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'Woman Next Door' is must see cinema

Al Locke

Francois Truffaut's latest film, *The Woman Next Door* is a gem. The haunting melodies of George Delerue and the visual perfection of William Lubitchansky's photography couple brilliantly with Truffaut's most profound direction since *The Green Room*.

The Woman Next Door is a love story turned tragedy. A Romeo and Juliet without the climactic double death. Instead a violent split, with the affair taken up twenty years later.

The action takes place near Grenoble, France. Bernard (Gerard Depardieu) and Mathilde (Fanny Ardant) had been deeply in love and their tempestuous liaison wound up in a stormy separation some years before the action begins.

By sheer coincidence Mathilde, newly married to Phillippe (Henri Garcin) moves into the house next door to Bernard and his wife, Arlette (Michelle Baumgartner).

In close quarters the two couples develop a neighbourly relationship, with Phillippe and Arlette unaware that their spouses are former lovers. The situation proves impossible for Bernard and Mathilde. The love, pain and loss they have endured, and thought they had conquered, rises to the surface of their conscious actions.

Virtually identical—both enjoy childish activities (she illustra-



Michelle Baumgartner, Roger Van Hool and Fanny Ardant all shine in Truffaut's *The Woman Next Door*.

tes children's books; he drives toy boats), each is dynamic, sensual, impetuous and virtually self-absorbed—both, still bearing the scars of their relationship, chose opposites as mates. Phillippe, the logical, calm air traffic controller,

and Arlette, the submissive wife. Even physically, each new spouse is a direct opposite of the lost lover. When brought together in Grenoble Bernard and Mathilde fly at one another with the velocity and strength of arrows from a bow.

From here, Truffaut begins an elaborate expose of the heart. Its ability to overpower logic and hurt those now left unloved. Even the cool, collected air controller Phillippe loses his composure in a jealous rage over his errant wife.

The brightest light in *The Woman Next Door* is Fanny Ardant, appearing here in her first film. She captures the screen

with her ability to express the psychologically pain-ridden Mathilde.

Truffaut's genius has always come from his ability to imbue his scenes with a few extra, unstated elements. The only happy character in this menage of romantic crisis is a homosexual, masterfully underplayed by Roger Van Hool.

The Women Next Door starts Friday, January 8 at the Fine Arts Cinema. For students of psychology it is an elaborate look at the power of love on the psyche. For students of film, it is a masterpiece.

HAIR

***** January 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 *****

Showtime 8:00pm
(Note 2pm matinee Jan. 29th)

Admission: \$3.00 students
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