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## SKELETON GIRL MAKES ANIMATION HISTORY IN NYC

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### A Milestone in 3D Animation Created in Calgary, Alberta

by Joel Schulz – Managing Editor

On Monday April 24<sup>th</sup>, Bleeding Art Industries' [Skeleton Girl](#) took a quantum leap into animation history. Be Film, The Underground Film Festival, is happening in New York this week and [Skeleton Girl](#) was selected by the festival's programmers for its world premiere screening. This short film is also a world first for 3D stop motion animation with constructed rather than computer generated models.

Earlier in the year I sat down with Calgary based Executive Producer Becky Scott, co-owner of [Bleeding Art Industries](#), for an exciting informal discussion about [Skeleton Girl](#), which they had just finished filming and was, at the time, in the hands of the editors. It was Bleeding Art founder Leo Wieser's vision to make real the darkness of the graveyard behind his grandparents' house he knew as a child. It unfolds in Millicent's world, the title character. Becky described the film as "a native/stereoscopic 3D digital animated short film about an orphan girl named Millicent who discovers why it's not a good idea to steal from the dead". It is "a journey through a land of make-believe and one small girl's imagination leads her to take a valuable gem that doesn't belong to her, only to discover it isn't a good idea to steal from the dead". Calgary and by extension Canada, thanks to Becky's and Leo's team, have taken their rightful place on the world stage of cinematic innovation. However, Canada is no stranger to success in stop motion

animation. Norman McLaren's short, *Neighbours*, was the first stop motion short animation to win an Academy Award. He did so in 1953.

For the uninitiated, Alberta Buzz would like share some background information on just how intensive and undertaking 3D stop motion with constructed models actually is.

Stop motion is arguably the most time consuming animation method used by filmmakers. The process involves creating objects, such as clay models and puppets, and creating their movements incrementally and taking still shots of their developing motions. One second of the production would require the model to be moved approximately 24 times with an equal number of still shots taken. A 15 minute 2D production would require 21,600 incremental movements and still shots and that is assuming that each take is successful. Now imagine a production with multiple models in 3D. Forty to fifty thousand frames would have to be shot. *Millicent's world* took almost as long as it took to create life itself. The use of stereoscopic photography transforms the animations into 3D. Such productions are not for the faint of art.

The production team, in addition to Leo and Becky, benefited from the hard work and dedication of co-director and animator Steven Hanulik, director of photography Aaron Bernakevitch, narrator Elinor Holt, and renowned composer Tomasz Opalka. The puppets were designed and built by sculptors Colin and Lisa. Steven captured the images using a Nikon D90 with a Nikkor 24-85 lens. All aperture settings were manual.

Alberta Buzz is proud to be associated with such innovative and dedicated filmmakers. Leo and Becky, you must be congratulated for your efforts and success in taking Calgary talent to the forefront in world film. You deserve it and the end result is that our city is now known as a hub for serious filmmaking.

In a few weeks I will sit down with Becky Scott and Leo Wieser to discuss their post-festival thoughts. Everyone please give them, and their team, a huge round of applause.