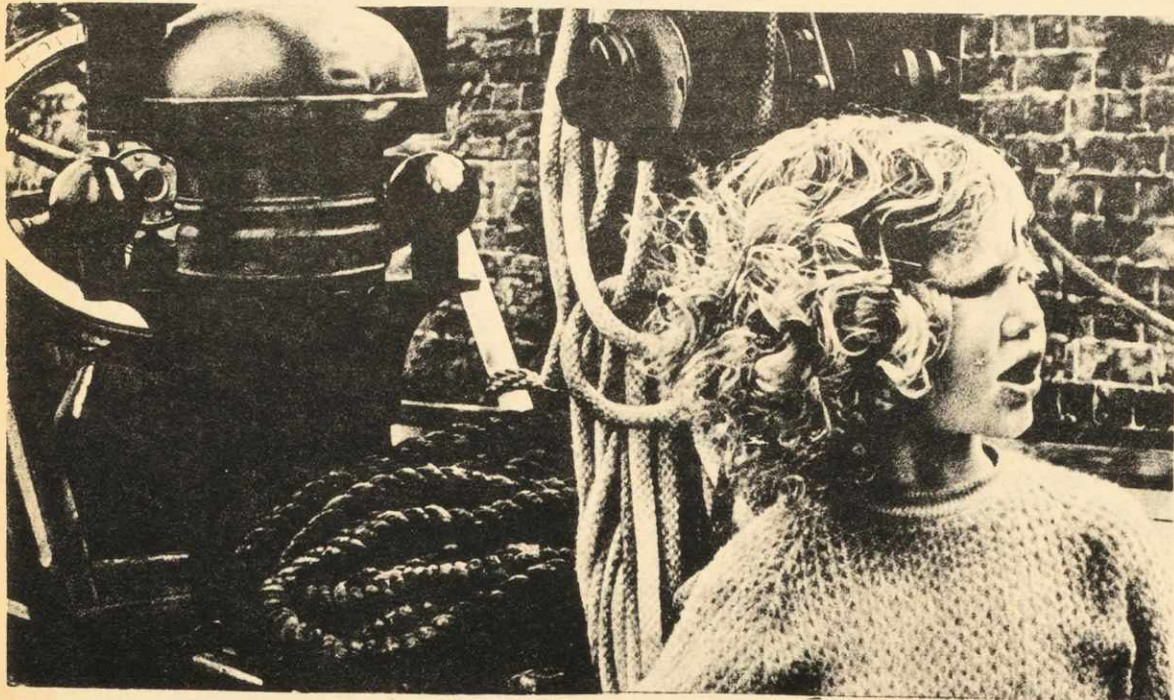


Entertainment



Susan Gibson — Alongside the Quay Wall

Scotians experiment - Visual arts flourish

by Susan MacLeod

Contemporary visual arts in Nova Scotia are alive and well and flourishing at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

This was evident at the official opening on Jan. 11, 1979 of Visual Record, an exhibit of resident Nova Scotian artists organized by Visual Arts Nova Scotia.

The purpose of the exhibition, as stated in the catalogue, was to "reflect the scope of the artistic interests in Nova Scotia on a level with Canada and the world" and to expose Nova Scotian artists to the public.

The exhibition displayed, in

particular, the diversity of approach and individuality of our artists. This unique approach was represented in the watercolours of Barry Feldman which were done in relief by attaching curved pieces of watercolour paper to the original surface. This created a peaceful, quilt-like effect as well as a three-dimensional quality.

Humour was displayed in a work by Doug Waterman entitled "Included" "Excluded", a 15-inch cube with "Included" written on the outside and a continuously-playing sound tape inside stating "Excluded".

A crystal of salt encased in a glass cylinder and entitled "Proverbial Grain of Salt" by John Greer also demonstrated the more imaginative aspects of our native artists.

In a traditional vein, Susan Gibson produced a well-executed watercolour entitled "In the Garden". Working with realism, Gibson portrayed a child happily playing on a swing.

Remarks were made to the art community and patrons by the deputy minister of recreation, Louis Stephen. He stressed the necessity of exposing the public to art thereby encouraging dialogue and education.

The exhibition, while small, proved that Nova Scotian artists are experimenting in a significant way with contemporary ideas in art.

review

Boys from Brazil : Send them back

by Eric Simpson

Imagine making a motion picture from Ira Levin's best-selling novel about a Nazi plot to use the awe-inspiring concept of cloning to conquer the world. The potential excitement of such a film is astounding. Consider signing three star actors to the cast. Success seems imminent. Add the financial backing of Sir Lew Grade's Producer Circle; fabulous film locations in Portugal, England, Austria, and the United States; and Academy Award winning director Franklin Schaffner and the result is... another mediocre film.

Why? Well first of all two of the three over-paid actors were tired and dull. Furthermore the misunderstood subject of cloning was transformed into a convenient popular myth and mercilessly exploited for its shock value alone. The Nazis were portrayed in the usual stereotyped and stilted fashion. The cinematography lacked balance, precision and clarity; and except for one scene in the mountains, the filming was lack-lustre and unimaginative. The film, moving sporadically from one brutal slaying to another in uneven spurts, did not establish any definite mood.

The diabolical doctor, based on the real life Nazi geneticist Dr. Josef Mengele otherwise known as the Angel of Death, was played by the sometime cowboy hero Gregory Peck. Peck, pale, pasty and peaked, brought an aura of senility to a figure in which genius and insanity are supposed to meet. Lips pursed, Peck mumbled

his lines incoherently, succeeding only in the scenes of violent rage.

One wonders why Peck, distinctly unscholarly, un-Aryan and lacking in intensity, would be cast in this role. Peck has described his villainous character as "a rattlesnake thrown into a crowd of people". While his performance probably elicited as much enthusiasm from the audience as a rattle snake would from a crowd, Peck wallows in self-deception if he thinks that his acting ability commands as much respect or attention as the presence of a rattlesnake.

James Mason as Seibert was more insipid than insidious. A truly forgettable performance.

Sir Laurence Olivier, however, interpreted the role of the Austrian Nazi-hunter Ezra Lieberman with the humour, sensitivity and skill of a brilliant actor. Rejecting the vengeful attitude of retribution, Lieberman limps after the perpetrators of evil in a bumbling fashion reminiscent of Peter Seller's Inspector Clouseau. Indeed when he speaks it is with an accent that sounds like a cross between Clouseau and Colonel Klink of Hogans' Heroes. If the clone concept could have been applied to Olivier so that he could have played all three major roles, then the film might have been salvaged.

Jeremy Black, who did play four roles, was convincingly obnoxious and arrogant as the blue-eyed Aryan heir-apparent. He seemed less complex and more intelligent than my idea of a young fuhrer, but then who knows to what extent a clone would resemble his donor-father?

Although the film does consider some of the scientific and environmental aspects of cloning, justice is hardly done to the subject.

The question of post-Holocaust horror is much more successfully treated by Uris or Richler. I tend to agree with one of the young Hitler clones when he says: why don't you just print it in the history books?—in the case of this film in the History Book of Forgettable Films.

Near the end of the film we get close-ups of Peck's poorly made-up, blood-spattered face and the only real satisfaction is that the blasé film has passed so quickly. Hopefully this incompetent, febrile effort at the commercial exploitation of an interesting theme will not prevent future filmmakers from producing a superior endeavor. Undoubtedly the pathway to such a film will be strewn with a myriad of second-rate films like this one.

San the Record Man

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