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A Talk with PBS's
New CEO, Pat Mitchell

GOOD MACHINE'S 1ST DECADE

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ETN1043

Michelle Yoh in Good Machine's latest release,
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

STORYBOARDING ON THE SUBWAY

TealPaint is a filmmaker's mobile tableau

BY BETH PINSKER

ARTISTIC LICENSE PRESIDENT SANDE ZEIG IS a film distributor, producer, director, and screenwriter, but she's no professional graphic designer. So when she was settling in during preproduction last year on the first feature film she wrote and directed, *The Girl*, she relied on a few tools for help. One was an \$18 software application that somebody beamed directly into her Palm Pilot that allowed her to storyboard her film on the move.

TealPaint is a simple paint program from TealPoint Software, a San Rafael, California-based company started by former Lucas Arts employee Vince Lee. It works much like any PC- or Mac-based drawing program, with the usual point brushes and eraser tools. The difference is that the user draws with the Palm stylus as if it were a pencil, instead of using a mouse.

There are more expensive storyboarding programs out there, including StoryboardQuick and Storyboard Artist from Power Production Software, which retail for \$250 and \$800, respectively. Many editing software suites like Adobe Premiere and Apple's iMovie have storyboard features that allow filmmakers to freeze stills from their footage to place within a storyboard template, or work the script from a text file around blank boxes left for drawing. But these don't facilitate the drawing itself.

TealPaint's plus, says Zeig, is that it's easy to use and portable. "I just figured it out on my own," she says. "Somebody beamed me the program and I started to draw. I realized that if you animate the frames [a feature in the program], you can get the frames to move through a cycle."

She says the program was most useful when she'd come home from a long day of preproduction and she'd lie in bed with her Palm Pilot and sort out her next series of shots. She drew very simple stick figures, but still it was enough for her to go on when she got behind the camera.

TealPoint's founder says by now he's

to a PC in the office. An architect said he sketches roofing designs on location.

Lee says he had actually heard of TealPaint's being used for storyboarding before, when a designer at Industrial Light & Magic called to say he was using the program to create individual animation

cells. He would create a template background and then use it as a basis for new drawings. The function that "animates" the individual frames (like a cartoon flip-book) grew out of that call.

TealPoint has other movie-industry tools, such as the new TealMovie, which allows users to play short video clips on their Palms, and TealDoc, a document reader that could allow a filmmaker to download a whole screenplay to a Palm, but neither is interactive on the fly



TealPaint for PalmOS

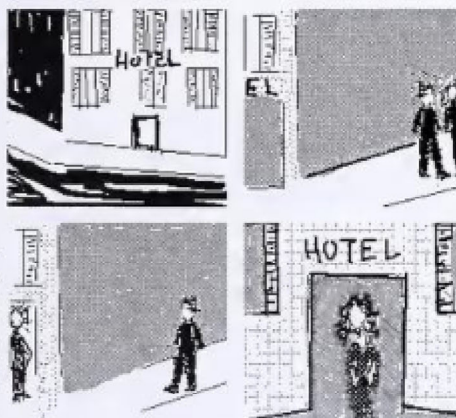
(Above) Artistic License president Sande Zeig storyboarded her directorial feature debut on her Palm Pilot using the TealPaint program.

Storyboard sequence from Zeig's *The Girl*.

used to people getting in touch with the company to say they've found some new use for TealPaint. Already the company's Web site features an "art gallery" of dozens of pictures that people have drawn and sent in—sort of like a Erch-a-Sketch gallery except more permanent.

"The program wasn't necessarily designed for a specific purpose," Lee says. "So we hear these stories all the time."

Once, a teacher called to say she was using TealPaint to teach her students shapes and colors—she'd quiz them right at their desks by drawing on her Palm. An engineer reported using the program at a power plant, where he'd draw sketches of wiring in the field and then transfer them



like TealPaint.

Since handheld computing is just starting to reach a critical mass, TealPoint has yet to do a major marketing push for its products. But when it does, Lee says he'll start to tout the various uses of TealPaint and sell it to the moviemaking community.

For more information see www.tealpoint.com