

Frame Up Films
In Association with the
New Zealand Film Commission

Present

SURE TO RISE

ELEVATION CERTAINE

Directed by Niki Caro

Official Selection
In Competition
Cannes 1994

Sales: Kathleen Drumm
New Zealand Film Commission
2nd Floor - Residence Festival
52 La Croisette
Cannes
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Press: Rachel Stace

SURE TO RISE

Short Synopsis

April, a recluse, discovers an injured man and claims him as her own. She must keep him secret and alive, in a strange community called Paradise. When her home is threatened April finds she can neither leave, nor stay. Sometimes there is nowhere else to go but up.



SURE TO RISE

Long Synopsis

There are people too gentle and naive for conventional society. April is one of these.

April is a recluse, child-like despite being an adult. While beachcombing she finds an injured man in the sand and takes him home to live with her. Home is a fringe dwelling in a semi-industrial area, a tiny community called Paradise.

But Paradise is threatened by the expansion of industry and its inhabitants are slowly moving on. These refugees include Boy and Nada, two children that April depends on to live her solitary existence. Their barter system is unique and effective.

Fiercely protective of the broken man in her bed, April cannot leave Paradise, nor can she stay. For April there is nowhere else to go but up.



SURE TO RISE

Director's Notes

I wanted to make a small film about our trampled instincts and forgotten tenderness. A story that was both epic and intimate, that could work on both real and mystical levels.

SURE TO RISE is a love story. It is set on the edge of the world, in a small community of misfits and loners where April lives a solitary life in her caravan.

When a companion literally drops out of the sky, April takes him for herself. Disabled and unconscious, he is the perfect partner.

But he doesn't stay grateful for long. April learns that other powerful forces threaten to separate them, the strongest of which might be him.

April has forgotten the social niceties of the regular world. Her responses are brave and instinctive and this makes her self-centred, like a child. I think a lot of us behave like this when there's something we really want.

HESTER JOYCE

Lead Actor in SURE TO RISE

Character: April

Hester came to SURE TO RISE with a wide variety of skills; as an actor, a writer and an academic.

The role of April coincided with Hester receiving her MA in English with First Class Honours. Despite the straightness of her mind she often finds herself cast as women who are "on the fringe", not "normal women". Hester wonders whether there is such a thing.....

Hester trained as an actor at Theatre Corporate in the early eighties and joined the company after graduation. Her film credits include Noeline in CONSTANCE (dir. Bruce Morrison) and Mother in JEWEL'S DARL (dir. Peter Wells).

She has worked as a writer and script consultant on television series and independent drama and continues to do script consultancy as well as her acting and academic careers.

At present she is deeply embroiled in her PhD, "Whaling Women in 19th Century South Pacific". She can also swim, drive and play a number of sports. She is however, allergic to horses.

JOEL TOBECK

Supporting Actor in SURE TO RISE

Character: Parachutist

Joel Tobeck, son of actress and writer Liddy Holloway, developed a passion for performance from an early age - his first appearance was at the Mercury in 1976, when he was just five years old.

In 1984 he took classes with the Auckland Youth Theatre, and in 1986 he started at the Performing Arts School. He is especially interested in comedy and dance, and in 1991 did a year-long fulltime contemporary dance course.

Joel's television credits include the role of *Ludo* in Television New Zealand's series **Strangers**, directed by Peter Sharp, for which he learnt to juggle, tap dance and perform magic.

His credits also include **Crimewatch**, **Gloss**, **Grasscutter** and **Lotto**. Joel appeared in the television series, **Black Beauty**, in the role of *Rupert*, a young violinist.

His film credits are **Grampire**, **Shrimp on the Barbie**, **Peach** and **The Summer the Queen Came**.

In his spare time, Joel follows another interest - radio - appearing regularly on shows and doing commercials for Auckland Radio Station BFM. Music has played a big part in his life, especially guitar which he started playing in 1987, and hasn't stopped since!

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Niki Caro

ADDRESS: 16 Lawrence Street
Herne Bay
Auckland
New Zealand

DATE OF BIRTH: 20 September 1966

PLACE OF BIRTH: Wellington, New Zealand

TELEPHONE: (09) 3780 488

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS:

1994 Writer:
THE CORINNE CURTIS STORY
1/2 hour drama for television.
Communicado.
Producer: Steve Sachs

 Director:
THE FRANCESCA HARDY STORY
1/2 hour drama for television.
Communicado.
Producer: Steve Sachs.

1993 Writer/Director:
SURE TO RISE
35mm Drama. 12 mins.
Frame Up Films.
Producer: Owen Hughes.

1992 Writer/Director:
THE SUMMER THE QUEEN CAME
16mm Drama. 30 mins.
Frame Up Films.
Producer: Owen Hughes

1992 cont...

Writer/Director:
OLD BASTARDS
35mm/8mm Drama. 12 mins.
O.B. Productions
Producer: Rachel Jean

1991/1992

Various Music clips and advertisements including:-

Director:
LINDA SENORITA
Music Video for KANTUTA/EMI Records
Zee Films.
Producer: Michele Fantl.

Director:
GROWERS TVC
Zee films/Mainstream Advertising.
Producer: Michele Fantl.

Director:
WHEN YOU LEAVE
Music Video. MERENIA/Pagan Records
Zee Films.
Producer: Michele Fantl.
Finalist: NZ Music Video Awards 1992.

Director:
DENTAL AWARENESS WEEK TVC
Zee Films/Chiat Day Mojo.
Producer: Michele Fantl.
Bronze Axis Award 1992

1990

Completed Post Graduate Diploma
(Writer/Director) Swinburne Film and
Television School, Melbourne.

Received **CINEVAX AWARD** for Excellence in Screen Writing.

Co-Producer/Director:
BAD NOTE FOR A HEART
Music Video.
STRAITJACKET FITS/Mushroom Records
Best Video. NZ Music Awards 1991.

1990 cont...

Writer/Director:

SINISTRE

16mm Drama. 10 mins.

Kiwi Shorts 1990.

Melbourne Film Festival 1990.

Highly Commended, NZ Film and

Television Awards 1990.

1988

Completed BFA. Elam School of Fine Arts.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Owen Hughes
ADDRESS: Hunua Road, R.D.3, Papakura
DATE OF BIRTH: 14 March 1946
PLACE OF BIRTH: Pwhelli, North Wales
TELEPHONE: (09) 292 4822

WORK HISTORY:

1993 **Producer, Frame Up Films Ltd, Auckland**

Producer **Sure to Rise**, Director Niki Caro. Cinema short. April, a recluse, finds an injured parachutist on the beach and goes with him to Paradise.

Producer **I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry**, Director Michael Hurst. 15 minute drama. The ghost of Hank Williams reunites estranged lovers. A Country & Western fable.

Producer **Act of Murder**, Director Shirley Horrocks. 1 hour prime time documentary. Miranda Harcourt tours New Zealand prisons with her solo play, Verbatim. Based on interviews, it is the story of a murderer.

Producer, **High Hopes**, Director Charlie de Salis. 1 hour prime time documentary. A basketball team at the bottom of the league hires a prize coach, imports two class players, renegotiates its sponsorship and heads for first place.

Producer, **Life Sentence**, Director Shereen Maloney. 2 hour prime time documentary. How New Zealand's most celebrated murder trial - that of Arthur Alan Thomas - still affects the lives of many people 23 years on.

Producer, **A Load of Rubbish**, Director Charlie de Salis. 1 hour prime time documentary. The myths of recycling.

1992

Producer, Frame Up Films Ltd, Auckland

Producer, **Mother Tongue**, Director Shereen Maloney.

1 hour drama. An ill-fated love affair in the 50's.

Producer, **Another Country**, Anthology, half hour dramas:

Revelations, Director Athina Tsoulis. A Greek teenager uses a family secret to stand up to her father.

The Summer the Queen Came, Director Niki Caro. It was the summer Miles' father became famous, his family fell apart and his little brothers plotted his death.

The Wall, Director Diana Rowan.

A widow escapes the clutches of her deranged in-laws.

1991

Producer, Frame Up Films Ltd, Auckland

Producer, **Behind Closed Doors**, Director Shereen Maloney.

1 hour prime time documentary. Men and women who have experienced domestic violence speak out.

Producer **The Joker**, Director Aileen Sullivan.

1/2 hour drama. A modern fairy tale.

1990

Frame Up Films Ltd, Auckland

Production Manager **Re-enactment of the Treaty of Waitangi**, Directors Don Selwyn and Richard Campion. Theatrical performance and TV transmission performed live in front of Treaty House on morning of 6 February 1990, 150 years after the original.

Producer **Christmas Shopping**, Director Diana Rowan

35mm cinema short. A young woman goes shopping with her new born baby on Christmas Eve and finds a dark side to the season of goodwill.

1989

Freelance Producer, Auckland.

Associate Producer **Just Me & Mario**, Director Gregg Stitt.

1 hour drama. An obsessive tale of love and Mario Lanza in West Auckland.

Production Manager **Angel At My Table**, Director Jane Campion.
3 x 1 hour dramas. Janet Frame's autobiography.

Line Producer **The Quiet Fighter**, Director Dell King.
1 hour drama/documentary. The writer Patricia Grace illuminated by
three of her short stories.

1977-1988

Frame Up Films Ltd, Auckland

Established Production Company with partner Susan Humphries.

10 years Director, mainly TV commercials. Sponsored programmes
include 15min 35mm Steadicam film: **Bremworth**, and 16mm film:
Fletchers.

1976

Freelance, Wellington & Auckland

Production Manager. Television commercials for Tony Williams
Productions, Silver Screen, Motion Pictures. Prepared initial budgets
and schedules for feature films **Solo** and **Mark II**.

Production Manager. Aardvark Films **Winners & Losers** series. 6 x
1/2 hour dramas directed by Ian Mune and Rodger Donaldson. New
Zealand short stories by Shadbolt, Crump, Stead, Duggan, Ihimaera
and Lee.

1975

Freelance, London

Co-produced 45mm drama sponsored by CO1. Written and directed
by Ferinand Fairfax (**Savage Islands** and **The Rescue**).

1973-1974

Phillip Bond Productions, London

18 months Production Manager. Budgeted and managed TV and
cinema commercials. Location management in Nigeria, Dubai and
Singapore.

1972

Downstage Theatre, Wellington

Production Manager, Floor Manager, Administrator for late night
programme and Touring Manager.

1968-1971

Pacific Films

3 months negative and lab contact. 3 years Production Manager. Budgeted and Production managed Tony Williams **Survey** series, a series of 1/2 hour dramatised documentaries commissioned by TVNZ (WNTV1). 1 year Assistant Director and Director. Wrote and directed 16mm documentaries for Farm Forestry Association, Meat Board and ICI. Directed 35mm Cinema Documentary for MOW on East Coast.

SURE TO RISE

PEOPLE INVOLVED

Director
NIKI CARO

Producer
OWEN HUGHES

Written by
NIKI CARO

Cast

April Hester Joyce
Parachutist Joel Tobeck

Key Crew

Director of Photography	Simon Raby
Production Designer	Brett Schwieters
Costume Designer	Denise Kum
Editor	Chris Plummer
Music	Chris Mathews and Michael Lowry
Make Up	Denise Kum
Sound Recordist	Terry King
Sound Post Production	Chris Burt

Produced with the assistance
of the
The New Zealand Film Commission

Celluloid Sisters

Filmmaking in New Zealand is at a fascinating stage. Established feature film makers are producing their finest work yet, and a wave of short film makers are emerging to carry on the tradition. Many of the most interesting films being made are by women, and five Auckland women in particular look destined to join the lauded ranks of Jane Campion, Alison Maclean and Gaylene Preston.

Athina Tsoulis, Shereen Maloney, Nicky Marshall, Niki Caro and Christine Parker are rapidly approaching the divide between making short films and features. Once they make the crossover, the future of quality filmmaking in this country will be assured.

Both Maclean and Jan Beiringa, manager of the QEII Arts Council film fund, agree that the number and quality of women filmmakers here is very high.

"They're exploring a whole range of subjects across a visual sort of cultural arena that we haven't seen before," says Beiringa. "And I think that accounts for the current very high interest."

The most obvious advantage of having a national pool of talented women filmmakers, each pursuing strong individual, creative and thematic ideas, is that a female voice and vision is given a sympathetic representation which it rarely receives in male filmmaking.

However, says Maclean, "The popular success of a film probably boils down to some pretty basic responses along the lines of, 'Do I identify with/want to have sex with this man/woman?' etc. And because our industry is commercially driven, that index of popular success determines the kinds of films that get made, and disadvantages a female vision."

text: Bernard D. McDonald
photo: Simon Young

Athina Tsoulis

Ideologically, Athina Tsoulis' filmmaking is informed by two fundamentals: her feminism and her Greek immigrant background. Since becoming a filmmaker in 1988 with an educational documentary titled *Equality for all: An attempt in anti-sexist, anti-racist teaching*, Tsoulis has expanded into short film making while retaining a strong desire to critique New Zealand attitudes to socially and politically marginalised members of our society. *A Bitter Song* and its sequel *Revelations* deal with the patriarchal subjugation of the women in a Greek immigrant family in 1950s New Zealand. Her second short, *The Invisible Hand*, addresses the hypocrisy of society's negative perception of prostitutes versus the lack of condemnation of the men who use them. Her most recent work, *Dissolution*, is a pro-choice film which delves into the mind of a woman during the termination of her pregnancy.

The predominant theme of Tsoulis' films is a feminist investment in representing women on screen, telling their stories, and encouraging men to reflect on the gender imbalance which weighs heavily against women having power and equality.

"I find it sad that people are threatened by feminism, because it offers a new way of living together as men and women. What I really want men to think about is, 'Okay, because I'm a man, from the time that I'm born I'm given certain privileges

and treated in a different way to women, and this patently isn't fair.' I'd like to get rid of gender. Why does everything have to be according to gender? Why can't we just be people?"

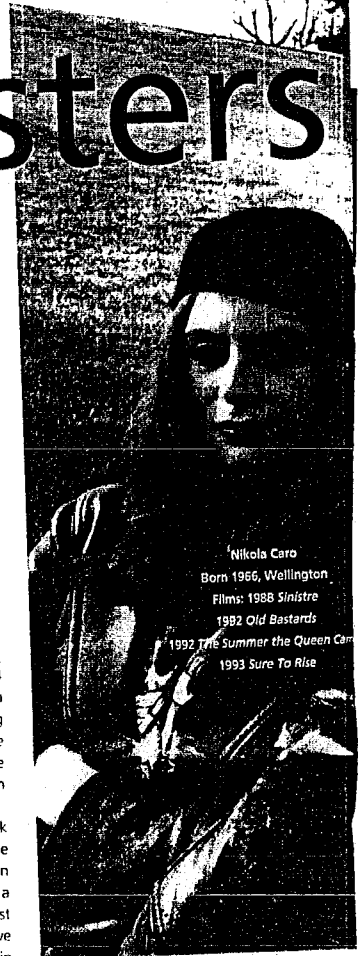
Tsoulis, the mother of two girls aged 14 and 12, moved to New Zealand from Australia in 1982, fortunately avoiding the dearth of local filmmaking in the 70s. As a period in our film history, the 70s had little to offer, particularly from and for women.

"Women's films in the 70s didn't look all that good," admits Tsoulis. "The women just didn't have that much of an idea about the technical stuff. I mean, a lot of them had heart, but their films just didn't look good. But I think women have really contributed a lot to filmmaking in New Zealand since then, and they're at the pinnacle at the moment."

"Women filmmakers are coming up with a lot of interesting work, while male filmmakers are still saying the same tired old things, really. They need to look at their ideas in response to a lot of the ideas that have come up, but a lot of them don't."

A fundamental difference between the films of women like Campion, Preston, Tsoulis and Maloney, and many of the "new generation" of women filmmakers coming through, is the older women's more complete immersion in the feminist movement of the 70s. The feminist impulse is more conscious in these women and more innate in filmmakers like Caro, Jessica Hobbs and Marshall. But the feminist movement is incomplete, and Tsoulis agrees that it is every woman filmmaker's obligation to demarginalise their sex in the media.

"I would say that it is every woman's obligation, but then they would probably not like that responsibility placed on them. I feel that I certainly question everything that is coming out of my films, what



Niki Caro
Born 1966, Wellington
Films: 1988 *Sinistre*
1992 *Old Bastards*
1992 *The Summer the Queen Came*
1993 *Sure To Rise*

kinds of messages, what they say to people. Unfortunately, I do see in a number of women's films a lot of reactionary messages coming through under the guise of being progressive. Maybe I've just lived longer, I don't know [laughs]. I just find it quite dangerous that we don't look at what we're saying."

Shereen Maloney

Shereen Maloney's filmography is characterised by the number of documentaries she has made compared to drama. All but *Return Journey* and *Mother Tongue* are documentary films which evince a feminist perspective on women's experience. However, the longevity of her film career has placed Maloney well beyond the mere foothills of feature film making. She makes a living out of producing local film work, but has plans to take time out soon to develop and write a treatment for her first feature.

Like Tsoulis, Maloney is a mother with all the constraints on time that the role demands. She says her greatest battle as a



Christine Parker
Born 1959, Cumbria, England
Films: 1991 *One Man's Meat*
1993 *Peach*

Athina Tsoullis
Born 1953, Varvasseha, Greece
Films: 1988 *Equality for all*
1989 *We Are Just Like Anyone Else*
1990 *A Roof of One's Own*
1992 *A Bitter Song*
1992 *The Invisible Hand*
1993 *Revelations*
Dissolution

Shereen Maloney
Born 1950, Auckland
Films: 1981 *Irene 59*
1985 *Dag, Return Journey*
1988 *Akarana*
1991 *Behind Closed Doors*
The ConFetti Conspiracy
1993 *Mother Tongue*

Nicola Marshall
Born 1963, Mosgiel
Films: 1989 *Partrayal*
1991 *Mon Desir*
1993 *Mirage*

filmmaker has been to find enough creative energy to give both her three young children and her filmmaking what they need. As a result, her career has been graduated, with the need to earn a living as a producer often taking precedence.

"I really envy the focus that some of these younger women filmmakers have, not that I regret having children," admits Maloney. "But money's been a major issue with me in terms of what I can do and what I can't do. I haven't been able to just concentrate on directing. I've done producing and consulting and script editing - lots of things."

A major reason Maloney has concentrated on making smaller projects is the reduced pressure short films and documentaries place on her time and energy. Maloney's short dramas and documentary films are not overtly feminist, although they do counter mainstream cinema by depicting women's stories from a distinctly female perspective. However, because of the limited scale of the two mediums, she hasn't been able to grapple with stories

and ideas as cogently as she would like.

"You need an enormous amount of space to make films; at least a year just to create a major idea and a script. You don't need a year to create a short drama, but you need several months, just to clear everything else out of your head and get the ideas right. That's the greatest difficulty I find, just getting enough space to get the concepts going. It just takes me a couple of years longer than most people."

Both Maloney and Tsoullis acknowledge that a certain ageism exists which hypes the younger short film makers. This ignores the groundbreaking territory the two directors have covered both as filmmakers and as feminists.

"I think the ageism thing is definitely there, in the sense that I think it's something that New Zealand suffers from," says Maloney. "It's both a strength and a weakness in our culture, this thirst for the new. You establish something and immediately turn to see what's coming along, rather than consolidating what we've

achieved. And I think it's happening earlier and earlier. I've seen new filmmakers coming through, they've just got a couple of films made, and then suddenly everybody's looking the other way. They're not being supported to make the next step into a longer drama or whatever.

"However, people like the two Nicky's are moving through very quickly. They haven't actually made a lot of films, but people get a lot of attention now which wasn't there before because no one was that interested in short film."

Nicola Marshall

After the extraordinary artistic and critical success of Nicky Marshall's first short film, *Mon Desir*, her path to feature film making deserved to be smooth and unfurrowed. Indeed, her second short, *Mirage*, was a Film Commission bonsai epic, the highest profile, most expensive short film one can make in this country. Unfortunately, *Mirage* was misunderstood by as many people as it enamoured, and the disparity of response left Marshall reeling with confusion and

anger.

Mirage played Russian roulette with an unavoidably controversial issue, incest. The film is not about incest, but many viewers have struggled to navigate between the apposition of imagination and reality which structures the narrative. As a result, the ambiguity within the father/daughter relationship at the centre of the story has elicited hostility from a disconcerting number of people, including other women filmmakers.

"I'm finding I'm getting quite a hostile reaction from those people who either aren't prepared to take responsibility for their own beliefs, or who have misinterpreted *Mirage* and believe that's my interpretation of what was happening, and they're reacting very strongly to it," says Marshall. "And, you know, I like my ego gratification, so I'm finding that hard. But when I think about what I set out to do, it doesn't surprise me that that's happening; it actually tells me that I've been successful in what I was trying to do."

Although *Mirage* (continued on p48)

(Celluloid Sisters continued from p23) has been screened at several film festivals and selected by Hoyts for exhibition before *Deadly Sins*. Marshall has stepped back from directing to go "commercial," lately working at Jyro Films producing television commercials. She is, however, in the early stages of developing ideas for a feature film.

"I feel that after *Mirage* I would like to make something longer, but it's a bit frustrating because there aren't many opportunities between a short film and a feature film. And yet, I feel I need to work in a middle area in terms of scale. So, I'm feeling through ideas to see where they go. But I'm not trying to mould myself into a particular scale of feature, although with *Mirage*, people have been saying that it's too dense for that size of film, and I know that my mind does take on fairly large issues."

Nikola Caro

With the possible exception of Jessica Hobbs, Niki Caro is arguably the most ambitious filmmaker yet to make a feature film in New Zealand. Caro's drive and energy is nuclear. It combusts whenever she has a project to sink herself into, whether it's music video, short drama, or a Dental Awareness Week commercial.

Caro began production on her first bon-sai epic, *Sure To Rise*, on November 23, and it is a natural progression in what promises to be an extremely interesting film career. However, it's a career that hasn't been without set backs and frustrations. A planned documentary called *Fine Art of Slaughter* which crosscuts between an artist as he produces violent images on

canvas and a pig hunter as he hunts down his prey, is under-funded. And her passion to make *Pursuit of Happiness*, a feature film based on the Parker and Hume murder case in Christchurch in the 1950s, was obscured by Peter Jackson's funding approval from the Film Commission to make *Heavenly Creatures*, a feature based on the same story.

"It's sad, and it's unlikely, and it's wrong, basically. My feeling is that their choice of filmmaker for that film is wildly inappropriate," says Caro, justifiably angry.

Caro shares with Alison Maclean and Nicky Marshall an oblique sense of New Zealand and its people. *Sinistre* captures the surreal edge of this vision, while *The Summer the Queen Came*, a feature masquerading as a 24-minute drama, reflects her fondness for the Kiwi vernacular.

"I love New Zealand, and I find it a completely bizarre place. I really believe that we have to tell our own stories, and I believe we have to tell them small and in a New Zealand way. I mean, our sense of humour is quite odd. And people here are very very strange. It's a lot to do with being so far from any where else. I love the way that people behave, and the fact that they're so fragile. And we're just learning to know ourselves now, which is wonderful."

It's a source of divine inexplicability that a country which has no formal film school can produce such an array of outstanding filmmakers. Caro, who argues that the absence of a film school in New Zealand isn't a bad thing, because "they can't teach you everything that there is to

know," is a prime example. Caro began filmmaking at Elam School of Fine Art before gravitating to Swinburne Film and Television School in Melbourne, where she graduated in 1990 with a postgrad diploma in writing and directing.

"Elam didn't teach me how to make films. They couldn't. They didn't have the resources. But what happened in my year, was a bunch of people went through in a department that had facilities to make experimental video, and they got a bunch of people who wanted very badly to make narrative drama. Man! [laughs] Bummer! And I don't know if they've completely stamped that out, but it was very strong there."

"When I got into Swinburne, I thought, 'Oh, it can't be a very good school because they liked me, they liked my film. It was funny. I was the only girl in my class. I was 23 years old, most of the boys were over 30. The Dean called me in and said, 'How's it all going?' And I said, 'Well, where are all the women?' She said that sometimes women apply, and they tend to do better in the written parts of the admission test, and they tend to be very articulate and very intelligent, but when it comes to showing something, they always go, 'Well, I have made something, but it wasn't very good, so I didn't bring it. And I thought *Sinistre* was the worst film that's ever been made!'"

Caro says she is committed to establishing an enduring career in this country, and is developing her first feature, *Once Removed*, with Sydney-based producer, Bridget Ikin.

"I want to make films here, and I want to make films with New Zealand actors about the way I know that we behave here. I don't want to make something that's terribly European, à la Vincent Ward, in a strange way, or ape Hollywood films. We have to make our own stories, and we have to make them on a scale that we can cope with. And the rest of the world's going to get it, if it's done properly and honestly."

Christine Parker

Continuity has been the hallmark of Christine Parker's film career. Following a job as production runner on Vincent Ward's *The Navigator* in 1986, Parker has since kept herself gainfully employed doing continuity work on various local films.

Her career as a filmmaker began in 1991 with *One Man's Meat*, scripted five years earlier but abandoned by Parker after the Arts Council declined funding. Encouraged by support from friends, she resubmitted a new draft, gained Catarina De Nave as adviser, and launched herself into filmmaking with a vengeance.

Parker initially underestimated her potential to make films, assuming that it was too hard to get anything made without a more substantial background in

film. However, her belated though rapid ascent has given her the confidence to set her sights on feature film making.

"I feel absolutely fortunate to be at the point I am. One of the best things about it is that I could now put in a proposal for a feature film which would have taken so much longer had I made other projects in between *One Man's Meat* and *Peach*. That's what I ultimately want to do, make feature-length films. So, it's good to have the process speeded up in that way, although there's no guarantee, of course, that the Film Commission will support my feature ideas, so I may end up making other things in between, anyway."

Those feature ideas include a fascination for theories about the social construction of gender. *One Man's Meat*, based on Frances Cherry's 1986 story *Waiting For Jim*, is about women breaking out of stereotypical roles such as virgin/whore/housewife, and defining their own identities beyond cultural myth. *Peach*, produced by De Nave and widely celebrated on both the general and gay/lesbian film festival circuit, is a parable about desire underscored by a lesbian subtext.

Although the personal politics in *Peach* do not form a specifically lesbian statement by Parker, the film has alternately been perceived as anti-men, pro-women, and pro-lesbian, unsurprising considering the wide-ranging audience it has reached. One reviewer took particular exception to its celebration of womanhood outside patriarchal constraint, remonstrating that "this sort of woman good/man bad kind of film isn't going to change 50,000 years of male oppression." Parker is wisely unimpressed.

"There was only one male character in it, and he wasn't 'bad'. The women were just more interesting, and it was about them, so I didn't think it was anti-men."

"It worried me for a while. I was ringing up all my male friends, saying, 'Did you think it was anti-men?' They didn't. The level on which I was offended was that, of all the short films made by males, are they asked that? I think that in some ways, being a woman filmmaker, and more so being a lesbian filmmaker, I'm given a certain amount of responsibility for making a political statement every time I produce something, and I might not want to do that."

Conversely, the rhetoric of postfeminist postulating which insists that the feminist movement is complete, holds very little credence with Parker.

"People talk about the postfeminist era which I think is a load of media hype. I don't really think there's any such thing. Actually, I believe we're only just getting past pinning our attitudes enough to be able to create some real analysis of the meaning of gender." ●

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