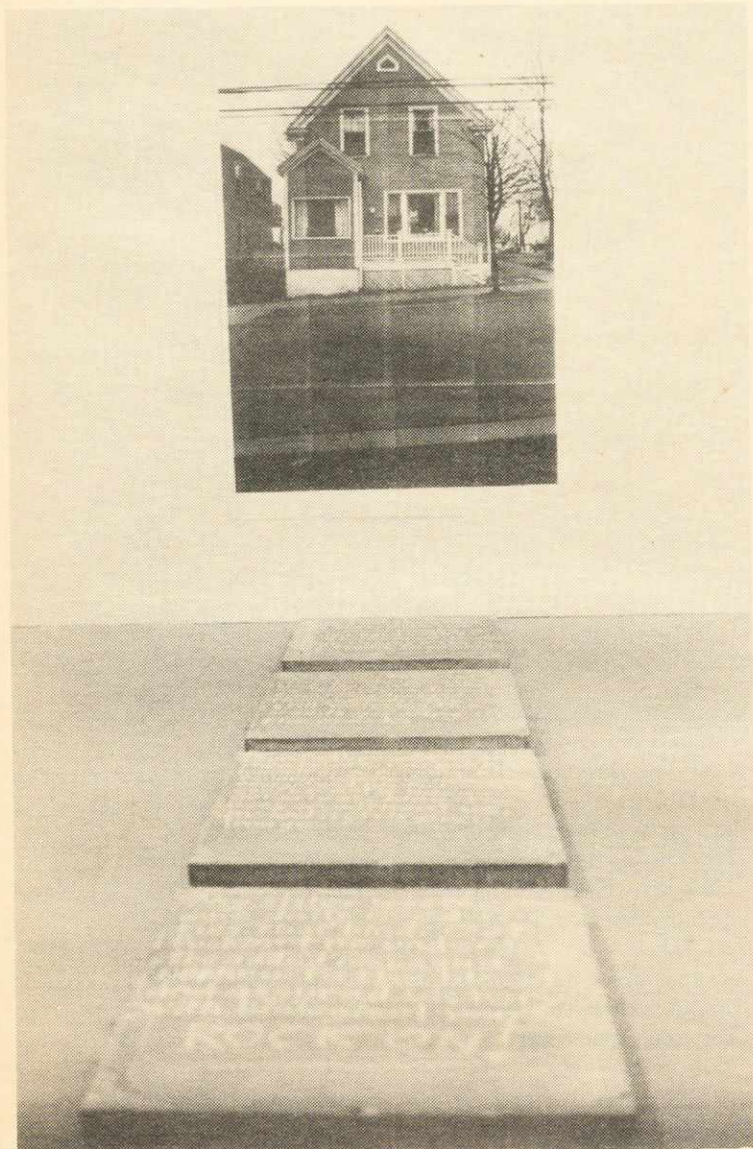


ARTS

Paved Way is a celebration of urban chic



The road to ruin

BY ROBERT CURRIE

PRECISE, ORDERED banality is the visual signature of the outer city — not downtown, not suburb. Its the sort of environment that makes graffiti seem out of place, even a child's chalk-scrrawlings on a sidewalk. In *Paved Way*, a photo installation at the Nova Scotia Photo Co-op's Photo Gallery, Colin MacKenzie and Craig Poile examine the visual and social existence of the urban fringe.

EXHIBITION
Paved Way
The Photo Gallery

Two photocollages dominate the installation from opposite walls, one an image of a house, the other of a power meter. Between them runs a sidewalk of concrete slabs with text

written in chalk. Brass-framed colour photos sit on shelves on the other walls, pictures of urban icons like wooden butterflies and Beware of Dog signs, and row after row of boxy, spare houses.

The text on the sidewalk tells a family history as familiar as the architecture. Repressed mother, frustrated father, rebel sister all appear, from the perspective of the alienated son: *Bring up the topic of family and I think only of myself. I let them live with the father/mother/sister/brother they'll never have, while I look for kin in a stranger's eye.*

The orderly architecture obscure a disorderly (or to use the term of the week dysfunctional) family atmos-

phere. The confessional simplicity of the text is juxtaposed against the rows of competently maintained lawns, mid-priced homes and middle class conformity.

A danger in documenting banality is that one risks succumbing to it. *Paved Way* comes very close to this. The outer city, in MacKenzie and Poile's vision is a pretty bland place, and the installation expresses this. But can boredom hold a viewer's attention? MacKenzie's images and Poile's text break no new ground, but do convey the contradictions of the world of straight streets and twisted relationships.

Paved Way, with photography by Colin MacKenzie and Text by Craig Poile, is at the Photo Gallery, 2182 Gottingen St, until April 5. Open Fridays and Saturdays, 1-5 pm.

BY JOANNE FRY

FOR THOSE OF YOU who haven't yet discovered Wormwood's Dog and Monkey Cinema, there is no better time than now to check it out.

FILM
Highway 61
Wormwood's

Highway 61 is entering its second and final week of showing at Wormwood's. Directed by Canadian Bruce McDonald, *Highway 61* follows the adventures of Jackie Bangs (Valerie Buhagiar) and Pokey Jones (Don McKellar) as they cruise to New Orleans along the highway made famous by Bob Dylan.

After discovering a frozen body in his backyard, barber/trumpet player Pokey becomes a local celebrity in Pickerel Falls. Enter Jackie, ex-roadie, who claims to be sister of the corpse. With the purpose of delivering "Jeffery" to a New Orleans funeral, the pair strap the coffin to Pokey's worshipped car and begin their wild road trip.

In pursuit of the couple is Mr. Skin aka Satan (Earl Pastko) who claims to have bought Jeffery's soul for the price of a bus ticket. Now it's time to

collect the body. Under this storyline the adventure begins.

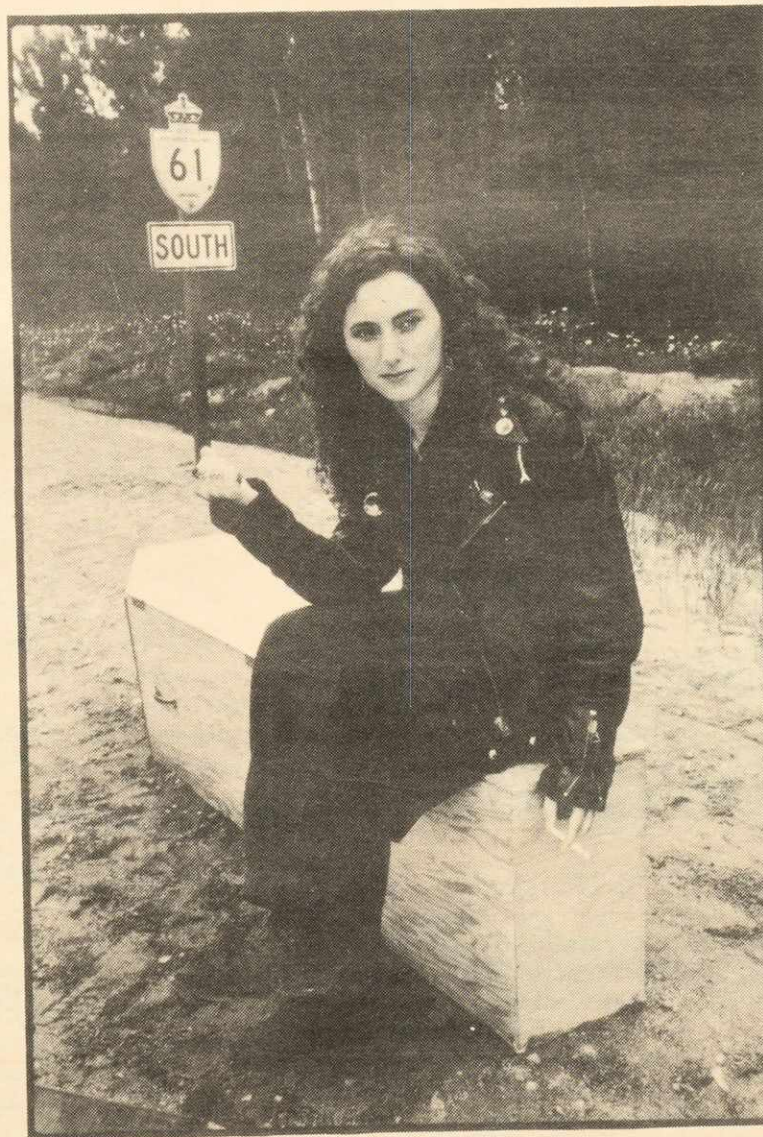
A strong follow-up to *Roadkill*, McDonald's first major film, *Highway 61* has lost the B-grade presentation but kept the distinctive humour of its predecessor. The film is rich with parody and off-the-wall dialogue.

Only in a film by McDonald could you meet an evangelical Satan that barbers for souls with capital he has earned playing bingo. Or a couple of rock and roll lovers that hunt chickens in their mansion to be served for dinner.

Absolutely nothing in this escapade is predictable. It is this aspect which makes McDonald's films so appealing.

Events that befall Jackie and Pokey are rather irregular in comparison to the every day life with which most of us are familiar. Pokey, however, is typically Canadian in many respects. His rambling speech and manner, and down-to-earth approach to life makes him an identifiable character. For this reason, even the most unbelievable situations seem plausible.

In fact, my only complaint about this film is the lack of character development in Jackie. To put it bluntly, Jackie was boring. Buhagiar played



Get on your corpse and ride

the least abnormal character in the film, yet she held the lead role.

This, however, is only a small gripe. *Highway 61* is one of the funniest movies I've seen for a long time. I strongly recommend this film, especially if you missed seeing *Roadkill*.

If a hip movie isn't enough enticement, you should at least go for the

Wormwood experience which includes great popcorn and a cozy theatre.

Highway 61 is playing until April 2 at Wormwood's Cinema, located at 2015 Gottingen Street at the Cogswell Street intersection. Phone 422-3700 for information and screening times.

