

INTERVIEW

SLIFF 2016 Interview: Margarethe Baillou and Allan Neuwirth – Producers of DRAWING HOME

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By Tom Stockman | November 7, 2016



DRAWING HOME screens Thursday, Nov. 10 at 6:30pm at The Tivoli Theater as part of this year's St. Louis International Film Festival. Ticket information can be found [HERE](#). Lead actors Juan Riedinger and Julie Lynn Mortenson will be in attendance as well as producers Allan Neuwirth and Margarethe Baillou.



In 1920s Boston, East Coast debutante Catharine Robb (newcomer Julie Lynn Mortensen) is dating the most eligible bachelor in the world, John D. Rockefeller III. Her future seems set: a dream life in the upper echelons of society. But Catherine finds her careful plans upended when she meets a young painter, Peter Whyte (Juan Riedinger), from one of the most beautiful places on Earth, the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Although their worlds are polar opposites, a mutual love of art draws them together. They soon face a universal question: Can you find “home” in another person? Inspired by the true story of the central couple, “Drawing Home” features a cast that includes Kate Mulgrew (“Orange Is the New Black”), Emmy winner Peter Strauss (“Rich Man, Poor Man”), Kristin Griffith, Rutger Hauer, and Wallace Shawn. The film was shot on location in Canada’s gorgeous Banff and Yoho National Parks.



Producers Allan Neuwirth and Margarethe Baillou took the time to talk to We Are Movie Geeks about DRAWING HOME

Interview conducted by Tom Stockman October 20th, 2016

Tom Stockman: Congratulations on your film. You're both coming to the screening at the St. Louis international film Festival on November 10. Have you been to St. Louis before?

Margarethe Baillou: I have.

Allan Neuwirth: It will be my first trip there and I'm looking forward to it.

TS: I think your film DRAWING HOME will be well-received here. It's a Canadian story. Are you both Canadian?

MB: No, I am German and Allen is an American. I've spent a lot of time in Canada. I think we deserve the key to Canada.

TS: Your film is the story of Peter and Catherine Whyte who I had never heard of. Are they famous in Canada?

MB: They aren't as famous as they deserve to be and there are a couple of reasons for that. For one, they are deceased and they didn't have any children so there was no legacy besides the extended family of the artwork. Their artwork is so good and even arts specialists rank their work alongside some of the very best painters, The fact that she came from money means that they were never required to sell their art. Though they lived a humble life, the invisible luxury was that they could just paint for themselves. They would give their paintings to friends or family or they would just keep them in storage. Even the museum they built was not for their own artwork. Funny enough, they never became famous or established in the art world or the cultural world in Canada. It's like pigs finding the truffle on foreign soil. We are introducing them to most Canadians themselves.

AN: They are well known in the Canadian Rockies. They were co-founders of the town of Banff, so they're known in that part of the world. There's going to be a traveling exhibition of their paintings, and our film will be traveling with it, so they will soon be better known than they have been.



TS: Was the film shot there in the Canadian Rockies?

MB: Yes, the story takes place there and was shot there. One of the most important locations was their actual home, which is now part of the Whyte Museum. We were allowed to use that after 50 years, allowed to go in there and film there. It was a very special thing and one of the authentic aspects of the movie.

AN: Another tidbit is that filmmakers use that part of the world very often to represent other locations. We are one of the very few films to shoot in Banff, that part of Alberta, for a story that actually took place there. They shot BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN up there, but we weren't doubling for Wyoming or Colorado.

TS: Was the Skoki ski lodge a location?

MB: Yes it was. We needed to shoot there in the middle of winter and there's no way to get up there aside from hiking there for many hours through thick snow so we were airlifted up there.



TS: Was it cold filming there?

MB: Yes it was cold. And when we got off the helicopter we sank knee-deep into the snow. It took a half an hour to walk 10 steps but we burned a lot of calories.

AN: You'll notice there were a lot of snowy scenes in the film.

TS: Right. Did that present a lot of challenges for the crew?

AN: Yes, there was one time where we encountered a blizzard that actually halted shooting for a while then we decided to incorporate that into the film. It was never supposed to be that snowy in the story, But it was a very happy accident.

MB: We were filming cheek to cheek with THE BOURNE LEGACY. They had an enormous budget and crew that could afford to wait out the blizzard. We were in the opposite situation so we ran in and captured the blizzard. The crew was 100% Canadian so I really have to credit them. They were such troopers. And real crafts-people, they really loved their jobs. They embraced the story and were so

proud to help to tell this Canadian story, even though the film is an American film. It was so cold, but they didn't complain. They gave it their everything. That was quite extraordinary.

TS: What was the budget on the phone?

AN: It was a low budget film, under 3 million but it looks like we spent closer to 15.

TS: It does. What helps is a couple of shots where you see dozens and dozens of vintage 1920s cars and vintage buildings. Was some of that CGI enhanced?

AN: Most of what you see on the screen is authentic in terms of vintage cars and vintage costuming. But there is some CGI. Things just don't look that way in Banff anymore. We needed to go back in time and the best way to do that was CGI, and I think we did that pretty effectively.



TS: The director Markus Rupprecht is a German and this is his directorial debut. How did he get the job directing DRAWING HOME?

MB: He was a friend of mine from Germany. He had never been to North America before this project. He's a very talented artist. One reason I offered it to him was that I felt this true story needed a combination of new faces for the leads and cultural newcomers, because I myself am a cultural outsider who wanted to tell the story. It's often the case, in real life as well as filmmaking, that cultural outsider will see more. Sometimes people who live with it don't take notice because it's so familiar to them so I figured it would make sense to bring another outsider to look at the story in an almost scientific way, Gathering all the bits and pieces, And then getting gradually emotionally involved and creating his own perspective. I think it paid off well. It would have been a different experience if we had hired a Canadian or American director. Markus really looked at the story in a way no North American would have.

TS: The lead actress Julie Lynn Mortensen is Canadian. At the end of the film you show some actual photos of Catharine Whyte and the actress really resembles her, doesn't she?

MB: Yes they both do, Juan Riedinger who played Peter not only was one Canadian, but he was born and grew up just blocks from where Peter Whyte lived. Julie is from Calgary but she had spent an enormous amount of time in the Rockies. So they are both from there which is one of the main reasons why we connected with them aside from their acting abilities. We needed actors who shared the mentality of those people. These were fictional characters we were trying to bring to life. They were real and we wanted to honor them and we wanted to be respectful of their legacy. We wanted newcomers because it is a true story and we wanted that element of authenticity. We didn't want a famous actress to detract from the real person whose story we were telling. We wanted to surround them with veteran actors that the audience is familiar with.



TS: How long was Rutger Hauer on the set?

AN: He was with us for about a week and a half.

TS: What was he like?

AN: He's a lovely guy and he had an amazingly wonderful time. There's something intimidating about him at first because he's had such an incredible, storied career, but once you get to know him, he is a remarkable man and a very sweet guy. When we had finished shooting all of his scenes, he stuck around a bit longer. He approached us one morning and said that he had an idea that he wanted to incorporate into the film and wondered if we would shoot it. He told us that he had written a poem that he wanted to deliver on camera. We were working with some of the First Nation tribes there and he wanted to speak to the chief and learn some authentic words. We shot it thinking maybe it would end up in the DVD as an extra, but we ended up using it in the film, when he gives that eulogy at the end. He wrote that.

TS: It's a great scene, and the movie looks gorgeous. The cinematographer Patrick McLaughlin does a great job.

AN: Yes, it's a movie to be seen on the big screen.



TS: How has your film been received so far? Have you shown it at many film festivals?

AN: It's making its world premiere first at Banff. At the *Banff Mountain Book and Film Festival*. We had a private screening in Argentina at an art museum and they loved it to. The lead Juan Riedinger is half Peruvian. It will be making its U.S. premier there at the *St. Louis international film Festival*. The few people that have seen it have responded very well so far.

TS: What are your plans for the film after the festival circuit?

MB: We don't have plans yet. We're trying to strategize right now. It's so complex when moviemaking part is all done. There is interest in foreign markets. Right now all of that is being mapped out, but there is no official release date yet.

TS: Good luck with *DRAWING HOME* and I hope you enjoy your visit to St. Louis.

AN: Thank you, I'm sure we will.

MB: Thank you.

