

# Women's Reel Vision Film Fest

by Mark Farmer

What the Hell is a man doing reviewing a women's film festival?! I don't know — I guess I'll be bringing my male prejudices and emotional baggage along for the ride, but I'll try to be fair. Stick with me.

**Chicks in White Satin**  
Elaine Holliman  
20 min.

*Chicks* is the light-hearted tale of two women who just want an old-fashioned Jewish wedding with all the trimmings. Unfortunately they want to marry each other, which isn't exactly an old-fashioned Jewish tradition, and away we go on a 20-minute ride of self-discovery and soul searching. The moms are understanding, or at least resigned to their fate, and as mom #1 says with a shrug and a sigh, "Going to prison would be worse than being gay I guess." Oh well.

The white satin chicks go through the whole wedding shtick, but with the twists that being a same-sex couple entails: who's going to be the 'groom' on the bridal registry computer? Will the straight

guests dance with queer ones? Will the happy couple even survive dance lessons?

In the end they pull it off. It's a white wedding on the front lawn with a hundred guests and everyone's happy and weepy and they all live happily ever after. All right, this isn't a cutting-edge investigation of queer rage, but it's not meant to be. It wouldn't have worked that way. As is, it's a quirky, amusing little film, and worth a look.

B+

**True Confessions of the All-Canadian Girl**  
Beverly D. Lewis  
3:26 min.

"My life flashed before your eyes in three minutes," according to director Lewis. *True Confessions* is an animated short that uses recycled magazines and xeroxed odds and ends to portray the essence of the all-Canadian girl. It's twisted and frenetic, if a little impenetrable, and Lewis shows promise as a director. I expect great things from her.

B+

**The Sisters**  
Penny McCann  
17 min.

*The Sisters* wants to be a transcendent, airy journey into the mysterious deaths of three sisters in the early part of the century, but falls short. A young woman in our time becomes fascinated by their deaths and imagines a solution to the mystery. Unfortunately the film isn't cohesive enough for us to follow comfortably, and it lacks focus. Make no mistake — it's well-shot, but style can't make up for that lack of focus. It's a good story that needs a better telling.

C+

**Keepers of the Fire**  
Christine Welsh  
56 min.

Sepia-tone photos of ancestors float by, faces of Indian women of the past, and a solemn voice intones "No people is broken until the hearts of its women are on the ground. Only then are they broken. Only then will they die."



*Keepers of the Fire* focuses on the women of three Indian tribes: the Mohawk of Oka, the Haida of Lyell Island and the Tobique of New Brunswick. The best story by far is the Mohawks', and we get to see Ellen Gabriel, Indian activist last seen in *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*.

The common thread running throughout the three stories is the way these women see themselves as warriors, or 'one who bears the burden of peace' as the Mohawks say. The Mohawk fight the army and Quebec police, the Haida fight the loggers and the Tobique fight to retain their Indian status when they marry a white.

Unfortunately the film bogs down in rhetoric. Why can't directors let events speak for themselves? Isn't it exciting enough watching the storming of the barricades at Oka, or a logging showdown on the west coast? That's what sank *Vienna Tribunal* (see *Gazette*, Sep 8) which is also playing at this festival: too much rhetoric and process, not enough of the hard, brutal facts and footage which are so compelling. My advice, unfortunately, is to leave at the end of the Oka segment.

B-

by Heather Gibson

*The Reel Life Women's Film and Video Festival is one of its kind in Nova Scotia.*

*In only its second year, the Festival presents a wide variety of films made by and about women.*

*Combining local, national and international talent, the Festival provides a unique setting for both the artist and the audience. Film topics include everything from Aboriginal women to the aging to lesbianism to religion — in a variety of mediums.*

*Included in the week's schedule is a video workshop. The workshop takes place October 29 and 30 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

*Participants are given the opportunity to produce, direct and edit a screenplay, under the direction of experienced film makers.*

*The Festival runs for five days and promises to be an unforgettable event, especially for women in the metro area. All evening screenings are at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.*

*For more information call the Festival Hotline at 492-3267.*

by James Beddington

**Gaz:** What is your background both culturally and geographically?

**MV:** I am from the Island of Mauritius, which is off the coast of Madagascar. Although I was born in Canada, I have returned to do my degree.

**Gaz:** What is the greatest cultural difference between Halifax and Mauritius?

**MV:** The culture is very different. I find the people in Halifax a lot more open, and everybody thinks in a different way. In Mauritius there is very distinct lines between the Indian, African and Chinese populations.

**Gaz:** What are your goals, both artistically and in your life?

**MV:** I want to become a graphic designer, eventually to have my own business, maybe in Mauritius.

**Gaz:** What is your primary inspiration?

**MV:** There are a lot of themes of the sea and maritimes in my work. It may have something to do with com-

**ARTIST PROFILE**

**Malini Veerassamy Gouache (opaque watercolours)**  
Graphic Design major at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design



ing from an island.

**Gaz:** Name one person that you idolize.

**MV:** (After thinking for a while) I really like Salvador Dali's work but I don't idolize him.

**Gaz:** Do you have any specific messages you try to communicate with your work?

**MV:** Yes, the freedom to create is

very important to me. I feel that if you like something and you want to do it then you should do it. Often people are too money-minded.

**Gaz:** What are you working on now?

**MV:** I'm working with pointalism, to develop my skills and to improve the way I translate objects into pure design.

**Gaz:** What piece(s) or artistic experience was the most satisfying to complete?

**MV:** For my A-Levels (roughly equivalent to advanced placement or honours courses) I did a weaving. I did everything myself from design to painting. It was based on the heavy textile industry in Mauritius. The most satisfying thing about it was weaving it by hand. It took me three months.

Malini is one of many artists participating in the M.O.S.A.I.C. multicultural show at the Anna Leonowens Gallery on November 14th through 21st.

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