

Another nibble at the National Film Board output, viewed at the Toronto office but concentrating on regional production. (16mm and Video available through NFB offices across the country, and 35mm theatrical distributed by Astral.)

## PIES [1984]

(Montreal)

Does Sheldon Cohen score again after his delightful *The Sweater*? Alas, no. He's hampered by a simplistic and non-humorous story of ethnic prejudice, peopled with stereotypes.

Mrs. Meuser, the German hausfrau, keeps a sparkling domicile, an immaculate person, and nags her husband. Mrs. Cherwak, Polish farmperson, has red hands, not so good English, and dresses badly. She also has a cow that loves to wander and leave squishy calling cards. Mrs. Meuser plans revenge upon Mrs. Cherwak while serving afternoon coffee and mincemeat pie.

The graphic style of the cel animation is assured, detailed and full of lovely colour, perhaps making palatable the obvious theme and prissy dialogue. Full marks for style and visuals, anyway.

p. Caroline Leaf design/anim./d. Sheldon Cohen mus. Alex Pauk voices: Hannah Poznanska, Suzanne Roth Colour: 16mm/Video; 35mm theatrical. running time: 12:50 mins.

## MUSCLE [1983]

(Prairie Region)

At 97 lbs. and only 5 ft. tall, diminutive Pat Ferris grapples with fiendish-look-

ing machines. She aims to be a body-building champion and provides many insights into her daily regimen - swallowing 32 vitamin supplements, running before and after her job as a social worker, work-outs in the gym, all allied with isolation and a lack of social pleasures.

Pat Ferris's air of cheerful determination contributes greatly to this entertaining and straightforward presentation of facts leading to her first competition, the Manitoba Women's Provincial Body Building Championship. (*Muscle* is programmed theatrically with *Hardbodies...*)

p. Andreas Poulsson d. Barry Lank cam. Elise Swerhone mus. Craig Fotheringham narr. Brian Richardson Colour: 11:10 mins. 16mm/video; 35mm theatrical.

## A SINGLE REGRET [1983]

(Montreal)

An open-ended drama about Mr. Grant, a wealthy, middle-aged man, who has lived with a guilty secret for more than 20 years. He hires a video crew to tape his confession of a brief, youthful affair. His attachment to David, the illegitimate son of the union, started with "observation trips", when he followed him from school at seven. Mr. Grant, intends to give the tape to his wife and two daughters, as he's been unable to confess verbally or by letter. He asks forgiveness, flares into anger, and generally twitches a lot.

Although based on a true story, the film has an air of unreality, and the confession is not moving and very unconvincing in execution. Instead of pro-

voking thoughtful discussion, this piece induces limp langour rather than searching questions.

exec. p. Barrie Howells p. William Brind d./sc./ed. Robert Fortier cam. Barry Perles l.p. Antony Parr (as Mr. Grant) Colour: 21:42 mins. 16mm/video.

## SHOW DREAM / L'ESPRIT DES NEIGES [1983]

(French Studio / Winnipeg)

Three men trudge through the snow and arrive at a square structure. The wooden walls are pushed away to reveal a large block of solidly-packed snow. Réal Berard, a Manitoba artist, and his two friends, proceed to chisel, saw, and cut the block into a snow sculpture. Almost wordlessly the work goes on. The men gather round the fire at night, one playing a mouth organ, one dancing slowly. The carving displays birds and faces of vaguely Indian or Inuit origin.

An air of magical mystery is supposed to pervade the project, but boredom creeps and words such as "why?" and "pretentious" drift into the mind. As the elements and then flames take their toll, it's not the symbolism that registers but rather, relief.

exec. p. Raymond Gauthier d./sc. Claude Grenier cam. François Beauchemin mus. Normand Roger Colour: 21:38 mins., 16mm/video; 35mm theatrical.

## ANGELS OF DEATH [1983]

(Montreal)

And a little Vignette as the final bon-bon. It's July 5, 1912 and the *Swat The Fly* contest is announced in Toronto. Total

first count at the City Health Department is 24,480 flies. Beatrice White is in the lead. She wants the \$50 prize to pay for piano lessons. In August, White's total fly-catch is 543,360 and she wins!

This vignette (in a series made as TV fillers), composed of newspaper clippings and stills, is a wacky bit of Canadiana.

No credits given. 2 mins., B&W: 16mm.

## AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY [1983]

(People At Work series/Montreal)

Another open-ended film designed to spark discussion. The setting is a hospital where Maureen, a single parent and sole support of her two children, has been a nurses' aide for six years. Spurred on by her shop steward, she applies for pharmacy training. When the list is posted, Maureen is not chosen, in spite of having the proper qualifications. "Not one woman on the list," moans the shop steward. "Let's go and eat something fattening," counters another cheesed-off nurse.

By going to the union president, the trio of shop steward, Maureen and another nurse manage to get the matter on the agenda of the next Union meeting.

It's difficult to compress meaty coverage of the issue into so short a film, and the acting leaves much to be desired. Still, it means well, but really fails to give a feeling of urgency and decisiveness to yet another example of women ground down in the marketplace.

exec. p. Robert Verrall d. Caroline Leaf sc. Gwynne Basen, Clayton Bailey, Caroline Leaf cam. Wolf Koenig Colour: 16mm/video, 12:40 mins.

Pat Thompson ●

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