

ICG unveils 2008 Emerging Cinematographer Awards Honorees



The International Cinematographers Guild honored seven members at the annual ICG Emerging Cinematographer Awards in Los Angeles in September. The honorees were Layton Blaylock (*Spring Cleaning*), Josh Ellis (*The 17th Man*), Rachael Levine (*Jesus Cooks Me Breakfast*), Eduardo Mayen (*Singularity*), Aaron Medick (*Para-Normal*), Gerry O'Malley (*Demption*), and Michael Svitak for *Noisemaker*. There were also three honorable mentions, Suad Kutlug (*Lola*), James O'Keeffe (*Cruel Logic*) and Mark Williams (*Love*).

The winning entries were selected from 60 short films submitted by camera crew members who are not yet rated as directors of photography, by a jury of cinematographers.

"It is a privilege to honor the best of the new generation," says ICG President Steven Poster, ASC. "Their talent bodes well for the future."

The short film competition and showcase was conceived by Robert Kositchek in 1996 and has been sponsored by Kodak since its inception. Kositchek chaired the committee for 12 years and provided guidance and support for

his successor Jim Matlosz this year. Five of the nine finalists in the first showcase in 1996 are now cinematographers on the ICG roster: Blake Evans, Steve Gainer, ASC, Mark Karen, Philip Schwartz and Amy Vincent, ASC.

The stories told in this year's films cross genres from comedy to the supernatural.

The Films

Spring Cleaning follows a young woman who is going through emotional turmoil while coping with her dying mother. "Realistically-dramatic is how I would describe it," says Blaylock. "We wanted it to have a very natural look."

The 17th Man follows an author who is trying to complete the final book in his best-selling series centered on the sultry, femme fatale character. He begins having visions of the character coming to life, and insisting he continue writing so she can go on killing. Ellis filmed *The 17th Man* on 35mm in 1.85 aspect ratio.

"I prefer film to other formats because of its uniquely 'real' feeling," he says. "When something is shot and projected on film, there is an indescribable sensation of really experiencing the story with the characters in a way that digital and video falls short."

Jesus Cooks Me Breakfast is a surreal comedy about an unmotivated New Yorker named Jules who gets a visit from Jesus. Jules learns that God is missing and Jesus wants Jules to find him. "I went through a lot of photo magazines for inspiration, and used certain images and lighting ratios to give me an idea of what I was going after," says Levine.

Singularity is the story of two guys and a girl who are friends until differences in what they believe in causes them to grow apart. "There are a lot of flashbacks and flash forwards until you don't know what is current and what is in the past," says Mayen. "It's open to interpretation ... it's very subjective cinematography."

Para-Normal is a thriller about supernatural research gone awry. "We wanted to keep the camera moving as much as possible, inspired by the

camera movement in *The Shining*," says Medick. "We wanted to give people that frantic feeling."

In *Demption*, a burned-out junkie returns the money he and his wife stole from their twisted dealer. A detective then tries to retrace their violent path and uncover the truth. "The director wanted to use color to differentiate the past from the present," says O'Malley. "It was fun and exciting to take responsibility for the look of the film."

Noisemaker is a comedic, sci-fi/Western set in 1874. A mute farmer finds a futuristic cell phone and his whole world is thrown off-kilter. "The film that most closely resembled the look we were going for was *Unforgiven*," Svitak says. "We agreed that 35mm film would be the optimal way to make *Noisemaker* to capture the richness of the Western scenes."

All of the filmmakers share one thing in common. They were thrilled to have their films chosen by their peers. "On a professional level, there is nothing better than that," says Blaylock.