

Mangaard; Low and Ianzelo

BY PATRICIA THOMPSON


“LET ME WRAP my arms around you. I want to hold you, hold you, and keep you warm.” So sings the woman on the soundtrack, but the film opens coldly. Hands caress a cactus, a finger is pricked and blood bubbles, a face emerges through blue-tinted water and bare trees whirl against a chilly sky. Leila (Anne Wessels) dreams vaguely of past events, of things she cannot grasp. A recurring nightmare of drowning evokes an opera-

Leila recalls a past love affair. In the city, she remembers, “he was so exotic,” and she wanted to be with him all the time, to touch, to look, to never let go. She went with her lover to Rankin Inlet in the Northwest Territories and lived with his people, the Inuit, totally unprepared for the isolation and strangeness of their way of life. The struggle to preserve and sustain love in an alien culture and frigid landscape defeated her. He went off hunting and fishing for days. He was arrogant and egotistical. Day and night were the same, and she slept

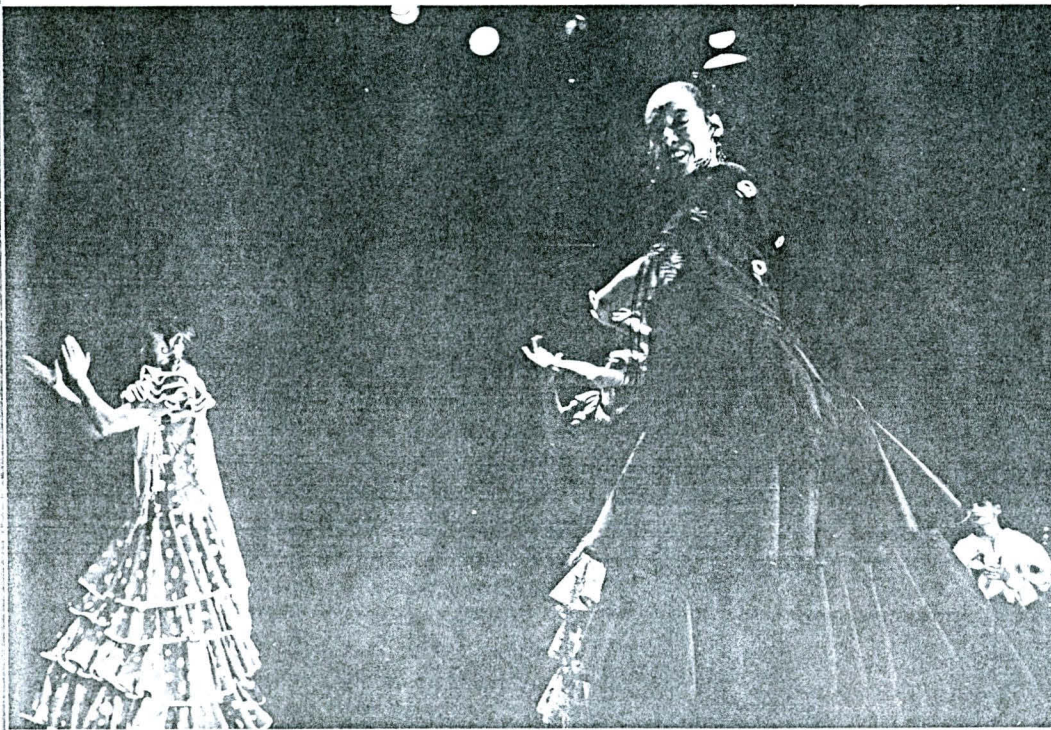
This accessible, intensely personal film is sad, chilly, and sometimes so constricting that one clutches the chest and breathes deeply. The obsessive-possessive single-mindedness of love is conveyed with a cool, well-written script and dense images, the core being amateurish fast-moving silent camerawork of a younger, happier Leila at Rankin Inlet, wrapped around today's footage of her conversations with Cynthia. The somber Leila attempting to crystallize her feelings after so long, the recurring cactus motif, the watery-filled floating frames, the sharp, enquiring questions of Cynthia, are enhanced by a thumping sound track, keening softly, with moments of eerie, insistent drumming.

The National Film Board celebrated Canada's 125th year with *Momentum*, the first film ever to be shot and projected in IMAX HD.

The images are predictable. There are glistening mountains and a peak-top rescue by a crew lowered from a hovering helicopter; lots of enormous bubbles being blown at the Ontario Science Centre; for “the West,” the inevitable roundup and cute Kurt Browning; Inuit artists are given the nod; in Montreal, patient citizenry wait for the bus in a snowstorm; and there's a truly awful set-up shot from the street into the glowing interior of a chic eatery.

The filmmakers started to think about *Momentum* four years ago. In this lengthy gestation period, surely they could have come up with images of trade, culture, commerce, sport, nature, that haven't been done to death too many times before. Positive, no-narrative films made to puff up the country and play to a worldwide audience need images that capture the unusual as well as the familiar, the humour in contrast to the serious stuff. The fact that filming in 48 frames per second means only 90 seconds of film in the magazine should not be a stumbling block but a hurdle to leap. There are hundreds of exhilarating one-and-a-half minute snaps of Canada to fill 20 minutes with wonder and class. They're not in *Momentum*. 

Patricia Thompson is the editor of Film Canada Yearbook.



▲ *Momentum* tion she had when she was 23, the awful feeling of suffocation upon coming out of the anesthetic, of being convinced that she would die.

In conversation with an elegantly civil friend, Cynthia (Christine Reeves),

more and more, becoming ill. “I wanted him to suffer and to feel my pain.” Cynthia asks why she never got in touch with him again, and urges her to telephone. Halfway through dialing she stops, “I have nothing to say to him.”

LET ME WRAP MY ARMS AROUND YOU — Directed, written, and produced by Annette Mangaard. 16mm/video. 28 min.
MOMENTUM — Directed by Colin Low and Tony Ianzelo. Director of Cinematography, Ernest McNabb.