

FOLK ART FOUND ME

NOVA SCOTIA FOLK artists face the camera squarely and talk in an artless and witty vein about their talent. The "naïve" carvings, paintings and sculptures are wondrous to behold, and the men (not a woman in sight) display carved fish, dogs, antlered creatures and whirligigs. The Naugler brothers make highly decorated chairs and tables, and indulge in almost musical three-part conversations. Garnet McPhail produces big, fat wooden alligators which he cradles in his arms like babies. Harry Whitney has put together a slightly sinister puppet show. At a folk art gallery in Halifax, the artists are all there and list proudly where pieces are now resting – Germany, Spain, Paris, Florida, Washington, D.C. They all make a living from their art.

A fascinating look at a group of passionate artists, full of creative fervour with not an ounce of pretension. A gem of a documentary which has already won six awards.

DIRECTED BY ALEX BUSBY
30 MINS. 16MM/VIDEO
WISDOM TEETH PRODUCTIONS/NFB

X-PRESSO!

HERE'S BOB, the singing pizza delivery boy receiving a rough reception – assaulted by bikers, eyes blackened, and then thrown down the stairs. He loses his job, but wants work not welfare. His trendy landlord carts off his possessions in lieu of back rent, but his biggest tragedy is no espresso machine! Bob suffers, meets an Italian widow, suggests a one-day marriage followed by an annulment. The idea is to get wedding gifts, especially an espresso machine or two. But she wants sex as well...

Probably a real scream of a story in the telling, but the let's-get-offensive script is far too extended. The screen is crammed with so many incidents that one cries, "enough!" The talent is there, but it needs to settle down.

DIRECTED AND CO-WRITTEN BY TASSO DIMOPOPOULOS
PRODUCED AND CO-WRITTEN BY MARTIN APELSAUM
14 MINS. 16MM/VIDEO, APPLE BOMB FILMS

DIVINE FATE

GENTLE SPIRITS DRIFT and flow around a mythical, magical space – the Land of the Divine Gates. The greatest edifice is the Emerald Gate embedded with cavities. A voice says: "Take what you need and give some-



Folk Art Found Me: RANSFORD and LEO NAUGLER

thing in return." Two strangers are flung into this harmonious atmosphere and come upon the Emerald Gate. They take brightly-coloured jewelled treasures and return some. Soon consumed by greed, they wallow in an ever-increasing hoard. The Emerald Gate shrinks and disappears.

This somber tale of over-consumption, material gain and the destruction of the environment, is a thing of exquisite beauty to watch. Ishu Patel (a two-time Oscar nominee) creates sweeping movement and symmetrical precision without a computer, aided by the superb animation cameraman, Pierre Landry.

DIRECTED BY ISHU PATEL
WRITTEN BY MARILYN BOWERING
MUSIC BY NORMAND ROGER
10 MINS. 35MM/16MM/VIDEO, NFB

WHEN SHIRLEY MET FLORENCE

TWO MONTREAL WOMEN talk about their deep friendship stretching back many years. They wander the back lanes recalling their homes and games played together. On a visit to the school where they met, their names on the report cards trigger a memory of the teacher writing down Shirley Smith and Florence Brown because their European names were too difficult to pronounce. They both love music – the "glue" that holds them together, says Shirley – who married Moe, Florence's brother. Florence recalls that being a lesbian in the 1940s was hard and after 10 years of "going from one side to another, I came out."

A beautiful, enduring friendship displayed with warmth and pleasure by two women who talk, walk, exercise, and make music together. It's eavesdropping on real people looking back with affection on intertwined lives.

DIRECTED BY RONIT BEZALEL
27 MINS. VIDEO
NFB

BOB'S BIRTHDAY

BOB THE DENTIST IS 40, and his wife has organized a surprise party. His day is usual – drilling and filling – and finally he arrives home. The guests are hiding behind the furniture in the living room, but Bob doesn't go in – he wanders off to change (he thinks they are eating out). Then, half-dressed, Bob sits in the living room to complain about his life and his friends.

The animation team of Alison Snowden and David Fine, who have twice garnered Oscar nominations, hits the mark again with a delightfully droll rumination on attaining 40. Characters and voices (including those of the animators) blend perfectly. And it's filled with little asides – a guest rummaging under the sofa cushions for coins; two dogs disputing a spotted ball; Bob mooning over his nurse as she chases bugs on the potted plants. A wonderful story board conceived and presented by two masters.

WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ALISON SNOWDEN & DAVID FINE
12 MINS. 35MM/16MM/VIDEO
CHANNEL 4 (UK)/NFB

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