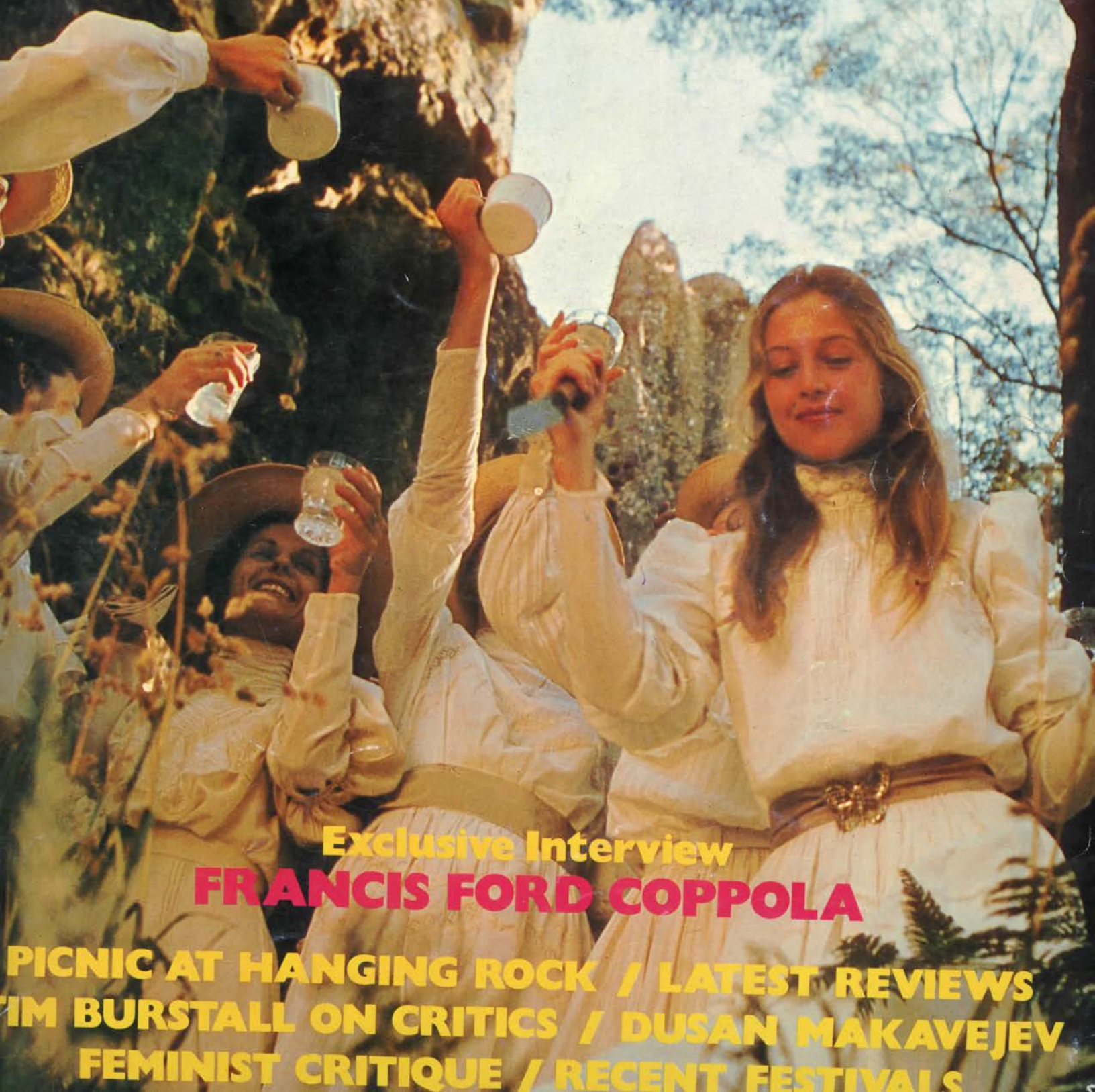


# CINEMA

## *Papers*



Exclusive Interview  
**FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA**

**PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK / LATEST REVIEWS  
TIM BURSTALL ON CRITICS / DUSAN MAKAVEJEV  
FEMINIST CRITIQUE / RECENT FESTIVALS**



# FILM FESTIVAL

At the conclusion of the first International Women's Film Festival\*, the uniqueness of the event can be discerned. The most obvious difference was the dominance of films with female protagonists, including a number of films with almost exclusively female casts. In the feature films, most directors had scenarios depicting an independent woman who retained her independence through adversity. Such films eschewed traditional happy endings to concentrate on showing the price of independence. Even the final 'happiness' of Nelly Kaplan's **A Very Curious Girl**, was more a celebration of freedom and self, using revolutionary means, than any complacent formula happiness. Nevertheless the films were not unremittingly bleak in their portrayal of independence. Most endeavored to explore ways of surmounting our socialization by posing and testing radical alternatives.

The complete absence of common film genres, e.g. Westerns, detective, science fiction and musicals, was noticeable. This is probably due less to restrictions of budget and more to a reflection of the priorities that women directors have. For most, the exploration of sexual politics in a realistic social context is the prime concern. The other major area in which women filmmakers are working is in documentaries. These were wide-ranging and contradicted the popular misconception that they would all be rhetorical protest films. In fact the subjects and politics were various and there were also some radical departures in form.

The overall quality of the films was remarkable and the response of the audience was exciting. During the Festival a feeling of solidarity and discovery arose among the stayers and it became apparent how politicising an effect cinema can have. The Festival provided ample intellectual and emotional fuel to refute the still remaining prejudices concerning women and film. The pre-publicity tried not to alienate men, but the unfamiliarity of a 'women's film festival' kept many people away. Sixty to 70 per cent of the audiences were women and it is obvious that many men were deterred because of their preconceptions.

Organizing an inaugural Festival on such a vast and ambitious scale, far exceeded the dimensions of comparable events as the Melbourne Film Festival. In Melbourne more films were screened than elsewhere — 24 features and feature-length documentaries and 70-odd short films. The reception of such 'extras' as video screenings, a photography exhibition, special screenings for schools, housewives and children, justified the work needed to organize them.

A competence and expertise was gained that we intend to employ even more effectively in future festivals. Next year a Festival of films both directed by women and about women is planned. Now that a context for viewing women's films has been established it is essential to look closely and in detail at selected areas of interest. To make the Festival an annual event will require government finance and support. The Festival has established its credibility, the films were good and those who saw them should question why they were not previously available.

**Suzanne Spinner, Christine Johnston, Pat Longmore, Sue Johnston.**

Nelly Kaplan's **A Very Curious Girl** (1969) was selected for the last night of the Melbourne and Sydney festivals as the cinematic and feminist climax, even though the only print available was without English sub-titles. That Australian audiences came *en masse* and sat in fascination throughout is a major achievement for Kaplan.

**A Very Curious Girl** is a fantasy of revolution — a revolution of female liberation from oppression, followed by a conscious course of revenge. And to give her myth greater universality Kaplan has used a fantastic, rather than realistic, style.

The plot itself is a set in the cast of a modern witches' tale. Marie, a social outcast in the village, is constantly ex-

\* See pp 109-10, *Cinema Papers*, July-August 1975.





Agnes Varda's love poem to decaying Hollywood, **Lion's Love**.



The McDonaghs' deeply moral exploration of the consequences of kinship and loyalty, **The Cheaters**.



**Meshes of the Afternoon**, a poetic work of sustained surrealism.

Set in the Sweden of 1915, Mai Zetterling's **Loving Couples** (1964) intricately weaves the lives of three women awaiting confinement in a provincial maternity hospital. Angela (Gio Petre) is the mistress, Agda (Harriet Andersson) her lower-class confidante and later her brother's mistress and Adele (Gunnel Lindblum), the servant. We see in flashback their past couplings and the nature of their loving.

Zetterling shows the subtle variations of sex oppression within these particular classes by recording the personal life of each woman and their interactions with each other.

The most fully-rounded character in the film is Agda. 'Plonked' on the immense marble stairs of the hospital, her legs sprawled, belly distended, plaits bobbing, and stuffing herself with sweets, Agda trips up pompous gynaecologists by hopscotching in their path. She is daffy, but thoroughly resilient, perpetually able to turn adversity to her own end. An episode from her orphaned childhood shows how quickly she learnt this resilience: she gorges herself on cream cakes and hot chocolate, unconsciously parodying the lechery of the old gentleman who is footing the bill.

The character of Adele has the most potential, but her justifiable bitterness is so exaggerated that she becomes a Dickensian caricature of dissatisfaction. However, she does have great moments — some being endemic to the lot of women. As when she undergoes the indignity of gynaecological stirrups, amid stern paternal eyes, she asks, "How do I get down?" Or when she looks at herself in a mirror and we see her face fall apart, losing beauty, grace and self in one long, cold, self-hating appraisal. At other times the source of her strength is the vitriol she heaps on her mistress — gloating over finding baby clothes in the unwed Angela's cupboards, or taunting her husband for his genuine feelings toward the cool and reserved Petra.

Adele's strongest moment could have been the tirade against marriage and class ("It's all mud, slime and beds") which she delivers at Agda and Stellan's wedding breakfast. However, its force is undermined because Agda and Stellan are obviously happy in spite of their marriage. Consequently Adele's rantings seem merely grotesque.

Indeed the nicest relationship is that between Agda and Stellan, the transvestite artist. Its appeal resides in the fact that he is imperfect but forgiving. From the beginning, it is a web of illusions joyfully entered into, their absurd romanticism tempered by a clear understanding of each other, which enables them to play without pain.

Such genuine levity about love is not for the embittered Adele and the serious Angela. Even the voracious older woman played by Eva Dahlbeck is, for all her fairness, too mannered to finally enjoy it as Agda and Stellan do.

If Agda is the most sharply drawn character and Adele the most overdrawn, then Angela is the most elusive. A compliant girl who was always adult, she couples for love without resolving the lesbian implications of her school life and her relationship with Petra (her companion and surrogate mother). Her doubt about how to be a woman without being a daughter, is amplified in her choice of lover — a man old and detached enough to be her father. Finally she and Petra return to each other and talking of "our baby", leave the world of men and wars firmly behind.

**Loving Couples** could be compared with Bergman's **Smiles of a Summer Night**, in that they share a common theme of class conscious lovers mingling on a Midsummer's Eve. However, Zetterling's social incisiveness enables **Loving Couples** to say more about the relationships between individuals and classes than Bergman, who is finally content to loll about in an idyllic pastorate. Zetterling, however, is prepared to face the world as it is.

Agnes Varda's **Lion's Love** (1969), a love poem to decaying Hollywood, is the best example on record of the self-conscious manipulation of cinema-verite. It explores the relationship between life and art by suggesting that life is but a dull imitation. Set in Viva's mansion (a Beverly

Hills version of the Garden of Eden) it is a *menage a trois* and 'living theater' in their own home. **Lion's Love** is very enjoyable because it is warm and humane, affirming life and absurdity. It could also be called indulgent, insular and decadent, but this would be pedantic and would overlook its superb self-parodying qualities. It is constantly witty, but in a droll, dreamy way, though the pace rarely wavers due to Varda's exceptionally fine sense of timing and editing.

The most overwhelming visual aspect of the film is in its color — skies as blue as the painted swimming pools, tree greens that vibrate as much as the plastic palm fronds. Amid lurid plastic pineapple lamps and fake birds of paradise, Viva and the boys make it seem just possible to love unselfishly and romantically without any attendant schmalz. Their early morning telephone conversation in bed, with the Bank of America on one line and the phone company on the other and which concludes with the phones fighting it out, is 'Absurdist' comedy par excellence.

The film is dotted with absurd, but faintly plausible, incidents that verge on black comedy. For instance they decide to be parents for a day and borrow a few kids on approval. Their solution of drugging the brats who have already drunk 15 bottles of Coke and peed 18 times, is something we may wish to do but wouldn't dare.

The fact that the film never ventures outside paradise doesn't mean it is not political. The world that comes via color television — Bobby Kennedy's assassination and the pomp of his funeral — is political and indeed more unreal than the artificial hothouse they cultivate and inhabit. If the trio's life is a travesty then at least they enjoy it, which is more than can be said for 'middle-America'.

Basically it is about a filmmaker (Agnes Varda) coming to Hollywood to make a film about Hollywood (**Lion's Love**) which includes a filmmaker (played by filmmaker Shirley Clarke) coming to Hollywood to make a film. This device is a brilliant and generous conceit which sustains the film. The film-within-films theme is continued in Viva's send-up of her type-casting in all her Warhol and Morrissey films. As she states, she will just breathe on screen and does so for the last scenes.

Although thoroughly and archly self-conscious, **Lion's Love** is never cute or precious — in fact it is totally dispensable. But who would want to part with it? If you liked the film, and some did not, you wanted it to continue indefinitely.

Phyllis, Isobel and Paulette McDonagh were among the first filmmakers to strive for internationalism in Australian cinema — devoid of parched deserts, Dads and Daves and beery bushrangers. In **The Cheaters** (1929) they achieve a level of social sophistication comparable to U.S. films of the time. However, a tinge of naivety still remains, giving their work a refreshing naturalness.

The naturalness is derived from the carefully underplayed acting Paulette has demanded and got — particularly from her sister Isobel the heroine, and her wronged 'father'. Paulette wrote the scenario for this 'society melodrama' which is the story of a convicted embezzler who swears revenge on his employer.

The feel of the film emanates from the subtle characterizations and the delicately woven kinship of these two — caught between their sense of natural justice and natural affection. The film takes a deeply moral stance as it explores the consequences of kinship and loyalty.

The interiors are rich in detail and texture. The most ambitious exteriors are those at Long Bay Gaol, shot on location, which convey the wretchedness and injustice of enforced alienation.

The romantic scenes are beautifully set pieces that work because the acting conveys nervous and tentative sensuality. The hero is a contemporary Barrymore out of Fitzgerald's Princeton (or its Sydney G.P.S. equivalent) with his convertible and rowing oars. The heroine is the worldlier of the two (as the hero's father remarks, "That woman has seen life, son"). Her attractiveness is her openness and vulnerability — she has a lot more to lose than he, the pampered playboy, ever could. Their scenes

of limpid, lakeside idyll are reminiscent of Sydney Long's paintings of bush lagoons at sunset.

One of the wittiest scenes in the film is when Isabel's companion in crime, a real old trooper in the vein of Marie Dressler, all but gives a Mae West come on to the 'policeman' arresting her. The fact that it all turns out to be a put up job, lends in retrospect an element of "high camp" to the scene.

Joyce Welland's **Rat Life and Diet in North America** (1968) is a Swiftian satire on power politics, which ingeniously uses live cats and rats.

**We're Alive** (1974) grew out of the video workshops conducted by three women graduate film students from the University College of Los Angeles at California's only state prison for women. **Fakenham Occupation** (1972), by the London Women's Film Group, covers the successful six-month work-in by women workers at Sexton's shoe factory in Fakenham, Norfolk.

Both films are striking examples of the kind of political film where the way they are made is as important as what they are about. Through the means of collective filmmaking, the filmmakers and their subjects come to an increasing understanding of their oppression. What was so remarkable was the way in which they could say precisely how and why they were put down. Such films make one wonder how far the suffragettes could have gone had they been armed with portapak and Arriflexes.

Susan Shapiro's **Women of the Rhondda** (1973) attempts to present a hitherto ignored side of the epic miners' strike of the twenties and thirties in the Rhondda Valley of Wales — the part played by the women. Hearing the miners' wives, daughters, girlfriends, mothers and sisters recounting the events casts a new light on our understanding of the personal cost of strikes.

Women are doubly burdened because the task of keeping the family going during strikes falls solely on their shoulders. And the men, devoid of their breadwinning abilities, require additional emotional support.

From the film we get a fierce sense of the loyalty and community that grew out of the strike and still exists — scabs are still remembered. The old women of the Rhondda have remarkably strong and beautiful faces. They have coped with, and ultimately defied, hardships through unity. In comfortable homes, their reflections are sharp and politically aware as they were then, though there is an element of mellowing wisdom as well.

In 1972, 26 women from the California Institute of the Arts transformed an old mansion in Hollywood into an environmental art and theater piece. Johanna Demetrakas' **Womanhouse** (1972) attempts to expose the house, but does not succeed. It spends too long recording the uncritical eulogistic 'raps' of the women involved, and too little time showing the creative and exhilarating art of the house.

Moreover, the camera's exploration of the environment is unsatisfactory and frustrating. In an unusual situation where wide-angles should be mandatory, Demetrakas employs none. Thus it is impossible to capture the total sweep of each room, let alone of the whole house. We are left tantalized.

The women's theater pieces directed by Judy Chicago are crude and dated even for 1972, particularly in view of what women's theater groups do in Australia. The only piece that was original and moving was the group walling. And, in contrast to the others, it was photographed with sensitivity. It allowed the patterning of the group of bodies acting as one voice.

The film is fragmented by editing that is all but random. According to Maya Deren, "Cinema provides a different order of space, and is able to create a different order of time" **At Land** (1943) and **Meshes of the Afternoon** (1943) are examples of her dictum. They work on a poetic level of sustained surrealism, surpassing early Bunuel in their ability to compress perceptions and create complete personal myths through simple and unsensational images. Her other cinematic affinities are with Cocteau — in her ability, through exquisite timing and



# THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL

Sue Spinner

The role of women in film will come into sharp focus in August this year when the International Women's Film Festival commences screenings in all capital cities of films made by women around the world.

The idea of this festival grew out of the Sydney Womenvision Conference in 1973, when women involved in media discussed the paucity of opportunities available to them in the film and TV industries. They realized that a film festival was one of the means of correcting this imbalance. In September 1974, the Film and Television Board granted a loan of \$20,000 to get the Festival off the ground.

The following article by Sue Spinner highlights the achievements of women directors, and explains the need for an International Women's Film Festival.

★ ★ ★

In spite of all the difficulties and barriers which have confronted women directors in film industries around the world, some have created feature length narrative films. Women directors have played a role in every country which has ever had a film industry. Why then doesn't anyone know of their existence?

From the earliest days of the industry, women have had the creative incentive to make films. Alice Guy-Blanche, for example, was Leon Gaumont's secretary, and while he was busy creating filmmaking equipment, she took on the job of making short demonstration films. Her first film, *La Fée aux Choux*, made in 1896, was completed six months before Melies made *Une Partie de Cartes*.

Guy-Blanche stayed on at Gaumont's as their artistic director until 1905, then moved to Germany and later to the U.S., where her directorial career continued until 1925.

Another of the early pioneers of American filmmaking was Lois Weber. Her prolific career began in 1913 as part of a filmmaking team with her husband. However, Weber soon began directing her own films, and in 1916 was dubbed by a popular magazine as "the highest salaried woman director in the world today".

By 1920, she had about 75 one and two reelers to her credit and several longer films. Weber made six more films in the twenties and thirties, and her last, *White Heat*, was completed five years before her death in 1939.

In the same period other women made fleeting appearances as directors: Frances Marion with *Just Around the Corner* and *The Love Light*; Mary Pickford, directing herself in three films; and Lillian Gish, directing her sister Dorothy in *Remodelling Her Husband*.

Yet, while Marion was an established screenwriter and Pickford and Gish the darlings of the screen, these excursions into the role of director were never taken seriously. They were only regarded as peripheral to their 'real' — supportive — work.

By the 1930s women had been effectively closed out of executive and creative positions in the American film industry. Those few who remained were restricted to low-budget, second-rate work. Only one woman, Dorothy Arzner, managed to crack the system and work expressly as a director.

Arzner began her film career in the twenties, first of all editing, then directing for Paramount. In the thirties, she moved to RKO, becoming Hollywood's only woman director, working with stars like Rosalind Russell in *Craig's Wife*, Katherine Hepburn in *Christopher Strong* and Lucille Ball in *Dance Girl, Dance*.

RKO were known for their B-grade films, and in her autobiography Lucille Ball reveals that when she worked at RKO, Arzner was known as "Queen of the B's"; the ballyhoo that accompanied an A-grade film throughout the thirties was not the lot of a B-grade director — male or female.

Ida Lupino, well-known to audiences as an actress in A-grade films, was equally unable to redress the lack of publicity given to women directors. She directed more than nine feature films and even created her own production company in order to have artistic control of her work. However, the limited production budgets on most of her films effectively rated them below B-grade.

In Britain, the production fund monopoly that crippled Lupino's work had the same effect on Muriel Box. Between 1946 and 1964, Box directed more than nine successful formula features, but without access to finance she was never able to work independently.



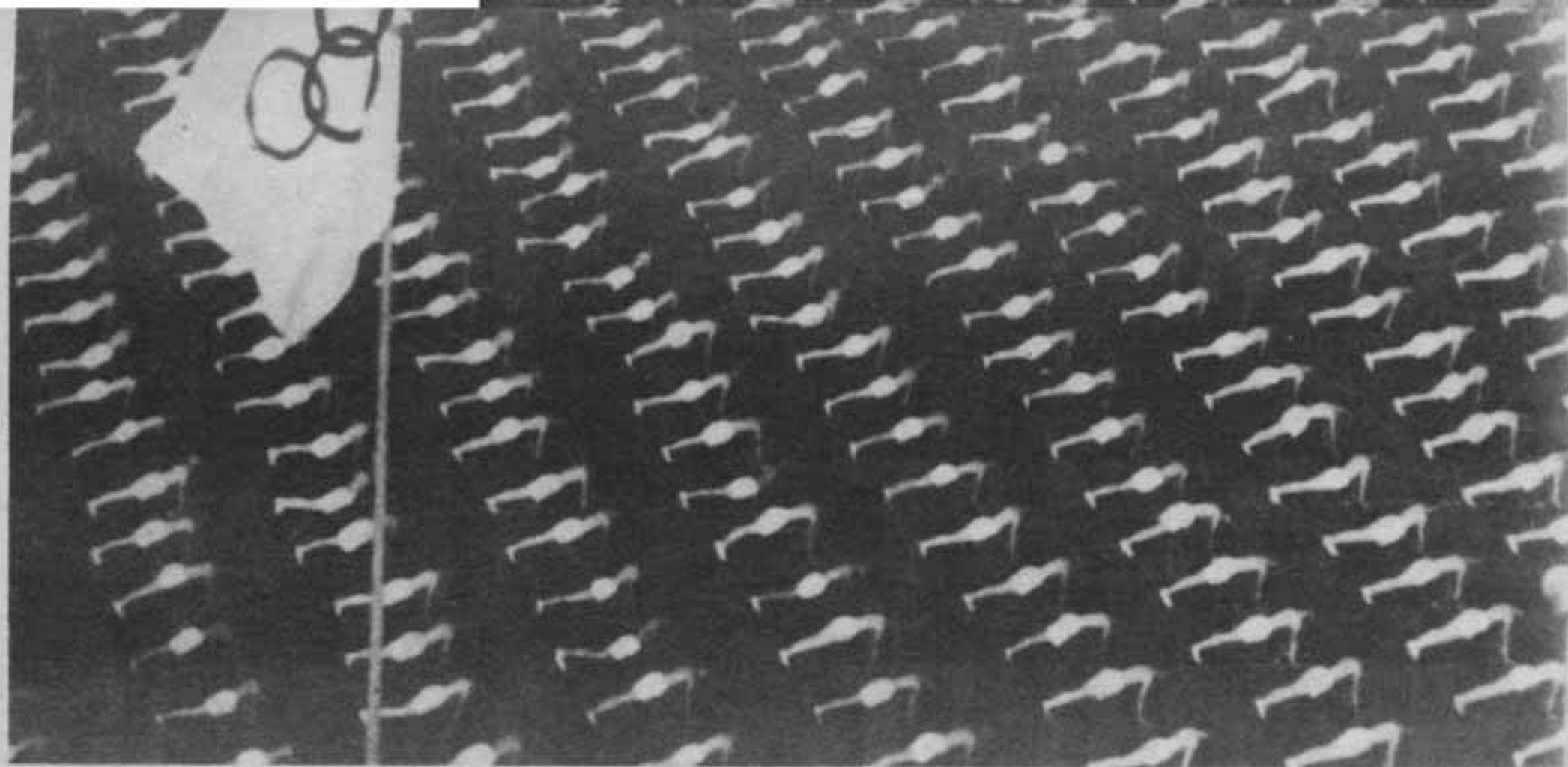
Who would buy an Agnes Varda film? Those words, spoken by a director of a major film festival with just the correct subtle balance of incredulity and scorn, epitomize the need for an Australian International Women's Film Festival.

Other women working in Britain with a freer artistic rein did so at the expense of their independence — women like Alma Reville, Hitchcock's wife and rarely accredited cinematic better half.

Olga Preobrazhenskaya was the Soviet Union's first woman director. She made her first film in 1916 and made seven more before the Stalinist purges in 1935. Esther Shub, along with Dziga-Vertov, was one of the first Russians to create feature films entirely from newsreel and archival material. Shub went on to make more than 10 films between 1927 and 1947.

Top: Dorothy Arzner (right) directing *Bride Wore Red*. Arzner was the only woman director in America during the 1930s.  
Above: Agnes Varda's *Lion's Love*.





The most outstanding woman director in eastern Europe was Poland's Wanda Jakubowska, who co-founded the Society of the Devotees of the Artistic Film (START) in the twenties. In the thirties Jakubowska joined the vanguard of the prewar documentary movement and by 1949 — with the making of *The Last Stage*\* — she had established herself as one of the leading filmmakers in Poland. Since then Jakubowska has made eight more features — the last in 1965.

Overall, the degree of emotional and physical support given to filmmakers in communist countries has been greater than in the West. Such support is due, in part, to the policies of official organizations — such as State-run film schools — which do not discourage the participation of women. Consequently eastern European women have not suffered as much as their sisters in the 'free world' from the liberal myth that success comes to those who deserve it, and their work has been seriously considered from the beginning.

Preobrazhenskaya, Shub and Jakubowska all worked closely with their male contemporaries in the forefront of technical innovation and creative experimentation, whereas Arzner and Lupino were denied this sort of ongoing productive association with their contemporaries.

Mention here must be made of the extraordinary success of Leni Riefenstahl. Extraordinary in that the most totalitarian regime of the century allowed a woman director hitherto unparalleled creative freedom. For the filming of the Berlin Olympics in 1936, Riefenstahl had 29 cameramen at her disposal, and the famous Nuremberg Rally was staged exclusively for the production of *Triumph of the Will*.

After the war, Riefenstahl disclaimed all associations with National Socialism. She is still making films, although in the more remote parts of the world. Only her documentary propaganda films have been seen in Australia.

In the West, Agnes Varda is the only woman director to have worked as an equal with men. She was an active member of the New Wave, and her film *Les Créatures* dates from this period. She was also one of the directors of *Loin de Vietnam*.

The status of women filmmakers today has hardly improved. But while there probably isn't a conscious conspiracy to prevent women making films, there certainly isn't any biological impediment preventing them from doing so either. Clearly there is historical precedent.

Those women's films that *are* made, however, are appallingly distributed, inadequately publicized, and never receive the serious critical attention they deserve. In addition, the subtext they communicate — that women *can* make films — is not apprehended. A vicious cycle ensues, keeping women either completely out of the industry or working as embattled independents — those very mavericks who, as Pauline Kael has said in a recent *New Yorker* article, the distributors and studio heads won't touch with a barge pole.

Lina Wertmüller is a glaring case in point. Her third feature *Mimi the Metalworker* has been released in Australia, but only in a 350-seat government subsidised 'art' house.

In view of the brilliance and wit with which this unabashedly commercial piece was executed, the fact that it has not had a major commercial release here is as incomprehensible as it is deplorable. Not that *Mimi* is an avowedly feminist film; in fact, to many, its commercial appeal is the direct correlative of its rampant celebration of sexism, since the film is told exclusively from the viewpoint of a philandering Sicilian male who pursues the double standard with unmatched vigor. One can only hope Wertmüller's latest film, *Of Love and Anarchy*, fares better.

At present the only film by a woman director enjoying a full commercial release is Liliana Cavani's *Night Porter*.

So, at a time when the need for women to create and explore their own cinematic images has never been greater, the commercial exhibition of women's films in Australia continues to be blocked. Agnes Varda and Susan Sontag's films wait for distribution, and Nelly Kaplan's *A Very Curious Girl* (Bloody Mary) is considered too obscene.

The need for a retrospective festival of films made only by women is urgent, and a case par excellence for positive discrimination in favor of women. A festival is neither an apology nor a destructively separatist event. The accusation of separatism (after all why not show films *about* women, not necessarily *made* by women?) can be met if the unique opportunity International Women's Year affords is considered. Never again will women have the resources at their disposal to send representatives overseas to find and negotiate for films. And perhaps never again will women have the energy nor the audacity to stage festivals in all the state capitals of the country.

Moreover, if the notion of a women's film festival is not to be a mere flash in the same greasy old pan, the original festival should provide an historical context and celebration of the catholic tastes and varied concerns of the numerous women who have been making films since the inception of this newest and most socially decisive art form.

The success of the 1975 International Women's Film Festival cannot be measured purely in terms of the audience who sees it, because the vast majority of Australian women will not. The reason for this cannot, unfortunately, be explained by simply citing admission prices — \$16 in Melbourne and Sydney for full subscriptions. If the Festival becomes the province of the educated middle class it will be because of the nature of the event and not the cost. Women are more likely to be put off by the unfamiliar and opaque notion of a film festival per se.

Hence the inroads that are made into the consciousness of the community at large will depend on the energy that is directed towards the other 'events' of the festival — the video access centers; the proposed screenings of films and videotapes in schools, country centers, shopping center auditoriums and on the factory floor by mobile projection units; the photographic exhibitions; the video tuition and the possible film-making workshops.

The organizers hope to expand the dimension of this festival by utilising its audience — a film festival's most often neglected resource. To this end, venues will be provided for people to meet after the screenings in order to talk in warm and sympathetic conditions.

The danger inherent in such a festival is that it could become an excuse for passivity, under the respectable guise of a critical evaluation of the past, unless its praxis-making potential — its ability to illuminate the past in order to inspire, inform and emotionally support current or potential female filmmakers — is realized.

The existence of such a festival is almost mandatory if women filmmakers are to be exposed to the need for dynamic reappraisal of their own individual perceptions, in order to *ensure* that a new idiom and new dimensions are added to the art of filmmaking. ★

Above left: Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympiade* 1936. A woman director with hitherto unparalleled creative freedom.

Above right: Mai Zetterling's *Night Games*. Zetterling will be a guest of the International Women's Film Festival.

\**The Last Stage* is a documentary reconstruction of the fate of women in Nazi concentration camps. It was made by a cast and crew, including the director herself, who had been imprisoned in them.





"The success of any actor in any generation can be traced to the personification of some trait which is fairly common to most of the population . . .

"Glenda Jackson personifies a kind of anti-sentimental candor which, in our finest moments, enables us to reject the pap, kitsch and schlock that stultify our daily lives."

Charles Marowitz

## Glenda Jackson

Ms Jackson, you said that by the time you were 18 you have decided to be an actress and that apart from a brief stint in a chemist shop you had not considered any other career. Did you feel that you would ever become a major film star?

No. When I started my training I was told I was obviously only a 'character' actress, and could not expect to have any substantial parts until I was in my forties. At that time in the theater most of the roles went to pretty blonde 'juves'. Then it all changed with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, in which, for the first time, working-class life was considered palatable for the theater, whereas previously the country-house set or classical old masters were the only vehicles for actors.

Who were the film and stage actresses that inspired you as a girl?

Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn . . .

Because of the sort of roles they played?

No, because of their acting; but someone I really liked was Esther Williams.

You have worked a lot with Ken Russell, during which time you tended to play a certain type of woman. Has that relationship and the particular way he saw you had any effect on the films you have made for other directors?

No, he had seen me in *Marat-Sade* and asked me as a result to do *Women in Love*. He was one of the young directors who had come up through television in the post-Osborne era and I had always liked his work. He has tremendous energy and so much enthusiasm, but most

In 1954 Glenda Jackson entered the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, following in the wake of actors like Albert Finney, Peter O'Toole, Sarah Miles and Alan Bates.

Ten years of demoralizing repertory work followed her graduation, until she was selected by directors Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz to play a role in the Artaud-inspired production of *Marat-Sade* for the Royal Shakespearean Company's Theatre of Cruelty season.

Her rivetting portrayal of the crazed Charlotte Corday on stage in London and New York — and later in Brook's film of the production — mesmerized audiences.

Ken Russell saw Glenda Jackson as Charlotte and was prompted to take her on to play Gudrun in his film of Lawrence's *Women in Love*. Her precision acting and raw, unfashionable type of sexuality immediately established her as a unique actress.

Within ten years she was to become one of the most charismatic screen presences in the world.

Glenda Jackson was recently in Melbourne with the Royal Shakespearean Company, and was interviewed by Sue Spinner and Pat Longmore for the International Women's Film Festival.

Jackson speaks of the 'dark' and perhaps demented women she has played for many directors, and her desire to play 'lighter souls'.

importantly, he allows you to bring all your fantasies into play.

I've heard Liv Ullman, talking about Bergman, say that a good director creates the space for the actor's fantasies. There's an instance she cites of when she was playing a vain woman who was to walk down a passageway. Most directors would have chosen to do a panning shot, but Liv Ullman stopped in front of a mirror in order to project her thoughts. Bergman had placed the camera exactly because he anticipated she might do just that.

Great directors have the ability to anticipate or allow innovations to occur. Ken Russell also has this ability.

Have you ever had a director place you in a physically harrowing or dangerous position?

Ken Russell is an utter physical coward, and therefore he always has his actors doing extremely dangerous things so he doesn't look a coward himself. In one scene in *Women in Love*, Oliver and I were in a side-car on a low loader, going along a very narrow lane in Derbyshire with deep ditches on either side. We were going at such incredible speed that we went off the road and ended up in the ditch. Only the cameraman's protest that the speed was quite unnecessary saved us from having to repeat the

scene over and over, although we actors were ready to pick ourselves up and start afresh.

On the coldest day of the coldest British winter for years, for the last shot of *The Music Lovers* in the asylum, I found myself crouched over a grating, in a disused army barracks, clad only in a thin cotton frock, no stockings or shoes. The shot was repeated over and over again during the day until I was literally blue. Eventually, my face had quite frozen — it looked perfect for the film.

For the 1812 fantasy scene in *The Music Lovers*, Richard Chamberlain and I had to run into the street in a storm. They had got an enormous wind machine with a great propellor, and it had been turned on with such force it literally lifted us off our feet and dropped us in a heap, with me on the bottom. I realized, during the moments the bodies above me were getting up, that Ken would be waiting for my comments. So I said that it was a most fantastic experience, just like flying. To which he responded by ordering that the machine be turned down by half at least. I knew if I had said how vile it was, he would have decided it had to be just like that and wanted to do it again.

In the context of the rest of your films, "A Touch of Class" is unusual. Why did you do it?

For a change it was so nice not to have to destroy anybody. I am always being such a dark lady, so gloomy. It was a lovely change to be light for a little while.

Continued on page 177



Do you ever offer any technical criticism — for instance in the flat corridor sequence in "Sunday Bloody Sunday", the sound has an echoing quality . . . ?

No, Schlesinger deliberately chose that sound for the sound track. Sometimes in post-synching I hear a line I've interpreted with the wrong tone or inflection and, if possible, alterations are made.

Have any directors expressed a preference for using you in long or middle shots as opposed to close-ups?

Sometimes, I have suggested that a full shot would enable the full body to make a gesture that interpreted the mood more effectively than just a close-up of the face.

Do you believe a film could be made through a group decision process?

No. Actors are people who will never make a decision if it can be avoided, and it's essential for a film or stage production that someone have complete authority to make decisions and keep a balance between the conflicting claims of the actors' ideas. Otherwise, working together can become too personally destructive.

It's too easy to forget in those situations that the text you're dealing with probably represents a greater mind than all the ones that are interpreting it. You have to have respect for the text and believe that what you are making is more than the total of the egos involved in it.

It's particularly true in the theater, where the original idea will have come in a far more filled-in form than in films, where the director may only bring the skeleton for the actors to flesh out. Someone like Peter Brook would always listen to and try out what any of us had to say. A great director is great because he is open. You should be able to say anything to him and he should be able to say anything to you. If you are going to have your feelings hurt you shouldn't be doing it in the first place.

A film is obviously different from a theatrical production in that it can be altered after its completion. Have you ever been concerned that the direction of the finished product has been changed either by the editor or an entrepreneur?

No.

Have the roles you played ever affected your life and the way you were living?

Not in films, because all the energy goes out so quickly. Making a film is like five first-nights in one day. It's so physically demanding that by the end of the day there's nothing left. In a play, if you're doing it for a long time, it begins to mesh with your everyday perceptions, because you have to re-create it each time. During *Marat-Sade* it was like living in a lunatic asylum, and one day it occurred to me that everyone I had talked to that day was insane.

Have you ever been offered scripts by large American companies?

Yes, but the scripts were all unsuitable.

If you were offered a script from Hollywood that was 'suitable', would you accept?

Yes, I'd do anything for anybody if it were good.

Working on "Sunday Bloody Sunday", did you find that having a script written by a woman added to or altered the interpretation of your role?

No. Schlesinger had suggested the idea to Penelope Mortimer years ago. She was in New York when we were shooting, and I think they had long conversations on the telephone over it.

What did you feel about the unhappiness of the characters at the end of the film? Do you think they should have been allowed to make those choices and be happy as well?

No, to me it was very realistic. People manage personal relationships worst of all — the important thing is that they go on exposing themselves to feeling and go on loving. What's so remarkable and admirable about the film is that the sexual aspect of their relationships is underplayed — they all really love and care for each other. And they keep themselves open to go on loving, taking their scars with them and knowing that they'll always be hurt. You must remember 10 years ago they would have all had to go off into a room and shoot themselves. But they were all there at the end, alive — certainly scarred.

Peter's speech then, which he did so beautifully, shows just how much. But you know absolutely that suicide's not on for any of them.

If you were presented with a responsible project — possibly to be written and directed by women — delineating new forms of social relationships, would you be willing to assist even to the extent of taking a deferred salary?

Yes, because no actress should be in the business for the money. I've already done this in *The Triple Echo* with Oliver Reed. We both took hardly any money and shot it in an incredibly short time because we believed in what it was about and that the director knew what he was doing.

What kind of films would you like to be making in the future?

I really want to make political films — ones that take up an overt political stance. But there are tremendous problems. Ken Loach worked 18 months to get a script of this nature together and then ran into a wall of censorship as no one would give him the money to finish it. Even when Loach had actually got the money and made the film, he met a more insidious form of censorship.

In Britain, there's the Board of Film Censors, but the real censorship comes from the distributors who will not distribute these films once they are made. *Triple Echo*, which is set in the war and is about a woman who shields a deserter, is a case in point. It was never properly distributed, and hardly anybody's seen it.

#### FILMOGRAPHY

1967	<i>Marat Sade</i>	(Peter Brook) UK
1968	<i>Negatives</i>	(Peter Medak) UK
1969	<i>Women in Love</i>	(Ken Russell) UK
1970	<i>The Music Lovers</i>	(Ken Russell) UK
1971	<i>Sunday Bloody Sunday</i>	(John Schlesinger) UK
1972	<i>The Boyfriend</i>	(Ken Russell) UK
	<i>The Triple Echo</i>	(Michael Apted) UK
1973	<i>A Touch of Class</i>	(Melvin Frank) UK
	<i>Bequest to the Nation</i>	(James Cellan Jones) UK
	<i>Mary Queen of Scots</i>	(Charles Jarrot) UK
1974	<i>The Temptress</i>	(Damiano Damiani) Italy
1975	<i>The Romantic Englishwoman</i>	(Joseph Losey) UK

(Incomplete)