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Eastern Wave

CHRIS MAJKA

Ugh - cold season is here! Every day the weather seems to change from extreme cold, to balmy mild, to torrential rainfall, to blinding blizzards and my body can't keep pace with the fluctuations. It's fortunate my computer can't convey the congested slur of my virus ridden voice.

Life Classes has notched up five Genie Awards nominations coming in fourth after *Un Zoo la nuit*, *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* and *Family Viewing* but ahead of *Train of Dreams*. The film was nominated for Best Picture, (Jacinta Cormier), Best Supporting Actor, Best Actress, (Leon Dubinsky), Best Screenplay (William MacGillvray) Best Original Song (Mary's Lament by MacGillvray) *Life Classes*.

Life Classes is booked for a week of screenings at Wormwoods Cinema at the end of March - its first showing here since the Atlantic Festival Atlantique. And speaking of Picture Plant, their documentary on the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design is due for release any day. Picture Planter David Craig informed me that it had been picked up by CBC and that a scaled down (under 1 hour) version of it would be shown regionally. I'm hoping that we'll soon see a gala screening of it here in town.

● The Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op (AFCOOP) has just completed an ambitious series of marathon screenings featuring a retrospective look at all AFCOOP productions since 1973! I hesitate to say how many films this involved, but four evenings were required to run all the films. In any event it was a good opportunity to reflect on over 15 years of activity by one of Canada's oldest and most prolific co-ops.

● One of Halifax's most beloved screens is about to travel across town. Wormwoods Dog and Monkey Cinema is moving from its current home in the Bean Sprout Building (whose future is uncertain) to the Carpenters Hall. The leading light of cinephiles in Nova Scotia, Wormwoods has finally found a venue which will better suit its ambitions and audience. Expanding from 91 seats to an almost staggering 170, Wormwoods hopes to accommodate the throngs of loyal friends and supporters which it has had to turn away, in the past due to limited seating. Wormwoods will valiantly hold ticket prices at \$3.50, in defiance of the prices which commercial theatres charge. Popcorn and coffee will now be available to patrons as will the region's first 'crying room' where parents can bring cranky children and watch the film without disturbing other patrons. May the force be with you!

● Following the success of the 'plex' style cinema in many North American centers, Famous Players is constructing Halifax's most ambitious multiple screen venue in the new Park Lane commercial complex on Spring Garden Road. This opening will more than double Halifax's screens from seven to 15. The new complex will have theatres ranging in size from 225 to 500 seats with a total capacity of between 2,400 and 2,500 seats. Halifax currently has only 3640 seats between the Famous Players and Empire chains and Wormwoods.

Maritime regional district manager for Famous Players, Maurice Landry, is contemplating using one of the smaller theatres in this new complex as an 'art house'. Plans are not yet firm but Landry feels that there is a large untapped audience for these kinds of films, especially since the new cinema will be within walking distance of three universities. The Park Lane complex is scheduled for opening in the fall of this year and we may see both an increased availability of alternative films and a more heated competition between Wormwoods and Famous Players for Halifax's *cinéastes*.

● Eye Level Gallery, an alternate art, space here in Halifax, frequently has intriguing exhibits or installations but only rarely do these pertain to cinema. This January, however, they featured the work of Wyn Gelevnse, a Dutch-born artist, photographer and experimental filmmaker. I found this exhibit intriguing and filled with many cinematic possibilities.

Gelevnse's photo-cinema 'installations' consist of a 16mm black and white film projector showing a film loop, the image of which is usually projected in some unconventional way on an unconventional substrate. For example in one distance entitled "In the Privacy of Your Home", the image of a seated man being beaten with a stick is projected on a 'screen' within a plexi-glass model of a house. A second projector projects a scene of a man watching, as it were, home movies which are projected from the same projector onto a photograph of a screen! In another instance the projector back-projects a scene with a man in the foreground and a bridge in the background onto a screen with the photo-engraved image, shot some decades ago, of a family poised in the exact same location, the passing pedestrians and vehicles bringing to life this historical photograph. In a fourth distance a beautiful silver image of a water fountain is projected on a glass slab balanced upright in an exquisite glass bowl filled with water and sitting on a mirror. The shimmering silver images reflect in the water of the bowl and ripple in waves you can create yourself.

These installations remind me of the early works of Méliès and the Lumière brothers who awoke within the viewing public a magic fascination with moving images. It seems to me that in the works of Mr. Gelevnse today filmmakers can find some inspiration for creative ways of exploring the medium with which they work.

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