Film Grads Set New Standards for Independent Cinema

Two producers brighten up fall cinema offerings

Columbia's graduate film school prides itself on teaching cinema not simply as a craft but also as an art. According to acting dean Dan Kleinman, this unique approach has earned it the reputation of being "one of the two most successful programs in the country, along with the one at the University of Southern California.

This fall is a testament to the effectiveness of the school's approach, with high-profile independent films by two graduates gracing our cinema screens. Producers Jeff Sharp (SOA'01) and Albert Berger (SOA'83) have already made names for themselves in independent cinema. They continue to set new standards with the fall release of Proof by Sharp and Bee Season and Ice Harvest by Berger.

Annette Insdorf, who chaired the Graduate Film Division in the early 1990s, says that Sharp and Berger "exemplify the strengths of Columbia's M.F.A. program," its focus on screenwriting as the basis of all strong filmmaking and its emphasis on film history. "Having seen and appreciated Bee Season, I can see how the filmmaking team has learned from great movies of the past, including those of Polish master Krzysztof Kieslowski," she notes.

Never a Dull Moment with Producer Jeff Sharp

Jeff Sharp was no film novice when he first arrived at Columbia. After earning a B.A. from Colgate, he moved to Los Angeles and, with no experience left, landed a job as a development assistant for director Oliver Stone on development assistant for experience, landed a job as a B.A. from Colgate, he moved to Los Angeles and, with no experience left, landed a job as a development assistant for director Oliver Stone on filmglossary/index.php.

For Your Reference

New on the Web: Film Language Glossary

You may be well versed in all the latest movies as well as cinema classics; but how is your filmmaking vocabulary? Do you know what it means for a scene to dissolve? Can you judge "depth of field"? Can you hold your own when the conversation turns to a filmmaker's chiaroscuro technique or the film's diegetic sound?

Explanations of these, and many more, cinematic terms are now available in the Film Language Glossary (http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/filmglossary/), an online teaching tool created by Columbia's Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CUNY), in conjunction with the Libraries and the School of the Arts (SOA). The site offers a glossary of 67 film terms and 83 clips from legendary movies depicting a range of filmmaking techniques.

Max Minghella, Juliette Binoche, Flora Cross, Richard Gere play the Naumann family in Bee Season, produced by Albert Berger.