

ON (EXPERIMENTAL) FILM

by Barbara N. Sternberg

Richard Johnson's **Moving Images**, is a new series that will follow-up on **New Directions**, his successful special aired last fall. **Images** will feature video, film, performance, computer and holographic art. It will be presented without a host or explanatory voice-over; that is without the traditional television format. Works will be shown in their entirety or excerpted with only a guide text on the screen to introduce the work, the artist and to identify the medium. Richard is trying to be true to both the medium of television and the artworks being presented. He is aware that this format may not work out—he is experimenting—and will modify, if necessary, according to results. Programme No. 1 includes, **Oh Nothing**, a video by Dennis Day (Newfoundland); **The Tyranny of Architecture**, an experimental film by Annette Mangaard (Toronto); **Luminarie**, computer graphics and digital video effects by John Sanbour and Dean Winkler; **Resurrected Fields**, experimental film by Henry Hesionka (Toronto); and **Hell**, a video by Adele Lister (Calgary). Each show will take on a character of its own depending on the nature of the individual works in the particular programme. Other programmes will see films by Richard Kerr (Toronto), Richard Martin (Vancouver), Martha Davis (Toronto), Stephen Denure (Vancouver), Richard Raxlin (Montreal), Chuck Clark (Halifax), Chris Gallagher (Regina) Guy

B.C. Film

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degree of financial and creative control."

"There were also concerns that U.S. production companies could deficit finance... This is not the case. There is also the problem that U.S. networks are familiar with ways of cutting costs in Canada... (for example) CBS will knock off the difference in costs on a Canadian project. What we will be doing is allowing B.C. companies to work with producers from anywhere in the world. But never will the fund consider applications where the B.C. company owns less than 50 per cent of the voting equity."

Finding storytellers, developing talent, and providing a return on investment. It's an ambitious three-year plan for an agency-come-lately. On the whole B.C. filmmakers seem confident that Sterloff eventually would like to "change the way of thinking in some of the federal agencies." There are advantages to having learned from someone else's mistakes.

McLaren and others. Richard speaks of the programme as a "visual catalogue devoted to the exploration of the moving image", and of television as the appropriate vehicle since it is the "site of the most prolific use of moving images". He also speaks of the seductiveness of technology. Yet, he is using works that question or satirize the technology as well. **Moving Images** will premiere Monday, January 11 at 10:00 pm (prime time!) on TVOntario and will continue for 10 (possibly 13) weeks. Let TVO know you're watching.

"Culture at the Crossroads", the first Wendy Mitchener symposium, was held at York University. Joyce Wieland, who showed a short clip from her new/old film-in-progress, **Wendy and Joyce**, was among the presenters. Like much of Joyce's work, the footage is quite unassuming—like home movies. I look forward to seeing how it will be shaped into a finished film. Peter Morris, of Queen's University and soon to be of York's film department, was also a presenter. He gave an analysis of the schism between film critics and filmmakers in English-Canada and the negative impact this had on the development of an English-Canadian art cinema. Morris set forth assumptions and standards of quality applied by critics (film is a composite art; 'universal' cinema versus cinema with an authorial or regional voice; credibility and narrative unity as essential; subject matter as more significant than voice or subject matter versus filmicness as content; no distinctions between commercial and art cinema—our films should do as well at the box-office as U.S. films and somehow be 'better'). According to Morris, these assumptions blind critics to the value of the films and prevent them from recognizing the intent or structural and stylistic choices of the filmmakers. Though Morris did not refer to experimental film practice, these assumptions would similarly account for the total lack of critical attention given to experimental films. The three critic/journalists Morris pointed out as writing contrary to these dominant critical ideas were Wendy Mitchener, Joan Fox and Germaine Walkington—all women you might note (as Joyce Zemans, Dean of Fine Arts at York, did) and so perhaps not incidentally capable of recognizing and appreciating a different voice.

I just saw Astid Klein's large black and white Photoworks at the Ydessa Gallery in Toronto. Photoworks are enlargements of photos made from negatives that have been doused with acid, burned, double-exposed or otherwise manipulated. They brought to mind some of the self-processed or optically printed films I have seen—these could be frame enlargements—and I thought of how much work goes into a film where every frame is just a manipulated image and 24 go by each second. Ah, there it is, they go by—and these three of Klein stay here, in a gallery room to themselves, to be looked at for weeks. John Bentley-Mays reviewed the show and was enthusiastic in his descriptions and interpretations of this materialist work. I invite John to look again, perhaps one frame at a time, at the experimental films of, for example, David Rimmer, Al Razutis, Bruce Elder, Carl Brown, and Mike Hoolboom.

The following are new films in various stages of production:

— Michael Snow is working on a film he hopes to have completed for his Japan tour with CCMC in February.

— Richard Kerr's **The Last Days of Living** is an exploration of the Canadian and American landscapes and the relation between the two: "I documented American landscapes in the tradition of the early formalist photographers (Walker Evans, Paul Strand) allowing there to be content in form.

— **Svetlana** by Mike Hoolboom, 70 min. black & white, is comprised of dramatic and documentary elements. The film, which looks at a disintegrating relationship, is woven through with meditations on film form and the *film noir* genre (sort of).

— Al Razutis is distributing three bits of his recent performance work: **The Tilted X**, an essay on Postmodernism; **The Far Shore**, a multi-media performance piece featuring four voices (performers to be drawn from the audience), film loops and slides; and **Metalepsis**, a film on censorship

— **Illapse**, 4 min. Super 8, by Sharon Cook and Michael Wojewoda.

— **Moving Picture Trilogy**, Super 8, by Gary McLaren which includes **White Ants Ate My Brain**, **My Trip to New York** and **Wheel of Fortune**.

— Ian Cochrane's **Shadow Project** is about the anniversary of Nagasaki.

— David Rimmer's two new works, **Sisyphus** and **Roadshow**—are dance videos. David is teaching video art production at the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver.

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