

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 8
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Note to critics and editors:
Advance screenings on request

NEW CINEMA FROM QUEBEC AT MUSEUM

The Museum of Modern Art will introduce New Cinema from Quebec and will offer New Yorkers their first exposure to the emerging consciousness of young French-Canadian filmmakers. The program begins at the Museum on February 3 and will include Claude Jutra's "Mon Oncle Antoine," recipient of the Best Film of the Year in the 1971 Canadian Film Awards, and one of the most popular and highly praised motion pictures ever produced in Canada. Guy Frégault, Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs of Quebec, will introduce "Mon Oncle Antoine" at the 8:00 p.m. showing on February 3. There are altogether 11 features and six shorts in the series.

"The cinema of Quebec is an anxious cinema," according to Larry Kardish, Assistant Curator of the Department of Film, who is responsible for organizing this film cycle. It includes critically acclaimed Canadian films not seen here previously, among them "Les Mâles," "Q - bec My Love," and "My Childhood in Montreal."

Cut loose from traditional obedience to church and state and surrounded by a pervasive, alien culture, the French-Canadian filmmaker is involved in a quest for his own and his people's identity, according to Mr. Kardish. In this quest, he turns repeatedly to two themes: the native land, particularly its physical aspects, and a political-cultural establishment that fails to fulfill the needs of his people.

The films are by no means provincial. Their aesthetic roots are in the documentary traditions of the well-known National Film Board of Canada and in the personal approach of the French New Wave. And while they have had relatively little exposure in this country, French-Canadian films have been widely exhibited in film festivals throughout the world. It is notable that the French-speaking population of Quebec is only five million and that over 20 feature films are produced there annually.

Despite broad similarities in a viewpoint that is anti-establishment in the overall, the films themselves are diverse in subject. "Mon Oncle Antoine" is, on one level, the story of a teen-

(more)

age boy's discovery of the weakness and fallibility of adults generally and of his uncle in particular. On another level, the film lays bare the grim, oppressive atmosphere of life in an asbestos mining town in Quebec, where the bosses are English and the workers are French. The town becomes a microcosm of the entire province.

Director Gilles Carle is represented by two films in the Museum program. "Red" is a mystery/action film whose hero, a fugitive, is both French and Indian and consequently a doubly oppressed member of society. "Les Mâles" is a dark comedy of the misadventures of a student and a woodsman who abandon civilization for life in the wilderness.

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, a highly individualistic and prolific filmmaker, is also represented by two films, "Q-bec My Love" and "Those Damned Savages." The former is a broad political burlesque about a girl named Q-bec who is a secretary to Peter Ottowa and the girl-friend of Sam Washington. "Those Damned Savages," the story of colonial settler Thomas Hebert, attempts to point out the biases involved in the transmission of history -- "the spirit in which and with which these facts have been handed down to us," according to the filmmaker. The action and characters of the film shift back and forth from 1670 to the present.

Pierre Perrault is a veteran filmmaker whose early film, "Pour la Suite du Monde," like Claude Jutra's "A Tout Prendre," first alerted the world film community to the exciting "cinéma québécois" nine years ago. Perrault's "River Schooners" and "Un Pays Sans Bon Sens" will be shown in the Museum series. "River Schooners" is a poetic documentary about the inhabitants of an island off the Canadian mainland where 16th century French is spoken and where a modern way of life has begun to intrude on traditions. "Un Pays Sans Bon Sens," made for the English division of the National Film Board of Canada, attempts to explain the causes of Quebec's anxieties. It is a documentary mosaic of a people's search for its collective identity.

"My Childhood in Montreal," the first film by Jean Chabot, concerns a young family imprisoned by poverty and by the violence of a society which is most ruthless toward those least equipped to defend themselves. It was produced by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. A family of limited means is also the subject of director Jacques Leduc's "On Est Loin du Soleil." A quiet and subtle film, it details the daily existence of a poor but proud family.

"A Matter of Life" was written, directed and edited by André Théberge in 1970, when he was

(more)

25 years old. The film depicts three harrowing days in the life of a young woman who, deserted by her husband and with three children to support, suffers a mental breakdown. The final feature on the program is André Forcier's "The Return of the Immaculate Conception," a whimsical and sometimes fantastic story of a group of teen-agers and the rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood.

The French Division of the National Film Board of Canada trains filmmakers and also helps produce more than a third of Quebec's features. The Canadian Film Development Corporation is another agency which provides funds for filmmakers. Once a film is completed in Quebec, it will be vigorously promoted by the Conseil quebécois pour la diffusion du cinema, and exhibited throughout the province in a network of theatres devoted to the French-Canadian cinema.

The schedule of New Cinema from Quebec follows:

- LES MALES. 1970. By Gilles Carle. English titles. 113 min.
Thursday, February 3, 2 pm and Sunday, February 6, 5:30 pm.
- RED. 1970. By Gilles Carle. English titles. 101 min.
Thursday, February 3, 5:30 pm and Saturday, February 5, 3 pm.
- MON ONCLE ANTOINE. 1971. By Claude Jutra. English titles. 110 min.
Thursday, February 3, 8 pm and Friday, February 4, 2 pm.
- THE RETURN OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. 1971. By André Forcier. English titles. 80 min.
Friday, February 4, 5:30 pm and Monday, February 7, noon.
- THOSE DAMNED SAVAGES. 1971. By Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. English titles. 107 min.
Saturday, February 5, 5:30 pm and Wednesday, February 9, 2 pm.
- Q-BEC MY LOVE. 1969. By Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. English titles. 80 min.
Sunday, February 6, 3 pm and Wednesday, February 9, 5:30 pm.
- A MATTER OF LIFE. 1970. By André Thérberge. English titles. 68 min.
Thursday, February 10, 2 pm and Monday, February 14, noon.
- ON EST LOIN DU SOLEIL. 1970. By Jacques Leduc. No English titles. 76 min.
Thursday, February 10, 5:30 pm and Sunday, February 13, 5:30 pm.
- MY CHILDHOOD IN MONTREAL. 1970. By Jean Chabot. No English titles. 65 min.
Thursday, February 10, 8 pm and Saturday, February 12, 3 pm.
- RIVER SCHOONERS. 1969. By Pierre Perrault. English titles. 110 min.
Friday, February 11, 2 pm and Saturday, February 12, 5:30 pm.
- UN PAYS SANS BONS SENS. 1971. By Pierre Perrault. English titles. 118 min.
Friday, February 11, 5:30 pm and Sunday, February 13, 3 pm.
- Selected Short Films.
Wednesday, February 9, noon.

Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Telephone: (212) 956-7296.