

Between September 20-23, the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art at Sir George Williams University in Montreal held its fourth Canadian Student Film Festival.

Fifty-eight films (20 in 8mm) made it into the competition which was the strongest ever. Nearly half of the films came from the anglophone Montreal schools — particularly Sir George Williams, Loyola, and the Montreal Museum School of Art and Design. Nine entrants came from francophone Quebec and eight from Canadian students studying in foreign schools as dispersed as UCLA, New York School of Visual Arts, and the London Film School. Only five high school students made it to the finals.

One definitely got the feeling that representation depended on whether one's film instructor knew about the festival. Another factor in the diversity of entrants (and the questionable student status of some) is Famous Players' \$10,500 in prize money ranging from \$1,500 for best film on down, divided according to 16mm and 8mm in scenario, documentary, and animation categories. Famous Players' support has helped the Sir George festival grow into the biggest and best in Canada and perhaps the richest student festival anywhere.

There were sixteen prize winners in all categories with Neil Affleck's animation film *Hands* winning the top prize, the Norman McLaren award. While Affleck is a student at the Museum School he also works at the National Film Board and his style is reminiscent of Ryan Larkin.



Irma Walls winner of Maple Leaf Award for *Piddling Pete*.

*Hands* is simply a very meticulous and beautiful study of hands doing all manner of things against a white background. Affleck spent two years on it and while it is not a brilliant inspired work, still not to give it best prize would have been difficult.

My two other favorites were Veronica Soul's *How the Hell Are You?* which won first prize in scenario and Boon Collins' *Kettle of Fish* which should have won a scenario prize but didn't. There is supposed to be a Veronica Soul at McGill, but having seen *How the Hell Are You?* twice, I wouldn't be surprised if she were a put on. The film is a tremendously funny collage inspired by the cynical comments of a homosexual writing back to the filmmaker over the course of years. The problems of picking up a sailor in Barcelona or buying flowers to place on Proust's grave at his centennial seem to be the only things that give the correspondent-narrator's life meaning. Brilliant and bitter.

Collins' *Kettle of Fish* is a great piece of filmmaking. The characters in a New York bar interact in the usual ways and the audience follows the social games which are subtle and fast paced. A lecture by an aging black on "keeping one's balance" is great acting and great directing. It was one of the few films that didn't fall into the great student trap of being overlong and overly tedious. It should have won a prize.

First prize/documentary went to Steve Shaw (Ryerson) for *Don't You Ever Say Goodbye*, about the good old days at a Toronto dance hall on the lakefront. Second Prize went to Nicholas Kendall's *Bill and John*, about two down and outs in London, England who seem to have turned the life of the 'bum' into an art. Third prize went to Roger Murray for *La Corvée* which is a terribly overlong work on life in the Gaspé. It is also moving in documenting the struggle of that life from mechanized logging to hand sowing rocky fields. The filmmaker is a worker and this is his first film. His talent and great compassion rather than his technique, won over the judges and the audience.

Except for *Hands*, the entire animation category was a little disappointing. Janet Perlman (Museum School) won first prize/animation for *Comic Strip* which was an amusing work on the foibles of graceless ballet students. Joyce Borenstein won second prize for *Opus I* which also won a prize last year as *Tricycle*. Since then the film went through an optical printer but shouldn't have been submitted.

## Student Film Festival



Neill Affleck receives the award for best film from Norman McLaren.

Dennis Zahoruk's *Jason Borwick* (second prize/scenario) seemed to be an audience favorite but was too heavy handed for my taste. It was about two sides of someone's mind who play snooker in the head for psychic dominance. Good idea.

William MacGillivray from the London School entered the only 35mm film which won third prize in the strong scenario division. Called *7:30 A.M.*, it is a subtle and amusing piece on the tensions and struggle between a man and wife as seen inside their bathroom in the morning. He is a dandy, who likes his life neat and tidy, she subtly mothers him, but can't keep her rollers in the right place. Hardly a word is said, but their entire lives are wrapped up in those rollers. Should have won second prize and any other year would have been first.

The only "structural" film at the festival won first prize/documentary in the 8mm division. This was Kathy Goldsmith's *6 A.M. to 6 P.M.* She set up a camera above an intersection and recorded twelve hours in the life of an intersection in one minute. Not an original concept, but for some reason it worked. Too bad there weren't more films like it.

Serge Losique runs the Conservatory. The judges this year were André Guerin (Quebec Censor Board), Marcel Martin (critic), Rena Krawagna (CBC-Toronto), Tom Shandel (Vancouver filmmaker-representative), Guy Joussemet (CBC-Montreal), and Jean-Pierre Tadros (critic/editor, Cinema Quebec).

#### 16MM PRODUCTIONS

Neil Affleck, Montreal, **Hands**, Norman McLaren Award/Diplôme du Jury for the overall winning film.

\$1,500.00

Veronica Soul, Montreal, **How the hell are you?** Scenario/First Prize.

\$1,000.00

Denis Zahoruk, Ontario, **Jason Borwick**, Scenario/Second Prize.

\$750.00

William MacGillivray, Nova Scotia, **7:30 A.M.**, Scenario/Third Prize.

\$500.00

Steve Shaw, Ontario, **Don't you ever say goodbye**, Documentary/First Prize.

\$1,000.00

Nicholas Kendall, Ontario, **Bill and John**, Documentary/Second Prize.

\$750.00

Roger Murray, Québec, **La Corvée**, Documentary/Third Prize.

\$500.00

Janit Perlman, Montréal, **Comic Strip**, Animation/Third Prize.

\$1,000.00

Joyce Borenstein, Montréal, **Opus 1**, Animation/Second Prize.

\$750.00

Irma Walls, Montréal, **Piddling Pete**, Animation/Third Prize.

\$500.00

#### 8MM PRODUCTIONS

David Cyr, Montreal, **Necrophile**, Scenario/First Prize.

\$500.00

Richard Martin, Québec, **6 A.M. to 6 P.M.**, Documentary/First Prize.

\$500.00

Giancarlo Ciambella, Montreal, **Un oratoire**, Documentary/Second Prize.

\$250.00

David Austin, Vancouver, **The Slide**, Animation/First Prize.

\$500.00

Michel Houle, Québec, **L'Homodétritus**, Animation/Second Prize.

\$250.00

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