related images in a fast-paced 24/Cinema Canada - February 1986 posed to reach in the previous sequence when Michael revisits the sight of his fright? I didn't understand why all the people were waving at Suzie when she's riding on her bike after the truck. And dubbing is confusing because you never know who's voice it is. I think the people who did the movie did a good job. I liked everything. But we had to wait too long for the movie to start. I really liked the record too and I know the songs by heart.

Christopher Dorland, 7.


Gilles Carle's Ô Picasso

Gilles Carle, commissioned by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to make a documentary on Picasso in conjunction with the museum's much­ touted 1985 exhibition of minor works, has made a film that captures the spirit of Picasso in form and content.

Ô Picasso is not a traditional art film. It doesn't chronologically relate the artist's life. It shows very little of the artist's work. Instead, it combines a variety of Picasso-related images in a fast-paced collage.

The film begins with a café act. A female singer and her male band perform original songs about Picasso. The music is modern, upbeat, catchy. The words play with Picasso's name and describe the sort of fantastic occurrences such as an eye found in a hand - that are frequent in his art. The band and their music reappear periodically throughout the film, often providing a short break from the more wordy interviews. Every now and then the film cuts from something totally unrelated to the band members wandering around the museum in startling colour-suits (the red, blue and yellow of the suits are, of course, art's primary colours from which all others are mixed).

Ô Picasso features behind-the-scenes glimpses of the actual preparation for the show. After the first segment of the café act, the film cuts to Mirabel airport where large crates marked "fragile" and "Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to Picasso" are being loaded into a truck. The man in charge of the transport operation is interviewed. In the museum, about 20 people are at work, dismantling the previous large exhibition of Picasso, enormous Bouguereau canvases.

The Picasso works are unpacked and hung to the specifications of the museum director. These are scenes one rarely gets to see, as the people who come to an art-show see it in its final form and usually don't think of all the work that went into getting the works uncrated and hung. This museological element of the film roots it very concretely to the "Meeting in Montreal." show.

However, the vast majority of Carle's Ô Picasso is composed of interviews. An art historian, various art-world celebrities, and personal friends all talk about Picasso. The subjects range from the artist's love life to his art. There is much cutting from one talking head to another: too much information is provided too quickly to be absorbable in one viewing. But then Picasso and his work are that way too.

Some interesting comments do emerge. Picasso is described as a great manipulator who needed people's energy. A day with Picasso would leave you exhausted. He had piercing eyes that made you feel he could see through you. The artist chose the name Picasso for his mother's name, because he liked it.

Connie (Sihuk Saysanhas) gives Michael (Mathew Mackay) a needed trim in Peanut Butter Solution
better than his father's Ruiz. One person remarks that Picasso was an avid reader; the next says that he never read. Footage of an interview with Picasso is cut in near the end of the film. Picasso relates, among other things, how he enjoyed watching Princess Elizabeth's marriage on television. Quotations from Picasso, Cocteau etc. appear on the screen and seem random moments. Carle lets all this jumble of information speak for itself. He doesn't strive to create a homogenous portrait of the artist.

Pierre Hebert, an animator in the French animation studio of the NFB, has made an animated film on Picasso, part of which is shown in Carle's film. Hebert plays with Picasso-like figures in an often ironic manner — creating a work in the spirit of the man himself. In Ô Picasso, Hebert is interviewed in an animation studio where he is scratching his images on film.

Ô Picasso ends with the opening of the 1985 Montreal exhibition. The shots of people lined up outside the museum are finally relieved by a beautifully framed shot of people at last coming in through the rotating door. On the soundtrack are children's voices commenting on Picasso's work. The final words heard before silence are... "fait pas de sens.

Ô Picasso assumes a certain degree of knowledge about the man and his art on the part of the viewer. Carle hasn't attempted to create a complete or ordered picture of this twentieth-century art legend. Unconventional, amusing and entertaining, at times a difficult film, Ô Picasso is not unlike the man it's about.

Fay Plant


Alexandre Arcady's Hold-Up

Another formula movie. The formula, as defined over the years by the Hollywood entertainment machine and brought to its ultimate fruition in the high-tech action thriller, is a powerful and deadly one. Powerful in that it preys upon the viewers' escapist tendencies and reactive mechanisms; deadly in that it lobotomizes the viewer into a moronic stupor.

The formula is simple. First you need a star, definitely male, then add a series of high-speed car chases and sanitized pile-ups (no one got killed in this movie); sprinkle in some skin, definitely female, accent with punchy, over-produced musical score, and sit carefully to remove even a hint of intelligence. What you are left with is mushy and tasteless. In the case of Hold-Up a variation on the cops-and-robbers theme where the cops are portrayed as brainless sheep and the robbers as harmless, easy-going Robin Hoods. The finished product bears the unmistakeable Hollywood imprint.

The presskit describes the narrative and at the same time the marketing strategy — Hold-Up! it's aim! A Montreal bank — the biggest, of course. The method? One of fantastic daring. The hoped-for result? Two million dollars, tax-free. The man who had this idea? Grimm (Jean-Paul Belmondo). Supercool this Grimm... You had to be, to enter this bank and walk out again other than with your two feet first. To carry out this idea, he has one thing going for him, only one, but a major one — his prodigious brain power.

Unfortunately, there isn't a brain in evidence on either side of the camera. This is pure sit-down, turn-off cinema, based entirely on a simplistic and stereotypic world view — a kind of intellectual and cultural snow-job. Hold-Up has the same nutritional value as an overdose of sugar: quickly digested, leaving you with a slight hangover.

With so few visible merits, artistic or other, Hold-Up is bottom-line filmmaking in the purest sense. If intelligence in a film is no guarantee of financial success, a formula film like Hold-Up with its box-office draw in Belmondo almost assures financial viability. It's just a question of quantity: how much?

Hold-Up just completed a two-month run on 12 screens across Quebec. To date, 257,000 people paid to see this movie, grossing it just over one million Canadian dollars (which is coincidentally what Canadian taxpayers via Telefilm kicked into the film's production). But from France, where it's still playing, comes the cheery sound of cash registers. And surely that's music to somebody's ears.

Nell Wilson