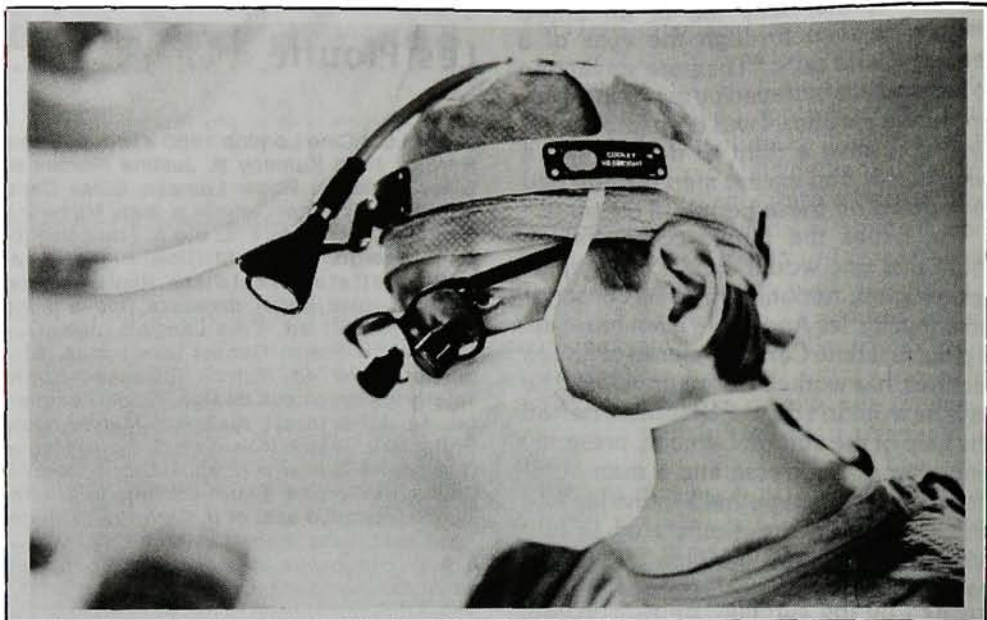


Threshold

Richard Pierce, director of the film currently being shot under the working title **Threshold**, will not let up. On location north of Kleinberg, Ontario, he prepares to shoot an operating room scene which requires an extra table, completely and *authentically* laid out with surgical equipment. Informed by one of the crew that they have neither an extra table, nor the scalpels, forceps and tongs to put on it, Pierce dispatches someone to *make* the table and listens carefully to suggested sources for the needed surgical implements.

The extra table and its trimmings will only be visible in the distance in the shot Pierce is planning, but he must have it and it must be right. In his baseball cap, flannel shirt, jeans and sneakers, he looks as though he could be trundling across suburban lawns winging newspapers at doorsteps. Despite his youthful appearance and unassuming manner, he listens intently and speaks with reason and authority. He has blocked out and story-boarded all of **Threshold** himself and has a confident grasp of the material. In fact, a sense of competence and diligence seems to characterize everyone's role.

Set somewhere between 1990 and



Crossing the **Threshold** into the miracle of medical science in 1995 is Donald Sutherland.

1995, the screenplay, written by James Salter (**Downhill Racer**) explores the ramifications of implanting an artificial heart. The film's uniqueness will stem from its scrupulous authenticity and novelistic development of characters on several levels.

Filming **Threshold** has required several locations. The New Ottawa General Hospital and York University have been used

to convey a sense of future time. The Ontario Veterinarians' College in Guelph was filmed as the research facility where the heart was developed on animals. The set in Kleinberg will be used to film the operating scenes.

It tooks six weeks to recreate, in a honeycombed layout of four cells, the operating rooms in which Donald Sutherland will implant the artificial heart into a young girl. The set was created with equipment and technicians on loan from Hewlett Packard and Ohio Nuclear. The incubators, surgery lamps, operating tables and surgical utensils are all genuine. Dr. Bernard Goldman and Dr. Ernie Michel, both from Toronto General Hospital, along with cardiac scrub nurses are on set to authenticate the medical procedures to be filmed. One of the producers, Robert Sax, claims that **Threshold** will have "an authenticity that people won't even notice."

To acquire the finesse with scalpel and forceps he will need as Dr. Thomas Vrain, Sutherland practiced surgical techniques while in London filming **Eye of the Needle**. He also spent several days in Houston at the Texas Heart Institute watching Dr. Denton Cooley work. Cooley, who is known for transplanting hearts in the sixties and early seventies, has a cameo role in **Threshold**. Sutherland will operate on latex hearts developed especially for the film by Gord Smith of Gore Boys. The hearts beat and fibrillate, but Robert Sax insists that the audience will be "fascinated, not repulsed" by the surgery.

Threshold promises to be well made. Sax feels it's fair to say that the film is

Threshold

p.c. Passage Films Inc. 1980 **exec.p.** Jon Stan **p.** Michael Burns **line p.** Robert Sax **legal & admin. head** Philip Johnston **asst. to p.** Luanna R. Bayer **p. sec.** Lena Cordina **d.** Richard Pearce **consultant** Bill Yahraus **p. man.** Barbara Laffey **asst. p.man.** Judy Watt **loc.man.** Peter Davis **unit man.** Maureen Fitzgerald **asst.d.** Kim Kaufman (1st), Pedro Gando (2nd), Jerome McCann (3rd) **cont.** Gillian Richardson **Mr. Sutherland's asst.** Maurice Dunster, Bob Watts **p.account.** Dorothy Precious **bookkeeper** Mar **p.sec.** Shalhevet Goldhar, Victoria Sleeper **p. office asst.** Mark Achbar **craftservice** Rebecca McKenzie **art.d.** Anne Pritchard **asst. art d.** Jackie Field, Lindsey Goddard **set dec.** Anthony Greco **asst. set dress.** Claire Smerdon, Susan Kyle, Gordon Sim **prop. master** Don Miloyevich **asst.props** Laird McMurray **special efx design.** Gordon Smith **special efx op.** Dan Bezaire **art depart. sec.** Karen Boulton **props trainee** John Gallaro **tech. advisor** Nancy Downey **ward.** Sharon Purdy (design), Brittney Burr (mistress), Lorraine Carson (asst.), Anna Nikolajevich (trainee) **seamstress** Brenda Colling, Allison Till **makeup** Shonagh Jabour, Wally Schneiderman (Mr. Sutherland), Suzanne Benoit (asst.) **hair.** Judi Cooper-Sealy, Jenny Arbour (asst.) **construct.man.** Brian James **d.o.p.** Michel Brault **asst. cam.** René Daigle, Sylvain Brault (2nd) **2nd cam.op.** Vic Sarin **cam.depart.trainee** Rita Johnson **steadycam op.** Louis De Ernstead **video tape consult.** Michael Lennick **stills** John Williamson

sd.rec. Bryan Day **boom** Victor Gamble **asst.sd.** Michael Lacroix **gaf.** Jacques Paquet, Roger Bate **best boy** Richard Allen **genny op.** Ken Smale **elec.** Bill Brown **key grip** Lou Graydon **grip** Jim Craig, Lee Wright **cut. room** Quinn Sound (Mirophonic) **ed.** Susan Martin **asst. ed.** Elaine Foreman (1st), Richard Kelly (2nd) **drivers** John Pace (capt.), Paul Valley (Mr. Sutherland), Jeff Steinberg, Randy Jones, Don Payne, John Vanderpas, David Cotton **i.p.** Donald Sutherland, Jeff Goldblum, Allan Nicholls, Sharon Acker, Jana Stinson, Jessica Steen, Mavor Moore, Mare Wingham, Lally Cadeau, John Marley, Michael Lerner, James Douglas, Marilyn Gardner, Bob Warner, Robert Joy, Barbara Gordon, Jonathan Welsh, Jan Muzynski, Bob Hannah, Steve Ballantine, Richard Blackburn, Maureen McRae, Paul Hecht, Michael C. Gwynne, Murray Westgate, Robert Goodier, Brenda Kamino, Deborah Kipp, Amy Naftolin, Luigi Corazza, Theresa Corazza, Tom Harvey, Kunio Suyama, Casey Stevens, Melody Ryane, Bob Haley, Eric Clavering, JoAnne Lane, Melleny Brown, Leroy Gallier, Stuart Gillard, Denton Cooley, Christopher Hinn, Michael Burns, Samantha Langevin, Julie Armstrong, Greg Tessaro, Lheila & Yasmina Palumbo, Jun Asahina, Ron Hartman, Ara Hovan, Kate Trotter, Ken James, Deborah Turnbull, Margaret Edgar, Stan Lesk, Jack Messinger, Barry Flatman, Harvey Chao, Dennis Hayes, Ian Orr, Gordon Jocelyn, Harry Gulkin, James Loxley, Peter Shane **pub.** Hannah Math (Budman/Math) **unit pub.** Glenda Roy **casting** Diane Polley, Victoria Mitchell **extras** Peter Lavender (Film Extra Service)

The Odyssey of the Pacific

being made by "technically the best crew and cast ever assembled in Canada." Michel Brault (director of *Les ordres*, and director of photography of *Mon oncle Antoine* and *Kamouraska*) and his French Canadian crew dart about the set with wit and professionalism. They somehow manage to attend to their cameras while sustaining a repartee in accented English on the vicissitudes of World Series baseball.

Art director Anne Pritchard, exhausted after only three hours of sleep, smiles wanly as she tries to explain the effects she expects from the opaque white she has used in the operating rooms. There will not be an antiseptic glare in any of the scenes shot on this set. It seems that the actors will be cast in a faint penumbra of light on the periphery of the bright pool created by the surgery lamps. Pritchard suggested that this aura could lend the scenes an unearthly quality. Considering the film's theme this ethereal effect may be intended to hint at the surreal possibilities presented by medical science. Sax promises that the surgery footage "won't look like operating-room scenes ever seen before." He describes the effects as, "otherworldly. Not surrealistic, hyper-realistic!" When asked how these effects would be attained, he replies that "there are big secrets" for which we must "wait and see."

But *Threshold* will not be just a bag of medical special effects. Sax says the story is about "the effects of an artificial heart on the characters." Central to the drama is a young girl's need for an artificial heart in order to live. But Sax emphasizes that the story "is not morbid, but insightful." The audience will see the drama from the surgeon's point of view, not the patient's. From this perspective the film assumes an objectivity that will prevent it from becoming melodramatic. Sax believes that "the audience won't feel it is a victim." Instead, it will see a film that "develops characters the way a novel does, dealing with the intricate relationships between people." Sax also stresses the film's coherence: "Everything fits in. There is no cliché dialogue. There are no silhouettes. Even the bad guys are human. Mayor Moore portrays a gruff bastard, but he is not two-dimensional."

Threshold aims to be an uplifting film. It is possible that medical science will be attributed an omnipotence superior to that which it already has. So far, indications are that those making this film may well succeed in capturing the depth and significance they are after.

Walter Owen

"A film for adults, but mostly for children," is how director Fernando Arrabal describes his latest project, *Odyssey Of The Pacific*, a \$2 million Canada-France co-production filmed on location this fall in Montreal.

The Spanish-born, internationally renowned playwright and director conceived the *Odyssey* story after his own children's tales of their extraordinary adventures in their sleeping and waking dreams intrigued him. Writing the script, with old friend Mickey Rooney in mind for the starring role, Arrabal and Romaine Legargeant, the Paris producer of Arrabal's last two films, contacted Montreal producer Claude Léger, whose last film was the favourably acclaimed *The Lucky Star*. The creativity and imagination of Arrabal's script convinced Léger to undertake the project.

Like his previous film work, *Viva la muerte*, *J'irai comme un cheval fou*, and *L'arbre de Guernica*, *Odyssey* combines Arrabal's richly poetic vision of avant-garde fantasy and imagination with an awareness of a harsher reality drawn from the director's own difficult and painful childhood experience. But the playful and whimsical style of his latest film is a radical departure from the darker nature of his earlier work.

The story begins as nine-year-old Lis

and seven-year-old Toby (Annick and Jonathan Starr, in their first screen roles), spend their summer vacation in the country with their aunt Elsa (Monique Mercure), and their uncle Alex (Jean-Louis Roux), wrapped in a comfortable world of television, daydreams, and electric model train sets.

Enter Hoang (Ky Huot Uk, also in his' first film role), a seven-year-old Cambodian refugee placed temporarily in Elsa and Alex's custody, who has lost his father and was separated from his mother on a Cambodian beach when the boat took him away. The children become fast friends. Toby is a passionate dreamer whose fantasies involve a major part of the film; he dreams of walking a circus wire, commanding a tank brigade, travelling in outer space, or conducting a symphony orchestra (shot with members of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and 75 extras at Montreal's Monkland Theatre) alongside his pet duck Federico. Toby's dreams of grandeur are contrasted with Hoang's more painful imagination, as he recalls memories of his father and the scene at the beach where he was taken from his mother.

One day while exploring in the woods, the children discover a hidden Pacific steam locomotive and later, the home of Old Thubal (Mickey Rooney), a feisty



Chewing the fat over a coke and a stogie are Mickey Rooney and Guy Hoffman