, financed from France, Switzerland and Canada, is the first Caribbean-directed feature to be selected for the main competition at Cannes. It received a standing ovation, but alas took no prizes. Peck, noted as filmmaker with artistic flair for his award-winning documentary "Lumumba: Death of a Prophet" was accompanied to the screening by the principal characters, most of them Haitian, including Jennifer Zuber the young star of the film, Toto Bissainte who plays her Grandmother and Patrick Rameau who gave a masterly performance as the crazy Gracieux/Sorel. Set during the period of the bloody Duvalier dictatorship, a little girl creates a fantasy world of her own to escape the violence she witnesses around her. Her parents have had to leave the country and her grandmother looks after Sarah and her two sisters. Her memories of her childhood, thirty years later are haunted by the events of that time.

A gentle and meticulous building of momentum and drama that has become Peck's trade mark, sets the film apart. It remains to be seen which enterprising distributors have the foresight to pick it up.

Other Caribbean presences were the young Martiniquan director **Guy Des Lauriers** setting up the second half of the shoot of his feature film BEHAZIN from Burkina Faso, and the short film by the Russian trained young director from Mauritania, **Abderrahmane Sissako**'s OCTOBER. FESPACO/FEPACI shared a market stand which was the regular meeting place for anyone interested in African film during the festival.

Asia

Asian Cinema had a high profile at the Festival this year with 5 Taiwanese films in the market. There was one Taiwanese film; HSIMENG RENSHENG -The Puppet Master by **Hou Hsiao Hsien**; and one Chinese film, BAWANG BIEJI: Farewell my Concubine by **Chen Kaige**, in competition. The latter film was the joint winner of this year's coveted Palm D'or along with Jane Campion's THE PIANO. THE BOATMAN OF THE RIVER PADMA by the Indian director **Goutam Ghose** was selected for the Director's Fortnight and won the CICT/UNESCO Film Prize.

Africa

There were few African films at Cannes this year in the official selections. After a considerable amount last year, many of the film makers are in preparation or production on new projects. However, a number of them were there seeking production finance and touting projects like everyone else. Among them was the "Ballon D'or" project by Cheik Doukoure, which stars Zico, a young boy from Guinea, who dreams of becoming a footballer. The script is inspired by the life of Salif Keita who also appears in the 17 million FF (£2,028,000) film which is expected to be finished in early 1994. Souleymane Cisse was there to meet with the production partners of his new 4.0 million FF feature WAATI. A nine-week shoot has already been completed in Ivory Coast and Mali and there is a further 6 weeks left to shoot in the Ivory Coast and Namibia.

Rachid Bouchareb, the director of the Beur film CHEB was present as a producer. He had meetings with the producers of the next film that he will direct in September this year. Set in Thailand it is a story about "Amer-asians", children born of Vietnamese mothers

and American fathers in the 70s.

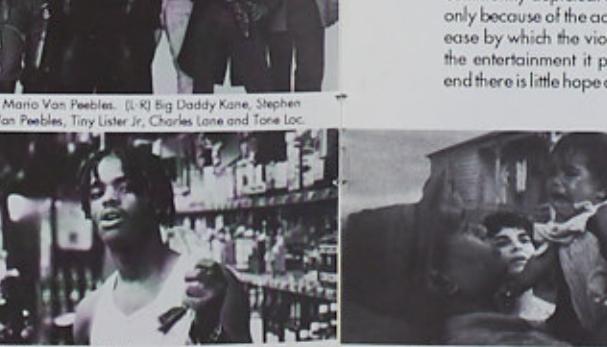
Selected for the 'Certain Regard' competition was **Pierre Yameogo**'s second feature WENDEMI: L'ENFANT DU DIEU (Wendemi: The Child of God) from Burkina Faso, and the short film by the Russian trained young director from Mauritania, **Abderrahmane Sissako**'s OCTOBER. FESPACO/FEPACI shared a market stand which was the regular meeting place for anyone interested in African film during the festival.

Australia

The Aboriginal director **Tracey Moffat** presented her first feature film BEDEVIL selected for the 'Certain Regard' competition this year. BEDEVIL is based on a trilogy of ghost stories derived from her Aboriginal/Irish ancestral heritage that used to frighten her as a child. The film described as a mixture of "the past and the present, the real and the unreal, the funny and the frightening" was made on a budget of 2.5 million Australian dollars from the Australian Film Finance Corporation and received its world premiere at Cannes. Those who know her work and her background in photography will not be surprised by the heavily stylised imagery, the tapestry-like format and the fragmented non-linear narrative which the filmmaker deliberately used to "allow audiences to make their own connections".

U.S.

There was a fair sprinkling of African American films and filmmakers at Cannes this year too, most of the films being shown in the market. The highest profile events were the **Hughes Brothers** (21-year old Allen and Robert) co-directed film MENACE II SOCIETY and the new **Mario Van Peebles** film THE POSSE. MENACE II SOCIETY was shown in the 'Director's Fortnight'. Produced and distributed by New Line, it involves a young black man in Watts trying to escape the futile circle that reproduces wasted black male lives from generation to generation. It's already causing some controversy in the US around the psychopathic behaviour shown to be so arbitrary in the black urban community depicted. It's a violent film that shocks, not only because of the actual acts of violence, but also the ease by which the violence is invoked, not to mention the entertainment it provides the perpetrators. In the end there is little hope offered of fighting the downward



MENACE II SOCIETY. Dir: Hughes Brothers. Lorenz Tate plays the lawless teenager O-Dog. Photo: D. Stevens.

BEDEVIL. Dir: Tracey Moffat. Aboriginal Ghost Stories

The American Pavilion was the location for a discus-

sion panel event entitled Black Filmmakers and the International Market Place organised by independent US filmmaker **Jacqui Taliéfero**. Featured on the panel were **Mario Van Peebles**, **Trix Worrell** (writer/producer UK), **Rusty Cundieff** (director), **Darin Scott** (producer of MENACE II SOCIETY), **FEAR OF A BLACK HAT**, and **Charles Burnett**'s "To Sleep With Anger" shown in the Director's Fortnight at Cannes in 1990. **Simon Onwurah** were highly visible seeking distribution interest and completion finance for the film; and **Trix Worrell** was in town with the Tribitz-Worrell co-production YOUNG AMERICANS which was also shown in the market and was widely sold. Nevertheless there was a sizeable UK presence. In addition to the former Under Secretary of State Robert Key, there was a **Guardian Panel** event entitled "In a Lonely Place: Filmmaking in Britain" held at the European Pavilion with **Ken Loach** (Director), **Stephen Wolley** (producer), **Rorraine Hart** (Distributor), **Wilf Stevenson** (BFI) and chaired by **Derek Malcolm** (Critic).

The discussion focused on Rank's decision "to invest £75 million in a young independent film company in the USA" a decision which made panellists both sad and angry that such investment is not made in the UK industry. Analysis of the UK situation produced observations such as "British audiences were spoiled by good TV and did not go to the cinema to see British films", "No industry slags itself off like we do. Its very upsetting" (Wolley); and "There should be better programmes on TV which explained films - not just programmes for semi-literate morons" (Malcolm). Loach suggested a tax on cinema seats which would go back into British filmmaking. • June Giovanni

Britain

The black UK presence was limited this year, with no films in the official selection, but **Isaac Julien**'s THE ATTENDANT and **Gurinder Chada**'s BHAIJ ON THE BEACH were in the market. The Terrordome group led by **Simon Onwurah** were highly visible seeking distribution interest and completion finance for the film; and **Trix Worrell** was in town with the Tribitz-Worrell co-production YOUNG AMERICANS which was also shown in the market and was widely sold. Nevertheless there was a sizeable UK presence. In addition to the former Under Secretary of State Robert Key, there was a **Guardian Panel** event entitled "In a Lonely Place: Filmmaking in Britain" held at the European Pavilion with **Ken Loach** (Director), **Stephen Wolley** (producer), **Rorraine Hart** (Distributor), **Wilf Stevenson** (BFI) and chaired by **Derek Malcolm** (Critic).

ARMCHAIR GUIDE

spring tv & film guide

REAR WINDOW. Prod: Bandung Ltd. Including: 27 Jul THE WOLF, THE WOODS & THE NEW MAN. Cuban film directors. Cont. Tuesdays C4 9.00pm.

Global Image. Radical documentaries from around the world. Mondays C4. 12 July KANEHSATAKE: 270 YEARS OF RESISTANCE by National Film Board of Canada. 26 July SALVATION by Pankaj Butolia. 2 Aug THE TRUTH IES IN ROSTOCK.

17 July WHATYA LOOKIN AT - New Comedy series. Dir: Trix Worrell. Saturdays ITV 6.30pm.

OUT OF AFRICA. 4x1 hr series. C4 Business, Science & Features. Prod: Afro-Wisdom Films. A discussion programme about African society and environment.

July 11 11.35pm - Party Politics. July 18 11.15pm - Resolution of Conflict. July 25 11.00pm - The Politics of Food. Aug 1 11.15pm - Out of Africa

BBC Birthrights: Continuing Education. BBC 2 Wednesday 7.40pm. Comm Ed: Chris Lent. 21 July REUNION. Dir: Frances Anne Solomon. 28 July TAKEAWAYLIVES. Dir: Andy Francis/Mian Har Ng. 4 Aug THE COLOUR OF LOVE. Dir: Salim Salam. 11 Aug AFRICAN SUITE. DIR: Glen Ujebu Masakoane. 18 Aug CROSSING THE TRACKS. Dir: Celina Smith. 25 Aug BLACK INK. DIR: Ahmed Ahmadzaden.

C4 Cinema, Cinema season: Independent Film & Video Dept. C4. Saturdays. 31 July HYENAS Dir: Djibril Diop/Senegal. 7 Aug WEND KUINI Dir: Gaston Kaboré/Burkina Faso

12 Aug MARRIAGE OFF THE PEG. Prod: Clarke Prods.

Witness. Series on personal beliefs. C4. 12 Aug MAN, GOD & AFRICA. Religion in South Africa's black community. 26 Aug THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY. Documentary on

Rastafarianism.

5 Sept LIBERATORS FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS. C4 Independent Film & Video. Bears witness to the role African-Americans played in the defeat of the Nazis.

9th Sept BIRTH OF A NATION Dir: DW Griffith. Part of a season dedicated to this early film pioneer, this film is legendary for its racist caricatures of Africans during the US Civil War. First time on TV.

Black Bag. C4 Multicultural Unit. 1 hr docs investigating multicultural issues.

11 Sept RACE CRIME BUSTERS. Polio Prods. 18 Sept THE ROUNDHOUSE. Bachiks Prods. 25 Sept PUNJAB ROAD RUNNERS. Discview Ltd. 2 Oct DANCING WITH HITLER. YoYo Films.

CINEMA Q

new UK releases

30 July JUST ANOTHER GIRL ON THE IRT. Dir: Leslie Harris. 1993/90mins/16mm. Venues tbc. Metrotartan Distribution. Just a bunch of Brooklyn girls makin' out and makin' it up as they go along. The Face. Chantel Mitchell dreams of becoming a doctor until she finds herself pregnant.



COURSES

for black students

LONELY WALKER. Dir: Nasser Bakhti. 1992/16mm/27mm/UK/ ALGERIA. An ageing man reflects on his life in Algeria. First broadcast as part of the C4 South series. Distributor: Troubadour Films Tel: 081 341 3291.

POETIC JUSTICE. Dir: John Singleton. 1993. A feature film starring Janet Jackson and poems from Maya Angelou. DIS: COLUMBIA TRISTAR FILMS UK Tel: 071 580 2090. Release date: tbc.

RETURN TO SHASHAMANIE. Dir: Ras Mweya Masimba. 1992/vhs/1hr. Documentary involving the people who have settled in Shashamanie, Ethiopia, the gift land given to black people by Haile Selassie. Dis: I-Vision. Tel: 0274 660455.

THERE'LL BE TEARS BEFORE BEDTIME. Dir: Paul Andre' Leo. 1993/20mins/16mm. Mendy a professional vagabond crosses paths with Billie an impressionable teenage street sponger. Distributor: Virginia Haworth, Cultural Partnerships 071 254 8217.

A VIEW FROM THE SHORE. Dir: Sindamani Brigal. 1993/52mins/16mm. A docu-drama on Columbus and Caribbean history. UK distribution pending.

WARRIOR MARKS: GENITAL MUTILATION AND THE MAIMING OF WOMEN. Dir: Pratibha Parmar. 1993/16mm. Written and presented by Alice Walker, this docu-drama explores the controversial topic of genital mutilation. UK Distribution pending.

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY, from September 1994, will offer studies in Race and culture a part of which will examine black film and representation. Watch for further details.

YOUNG AMERICANS. Dir: Danny Cannon. Produced by Tribits & Worrel. An American cop comes over to Britain to investigate an underground crack organisation.

THE POSSE. Dir: Mario Van Peebles. 1993/USA group of black outlaws decide to take the law into their own hands. Distributor: Rank Films distributor Ltd. Tel: 071 434 3689. Release dates: tbc.

LATIFAH AND HAMU'S NOMADIC UNCLE. Dir: Alnoor Dewshi. 1993/15mins. A drama which uses nomads as a metaphor to illustrate an emerging British identity.

KINGS OF THE HEART. Dir: Dee Phillips. Prod: Black, Young & Gifted. U-matic. A relationship develops between a lonely man and a woman whom he rescues from a brawl. Distributors: BYGTV Tel: 071 248 8167.

AN ORDINARY PORTRAIT. Dir: Pier Wilkie. 1993.

A drama that examines a relationship between daughter and father.

Dis: Arts Council Film and Video Library at Concord Film & Video Council Tel: 0473 726012.

8

PASSAGES. Dir: Ranjana Sharda. 1993/10mins/16mm. Drama about an artist's creative process and development through her paintings. CHAYTANTRA. Dir: Ali Zaidi & Keith Khan. 1993/12mins/16mm. A fable about power, greed, lust, wisdom and peace.

DAMIRIFA DUE! Dir: Rosemary Dei-Boateng. 1993/15mins/16mm. A documentary about the celebration of Asante (Akan) funeral traditions in Ghana.

URSULENA'S BOX. Dir: Jillian Li-Sue. 1993/11mins/16mm. A semi-biographical documentary about a man's experience of bereavement. Dis: Arts Council Film and Video Library at Concord Film & Video Council Tel: 0473 726012.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: 14 - 29 Aug. Events, screenings, premieres including "Young Americans" (Tribitz/Worrell) "Bhaji on the Beach" (Gurinder Chadha). Contact: Edinburgh Film Festival office - 031 228 4051. Fax: 031 229 5301.

SISTERS...VOICES OF BLACK WOMEN. Dir: Don John. 1993/44mins/u-matic. A documentary based on a debate about relationships between black couples.

THE COLOUR OF LOVE. Dir: Don John. 1993/30mins. A studio debate about mixed relationships, and mixed race children.

Both films featured in this year's Southampton Film Festival.

Dis: Black & Asian Video Panel 0703 832274.

GORDON PARKS SEASON: 12 - 30 Sept NFT. Season of 12 films including his later well known works such as "Shaft" with his earlier documentaries and autobiographical film. A photographic exhibition organised by Autograph will be on display at the Photographers Gallery Halina House, 5 Great Newport Street, London WC2H 7HY. Contact: the National Film Theatre Box Office, Southbank, London SE1 8XT. Tel: 071 928 3232. Tel: 071 831 1772.

IN PRODUCTION

EVENTually...

forthcoming festivals and events

NATIONAL

JULIE DASH IN CONVERSATION WITH CYNTHIA ROSE: 15 July. Talking about her latest release 'Daughters of the Dust' which will open at the ICA in September. This event is part of the Arts Talk season by the ICA. Venue: ICA, The Mall, London SW1. Tel: 071 920 0493.

THIRD CINEMA FOCUS: 8 - 16 October. (As part of the Birmingham International Film & TV Festival). Further details contact: Pervaiz Khan, Third Cinema Focus, Central House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2JP. Tel: 021 616 4213.

DON'T LEAVE ME THIS WAY. Dir: Frances Ann Solomon. Leda Serene Prods. Shooting dates: Aug/Oct.

FUNKY BLACK SHORTS. Prod: Crucial Films. Comm: Chris Lent, BBC Continuing Education. 6 x 10 mins shorts. Writers: Jez Simons, Jyoti Patel, Chris McGinty, Rohan Candappa, Danny Thompson, Kilton Lee, Avril Russell.

LONELY LONDONERS. British Screen. Production:

MOTHERLAND PRODS. MAMA LOU. Dir: Maybelle Peters. 16mm/61/2mins. Prod: Lisa Beattie. Comm Ed: Claire Kitson/Animation C4.

INTERNATIONAL

39TH ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR

7 - 13 Aug. Features Latino and Latin American media arts and an overview of the Black Maria Festival. Louis Massiah will present an examination on new aesthetic approaches among film/video makers from the African diaspora. For a brochure contact: Sally Berger, Executive Director, IFS, 305 West 21 Street, New York, NY 10011 Tel: 212 727 7262 Fax: 212 691 9565.

THE POSSE SERIES

Prod: Nadine Marsh Edwards/C4.

SHADOWLANDS. Prod: Frances Ann Solomon/BFI. Series of short 20 mins films by new black women writers exploring the supra-natural.

LITTLE SISTER, WHAT COLOUR FLOWER ARE YOU WEARING IN YOUR HAIR? Dir: Hi Ching. RAAG, GUTTER AND CHIPS. Dir: Kuljit Chuhan. CAN I TOUCH IT? Dir: Tanya Read.

PASSING. Dir: Erika Tan. TALKING THE TALK. Dir: Marina Warsama. RAW RHYTHM. Dir: Ruhul Amin.

SECRETS OF THE SELF. Dir: Nasser Saleem Aslam. NO SEX PLEASE, WE'RE INDIAN. Dir: Barinda Kalsi. IDENTICAL BEAT. Dir: Smita Malde.

THE EMIGRANTS. Dir: Pier Wilkie. In Development with the Arts Council Black Arts Video Project Scheme.

ON SET

black films in production

IN DEVELOPMENT - Script Stage

AN AFRICAN LOVE STORY. Dir: Niyi Epega.

CHEF! CHRISTMAS SPECIAL. Prod: Crucial Films. Dir: John Birkin. Writer: Peter Tilbury. Starring Lenny Henry, Caroline Lee Johnson. 30 mins.

CRUCIAL SKETCH SHOW. Prod: Crucial Films. Comm: Carlton TV. Multiracial cast and writing team of 20.

AS EYE FOR AN EYE. Dir: Pogus Caesar. Beta SP/5mins. DAY AND NIGHT. Dir: Peter Harvey.

THE GOSPEL TRUTH. Dir: Dilly Braimoh. DOMINOES. Dir: Bluette Abrahams. SAMPLING LONDON. Dir: Ranjana Sharda. WE ARE THE RAGGA GIRLS. Dir: Inga Blackmon. FRO HERE TO ETERNITY. Dir: Yve Ngoo.

ANANSI FANTASIA. Dir: Shirley Thompson. 16mm/Beta/5'30". Synchro Productions for Carlton and the Arts Council. Tx date: October.

As Eye for an EYE. L to R Pogus Caesar (Prod/Dir) & Sculptor Willard Wiggin. Photo: Kevin Small



As Eye for an EYE. L to R Pogus Caesar (Prod/Dir) & Sculptor Willard Wiggin. Photo: Kevin Small

THE ADVENTURES OF ATOMIC DOG AND RAGGA, Hip Hop/Rave Road Movie. Shooting dates: End of July. Contact: Anjali Paul, Butcherhouse, 97 Longdown Lane, South Epsom, Surrey, KT17 4JJ.

STUDENT FILMS new in distribution

NATIONAL FILM & TV SCHOOL TEL: 0494 671234

GO WEST YOUNG MAN. Dir: Keith Piper. Arts Council/Channel Four Animation Award. Examines historical and contemporary framing of the black male in the western world.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME. Dir: Maureen Blackwood. Prod: Sankofa/Nadine Marsh-Edwards. Shoot dates: Beg of July. British Screen Short.

SOUTH BANK SHOW ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN HUMOUR. Prod/Dir: Dan Marks. Comm: LWT. Presenter: Lenny Henry. Filming in USA.

POST PRODUCTION

FICTIONS. Dir: Amanda Holiday. 16mm/B/W/4mins. Arts Council/Channel Four Experimental Awards. Completion date: July. Experimental documentary which looks at the nature of fiction.

LOST DAYS. Dir: Raza Mallal. Lalmarich Collective Prods. Beta SP. Set in an Asian household a revengeful brother and sister abuse their power over an exploitative cousin.

THE NEW SOULNATION. Prod: Crucial Films. Comm: Andrea Wonfor/Bill Hilary C4. 65 mins Beta SP. Key Artiste: Lenny Henry (presenter). Omar, Mica Paris, Nucolours, Bryan Powell, Ray Hayden etc. A special for Channel 4 - a documentary and celebration of British soul music.

WELCOME TO THE TERRORDOME. Dir: Nigzi Omwurah. 16mm Feature. Non-Aligned Prods. Futuristic drama set in an apartheid ruled city.

LOOT. Dir: Shafeeq Vellani. 16mm/7 1/2 mins. Prod: Jeremy Payne. Completion date: July 31st. An experimental drama exploring the history and politics of the production and consumption of tea colonialism, empire and profit.

ANGELS. Dir: Folake Shange. 16mm/5mins. Prod: Jeremy Payne. Animation short. Through a window the history of a family from 1930's Durham to 1960's Nigeria through to 1990's Bristol is traced. Shorts made for HTV/South West Arts. Tx: In August during Andy Shepherd Rap show.

STUDENT FILMS new in distribution

NATIONAL FILM & TV SCHOOL TEL: 0494 671234

THE BY BY BIRD. Dir: Amanda Holiday. 16mm/color/10mins. Prod: NFTVS. Short drama about a mixed race girl who believes her father lives down a well.

CONCRETE GARDEN. Dir: Alrick Riley. 1993/16mm/

FLYING COLOURS. Dir: Alex Pillai. 1993/30mins/16mm.

KOFI CHEZ LES FRANCAIS. Dir: Carlyn Saltman. 1993/58 mins/16mm.

RWENDO. Dir: Farai Seveno. 1993/44mins/16mm.



WHO'S IN TOWN

who's been, who's coming

LONDON COLLEGE OF PRINTING. TEL: 071 278 7445

EYEDENTITY. Dir: Donovan Chamberlyne. 1993/U-matic/10mins. Featuring Omar, the Cookie Crew, Sunchilde, Black Radical and General Levy.

THE NEW SOULNATION. Prod: Crucial Films. Comm: Andrea Wonfor/Bill Hilary C4. 65 mins Beta SP. Key Artiste: Lenny Henry (presenter). Omar, Mica Paris, Nucolours, Bryan Powell, Ray Hayden etc. A special for Channel 4 - a documentary and celebration of British soul music.

WELCOME TO THE TERRORDOME. Dir: Nigzi Omwurah. 16mm Feature. Non-Aligned Prods. Futuristic drama set in an apartheid ruled city.

LOOT. Dir: Shafeeq Vellani. 16mm/7 1/2 mins. Prod: Jeremy Payne. Completion date: July 31st. An experimental drama exploring the history and politics of the production and consumption of tea colonialism, empire and profit.

ANGELS. Dir: Folake Shange. 16mm/5mins. Prod: Jeremy Payne. Animation short. Through a window the history of a family from 1930's Durham to 1960's Nigeria through to 1990's Bristol is traced. Shorts made for HTV/South West Arts. Tx: In August during Andy Shepherd Rap show.

THE WORD new black/film publications

BLACK POPULAR CULTURE. Edited by Gina Dent. From a project by Michele Wallace contains essays by a range of writers including Stuart Hall, Cornel West, Marlon Riggs and Isaac Julien. Published by the Dia Centre for the Arts. 1992. ISBN 0-941920-23-2. \$18.95

CULTURAL IDENTITY & RACISM (video directory). Comprehensive video list about issues of race and

FOR MALCOLM X will be available for rental and sale from national video outlets on the Black Audio/Electric label. The three will be priced at approximately £15 each.

BLACK UNICORN distributes and promotes Black/Asian films for home video through retail outlets and a black film mailing list. Contact Marlan Hawthorne, 3A Warwick Street, Ifley Oxford OX4 1SZ. Tel: 0865 2346. £6.00.

DIRECTORY OF AFRICAN FILM-MAKERS AND FILMS. Compiled and edited by Keith Shire. Information on nearly 250 filmmakers. Published by Flicks Books 29 Bradford Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 9AN. 1992. ISBN 0-948911-60-3. £40.00

AFRICAN VIDEO CENTRE has now opened its Peckham Branch at 92 Peckham High Street. It stocks 750 titles plus 2000 titles available by mail order. Membership costs £5/£10 per year. Telephone 071 732 5460 for further details.

I-VISION VIDEO PRODS Producers and distributors of films on Rastafarianism. They also run video prods courses. Contact: Ras Mweya Masimba, I-Vision, 93 Upper Rushton Road, Bradford, W. Yorks BD23 7LG. Tel: 0274 660455.

LE CINEMA DANS LES ANTILLES FRANCAISES by Osange Silou. A history of French West-Indian cinema. Published by OCIC 1991 Rue de l'Orme, 8, B-10040 Brussels, Belgium. 1991. ISBN 92-9080-027-5 £12.00.

RUNNEYMEDE BULLETIN published by The Runnymede Trust. A monthly newsletter monitoring of events and developments in the field of race relations in Britain and Europe. Subscription for 10 issues per year ranges from £13-£18. Contact: The Runnymede Trust, 11 Princes Street, London El 6QH. Tel: 071 375 1496. Fax: 071 247 7695.

QUEST FOR COLOUR. Dir: Keyo Yendii. 16mm animation.

MUD. Dir: Ain Bailey Eshe. 16mm.

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE. TEL: 081 692 7171

THE H-ART IN US. Dir: Kadaria M Ahmed. 15mins.

MINIATURE MIRROR OF THE MUGHALS. Dir: Zarqa Imtiaz. 14mins/U-matic.

A RESTING PLACE FOR KATE. Dir: Janice Edwards.

VIDEO VIEW black video news

BLACK AUDIO FILM COLLECTIVE and ELECTRIC PICTURES are releasing three of the best from Black Audio on video. From August HANDSWORTH SONGS, WHO NEEDS A HEART and SEVEN SONGS

culture featuring the material available and outlet details. Documentaries only. Suitable for researchers. Published by the Mental Health Media Council, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. Tel: 071 286 2346. £6.00.

FLYING COLOURS. Dir: Alex Pillai. 1993/30mins/16mm.

KOFI CHEZ LES FRANCAIS. Dir: Carlyn Saltman. 1993/58 mins/16mm.

RWENDO. Dir: Farai Seveno. 1993/44mins/16mm.

SOULNATION. Dir: Crucial Films. 65 mins Beta SP.

THE WORD. Dir: Folake Shange. 16mm/5mins.

the indispensable three PRODUCERS

For those of you finishing courses, considering your next move, or just curious about working in the industry, here is some food for thought. The film industry can often be cliquish so to help to break down the selective "who you know" syndrome we introduce people working in the industry, sometimes in not very visible profiles, as colleagues and role models. The Information Feature will occasionally spotlight some of these people and share their thoughts on what they do and how they work.

As the black film sector in this country develops, the specification of skills and roles becomes more important as opposed to the 'collective' way of working in the 1980's. One of the areas where there has, until now, been little specification is PRODUCING. One could count on their fingers (and perhaps toes) the number of independent black film producers in the UK. They include Lina Gopaul and Avril Johnson of Black Audio Film Collective; Lloyd Gardner; Mahmood Jamal; Ingrid Lewis; Pogus Caesar, and newcomers to the scene such as Louise Decoteau. There are also a number working in television, notably Trevor Phillips, Tariq Ali, Terry Jarvis, Colin Prescod and Parminder Vir.

In this Information Feature we interview THREE PRODUCERS, each one of whom relates very differently to the role of producer: NADINE MARSH EDWARDS who started off as an editor and now produces drama and documentary, MUNNI KABIR who directs as well as produces non-fiction and TRIX WORRELL, a producer and writer of drama.

The paths into the industry are almost as varied as the reasons for which individuals choose the profession. How and why did they get involved in this field as producers?

Nadine Marsh Edwards as a co-founder of the Sankofa Workshop group, had the opportunity to try different areas and found producing to be the most exciting due to the involvement required from the conception of a project right through to the marketing of a film. Trix Worrell better known as writer and director of DESMOND'S, is now part of the joint production company Tribits-Worrell. He began by winning a TV and script competition in 1984 and then attended the National Film & Television School to undertake a course in producing. He describes himself as an 'enabler' - a 'creator' whose passion is writing, but combines the skills of writer, producer and director. He personally prefers to produce other people's work, but likes to direct his own writing.

"I keep the creative and producing processes separately because ultimately those things don't mix. Part of the friction in a production can be the conflict between creativity and finance."

Drama especially, needs another critical eye, he feels. Unlike Trix, Munni Kabir is an 'auteur' filmmaker who creates, directs and produces her own films because she likes to control the whole artistic project. She sees both producing and directing as part of the same process. This also helps to reduce costs on increasingly hard-pressed budgets. Munni, director of Hyphen Films, has most recently produced the series "Dilly Down Town" for Carlton TV.



Nadine Marsh-Edwards

1983 Degree in Mass Communications at Goldsmiths College

1985 Co-Founder of Sankofa Workshop

Production Manager/Produced: TERRITORIES (1984);

THE PASSION OF REMEMBRANCE (1986); DREAMING RIVERS (1988); PERFECT IMAGE (1988); LOOKING FOR LANGSTON (1989); A NICE ARRANGEMENT (1990); YOUNG SOUL REBELS (1991); PUBLIC ENEMY/PRIVATE FRIENDS (1992); IN BETWEEN (1992); A FAMILY CALLED ABEW (1992); FLIGHT OF THE SWAN (exec prod: 1992); ARMED AND DANGEROUS (1993); BHAIJI ON THE BEACH (1993); HOME AWAY FROM HOME (exec prod: 1993).

"It's very important not to do that because if you do you may miss useful advice and information that you will need to act upon."

Munni thinks that the ability to predict and avoid problems, hence the need for well developed planning skills, is imperative. The producer should be able to give support and confidence to the production team, but with honesty not false reassurances.

So once you possess the skills, how do you then go about choosing the projects to work on?

information

three PRODUCERS

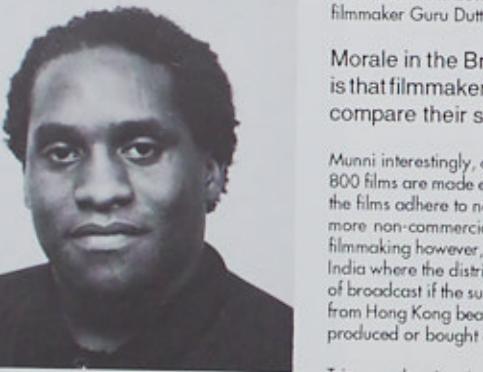
Munni develops her own projects which will then go into production in the order in which the finance becomes available. When undertaking project offers from colleagues, her personal interest in the subject will be the main factor. As well as being interested in the subject matter, Nadine believes the choice of director to be as important to her decision. "I do work with a lot of new writers and directors and might be more interested in them as an artist than the particular project at the time, but I might become interested in their future projects." She also realises that it pays to be aware of the market but not to blindly follow it. She personally prefers to decide what the motive and the subject of the film is first and then to choose the appropriate genre.

Trix, on the other hand often makes his decision based on genre and type of movie. He actively seeks scripts in particular genres. Working with Wicked Films, a pop promo company, Trix and the company felt the need to tackle a feature. They developed, what eventually became the cult horror film *HARDWARE*, by choosing the genre first. "We said let's make a horror film and that way hopefully it will get us some money to do other things." The next film, Trix tackled was the, soon to be released, thriller *YOUNG AMERICANS* and how they want to work on a comedy. Not only does the choice of a popular genre help to ensure maximum returns but, "One of the reasons we particularly chose to do something like *YOUNG AMERICANS*, was because we realised that the face of England has always been seen through Merchant Ivory type films. One of the best movies I've seen come out of here was 'The Long Good Friday', a brilliant thriller, showing gangster life in England. We said it was about time we shot a movie on the streets of London."

In a climate where more and more filmmakers are expected to be financially accountable for the work they produce, how do the three measure success and what are their career goals? Has profit become the only driving force?

Nadine does not seem to think so. Success depends on what type of producer you choose to be, she argues. It could be the size of the budgets one has to work with and whether these increase throughout the producers career. Also she feels it could be the amount of films one produces with black stars, writers and directors. "For me it's probably a combination of those two things, plus a feeling that I'm making a contribution to film culture in England and black film culture in particular. There are so many other political agendas that affect the types of films financiers think you should be making, so I gauge my success on the range of work I can make happen". A personal career goal is to make a historical drama about black people in England on the scale and impact of "Roots".

Trix sees success in another way. Paraphrasing Putnam he suggests it could be,



Trix Worrell

1978-1984 THEATRE - Asst. Director/Director & Writer; including *JUST LIKE MOHICANS* (1984) *BLACK & WHITE RAP* (1984).

FILMS & TV - National Film & Television School 1984. Director/Producer/Writer: *WEEDS* (1984 BBC) *JUST LIKE MOHICANS* (1984 C4) *DANNY'S BIG NIGHT OUT* (1985) *FOR QUEEN & COUNTRY* (1985) *DESMOND'S* (1989-1992) *HARDWARE* (1989) *YOUNG AMERICANS* (1993).

Nadine does not take such an optimistic view of Europe and the United States when it comes to the financing of black film. She believes the 'better availability for film finance abroad' notion is a myth unless you happen to be a 'white' filmmaker. Government finance in France is for French directors, she says, and perhaps may be made available to some African filmmakers in a paternal way but it is still difficult for black French filmmakers to get access to funds. It is no easier for them than it is

"When the producer is bigger than the film itself". As he sees it, in this uncertain climate, success is when people can simply continue to raise money and make films. His goal is to make 'British', not mid-Atlantic films, which are respected internationally and will stand the test of time. "I want to shoot more films in London and help develop our own style of filmmaking." Munni who works mainly in television, has a slightly different perspective. She views success as how many commissions one can get and agrees with Trix that to survive in today's stringent climate is, in itself, success. Philosophically, she realises that success can be a false illusion. "In this business you might have done three films and won an Oscar for them, but if your last film you are judged on or your last six months work. That is what is very cruel about this business". Her personal goal is to make a film on the Indian filmmaker Guru Dutt.

Morale in the British film industry is low and the general feeling is that filmmakers here are having a rough time of it. How do they compare their situation with producers abroad?

Munni interestingly, compares the situation here to that in India, where as many as 800 films are made each year. The funding for features is better in India as long as the films adhere to narrow definitions of conventional entertainment. Classics and more non-commercial films are made with government help. For documentary filmmaking however, she believes she is better off in England than countries such as India where the distribution of documentaries is a problem. There is no possibility of broadcast if the subject is politically sensitive or probing. Paradoxically Star TV from Hong Kong beams into India, five channels including the BBC, so material co-produced or bought abroad can be seen on screen there.

Trix sees the situation in England as depressing. He argues that there is no UK Government support for investment or tax incentives whereas film in France is viewed as 'culture' and receives government support of up to 150 million pounds a year. "We went to Thatcher to ask 'can we have five million pounds please?'. London is revered as the promo capital of the world in terms of images and innovation. But we found that with every promo we made (with a French company) in France, we got twenty five percent of our budget back, courtesy of the French government". He does not think that film is taken seriously here. It is seen as glamour and fun, but not as a business by which people can earn a living. There are few places in the UK which supply film finance and those are shrinking e.g. British Screen or Channel Four but, he claims, in the US and Europe there are 10 to 12 different avenues available to be able to make a film happen.

Nadine does not take such an optimistic view of Europe and the United States when it comes to the financing of black film. She believes the 'better availability for film finance abroad' notion is a myth unless you happen to be a 'white' filmmaker. Government finance in France is for French directors, she says, and perhaps may be made available to some African filmmakers in a paternal way but it is still difficult for black French filmmakers to get access to funds. It is no easier for them than it is

feature

three PRODUCERS

for black filmmakers in the UK. It is difficult to find a black co-producer in France to work with for example. This is without raising the problem of xenophobia and the growth of the Right Wing in Europe, making the job of "trying to persuade people that stories by black people are universal and everyone can get something from those stories" near impossible.

She also seeks to de-mystify the myth about the US being the land of opportunity for black film. Film in the US is a massive export industry but is characterised by waves and trends. The 'Black Wave' at the moment is narrowly defined into two areas in her opinion - as 'black men retaining their manhood in the urban jungle' or comedy. "Show me the gentle Hollywood love story starring two black people", she pleads. She also states that films which are a lot more meditative, for example Charles Burnett's 'To Sleep With Anger' die when it comes to marketing because the studios do not know what to do with them. "I do lament my lot as a producer in England but I'm very aware that the grass is not always necessarily greener on the other side."

When asked which were the easiest and which were their hardest projects and for what reasons, all claimed that their easiest productions were also their hardest.

Trix described *HARDWARE* as "a nightmare of co-production egos". It was difficult for that reason but also was made easy because of the short turn around. The film was completed through from script stage in a year. He adds though that no film is easy. *MOVIE MAHAL*, the documentary films on Indian Cinema which Munni made for Channel 4 were easy because there had been very little done before on the subject and sources of information were open and eager. The difficulty arose when trying to deal with the cultural issue of deciding whether to take the stance of an informed Indian viewer who would know, for example, the great works of filmmaker Guru Dutt, or to take the perspective of a standard UK viewer. In this case she decided to take the former as there were sufficient universal points of interest for any audience such as his short and tragic life, his distinguished and prolific career etc. It can be quite difficult walking the tightrope of trying not to patronise either English or Indian viewer. Nadine declares that Danny Thompson's *PUBLIC ENEMY PRIVATE FRIENDS* was her easiest as it was a comedy, so for the most part spirits were high, and, although low-budget, there was a co-operative team. It was also tricky however because the director wanted a certain look which was part documentary and part non-realist. *BHAJI ON THE BEACH* her latest feature with director Gurinder Chadha was tactfully difficult because of the 14 different characters in a story over one day filmed during a so-called English summer. "It was the thought of what could have gone wrong as opposed to what did".

Finally they were asked about the difference for them working in film and television; and fiction and non-fictional work.



Munni Kabir

1970-1980 Assistant Director on French, English, African, German prods including *QUATRE NUITS D'UN REVEUR* by Robert Bresson. Film Festivals: Organised two major film festivals of Indian Cinema at the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris (1983 - 1985) Nantes Film Festival (1984). Consultant: Channel 4 on Indian cinema (1982-1991). Produced and directed: *MOVIE MAHAL* two series on Indian Cinema for C4 (1986-1990) *LATAIN HER OWN VOICE* six part series (1990) *FLESH & PAPER* (dir. Pratibha Parmar), *BOMBAY 80 CLIPS* (Jan 1992) *DILLY DOWN TOWN* (1992 - Carlton TV). Also works as sub-titler.

Trix claims that film and TV are different entities and the people and the operations are different because the sources of revenue are different. TV carries much more regulation and obligation. "Nobody has to make films," he says. "For me TV is bread and butter. Film is optional." He also resented the fact that one senior member of staff at the National Film & Television School during his interview assumed that because he was black he wanted to make documentaries. "I want to show black stories and can do that best through drama or comedy, film or TV."

Munni chose non-fiction because she felt there was a necessity to build an archival record of some of the great people who worked in cinema from the 1940's, to the 1960's, for whom no interviews exist and who have now died.

Nadine broadens the issue. Whether film or TV there is a 99% chance that you will have to use TV money she claims. For cinema distribution the ideas have to be bigger, the scope of the film has to be wider and the way the film is shot has to be bigger. Cinema has to transcend locality and provide the universal story. One of the main tasks of the producer is to try and tell at script stage whether a project will work financially or marketing-wise for cinema. TV stories, she continues, can be potentially small, localised, and very intimate. The onus can be on characters thoughts rather than their actions. For someone who works in documentary and drama depending on what the subject is, she prefers to work in drama as it can often transcend audiences cultural backgrounds as well as hold their attention for longer than a documentary. If the elements of a taboo subject are embodied in a character, audiences will become involved and watch until the end. She also thinks that documentary may suit some subjects better at a particular time. For example Maureen Blackwood's documentary 'A Family Called Abreu' produced by Nadine, is a historical document, but some of the stories that came out of the interviews could be made into drama.

She concludes by a piece of advice. "If you want to be a producer, or if you want to work in the film industry in this country at the moment, I think you need to have a very clear vision of what you want to do because if you don't, with the many obstacles you will encounter on your way, it would be easy to get side tracked and give up. You have to be very controlled and determined and choose who you work with very carefully."

It is important to recognise that for anybody trying to make films in England, there are very few places to obtain finance so the knock on effect of that is that it is extremely difficult for black filmmakers to see their dream come true. Even though it is difficult I would encourage those who want to make films not to give up."

YOUNG AMERICANS will be out later this year by Rank Film Distributors. *BHAJI ON THE BEACH* will be released in October by First Independent and *DILLY DOWN TOWN* is being repeated this Autumn on Carlton TV. Nadine Marsh Edwards is on the look out for black drama or drama series scripts. Send treatments and scripts c/o Sankofa Unit K, 32-34 Gordon House Road, London NW5 1LP.

Wishful Filming

by John Akomfrah

John Akomfrah's two part interview of which the first part "Sneaking Ghosts Through the Back Door" was published in the last issue of BFB, is concluded here taking a frank approach to the issue of audience demands and black film aesthetics the UK. Akomfrah argues that one can't really make any sense of a Black British emergent cinema without placing it within British Cinema and understanding the relationship British cinema has with American cinema or has had historically.

British Audiences/Black Aesthetics

I feel there's a kind of certainty that African-American film embodies and a lot of people want that to be duplicated here. It is increasingly seen that any black film-maker who is interested in interrogating forms, finding fresh ways of saying things is accused of being funded by white liberals. It's the most bizarre argument! How are we going to learn how to make films unless we try to find ways of talking about it?

It seems to me that we were beginning to get to the point where a certain amount of cultural credibility was being gained by black British filmmakers abroad and we didn't have to completely betray everything that we represent in order to be taken seriously. But precisely at that moment you have a crowd of people saying we don't need experimental films because they're all rubbish. I don't understand why it is that people who feel they need to do other types of work need to attack experimentalism. I don't understand why people who watch "Boyz n' the Hood" and "Bladerunner" have a problem saying that experimental filmmaking is just one more strand of the filmmaking experience I want to open myself out to. I don't feel the need to pander to anybody any more. They should go somewhere else to see the films they want.

There has always been a kind of healthy disrespect for capacities for abstraction in this culture. So why should any intellectual defence of our difference be seen as an apology for white liberalism? The underlying assumption of that accusation is that there has been a willingness on the part of some institutions/financiers to fund mainstream black films and we, the "Workshops", haven't been prepared to go along with it. That's simply not true. The Workshops developed as a diverse practice and people, who from the beginning were pushing fiction synopsis and treatments of what would be described as mainstream pieces. On the whole nobody in the British industry was interested in a black cinema. The only time they started thinking about it was when they realised that a pornographic display of black life was worth some money, and anybody who thinks that there was in the past a group of willing British producers who were stopped from making commercial black film by 'avant-garde' Uncle Toms like myself is living in wacko land. Let's get real here.

I'm being really polemical but I find what is going on really interesting. For one, when we started there were no people who wanted to talk about cinema. Now everybody wants to talk about cinema. That major moment when potentially all the things we talked about - the need for a black constituency, a supportive base for black filmmaking and for black film ideas, is beginning to happen. But it's just not happening in the way that some of us would like and that's the nature of the beast! We can't become too despondent about it; we have to carry on making inroads by informing people that there are different kinds of black filmmaking. What I want is not what Ngozi Onwurah or Sankofa or Charles Burnett, Med Hondo, Spike Lee, Haile Gerima, Julie Dash, Isaac Julien or even other BAFC people might want to do even though I love them all.

The Great Divide?

Most white filmmakers or movie goers make a clear distinction between what is British and what is American. Watching an American film is very much an exercise in visiting a foreign land for audiences - they know that there is a cultural difference. One of the things that I initially thought exciting about the black British movie going audiences was the erasure of that difference in the name of something else - a black international or black diasporic culture. That excitement will remain for me as long as the whole thing doesn't ossify into the usual boring, servile, conformist, British approach.

"On the whole nobody in the British industry was interested in black cinema. The only time they started thinking about it was when they realised that a pornographic display of black life was worth some money."

to American culture. We've a unique chance for dialogue and we should take it. Let's they offer us or start shamelessly mimicking them.

Pointing to the U.S. experience without properly understanding it is a mistake. Spike if it wasn't for "She's Gotta Have It" was one of the most radical cinema made at the time. The are really important to understand but people don't want to talk about it.

ence without properly understanding it is a mistake. Spike if it wasn't for "She's Gotta Have It" was one of the most radical cinema made at the time. The are really important to understand but people don't want to talk about it.

This comparison of Black British and Black American film popularity is also happening at a time when most British film producers in the wider industry are busy re-selling their souls. Everybody is doing it! Not just young blacks but everybody. "We make awful films the US are so much better!" they say, rather than just accepting the fact that we are a smaller culture and our contributions can be made in a smaller but very particular way. There are those who in the usual boring British filmmaking way since the 1940's, are trying to resurrect this dead, putrid horse called Commercial British Cinema and you've got these young blacks following them. It's a completely dead horse and it's not going to go anywhere - never has done, never will! Once you accept that you can be quite comfortable. People are flogging a completely dead horse which hasn't been alive for forty years. And the idea that by some miracle this fifth column called black British commercial filmmaking is going to break through is baloney. It's a massive exercise in wishful filming. ●

Sharks & Charlatans

by David Lawson - producer Black Audio Film Collective

Film Collective films. The story of my subsequent incarceration in New York penal institutions and cells is a story of tragicomic proportions, full of degeneracy, horror, abject dehumanisation, penal vastness, bureaucracy and despair. For example handcuffed in a huge holding tank with 50 other prisoners for eight hours, walking from one cell to another in a manacled chain gang, HIV positive junkies jacking up (having already been searched three times), fights over your rations of rice crisps, screaming for most of the night, sleeping fourteen to a cell with roaches and, for your pedagogic instruction and entertainment, cable porn. Just a few of the highlights chosen at random for the independent producer to bear in mind when signing up a distributor. I will spare you the rest of the details.

Britain's black filmmakers have been making inroads to the vast continent of North America for some time. In the mid Seventies the notion of a third Cinema was common parlance both here and in the States. There was trade between black British filmmakers and black American curators/distributors at a brisk pace. The result has been black British films finding black distribution companies who were supposedly kindred spirits and committed to the idea of a black films, independent films, films from black subjects, network. These were the companies that had been favoured by black filmmakers over others because of their commitment to black film rather than green dollars. How we have been so wrong.

Personally I could not envisage calling the police to arrest a filmmaker that I represented, not least of all over civil matter where I was in dispute with them. Neither could I envisage calling the police on a matter where I was most certainly in the wrong. This incident has called whatever standards we had into question. What ethics do we have as a filmmaking body? Where is this so-called solidarity and what are we doing this for? Exactly how "professional" are these new distributors of black film? Is the whole thrust of this profession so over determined by dollars that its commitment to this goal is at the expense of films and the filmmakers?

These distributors are being called into question in a very serious manner. Black Audio Film Collective's HANSWORTH SONGS has been with the New York based THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL since 1988. Other Black Audio titles TESTAMENT and WHO NEEDS A HEART should have been in distribution in the USA from the end of last year with the same company. The scenario has been that Black Audio Film Collective has not had any royalties from Third World Newsreel for the past year and a half. After repeated request the matter had not been resolved. Finally after more than a generous period had been allowed we were forced to terminate our contracts with Third World Newsreel.

After 30 days notice, as stipulated in the contract, I went to New York to inspect the books and ultimately to retrieve our films as defined and stated in the contract at the producers right. I was initially given the films and vhs cassettes but not the statements which would show how much money was due. I returned the next day to collect the statements at Third World Newsreel's behest. The most foul, incredulous, unethical and sinister event then took place. Third World Newsreel called the police (eight officer) without my knowledge and I was arrested for Grand Larceny "theft of over \$1000". The goods in question - Black Audio

PRIZED PIECES FILM & VIDEO COMPETITION open for African/African-American film and TV productions. Categories are Public Affairs, News, Youth/Teens, Drama, Documentary, Music Video/Musical, Promotional Shorts, Content Shorts, Comedy, Experimental. Contact Greg King, NBPC, 929 Harrison Avenue, Suite 101, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Tel: 614 299 5355. Fax: 614 299 4761. Entries to be received by 5pm July 30 1993.

MEDIA 95

Forthcoming deadlines to note:-

- 1 Aug - EAVE
- 16 Aug - EURO AIM MIPCOM participation
- 1 Sept - Media Investment Club, Digital Media
- 15 Sept - GRECO
- 15 Sept - MAP TV
- 23-25 Sept - CARTOON FORUM, Inverness
- 1 Oct - Media Investment Club, HD MEDIA
- 31 Oct - CARTOON Development Loans
- 31 Oct - European Script Fund - Single Project Development Loans

Plans for Britain's first BLACK AND ASIAN FILM AND TV PRODUCERS FORUM have begun. The aims include providing an extensive database, developing areas of sponsorship and forming closer links with African and European markets. Contact: Fauzia Kohomedine, 55 Edbrooke Road, London W9 2DE.

AFRICAN-CANADIAN documentary producer Shaheera Isis Asante wants to network with documentary producers in Canadian/British co-production possibilities. Contact: Idera Films, 2524 Cypress Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3NZ Canada. Tel: 604 738 8815. Fax: 604 738 8400.

ARTS COUNCIL'S LARGE AND SMALL AWARDS deadline is 6th Sept. Send SAE to Gary Thomas, Arts Council, 14 Great Peters Street, London SW1P 3NQ.

ORISHI a new distribution company is looking to distribute black films in France. If interested contact Sanvi Panou 4 Villa Poissonniere, 75018 Paris. Tel: 331 42 51 85 55. Fax: 331 42 51 18 85.

WOMEN'S VOICES a new "zine" based in L.A. is looking for submissions by black women (either poem, essay, diary/journal entry) with a particular view on the subject of viewing preferences and patterns among black British audiences. Contact: Lola Young 081 362 6036 or 081 362 5973.

Letters

Many thanks for sending along the first copy of the Black Film Bulletin. Enclosed is a check for my subscription. It was a pleasure to be able to catch up on things in Britain and elsewhere through the Bulletin. Congratulations.

Dighton E Spooner
Los Angeles, Ca.,

I wish to express my congrats to both of you and the BFI, for the Black Film Bulletin. Its both timely and necessary. For the Black film sector it is an important watershed. I found it informative and well produced and wish you lots of success!

Menelik Shabazz
Director

I like the Black Film Bulletin. It's certainly going to be very useful to me.

All the Best

Mark Shivas
BBC Drama Dept.

I would like to thank you for keeping 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks in touch with the UK Black film scene by sending us a copy of the Black Film Bulletin. The Bulletin is both informative and worldly. Spike Lee is indeed interested in keeping abreast of new filmmakers in the UK and even more interested in looking at bright new writers with copywritten film scripts. We appreciate your interest in our organisation.

Desiree Jellerette
Administrative Director
40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks

For more information of Spike's request see Noticeboard.

Essential for keeping track of the exploding black film and video sector. Informative, critical, comprehensive, readable. Terrific job. Congratulations.

Stuart Hall
Open University

I am really thrilled with your publication the Black Film Bulletin. It's really nice to see talk and good intentions being replaced by a publication like this that keeps us informed and helps to make us feel less isolated.

Good Luck with it. I'll send you any information that may be relevant. I'm delighted to enclose a cheque for £10 re subscription and look forward to receiving the next quarter. All the Best.

Munni Kabir
Producer

The British Film Institute exists to encourage the development of film, television and video in the United Kingdom, and to promote knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the culture of the moving image. Its activities include the National Film Archive; The National Film Theatre; The London Film Festival; The Museum of the Moving Image; the production and distribution of film and video; funding and support for regional activities; Library and Information Services; Stills, Posters and Designs; Research; Publishing and Education; and the monthly Sight and Sound magazine.

Black Film Bulletin Vol1 Issue No2 Summer 1993

21 Stephen Street
London W1P 1PL
Telephone 071 255 1444
Facsimile 071 436 7950

EDITORIAL
Editor
June Givanni
Assistant Editor
Gaylene Gould

PRODUCTION
Directors
June Givanni & Gaylene Gould
Design
Curtis Holder & Gaylene Gould
Liason
John Smoker

ASSISTANTS
Ame Ekhaguere
Anthony Assani

CONTRIBUTORS
Alrick Riley
Film Director

29th July

Coming Soon...
The BFB proudly presents

8pm - 2am

SUMMER SCREEN CELEBRATION

at the WKD Cafe, Kentish Town Road, NW1 on the Thursday 29th July 8pm - 2am

Featuring

Outdoor Screenings of the latest and the best in black British films with previews of the most exciting black Summer and Autumn releases as featured in your BFB. Complete with barbecue and live music from BOOM, LIVE, FUNKY, JAM!

£6 on the door or £4 for BFB subscribers or if you turn up with a completed subscription form!



CELEBRATING THE MOVING IMAGE