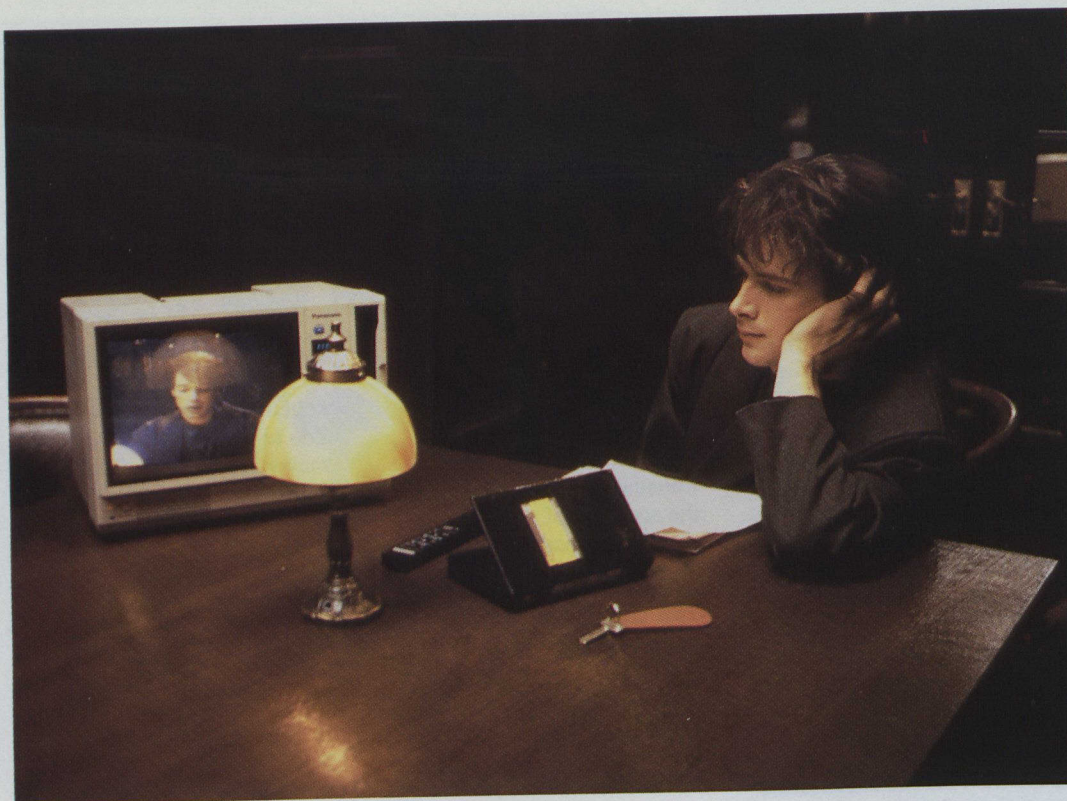




Cinéphile

Radical Roadkill

It would be impossible for all Canadian films to live up to the grandeur of *Jésus de Montréal*. But numerous films are finding enthusiasts both in Canada and abroad and at prestigious international festivals. Bruce McDonald's *Roadkill* is a case in point.

Roadkill takes us on a rock'n'roll journey to northern Ontario. A sleazy Toronto promoter sends Ramona (Valerie Buhagiar) to bring home a renegade rock band called "Children of Paradise." While searching for the elusive band, Ramona encounters an assortment of weirdos, including a pothead cab driver who drones on about his encounters with drugged-out rock stars; an aspiring filmmaker (played by McDonald himself); and a young man who contemplates serial killing as a career. "There are not a lot of opportunities," he says. "You can either become a hockey player or take up a life of crime — and I have weak ankles."

With its bleak northern setting and lonely characters, *Roadkill* is a humorous comment on our sense of obsessive alienation and preoccupation with identity. McDonald has successfully captured a unique Canadian sensibility on film. This offbeat rock'n'roll road movie has been sold in five countries and was featured at festivals in both Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, during the summer of 1990.

Tackling "Identity"

Another film about alienation tackles the subject from a different angle. Atom Egoyan's *Speaking Parts*, a film about technology, images and human relations, comments on how our reality is constructed for us by images, particularly through television and video. It is the third and most complex film to date by the creator of *Next of Kin* and *Family Viewing*.

Atom Egoyan's *Speaking Parts*: a film about persons obsessed with the creation of images.

Speaking Parts is a provocative film that centres around Lance, a struggling, emotionally distant actor who works in a hotel, and two women, Lisa, a chambermaid and Clara, a scriptwriter. The three characters are all obsessed with video and the creation of images. This dark and ironic film observes the delicate line between personalities as they appear and as they are.

Television at Its Best

If *Speaking Parts* looks at human relationships through a high-tech lens, then *Les Noces de papier* (*Paper Wedding*) takes a decidedly more conventional approach. A made-for-television feature by veteran Quebec filmmaker Michel Brault, *Les Noces* is

about Manuel, a Chilean political refugee who is hounded by two comical immigration officials in Montreal. His liberal lawyer, Annie, convinces her sister Claire (Geneviève Bujold) to marry him so that he can stay in Canada.

A simple ceremony gets complicated when the two must live together for a weekend and take an exam to convince authorities of their commitment. Ironically, while they are trying to convince everyone else, they begin to feel true tenderness for each other. This gentle feature won the 1990 award for Best Television Feature at the Banff Television Festival.

Awesome Animation

Canada also made some impressive contributions in the field of animation at the Cannes Festival in 1990.

Jours de plaine (*Great Plain Days*) brings together the music and images of two Franco-Manitoban artists. Visual artist Réal Bérard, and singer Daniel Lavoie combine their talents in a film that celebrates the landscape and soul of western Canada. Meanwhile, *To Be*, NFB filmmaker John Weldon's ninth film, is a richly textured, provocative story that looks at the nature of personal identity and what it means ... to be.

Canada continues to make socially relevant films. And with new films expected from Patricia Rozema and Denys Arcand in the near future, critics and *cinéphiles* the world over can look forward to a Canadian cinema that continues to thrive. ♦