

Peter Rowe's

Lost!

Lost! is more than a film about a sailing trip that goes awry. Filmmaker Rowe takes us through a purgatorial journey away from civilization, as two men and a woman at the mercy of the sea manage to live in a capsized and upturned trimarin for 72 days.

But one cannot help suspecting that the character Jim (Kenneth Welsh), a strict fundamentalist, has somehow engineered this whole situation to test his own faith and bring his brother Bob (Michael Hogan) "back to Christ."

Based on a true story, Rowe makes the film into a study of two brothers whose relations are strained under normal conditions, but under the film's extreme circumstances regress into a destructive sibling rivalry, fueled by elaborate debate about the precepts of the Christian faith, in which Jim manipulates survival options and events to make the crew more vulnerable and closer to God. If the brothers cannot understand each other, as tolerance limits are met and surpassed in sheer survival, the two men begin to know each other emotionally. In the process, Jim grows from an unsavory bible-

thumping stereotype into a man of fascinating complexity and great pathos.

As Jim, Kenneth Welsh has created a classic personification of the Christian martyr, but the martyr collapses under the burden of guilt he can share with no-one - he has chosen the route of corruption and destruction in order to be purified. Welsh's characterization of Jim is a studied breakdown of a missionary at the edge of his faith, desperately clinging to his beliefs. Defying the gravity of the catastrophe and his responsibility in it, he is prepared to sacrifice everything to strengthen his belief in God - even if it means other human lives.

The acting in the film is finely tuned and textured in rare ensemble performances. Bob's wife, Linda (Helen Shaver), reveals that she is pregnant on the day after the storm while the three are hanging onto the upturned boat that drifts aimlessly in the sunny sea. Shaver is magnificent: first, as the good-natured buffer between the brothers and then, as the most vulnerable of the three, the first to crack up. She begins to distrust Jim and accuses him of stealing food; then, point blank, of killing her. As she dies the yellow light of the oil lamp reflects off the water and mixes with an eery blue shadow on her face. The same light makes Jim appear both saintly and satanic as he tells her she is "purified...free from sin...Holy...ready for God."

As Bob, Michael Hogan plays a realist with remarkable resilience. *Lost!* is, in

fact, Bob's story as he is the only survivor of a watery hell that stops just short of Bob's murdering his brother. Bob, however, knows himself well enough to know he needs Jim - more than anything for company - and though he rejects Jim's evangelicalism, he is prepared to make concessions for the sake of a companion.

When the water rations are down to five days, Bob, his voice and body unsteady, takes a last communion with Jim in a final act of bonding with his brother. By now a spiritual bankrupt, Jim is driven insane and then to suicide by his brother's belief in himself.

With *Lost!*, Rowe has made an incredible film that is surely destined to become one of the great sea classics of the screen. His subtlety as a writer/director is evident in the complex and diverse psychological states that emerge on-screen through some of the finest actors working today. *Lost!* is poetry of the sea, awesome in its harmony, fearsome as an avenger in an infinity that transcends human actions.

If *Lost!*'s story is a little slow at the beginning, deliberately concentrating on character development, it quickly becomes a roller-coaster of a film about the wild sea of uncensored human emotions that hauntingly shows us something of our limitations as human beings.

LOST! d./p./sc. Peter Rowe assoc.p. Don Wilder line p. Sean Ryerson asst. p. Corinne Farago a.d. Ty Haller p. coord. Nan Skiba art d. Bill Fleming asst. art d. Tim Bider const. Mutabilis, Scenic Services, Line and Design set dec. Lizette St. Germaine models Gerry Beck standby carp. Ian Greig sd. rec. David Joliat rec. Tony Van Den Akker ef.x.ed./foley Christopher Hutton ADR & dia.ed. Dale Sheldrake mus. rec. Manta Sound mus. comp. Micky Erbe, Maribeth Solomon, Allan Kane asst. eds. Katherine Fitzgerald, Bruce McDonald asst. cam. Wolf Ruck 2nd asst. cam. Roger Finley cam. trainee Andy Trauttmansdorff cont. Paule Mercier stills Ben Mark Holzberg add. cam. (2nd unit) Wolf Ruck (storm) Peter Rowe (sharks) Al Giddings matte photog. Palette Productions, Mobile Image, Image Transform ward. Maggie Thomas make-up Leslie Haynes hair Roger Dagliesh key grip Brian Danniels gaffer Steve Hutchison grip Burt Gouweleuw lighting David Thornton, Doug Marshall, Ken Smale sp.efx. Frank Carere 3rd A.D./diving coord. Jake Fry dev. John DeImge, Jim Burt, Barry Pearson, R.H. Thomson, Sonya Smits, Richard Donat boat wrangler Ratch Wallace, Keith Lohnes, Brenton Wiebe, Ross Cotterill, Patrick Langille p.assts. Peter Miskimmin, Jamie Watling, Owen Livingstone, unit pub. Prudence Emory p.accts. Lori McNamara, Doreen Davis, craft serv. Beverly Kreller caterers Concert Caterers equip. P.S. Production, Services Ltd. process. Film House Ltd. neg. cut Unicorn Concepts completion bond Motion Picture Guarantors Ltd. interim finance J. Brad Heney, Eastworld Films, Peter Michie p. liaison David Pears, John Dimon sp. assts. Tony Hall, U.S. Coast Guard, Etobicoke Yacht Club, Fred Roberts. cast. d. Susan Skinner p.c. Rosebud Films Ltd. in association with Victor Solnicki Productions and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and with the participation of Telefilm Canada l.p. Kenneth Welsh, Helen Shaver, Michael Hogan, Linda Goranson, Charles Joliffe, Richard Donat, Marc Gomes, Moira Wylie, Michael Fantini, Stuart Stone, Steve Brinder, Elizabeth Rukavina, Tex Konig, Gary Farmer, Errol Slue, 35mm, col. running time: 92 mins. dist./world sales: Simcom International.

Kalli Paakspuu •



• One of the great sea classics, *Lost!* stars Helen Shaver, Michael Hogan and Kenneth Welsh

Michel Juliani's
Instantanés

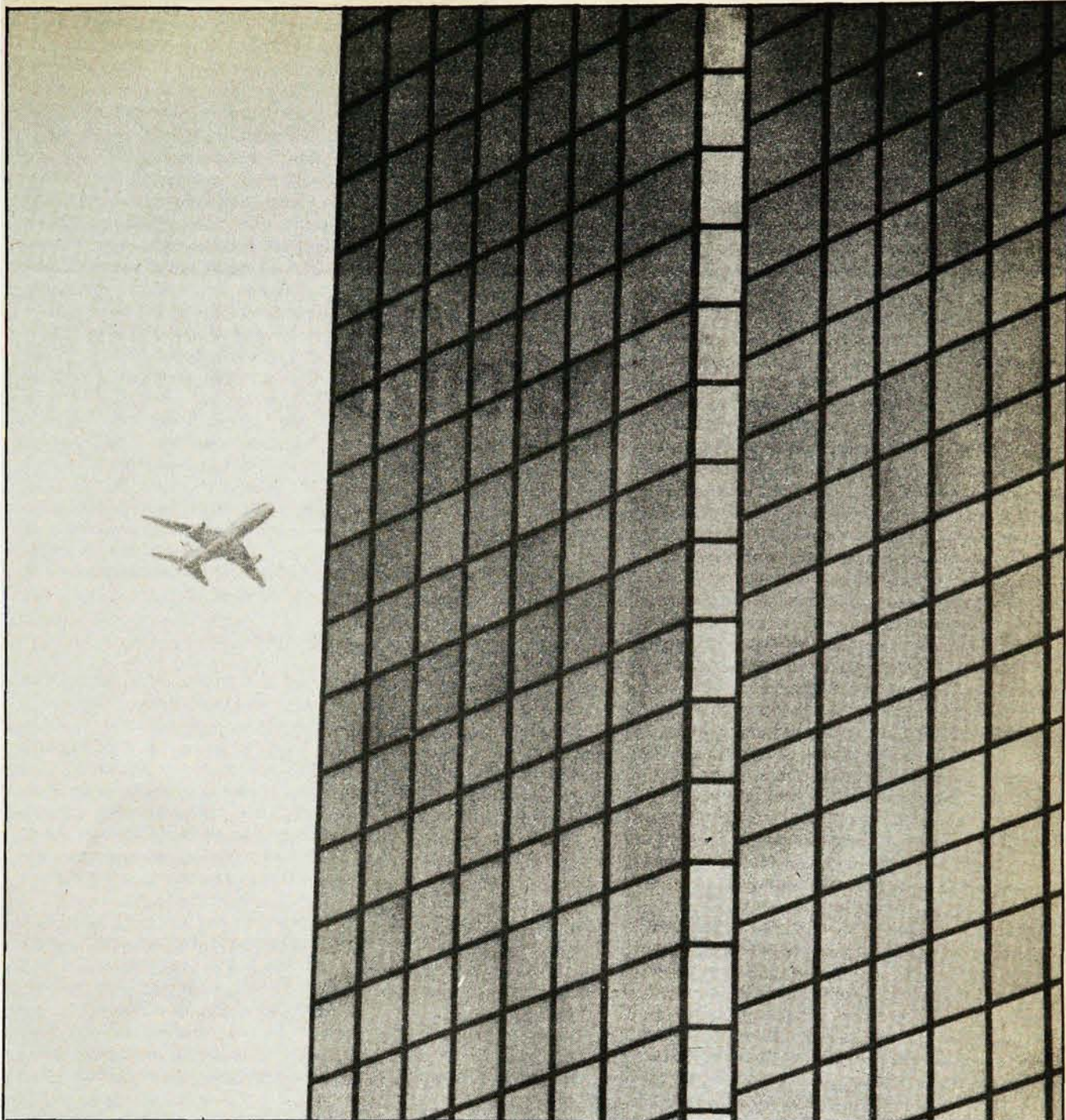
The photographic *instantané*, according to one recent definition, is an observation of the urban mix as it looks in everyday flux. And that definition could serve as a description of Montreal film editor Michel Juliani's first **auterial** feature (director, producer editor, scripwriter, etc.) – though one would have to qualify this somewhat since Juliani's film, as a film, is as much in flux as the mix of five Montreal artists whose everyday life it portrays.

Some of the flux can be accounted for by the fact that Juliani's is a feature almost out of nowhere. That is to say, **Instantanés** is a film made with minimal institutional support – an NFB development (PAPFFS) grant for some of the negative and some of the sound, and post-production through the good offices of Montreal production house LaGauchet. In other words, it's your typical Canadian personal feature and so shares in both the strengths and the weaknesses of that tradition.

And the positive side of that tradition lies in 1) its rejection of institutionalized cinema (where an already narrow view of cinema is often reinforced by the committee process of decision-making) and 2) its privileging of the validity of the insights of the individual creative artist. The negative side, by its indifference to the possibility of improvements at the general level of cinematic development, tends to be a permanent condition of re-inventing the wheel. And, in this perspective, **Instantanés** steers a fairly unsteady course between the two poles.

Upfront in its belief in film-as-art (the film's epigraph states that there are artists who say they are artists but aren't, while there are real artists whose work testifies to the truth of Art), **Instantanés** consists of five "chapters," plus an epilogue, about five artists: a writer, a musician, a photographer, and two painters (one male, one female).

What is an artist? According to **Instantanés**, a person like any other (with all the problems, emotional and financial, that entails) except for a greater obsessional disposition expressed (often with great difficulty) via an artistic medium: words on paper, drawing, painting, photographic composition and developing, etc. Each of **Instantanés'** artists (all of them unfortunately too young, in their early to mid-twenties) teeters before the creative abyss: the writer can't write, the photographer can't photograph, the musician can only improvise. The painters, though, do manage to paint. Or because a painting is visibly representational, it can be filmed as an object-in-itself, it is there, and does not require of a film to do much more than shoot it; the film doesn't have to construct a psychology of creativity. As a result of this over-reliance on the created thing, **Instantanés**, in its portrayal of the writer for example, can only suggest an inexplicit torment. This is not perhaps as much the filmmaker's fault as it is a limitation



• **Instantanés**: What is the place of the artist in the modern technoscape?

of the film medium itself: I can't think of a single film ever made, here or abroad, that has been adequately able to convey what it means to be a writer.

Yet in terms of what psychology the film does articulate, the most interesting portrait is that of the photographer, not because the film is particularly insightful about photography, but because this particular photographer has a heavy cocaine habit. **Instantanés**, in a truly lovely sequence of dancing metal figures, manages to express, seemingly with great accuracy, the emotional coldness and remoteness of addiction.

Another fine sequence involves the male painter who is haunted by nuclear fears. In a powerful use of sound and rapid montage of stills, **Instantanés** creates an apocalyptic moment of considerable obsessional force.

Unfortunately, **Instantanés** treatment of the female artist is merely banal (except for her completed paintings at the end of the film). It's off with her clothes as fast as possible and straight into the slow-motion, bouncing titties scene.

Nevertheless, despite their chronic money-worries, emotional hang-ups, etc., the painters succeed in completing their work for the group show that is

the epilogue of the film. Somehow art has happened, and the proof is in the artworks on the gallery walls. Art presumably redeems life; life, meanwhile, continues to flow along its absurd daily course.

Yet what is curious about **Instantanés** is that if one is disappointed it isn't a better film, it's not as bad as all that either. Be it the coke-figurines or the party scene of the epilogue, **Instantanés** contains some effective camerawork and editing. If the locations are mainly interiors, the male artist's loft with its eating platform and barbed-wire reading-corner is suitably bizarre. The film's considerable use of stills, if eventually overdone, inscribes it within the venerable Canadian tradition of using still photography in film. On the negative side, though, the sound is of appallingly bad quality; the music a jumbled medley from electronic to easy listening; the script suffers from not having enough to say; and the acting seems non-existent.

Even so, for all this formlessness, **Instantanés** does manage to convey something of the difficult authenticity required of artistic pursuits in that lofty little world of the St. Lawrence Main. In this sense, **Instantanés** also speaks

about the wretchedness of the artist (that is, someone who, by being 'creative', is essentially useless) in a larger environment whose emptiness is filled with meaningless purposivity.

Finally (and perhaps above all), **Instantanés** is a statement less in itself as a film than of its *auteur's* singleminded determination to make this film no matter what and whom. Perhaps the next time round – and Juliani definitely deserves a next time round – he'll get a little more support in his filmmaking from the official cinematic institution which, despite **Instantanés'** would-be challenge, always wins in the end – out of sheer inertia.

Michael Dorland •

INSTANTANES p/d/sc/ed. Michel Juliani cam. André Martin add. cam. Raymond Gravelle stills Robert Delisle, Michel Juliani sd. Franck Le Flaguais elect. David Poulin make-up Alba Kasfabijj asst. cam. Germañ Gutierrez, Louis Létiennne mus. Mathieu Léger p. asst. Dominique Juliani mus. mix/sd. efx. André Dussault (Dusson synchro) mix. Joey Galimi (Cinélume) lab. NFB/Belleveue Pathé paintings Lisette Legault, Roger Pilon, Pierre Castagner stained glass Mario Bouliane l.p. Lisette Legault, Roger Pilon, Paul Carrière, Mario Bouliane, Pierre Castagner, Michèle Poirier, Monique Lalancette, France Morais, Hélène Nadeau, Pierre Legault, *The producer would like to acknowledge the assistance of Les Productions LaGauchet in completing this film.* col. / b & w, 16mm, running time: 75 mins. dist. Expédifilm Ltée (514) 288-4413.

MINI REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

A visit to the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre in Toronto brought to light a few recent acquisitions. All are available from 67A Portland St., 1, Toronto M5V 2M9 (416) 593-1808, and West: 1131 Howe St., Ste. 100, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2L7 (604) 684-3014.

PLECO

The spotted fish swims before the credits. There's a flash of a girl's face and her black leotard. A man, walking along a wet, snowy street, stops to pick up a brown paper bag. He enters a house and, in the living room where two women sit, opens it to reveal a spotted fish entombed in a small block of ice. "What have you got?" ask the women. "What are you going to do with it?"

They sit in silence. The fish now swims in a bowl. At night, the man tosses restlessly in bed. His companion sees the marks on his back, and she runs her fingers over them. Later, the man is no longer in bed, and the woman goes out into the night. In another house she calls, "Are you there? Are you all right?"

A fine example of an eerie, tension-laden short tale that demands viewer interpretation and attention to the sub-text, all in the space of 11 minutes. Obviously made on a minuscule budget, but with much care devoted to mood, faces and music. **d./sc./ed./** Ross Turnbull, **cam.** Derek Redmond, **mus.** Andrew Grenville, **l.p.** Jennifer Hazel, André Czernohorsky. **Col.**, 16mm, running time: 11 mins.

AT HER COTTAGE

The sun shines, the birds twitter, the surface of the lake is glassy. A woman's voice starts, "Jack is the whole heart of the town." Her young pigtailed daughter plays on the dock. The calm lake and a picnic table, with its one coffee mug left of centre, are framed by tree trunks.

Other stories are told about Jack. Mother and daughter go out in a boat, and Polaroid shots are taken and filmed as they slowly emerge, held by the people already photographed. The water is splashed by hands and feet; boat engines roar and fade; the Jack stories are repeated – and the circle closes once again.

A poetic evocation of summer and the cottage, sharpened by the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated items. Lots of striking imagery – and there's one lovely "painting" of an orange bucket next to a wheelbarrow filled with water in which a fish swims, and a green fern undulates.

d./cam. Richard Kerr, **add.cam.** Phillip Hoffman, **ed.** Tom Thibeault, Richard Kerr. **Col.**, 16mm/3/4 inch video, **running time:** 20 mins.

TOGETHER AND APART

A 26-minute musical set in Kingston, Ontario, is surely a daring undertaking!

After a number of years, a published poet returns to his university to give a reading. He meets his ex-

lover Michael, now married to Julia, and accepts their invitation to a dinner party. The couple live in Michael's family home, and it brings back to Tom old and fond memories of the affair.

The action doesn't stop for the songs – everyone goes on conversing silently as Tom and Michael sing about each other, past shared feelings, and present satisfactory states.

A bold attempt which holds much promise for future work. The acting is somewhat stiff, and the music is not overwhelming, but the film is eminently watchable and evokes admiration for the filmmaker's flair and guts.

d./ed./ Laurie Lynd, **sc.** Marlene Glicksman, Laurie Lynd, **cam.** Jonathon Rho, **mus.** Micah Barnes. **Col.**, 16mm/3/4 inch & 1/2 inch video, **running time:** 26 mins. *Special Award, American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 1985/Silver Plaque, Chicago Film & Video Festival 1985.*

OH DAD!

A hot and strong set-to about 'Star Wars' and pollution, between a young lad and his father.

The technique of this Toronto filmmaker involves animating fine silver chains and coloured sand directly under the animation camera. The background is black, and the figures of father and son appear in outline across the screen, rather like the skyline of a strange city!

However, the charming visuals are overshadowed by an angry, over-wordy diatribe delivered by the young son – far too preachy and unconvincing in a child's mouth.

An animated film by Joanthan Amitay, **voice:** Iris Paabo, **Col.**, 16mm, **running time:** 3 mins.

Newsmakers,
please note

You've read their names and maybe your own many times in the pages of **Cinema Canada**, but you've often wondered what the others look like... Well, so have we. That's why, **Cinema Canada** puts emphasis on the faces that make up Canada's program production/distribution industry. But don't wait for the news to happen first. Help us get a step ahead by sending along your photo to **Cinema Canada** now. That way, when you're in the news, we'll be ready to go with the story and your picture... while it is still news.

SCAN LINES

by Joyce Nelson

U.S. TV dumping

A recent page in *Variety* says a lot about the weird world of television economics. Every spring, *Variety* looks back on the previous year in terms of U.S. sales of American TV shows around the world, and it ranks the importing countries according to the average price-range they pay for each half-hour of American programming. These prices vary dramatically from country to country, depending on the stance each country has taken towards foreign imports. For example, in 1985, Kenya paid about \$60 for each half-hour, and Japan between \$6,000 and \$7,000. But Canada paid between \$15,000 and \$20,000 on the average for each half-hour of American programming. Once again, as it has for the past dozen years, Canada led the world in prices paid for American shows: shelling out over \$150 million a year for this dubious honour.

The U.S. entertainment industry has a very aggressive lobbying agent to act on its behalf around the world: the Motion Picture Association of America, which establishes pricing from country to country. Nevertheless, certain countries have better leverage than others in determining

the price they will pay. In the early 1970s, Canada was paying about \$2,000 for each half-hour: one-tenth of what we pay now. That's because the market then was a buyers' market. There were only two English Canadian TV networks competing for the rights to American shows. CBC and CTV could pretty well set their own price.

But, in the mid-1970s, the Canadian TV scene changed completely as a result of CRTC licensing decisions. The Global Network and CITY-TV came on the scene; independent CHCH-TV in Hamilton adopted an aggressive importing stance; and suddenly there were five or six English Canadian networks and stations competing and outbid-

ding each other for the rights to American shows. What had been a buyers' market quickly became a sellers' market. Between 1975 and 1985, the average price paid by Canada for each half-hour of U.S. programming *quintupled*.

Yet even at these high prices, it is still cheaper to buy American shows than to produce indigenous programs of an equivalent production quality. Why spend \$100,000 to make an episode of *Seeing Things* when for a mere \$20,000 or so, you can pick up an episode of *Lifestyles Of The Rich and Famous* and slot it into your schedule? And that's how American dumping of TV shows works. By peddling its TV product

around the globe, the U.S. entertainment industry undercuts the impulse to build a country's own indigenous programming.

One result of this situation in Canada is that, as of 1984, of 17,500 hours of dramatic TV programming aired across English-Canadian networks and stations, only 1 1/2 per cent of it was Canadian-made. And we paid at least \$150 million for this American TV deluge (a fact worth bearing in mind as we go into talks on free trade). The U.S. entertainment industry will want no tampering with that situation.

But the recent action taken by the Mulroney government has given me a new perspective on all this. In the midst of the current economic salvos being fired across the border, Mulroney has decided to really hit the American economy where it lives, by imposing a stiff tariff on American novels. All along I had assumed that millions of Canadians were actually watching *Miami Vice* and *Dallas*. Instead, as this Mulroney action indicates, they are secretly curled up with Walt Whitman or Sinclair Lewis. This new tariff on books must be causing real dread on the Potomac.