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FILMMAKER BLOG

Monday, December 06, 2004

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WORK

I always admire those who are able to lay either their professional and personal lives out online for all to see. One person who does this when it comes to his independent film producing is Muse Production's Chris Hanley, who has made an entertaining habit of posting on his [website](#) copies of business emails he's received under the apt header of "Scathing Letters." For a while the letters sections was filled with angry back-and-forths from folks like Vincent Gallo and Don Murphy over older Muse projects, but Hanley has updated the site recently with two choice bits of correspondence, both of which probably give budding indie filmmakers more insight into this business than a raft of cinematic self-help books. (Click on the link above and then go to the mailbox and click through to the four letters that comprise page two.)

The first is an irate email from actor and *I Love Your Work* writer/director Adam Goldberg about the distribution hell his film, which Muse produced, is in. The film, which premiered in Toronto last year and stars Giovanni Ribisi and Christina Ricci, was co-financed by [fellow producer Cyan Pictures](#) and foreign sales agent Fireworks and seems to be in some kind of bad place now that Fireworks is defunct but contractually holds approval rights for North American distribution. If you wonder about the drama that can go into the financing of low-budget independent film, check out this correspondence.

The second set of exchanges is between Muse's Robert Hanley, New Line's Bob Shaye, and [director David Cronenberg](#) over script coverage New Line commissioned for a Roberta-scripted, Cronenberg-directed adaptation of Martin Amis's novel *London Fields*. In passing, Shaye forwards the coverage which Muse posts on its site. Here's an excerpt:

"*London Fields* is a fairly disjointed and predominantly nonsensical drama that fails to offer much in the way of a coherent plot, developed characters or a satisfying ending. Things seem to take place randomly, with little reason for events to occur. The main characters are incredibly simplistic and unsympathetic and we never connect with either on a deeper level. Because we aren't involved with the plot or

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characters emotionally, we simply do not care about what transpires. It is unclear what the authors were attempting to accomplish in this screenplay, but it is safe to say that whatever it is they did not succeed. Perhaps they were going for a quirky, gritty drama/thriller, but this story doesn't possess the intensity or coolness necessary to pull that off. All in all, *London Fields* is an utterly uninspired script that falters instantly out of the gate and never recovers; making it an unmitigated pass on all levels."

After Robert cc's Cronenberg on her reply, he writes back to her assistant, "Please let Roberta know that I agree completely with her letter to Bob Shaye re that fussy, petulant reader's report. It's a laugh. I wonder what that reader would have said about my script for *Crash*." Want to see who you agree with, Cronenberg or Shaye? Read the script online [here](#).

posted by Scott Macaulay @ 12/06/2004 04:26:59 PM

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