



Courtesy photo

The short film 'Alchemy,' recently shown at Bijou Cinemas, was directed by Eugene-based filmmaker Craig Mahaffy.

Digital technology frees filmmaker

LOW PRODUCTION COSTS MEAN LESS POWER FOR HOLLYWOOD

By Bryan Petersen
Oregon Daily Emerald

There was a time, not all that long ago, when making any kind of quality film took quality cash, and a lot of it.

Well, chalk up another victory for modern technology. Now, thanks to huge advances in digital technology, one can make a high-quality film for next to nothing.

Craig Eugene Mahaffy is a 37-year-old filmmaker who found his way to Oregon from Lynchburg, Tenn. He is somewhat of a rebel as far as filmmakers go, a man who sees importance in artistic individuality and expression in a field that, for the most part, encourages anything but.

"My favorite filmmakers," he says, "are those who express a strong vision in this incredibly competitive and divisive field, without sacrificing their artistic integrity."

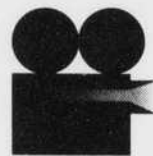
Mahaffy is the director of "Alchemy," an oblique, surreal short film that recently played at the Bijou. He is also the director of Zapadak Productions, a collaborative group of actors, writers and filmmakers based in Eugene.

The film includes two characters: Anna and Victor, played by Barbora Bakalarova and Richard

Leebrick of Eugene's Lord Leebrick Theater Company.

Once, the two were lovers. Now, however, Anna is alone, and she summons Victor to the secluded cottage she has isolated herself in. She seems desperate to regain some kind of connection with him. But after a night of rehashing hostility and confused passions, the two end up alone.

The striking thing about "Alchemy" is its symbolic, dreamy surrealism. It's hard at first to tell that a story resides in these thirteen minutes of psychedelia.



Mark, who declined to give his last name, is an employee of the Bijou who agrees that the film is somewhat dense.

"It was very intriguing. It seemed like there was a lot in there that I wasn't quite picking up on. 'Artsy' is the word that comes to mind. I walked away thinking that it was a well-made film, production-wise. As far as story, plot and character, I felt it was a little difficult, but it definitely had lots of potential."

Mahaffy and Zapadak Productions are currently working on a new feature-length film, which should thrust this potential way into the realm of artistic reality.

The new film, which is currently in pre-production, will be titled "The Day Bloch Died."

The story takes place at a party that is going on in a huge artist's loft in the industrial section of Portland, Ore. As people arrive at the party, news reports are coming in that race riots have broken out around the country in several major cities, and martial law has been imposed in these places. While the race riots have not spread to Portland, the police and the city itself are in a high state of alert.

"The Day Bloch Died" will be shot entirely in digital video and then will be transferred to film.

Mahaffy is enthusiastic about working with this new technology, which he hopes will take some of the power away from the Hollywood movie moguls, whom he described as having dollar signs for eyes and discouraging original ideas.

"What we have in Hollywood is an industry which seeks to reflect back to viewers what analysts and test-data tell them people want to see," Mahaffy says. "This may be entertainment, but it is not art."

Digital technology now allows filmmakers to produce high-quality films for little money, he adds, widening the field for those who consider movie making an art form.

"As the medium becomes less and less expensive, we are going to see a huge upsurge in films which represent the artist's unique vision rather than an attempt to cater to a studio's idea of what will sell the most."

Oregon native premieres film at Bijou

THE L.A.-BASED FILMMAKER COMES HOME TO MAKE MOVIE

By Bryan Petersen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Look out, Hollywood, here comes Oregon. More and more filmmakers from this fair state are hoping to bypass the Southern California film capital and bring productions and premiers home.

One example is Oregon writer/director Kevin Hageman, who will premier his short film "Dawn of the Dwellers," a teenage comedy thriller, at the Bijou on Saturday at 3 p.m.

Hageman conceived the idea for "Dawn of Dwellers" while attending Loyola Marymount Film School in southern California. Instead of going with the traditional Hollywood production scheme, he returned to Oregon to shoot the film.

The cast and crew was composed of more than 200 students, most attending the University, as well as young, up-and-coming professional crew members and three Oregon production compa-

nies: Alcala Music Publishing, Tektronix and 245 Media.

Alcala Music, based in Eugene, provided audio postproduction, the music soundtrack and the score for the film. In doing so, Alcala recorded Oregon's first orchestral film score.

The film was edited on equipment provided by Oregon-based Tektronix, and Eugene's 245 Media will handle marketing.

Hageman's brother Dan, who attends the University, says while they were growing up in Lake Oswego Kevin was always interested in making films, although directing is somewhat of a recent twist.

"He and I did a lot of acting, but then as a career move he decided he wanted to go into directing instead of acting. He's a really good actor, but he doesn't really expect to become an actor in Hollywood. He really wants to direct."

"Dawn of the Dwellers" has inspired "The Dwellers," a feature-length version of the film that will be shown at the Bijou, which is only about 45 minutes long. The brothers Hageman will work together on "The Dwellers," which will span more than two hours.

Coming Up
What: 'Dawn of the Dwellers'
When: Premieres Saturday at 3 p.m.
Where: Bijou Cinemas

"We've been working on the full-length script for over two years, revising it over and over. Some of the same characters are in it, but there is more of a distinct plot. The people who have been reading it in Hollywood have been really impressed, and it's looking more and more like it will be made."

While Kevin is still based in Southern California, Dan says his brother hopes to return to Oregon.

"He wants to work in L.A., but eventually he wants to move up to Oregon. He hopefully will make enough of a name for himself so that he will be able to work in Oregon, and people will be calling him with work no matter where he is."

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