

ART

Exhibition of avant-garde film challenges Hollywood model

Gerald Saul: *Persistent Visions*
(1833 Hamilton St.)
(through July 19)

In every arts discipline, there's a division between mainstream and *avant-garde* forms of practice. And nowhere is this divide greater than in film.

Faced with the overwhelming presence of Hollywood, and the esthetic conventions it imprints in the public's mind, experimental film-makers must struggle to create an audience for their work.

That struggle, and the desire to debunk *avant-garde* film's undeserved reputation for being intellectually pretentious and "boring," is the rationale behind "Projected Value," a satellite film series organized for Neutral Ground by Saskatchewan film-maker Brett Bell.

The series' first component, Gerald Saul's *Persistent Visions*, runs from Tuesday to Saturday from dusk to midnight at 1833 Hamilton, the former location of Sutherland Books.

Each evening, Saul will project two film loops, each 10-30 seconds, culled from his own personal archive, onto the front window, where they will be visible to passing pedestrians and motorists.

By subtly subverting a familiar architectural space, Saul challenges viewers' preconceptions of Regina's nocturnal downtown environment.

His potential audience includes people who park on Hamilton to attend the Cornwall Cinema. Ideally, people will emerge from theatre, and be presented with an alternative form of film practice not grounded in formula narrative.

Saul has structured his installation so that the loops play simultaneously. One consists of an unmanipulated image, while the other incorporates experimental techniques like scratch animation and hand coloring.

Largely concerned with landscape, *Persistent Visions* examines the process by which Saskatchewan's identity has been shaped by externally imposed, but internally supported, stereotypes that fail to capture the province's true diversity, like the wheat field that purports to represent Saskatchewan in every compilation calendar of Canada's provinces.

Each loop functions as an independent short film. But through their coincidental viewing, a dialogue emerges.

Last Saturday's offering, for example, consisted of *Flag* and *Cupid love factory*. The former loop depicted the Canadian flag fluttering in the breeze, while the latter showed a couple with animated hearts on their faces kissing, followed by a burst of fireworks. As a signifier of their passion, fireworks also play a prominent role in Regina's annual Canada Day celebration.

A new pair of films runs each night, offering viewers a continually changing



Gerald Saul's 'Cupid love factory' ran concurrently with a film loop showing a Canadian flag



GALLERIES

urban vista that contrasts with the more fixed signs and commercial window displays one ordinarily encounters down-

town.

Indeed, it's even possible to see deterioration in individual loops as they run throughout the evening. This clashes with the perfect production values one expects in a mainstream theatre.

"Projected Value"'s second instalment, Mark Wihak's *Interstitial Zone* (July 19-Aug. 2), will be screened Tuesday to Saturday from noon until dusk at 1914 Hamilton.

A reception for both film-makers will be held at Neutral Ground July 19 at 8 p.m.