

Frank's Cock

directed by MIKE HOOLBOOM; 8 mins.; 16mm

The overwhelming losses brought about by the AIDS crisis have, in recent years, stimulated a body of artwork of extraordinary passion and urgency. In *Frank's Cock*, Mike Hoolboom, one of Canada's most prolific experimental filmmakers, uses multiple screens as a backdrop to a man, facing the camera, telling the story of a relationship severed by AIDS. The visuals are hypnotic – here, the stark beauty of an individual, shot in black and white, is juxtaposed with a stream of impressionistic colour images. In a beautifully modulated performance, Callum Renney plays a character whose lover, Frank, is dying. The emotional tenor of Renney's monologue builds delicately but steadily, as the details of his relationship with Frank unfold, an achievement which is particularly significant given the film is only eight minutes long. *Frank's Cock* deservedly garnered Hoolboom the NFB Award for best Canadian Short at the Toronto film festival ●

Hands of History

directed by LORETTA TODD; National Film Board of Canada; 60 mins.; 16mm

Hands of History, a heartfelt documentary by acclaimed Metis filmmaker Loretta Todd, opens and closes with the words of Doreen Jensen: "In my language, there is no word for art – this is not because we are devoid of art, but because art is so powerfully integrated with all aspects of life." Jensen, a Gitksan carver and button blanket maker, is one of four women (weaver Rena Bolton and mixed media artists Jane Ash Poitras and Joanne Cardinal-Schubert are the others) whose stories and art works form the basis of Todd's tribute to Native women artists, past and present. Masterfully constructed, the film expresses each woman's unique vision while linking her to a larger history of art practice among First Nations Peoples. Todd contends that native women have been ignored by art historians who have relegated their art to the realm of anthropology while in general minimizing the contributions of women to their native culture.

Hands of History is beautifully crafted, boasting high production values, strik-



Hands of History: a heartfelt documentary by acclaimed Metis filmmaker LORETTA TODD

ing cinematography, fine editing and a rich musical score. What makes the film particularly remarkable, however, is Todd's enormous respect and sensitivity for her subjects and her skill in transferring their art to the screen. A project of the NFB's Studio D, this film will inevitably be marketed to the educational, women's and native communities, but it deserves a wider viewing. As Jensen says at the closing of the film: "If Canada is to emerge as a nation with cultural identity and purpose, we have to accept First Nations art and what it has to tell us about the spirit and the land" ●

Make Some Noise

directed and produced by ANDREW MUNGER; production company, Ultramagnetic; 60 mins.; 16mm

From basements to school grounds, clubs to college radio stations, young black artists are pooling their extraordinary talents to "making some noise," creating culture and musical forms reflective of their daily lives and experiences. This is Toronto's hip hop nation, captured by filmmaker and music enthusiast, Andrew Munger. Deftly welding interviews with performance footage, Munger avoids imposing his own analysis in favour of highlighting the voices and expressions of his subjects – the rappers, deejays, managers,

and personalities who comprise the local scene. Between impromptu musical numbers, performers such as Nu Black Nation, Ghetto Concept, and MVP discuss their lives and art, providing a rare look at an underground movement from which a more visible musical presence is emerging. With its wealth of sounds and statements, *Make Some Noise* is at first glance a celebration. But the film also tackles some larger concerns. The representation of black women in rap lyrics, for instance, is hotly debated. One wishes that the filmmaker had delved deeper into issues such as police brutality towards blacks in Canada. What emerges on the screen is an exuberant, if uncomplicated, view of an emerging cultural form – hip hop in Canada ●

Domino

directed by SHANTI THAKUR; National Film Board of Canada; 46 mins.; 16mm

Ever since Sidney Poitier came for dinner in 1967 the topic of interracial relations has captured the popular imagination with a series of mainstream films covering this troubled terrain. *Jungle Fever*, *Mississippi Masala* and *Zebrahead* are a few recent examples. The offspring of mixed race unions, however, have received little screen attention. *Domino*, an NFB-produced documentary by emerging filmmaker Shanti Thakur tries to address this gap. Tightly structured around a series of interviews, the film weaves together Thakur's own experiences as a woman of mixed Danish and Indian parentage with the voices and stories of six other mixed race people. What quickly becomes clear is that all the interviewees share a common urge to identify with both their cultural backgrounds and a similar confusion over their status, be it in mainstream society, in their cultural communities or in their family homes. From beginning to end, *Domino* is a thoughtful and cohesive film, demonstrating Thakur's growing assurance as a documentary filmmaker. Considering the personal history Thakur shares with her subjects, her choice of avoiding any direct dialogue with them feels oddly distancing. That only two of her subjects – a brother and sister team – actually speak to one another on screen adds to this subtle feeling of alienation. Notwithstanding, *Domino* is an important work, covering unexplored territory and providing a springboard for future discussions on race relations ●