

A new look at Tricky Dick

Secret Honor
National Film Theatre
through January 20

review by David Jordan

Secrets are rarely honourable and honour is rarely secret, but in the context of the presidency of the United States, these words may find themselves as bedfellows.

Robert Altman

A familiar figure walks into an oak-lined room, jowls flapping, eyes shifting. The Nixon look-alike (a very convincing portrayal by Philip Baker Hall) pours himself a drink, puts it down, crosses the room, and pours another drink. He slips a tape into a cassette recorder, then spends the next five minutes trying to figure out how to record himself, finally

resorting to the owners' manual.

Secret Honor starts off on a familiar footing; if you've heard or read the transcripts of Nixon's White House tapes, you know that it is impossible to overdo portrayals of a vulgar, incoherent Nixon. But where Altman's latest film differs from the dozens of post-Watergate take-offs is that it not only portrays the president's insanity; it suggests a plausible cause.

Secret Honor is a one-man show. Nixon enters the sombre study in his post-presidency residence and begins unraveling his story to his faithful companion—the tape recorder. The ensuing blend of fact and invention subtly pieces together a scenario in which Nixon was only a pawn to a higher corporate power. The film climaxes with a revelation that Nixon surrendered his tapes and relinquished the presidency only to

mask a crime infinitely more despicable than the Watergate break-ins. It is the weight of this heinous crime (I won't give it away—you'll have to see the movie) on his conscience that drives the ex-president to ranting incoherence.

This latest Nixon-portrayal is not for everybody; if you have no interest in the Nixon story, and if you like a lot of shoot 'em up action and quick cuts, then stay home. If you are still curious about how a demented liar could hold the highest office in (arguably) the most powerful country in the world, then *Secret Honor* provides a stimulating alternative to the common explanations.

Secret Honor plays at The National Film Theatre, Ziedler Hall, tonight through this weekend. Phone the NFT at 426-4811 for show times.



Revolving photography

Two experimental artists from Toronto will be in Edmonton this week to demonstrate their brand of photography and performance art.

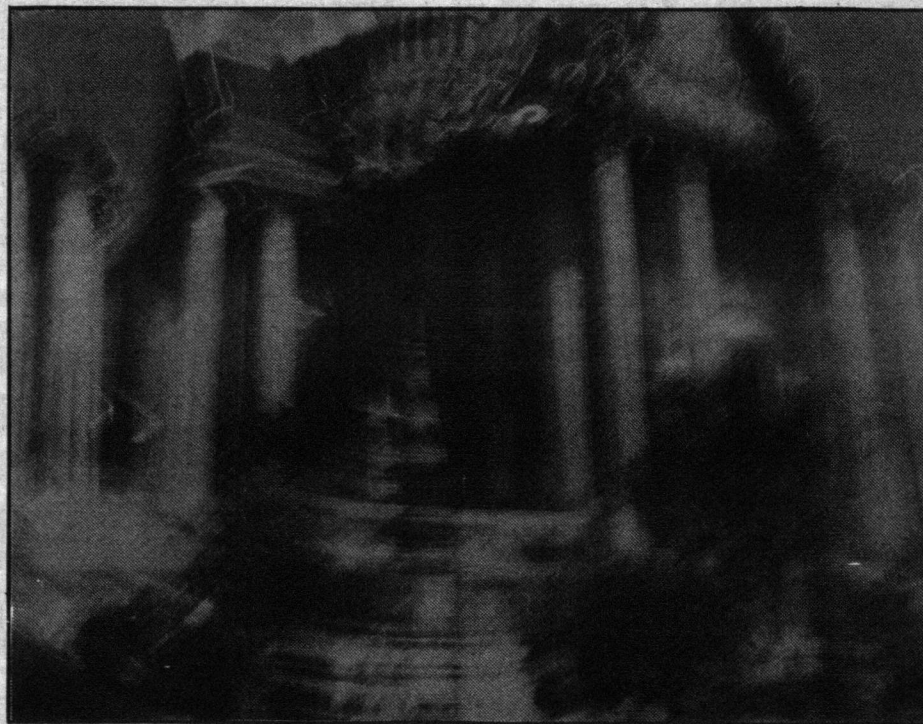
Neumann will give two lectures while he is in Edmonton this week. On Friday, Jan. 18, at 2:30 pm, Neumann will speak in room 2-20 fine Arts Building at the U of A. On Saturday, Neumann will give a lecture at 8 pm at Latitude 53.

The gallery will also be bringing in Gordon Monahan to speak. Monahan is an "experimental musician" from Toronto who is touring Alberta and Saskatchewan with support from a Canada Council grant. The Mt. Allison bachelor of music graduate was the first prize winner of the 1984 CBC National Radio Competition for Young Composers. He is the co-director of the New Music Co-op in Toronto and an assistant editor of *Musicworks*, the Canadian print and sound quarterly.

Monohan will lecture at Latitude on Jan. 17 at 8 pm. He will be giving a performance the following evening at Grant MacEwan, 10045-156 St., at 8 pm.

For more information on either artist, call Latitude 53 at 439-1985.

Alex Neumann is a Toronto photographer whose exhibition "Sites/Sights" is running at



An example of Alex Neumann's "revolving" photography: "Wat Phra Kaeo, Bangkok, Thailand." Neumann's photography will be on exhibit at Latitude 53 until January 27.

Latitude 53 until Jan. 27. Neumann likens his works to narratives. "Like the story that occurs when sitting in a train, you focus on a

distant point and have the world revolve around it. I regard these landscapes to be allegorical in nature."

ENTERTAINMENT Trivia

MOVIES

1. She played opposite Elvis Presley in *Roustabout*.
2. He played opposite Barbara Streisand in *The Owl and the Pussycat*.
3. She played *The Bitch* opposite *The Stud*.

MUSIC

4. He recorded "Lonely Teardrops," "That's Why (I Love You So)," and "Talk That Talk."
5. He had hits with "I Hear You Knocking," "Queen of Hearts," and "Singin' the Blues."
6. Early in her career, she had hits with "I'm Sorry" and "Sweet Nothin'."
7. She recorded "B-A-B-Y," "Baby, Let's Play House" and "Everlasting Love" before she was twenty.

TELEVISION

8. He played center for *The White Shadow*.
9. He was *Daniel Boone* and *Davey Crockett*.
10. He was Agent 86.

Last Week's Answers

1. The Police
2. Chelsea
3. Reforming the Monkees
4. Blacksmith
5. The Thorn Birds
6. Larry Melman's party snack
7. Orland Kurtenbach
8. Hartford Whalers
9. Don Luce
10. Chicago Black Hawks

S.O.S.

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