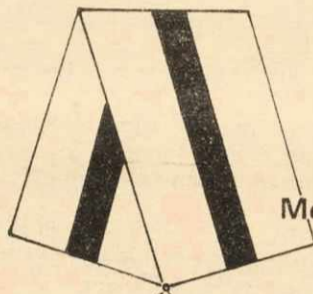


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Sally Field an amiable Amy in Back Roads

by Frank McGinn

Speaking of back roads, Sally Field certainly has arrived by way of some. Who'd have thought a body could reach the dizzy Academy Award winning heights of *Norma Rae* via the Gidget movies (*Gidget Goes To Hollywood*, *Gidget Goes To Rome*; *Gidget Goes All The Way*) and television's noxious *The Flying Nun*? The only thing more sugary than this route is cherry Kool Aid and either one will kill you. But Sally Field didn't rot away and eventually it became apparent that under all the candy there was a real apple—fresh, appetizing and very good for you. She proved she was a serious actress in the television drama *Sybil*, she proved she could rise to a great role in *Norma Rae* and, in *Back Roads*, Sally Field proves quite irresistible.

Back Roads is a road movie, a romantic odyssey through the American South. Amy (Sally Field) is a self-respecting prostitute working the Mobile bar scene when she runs across Aldo (Tommy Lee Jones), a drifter and a gentleman, most of the time. They

are tossed together, like the ingredients of a salad, when Aldo good naturedly decks a vice cop for the lady, and soon it is on the road again. Amy wants to be a manicurist in L.A. and Aldo is nothing, if not amiable, so they head west. Travelling mainly on "wit and grit", they become close comrades-in-arms and gradually, sigh, need I say more.

This format, fleeing and falling in love, is only as good as its leads are likeable. Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert got away with it in *It Happened One Night* because they were so cute; Sally Field and Henry Winkler missed by a hair in *Heroes* because they were too cute. *Back Roads* succeeds because Sally Field and Tommy Lee Jones are such right characters, and so right for each other.

Amy is a totally admirable lady, smart, sexy and without illusions. When a sailor boy attempts to insult her by calling her a whore, she gives it to him straight from the hip. "A whore is a teenager with a bad reputation," she says

icily. "I am a hustler." And Aldo is just the man for her. He is sensitive enough to admire the photo of her son, so courteous that when rolling a drunk he warns him to close his mouth so the blow won't cause him to bite his tongue off and always able to kid Amy back into her natural good humour. ("A sixteen-year-old with a bad reputation is a slut," he tells the still fuming Amy.) Their story is the kind that makes your tummy glow, like drinking hot Scotch and lemon, as you watch these two scrappy loners gradually, reluctantly, come to the realization that they are the perfect team.

Director Martin Ritt is mainly known for sensitive, social dramas like *Norma Rae*, *Souther* and *Hud*, so this romantic fantasy must have been something of a vacation for him. He continues to hit the right notes on the Southern background, though, and the lazily accurate bus stops, bar rooms and truckers' diners provide the perfect air of realism to balance this engaging, airy love story.

Eye Level Gallery takes cake

by Cym Gormery

I must admit I was startled: The room I entered appeared to be empty; the walls on which I had expected to see a multitude of paintings were bare, as was the room, save for two stark-looking white

radiators at my left and right, and a lone stool sitting more or less in the centre of the room. I checked again to be sure I was in the right place, and desperate for a clue as to where this gallery's art was hidden. Finally I noticed a book, similar to those found at art exhibitions, museums, and the like, which would, I was certain, at least tell me what had been here. Unfortunately, the book's comments left me more confused than ever: "yummy?" "cake mistique?" "but I'm on a diet...?" Had I blundered into a bake show?

It was an accidental glance that first drew my attention to the "art" I had come to see. It was not "eye level," as I had expected, even for a Harlem Globetrotter, and certainly not for me without heels. Exactly nine feet up (as I later learned), and hung at right angles to the wall, were — cakes. At least, they looked like cakes; the woman to whom I spoke arranged for me to meet the artist in person for details, and in the meantime she explained a little about the **Eye Level Gallery** to me.

The gallery, located on Barrington Street, is, at first impression, rather unassuming: it is a small, unembellished building, distinguished only by a nondescript sign indicating its name and hours. It is non-commercial, and one of thirty five such galleries across Canada, funded by the Canada Council and Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness. Different exhibitions are featured every three weeks, the artists being chosen through a committee of their contem-

poraries.

Two days after my first visit I was able to interview the artist whose work I found so unusual. **Ryan Arnott** is about 5'7" tall, dark haired, and fairly thin — this last quality in particular gave me to wonder, fleetingly, how he could be so hung up on cakes. His exhibition, he explained, was entitled "Nine by Nine by Nine" and dedicated (or "dedicated," to use Ryan's own spelling), to John Lennon, for whom, apparently nine was a very significant number — Lennon was born and died on the ninth, for example. Each of nine hats were nine feet above the ground, and nine feet apart, hence the exhibit's title. Even the stool in the centre of the room was significant: its four legs faced, respectively, north, south, east, and west, was a line on the floor which pointed to New York. Such props are extremely important, I was informed, and even the colour of the gallery door had been changed, from salmon to off-white, for the exhibition.

Ryan Arnott's "cakes" are actually hats, but they have been decorated in such a way that this is only noticeable on close examination. The artist himself writes: "Then idea (of "hat cakes") sat like a germ, inating in my mind and growing until I noticed the resemblance (re-assemblance) of a hat to a plate with angel-food on it. Painting grew up." Apparently "food painting" is more common than I had thought, the interview gave me to realize. I left Eye Level Gallery smiling...in Ryan's words; "What do you think of hat?"

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