

graphy and John Tucker's illuminating score. For it is in the visual and aural contributions of these two gentlemen that Spring has found her most successful collaboration. However, with this impressive film debut, one can only look forward to the next work of this talented director.

Moze Mossanen •

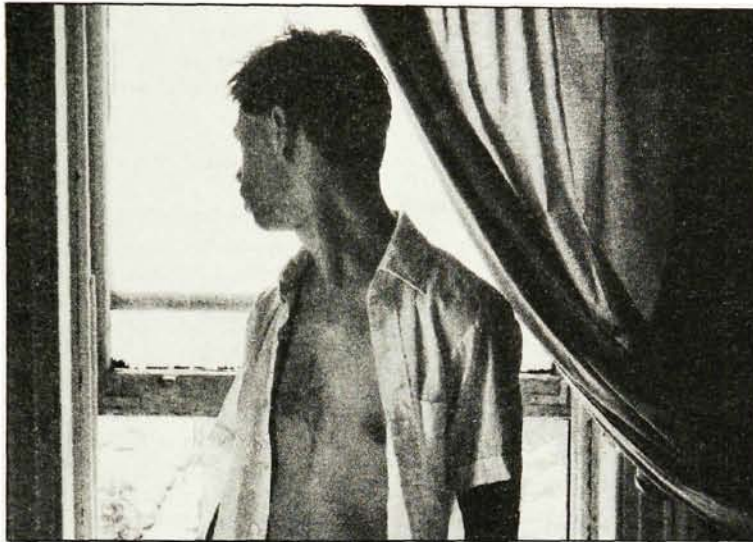
INSIDE/OUT p./d./sc./ed. Lori Spring. From a short story by Lori Spring and Alan Zweig d.o.p. Steven Deme art dir./makeup/ward. Donna Mehalko, Virginia Rankin sd. ed. Steve Munro mus. John Tucker, The Rhythmn Twins 1st a. d. Alan Zweig 2nd a. d. Jolynn Sommerville cont. Annette Manguard 1st asst. cam. Frank Polyak 2nd. asst. cam. Marcus Elliot video Nick Shefter stills photo David Rasmus craft services Marilee Pinto grip Dennis Kane gaffer Ted Fanyeck ass. ed. Michael Werth, Scott Munro consulting ed. Sally Patterson 2nd unit 1st asst. cam. Charlotte Dishar 2nd unit asst. cam. Andrew Potter prod. asst. Randy Zimmer, Mark Fawcett, Graeme Lynch prod. consultant Alexandra Raiffe sd. mix Daniel Pellerin neg cut Francont Films opticals Film Opticals Hiles Meta Media i. p. Emma Richler, Jackie Burroughs, Larry Epp, Alan Zweig, Donna LaPointe, John Carr, Mark Fawcett, Rhonda Kristi. Colour, 16mm, 27 min.

Mike Hoolboom's From Home

Mike Hoolboom's new film is a powerful and disturbing work which deals with love, memory, sexuality, murder and desire. *From Home* is a neo-narrative that is frankly experimental in structure. Hoolboom utilizes fictional footage, personal documentary elements and archival sequences of either a historic or intimate nature in an abrupt and seemingly arbitrary manner that forces the viewer to reflect on the ontological and ethical implications of the cinema. The film contains sequences that are shockingly explicit about details in the director's - and subject's - lives. Hoolboom asks for, and gives, no quarter in his devastatingly honest depiction of the break-up of his relationship with Svetlana Lilova, a Bulgarian émigré.

The audience is made to see the two true lovers, their fictional constructs who play at being "Mike and Svet", meditations on the nature of the cinema, an odd private-eye satirical sub-plot, photos of Edward Weston and the birth of the airplane, and a series of reconstructed screen tests. While the viewer is confronted by these apparently disparate elements, he is not particularly reassured by the director's self-assessment, that he knows it is difficult to place "two pictures together" and make those parts into a seamless whole. In fact, the viewer, like the narrator/director, is forced to embark on a quest in search of the meaning behind the relationships in the text.

From Home is a film of contradictory impulses. It begins, and ends, as a consideration of the word "love". Eschewing the sentimental, Hoolboom presents what love can mean to a



Mike Hoolboom falls for a simple twist of fate in his controversial new film *From Home*

person during and after an affair. The desperation that develops at the end of a relationship as mutual comprehension disintegrates into anger and diffidence, is effectively contrasted with the wealth of good humour when trust in another still exists. Hoolboom is asked by a friend (Gary Popovich) to define love in semantic and intimate contexts. His only true reply is to film Svetlana making love to someone else. The acknowledgement that ultimately this director's muse is his art and not his woman, is presented as a painful realization. Yet this ebb and flow of love definitions is made to work against other formal elements in the complicated scenario.

From Home is elliptical in impact and digressive in construction. At one point, Hoolboom has a narrator state that, "Contradiction is only another way of saying the same thing twice." This may be a clue to Svetlana's enigmatic character but it reveals little of the structure for the film, which rarely re-doubles its constituent parts.

Indeed, the only deliberately "doubled" characters in the film are Mike and Svetlana and their *doppelgangers* are generally depicted in a phlegmatic manner. Fenway Crane, Hoolboom's alter ego, is given a farcical background as a potential Nobel laureate in a sequence which presents visually a home-movie of a typical suburban family's three children taking a bath, while on the soundtrack underneath the portentous description of the director's life, one can hear the old pop hit "There I've Said It Again." This complex joke is typical of Hoolboom's approach to character throughout the film. The audience is allowed to be dazzled, titillated and amused, but is never allowed an entry into the true spirit of Crane/Hoolboom or the two Svetlanas.

The reasoning behind the virtuoso structuring of the film becomes clearer in a remarkable sequence which depicts the romantic beginnings

of aviation at the turn of the century. Over shots that move from an aircraft taking off while a crowd cheers, to a ship, crippled, hurtling down from the skies, a voice (Hoolboom's) speculates that the memory of love is like an accordion: from one body can emerge many corporal forms. So it is with *From Home*. The multiplicity of forms that the film takes are manifestations of the cineaste's desire to come to grips with the memory of his private past.

From Home reaches its emotional peak when the director decides to film his protagonist in the act of making love. This section is as problematic as it is strong, and exploitive. Here the *verité*-like visual element is counterbalanced by a disturbing narrative about the cameraman who shot the "shambles" left by Jack the Ripper at the final dwellings of his victims. A shot of the director cutting film is placed tellingly near the end of this sequence, allowing Hoolboom "no way out" of this particular ethical closure.

Where can one hear Svetlana in this film? She can be heard recounting scientific and fantastic parables at various points. The viewer sees her talking, laughing, making love. Yet ultimately she remains a director's other quest, which is to feel capable of "putting one picture next to the other," to make a narrative. In this vein, *From Home* is successful, the finest work yet by one of Canada's most prodigious talents. Mike Hoolboom deserves the viewer's respect for this brave offering. Yet one is left dissatisfied. The viewer still wants to know: where is Svetlana and her voice?

Marc Glassman •

FROM HOME p./d./sc./ed. Mike Hoolboom d.o.p. Mike Hoolboom, Gary Popovich sd. design Tom Thibault, Mike Hoolboom sd. rec. Jim Anderson, Peter Chapman, Svetlana Lilova, David Müller, Karen Saunders, Randy Smith i. p. Martha Cronyn, Maria Friedhoff, Svetlana Lilova, Midi Onodera, Andrew Scorer, Camille Turner, Victor Willis Funding National Film Board of Canada, Ontario Arts Council, Mike Hoolboom. B & W, 16mm, 55 min. dist. CFMDC

Camelia Frieberg's Crossing the River

Amnesty International and the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador have recorded over 65,000 deaths since the civil war began in 1979. More than 7,000 people have disappeared and tens of thousands have been held as political prisoners. The death squads and the government's security forces, often working in collusion, continue to this day to carry out acts of terror and oppression with impunity.

- From *Crossing the River*

Crossing the River is a committed and informed investigation into the life of a Salvadorean refugee, Carmen A. (who has chosen not to use her real name in the film in order to protect her family living in El Salvador.) The film records Carmen's painful memories of El Salvador, her commitment to the Salvadorean cause and her adjustment to a new life with her children in Toronto.

Carmen A. was born in Guazapa, El Salvador, of a peasant family. Guazapa has been plagued by civil conflict between guerrillas and Salvadorean armed forces over the last 10 years. The film opens with a still photo of a group of Salvadorean women who are bravely dedicated to and brought together by a common cause called the "Committee of Mothers and Families of Political Prisoners Disappeared and Assassinated from El Salvador." Carmen A. joined this group after the disappearance of the father of her children. She later found out he was captured by the National Police. Carmen, along with her six-month-old son, was also detained, interrogated and tortured by the National Guard when she came to them enquiring of her husband's disappearance. Francisco was released after seven months but was gunned down a year later at a bus stop on his way home from work. Carmen believes his murder resulted from his membership in a local farmer's union. Carmen was left pregnant and with a two-year-old son. The spree of violence continued to haunt Carmen's family and friends to the extent that she had to flee her native country. Carmen had to leave her children behind, arriving first in Mexico before finding refuge in Toronto. She was later reunited with her children.

Carmen's blunt and direct line in the film "Francisco did not commit any crime" conveys a sense of the helplessness and frustration of the El Salvadorean people and the senselessness behind the tragic loss of her companion. Her testimony to the camera is set against a stark black background creating a feeling for Carmen's isolation and personal grief. Photographer Daniel Gantreau's stills provide a chilling backdrop recreating the oppressive atmosphere surrounding Salvadorean