

Jon Joffe pays his dues

Local filmmaker's future looks bright with dark new film

FILM

>>PREVIEW

PRAIRIE TALES 8

August 17 to 18
CSIF Screening Room
(Sofa Cinema)

WES LAFORTUNE

Take 1. Think of Calgarian Jon Joffe, 33, as a hard-rock miner of the film business.

With steely determination, Joffe has broken through layer after layer of obstacles to create low budget independent films that are now racking up awards and catching the attention of industry insiders.

His most recent effort, *Cost of Living*, is being screened at the Prairie Tales 8 film and video tour on August 17 and 18. It's an 11-minute film set in the future about a man who faces death and discovers in the process the price he's willing to pay to live forever.

"It's been to 40 film festivals and won 15 awards," says Joffe.

Rather than being boastful about his accomplishments, Joffe views the awards being lavished on *Cost of Living*, including the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPPIA) award for best drama (under 60 minutes) and award for best director (under 60 minutes), as validation for the dogged commitment he's made to filmmaking.

"The awards help distinguish you from the pack," says Joffe. "And it

gives you feedback."

The pack that's nipping at Joffe's heels is a group of creators who share his passion for fashioning something that matters out of a spool of film or videotape cassette.

Joffe is an inspiration to anyone who has ever fantasized about breaking out of their cubicle and pursuing a dream. Without a film school education or any backers with big bucks, he continues to create movies made on shoestring budgets that have high production values and stories that engage audiences.

Joffe's approach is unconventional by most standards, but it has begun to pay off. After *Young Rocket Samurai*, another short film he directed a few years ago, Joffe realized he needed more practice working with actors who could speak in front of the camera instead of those, such as in *Samurai*, who were able to fly through the air before embarking on strenuous sword fights.

"I approached ACTRA looking for actors," says Joffe, referring to the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists.

ACTRA supplied Joffe with actors looking for more experience and the actors provided Joffe with the invaluable opportunity to direct people who also desire to capture something extraordinary on film and video.

"I did like a zillion of them," he says. "More than 60 scenes. I made a movie at the end of that."

The movie is *Cost of Living* and stands as clear evidence of Joffe's maturing as a director.

In the tradition of the dialogue driven Louis Malle classic, *My Dinner With Andre*, *Cost of Living* showcases the considerable talents of two actors (Vancouver-based William B. Davis and Calgarian Andy Krivanek) in conversation about life, death and the murky spaces in between.

Shot in one day, *Cost of Living* is a captivating film that is Joffe's most accomplished work to date.

After meeting with this hard-working filmmaker, his camera in hand, a quote from iconic film director Frank Capra seems to apply.

"Friend, you are a divine mangle of guts and stardust. So hang in there. If doors opened for me, they can open for anyone."

Prairie Tales 8 takes place at the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (Sofa Theatre) located in building J2, 2711 Battleford Ave. S.W. in the Currie Barracks. For more information visit www.prairietales.org.

***Cost of Living* is Jon Joffe's award-winning short about a man who discovers he's willing to pay to live forever**

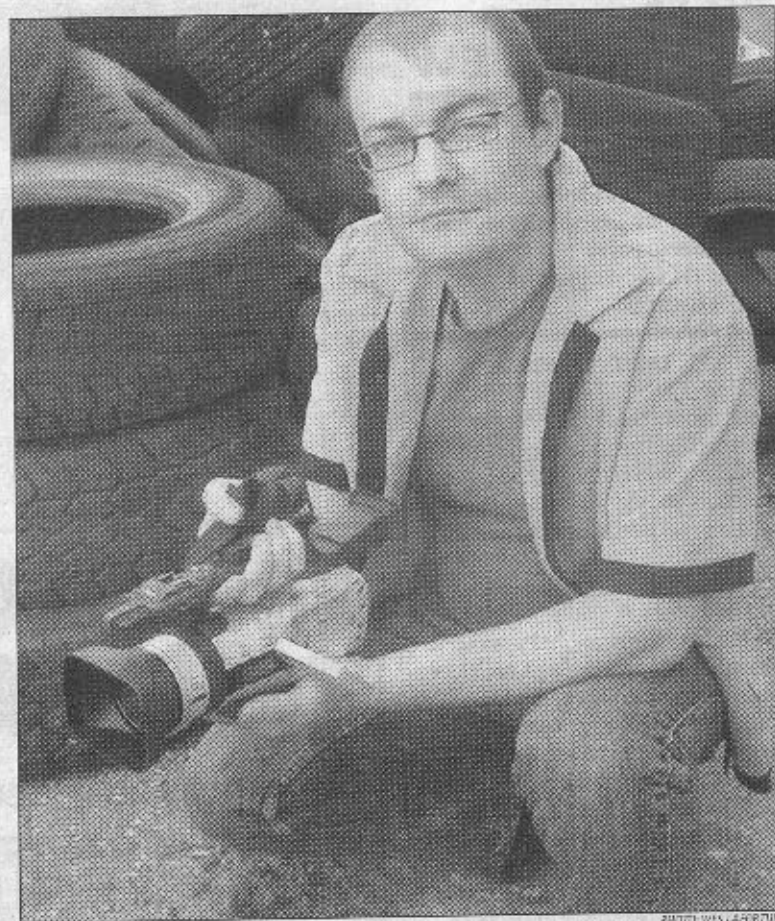


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