



A Different Kind of Film Festival

Hard work, a team effort, and the desire for an inclusive event with “something for everyone” are some of the ingredients that have made the Toronto International Film Festival a success.

Cannes and Berlin, (which award prizes), and non-competitive festivals like Toronto, which do not award prizes.

“Competitive festivals have juries of 10 people who are the designated arbiters of taste. So if a festival shows 20 films, one filmmaker wins and goes away happy, but 19 people go

itself, he says the festival began successfully pursuing international connections, bringing in films and filmmakers from Latin America, Western and later Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as North American and Hollywood films.

The festival’s own marketing budget is small, so organizers approached donors not on the philanthropic side, as many other arts organizations do, but on the marketing side, which he says was a “break-through” for the Toronto festival. That sponsorship gave the programmers immense freedom to build the organization, which he now describes as a model that other world film festivals aspire to emulate.

“The audience senses what you care and don’t care about,” he says. “Care, intention and passion always come through.”

Handling followed **Michael Lee-Chin** (see page 41) in this ongoing series, which features some of today’s most original and successful business thinkers. “I have long wanted to engage our students and friends in the process of building a model of integrative thinking and learning,” says Dean **Roger Martin**. “This series is an important step in this direction.” For information on upcoming *Rotman Integrative Thinking Seminars*, visit our Web site at www.rotman.utoronto.ca/news/events.htm.

— *Mary Ann Gratton*



From left, Piers Handling; Rotman Dean Roger Martin; Michelle Maheux, Managing Director of the Film Festival; Henk van Der Kolk, one of the Festival founders; and Peter Roberts, Director of administration and HR at the Festival.

Piers Handling, director of the Toronto International Film Festival, spoke at Rotman on March 7 at the sixth *Rotman Integrative Thinking Seminar*. Handling outlined the evolution of worldwide film festivals as well as the Toronto festival’s own history since its inception in 1976, and its goals for the future. It was clear that this festival set out from the start to be different.

Handling described the difference between competitive festivals, such as those in Venice,

away unhappy,” he says. “But in Toronto, 80 filmmakers can walk away happy, feeling like winners. They may have sold their film to 10 countries or territories, and they feel great about their festival experience.”

Toronto festival organizers have always tried to make the event welcoming to filmmakers, the public, and the media, he says. The festival also celebrates its Canadian roots, traditionally opening with a Canadian film despite pressure from Hollywood. After establishing