

Bachar Chbib's
Evixion

Bachar Chbib's *Evixion* has the bad luck of being billed, erroneously, as a "non-narrative lyric poem." Such labels would be a curse to any film. But this doesn't explain why most reviewers, those that weren't merely dismissive, have thrashed it so violently. It's as if they were reacting to someone self-indulgently wasting half of Telefilm's budget instead of to a \$4,000 experiment by a talented young filmmaker.

Evixion is a narrative film. It may be nonlinear, the audience certainly has trouble following it, but it does tell a story - A motley group of tenants (a gay couple, a yuppie couple, a black family, punks) receive an eviction order from their landlord and we get to see how they react to the possibility of their being thrown out on the street.

Chbib has partly modelled the film after twenties' slapstick comedy. His characters use broad gestures to communicate with each other. There's a lot of people running around, entering rooms through windows, and smashing into each other. Though the film has an unusually varied and well-chosen soundtrack (everything from opera to industrial noise), there is no dialogue except for a crazy poetess who spouts



• Claire Nadon is Rose and Roland Smith is Blue in pale *Evixion*

radical doggerel.

One of the disappointments of the film is that *Evixion's* non-linearity lacks purpose. It's not used to experiment with time and its pacing seems to have no pattern. The film's structure feels more like a last resort than a deliberate choice. Another disappointment is that after luring a cast many Canadian direc-

tors would kill for (it includes, Piotr Lysak, who starred in Andrej Wajda's *A Love in Germany*, and Pierre Curzi), Chbib wastes them. He does give each their little moments (which they make the most of) but for the most part, he might as well have used extras.

There are a few wonderful scenes in *Evixion* (The voyeurism between

apartments, Lysak's attempts at seduction) in which performance, direction and the audience's understanding come together. But often, Chbib's insistence on presenting the irrational irrationally, as illustrated by the depiction of the poetess, makes the film hard to sit through.

Evixion, however, shouldn't be dismissed. It is an unsuccessful experiment. But it is also the only Canadian film I've seen this year that tries to express a kind of rabid sense of alienation, exemplified by punks, skinheads and other marginals, shared by increasing numbers of young people. It is those who take the chance of affronting audiences with films like *Evixion*, and not those who grovel before it offering *Crazy Moon(s)*, who are making films worth watching.

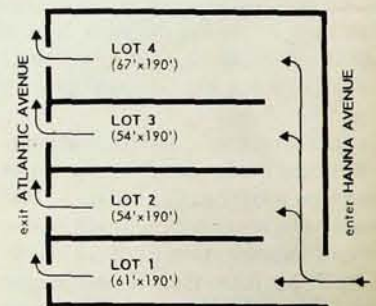
José Arroyo •

photo: Benny Chou

EVIXION d./p./ed. Bachar Chbib sc. Bachar Chbib, Claire Nadon, Dafna Kastner, Stephen Reizes d.o.p. David Wellington cam. Sylvain Gingras asst. cam. Sylvain Archambault sd. Doug Taylor, Marie Claude Gagné asst. ed. David Wellington orig. music François Giroux, Liver and Jean Leboeuf, (original) Jean-Noël Bodo, (original) addt. music Susan Eytton-Jones, Paul Stewart sd. ed. Marie Claude Gagné art d. Achraf Chbib, Paolo Giovannetti, Kathy Horner asst. d. Brigitte Huppen poetry Kennon B. Raines l.p. Claire Nadon, Roland Smith, Kennon Raines, Pierre Curzi, Piotr Lysak, Dafna Kastner, Jean Claude Gingras, Suzanne Stark, Mark Bérubé, Danusha Hart, Michelle DeVillie, Eric Gregor Pierce, Pierre Rancourt, Carole Jadeluca, Dalours Thornhill, Kathy Horner, François Giroux, Seamus Wheelan, Achraf Chbib, Brigitte Huppen, Armand Monroë p.c. Chbib Productions Inc. In collaboration with Main Film. And the Financial Participation of La Société générale du cinéma du Québec and Téléfilm Canada. Colour, 16mm running time: 78 mins.

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