

Georges Dufaux's
**10 jours...
48 heures**

Georges Dufaux's recent documentary **10 jours...48 heures** depicts the oppressiveness of East Coast fishing in the '80s – an entire community dominated and controlled by a single company whose main goal is the commercial exploitation of Newfoundland's codfish. The film is a contemporary reworking of John Grierson's 1929 film **Drifters**, a romantic and poetic treatment of Britain's deep-sea fishing industry. While Grierson's film focuses mainly on the men who go out to sea, Dufaux's goes several steps further by avoiding the excessive romanticization of the role of the fisherman. Instead, he tries to show how large-scale fishing affects the entire community of Marystown, a small fishing village in southeastern Newfoundland where 80 to 90 per cent of its inhabitants are employed by one company, Fisheries Products International. In Marystown, the fishing industry permeates practically every aspect of people's lives. Dufaux illustrates this by taking his camera into places like the church, the radio station, and the classroom where references to fishing are invariably present.

The title of the film refers to the pattern of 10 days at sea, 48 hours leave for the fishermen on the trawler 'Zamberg', one of the largest of the FPI fleet and the mainstay of the processing plant at Marystown. Through interviews with two of the fishermen's wives we learn of the personal hardships a life of offshore fishing imposes on the lives of the fishermen and their families. Brief interviews with people involved in the administrative side of the industry and factory workers' comments add to the sense of how profoundly this single industry and company affects the people of Marystown.

The fishermen in Dufaux's film catch fish destined primarily for an American market. The fish, caught and semi-processed in Newfoundland, is sent to an FPI finishing plant in Massachusetts where it is transformed into a highly processed 60% fish product. FPI's goal, a company spokesperson tells us, is to create a product that tastes like fish, but better. In doing so, it hopes to capture the lucrative children's market and eventually create a demand for fish McNuggets. Ironically, an employee of Waldman's fish market in Montreal explains that the store imports most of their fish from the United States because Canadian fish can't compete either in terms of price or quality. This contrast points to one of the disturbing facts about East Coast fisheries: the people of Newfoundland can't sell their fish at home but must send it to a foreign country where it is subsequently turned into junk food. The reference at the beginning of the film to John Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland and the decision in 1497 to exploit its rich fishing grounds seems to suggest that very little has changed over the last 500 years, and Newfoundland's resources and people

continue to be exploited for the benefit of foreign powers.

Apart from the occasional interviews (conducted in English, but subtitled or dubbed into French) by Dufaux's assistant, Antonia McGrath, the film is mostly observational. Dufaux's camera surveys the various stages of production in the factory and on board the 'Zamberg', as well as the day-to-day interaction of some of the families. There is a noticeable absence of background music or narration – only the constant hum of the factory in operation, or the sound of the trawler as it breaks through the ice on its way to the fishing grounds. Dufaux avoids the typical lyrical presentation of small East Coast fishing villages – Marystown in winter is a far cry from the quaint, idyllic fishing villages we're used to seeing. The fluorescent lighting inside the factory and the harsh winter light enhances the cold detached feeling of this film.

Dufaux has been praised in the past for his "calm and discreet" style of filmmaking: In this film though, it decidedly works against him. Although the film occasionally is a moving portrayal of the young fisherman David and his family, it is mainly a detached overview of a large-scale fishing and processing industry in Newfoundland. The film often alludes to many of the ongoing economic and political problems that have plagued the Newfoundland fisheries for years. Dufaux doesn't, for instance, touch on the interaction between the company and workers even though the film begins with the workers returning to their jobs after a six-month strike. A radio program heard in the background mentions the pressing need for the modernization of many of Newfoundland's processing plants, and fishermen's chronic problems with the unemployment insurance system. However, these issues are never expanded upon and their relevance to the film in general remains at best tenuous.

Unfortunately, the overall strength of the film is lost in Dufaux's subtle and distanced treatment of the subject matter. This is further weakened by the unnecessary length of 85 minutes. In the end, the film fails to elicit a strong response from the viewer, and one is left feeling indifferent and apathetic to the issues raised by the film.

Mary Ledwell ●

10 JOURS ... 48 HEURES d. Georges Dufaux asst. d. Antonia McGrath sd. Jim Rillie asst. cam. Michelle Paulin ed. Georges Dufaux, Catherine Martin sd. ed. Les Halman asst. sd. ed. Antonia McGrath mix Hans Peter Strobl asst. sd. mix. Adrian Croll **French version** Claude Dionne voices Anne Caron, Mario Desmarais, Hubert Gagnon, Eric Gaudry, Jocelyne Goyette, Elizabeth Lesieur, Hubert Loiselle, Claude Préfontaine, Louise Rémy, Yvon Thiboutot, extracts from Menabem Golan's "Over the Brooklyn Bridge" used with the permission of Cannon films **Thanks to** The workers of the Catalina and Danvers factories and the crew of the Zandberg for their participation **admin.** Joanne Gallant **assoc. p.** Shelagh McKenzie **p.** Eric Michel c. 16mm **running time** 85 min 58 secs **1986 doc.** A National Film Board of Canada Production

**Capsule
reviews**

You would have to scratch to find some basis for comparison between **Prairie Women** and **The Road to Yorkton**. Both are short films that were presented at the Yorkton Film Festival this year, and both were produced by western Canadian filmmakers. That's about it.

THE ROAD TO YORKTON

The Road to Yorkton is a docu-parody, a lark that turned into a mocking look at a self-conscious business. Francis Damberger and Lars Lehman, partners in Young Alberta Filmmakers, took themselves and a short film to the Yorkton competition last winter. They also took a camera and a cameraman. They made **The Road to Yorkton** on the trip to Yorkton.

Damberger embellishes a version of himself: a back-country boy with big-city ambitions and one response to everything. On the lonely winter highway (going to the festival) he draws on a brew and quotes Steven Spielberg. "I know what he means." In a motel sauna (during the festival) he draws on a brew and listens to a European film editor describe bringing Bertolt Brecht to a film set: "I know just what you mean." In a motel-room bathroom (at the end of the festival) he throws up and listens to his producer quote George Lucas. "And I know just what he means."

This film is obviously an improvisation, technically competent as it is. But it bears a charm that comes from honesty. Damberger's fictional character, the conning "new mustang of western filmmaking" fits perfectly into a real background. Whether the dozen or so people

who made cameo appearances like it or not, there is only one way to distinguish truth from fiction in this film: the fiction is strange, the truth is very strange.

PRAIRIE WOMEN

Late in June, the downtown branch of the Edmonton Public Library hosted a screening of award-winners from this year's Yorkton Film Festival. The featured presentation was a half-hour documentary called **Prairie Women**, winner of the Golden Sheaf for best of the festival.

National Film Board of Canada documentaries are not generally considered box-office boffo – but **Prairie Women** surprised everyone. It packed audiences in the 200-seat theatre for two consecutive nights. The NFB scheduled extra screenings to accommodate the overflow.

Barbara Evans, a graduate of University of British Columbia and the National Film School in London, created a textbook example of what NFB documentaries do at their best: capture a piece of history that hadn't been contained. The topic of this film was the women's farm movement of the '20s and '30s. The heart of this film was the spirit of the women it documented.

The difficulties of farming forced prairie settlers to circumvent a lot of discriminatory traditions. As one woman pointed out, "It was very much a co-operative situation...a complete partnership. It brought people together. Until it got too difficult. Then it drove them apart."

It was those difficulties – incredible poverty and extreme isolation – that spurred farmers into forming the reform movements of the Great Depression. Their wives, who were worse off in some ways, joined forces in the Women's Grain Growers and United Farm Women's associations.

Women who might never have left their children and gardens and livestock felt compelled to campaign for educational, political, and legislative reform. Unassuming, but forceful "We farm women should know considerable about this patching business", they petitioned for health care, educational reform,



● A prairie woman, Nellie Peterson

world peace, and birth control.

Evan sketches this movement with deft strokes, drawing on letters, diaries, speeches and published articles. She intercuts them with interviews of seven women who were directly involved, and some well-crafted "reenactments" — all standard fare. Yet the story is unique and Evans doesn't simplify the situation. The women, anywhere between 65 and 93 years of age when they were interviewed, project energy and a contemporary wisdom. They present a logical and positive extension to history that, however recent, is sometimes incredible.

Stacey Berthes

PRAIRIE WOMEN w/d. Barbara Evans d.o.p. Doug Cole add. cinematog. Moira Simpson, Roger Vernon loc. sd. Daryl Powell, Garrell Clark, Tim Hiltz eds. Peter Svab, Barbara Evans m. Connie Kaldor narr. Elan Ross Gibson period scenes co-d. Wendy Hill-Tout p. Caryl Brandt assoc. p. Dale Phillips exec. p. Tom Radford, Graydon McCrea. Produced by the National Film Board, Northwest Centre colour, 1987, 45 minutes.

THE ROAD TO YORKTON d./sc. Francis Daberger p. Lars Lehman d.o.p. Ken Hewlett m. Michael Becker ed. Eric Hill sd. mix Robert Decoste add. sd. Martin Mitchell post sd. mix. Rob Wurzer l.p. John Osler, Robert DeCoste, Mike Dobko, David Scorgie, Stephen Onda, Peter Campbell. colour 1987 30 min.

sion of a world that horrifies her. As Sue Coe tells us, this is her vision and for her "The showing of what is real is hope in itself." The film clearly shows us the beauty and strength of this artist whose politically committed works could be placed in the tradition of Goya and Dix.

d./sc. Helene Klodawski research Holly Metz p. Helene Klodawski, Liette Aubin exec. p. Jean-Roch Marcotte assist. p. Danny Leiner ed. Liette Aubin cam. Judy Irola assist. cam. Chris Diskin anim. cam. Robin Bain, Pierre Landry sd. Judt Karp orig. m. René Lussier, Jean Derome voice and narr. Karen Young graphics Claire Beaulieu mix Ciné Groupe neg. cut. Pierre Compte p. by Les Productions du Regard Inc. with financial participation of Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council's Explorations Programme, PAFFPS program at the National Film Board distib. by Cinéma Libre running time 26 min. colour 16 mm.

DU POTLATCH, L'ODEUR DE L'HUILE

Marie-Hélène Cousineau in the video, *Du Potlatch, l'odeur de l'huile* presents us with a somewhat unusual documentary on art. The subject matter is an event which took place in June of 1985, "la fête du Potlatch". Montreal artists, inspired by an Indian tradition, burned their works as a form of protest against the neglect of the artist by society. The

event itself is documented by a moving camera, *cinéma vérité* style, which communicates to the viewer the turmoil and passion of the participants. The technical possibilities of video are put to good use in creating a vivid contrast between the brightly burning orange fire and the stark white and black tonalities of the rest of the image. Often, the participants are shown being interviewed, while these scenes appear on a separate plane behind them. Intercut with this footage are people watching television, and various mass-media images, to emphasize the opposition of these artists to a commodified society. The strength of the film lies in its combination of several genres; that of video-art, *cinéma-vérité* documentary and the politically committed documentary.

d./sc./p. Marie-Hélène Cousineau ed. Christopher Flambard, Johanna Kotkowska m. Hani Habaschi sd. Pierre Ouellette running time 30 min. c. 1986 dist. Videographe, (514) 521-2116

OUT

Out is billed as an "opera video" with an original techno-pop score. Its style is close to that of an experimental film. It is comprised of four sections where the images are reworked through step-printing and colour saturation processes to enhance their expressive qualities.

The first section uses footage of the Amazon River, and the primitive tribes which inhabit its borders, juxtaposed with a text which muses on the relationship of modern man to the primitive. The whole opera seems to be a meditation on the relationship between our technological society and nature. The images and music are beautiful but it always seems strange to me that artists can use a technological medium to put down technology.

d./p. Miguel Raymond m. Alain Thibeault running time 4 min. c. 1986 dist. Zone prods. (514) 842-1187

MONSIEUR LÉON

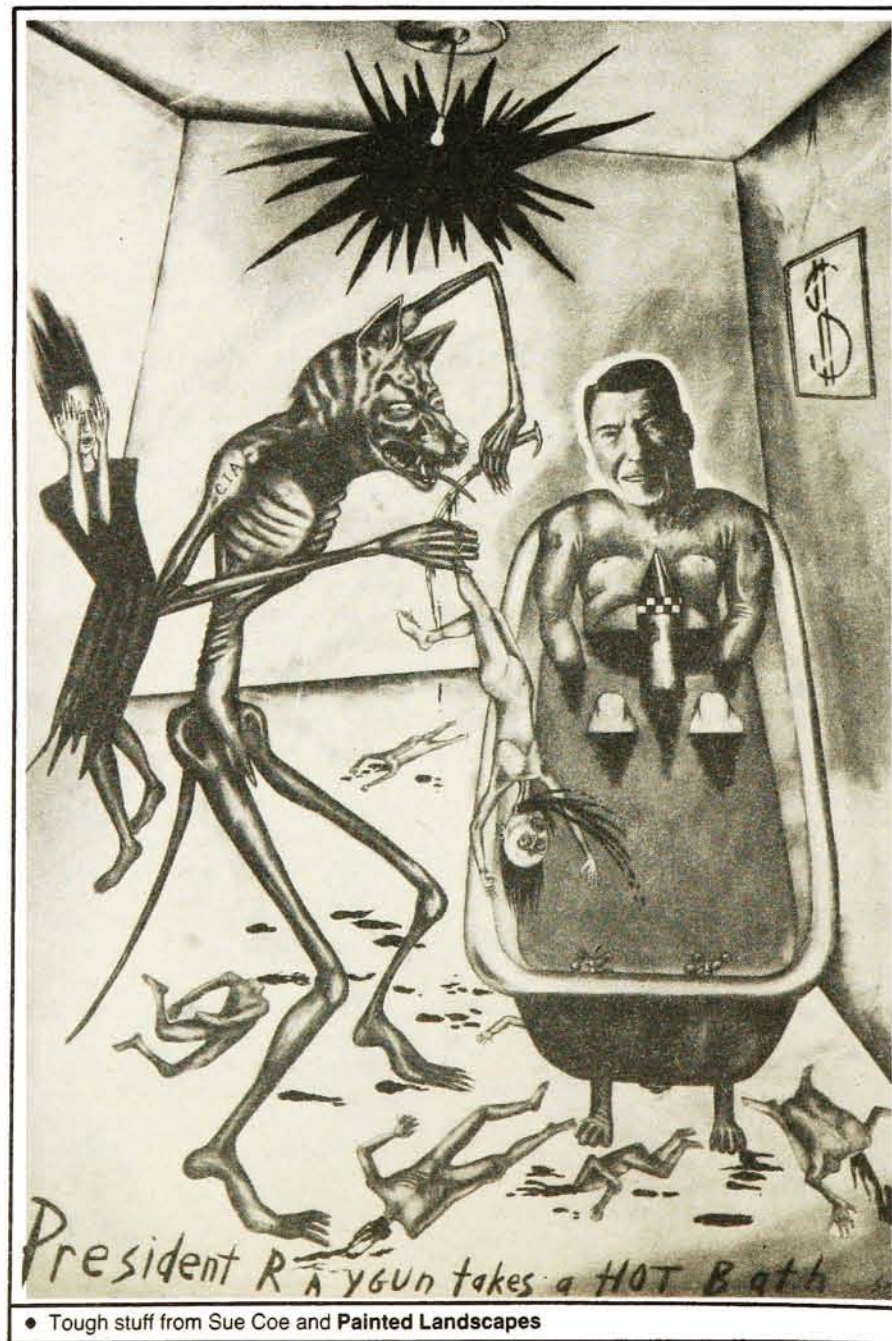
The video, *Monsieur Léon*, could be seen as a postmodernist, ambiguous narrative about miscommunication. It uses the form of the thriller genre in a fragmented story where a woman tries to deliver a mysterious package to a mysterious stranger. The visuals are very stylized, using an art-deco setting made up of pastel greens and blues. The artist makes an interesting use of the possibilities of video technology in his distortion of buildings thus turning the backgrounds into expressionistic sets.

d. François Girard p. Bruno Jobin, Zone Productions running time 13 min. 20 secs. c. 1986 dist. Videographe Inc.

Images from "Les Quinze Jours du Milieu", Montreal

PAINTED LANDSCAPES OF THE TIMES

In the tradition of using the film medium to record another art form, Helene Klodawski has made a film called *Painted Landscape of the Times: The Art of Sue Coe*. This skillful documentary was made by a Canadian about a British artist in New York. Sue Coe's paintings are highly expressionistic, black and blue, monochrome works with slashes of red to emphasize the violence that she is depicting. Many of her images are borrowed from newspaper photographs, or newspaper accounts of violent crimes. The camera follows Sue Coe, dressed in black and blue, around New York as she sketches the subjects of her paintings on the subway and in the streets. The internalized violence of this society is evident in the faces the camera shows as it pans, following her line of sight, and demonstrating how the artist's vision is based on a specific reality. At one point in the film, children from a nearby school ask questions of the artist as she sits in front of her paintings. The questions are perceptive and her answers are lucid and committed to this vi-



• Tough stuff from Sue Coe and Painted Landscapes

PUZZLE

Puzzle is a video that uses a fragmented narrative line to express the main character's puzzlement about her life. A woman sits working on a puzzle, and under the puzzle-pieces, parts of her life appear. Cut into these images is a dramatic fiction about a male-female relationship and the desire to have a baby. This narrative is moving in its portrayal of today's youth who find themselves with no place in society and therefore with no way to go on with their lives.

d. Paul Gauvin, Jean Gagnon p. G.R.A.A.V., running time 25 min. c. 1986 dist. Videographe Inc. (514) 521-2116

BYRON BLACK'N' BLUE-BLIND

Byron Black'N'Blue-Blind is a hilarious performance piece where the author himself spoofs the gender specific. The ambiguity of gender identity is doubled by the ambiguity of the visual codes possible in the video medium. A man and a woman (?) sing romantic duets on the screen, but soon it becomes obvious that they are both Byron Black. At one point they seem to stand in front of a field of high green grass. But Byron, by painting his hand blue, makes his hand transparent and then we notice that the green grass also shows through the polka dots on his tie. This video is an extremely amusing play on what we mistakenly think reality is.

d. Byron Black running time 17 min. c. 1985. dist. Videographe Inc. (514) 521-2116