REEL MADNESS FILM FESTIVAL 2002 Festival Program

Films and Discussions

About mental illness and recovery

A special Project Of the

Movie Monday Society

www. islandnet. com/mm



Thank_you to our sponsors

sponsors:

VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY













Canada Council for the Arts

Conseil des Arts du Canada

And Special Thanks to ...

Huge thanks to Bruce Wallace, my collaborator for the fifth year, in making this festival a go. That's a long-term relationship. His dedication to MM is squeezed between family and other commitments to job and equally good causes.

A new close working partner this year, as my family grows up and away, is Hugh Armstrong. His magnificent work on the MM web site is particularly instrumental in keeping me organized and everyone informed, up to the minute, with our endeavours. My son Paul still gets plundered on weekends and holidays for his computer graphic skills, especially in this year's posters and the year round programs for MM. To my wife Laurel who gives me my head (and a lot of "our time") to pursue my dream. My folks for their faithful contribution.

This year the extra organization of Rob's tour has been possible with the help of especially Lynne Smith, at Western Canoeing and Kayaking, and Paul vanPeenen in Abbottsford, Peter Harris and Alex Rhodes at Vancouver Island Canoe and Kayak Centre and also Kathy Scholz at Mountain Equipment Co-op, Sarah Regan at Western Washington University, and Bill Martin, REI and Elliot Bay Books in Seattle. Having these satellite events has not only made it possible for our modest festival to afford to have Rob come, but also to reach a far broader audience with the mental health message our events carry.

Thanks also to Canadian Mental Health B C Division, The Mood Disorders Association of B C, and Vancouver Island Health Authority (formerly known as CHR) and the pharmaceutical companies Janssen, Eli Lilly, Novartis and Glaxo Smith Kline for finding funds, again without strings, to support this unique "consumer" driven and broad reaching approach to mental health education.

Big thanks to Canada Council for the Arts. Just before the Fest and when the account was almost dry, we received word of generous support to reward our filmmakers for their contribution and also to present more Canadian independent films in our special way throughout the year. Thanks especially thanks to our Movie Monday Society Board, and the rest of our volunteers.

The talent and the audience - as last year You do that so well.....

DONATIONS are always welcome in the jar or later to the "Movie Monday Society" 2033 Chaucer St Victoria B C V8R 1H6. We're still an underfunded fiercely independent outfit - but that doesn't mean we want to maintain the underfunded part. We also want to remain accessible to the underfunded.







A Message from the

Festival Director

n my own

so many others'...

trying to find the

nation of things

that will get us

of being "well"

quest."

back to a feeling

again is like a Tol-

kien protagonist's

thing or the combi-

case and in

warning: Movie reference ahead

This year, and once again, pulling together this festival, I have felt like Steve Martin's character in BOWFINGER. against all odds and with an unreal budget and with compensatory amounts of passion making it work once again. It's

a brilliant comedy and if you've seen it, (or when you'll see it - you must) you'll see the parallels. Even the "wetbacks" are here, our volunteers, becoming increasingly sophisticated in making the production work. Well, they are a pretty sophisticated lot already, but everyone is taking a chance on supporting my vision of a grand outcome.

I too am waiting for that FEDEX truck to come up

my street. Funds are getting even more elusive, with economic uncertainty and especially government cutbacks. We really appreciate the organizations and agencies that have found funds, without strings, to support this unique initiative.

This year we're taking a bigger gamble, bringing a "bigger act", to town, organizing a tour for Rob Perkins to make his trip to the West Coast viable. That includes events in Seattle, Bellingham, Abbottsford and two events in an auditorium twice the size of our modest MM theatre. It's a risk

> and a lot of extra work. but like Bowfinger I have a vision and it's just gotta work!

This year the theme that evolved is "A Ouest For Wellness". When I ran that name by my 21year-old son he critiqued it, "sounds a little cheesy" (although agreeing it was a worthy theme). But that's what it feels like. In my own case and in so many others' I've heard over the vears since I've been on

that winding road, trying to find the thing or the combination of things that will get us back to a feeling of being "well" again is like a Tolkien protagonist's quest. There are an infinite number of choices and combinations; lifestyle, vocation, medical, counselling options that can be tried.

Some make us sicker, less functional... many are contradictory and we're often choosing in a crisis when we're having a hard time, planning our next moment let alone a course of treatment. Sometimes having choices are made for us.

I have acquaintances who are replacing all their fillings, are doing mega vitamins, pig vitamins. Some are trying every new medication (and sometimes not much else), some are experimenting with "med holidays". Yoga, meditation, exercise, art therapy...the list goes on, the results vary. Our films are provocative, the discussions should be illuminating. I always learn a lot.

There is excellent new information emerging showing new trends and hopefulness for people who suffer the trauma of mental illness. Even the concept of mental illness as a temporary, passing, occasional thing that can be lived with, lived well with*, is an innovation in many circles. It's a concept that people need to grasp early on that road to survive it.

I hope that, coming as it does from an expatient's perspective, the festival, the films, the guests, the conversations we have and the media spin we create (and we're getting good at that) will inspire people and those around them to keep on exploring down that road.

The folks that seem to be gaining on it are the ones actively engaged in "The Quest"

The films this year explore the options, offer some positive examples and some cautions too.

Bruce Jaunders

Coordinator

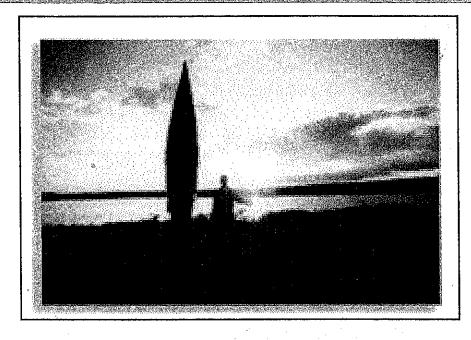
* see our web site link to the Boston University website: http://www.bu.edu/cpr/webcast/ "The Recovery Vision: New paradigm, new questions, new answers"

Please Note:

Many events will be video taped. The camera will be on the featured speaker or facilitator - not the audience. Sound only will be collected from audience participation. We're keen to have your input.

The whole purpose is to share ideas and first-hand knowledge and experience. But keep in mind, neither is it meant to be a therapy situation nor is it confidential. Simply, if you don't want something known by the public, this probably isn't a good place to share it. If you do regret something said in a taped discussion, please let us know so the comments can be stricken from the record. The tapes may only be used for reference and with care in educational settings. Contact Bruce Saunders 595-5977 or email bruces@islandnet.com

More detail on the films, sources, makers, and topics as well as background on Movie Monday, our 8 1/2 year old weekly film program, and last year's fest on our website: www.islandnet.com/mm.



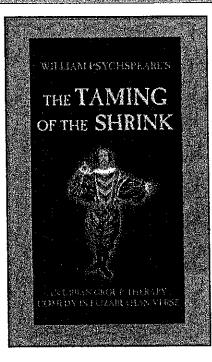
INTO THE GREAT SOLITUDE

(57min, USA., 1989)

Rob Perkins is this year's featured filmmaker, and this is his first and best-known film. In his unique and intimate film journal, Rob Perkins brings alive the Arctic tundra. Trading in a high-paying job in New York for a solo adventure in this uninhabited wilderness, he travels alone for 72 days in his canoe "Loon" down the 700-mile long Back River, one of Northwest Canada's toughest and most remote waterways. Filming his own journey with an artist's eye and a deep sensitivity toward the environment, he draws us into the open, elemental beauty of the land: its power, its fragility, and its mystery. We follow him during the long hours of Arctic twilight, in encounters with wild animals, in battles with the strong winds and dangerous rapids. His isolation also takes him on an inner journey in which he faces change and death and searches for perspectives on his relationship with his father.

Before the film enjoy the sounds of the Minds at Work's Rhythm & Blues Band.

Stay after the film for a conversation with Rob Perkins.



THE TAMING OF THE SHRINK

(10min, USA, 1998)

Join four Elizabethans (who somehow find themselves in the high-rise office of a 16th century therapist) as they delve into our collective angst, in iambic pentameter, of course. We'd like to think *William Shakespeare* would have seen this film as a way to get some closure.



MASKS OF MADNESS

(50min, Canada, 1998)

A controversial documentary that chronicles the experiences of patients and health care professionals who went beyond the inadequacies of conventional psychiatry to find their answers in orthomolecular medicine. Hosted by actor *Margot Kidder* who herself suffered from manic depression, we hear how she finally recovered using orthomolecular medicine. Other former patients participate in a roundtable discussion of their individual descents into mental illness, their extraordinary difficulties in getting answers from conventional psychiatry, and their final recoveries using diet, vitamins and a minimum of pharmacological intervention.

We are looking forward to the post-film discussions on this controversial film. One of the people who shares their story in the film will join us in the

Saturday January 26th 6:30pm



UNTANGLING THE MIND

(54min, Canada, 2000)

This riveting documentary shows the transformation that has occurred in psychiatric care through the pioneering work of Dr. Heinz Lehmann. When Dr. Lehmann fled Nazi Germany to Montreal in 1937, he devoted the next sixty years to finding new and more humane treatments for the mentally ill. One of his dramatic achievements, captured on archival film, was a series of experiments involving intense human contact with his most regressed women patients. But Dr. Lehmann's greatest legacy came with a single pill - Largactil - the first anti-psychotic drug used in North America. By successfully treating patients with this drug, Lehmann introduced the world to the idea that biology plays a role in mental illness.

While Untangling the Mind is a record of Lehmann's perseverance and humanity, it is also an important historical record. Extraordinary archival footage of doctors performing electric shock therapy and lobotomies demonstrate how far psychiatric medicine has come. The

doctor wonders too whether we've gone too far toward the medical model and lost some of the compassionate work and institutional care that, in spite of the crudeness of older therapies, protected people with mental illnesses from the dangers being down and out on the streets.

Produced by Catherine Mullins for Green Lion Productions. Technology will allow us to connect Catherine in Montreal with the audience in Victoria for our post-film discussion.

INCITE/INSIGHT

(4min, Canada, 2000)

This short artfully embellished interview with Irit Shimrat, author of Call Me Crazy - Stories from the Mad Movement is a clear dissenting voice for the right not to be "psychiatrized" for mental illness symptoms. The filmmaker from Vancouver, Cindy Lou Griffith will be joining us. She is currently finishing her degree at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design where she has produced a series of videos reflecting her views on anti-psychiatry and family. Her video work has a strong emphasis on historical and interview-based documentation.



JERICHO AND HIS FORTRESS

(5min, Canada, 2001)

Neil is a person who has been in and out of institutions; he gets a small check to keep a roof over his head and bums money on the street to get buy with food and some tobacco. Most people walk past him and pretend he is not there. Some people give him money but don't stop to talk. Filmmaker Robert Williams stopped, and the result is this short animated film that questions how the idea of reality is very different for everyone. What does my reality sound like to someone else?

Sunday January 27th 6:30pm



TWITCH CITY

(2hr15min, Canada, 1998)

Don McKellar's t.v. opus shot with great style by Bruce McDonald. Our protagonist, Curtis, (Don McKellar) is a TV addicted, Frutti-O's crunching recluse with a certain cunning as a landlord and a love interest for room mate, Molly Parker. Don McKellar's oddly charming character could be diagnosed as agoraphobic as his roommate gradually realises he has a fear of leaving his home. While he has adapted well to his situation and people around him accommodate his "quirk", it is becoming a problem as his new friend challenges him to go beyond his boundaries. Produced by Shadow Shows and Accent Entertainment in association with CBC Television. Special thanks to Accent Entertainment for permission to bring Twitch City to our city.

See also the letter on agoraphobia on pages 13 and 14 in this programme.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A STUDENT FILMMAKER

(10min, Canada, 1993)

A darkly funny journal of a young filmmaker struggling to rationalize a really bad first student film. By Victo ria's Jason Bortnick

Pre-film entertainment with Ken Beattie



18.000 DEAD IN GORDON HEAD

(13min. Canada, 2001)

Our festival featured Hitler! in 1999 and Gordon's Head in 2001, now we present Clive Holden's latest, and last, in his trilogy. This experimental film uses the audio track from his Trains Of Winnipeg spoken word CD. The words and eerie soundtrack recall an incident he witnessed of a girl shot by a sniper in our Gordon Head and a rash of other violent incidents that he encountered soon after. 18,000 is an estimate of how many violent deaths a child growing up might witness on TV. A creative look at one's mental health in a sometimes violent world.

Once again, Clive Holden will leave snowy Winnipeg to present his film and join our discussions.



TALKING TO ANGELS (60min. USA. 1995)

This year's featured filmmaker Rob Perkin's personal story about the experience of his partner, Rene's, illness with breast cancer. This film is a journal of how it was for both of them to be thrown into a reluctant struggle with a daunting foe. Times of hopefulness, helplessness, resignation and insight. The film blends Rob's solo canoeing in the Canadian north and their life at home in Cambridge, MA. It was completed when they were still hopeful of a recovery or a least some good years together and ends with their marriage. Unfortunately Rene died soon after. It's a journey that most of us avoid thinking about but are likely to experience, one way or another. This life-affirming legacy of their story is a valuable one. It's a difficult but touching film and Rob particularly asked if he might share it with an audience.

REEL MADNESS

AFTERNOON SEMINAR & FILMS

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT: Saturday, January 26, 1:30pm

An event celebrating the artistic, creative spirit, its strong connection to mental illness and its role in well-being at the Movie Monday Theatre at the Eric Martin Pavilion By donation.

Irene Loughlin, the artist whose painting "My Ancestress" adorns our festival poster this year will be with us bringing her knowledge as a member /curator at Vancouver's Gallery Gachet and her experience as a person who "uses art as a vehicle for social and political advocacy and as a means for creative selfexpression" She will be bringing some work and slides from Gachet. (her bio is on our web site). Linda Downey is a Victoria artist who created the poster image for RM Fest 2000. They will join us in a conversation illustrated by the following short films:

DRIVEN TO CREATE

(4min, Canada, 2001)

A short film about how art and poetry can be used as a healing tool of transformation and spiritual strength. "Art need not be taught; it is a flower within waiting to be released through passion, risk and growth, " says the filmmaker Linda Downey. "I have been an artist all my life. Art has been an inspiration and creative catalyst for me to express my passion and allow myself to heal. Art is a wonderful tool to release shame, guilt, and denial and to empower ourselves."



SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

(27min, USA, 1998)

Nominated for an Emmy, this documentary produced by award winning (ex-NFB) producer Jack Oldield features artists in the San Diego area who are creating some powerful images and exploring how their creative energy relates to their "altered states". Produced with help from Eli Lilly and Janssen.

WHY?

(12min, Canada, 1990)

Carol Halstead will be with us for the festival again to present this brilliantly illustrated rant about her life - why she, at 60, had gone back to art school (and 11 years later is still working toward a masters degree and "taking as long as she can to complete it"). Using a narrative voice and various visual techniques, she touches on experiences that resonate for many women, including marriage, mothering, welfare, work, isolation, depression, survival, and strength.

REEL MADNESS

AFTERNOON SEMINAR

Personal Narrative Filmmaking

Sunday, January 27, 1:30pm (\$15.00 registration fee)

Both filmmakers are presenting films at the Festival and are deeply committed communicators, creatively telling their stories and succeeding in several mediums. Both independent artists following their bliss, working out their stuff on film, video, audio and print mediums, distribute their own work - and making a living as well. Both have excellent web sites. We'll show clips of their work and have a relaxed exchange of ideas with participants.

Rob Perkins from Cambridge MA has made six films with PBS and England's Channel 4 and is preparing for his next film which will take him down the (Greasy) Limpopo River in Southern Africa. Into The Great Solitude is a classic canoe adventure film that was featured in last year's Waterwalker festival that toured Canada, and also was honored by a screening at Movie Monday. He has authored several books and visiting his website can fill you in more (www.gotrob.com).

Clive Holden is a Victoria native now enjoying the creative climate in Winnipeg. This will be the 3rd year he has been a feature presenter at our festival and several MM events. His spoken word work has been featured on CBC; a regular contributor to Definately Not The Opera, and a major doc on Leonard Cohen. Clive's innovative spoken word CD, Trains Of Winnipeg is #62 (with a bullet) on Canadian college campus radio and several of the tracks have become experimental films. Previews can be seen on Clive fabulous interactive website at www.trainsofwinnipeg.com.

Sponsored by



Letter on Living with Agoraphobia to go with our discussion of TWITCH CITY (name withheld)

I was always an anxious child, but who would have guessed I would end up housebound by the age of 40?

It wasn't until my late teens, early 20s that I started having panic attacks. I had a very stressful job at the time and wasn't coping too well. Family matters at home were stressful too. Somehow the combined stressors triggered my panic attacks (although I didn't know what they were called then).

Since then, I have had four nervous breakdowns. I have lived with both 'functional' agoraphobia (I could do normal activities with some limitations, but the agoraphobic tendencies weren't interfering with my life too much), and 'intense' agoraphobia (afraid to leave my house).

I am an extremely intelligent and sensitive person. That can be both good and bad. On the one hand, I am sensitive to the feelings of others and have much compassion and empathy. On the other

hand, I can become overwhelmed by the pain and suffering of others.

Worry is a big part of the problem. When I feel I cannot cope, I tend to worry more than the average person. "What if..." statements become the norm. And when one worries too much, both

physical and psychological damage results. I have worried to the point where I thought I could not stand another minute of having to be alive in my brain and body. It's an EXTREME feeling. The problem with anxiety that runs ahead unchecked is that it becomes excessive and interferes with normal, daily functioning.

I have been virtually housebound for four years. How did this happen? Sometimes I don't under-

stand it myself. Again, it was a combination of life stressors over which I had no control. It was worry over work demands, financial difficulties, and relationships. All combined again to trigger this syndrome.

Anyone who feels they're heading in my direction should check out every possible avenue of treatment. The big thing is STICK

with whatever you decide and DO the

work. If you don't actually DO the work yourself, whether it's changing your diet, exercising, taking medication, or learning relaxation methods, you won't see any results know that can be hard. I've struggled for years with different therapies and treatments. Some give relief, some don't, some need to be tried over and over. Despite every-

or now. I am •housebound and have learned to live with it, just as one would learn to live in a wheelchair. I am making a life for myself despite my anxiety and agoraphobia. I've learned that I need to nip anxiety in the bud, so that it doesn't get too far out-ofcontrol. Finding ways to cope is extremely important."

thing, I never give up.

For now, I am housebound and have learned to live with it, just as one would learn to live in a wheelchair. I am making a life for myself despite my anxiety and agoraphobia. I've learned that I need to nip anxiety in the bud, so that it doesn't get too far outof-control. Finding ways to cope is extremely important.

I do get out of the house. I can go for walks down the road in front of my house and I can go out in the car for brief rides. An agoraphobic always needs to know they can get back to a 'safe' place. So, for me, I don't want to venture too far. However, I am doing more now than I was four years ago. That is progress I know I can build on.

All my health care practitioners make house calls. My appointments come to me. That's the only way I can do it. I am an extremely resourceful person, so I continually find my own ways of dealing with these things. My husband does the grocery shopping and errands, and if he can't, there are a lot of grocery stores that deliver.

Inside the house I do my own cooking, cleaning, paying bills, etc. and I run my own home-based business. I have been able to carve out a life for myself DESPITE being confined. I feel lucky that I am able to do this. A lot of people with this condition just hide away and do nothing with themselves and sink into depression.

It's not all fun and games, I can assure you. I have a really hard time being alone in the house as well. Being afraid of being alone is also a component of agoraphobia.

My situation is probably unique to me. Although I share the same symptoms, etc. that others with anxiety and agoraphobia might have, I'm also able to function relatively well. However, when I was first housebound I was EXTREMELY stressed and

could not handle much at all. It's taken me four years to develop this system of living I have now, which is probably why I say I feel lucky. It's ME who's done all the work to rehabilitate myself to this point.

In the past four years, I've gone from living on welfare to running my own business. Originally, no one in mental health seemed able to help me with the way the system is currently set up. The provincial government programs appeared unable to assist someone in my situation.

Imagine wanting to be retrained for work or get some more training? How does one do that if they can't go out to them or can't afford to pay? So I got determined to find whatever resources I could to get what I need to have a relatively normal life, except for being confined to the house. Now I have found ways to accommodate my situation.

I was successful in obtaining a business loan through the ABLED (Advice and Business Loans for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities) Program. This has enabled me to furnish my home office with upto-date computer equipment and supplies. I now pay for my own home support and health support services.

Yes, I had some counseling and some alternative therapies (massage, etc.) But the mental health system did little to help me. The mental health system's program constraints unfortunately make it difficult for people like me to find ongoing, comprehensive rehabilitative assistance. And programs outside the mental heath system are much too expensive for me to take part in.

I had to make it happen myself. There again I may differ from others. Some people aren't sure where to find help or may not feel they want any. I just happen to have some moxie* that says if I have to live like this, I'm going to make it as comfortable as I can.

(Editor's note: Moxie=guts, courage and nerve.)

ARTIST STATEMENT - Irene Loughlin

Irene Loughlin is a multi-disciplinary artist working in painting, installation, video and performance art. She has studied at the Ontario College of Art, the NSCAD New York Summer Studio Program, and Simon Fraser University. She has worked as an artist in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (Canada's most economically deprived area) over the last five years, and lived in a studio located on the 100 block of East Hastings in 1997. During this time, she became an advocate in the area, concentrating on improved access and health care for drug users, and for artists with mental



health issues. She is currently a member of the board of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) and is co-curating a Performance Art Series for the Vancouver Performance Art Biennale October 2001 at Gallery Gachet.

Irene Loughlin has struggled with marginalization related to her mood disorder and subsequent past substance addiction over the last ten years. She is actively involved in the disability arts and culture movement, and has been a member of Gallery Gachet The Artists' Cooperative (a consumer/survivor artistrun centre in Vancouver) for the past four years. She uses art as a vehicle for social and political advocacy and a means for creative self-expression.

In the painting on our poster, Mo Bansinsearach (My Ancestress), Irene Loughlin draws upon her Irish-Canadian ancestry and explores the passage of time and the specific quality of light that comes from the depths of the aquatic world. She investigates mythic relationships existing between humans and the sea. She captures the essence of hypnotic fascination with the Pacific Ocean that exists in the consciousness of the people of the West Coast in this painting, a fascination that also exists in the mythology of her ancestor. If you would like to contact her, please email maeve9@lycos.com.



OAK BAY COPY CENTRE LTD QUALITY HIGH SPEED COLOUR AND BAW DIGITAL OUTPUT Conv & rax Service

Kelly McKernan

Tel: (250) 595-3040 Fox: (250) 595-8265 Email: obcopy@shawbiz.ca

2017A Cadboro Bay Road Victoria, B.C. VBR 5G4

CHARON HILL

PRESTIGE PICTURE FRAMING ETCETERA 2802 DAK BAY AVENUE, VICTORIA, BC VBR 164



