

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



NO. 48
For Immediate Release

July 30, 1981

MoMA'S SALUTE TO NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA CONTINUES WITH

PART III: ASPECTS OF FICTION

Fiction and feature films will comprise the third section of NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA: A RETROSPECTIVE, The Museum of Modern Art's tribute to 42 years of exceptional filmmaking at NFBC. From August 24 to September 15, 46 short and feature-length dramatic films will be screened in MoMA's Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium.

The National Film Board of Canada has, since its inception in 1939, become the premier government-sponsored motion picture-making agency in the world. Although Claude Jutra's feature film Mon Oncle Antoine (1976) has become a classic of repertory cinema, the Board's involvement with fiction filmmaking is still less well known than its documentary and animated films, which were highlighted in Parts I & II of MoMA's Retrospective.

Fiction at NFBC developed from short films which informed and instructed through dramatizations of case histories and recreations of events that had passed unrecorded. Where the principals had died or aged, actors were employed. The director, writer, editor and art director (a figure absent from documentary production) shaped the re-created situation so a particular aspect would be illuminated or an action displayed.

The earliest fiction films were based on social service records (The Case of Charlie Gordon -- the Board's earliest production, 1939), R.C.M.P. files (The Connors Case, 1947), psychological case histories (the Mental Mechanisms series, 1947-48) etc. Many films, such as the What Do You Think...? series (1955) dramatized a moral quandary through a fictional situation. Later feature films, such as Cold Journey (1972), Le Temps d'une Chasse (Once Upon A Hunt) (1972), Tendresse Ordinaire (Ordinary Tenderness) (1973) and O.K...Laliberte (1973) have no overt didactic intentions but carry a strong moral sense; they also employ documentary technique in the telling of their stories, and in this way the Board's influence is doubly manifest. Other features are based on actual events but put to effective use the narrative and stylistic

devices of drama: Le Festin des Morts (Mission of Fear) (1965), a grim and beautiful tragedy of cultural conflict between Jesuit missionaries and Huron Indians, and Mon Oncle Antoine (1976), Claude Jutra's acclaimed autobiographical tale of a boy's coming of age, are examples.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA: A RETROSPECTIVE is directed by Larry Kardish, Associate Curator. The Department of Film is grateful for the enthusiastic cooperation it has received from NFBC, and wishes to thank Ken Shere of the New York office and Huguette Parent of the Festivals Headquarters in Montreal for their particular support and assistance.

#

Press screenings will be held in MoMA's 4th-floor screening room:

Friday, August 14 at 10:30 - LE TEMPS D'UNE CHASSE (ONCE UPON A HUNT) 1972. In French; English subtitles. 92 mins. First feature film by Francis Mankiewicz (Les Bons Debarras).

Tuesday, August 18 at 3:00 - O.K...LALIBERTE. 1973. Dir. by Marcel Carriere. In French; English subtitles. 112 mins. American premiere of this tale of an eccentric romance in Montreal.

Friday, August 21 at 10:15 - Program of short films:

- GETTING ON THE BANDWAGON. 1956. From the series WHAT'S MAKING UP YOUR MIND? Dir. by Gudrun Parker. 8 mins.
- THE FEELING OF REJECTION. From the MENTAL MECHANISMS series, 1948-50. Dir. by Robert Anderson. 21 mins.
- THE CONNORS CASE. 1947. From the R.C.M.P. file series; dramatization of case history. Dir. by Donald Mulholland. 36 mins.
- THE MAN ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE. 1958. From the NATURE OF WORK series. Dir. by Morton Parker. 30 mins.

A complete schedule of NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA: PART III: ASPECTS OF FICTION is attached. For schedule information, the public can call 956-6100, or for that day's schedule, 956-7078.

For further information, please call Alicia Springer, Film Press Representative, 956-7289.
