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GNATM Celebrates Canadian Cinema

By Kim Skene, Program Assistant, Tom Thomson Art Gallery



Still from: *Still Mine*

As a programmer for the TOM's Gallery Night at the Movies' film series and a member of the Film Circuit, I had the opportunity to attend Cinéfest in Sudbury this past September. In a whirl-wind weekend filled with festival line-ups, concession food and coffee, I saw a number of great films – two of which we will feature in the New Year.

In January, we are screening Michael McGowan's *Still* starring James Cromwell and Geneviève Bujold. We have shown three of McGowan's other features, (*One Week*, *Score: a Hockey Musical* and *Saint Ralph* – one of my very favourite films) and all have played well to our patrons with the right amount of humour, poignancy and unabashed Canadian-ness. McGowan directed and wrote this latest film after reading a news article about an 89 year-old New Brunswicker who came up against some red tape while building a home on his own land. Cromwell and Bujold give great performances. While introducing his film, McGowan was all smiles about meeting the real Craig Morrison, his family and shooting in New Brunswick; the director is as amicable and as Canadian as his films. Some of the film was also shot in Northern Ontario, and while I am ever the "shusher" in movie theatres, it was great to hear excited whispers "Hey that's where..." or "That's so-and-so's farm..." while watching.

In February, we are screening *Stories We Tell*, a genre-bending documentary by the ever so talented Sarah Polley, (*Away From Her*, *Take This Waltz*) produced in conjunction with the National Film Board. Exploring the nature of truth, memory and storytelling, Polley playfully interrogates her own family – seemingly a cast of the usual suspects – regarding what began as a family joke when she was a child. Intimate and heartwarming, the audience seems to become one of the family as we too are drawn into the story.

It seems that Gallery Night at the Movies is celebrating Canadian cinema. By happy accident, these first two films are both from popular Canadian directors, whose work we have featured over the years. There is a familiarity to many Canadian films – whether it is the location or just the mind set. In fact, there is no lack of great Canadian cinema to be watching for. Ruba Nadda follows up *Cairo Time* and *Saba* with the

film *Inescapable* starring Alexander Siddig, and Joshua Jackson. And the same group who brought the award-winning films *Incendies* and *Monsieur Lazhar* to the big screen have a new offering out, *Inch'Allah*, which depicts a Canadian doctor's perspective while working in the West Bank.

Many Canadian films over the last few seasons have garnered international and critical acclaim, but lack the commercial push to be widely released to theatres. Gallery Night at the Movies' mandate is to bring the best in foreign, alternative and independent cinema to the region - that so much of it right now is Canadian, is a great thing for Canadian film and area film-goers.