

Julius Kohanyi is an experienced film-maker who has won numerous awards for his films, such as "The Herring Belt", "The Artists' Workshop", "Little Monday", "Teddy", and a short, widely acclaimed art film on Henry Moore. In Montreal last winter, Kohanyi was a member of the pre-selection jury for the Canadian entry to the Cannes Film Festival. He has recently done a half hour film on the sculptor Rodin, and is currently working on his first feature film.

In this interview, Kohanyi briefly offers some insights into the pre-selection judging for Cannes, his opinions on present Canadian films, and then discusses his latest project on the artist Auguste Rodin, to be released soon.

Julius Kohanyi

funny or all equally the same, but they're all equally representative of different dimensional things. It would be easy to judge if everybody picked one subject matter and then all you would have to do is judge how well this person executed it. It's quite a responsibility to try to judge, and of course you're also governed by emotions and things like that."

WHAT ARE A CANADIAN FILM'S CHANCES AT CANNES?

"I don't know really. I understand all the heavyweights are going to be there this year like Fellini, Bergman — so the competition will be fierce. I think the film that has gone over there is a very fine film. ("Bernadette" — Gilles Carle) I liked it very much myself. Generally all the films that I looked at, in the jury, prove one thing: that this country does know how to make films! I can't think of even one that wasn't technically competent and did not try to live on its own, and be something of its own, without worrying

say in the sense of M.G.M., you know, those giant buildings, but in the spirit behind the people involved. It seems like the furnace is not being shut off, it is being refueled every time it burns up so much. I think the greatest danger as far as film-makers are concerned is to go on an ego trip, and think that they will be the only distinct Canadian film-maker that will make the Great Canadian film. The film-maker must have a genuine conviction that the film has to be made as far as he's concerned, whether or not it would be a commercial or an artistic success."

IS THIS THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR FEATURE THAT YOU'RE PLANNING TO DO?

"If I get paid for it, it's fine. If I don't, as long as I had the money, I would pay somebody to let me make it. So I'm not trying to pull a big artistic trip at all. I just simply want to do this film. Film is the largest medium if you really want to converse with people. It's the fastest way

about the commercial aspects of it."

HOW DID THE QUEBEC FILMS AND THE ENGLISH-CANADIAN FILMS COMPARE?

"Well, I think they would be basically the same except for content. The Québec films that I saw generally dealt with this deep Québec style, style in the sense of a Québec way of life. And, too, the language is distinct. I would call the other films, the English-speaking ones, distinctly North American. I don't think one can go out and make a distinctly Canadian film, because we are still bound by our language which is North American or English. When you see a film from say, Toronto or Vancouver, it's just like it was from Los Angeles or somewhere like that. But a Québec film draws from the French Canadians' own organic being. It uses its own distinctive language and there is something that you can't put your finger on but it is distinctly Québec."

WHAT ABOUT A FILM LIKE PETER CARTER'S "ROWDYMAN", WHICH IS DISTINCTLY CANADIAN IN A SENSE.

"The "Rowdyman" has a distinct Newfoundland accent, which is beautiful. Newfoundland is in Canada, so you could call it a Canadian film."

DID YOU LIKE THE FILM?

"Oh yes, I thought it was fine. I have great confidence, not in the industry, let's

of telling somebody either a good joke or sharing an idea with them. And isn't it much better if you could reach not one, but three million? In other words, you could really get a great thing. I'm looking for rewards, not awards, and I don't mean in the money sense either. I would personally be much happier not to get an award from these critics, but instead somewhere, someplace on the street, someone comes up and says "I saw your film. I really enjoyed it and I thought I got something out of it." That is my reward."

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH YOUR FEATURE?

"Oh, it's looking good . . . it's going to have to be made on a shoestring budget. I don't want to say too much about it yet. I very much shy away from getting in the papers and doing that trip. The film is still in its early stages. I don't like to talk about it — superstition if you like."

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

"Just finishing a film on Rodin."

HOW DID YOU APPROACH THE SUBJECT?

"Mostly concentrated on his work, yeah, and tons of old photographs that I picked up in Philadelphia and other places. The man was such a giant that anything you've got to say about this guy is only going to go half way up the

CINEMA CANADA — LOCKED INTO AN EMPTY SCREENING ROOM WHERE YOU WERE SNOWBOUND, AND GOING ALMOST AROUND THE CLOCK, HOW DID THESE CONDITIONS AFFECT YOU DURING THE PRE-SELECTION SCREENINGS?

JULIUS KOHANYI — "It didn't affect us at all. Myself and most of the jury members, rather than getting tired around nine o'clock, found the situation was becoming hilarious, and it really worked to an advantage. We became more acute, more perceptive. We went upstairs at around twelve and we literally broke into the National Film Board's kitchen. Everything was gone, so Jean-Pierre Lefebvre walked through an incredible snowstorm to the local store, and bought eggs and bacon and things. Then all of us started to cook. And then poor Paul (Almond) who couldn't get his film there earlier in the morning, arrived with about nine reels of track and another nine reels of picture. I think he waded through about three miles of snow, on snowshoes and all bundled up. He came in there looking like the abominable snowman."

WHAT ABOUT THE ACTUAL JUDGING OF THE FILMS?

"It was almost a toss-up between the films. It was so difficult and I think you'll find this in Cannes, too. I've spoken with some of the jury members over there, and they've said they had an awfully tough job, not because the films are all equally