

3 June 2006

To Whom it May Concern:

Patti Durr and Joan Naturale would very much like to recommend Brigitte Lemaine for your consideration to travel to the United States in order to film a documentary on Deaf artist, James Castle. Patti Durr is an associate professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Rochester, New York, USA. She teaches a course about Deaf artists and is the curator of a website on Deaf artists - <http://www.rit.edu/deafartists>. We presently only have Castle featured in our artist links section because publishers of his work have not agreed to have the articles reproduced in the site yet. We would love to have a page about Castle and portfolio of his work in the site some day. Joan Naturale is the NTID Reference Librarian and works with faculty on curriculum development and orders deaf studies materials for our growing collection. She also teaches library classes to students on various topics such as how to use the electronic databases for research.

James Castle is a very fascinating subject and interesting artist. A documentary made by someone knowledgeable of Deaf culture and art would be very valuable. I am familiar with Lemaine's other documentary, "Temoins Sourds, Temoins Silencieux," and a few of her other works. The "Temoins" film deals with the persecution of Deaf people under the Nazi regime and is a very important documentary, which we were thrilled to find for Patti's Deaf People and World War II course. The library has several of Brigitte's videos and are used by faculty who teach deaf studies. Patti and Joan had a screening of Brigitte's film "Temoins, Temoins Silencieux" and the response of the audience indicated that they found this film interesting, informative and important.

While there have been books published about Castle's artwork, Patti and Joan know of no documentary about him and his art. Having grown up in a rural community in Idaho, he spent most of his life living in his family's home, out of which they ran a Post Office. He would utilize scrap pieces of paper, postal stamps, twine, and other discarded mailing material to create his art. He received very little formal education and was categorized to be a Deaf-Mute, having never really learned to speak or sign. Castle was also illiterate.

A documentary on this man and his art from someone with expertise in Deaf culture, art, and filmmaking is very important. We are submitting some of Lemaine's films to our Deaf film fest committee for possible inclusion in our March 2007 festival. If Lemaine is able to come to the US, Patti would also be interested to see if she could present at NTID and share some of her art-related documentaries with her students in Rochester, NY.

Please feel free to contact Patti at PADDHD@RIT.EDU and/or Joan Naturale at JXNWML@RIT.EDU.

Merci beaucoup,

Patti Durr (gm)

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