

# Women's films frame society

by Marni Stanley

In cooperation with the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee and the Edmonton Public Library the National Film Board will be screening four films on Wednesday, March 4th, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Centennial Library Theatre. *A Woman's Place, Your Move, Loved, Honoured and Bruised*, and *Some American Feminists* are the scheduled films. There is no charge for admission and the program is open to all.

All four films are about women and women's issues but that is their only connection. The first, *A Woman's Place*, is a short film from 1972 that discusses the status of women in Canada. Women, and some men, comment upon the problems women must confront in the work place and in society in general and talk about the necessity for change.

*Your Move* is an up-tempo film from 1973. Its primary concern is with women and physical activity. It begins, with the aid of turn of the century photos and movie stills, by exploring the myths which have long prevented women from participating in or enjoying sports. In particular the film draws attention to women's traditional role as the eternal spectator — confined to the sidelines by custom and impossible clothing.

Moving to the present the film presents a wide range of options for women interested in staying, or getting, in shape — showing everything from high ranking amateur athletes to babies in a swim class. The film shots of the women in motion celebrate the beauty and grace of the fit and active female body but the director spoils the effect somewhat by having one athlete, a beautiful track star, ham it up in a fashion model sequence. The message is very clear — you can still be pretty if you are an athlete.

Unfortunately the people responsible for the film don't seem to realize that that point was made by the woman in action and having her pretend to be something she is not only devalues her achievement. It is a brief sequence,



the sheaf

however, and on the whole the film is a joyous and healthy celebration of a woman's right to, and ability in, sport.

The third film, *Loved, Honoured and Bruised*, is a 1980 release that deals with one aspect of the problem of violence against women — wife battering. The makers have chosen to present the subject in a series of interviews dealing with one specific case and without narrative judgement. The wife, Jeannie, is a farm woman with five children who put up with thirteen years of abuse before fleeing in terror after a particularly violent outburst. She sometimes talks dispassionately straight into the camera,

reciting the facts of her "case" and clinically describing the events of her married life. Other times we witness her sessions with a social worker and a very frightened and vulnerable Jeannie emerges.

The film makers also managed to get the husband to consent to an interview. He stands in an outbuilding on the farm his family was forced to vacate and talks about his "useless daughters," his "frustrations," and his natural timidity. I found it extremely difficult to listen to his excuses and simply wanted to tear him off the screen every time he appeared — the film is about a specific and horrifying

mode of social violence but at the same time it is capable of provoking a violent reaction in the viewer. In that it shows that there are possibilities for women like Jeannie to extricate themselves from intolerable situations it is a hopeful film, but in showing the ways out it also shows the gross inadequacies of the system.

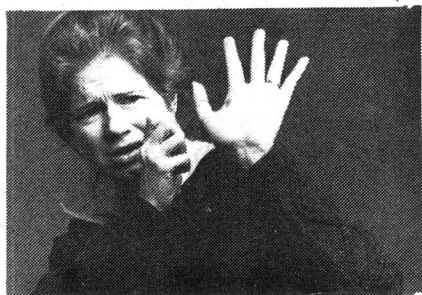
The fourth and final film is *Some American Feminists*, a 1977 release. The film was shot and assembled by an all female crew in New York City in 1975 and '76. It deals with the new feminist movement that seemed to begin, in the U.S. at any rate, with the publication of Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*. The film includes some historical footage, interviews and newsreels from the 60's and early 70's but it is largely a collection of interviews with the leaders of the movement — Ti-Grace Atkinson, Rita Mae Brown, Betty Friedan, Margo Jefferson, Kila Karp and Kate Millet.

These women discuss — in the context of their feminism — the social and political issues that have concerned them, issues including aesthetics, economics, philosophy, socialism, and lesbianism. They are all bright, articulate, and informed women ready and able to discuss the triumphs and problems of feminism and willing also to allow for disagreement.

I found this film very moving, in a large part due to the strength and sense of commitment shared by all these women, but at the same time it provokes feelings of nostalgia in spite of its recent date. The women talk of slight setbacks with the ERA and other problems but the recent swing to the right in America marked a significant defeat for them.

Although the movement they helped found is meeting with as strong an opposition as ever and some things they hoped to accomplish have not occurred, the film still stands as a document of their pride and confidence in their femaleness and in the convictions that condition of being female has resulted in.

## WOMEN IN FILM A Woman's Place Your Move Some American Feminists



### LOVED, HONOURED, AND BRUISED

a powerful NFB Prairie Production about battered women

**CENTENNIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY THEATRE**  
**WEDNESDAY MARCH 4, 7:30 p.m.**  
**ADMISSION FREE**

Sponsored By  
The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee  
The Edmonton Public Library  
The National Film Board of Canada



National  
Film Board  
of Canada

Office  
national du film  
du Canada

## HAIRPORT

*Hairstyling for Men and Women*

3 Locations to Serve You

7230 Argyll Road  
Regency Hotel  
469-2056

10632 - 82 Avenue  
West of Renford Inn  
439-4140

50 Brentwood Blvd.  
Brentwood Professional Building  
Sherwood Park  
464-7282

*Where we're smilin' and stylin'*



fitzgerald's

A Unique Dining Pleasure

LUNCHEON

Monday to Friday 11:30 AM to 2 PM

DINNER

Monday to Saturday 5 PM to 1 AM

Sunday 5 PM to 10 PM

Renford Inns

10621

3-9411