

Mini-reviews

Cinema Canada increases its coverage of Canadian short films by publishing a "Mini-review" section each month. Over 1000 Canadian shorts are produced every year. By concentrating on one distributor each month and reviewing a series of shorts, we hope to be able to cover more films than in the past and to give that distributor more exposure. This month features shorts from Marlin Motion Pictures Ltd., Toronto.

Hypothermia: Nature's Cold Killer

No one is immune to the dangers of hypothermia - "nature's cold killer."

Research conducted in the Foothills Hospital, Calgary; Simon Fraser University; Banff National Park; and the University of Victoria, is clearly discussed and illustrated in this 30 min. film.

A volunteer immersed in a tank of water, hung about with all sorts of wires to record temperature and heat loss, sits shivering and gasping for the good of others. With 25% of all boating accidents in North America due to hypothermia, it's emphasized that one should stay with an overturned boat rather than swim for the shore, as the body cools more rapidly when swimming than by staying still. Body survivor suits are tested, with a floating, inflated suit resembling enormous linked sausages!

On land, hikers and skiers who are ill-equipped can get into difficulties. A

rueful aside notes that people are more concerned with fashion than whether clothing is protective and useful.

An ingenious "wet walk", devised at the University of Victoria, starts a volunteer off for a four-to five-hour hike on an inside trail. First dry weather, and then pouring rain and its disorienting effects are studied. There's also a demonstration in real terrain of re-warming people with specialized equipment.

A sturdy, workmanlike film, with sensible and informative narration and diagrams, all set out to enlighten and communicate easily and clearly.

p./d./ed. Douglas Nicolle cam. Victor Nicolle mus. Greg Ray 30 mins. 16 mm.

Jackson

A fictional, dramatized day in the life of the U.S. abstract painter, Jackson Pollock, who died in 1956 at 44, in a car crash.

Michael Porco portrays Jackson. His voice-over recalls that he was always getting kicked out of school. In a bare, ordinary room, he sets about the creation of a painting.

All the time, Jackson's voice imparts knowledge about his life, his technique, his bitterness. Pollock never used an easel, but preferred to tack an unstretched canvas to the floor, so that he could walk round the work in progress, surveying it from all angles.

Pollock dashes, dribbles and splashes paint, swigs from the gin bottle, and darts around the floored canvas like a demented gnome. "The public doesn't understand my work or my way of work. They think I'm crazy."

"Texture gives it life" - he says as he throws a handful of dirt into a stream of wet paint.

Jackson is interviewed by an off-screen, disembodied voice. He sits stiffly, recording facts and views - his troubles with the bottle, his studies in the '30s, the evolution of his painting through previous artists. He reads his critics - "monumental" through "trivial" to "sick" - his troubles are deep-rooted.

Jackson comes across as a chain-smoking, neurotic alcoholic, given to whining: "If I'm so terrific, why ain't I rich?"

The end credits roll over some real Jackson Pollock paintings. The vibrant colour, density, and attack of these works of art bring forth the realization of how pale and lifeless has been the imitation

"created" on screen. This stilted and somewhat stagey presentation has no flow, no rush of emotion, no life.

d/writer Scott Dickson cam. Daniel Hainey mus. Brock Fricker Michael Porco as Jackson Pollock. 26 mins. 16mm.

Singapore

A lightning survey of Singapore - "one of the cleanest and greenest cities in the world."

With a population predominantly Chinese, plus Malays and Indians, the city has rapidly become westernized.

Reminders of the past are evoked. British colonialism is personified by the famous Raffles Hotel, while Hindu and Buddhist temples remain alongside huge government housing developments of high-rise apartments and condominiums.

A quick whisk around the harbour installations, then on to small industries including alligator pens and snakes for the skins, and the biggest export item - fantastic orchids.

Tiger Balm Park is negotiated; the stadium on Sunday mornings features all-male gatherings of bird fanciers; and there's a glimpse of the Monkey God Festival and the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Lots of lively content, and a narration crammed with information and statistics. A whirlwind introduction to a colourful city.

Pat Thompson ●

A film by Jack Ruddell. Narrator: Pat Murray 15 mins. 16mm.

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