

"I would like to contextualize this experience for you," began Bill MacGillivray at the world premiere of his new film, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, at Wormwoods Cinema adding parenthetically, "This is something which I learned how to say in the course of making this film." Opening as a documentary of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) *I Will...* is less this than a loose exploration of the aesthetics and *raison d'être* of postmodern art through the views and experiences of various teachers, past and present, of the college. The film focuses primarily on video, film and performance art with glances at painting and sculpture.

NSCAD is an institution which has had a prominent artistic profile, both in Nova Scotia and internationally, particularly in the decade or so after the appointment of Garry Kennedy as director in 1967. For reasons sometimes as mysterious as the elusive content of postmodern art, NSCAD came to be regarded as one of the outstanding art institutions in the world – at least so it came to be believed. A veritable who's who of radical, conceptual artists passed through the institution's doors including Michael Snow, Dara Birnbaum, Dan Graham, Eric Fischl, June Leaf, Gerald Ferguson, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Richard Demarko, Les Levine, Robert Frank and David Askevold, all of whom are featured in *I Will...*

In the early 1970s, video, as an artistic medium, was just beginning to be appreciated and many of these artists took advantage of the facilities at NSCAD to create original works or document various kinds of performance art. Others such as Frank worked with film in a variety of contexts. (As an aside I would note that these are many extracts in the film from a variety of productions and student experiments which are of documentary interest and which are otherwise unavailable. Particularly memorable is Robert Frank struggling to put on a pair of trousers behind a towel while telling a story about a rape on a beach.)

Fans of MacGillivray's ironic treatment of postmodern art in *Life Classes* will find much to delight them here. Not that MacGillivray lampoons any of the artists who he interviewed in Canada, the United States and Germany with the same sense of satire which he used in *Life Classes*. He simply lets them speak for themselves – or rather ramble, digress, prattle, and dissemble. A few of these artists seem to have a command of language and seem at least moderately clear about what it is that they are doing. The majority, however, are inarticulate, incoherent, seemingly confused and utterly bereft of any coherent conceptual framework to understand, let alone discuss, their work. The fragmented nature of their art, as is shown through numerous excerpts in *I Will...* and their inability to express anything lucid about it, other than in an empty jargon which masquerades as some kind of analytic language, seriously calls into question their ability to understand what it is that they are doing.

The results of students working in this atmosphere are similarly confused. Although a few interesting gleams do appear, it seems more the case of the 100 monkeys at typewriters who, given enough time, will write a novel of genius purely by chance. I hesitate in being so critical, but given the evidence no other conclusion can be drawn. In a gentle and humorous way the film is nevertheless a serious attack on the confusion of this direction in art.

Clear and collected were two films directed by Lyn Wright and shown here as part of a cross-Canada opening launch. *A House Divided* and *Mr. Nobody* are the first two sections of a documentary trilogy entitled *The Elderly at Risk* which is being produced by the NFB. The former deals with four situations of so-called "elderly abuse" and in so doing introduces some of the issues, organizations, challenges, and difficulties which surround this, as yet, little acknowledged social problem.

The latter is a portrait of 65-year-old Jack Huggins, an eccentric character, who is the victim of what is called "self neglect," a problem of many older people, unable to fully take care of themselves or their surroundings. The film examines the question to what degree should society intervene in the lives of people who, although competent to administer their affairs, nevertheless choose an eccentric lifestyle? In the case of the elderly, social organizations seem much more inclined to step in – perhaps reflecting our relative lack of respect for the rights of the elderly. Ms. Wright actively sought input from an appreciate audience on the third film in the series which she is currently preparing to make.

Although strictly outside the commercial stream of cinema in North America, screenings of films such as these remind me of the community role of film in creating a forum for the discussion of issues and ideas. Screenings such as these create a focus; one that cannot be duplicated by sitting and watching the production on your home VCR.

MONTREAL – Four Montreal firms have received a total of \$3,027,000 under the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Development of Communications Enterprises.

Bellevue Pathé will receive \$1 million, Les Films Cinar will receive \$808,500, Le Groupe André Perry will receive \$805,000 and Le Studio Centre-Ville will receive \$413,500.

This joint federal/provincial project to develop

the audiovisual industry in Montreal is represented by the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of Communications on the federal side and the Minister of Communications and the Minister responsible for Technological Development on the provincial side.

ROGER JAMES

ENTERTAINMENT INSURANCE BROKER

*Complete Insurance
for all
your entertainment needs*

- Feature Films
- Series
- Documentaries
- Special Events

Roger R. James Insurance Brokers Ltd.
1711 McCowan Road
Suite 203
Scarborough Ontario
M1S 2Y3
(416) 292-6767
Fax: (416) 292-9308

"It's a wrap!"

Tazmanian Ballroom – 99 Jarvis St

(416) 363-7117