

**10 October 2005**

**THE NEW WORLD**  
Production Information

...in the beginning all the World was America, and more so than it is now.”  
-John Locke, Second Treatise on government (1690)

*The New World* is an epic adventure set amid the encounter of European and Native American cultures during the founding of the Jamestown settlement in 1607. Inspired by the legend of John Smith and Pocahontas, acclaimed filmmaker TERRENCE MALICK transforms this classic story into a sweeping exploration of love, loss and discovery, both a celebration and an elegy of the America that was...and the America that was yet to come.

Against the dramatic and historically rich backdrop of a pristine Eden inhabited by a great native civilization, Malick (*Badlands*, *Days of Heaven*, *The Thin Red Line*) has set a dramatized tale of two strong-willed characters, a passionate and noble young native woman and an ambitious soldier of fortune who find themselves torn between the undeniable requirements of civic duty and the inescapable demands of the heart.

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In the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, North America is much as it has been for the previous five thousand years—a vast land of seemingly endless primeval wilderness populated by an intricate network of tribal cultures. Although these nations live in graceful harmony with their environment, their relations with each other are a bit more uneasy. All it will take to upset the balance is an intrusion from the outside.

On a spring day in April of 1607, three diminutive ships bearing 103 men sail into this world from their unimaginably distant home, the island kingdom of England, three thousand miles to the east across a vast ocean. On behalf of their

sponsor, the royally chartered Virginia Company, they are seeking to establish a cultural, religious, and economic foothold on the coast of what they regard as the New World.

The lead ship of the tiny flotilla is called the *Susan Constant*. Shackled below decks is a rebellious 27-year-old named John Smith (COLIN FARRELL), sentenced to be hanged for insubordination.

A veteran of countless European wars, Smith is a soldier of fortune...though fortune has often turned its back on him. Still, he is too talented and popular to have his neck stretched by his own people, and so he is freed by Captain Christopher Newport (CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER) soon after the *Susan Constant* drops anchor. As Captain Newport knows—and the colonists will soon discover—surviving in this unknown wilderness will require the services of every able-bodied man...particularly one of Smith's abilities.

Though they don't realize it at the time, Newport and his band of British settlers have landed in the midst of a sophisticated Native American empire ruled by the powerful chieftain Powhatan (AUGUST SCHELLENBERG). To the colonists, it may be a new world. But to Powhatan and his people, it is an ancient world—and the only one they have ever known.

The English, strangers in a strange land, struggle from the beginning, unable—or, in some cases, stubbornly unwilling—to fend for themselves. Smith, searching for assistance from the local tribesmen, chances upon a young woman who at first seems to be more woodland sprite than human being. A willful and impetuous young woman whose family and friends affectionately call her "Pocahontas"—or "playful one"—she is the favorite of Powhatan's children. Before long a bond develops between Smith and Pocahontas (Q'ORIANKA KILCHER in her feature starring debut), a bond so powerful that it transcends

friendship or even romance—and eventually becomes the basis of one of the most enduring American legends of the past 400 years.

For *The New World*, TERRENCE MALICK has assembled a distinguished cast led by COLIN FARRELL. One of film's most dynamic and versatile young actors, Farrell stars as John Smith. In addition to introducing newcomer Q'orianka Kilcher, the remarkable international ensemble also includes CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER (*National Treasure, A Beautiful Mind, The Insider*); CHRISTIAN BALE (*Batman Begins, American Psycho, Empire of the Sun*); AUGUST SCHELLENBERG (*Black Robe, Iron Will, the Free Willy movies*); WES STUDI (*Dances With Wolves, The Last of the Mohicans*); DAVID THEWLIS (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Seven Years in Tibet*); YORICK van WAGENINGEN (*The Chronicles of Riddick, Beyond Borders*); actor/choreographer RAOUL TRUJILLO (*Black Robe, Hallmark TV's The Song of Hiawatha*); MICHAEL GREYEVES (*Smoke Signals, the title role of TNT's Crazy Horse*); KALANI QUEYPO (*The Royal Tenenbaums*); BEN MENDELSON (*Vertical Limit, The Year My Voice Broke*); NOAH TAYLOR (*Almost Famous, Shine*); BEN CHAPLIN (*The Thin Red Line, Washington Square*); JOHN SAVAGE (*The Thin Red Line, The Deer Hunter*); IRENE BEDARD (*Smoke Signals, Lakota Woman: Siege at Wounded Knee*); EDDIE MARSAN (2004 British Independent Film Award winner for Mike Leigh's *Vera Drake*); ROGER REES (*Frida, The Pink Panther*); MYRTON RUNNING WOLF (*Skins*); JONATHAN PRYCE (*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Brazil*); and JESSE BORREGO (the title role of TV's *Tecumseh: The Last Warrior*, Taylor Hackford's *Blood In, Blood Out*).

Behind the camera, Malick has recruited such celebrated artists as director of photography EMMANUEL LUBEZKI (*Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, Y Tu Mama Tambien, Sleepy Hollow*); production designer JACK FISK (*Badlands, Days of Heaven and The Thin Red Line, David Lynch's The Straight Story and Mulholland Drive*); Academy Award nominated costume designer JACQUELINE WEST (*Quills, Rising Sun*), film editors RICHARD CHEW

(Academy Award winner for *Star Wars* and nominee for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), HANK CORWIN (*Natural Born Killers*, *Nixon*) and SAAR KLEIN (two time Academy Award nominee for *The Thin Red Line* and Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous*) and composer JAMES HORNER (winner of two Oscars for *Titanic* and nominations for *House of Sand and Fog* and *A Beautiful Mind*). The film is produced by SARAH GREEN (*Frida*, *Girlfight*), and executive produced by WILLIAM M. MECHANIC (*Dark Water*), New Line Cinema's TOBY EMMERICH, ROLF MITTWEG and MARK ORDESKY, and TRISH HOFMANN (*Igby Goes Down*, *Three Seasons*).

### **About the Production**

America did not begin with Columbus and the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria; nor with the Pilgrims and the Mayflower; nor even with the settlers of what became known as Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement, in 1607...which predated the Plymouth Rock landing by some 30 years. There were 15,000 years of habitation and culture in Virginia by indigenous peoples who found their world turned upside down by the arrival of newcomers from far distant shores. This powerful story, and its central element of the relationship between Captain John Smith and Pocahontas, daughter of the powerful Native chieftain Powhatan, first attracted Terrence Malick's interest more than two decades ago.

"Terry first wrote *The New World* about 25 years ago," explains producer Sarah Green. "He had the idea in the 1970s, and always kept it in his mind and imagination. *The New World* has, like all of Terry's films, a very deep understanding of humanity."

But as with all of Malick's work, the film is about so much more than its simple narrative story.

"It's a story of our history as Americans, our flaws, good points, virtues and, growing awareness, woven through the simplest element of all—that which makes us human - love," said Green. "It's a story in which people betray each other, try to get it right, betray each other again, and ultimately learn that there are many truths, and you can only live your own. There are no real heroes and no real villains. Every character is sympathetic, some more than others, and every character is flawed, also some more than others."

One of the unique elements of *The New World* is the way in which Malick melds his personal vision of the events that occurred 400 years ago in Jamestown with painstaking historical research of the era.

“We don’t know a lot of what actually happened in 1607,” notes Sarah Green. “What we have to go by are the writings of a few people who were there at the time, John Smith most prominent among them, some of which contradict each other. What we have tried to do is take the myth of John Smith and Pocahontas and use it to serve Terry’s vision of cultures connecting and finding ways to move alongside each other, and the powerful consequences of misunderstanding.

“Creative license is definitely taken,” adds Green. “Like all historical dramas since the ancient Greek playwrights, *The New World* uses real events—or as much as we know about them—and makes them work for the story that we’re telling. The details and fates of some real-life characters have been altered to support the flow of the story and the dramatic elements. The sequence of certain events has been compressed. This is dramatic interpretation, and not documentary.”

### **About The Cast**

In casting *The New World*, Malick had a number of things working to his advantage. In addition to his own clear sense of each role, the director found actors eager to work with him thanks to his reputation among other actors he had worked with in the past.

In casting the lead role of John Smith, Malick knew exactly who he wanted.

“Colin Farrell was the clear choice,” says Green. “He’s the right age [Farrell, at 28, is the same age of Smith at the time he landed in North America], the right spirit. Colin is an adventurer, an extraordinarily energetic, personable and

powerful young man, and a very strong actor. He and Terry connected from the start.”

The decision to partake in the film proved just as easy for Farrell, an actor who had already found tremendous box office success and critical acclaim for his work in such films as *Phone Booth*, *Daredevil* and *Tigerland*.

“Malick does a gig and the actors come running,” Farrell laughs. “It’s not like you even have to read his script, because the purity of every single movie he’s made is proof enough. Terry’s like a sage, he’s got the wisdom of years that he hasn’t lived on this planet, and he has a gentility which is astounding and a ferocity which is amazing. He’s a poet.”

In addition to the opportunity to work with Malick, Farrell was drawn to take part in the telling of a story that has become the stuff of legend, penetrating the popular arts—including literature, theatre and film—for generations.

“*The New World* is Terrence Malick’s artistic rendering of England’s colonization of the Americas,” says Farrell. “You just trust in the mind, soul and spirit of Terry. His intelligence and gift lies in that he sees that which most of us miss everyday, the beauty and tragedy of life all around us. You know that he will respect all sides of the story, including the Native Americans, who Terry pays homage to as a culture and a people whose beauty was not just misinterpreted, but ignored, by the early settlers in this great land.”

Christopher Plummer, a veteran of such Oscar-nominated films as *A Beautiful Mind* and *The Insider*, also sparked to Malick’s take on the tale of John Smith and Pocahontas and took on the role of Capt. Christopher Newport.

“I think that Terry sees the story as a very real dream,” says Plummer. “His passion for the land, and for this country, is a spiritual rather than a scientific one. Terry’s both a dreamer and an intellectual, and also incurably romantic.”

Although *The New World* may be a quintessentially American story, its cast is remarkably diverse. With casting offices in three states and two continents—principal casting director Francine Maisler and principal Native American casting director Rene Haynes in Los Angeles, Virginia/extras casting Jeanne Boiseneau in Richmond and Celestia Fox in London—a host of international performers were enlisted by Malick and Green to join the production.

Christian Bale, fresh off the landmark role of Bruce Wayne/Batman in *Batman Begins*, took on the role of John Rolfe.

“Christian Bale is an actor who Terry and I had admired for years,” notes Sarah Green. “He has heart, intelligence, skill, and a profound intuition. One of the things that made him perfect for John Rolfe was his willingness to disappear into a role, to underplay when appropriate. Pocahontas doesn’t notice Rolfe right away, and it’s wonderful to discover along with her his good and noble qualities.”

Casting brought its share of challenges, but none was as daunting or as crucial as finding the right actress to portray the legendary Pocahontas. In order to find the right actress for the role, the filmmakers launched an international search for a young woman who combined the skills needed to effectively portray this most mythologized of Americans.

“There’s a lot of controversy as to who she was, how old she was, what she looked like, and what the nature of her relationship with John Smith was,” notes Sarah Green. “The most likely scenario is that she was quite young, 12 or 13, but certainly of age in the Native world at that time. We wanted someone who could bring the spirit of innocence, pure goodness, youth, vitality and fun to this

part, but also someone who could age, experience heartbreak, go through difficult times and mature in very profound ways.”

The unique challenges of the role left producers with a dilemma.

“We found wonderful actresses with the gravitas to play the older Pocahontas, and wonderful young actresses who had spirit and light in them, but it was very challenging to find someone who could transition to both of those things,” says Green. “We looked for months all over the United States, then Canada, and then we expanded the search internationally. And in the last month, as we were narrowing the search down to people who were really skilled, interesting, talented and beautiful, Q’orianka Kilcher was submitted to (casting director) Rene Haynes for another film. One of the assistants in Rene’s office happened to notice Q’orianka’s picture and thought, ‘Hmm, maybe it should go into the *New World* pile instead.’ There was something very compelling about her photograph, and when we ultimately met Q’orianka, there was something even more compelling about her in person. She had a calm and a depth far beyond her years.”

A multi-talented 15-year-old, Kilcher is the daughter of a Native Peruvian (Quecha/Huachapaeri) father, with a background in singing, musicianship and dancing - but only one film role - as a child chorister in *Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas*—to her credit.

“Her Indian roots really come through both in her spirit and in her physicality,” says Green. “Q’orianka has a youthful spirit, but also has a nobility - she’s very serious about her work, her life and her values. It’s a scary thing to cast an inexperienced unknown in a role like this, but it’s not Q’orianka’s training that made her right for Pocahontas, it’s her life. And when we screen tested her, with no makeup, Q’orianka just jumped off the screen at us. It was powerful, beautiful, compelling...it was Pocahontas.”

Kilcher was equally surprised to land the coveted role.

“It was a long audition process, but I always had really wonderful people, like Terry, Sarah and Rene Haynes, believing in me and looking out for my best interests,” she says. “Somehow, it just happened.”

Landing the role turned out to be a life-changing experience for Kilcher, and one which she will remember for a long time.

“Pocahontas has such great qualities, like courageousness and love for everything in life, so I hope she will always be a part of me,” says Kilcher. “Pocahontas was a symbol of peace in bringing two worlds together, and it was amazing to be able to portray this wonderful human being. My greatest challenge in the making of the film was to stay as true to Pocahontas as possible, and just try and show her story in the best way possible to the world.”

“And of course,” Kilcher continues, “being a first-time actress with Terrence Malick directing me was amazing. I could not even dream of working with someone like him. No matter who we were, he was always asking us for our opinions and input.”

Kilcher’s co-workers had nothing but praise for the young actor.

“What a responsibility she took on,” says Farrell. “She plays a character who you could say truly embodies the spirit of America. You’re asking someone of that age to understand these things, but I think that Q’orianka is closer to the purity of what I think Pocahontas would have been. In a word, she’s amazing. I don’t know where it comes from, but she has a smile that could light up both hemispheres at the same time, and she has depths of light and darkness which could make the world stop moving.”

### **About The Filmmakers**

As actors flocked to work with Malick, the filmmaker and his producer shifted their focus to assembling their production team. The highly experienced Trish Hofmann, a previous collaborator of Sarah Green, came aboard as executive producer. Selected as director of photography was Emmanuel (Chivo) Lubezki, whose work in both his native Mexico and the United States, ranging from *Like Water for Chocolate* and *Y Tu Mama Tambien* to *Sleepy Hollow* and *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, had indicated not only strong artistic and technical skills, but also deft experimental and independent inclinations which would serve Malick's unfettered imagination.

Lubezki was also instrumental in helping Malick achieve his goal of filming almost entirely in natural light, a technique that allowed the production to avoid the distractions of the usual paraphernalia that litters a movie set. "I love the fact that Terry doesn't use lights," notes actor Noah Taylor. "The mere fact that there aren't cables and lights all over the place creates a very solid reality that affects all the people working on the film. The set has an intensely real feeling to it."

Malick's choice of production designer came as no surprise to anyone: Jack Fisk, a close creative ally of Malick who has worked side-by-side with the filmmaker on all three of his previous films.

For costume design - a particular challenge in film that required clothing 17<sup>th</sup> century English nobles and peasants as well as authentically arraying inhabitants of Powhatan's vast empire in North America - Malick turned to Jacqueline West. A veteran designer whose period work in Philip Kaufman's *Quills*, and her own tremendous interest and enthusiasm for Native culture captured Malick's eye, West quickly came aboard.

Although Malick knew he planned to take liberties with some of the known facts of the people and events depicted in *The New World*, it was crucial to him that the cultural backdrops the story was set against be authentically and meticulously detailed. In order to assure this accuracy, the filmmakers assembled a distinguished Board of Advisers to help guide their work. The Board included such noted experts as Dr. William Kelso (Director of Archaeology for the Jamestown Recovery Project); Professor Frederic Gleach (an independent scholar in Ithaca, New York, and the author of such books as [Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia](#); Danielle Moretti-Langholtz (The Virginia Council on Indians and the Department of Anthropology at the College of William & Mary); and, on set nearly every day of production, Blair Rudes (Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of North Carolina and the film's Algonquian translator and dialect coach, of Abenaki Nation descent) and Buck Woodard (the film's amateur, helping to ensure accuracy in all details), a visual art instructor in Henrico County, Virginia, who has worked in the past for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and contributed to projects with the National Park Service, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Woodard is an enrolled descendent of the Lower Muskogee Creek and serves the state Governor with the Virginia Council on Indians.

One of the main areas in which the production put its accumulated historical expertise to use was in the portrayal of the three ships - the Susan Constant, the Godspeed and the Discovery – that are depicted in the film. Luckily, the production was able to use three nearby ships that are housed at the original Jamestowne Settlement history museum and usually on display for the public.

“If we had to build these ships, they would have cost two million dollars each,” notes Trish Hofmann. “To have three ships within five miles of our major location was incredibly ideal. We had to work everything out carefully with the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, which operates the Jamestown Settlement



where the ships are on display. It was difficult because the Settlement is such a popular tourist attraction, and the ships are a major draw. But they were very kind to us, and allowed us to keep the Godspeed, a beautiful ship, for three-quarters of our Virginia shoot harbored just off James Fort...which was perfect, because our research indicated that the English always left one ship behind. We wanted to treat these ships like stars.”

And like the stars they are, they required a Hollywood makeover...not to make them more glamorous, but less so.

“We repainted all of the ships, aging them down and making them look more to what I thought ships of the period would look like if they had been out in the weather for months at a time,” says Fisk. “I figured that these ships were kind of like the trucks we see on the highway today, big semis, used for transport. They weren’t overly comfortable, there was nothing fancy about them and they were moving a lot more people than they were designed to do when they came to Jamestown.”

However, the production, Eric Speth (who captains the three Jamestowne Settlement ships), and the film’s marine coordinator, Mark Preisser, were faced with another nautical challenge. For one crucial scene, all three ships needed to be shot coming up the James River toward its initial landing, and of course, the agreement had stated that one ship always had to be left at the Jamestowne Settlement.

“Even if we had been able to secure all three ships for that one day, we wouldn’t have been able to put them on the Chickahominy River, because the draft of the Susan Constant is too deep for the river,” recalls Trish Hoffman. “So we had to go searching for another ship to portray the Susan Constant!”



The quest brought the producers and Jack Fisk to Verplanck, New York, and a magnificent 85-foot replica of the Half Moon, which Henry Hudson sailed while exploring the Hudson River in 1609. David Crank and a crew traveled from Virginia to upstate New York to give the Half Moon its own makeover, transforming the three-masted vessel with a new palette of colors and aging techniques. The Half Moon's captain, Chip Reynolds, then sailed it from Verplanck to the banks of the Chickahominy, ready for its close-up.

Another vessel, the smaller but nonetheless impressive 33-foot-long shallop (dubbed "the pickup truck of the 17<sup>th</sup> century" by Preisser) used by John Smith both for transporting men from the larger ships to shore, as well as exploring the waterways of Virginia, was secured from the Plimouth Plantation in Massachusetts.

### **Designing The New World**

One of the earliest challenges faced by the production team was determining where to shoot the film. Initially, they were skeptical they would be able to find an area that could adequately resemble the world which European settlers first encountered in America.

"We thought that in a million years there's no place left in the United States that looks as untouched as the James and Chickahominy Rivers would have been in 1607," says Green. "We thought it would be in some mysterious place where no one lives, so we looked at obscure regions in Canada where there were hopefully untouched forests and rivers.

"But (production designer) Jack Fisk, who lives in Virginia, felt that we shouldn't go anywhere else until we saw where it all started. So Terry, Jack and I traveled to see the original site of James Fort, and to the Jamestown Settlement recreation nearby. Then we took a boat up the Chickahominy River to see how

the landscape flowed, and we thought, gosh, there are a whole lot of stretches that weren't quite as settled as we thought they might be. At one point, we came around a bend in the river and saw a big old concrete fish house with a 'For Sale' sign on it. We didn't think we could afford to shoot in Virginia, but with our collective aversion to runaway productions, and with a lot of help from the State of Virginia, we decided that we had to make it work. There's a look in Virginia that's nowhere else."

Green credits the Virginia government with helping make it feasible for the production to shoot in the state where the story took place so many years ago.

"The Virginia Film Office really helped pave the way for us to shoot there," says Green. "The unions wanted us in Virginia, the crews wanted us in Virginia and the actors wanted us in Virginia. Then Governor Warner really threw his weight behind us, and that was it. It's one of the rare examples of a historical film shooting in almost the exact place where the events originally occurred, and that fish house became the site of the Jamestown fort."

### **Rebuilding A Lost World**

Setting up production in the idyllic Virginia countryside was only the beginning of creating the remarkable environment in which *The New World* would take place. To bring that world to life, Malick turned to his longtime collaborator, production designer Jack Fisk.

"Walking on to one of Jack Fisk's sets is like walking into Caravaggio's studio," says his *New World* colleague, costume designer Jacqueline West. "It's like going back in time."

For Fisk, his work on *The New World* brought with it a set of challenges unlike any he had faced before.

“Although I live in Virginia, I didn’t know that much about either the Indian or Anglo cultures at that time Jamestown was settled...just what I had learned in history class,” says Fisk.

In order to educate himself about these cultures, Fisk embarked on a crash course which would result in the most authentic depictions of life in early 17<sup>th</sup> century North America yet seen on film.

“I got excited because I knew that the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jamestown Settlement was coming up and thought that it was a story that should be told, about both cultures,” says Fisk. “To create James Fort, I studied all of the writings of the colonists, primarily the Jamestown Narratives, what remains of their eyewitness accounts.

“I was fortunate the Jamestown Rediscovery Project was happening so close to where we were shooting,” continues Fisk. “In researching James Fort, we all worked from the same written materials, but the archaeologists are working from real things they find in the ground. Some of the information they gave me at our first meeting encouraged me to alter our original design of the fort.”

For art director David Crank, the chance to build the fort was the culmination of a childhood dream.

“Having grown up in Virginia, I built James Fort out of Popsicle sticks in fourth grade,” he recalls.

But as exciting as the construction of the Fort would be, it would not be without its challenges. Making set design particularly difficult was the style of Malick’s filming which requires every environment to be three-dimensional and as real as possible.

“Terry is one of the few directors who doesn’t look at drawings,” says Fisk. “He just says, ‘Whatever you build, we’ll come in like a documentary crew and shoot it.’ Terry likes to film almost on a found object, so the more complete it is, the more he can use it. He doesn’t really like the idea of just shooting a bit of a set or a wall in one direction. And since Terry doesn’t like to light his scenes, he changes his direction according to the sun, so we needed to create an environment where he could move around accordingly. Terry likes things to be real, and it was fun to build the sets in as real a way as possible.”

In the case of James Fort, construction required the huge structure to be erected on the banks of the river, with a large expanse of fields planted with wild grasses and fennel just beyond them.

“We were extremely lucky in that we chose, at Jack’s instigation, to build things as close to the way we think they were actually built,” says art director David Crank. “It was a lot of hands-on labor.”

The modern reconstruction of the fort proved hard enough to leave the production team wondering how the English settlers had managed to build it in the first place.

“I wanted to build out of local materials so that the clay, and the wattle and daub (common building materials), looked right,” says Fisk. “But unlike the colonists, we had the wood delivered on trucks, used chainsaws for cutting it and had hydraulic forklifts for lifting the board. The colonists had to cut posts that were 12 to 15 feet high off the ground and another three feet underground for the palisades, needed to dig 1,200 feet of trenches to put the posts in and then had to strip the posts of all their leaves and branches. That had to have been a superhuman task in 1607.”

Even with the advantages of modern technology, constructing the fort took quite some time to pull off.

“We built the perimeter wall of the fort in 30 days, and took another month-and-a-half to build the 11 or 12 four-walled structures inside,” says Fisk. “We didn’t use any hinges, just pins, carved out of wood. That actually worked better. Little experiments like that keep you going. Using natural materials that we found in the area was the key.”

Although the James Fort seen in *The New World* is 25 percent smaller than the original structure, the rough-hewn fort and rustic structures within had the patina of age and an air and atmosphere of absolute reality. There was nothing clean or antiseptic about the fort, its muddy grounds peppered with pools of rainwater, its structures of earth and wood standing defiantly against the natural world that surrounds them.

If *The New World’s* James Fort looked like what it was—a stark foreign invader on Native American soil—considerably more organically interwoven with its coastal forest environment is Fisk’s visual interpretation of Powhatan’s city of Werowocomoco. Since the Algonquian Natives of Powhatan’s world kept no written records, Fisk, Crank and their staffs had to rely on sketches by Englishman John White, who traveled extensively among the Indians of North Carolina in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as John Smith’s accounts and, importantly, Virginia Indian oral traditions.

“Some of the design of Werowocomoco and the other Indian environments came from research, and some it came from...just spirits kind of telling me what to do,” says Fisk. “I felt a little awkward trying to recreate an Indian culture that was partially eliminated. The Indians were destroyed by the greed of the colonists for land. Once they discovered tobacco—which for the Natives was a sacred plant used ceremonially—and realized they could sell it, the colonists gobbled up every

piece of clear land in Virginia and the Indians were moved to places like Ohio and Oklahoma. They just couldn't compete with the English in firepower or, ultimately, numbers. The sad thing is that because there wasn't a written language that recorded their history, we have to learn about their culture through what remains, and through archaeology. Part of our work is accurate, part of it is imagination, but I hope the feel of it is representative of a great culture."

Shaded by towering trees, the verdant, cool and pleasant land on the banks of the Chickahominy was a perfect site to build an Indian community that co-exists with nature, rather than imposes itself upon it.

"The Indians were an agricultural community, and were wonderful hunters and fishermen," says Fisk. "They took advantage of all the sea life from the rivers and the Chesapeake Bay."

What Fisk devised for Werowocomoco and other Indian backdrops are wonders of atmospheric production design, with the Powhatan dwellings seeming as if they've risen organically right out of the earth. The Native homes were constructed of natural materials, and based on the most contemporary research.

"Unlike John White's drawings, which show the Powhatan houses as flat-ended buildings, latest archaeology has found they were all round-shaped, which we have done," notes David Crank.

Both the smaller dwellings as well as Powhatan's imposing longhouse, are covered with matting which effectively protected them from the elements but could be rolled up to let in the air on good days.

In addition to the dwellings for Werowocomoco's inhabitants, Fisk and his crew designed and constructed ancillary structures that indicate the vibrant spiritual life

of the community, including a hushed forest temple, carved wooden figures in a ceremonial circle and an extraordinary carving of a standing bear sculpted out right into a tree trunk by carpenter Michael Boone one day before shooting was to begin on that set.

A crucial aspect of the Werowocomoco set were the fields of crops so meticulously tended by the Virginia Natives.

“Times and crops have changed since the early 1600s and we spent some time researching and finding seeds for Indian corn and tobacco,” says Fisk. “We planted a three-acre field for the main Werowocomoco garden, and had a fantastic greens crew under Jeff DeBell. They planted environmental grasses that we believe were here at that time, and we were fortunate to be able to come in early spring and get the grasses to grow so that we could shoot them in late summer.”

Ironically, the corn, squash, melons and the sacred tobacco plants were assisted by the torrential summer rains which were to plague other aspects of the production.

### **Set Decoration, Props and Armor**

With the primary sets for both colonists and Natives constructed, it fell to set decorator Jim Erickson and his department to adorn them.

“Pretty much everything has been made by hand,” he says. “For the Native cultures, we literally made each one with leathers, feathers, stone and wood. You can’t buy these things off the shelf. For the English colony culture, we found a few pieces and rented a few others, but again, we made most of everything. Also, keep in mind that the English originally brought over just the basics to survive.”

Erickson said that his department made a special effort to go against the way Native culture has generally been portrayed in films.

“It’s been a wonderful experience to try and resurrect the Native culture,” says Erickson. “We’re consciously playing against the standard Hollywood version of how Natives are depicted in film, and in addition to researching the Powhatan culture, we have also looked at tribal artifacts from around the world. We started growing out of that, trying to create a feeling of tribal identity and culture.”

Erickson’s set decoration department worked closely with property master Steve George and master armorer Vern Crofoot.

“We combined the departments together into one big workshop,” says Erickson, referring to the large tent situated next door to the film’s production office on the grounds of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg. A literal smell of history emanated from the tent, earthy leather, freshly-woven basketry, the polished metal of the wheel lock pistols and swords.

“Sometimes we had up to 25 people working there weaving mats, making Native war clubs, leather bags and belts, and later on, during the battle scenes, we had to set up a triage factory in the prop truck trying to repair everything that was busted apart,” says George. “But the biggest challenge on this movie is the fact that very few things exist from the time period depicted, so we pretty much had to manufacture all of the Native American and colonist props.”

Erickson adds, “I felt it was important to try and recreate things that they’ve dug out of the fort site within the last five years, such as earthenware cooking pots, chamber pots, storage jars, watering cans, jugs, mugs and a lot of German stoneware. I’ve tried to create a range of wares that would have exemplified the types of things that would have been used everyday in the fort.”

The production also relied on other craftspersons throughout Virginia and the nation for specialty items, including John Smith's elaborate ebony and mahogany sundial compass inlaid with carved ivory and the large medallion to be worn by the Governor of Jamestown—with the seal of The Virginia Company on one side, and King James' coat of arms on the other.

Armorer Vern Crofoot assembled an arsenal of historically accurate weaponry for both the English and Natives, working closely with Erickson and George. But the main challenge faced by the armorer was a familiar one...nothing from the period exists any more.

“For Civil War movies, the weapons are readily available,” says Crofoot. “There are many people out doing re-enactments and lots of those guns are made as replicas today. But *The New World* is set during a transitional period, with no major wars occurring at that time, and very few—if any—films are set in this era.”

Thus, Crofoot came up with an arsenal of archaic weaponry, including matchlock rifles, swords, daggers and pikes.

“There are a couple of guns in this movie that I don't believe have ever been seen onscreen before such as the Petronel, a very short carbine which is shot off the middle of your chest instead of putting it against your shoulder,” says Crofoot. “The weapons that were provided to the colonists at Jamestown were provided by the Crown of England, most of which came out of the last war they'd had with the Dutch, so we have a mixture here of British and Dutch guns. And as far as the long guns are concerned, every single one was made for this movie by specialist artisans. You can't go to a props house and say, ‘Hey, send me 50 matchlock muskets.’ They don't exist. And no two muskets in the film are exactly the same. A replica can be replicated over and over again from casings, but our

guns are all handmade, all of the parts are handmade and the stocks are cut by hand. Each one is a hand-tooled item.”

Crofoot also re-created four different styles of Falconnet cannons—two of which were fully functional—with the wooden carriages constructed exactly as they existed in James Fort, and small mobile breach-loading swivel guns.

To discover the correct kind of sword to be used by the colonists, Crofoot also examined what had been found at the actual Jamestown site.

“When we first started, we figured that we were going to have a lot of crossbar or cruciform style swords, but what’s been recovered are basket hilts,” he says. “Some of our swords are custom made, and some are originals that date from the period, such as Captain Newport’s [Christopher Plummer].”

Crofoot collaborated with Jim Erickson on the Native weaponry, including arrows and quivers made from reeds and leaf-shaped swords called “matakas” that resemble harmless canoe paddles, but were hardened by the Powhatans in seawater and fire so as to make them sharp enough to cut through bone.

### **Threads of History**

Since Terrence Malick’s quest for historical accuracy extended into every department, costume designer Jacqueline West found herself faced with the daunting task of authentically clothing the colonists and Natives. It was a challenge the veteran designer was eager to accept.

“As soon as I learned that I would be meeting with Terry, who I so admire, I started doing research and drawings,” West recalls. “So when I went to the meeting, I put some sketches and vivid references down on the table for him for

Native costumes. They had a dark, mysterious quality, which was in alignment with what Terry had in mind.”

For inspiration, West buried herself in pre-production research, much of it from her own extensive library of books on American Indians.

“Designing the costumes for the English was mainly research and then getting the clothes of the period to look like they’d been through what they had to have gone through getting from Britain to Virginia,” says West. “But I wanted the Natives to have a feeling that we haven’t seen before.”

In designing the costumes, West paid special attention to the nature of the materials used in the era.

“Of course, everything they used came from the natural world, and we felt that it would have been both unrealistic and spiritually insulting to use mass produced, artificial materials,” she says. “We started ordering skins and furs, but only of what already existed. Of course, no animals were killed for our purposes. I also relied on the generosity of strangers, such as Chief Robert Two Eagles Green of the Patowomeck Indians of Virginia. He became a great friend and benefactor, giving us a great many deer antlers, turkey feathers and other materials. Chief Green and also Chief Stephen Adkins of the Chickahominy would later say, after appearing in scenes for the film, that they felt like they had gone back to the time of their ancestors and really felt that we tried to portray how animals were respectfully used, and how nothing was wasted. If we accomplished that, even part way, I feel we were successful.”

West and her department found other natural materials, including shells at the seashore and freshwater pearls, which were used as adornments by a people who lived by and with the waters that surrounded them. The wardrobe

department was to turn out some 500 costumes with a staff that only numbered 15 from the start of pre-production, many of them from Virginia.

“I was able to find the most talented, hardworking and creative people,” West says. “We had 15 fabricators, a mask maker, a headdress maker, two jewelry makers, a wonderful leather maker, all from the area.”

For the English costumes, West teamed with her longtime collaborator Suzi Turnbull. “I’ve done three movies with her and I call her my secret weapon,” says West. “Suzi did research in England while I was doing research in the U.S., and we put it all together. The period of James I is not one you often see on film. After exchanging drawings that I would sketch and pre-approve with Terry, Suzi went on a search of all the costume houses of Europe, including England, Spain, France and Italy, to find enough wardrobe for this movie. Then we had two agers working with us full time to make them look worn and used. We’ve built a lot of the English shirts, and made lots of britches as well. I insisted that we prep these clothes in England, where we could obtain homespun fabrics. There’s still a great deal of handmade work being done, and you’ve got to go to the source.”

West’s costumes for the protagonists of the film were carefully designed as extensions of their characters and personalities.

“Captain John Smith was tricky, because men in tights can be scary,” says West. “I got my inspiration for his costumes from the swashbuckling adventures, but with authentic period feeling. Men in that time usually had one suit of clothing, because for someone of John Smith’s level in society, it would cost almost as much as if you’d had your portrait done by a painter. Clothing was so at a premium that articles like a leather doublet would be bequeathed to someone in your family...it was that valuable. So John Smith had one outfit, and we had to do a variety of things with it. We also gave him elements of things he’d collected in

his world adventures and travels: a Transylvanian dragon earring and a Moorish cape, for example.”

Dressing Pocahontas presented a different set of challenges.

“For Pocahontas, Terry wanted the costume to be quite simple at first, indicating a free spirit unencumbered by possessions,” says West. “After she meets John Smith, Pocahontas’ character evolves as she becomes more self conscious, so very gradually she gives up her breech cloth and then her buckskin dress. When the Puritanism of the English is imposed on her, we see her in Western wardrobe with a very constrictive bodice, sleeves, lots of padding, crinolines and petticoats. She almost seems to be imprisoned by her clothing. And that gradually transforms in her wardrobe to almost middle-class English later in the story.”

For Kilcher, her character’s wardrobe proved to be a great help in getting touch with the character.

“My costumes were so authentic, which helped to make me feel more like the character,” Kilcher says. “There was a total contrast between what Pocahontas wears in Werowocomoco and then later in the film, with corsets, long dresses and high heels.”

John Smith and Pocahontas were far from the only characters whose costumes received elaborate touches. For the “consummate king” Powhatan, West made an opulent mantle which consisted of four deerskins and 30,000 hand-sewn beads depicting the king’s 34 realms. The piece was re-created mathematically from the original, which is currently on display in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England. Meanwhile Christian Bale’s John Rolfe was dressed in tweed suits of the period that were befitting a Middle Class Englishman, a cut above the first wave of colonists.

Just as it was important for West to use authentic materials for the English and Native American costumes, she also sought absolute realism in the armor that was required.

“Armor didn’t change much from Elizabethan times until the English Civil Wars in the 1620s, but there’s not a lot of really lovely armor that exists that’s really authentic,” says West. “The period-correct armor was either fabricated by us or was discovered in Italy. I loved Terry’s image of the English coming up from the shore in ungainly, clanking armor into this virgin, pastoral, pristine, utopian landscape and its barely adorned people. The visual analogy is amazing.”

In addition to the costumes, a particularly crucial aspect of *The New World’s* characters were the hair and makeup designs which called for a variety of looks ranging from colonists in various stages of health to Natives who were walking works of art with elaborate body paint, tattoos and unusual hairstyles. Responsible for such meticulous work was makeup designer Paul Engelen and his staff, particularly department head makeup John Bayless and key makeup artist David Atherton, as well as hair designer Joani Yarbrough and key hair artist Phillip “Mr. P.” Ivey. Atherton and Yarbrough had long experience working on Native American film projects, including *Dances With Wolves*, but *The New World* would push them to the limits of their creativity.

The elaborate designs came about after much trial and error. “We had about four weeks of solid experimentation,” notes Engelen, “developing different techniques, textures and ingredients for the paint.”

Adds John Bayless, “Terry loves texture, and not necessarily anything that looks freshly painted. In *The New World*, you see a look that has probably not been seen on screen before. We want a look of worn paint that isn’t touched up all of the time so as to look pristine. If we’re shooting in the rain, we want it to look as

though the paint had to deal with the rain, so we'll leave it alone and give it a more natural look.

“Terry wanted us to stay with organic colors, trying to stay away from bright reds, or colors that you can't find in the nature that surrounded the Natives,” says Bayless. “We've actually added clays, sand and mud to get more texture than what you're normally accustomed to seeing, with the idea that the paint comes from the ground, from the leaves and flowers, very organic in terms of application—by hand or by stick, and not by brushes.”

It got to a point where the Native cast, Core and Zone One warriors began to apply their paint themselves each morning. “They got their hands in there and started developing their own designs, as part of their overall spiritual preparation,” notes Bayless.

Extraordinarily, several warriors said that they discovered their particular patterns while dreaming.

“On this movie, one of our primary costumes is our makeup,” says actor Michael Greyeyes. “And every time my character appears in the film, he has a different look. I thought it was a brave move, because it shows a community that was dynamic and not set in stone.

### **The Natives of *The New World***

The remarkable diversity of *The New World* cast includes the Virginia Natives appearing in the film. Actors flocked to the production from all over the United States with representatives of the Kiowa, Seminole, Lakota, Pawnee and, from Virginia itself—the direct descendants of the Powhatan empire—Chickahominy, Pamunkey, Rappahannock, and Upper Mattaponi tribes taking on roles in the film.

Making an extraordinary contribution to *The New World* were the 17 young men who comprised the Core Warriors, who would be trained in the various skills necessary to portray Algonquian Indians of the time. Hailing from all over North America, with many different tribal affiliations, this multi-talented group would demonstrate their skills at dance, combat and song with amazing physical dexterity.

“They became a tribe of their own for this movie, and it was a very profound thing to watch,” notes Sarah Green. “On a daily basis they blessed each other, cleansed each other with sage, cleansed and asked for protection for us. They created a spirit around the movie that I believe everyone felt.”

Actor/choreography Raoul Trujillo adds, “I was given a chance to choose about 10 of the Core, so I was able to select a group who were all dancers. We have breakdancers, powwow dancers, all kinds, all athletic. I knew them enough to know that bringing them together was going to insure that we had this innate sense of spiritual power in the group. We all took on the task of representing the Powhatan people with a sense of commitment and responsibility.”

The Core also represented a cross-section of Native America. Their group leader was Larry Poirier, a highly experienced actor and filmmaker of Lakota heritage from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, a man of deep, quiet convictions with a strong sense of responsibility to the past...and to the future. The 17 members of the Core underwent an intensive two-week “boot camp” training before the start of filming, which saw them working on song, dance and movement with Trujillo, bow and arrow, spear and gunfire instruction with armorer Vern Crofoot and fight work with stunt coordinator Andy Cheng. Also participating in this training camp were many Native female extras, who learned such traditions as pottery, fish netting, weaving, hides, cooking and sign language from amateur Buck Woodard and adviser Frederic Gleach (the extras

portraying the Core Colonists also shared some of this training, working in swordmanship, shallop rowing and the like). Also participating side-by-side with the Core Warriors during much of the preparatory training was Q'orianka Kilcher, who was treated like a little sister.

“The Core was an amazing, amazing group of people,” she later recalled. “Although I’m of South American Indian rather than North American heritage, we all share cultures and problems throughout history, and I was totally accepted by them.”

The commitment to historical accuracy in the film even extended into the challenging area of language. The production team hired Blair Rudes, an Algonquin language expert who was charged with teaching this language to all of the actors portraying Virginia Natives as well as translating large chunks of dialogue from Malick’s script from English to Algonquian. As a result, this tongue—which has been virtually extinct since 1780—will be heard again in the film as a spoken language.

In an effort to establish early on that *The New World* would be dedicated to a more accurate depiction of Native culture than what is often showcased in “Hollywood” films, the filmmakers invited Chief Stephen Adkins of the Chickahominy Tribe to bless the production before they started shooting. It was the beginning of what blossomed into an excellent relationship between the filmmakers and tribal leaders.

“Early on, we invited the chiefs, the assistant chiefs and the representatives of the Virginia tribes to come and see what we were doing, and participate as much as they liked,” Green recalls. “They were, understandably, suspicious. At our first meeting, Chief Adkins gave me a strong and honest talking to about what this meant to them and how they’d been portrayed in the past. Over time, he became a friend, someone we could call on to answer sensitive questions about ritual and

what was appropriate to show. Ultimately, he trusted us enough to appear on screen in a scene with Pocahontas.”

The production’s Native American actors were also impressed with the production’s dedication to accuracy.

“I spent a lot of time in Los Angeles, and there were a lot of so-called Native films coming up,” recalls August Schellenberg, who plays Powhatan in the film. “Some of the scripts were just horrible, and I’d say ‘I’m not interested in doing this. It has nothing to do with Native American people.’ You know, those days of, bless him, Jay Silverheels and ‘You betchum, Red Ryder’ are gone. If something is detrimental to Native people, I will not have anything to do with it whatsoever.”

Wes Studi echoed Schellenberg’s beliefs.

“I’m sure that audiences will walk away from the film with a better understanding of the enormous birthing pains that came about in the creation of a nation that we now have,” says Studi. “It’s not always pretty, but sometimes the coming together of two cultures can become a wonderful thing. I think that many of the points brought out in the script will lend itself toward creating a better harmony in the world that we live in today.”

At the very least, many in the Native community are hopeful that *The New World* will help alleviate some of the misunderstandings about their culture.

“I think it’s time that the world knows who we are and I’m hoping that *The New World* helps to tell that story,” says Chief Adkins. “It remains to be seen, but I’m confident with the exchanges that I’ve had with the folks who put this film together that a lot of the myths surrounding the existence of Indians in Virginia will be dispelled. At our initial meeting with the producers, we asked them some rather pointed questions, and they didn’t sidestep the issues. I have high hopes

that this movie, although historical fiction, will be representative of a way of life that my forebears knew and enjoyed. I hope that it will telegraph to the world some of the injustices that my people faced, and will further let the world know that we still exist today...that we overcame the adversities...that we became stronger, that we are still married to our culture, to our heritage, and that will continue to the end of time.”

### **A Vision Comes To Life**

In the end, *The New World* represents the telling of a classic story through the eyes of one of this generation’s most distinctive and original filmmakers. And as far as the people in the production are concerned, that story could not have been in any better hands.

“Terry is rather like someone from a distant world who’s stumbled into the world of show business, and refuses to be seduced by it in any way, doing it his way and only his way,” says Plummer. “He’s the master of his dream, his vision, of which we are all the offspring.”

Producer Sarah Green also summed up the experience of working with Malick on the film.

“Terry Malick is an extraordinary director,” says Green. “He’s all heart and instinct, and works in a way that is organic and beautiful. His work speaks to the heart of humanity, and gets under your skin. He’s a mystery, a magician and an alchemist. What we accomplished on this film shouldn’t have been possible to accomplish. We do it because we believe in him and in the spirit of the moment. I think he has a trust and a faith in people which comes through in the way he writes and the way he works with them.

“There will be many ways of interpreting *The New World*,” concludes Green. “I don’t think that the title only refers to what the English colonists called America when they ‘discovered’ it. We were working with the idea that, however far America may have wandered from its true purpose and first promise, that the true America still waits to be discovered – still awaits us.”