

Let's face it, when experimental filmmakers discover a good thing, sometimes they just work it to death. How many personal films have you seen lately? Or films about the body? How about films that focus on the act of filming? Well, brace yourselves, because here comes another one—... *yet blooming purple* by Julie Wilson. Yet this time, instead of exploring them, this film actually confronts some of these tired old themes. It's only her second film, but already Wilson presents a refreshing point of view and she accomplishes this in an economical and densely layered 12 minutes.

In the film, Wilson discovers, to her horror, that the camera has a mind of its own. Sure, she can choose the angles and the shots and she can manipulate the imagery even to a point far removed from the original, but there is still a certain quality to the image that is inherent to the camera itself. What began as an innocent exercise—travelling around, filming women in the nude in an attempt to construct a positive view of lesbian sexuality—turned into a personal revelation of her role and responsibilities as a filmmaker. But this is not simply another personal, or diary, film. Nor is it yet another road movie gone awry, yet another film about a journey that gets side-tracked. Wilson quickly abandons the idea of the physical journey to focus on the more interesting metaphorical one. And in the best tradition of these films, the personal experience takes on a universal resonance. Not only do we recognize, and sympathize with the experience of growing awareness unfurling before us, but we are inspired to think some more about the properties of the medium, and to reconsider our own role in the construction of the imagery.

Working both with and against the old maxim “let the images speak for themselves,” Wilson systematically breaks up the visual flow to comment on the images she presents to us. This has proven dangerous in other films; often so much time is spent on the voice over that there's really nothing interesting about the imagery. The images merely support the incident related, or the story is so interesting that it takes our entire focus anyway. In any case, there's often very little interaction between the two. Julie's camera carefully, almost innocently, explores these women's bodies like a blind person explores another's face in an effort to know them. The images are grainy and textured, which masks the mere recording of the events and people in front of the camera. On their own, the images suggest yet another presentation of the female body on film; another intimate act that the filmmaker has witnessed and invited us to share. And once again, we are implicated in another act of voyeurism. Although this time the filmmaker questions her own role in the construction of this act. Whatever her original intention was, she realizes that the camera has a certain transformative power over the images that it captures. Julie realizes the danger that a mere representation of the female body can easily be read as an objectification of the female body. By voicing her fears she makes us question the act of filming and the voyeuristic nature of the camera. Her voice over sets up a relationship between the images and her involvement in their construction. In this relationship, a dialogue is formed.

Although the self-reflexive nature of the film turns the focus in on itself, its own construction and the process of its own construction, it still draws us into this process. From the very



Julie Wilson's *...yet blooming purple*: An attempt to construct a positive view of lesbian sexuality turned into a personal revelation of her role and responsibilities as a filmmaker.

beginning, Julie tells us about the difficult role that she suddenly finds herself in. She just wanted to film some images, but the people in front of the camera kept looking to her for direction. Suddenly, they were asking her to participate in the construction of the image; to construct the fiction in front of the camera as opposed to simply pointing the camera. Unable to remain a passive observer, she takes direct responsibility for the consequences of the act of filming. This means that if she objectified these women's bodies, then that is her responsibility too. Her notion of making a film that presents a positive view of lesbian sexuality is not as simple as it originally seemed. What if, in her attempt to put a new spin on an old theme, she ends up merely doing the same thing as everyone before her? Thankfully, she doesn't. ■