

LEDUC

— From B-1

more interesting."

Leduc said that he'll get back to the Medotti project sometime, but for now he's sated with films "about flamboyant Mexican women with leftist leanings."

Leduc's first feature film, "John Reed: Insurgent Mexico," is about the American journalist's revolutionary experiences while traveling with Pancho Villa in 1913.

"It was like Warren Beatty's film, 'Reds,' but it was made for a lot less money, and concentrated on the Mexican portions of Reed's career," he said.

To create a stronger illusion of documentary realism, Leduc had the Reed film shot in sepia-tone, and used mostly unknown actors.

"In 'Frida,' I was able to heighten reality by often using the actual locations where Kahlo and Rivera lived and lived it up. These actual settings often seemed to have a magical effect upon the actors. This was especially true of Ofelia Medina, who played Kahlo. The opening deathbed scenes were really shot in Kahlo's deathbed. There was so much emotional electricity involved that Medina went sort of crazy, and it became my job to bring to sharp focus what was oth-



Ofelia Medina, left, was named Latin American Film Festival's best actress for her role as Frida

erwise a superb performance."

Leduc unfolds Kahlo's life in a series of vignettes. Upon her deathbed, in a state of vacillating pain and consciousness, she insightfully reveals her life through dream-like flashbacks.

"At the end of the film, I had planned to list all the surgeries and ailments Kahlo had suffered during her lifetime," said Leduc. (They

were a result of polio and a childhood accident). "But at the last minute I decided against it. You shouldn't have to explain pain. Pain is pain."

It was an effective approach. "Frida" shared first place as the best film of 1985 at the Latin American Film Festival in Havana, Cuba. Medina won as best actress for her portrayal of Kahlo, and Alejandro

Luna won for best set design.

Leduc believes "Frida" will do well because Kahlo is beginning to become a cult figure all over the world as a result of the big retrospective of her work held in several major European cities about four years ago.

Meanwhile, Leduc said that financing films in Mexico continues to be a struggle.

"Como Ves?" ("How do you see things?"), about Mexico City punks, began as an anthology of stories.

"Then the earthquake came and upset everything, along with the funding," said Leduc. "We had to use what we had already shot. We edited down the material we had shot for several episodes into one story, and released it that way."

Leduc, who believes that the "business of Hollywood is no longer imagination, but the business of business," is currently filming a documentary about Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton.