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Women



Jenny Shimizu

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Meta Motion Pictures

Directors come out from behind the camera. **By Candace Moore**

Alison F

Alison Reid's IM manifesto for a b doubling in *Shoo Last Stand* to stu *Saw* films, Reid i with. However, t junkie has found camera in directi *The Baby Formu* the challenges o pregnant cast, h near death exper

How did you bec My standard an first stunt when craved excitement school and... I w so... I went after career out of it. **You came out aft** gone wrong, can I was rolling a c

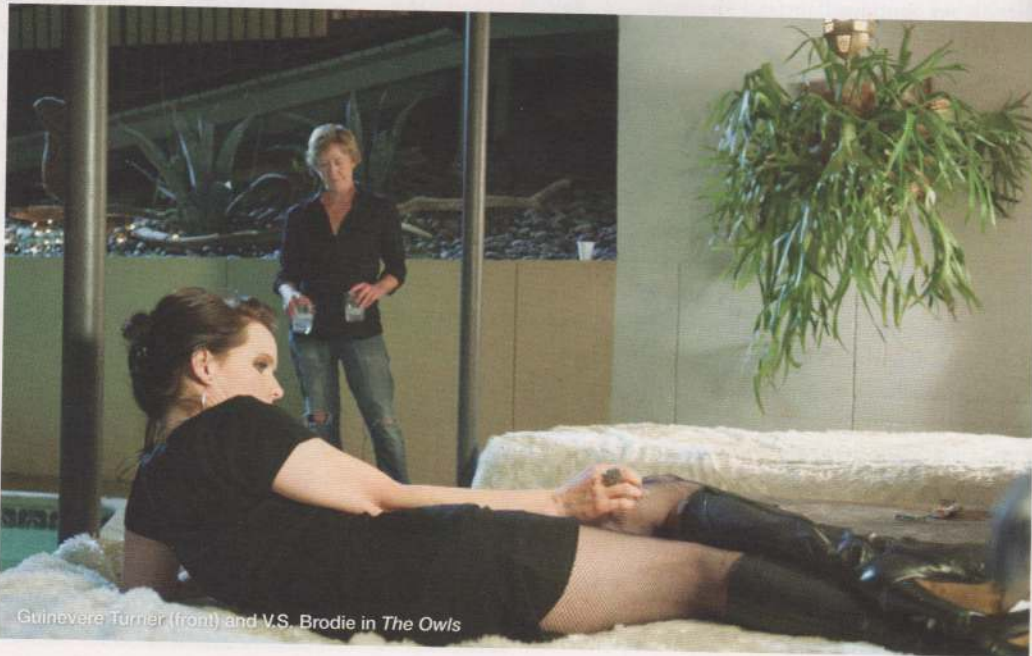
Intern's Pick



Daria: The Complete Animated Series (MTV):

"I don't have low self-esteem. I have low esteem for everyone else," says the cartoon character Daria. For anyone who's ever felt like the odd girl out in high school, Daria's cynicism and wry humor was well-deserved comfort food for every baby dyke in the '90s. Along with her friend Jane Lane, Daria takes on snooty Fashion Club members, ignorant teachers and obnoxious football players, and makes us LOL in the process. More than 10 years have passed since the show (an unlikely spinoff of *Beavis and Butt-Head*) first aired on MTV. With its DVD release, bright new generations of girls will undoubtedly fall victim to this bespectacled brainiac's charms. The eight-disc set contains all five seasons, as well as two special movie-length episodes. The "rough cut" pilot, "Sealed With a Kick," is also included. The only downside to the newly released series is that some of the original music has been changed, due to copyright issues, but it's still worth every penny. Don't pass this one up—your geek girl cred hangs in the balance. (dariaondvd.com)

[Lisa Gunther]



Guinevere Turner (front) and V.S. Brodie in *The Owls*

Both the experimental thriller *The Owls* and the mockumentary *The Baby Formula* feature their auteurs on-screen, as the films toy with genre and genetics, respectively.

The Owls (Peccadillo Pictures): The film is sun-flecked rather than shadowy, as might befit a story about a dark secret. In this desert-set film noir, Cheryl Dunye assumes the role of both filmmaker and character as she explores lesbian desire, subjectivity and history. *The Owls* incorporates self-conscious genre play, beyond the film's framed realities and realistic constructs, crafting its meditation on lesbian midlife crises as a murder mystery and a ghost story. Opening with footage of queer activism, from AIDS-era ACT UP protests to recent rallies against California's Prop. 8, the film uses the murder of a young dyke, Cricket (Itty Bitty Titty Committee's Deak Evgenikos), as a plot hook, implicating a foursome of 40-something lesbians—Cheryl Dunye, Guinevere Turner (*Go Fish*, *The L Word*), Lisa Gornick (*Tick Tock Lullaby*) and V.S. Brodie (*Go Fish*)—who are the true subjects of the film. Shots of the feathers, cacti, skulls and animal hides that decorate the characters' homes (which are also splashed with modern art and posters from their rock band glory days) tell a story of women who retain bohemian tastes but have acquired many domestic comforts. While Cricket's presence

haunts the film, her dead body in the desert is also a metaphor, illustrating the buried-in-time quality of the past and the potential isolation of the future. While the rotting corpse and a mysterious stranger (hunky Skyler Cooper) are important elements in the film, so too are the four main characters, who, finding that they can no longer drink and take drugs the way they used to, must weigh their desire for new affairs against the reality of their longtime commitments and face their ambivalence about taking on "adult" roles. *The Owls* eventually confesses that its generational concerns outweigh its genre tropes. Interviews with members of the Parliament Collective, the brain trust that collaborated on *The Owls* (and a nice pun on Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*), eventually share a split screen with the fictional storyline. "Owls," it turns out, is a funny acronym for older, wiser lesbians and seems like a premature obsession for Dunye and her set. The figureheads of queer cinema involved in the making of this film are really just owlets, experienced and contemplative, yet still relevant, vital and hip. No doubt they have much more to give. (theowlsmovie.com)

The Baby Formula (Wolfe): The notion of "womanly sperm" is the sci-fi premise that stretches Alison Reid's lesbian-mom mockumentary until it nearly pops. After attempts to cat-burgle semen from stem cell labs and family members, committed girlfriends



The Baby For

allow a came private medic each other's b the document to stay with t named pair h to be filmed closed on the *Formula* laml dual cooing, ultrasounds, and awkward enamored w conception. such tongue-i *The Baby For* "what if" pre little in the v relies on the loony, puncl cast of chara

Q+A

Alison Reid

Alison Reid's IMDb resume reads like the manifesto for a bona fide badass, from stunt doubling in *Shoot 'Em Up* and *X-Men: The Last Stand* to stunt coordinating two of the *Saw* films, Reid is a woman not to be trifled with. However, this self-professed adrenaline junkie has found a new passion behind the camera in directing the sci-fi mockumentary *The Baby Formula* (see article left). Reid shares the challenges of working with a real-life pregnant cast, her daring day job and how a near death experience inspired her to come out.

How did you become a stunt coordinator?

My standard answer is I fell into it. I did my first stunt when I was 17 years old and I just craved excitement and I was sort of bored with school and...I was a bit of an adrenaline junkie so...I went after it, and managed to make a career out of it.

You came out after you were injured in a stunt gone wrong, can you tell us about that?

I was rolling a car off a ramp and...there was

an explosion to go along with it and it went just perfectly, the car flew up in the air and came down on its roof. It wasn't until I took my helmet off and my neck brace that I realized something wasn't quite right. So they took me to the hospital and of course discovered that C1, which is the very top vertebrae, had a compression fracture. That could've been my last moving moment or my last moment alive. The attraction to women had always been in my being, I had sort of suppressed it and that just came to the forefront as something I didn't want to suppress anymore.

How did you go from stunts to directing *The Baby Formula*?

I'd wanted to do it for a very long time. I just felt like I needed to be challenging myself in different ways...and was interested in telling stories that appealed to me.

What unique problems did working with a pregnant cast present for you?

Oh my God. [Laughs] What, like when they go into labor when they're not supposed to in



the middle of a shooting day, that kind of thing perhaps? I wanted to shoot during the Pride parade here in Toronto and have Angela's water break during the parade and

so we could make a bit of a scene of it and throw her on the back of a Harley-Davidson. And we were rehearsing that exact scene when her water broke. For real.

What do you have planned next?

Well, plans are two-fold. I want to make another feature film. And I want there to be some stunts in this one. But I also very much want to make a television series using *The Baby Formula* characters.

OK here's a fun question, aside from your partner, who would you chose as your stem-cell baby mama?

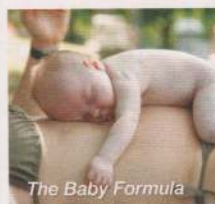
It's hard not to say Angelina Jolie. I was one of her stunt doubles in *Taking Lives*.

Who would win in an arm-wrestling match—you or Zoë Bell?

Me.

[Rachel Shatto]

Read our full interview with Alison Reid on curvemag.com



The Baby Formula

Athena and Lilith become the first women to prove men unnecessary to procreation. Comparing bulging tummies, they

allow a camera crew to document their private medical miracle: They are having each other's biological babies. Reid plays the documentary filmmaker who pushes to stay with the action as the Sapphically named pair have noisy lovers' spats, refuse to be filmed or pull the shower curtain closed on their candle-lit baths. *The Baby Formula* lambastes the hormonal surges, dual cooing, prenatal yoga, hypervigilant ultrasounds, topless gay Pride parades and awkward family gatherings of a couple enamored with their unique process of conception. A baby-happy derivative of such tongue-in-cheek films as *Best in Show*, *The Baby Formula* (now on DVD) takes its "what if" premise as far as it can but has little in the way of plot—instead, the film relies on the spontaneous hilarity of its loony, punch-drunk and melodramatic cast of characters. (wolfvideo.com) ■

DVD Picks



Paulista (FiGa Films)

This Brazilian film is a touching tribute to that age-old conundrum—relationships. Marina moves to the city hoping to become an actor, but is distracted by love with musician Justine. Along the way, her flatmates, including a transwoman, experience their own romantic encounters as the film ties together three different stories about, well, relationships. (figafilms.com) [Lisa Gunther]



Lord, Save Us From Your Followers (Thunderstruck Films)

This doc attempts to engage in an unbiased conversation about religion, but grows tiresome when the narrator mocks the separation of church and state. We applaud the film's critique of intolerance, but not its condescending attitude toward "gay lifestyles." The message—"God loves you, but not what you do." Pass. (lordsaveusthemovie.com) [Lisa Gunther]



Behind the Burly Q (First Run Features)

This film offers a glimpse into the glamorous world of burlesque. Archive footage and interviews with stars of the genre—including Kitty West, Tempest Storm and Blaze Starr—chronicle the history of this sexy and subversive form of theatrical entertainment. This nostalgic and informative doc will leave you wanting to know more. (firstrunfeatures.com) [Liska Koenig]



Glee: The Complete First Season (20th Century Fox)

Glee is about a group of kids trying to make it to stardom—or at least off of the lowest rung on the high school ladder. The show is complete with baby drama and a touching coming-out story. It features a talented cast, including Jane Lynch who clearly was put on Earth to play Sue Sylvester, the hard-ass cheerleading coach. (foxconnect.com) [Anna Belle Peterson]