



Jean-Claude Labrecque

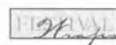
A slew of directors even offered more than one film for the public's viewing pleasure such as renown art-documentary filmmaker Philippe Balauqc with the children's fantasy *Hugo et le dragon* and the art documentary *Les Couleurs du sang*; up-and-coming director Denis Chouinard with *L'Ange de goudron* and the documentary tribute *Voir Gilles Groulx*, which opened the festival; Francis Leclerc with his debut feature *Une Jeune fille à la fenêtre* and the short *Quand tu vas être mort*, co-directed with Rosa Zacharie; the ever-prolific Donigan Cumming with *My Dinner with Weegee*, *Wrap* and *A Short Lesson*; experimental video and installation artist Marie-Lynda Bilodeau with *Les Châtelains* and the whimsical *Garde-robe*; veteran filmmaker Richard Jutras with the documentary *Les Conteurs de vues animées* and the short fictions *Flagrant Délit* and *Pawn Shop*; and last but not least the ever-present Jean-Claude Labrecque, whose output was so tremendous in 2001 – whether as director (*Le RIN*), cinematographer (*Mariages*, *La Femme qui boit*) or even as a subject for a film, *Jean-Claude Labrecque, cinéaste du contemporain*, directed by his son Jérôme – that a special tribute was deemed necessary to mark the richness of his accomplishments in a career spanning four decades.

Working from the idea that having access to a pool of talent and resources is much better than trying to do everything alone, a number of (mostly) young filmmakers are coming together to pursue similar artistic goals. They include the

KINO collective, which produces often inspired films made on shoe-string budgets and in ridiculously short amounts of time, and the Quebec-based production company Spirafilm, which has always advocated collaboration between its members or through special projects such as the Vidéographe's 30th-anniversary collection of short films, *Quand j'ai eu 30 ans*. Also pooling talent is the new Radio-Canada television series *Entrée côté court* that commissions short films from various directors. Some of the most noteworthy films in this trend include Philippe Falardeau's surprising KINO short *Ça c'est Laurence*, Philippe Gagnon's well-written *Vous êtes ici*

for Spirafilm, as well as *Entrée côté court*'s interesting *Hyperacousique* by Normand Bergeron and *Mensonges* by Louise Archambault.

In the end, the 2002 edition of the Rendez-vous confirmed more than ever the emergence of a new creative ebullience in Quebec cinema. In retrospect, what were 2001's cinematic landmarks? André Turpin's acclaimed sophomore effort and multi-Prix Jutra Award-winner *Un crabe dans la tête*; Catherine Martin's stark and beautiful first feature *Mariages*; Denis Chouinard's complex immigration drama and award-winning debut feature *L'Ange de goudron*; ever iconoclastic experimental documentary filmmaker Donigan Cumming's gripping and disturbing *My Dinner with Weegee*; political activist and veteran director Pierre Falardeau's surprisingly nuanced patriot drama *15 février 1839*; photographer and music video director Lyne Charlebois's brilliant first short fiction *Quel jour était-ce?*; video artists Nelson Henricks's and Dennis Day's wonderful experimental shorts *Planétarium* and *This Narrative Is Killing Me*; Hugo Latulippe's and Marielle Nitoslawka's controversial in-your-face documentaries *Bacon, le film* and *Bad Girl*; and last but not least *Yellowknife*, the beautiful second feature from a remarkably gifted filmmaker, Rodrigue Jean (*Full Blast*). What more can one ask from an event that year after year gives us a chance to see one last time the films that truly marked the past year.



FESTIVAL

Dracula

Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary



The National Screen Institute's FilmExchange

WINNIPEG 2/23 - 3/2/02

By Wyndham Wise

Winnipeg in February. Only in Canada, you say, would they hold a film festival in Winnipeg in February. Known as Local Heroes, Winnipeg last year (not to be confused with Local Heroes, Edmonton, which is still a going concern in March),

the National Screen Institute (NSI), in order to avoid any confusion in the future, renamed its festival FilmExchange, the all-Canadian film festival.

Festival director Bill Evans says FilmExchange is the largest festival dedicated to 100 per cent Canadian films, and this year's program included 14 features, 40 shorts, seminars, luncheons, invited guests and an opening night that featured SnowScreen, a hand-carved mound of snow shaped into a screen for a free outdoor showing in Old Market Square, in the heart of the Exchange District. Screened were the works of top Winnipeg animators Cordell Barker (*The Cat Came Back*), Richard Condie (*The Big Suit*), and *Strange Invaders*, Barker's 2002 Oscar nominee.

Guy Maddin's visual stunning and innovative *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* (see Take One No. 36) was only one of the few films to be shown that hadn't played in earlier festivals. It was screened as a fundraiser for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet two days before its premier on CBC-TV. Other galas included the multi-Genie winner, *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, Robert Cuffley's *Turning Paige*, Carl Bessai's *Lola*, Denis Chouinard's *Tar Angel*, Helen Lee's *The Art of Woo* and Dwayne Beaver's *The Rhino Brothers*. A series of industry events were offered at the Fort Garry Hotel, which served as festival headquarters, where delegates, mostly young and enthusiastic filmmakers from the thriving Winnipeg film community, could benefit from insider knowledge from the likes of director Gary Burns (*waydowntown*), producer Sandra Cunningham (*The Sweet Hereafter*) and writer Karen Walton (*Ginger Snaps*). Atom Egoyan talked at length with Geoff Pevere, *The Toronto Star's* movie critic, and Jacques Bensimon, the newly appointed Government Film Commissioner, gave a lunchtime address.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the festival was the closing night gala screening of Paul Gross's curling saga, *Men with Brooms*. The timing was brilliant as the Men with Brooms promotional tour coincided exactly with the dates of the festival. The tour swung into town Friday with Gross, Peter Outerbridge, James Allodi, Leslie Nielsen, Michelle Nolden, Kari Matchett and Alliance Atlantis PR staffers. On Saturday, Winnipeg's Granite Curling Club, the oldest in the country - formed in 1880 just 10 years after the province was founded - was the site for a media-staged event, two ends of celebrity curling with the cast and some local heroes, including Winnipeg mayor Glen Murray and Manitoba Premier Gary Doer. Afterwards everyone retired to the bar upstairs, presentations were made, and the assembled were told once again that Winnipeg is the curling capital of the world. The Alliance Atlantis PR types were working the room, making sure the media got the choice bits and understood the unique effort they were putting into promoting the film. Outerbridge told one *Winnipeg Free Press* reporter, "Everyone here has been involved with a Canadian film that was really good and had huge critical acclaim, then it went into the theatre for a week and disappeared. Canadian films don't get buzz. So let's give this movie a lot of buzz and let's tell everybody about it. If it works, then maybe it will start a trend."

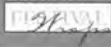
The screening that night was packed and the audience buzzed. If Winnipeg is, indeed, the curling capital of the universe, then the film could not have found a better, more forgiving audience. From the opening strains of "The Land of the Silverbirch," a campfire song everyone seemed to know, to the closing beavers and a



Leslie Nielsen and Paul Gross.

standing ovation, it roared its approval. They simply got it, loved it and laughed at every corny curling joke. In the 30 years I have spent watching Canadian films, I never have experienced such a joyous reaction. Gross stood up after final credits for a Q&A and the handsome leading man had them eating out of the palm of his hand. When one fan asked a few questions from the second balcony, she shouted, "Do you have a date for tonight?" Then, in a move that brought the house down, she ran down the stairs and planted a kiss on his cheek as flashbulbs popped.

After the festival, *Playback*, the Canadian industry biweekly, reported that the attendance nearly double from last year, which is a good sign that the festival organizers at the NSI are on the right track. They're making an effort to court the local and national press, and by offering a 100 per cent Canadian film festival they can carve out an important niche in the growing Canadian festival circuit. Surprisingly, it hasn't been done before. Not surprisingly, it's being done in Winnipeg - in February.



FILM • VIDEO • TV

Images Festival of Independent Film and Video

TORONTO 4/11-20/02

By Stephen Lan

Morose existential cowboys, ruminations on fleeting love, fast chopsticks that kill, kill, kill, and a giant slug named Laura hitchhiking to Winnipeg - it looks like Canadian filmmakers have more up their creative sleeves than pallid adventures of an all-male curling team. Now in its 15th year, the Images



Libby Hague's *Our Town*.

Festival of Independent Film and Video brought together another full plate of abstract video art, personal diaries and homemade porn from around the world to Toronto in April. The festival also dedicated a retrospective to Richard Fung, a Toronto video artist, theorist and activist, which included his early important works as well as an excerpt from his latest film, *National Sex*.