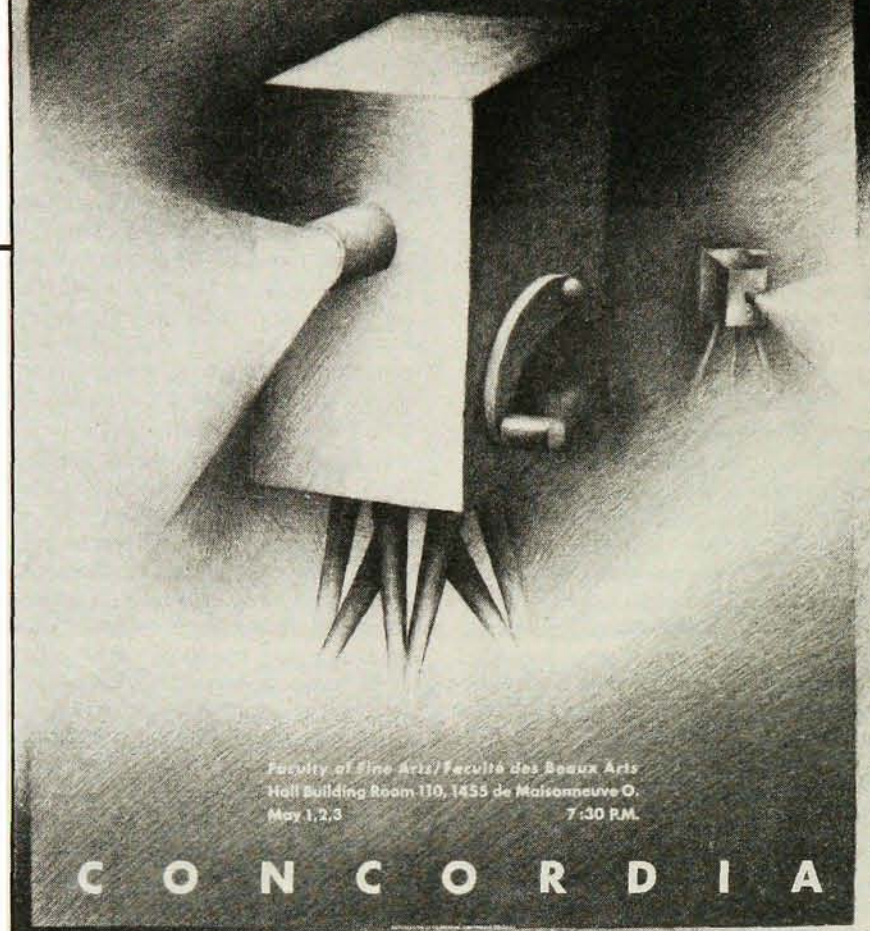


# CINEMA

ANNUAL YEAR END SCREENING OF STUDENT FILMS



Concordia University Department of Cinema's year-end screenings, held May 1, 2 and 3 was a small-scale film festival (i.e., manageable) and a wonderful exhibition of the creativity, the freedom, the zaniness that student filmmaking should be. It was also a surprising display of professionalism and technical expertise.

Of over 100 films submitted, fifty-four were shown on the three evenings. All three nights played to full houses, and the Saturday night screening had people sitting on the floor in the aisles. The crowds were responsive and openly proclaimed their approval or their boredom, adding to the buoyant atmosphere. Considering the limitations inherent to a student-made film (money/time/equipment), almost all of the 54 films screened deserve mention for some level of achievement. It should be noted, too, that many of the productions had the same people working on them, all in all a tremendous amount of work. Those listed here are what I felt to be the "best of the fest."

**GENERATIONS** d. Thomas Parkinson, 16 mm, 10 mins.

One of the best three of the festival, this is a film that leaves one wishing to see it again. Parkinson has put together an incredible amount of material, using mostly old home-movies to create a truly funny look at life, Woody Allen-style. With *Generations* Parkinson displays an amazing sensitivity to human nature, and a profound sense of the absurd that come across in his strong production abilities.

**TURBO CONCERTO** d. Martin Barry, 16mm, 7 mins.

An outstanding animated film (produced with the assistance of the NFB) that also appeared at Cannes. Mozart's piano concerto no. 21 is played by two racey characters in a garage, amid hydraulic lifts, turbo engines, hoses and pumps. Tremendous attention to detail and the off-beat humour behind the premise combine to make a very special short – the kind we should be seeing in theatres.

**BUSTON KEATER** d. Pierre Trudeau, 16mm, 6 mins.

The second of the best three, this animated film is done in silent movies style. Live electronic piano music accompanies the hero, Buston, as he races around an old castle, and through television screens to save the heroine. Original, truly funny, and well-done.

**UN CERTAIN MALAISE** d. Pierre Gill, 16mm, 6 mins.

Gill takes a common emotion – nervousness at having dinner with the in-laws – and exploits all its manifestations. The camera varies between objective and subjective points of view, zooming in and out, with a fish-eye effect to create images of that overly self-conscious feeling that, inevitably, leads to all sorts of accidents at the dinner table. Gill chose his actors/actresses well, and they do a great job. The crowd really liked this one too.

**OFF SEASON** d. Stefan Pleszczynski, 16mm, 28 mins.

One of the longest films in the program and thematically the most complex, *Off Season* is worthy of mention because of the excellence achieved in certain sections and elements of the film, though as a whole the excellence diminished. The film is comprised of four visual sections, each with a distinctive tone, place and idea, which are individually strongly expressive, but when put together become overwhelming, perhaps by the hugeness of what it seems Pleszczynski is attempting.

There are some extraordinarily beautiful visuals, reminiscent of *Witness*, in the harvesting and pioneer sections. From the warm and golden tones of this part, the film flips to the contrasting cold, bleak harshness of the present/future sections with some terrifying and provocative images.

**MÈRE POULE** d. Sophie Clerk, 16mm, 45 sec.

A hilarious animated short-short that takes an ingenious look at eggs for breakfast, or nurturing, or mothering, or perhaps anything else. In conception and production, this is the better of the two films by Clerk shown at the fest – who was also a winner of the Bellevue Pathé Film Animation Award.

**CACA STORY** d. Paul Hannan, 16mm, 4'30"

The unlikely hero of this animated film is a round-faced, round-headed baby who realizes that messing his diapers is one way to make his quarrelling parents stop – their attention shifts from screaming at each other to cleaning him and his dirty clothes. The good word eventually spreads

throughout the world so that everyone becomes too busy cleaning shitty babies to make war, pollution and other obnoxious characteristics of the modern world. The world's problems end not in a mushroom cloud, but a cloud of soap bubbles. Judging from this truly fine piece of work, Hannan fully deserved winning the Norman McLaren Film Animation Scholarship.

**YOU MAKE THE SOUND: PART ONE, THE STORY OF THE DUCK** d. William Herndon, 16mm, 4 mins.

An animated film presumably made for children but, judging from the audience reaction, has a larger audience than that. It is the first of a series planned to invoke audience participation by asking them to fill in the sounds. In this one it is the sound of the duck, a cow, a dog etc. as a lonely little duck seeks an object for its affections. The film is based on an ingenious concept, and like most other animated productions shown at the festival, exemplifies high production quality (for example, in the choice of simple line drawings).

**PORTER & SABU** d. Jacqueline McClintock, 16mm, 10 mins.

One of the few dramatic narrative films included in the program, this is about an old man who seems to have a drinking problem and is guardian to a very young girl, Sabu. They live in a house that the man Porter wants to sell, but Sabu doesn't want him too. The relationship between these two is never explained, but is certainly felt – a bond of familiarity and love is evident despite their differing opinions. Scripting, characterization, camera, sets, in short everything, was well-developed in this film. The story certainly could have been maintained for a TV half-hour and one could see these two characters as part of a series. McClintock won the annual Dean's Award for Film Production.

**EQUAL TIME** d. Sidney Watkins, 16mm, 2'20"

Described by its maker as "rock animation", this short could double as a kind of music video, but more likely is a film that was inspired by the song of the same title by Montreal rock band My Dog Popper. It is a series of stills mixed with Monty Python-like animation set to evocative lyrics about exploitation and political corruption giving equal time to society's underdogs. The pace is breathlessly fast which increases the power of the words and visuals, and, in fact, left the audience gasping but appreciative at its finish.

Jamie Gaetz •

## Best of the fests

# Concordia's Year End Screening of Student Films