



**Documentary proposal for full-length project
Dust, A Sculptor's Journey
by Jeanne Pope**

Documentary Summary

This feature-length documentary picture reflects upon the conflicted life of Stanley Lewis, the visionary and quixotically innovative Montreal sculptor who gave up his public career in the mid eighties to concentrate on stone sculpting. He lived out his final years in a dusty studio above L. Berson & Fils, Monuments, the Jewish tombstone engravers. This retrospection of an artist's complex life from heights of greatness and unhappiness to self-imposed exile and 'freedom' is concurrently a quest to posthumously bestow recognition upon Stanley as the great *Master* sculptor he was, while re-discovering the magnificent *Pink Lady*, the first piece he ever carved in Italy, in 1958.

I first met Stanley in 2002 and a fast friendship grew despite the age and cultural differences between us. Our meeting coincided with renewal. After many years of self-imposed exile, Stanley had decided to make a public comeback. Myself, after a harrowing divorce, was looking for the next path to take. Creation instantly bonded us - art and ways to express our desires - therefore I decided to enter Concordia's film school as a mature student and Stanley agreed to be my subject. He inspired my body of work in 16mm which forms an ensemble: *Where's Stanley?*, *Birth of the Smoked Meat*, and

Up and Down the City Road. Birth of the Smoked Meat screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007.

Who was Stanley Lewis?

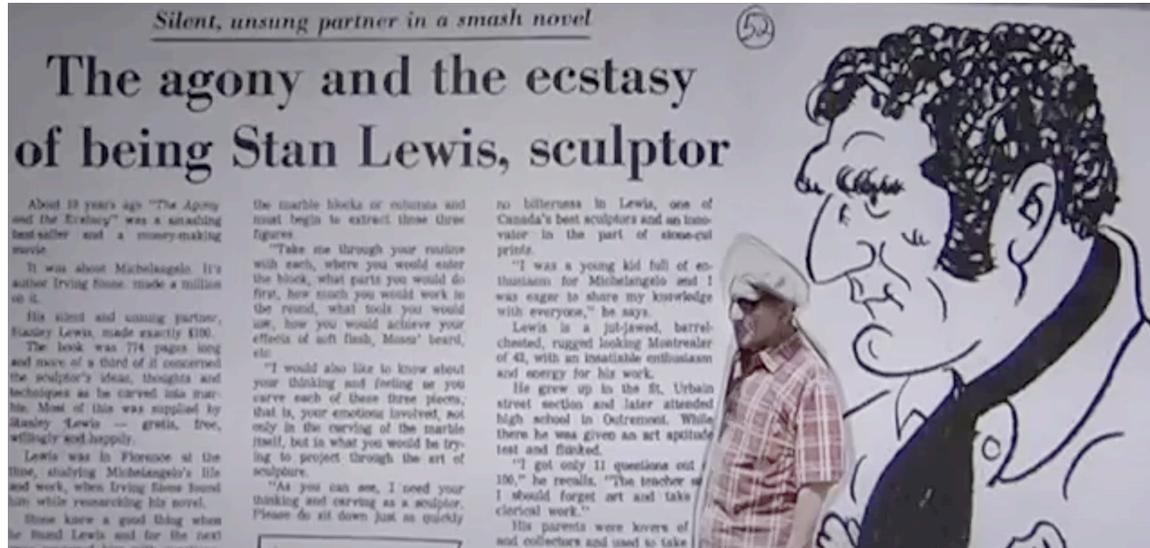
“A workaholic sculptor whose prime mistress was art,” wrote Lisa Fritterman in her obituary for *The Globe and Mail* in 2006, “yet he also loved Chinese food, lobster, women, kielbasa sausage and his friends.” I add to this: smoked meat from the Main Deli Steak House, lean, with Barbie’s coleslaw.

There are two preoccupations in Stanley's philosophy of life: the temporal and the timeless. His epicurean indulging represents the temporal aspect of his spirituality, whereas his art represents the timeless aspect of his spirituality. Food aside, Stanley Lewis was a master Canadian sculptor, innovative stone-cut printmaker, writer, teacher, photographer, traveller and researcher with a 56-year international career. Despite the lengthy contribution he made to Canadian art, he never gained the recognition he longed for and many feel he deserved. He was a teacher and mentor to many accomplished artists including Ryan Larkin, the Canadian animator, who was his lifelong friend. Speaking for myself, Stanley was the most interesting and beguiling man I have ever met.

From a sparkling debut in the fifties as the most talented student to graduate from the Montreal School of Fine Arts under the tutelage of the pioneering art educator Dr. Arthur Lismer, Stanley went on to Mexico for three years, where he learnt the rudiments of lithography and stone sculpture. Winning the prestigious Greenshields scholarship, he set sail for Italy where he learnt classical marble sculpting under Vittorio Gambacciani, the last marble carver in Italy. Here he discovered a Michelangelo technique and is accredited with being a Michelangelo expert. A meeting with Irving Stone the American author instigated a long correspondence, with Stanley providing the technical notes for Stone’s bestselling novel *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, on the life of Michelangelo. Stanley was later to profess to the media that he was plagiarised by Stone.

Coming back to Canada he searched for “the flavour of Canadian art,” finding it in the Inuit stone carvers and the stone-cut print. He began experimenting and innovated the technique, saying he “was the only non-Inuit to be working in this medium.” He was commissioned to create *The Ten Commandments* by the Jewish Congress and spent a further three years at Ein Hod, Israel. After nine years of world travels he returned to Montreal

where he put on 33 one-man shows, co-founded the Association of Sculptors, and began a 25-year stint as head sculptor at the Saidye Bronfman Center, Montreal.



Later Years: At sixty, after various breakdowns and professional disappointments, Stanley distanced himself from the art world, finding a small studio on The Main, Montreal's Boulevard St. Laurent, where he "went back to his roots," returning to stone carving where he was "only influenced by his own work."

He spent the last fifteen years of his life away from the public eye. He resumed his friendship with Ryan Larkin the animator. The two were inseparable, becoming local legends on the strip. Both had their "creative rebirth" at the same time in 2005. Stanley looked after Ryan and Ryan looked to Stanley as a father figure. They were to die within six months of each other, Stanley in 2006 and Ryan in 2007.

The documentary

The film opens in Stanley's Montreal studio. "We have no telephone, email or computer, do we Stanley?" says Ryan Larkin, Stanley's comrade-in-arms, "and we don't need them!" The tiny space is littered with sculptures, while bin liners are crammed with photocopies of Stanley's past achievements. The *Pink Lady II*, Stanley's prized sculpture which pivots the backbone to

the story, stands in the middle of the room, sometimes covered with an orange plastic, Stanley loves *her*, is proud of *her*, and anyone who knew Stanley and visited his studio on the Blvd. St. Laurent in his last years knew her.

2005, Stanley walks up and down The Main with renewed burning passion. He wants to make a public comeback after years in a form of exile. He begins his latest piece on Asian bird flu, *Bird & Mask*. He is involved in three documentary films, has plans to research an old theory on Cézanne, and slowly prepares for a retrospective show, *The Stanley Lewis Big Bang Show*.

None of these materialised, as he became very ill.

As he lay dying he talked about his inner feelings. Betrayal was a recurring theme which wound itself like ivy in Stanley's life. The final betrayal came when he asked a friend to remove his artworks from his studio to a safer place. Stanley then oddly changed his will, disinheriting his sister and leaving the same friend his entire 56-year legacy. An entire body of work vanished, literally.

Stanley Lewis died at 76, penniless. His artworks have subsequently been sold off at the local auction house, and someone is selling through eBay. His creditors took his most valued and loved sculpture, *Pink Lady*.

As the film comes to an end the viewer concludes that the *Pink Lady* will be like Orson Wells' *Rosebud* and remain an enigma, standing somewhere in some Montrealer's home. Yet Stan did have something up his sleeve - a twist ending. Deep in some woods, by a pond where lilies bloom, stands a nymphal creature carved in Rosetta stone and kept secretly by Stanley's niece, Brenda for forty years – the original *Pink Lady* upon which the second is copied. A tender young beauty who stands, as did Stanley, in his youth, in Italy, touched by innocence, looking out to life and the future.



Pink Lady I -



Pink Lady I

Treatment of documentary

I promised Stanley I would finish our film. Since his death I have spent time researching and interviewing. What has been illuminated for me is Stanley's generosity, originality and genius. While the darker shades of his mental health issues, hospitalisation and bi-polar disorder bring a deeper understanding of his character. Knowing how to weave and edit a tightly knitted film which is constantly on the move – like Stanley - observational with some interaction between the two of us, so the work always remains his "show, is my task in hand.

Aesthetic Process

The small block between Bagg Street and Napoleon, Montreal, is Stanley's haunt where he is constantly on the move and, like The Boulevard St. Laurent itself, ever-changing. HD captures Stanley's reality perfectly, allowing an intimacy between him and the lens. Mainly *cinéma direct* in style and context. Because I used a 1 chip DVCAM to work with - all I had at the time - I am really pleased, as the video image has quite a bit of grain and captures Stanley's studio, which is raw and stone dusty. It sets the tone and atmosphere.

Hybrid

I will also like to introduce different formats and various textures with more experimentation. The documentation on Stanley's mental illness is less abundant, I will use Stanley's art work at the time of his first hospitalisation, to show rather than tell works better, as this is one way for me to explore his prints from, *The Age of Pollution*.

The hybrid patchwork of media will be selected from 16mm, still photographs, digital video footage, super 8 footage, and rich audio recordings of Stanley, line drawn and cardboard cut-out stop motion animation. There will be a hands-on and organic feeling emanating from the screen.



Age of Pollution stone cut print - 1968

Point of view/s

Stanley is his own narrator, the driving force, the *forte* of his own portrait. He leads the way while peppering me with his projects and desires. He is determined we finish our film project on smoked meat. Adamant in documenting the Main. He leads. I follow. Everything is lived in the moment. He is on the stage for the world to see. This is Stanley Lewis' comeback. The Stanley Lewis show.

The last part of the film is my subjective point of view on Stanley's death.

Components

This project will consist of 3 components:

- 1) A 52-minute version for broadcast and screenings
- 2) A DVD of the 52-minute documentary with a chapter on technique and extras.
- 3) A website coinciding with the film where other resources can be accessed worldwide, with information on galleries and museums

which hold Stanley Lewis' work, along with some of his technical writing, notes and a collection of photos of artworks.

Overview of intended audience

This documentary is an intimate portrait of a friend and artist, yet the intention is to make it meaningful for a broad, diverse audience. I do not want it to be pigeonholed as an art film per se. I want it to be universally accessible and enjoyable, as well as educational.

It is quintessentially a Montreal story with the city's stamp upon it, with a subject who is engaging and recognizable; one of the landmarks from the Boulevard St. Laurent, of whom so few remain. This makes it nostalgically Montreal born and St. Laurent created, yet it has the larger universal theme of appropriation, poverty, and the familiar story of the naively talented artist trusting the wrong people, only to become recognised after death. Parallels can be made with other artists.

The documentary will hopefully resonate with art lovers who will be able to discover this socially conscious artist. I believe it can also be educational and informative, as the work is entwined around Stanley's musings and explanations on carving, polishing, sculpting. I believe that it could be used by museums – those which already house his work – and sculpture departments throughout Canada. The audience is as eclectic as Stanley was, and I want to aim for this flexibility. (There is a whole chapter I would like to dedicate to technique on the DVD.)

Finally, I believe it has a potential to travel internationally. I intend to have subtitles in French and would like to try and have it distributed for broadcast here in Canada and internationally.

This film also has a universal message from Stanley: 'never give up, never stop believing and working, no matter what, and do it your way!'

Project details

Format: transfer to HD for broadcast distribution

Production formats

Telecine transfers: super 8/16mm black/white and colour film

NTSC – 29.97

Screening format:

DVD

Experimental Documentary

Collaborators (CVs included)

Proposed Team

Jeanne Pope: director/writer/editor/camera

Zoe Mapp: assistant editor

Ying Wang: production - camera

Andrew Bailey: research and archives

Ying Wang is my production assistant/ technical advisor. He already worked on the creative research stage for 8 months. His functions will include production assistance, camera, motion graphics, cardboard cut-out animation and subtitle typesetting.

Zoe Mapp is my editor. I will supervise the editing. We will create the sound design together. Zoe and I have worked for years and know how each other works.

Andrew Bailey and I have worked together over the past few years on several written projects. He has knowledge of Italian Renaissance art, and will accompany me to Italy where I will film, take still photos, as well as collect sound from the streets of Florence and the pension and atelier Stanley used to use. We will be working from Stanley's letters and technical transcripts to Irving Stone to recapture the time and place – Italy in the fifties.

Music and Voice artist

Doriane Fabreg – ex *Dobacaracol*, the Montreal singer-songwriter will create the theme music for the film.

Rights

I have been given the rights by almost everyone who is involved in this project to film them, use their image, artworks, music etc. As this covers a large cast, I enclose Stanley's and Ryan Larkin's release forms along with Doriane Fabreg, the musician. I have all the other release at hand if needed.

Budget

Jeanne Pope

Director/writer/editor

\$ 2000 x 8 months

Service fees and living expense

\$16,000

Ying Wang \$1,000 x 8 months
Production assistance, camera,
motion graphics, cardboard
cut-out animation and subtitle
typesetting. (Including equipment)
\$8,000

Travel Expenses
Italy – marble quarry
JP & AB Tickets x 2
Spending
\$2,700

Zoe Mapp
Offline editing & sound design
\$16,000

Farzin
Colour correction, grading,
refining the picture edit and
sound edit, mix, for 90-
minute and 52-minute versions
\$10,000

Two 45 second animations
\$ 3,000

Film/script mentor and advisor
(reviewing rough cut)
\$1,000

French English translation
For subtitles
\$2,000

Voice artist (2 days max)
Recording studio
\$300

Intellectual property.

Rare Book Department.

McGill University (archival specialized service)

Filming within library \$150 per diem

\$150

Archival Footage.

CBC TV

Buy interview with Stanley
news item. 1989

\$1,000

Rights for photos – McGill

20 x \$25

\$500

Technical

Telecine transfer for 16mm animation

Quantra machine – VisionGlobale, Montreal

\$500

Bolex Camera and 7222 Kodak film stock, Oxberry
animation stand and processing

\$300

Theme music

Doriane Fabreg

\$1,000

\$49,950

