

Technology Institute at UC San Diego Names First Filmmaker in Residence

Director Jean-Pierre Gorin to Experiment with 21st Century 'Film' Format

November 8, 2006

Doug Ramsey

Reaching out to a one-time radical French film director for a fresh perspective on the future of technology, film and video, one of California's highest-profile technology institutes has named its first Filmmaker in Residence at the University of California, San Diego.

The UCSD Division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) appointed Jean-Pierre Gorin to the new position for an initial two-year term. He is a professor in the UCSD department of Visual Arts, where he has taught film history, criticism, editing and scriptwriting for more than 30 years.

"We are pleased to welcome J.P. as the first Filmmaker in Residence for the UCSD Division of Calit2," said Ramesh Rao, director of the UCSD Division. "We hope he will bring a fresh intellectual and cultural dimension to the institute that will inspire this organization."

Gorin says he is excited about being able to use Calit2's newest technologies in a number of areas. "The possibilities seem endless," he said. "CineGrid can connect intellectuals and artists in transcontinental exchanges, and I see further exploration of 4K technology to reinvigorate the critical discourse on the visual arts. We can look at the complex problems of digital film restoration, and I hope to further my research as a film essayist and as a narrative filmmaker."

An acclaimed director in his own right, Gorin rose to prominence as co-director with Jean-Luc Godard on a series of radical films in the late Sixties and early Seventies.

Gorin was a writer and literary editor for the leading French newspaper *Le Monde* in 1966 when he met Godard. Two years later, they created a filmmaking collective called the Dziga Vertov Group. What followed was a series of seven seminal films, co-directed by Gorin and Godard, that offered a radical examination of the aesthetic paradigm of political cinema: *Un Film Comme Les Autres* (1968); *Wind from the East* (1969); *Struggle in Italy* (1970); *Vladimir and Rosa* (1971); *Here and Elsewhere* (1971-1977); *Tout Va Bien* (1972); and *Letter to Jane* (1972).

After moving to San Diego in 1975, Gorin began a distinguished teaching career, but also experimented increasingly with a more personal type of filmmaking. His blend of essay and documentary marked a trilogy filmed in southern California: *Poto and Cabengo* (1978), which documented the lives of two young San Diego twins and their made-up language; *Routine Pleasures* (1986); and *My Crazy Life* (1991), which won a special jury prize at the 1992 Sundance Film Festival. These films have been widely reviewed as seminal contributions to the essayist tradition in filmmaking and will be released as a box set in 2008 in the Criterion Collection.

In the 1990s, Gorin's interests turned to music with both the completion of *Letter to Peter*, an essay on the staging by Peter Sellars of Olivier Messiaen's Opera Saint Francis at the Salzburg Film Festival, and the live filming of its performance.

In the last two years Gorin's work has been the object of no less than thirteen retrospectives and tributes in major festivals in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Japan, Korea, and Brazil. He was honored as this year's Guest Director at the Telluride Film Festival.

Gorin's association with Calit2 started in 2006 with a five-hour tribute, "Manny Farber and All That Jazz," to painter, film critic and UCSD Professor Emeritus Manny Farber, who recruited Gorin in 1975. "In the process of conceiving and producing this event," said Gorin, "I discovered Calit2, its staff and the fact that its technological capabilities were even more extensive than I had anticipated."

Specifically, he Gorin took advantage in Calit2's investment in a brand-new projection system, the first deployed in the U.S. to project video in 4K-four times the resolution of HD-TV. "It was evident to me that the 4K capabilities of Calit2 offered unique possibilities to explore Farber's aesthetics both as a painter and a film critic," said Gorin. "The event grew exponentially in ambition and complexity. Not only did I put to use 4K projection and GeoFusion software, but I was able to use the 26 audio channels of Atkinson Hall to integrate a live performance of Italian composer Luigi Nono's piece for piano and tape, *Sofferte Onde Serene*, by pianist John Mark Harris and sound designer [and UCSD music professor] Shahrok Yadegari. And Calit2 's name went a long way to persuading Sony Pictures to provide me with spectacular excerpts of 2K scans from their film library. The event achieved a remarkably successful blend of technological innovation and aesthetic ambition, and I came out of it wishing it could be the home of future research."

Media Contact: Doug Ramsey, 858-822-5825

