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The Girl Gets Around

Amy Talkington does a 360 with *The New Arrival*

Just as the Internet promises to create new forms of media and communication, it is also providing job opportunities for independent filmmakers. A case in point is *The New Arrival*, an interactive short by veteran filmmaker Amy Talkington (one of Filmmaker's "25 New Faces of Independent Film" in 1999) commissioned by AtomFilms, Intel and the BeHere corporation. Intel and BeHere created a new technology for the film — a wide fish-eye lens that shoots 360 degrees coupled with a software program that "wraps" the image onto videotape and "unwraps" it so the viewer can rotate it by clicking with a mouse.

"You can use your mouse to look at any portion of the image," Talkington says. "Each scene is only one shot, so the viewer is editing the scene him- or herself. You can look at it 10 different times in 10 different ways."

The New Arrival is an ingenious and even poignant riff on technological change. "As this was to be the first narrative movie ever made with this technology, I decided to make it about the technology itself. In the short you go into a rest home but it turns out to be a rest home for old technology — and you are a television set."

How does one shoot 360 degrees without

appearing in the frame? "Basically, you mount the lens on a Betacam or DV cam and then point the camera straight up, so what's below and above is not in the frame. To get motion, I wrote the wheelchair into the piece."

Talkington, who is currently attached to feature projects at American Zoetrope and Redeemable Features, says that the technology forced her to rethink the way that she constructs scenes. "Film-making is editing, largely, and with this technology, it becomes about choreography."

— Scott Macaulay

The New Arrival can be seen at www.atomfilms.com