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WORD · IS · OUT

stories · of · some · of · our · lives



Coming
Attractions...



From the Folks Who Are Taking over Hollywood

By Marjorie Rosen

A couple of years ago women filmmakers were closet movie directors. Their energy and numbers were in the East; their focus was on documentaries and personal revelation. For them, "film" meant an alternative to the drivel about earthquakes, sharks, and gangbusters passing for movies.

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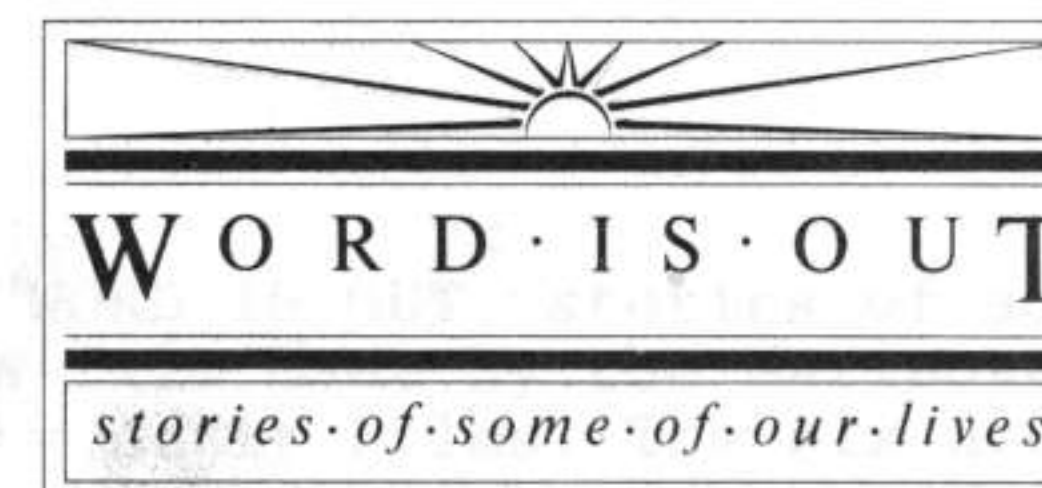
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COLLECTIVE STYLE

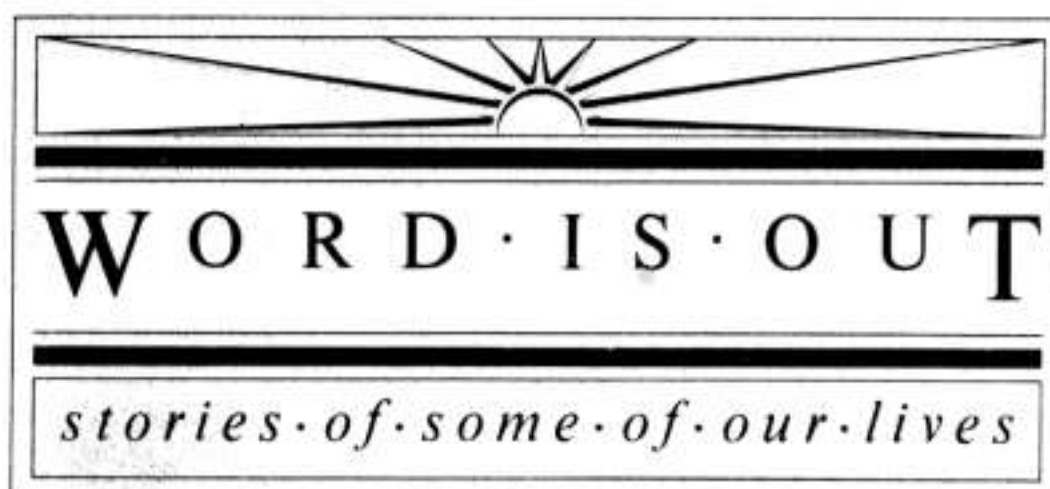
Although one could argue that filmmaking is a collective process, usually in my experience the moment that a collective is organized to direct a film, that picture is doomed. But there are a few pleasant, earnest documentaries that are exceptions. "My People Are My Home," by the Twin Cities' Women's Film Collective in Minneapolis, is a tribute to prairie women based on the writings of Meridel LeSueur (see Ms., August, 1975). It is also an effective piece of Midwestern ethnography.

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None of these women is alone effecting change, but the general buzz of activity is there whether it concerns a few recognized big guns or unstoppable new talents like Patricia Birch, choreographer of the "Grease." A novice, she is expected to direct "Grease II" when it starts filming in August. Darling, actress, acting coach, and former Norman Lear's tutelage, began her own "Mary Hartman" episodes with "First Love," an erotic love story which Paramount will produce. Or Karen Arthur, director of "Clouds" (a bizarre tale of two sisters and their journey to the moon), produced independently by state. Lee Grant and Carol "a Pretty Picture") Coolidge ("Daisy") Cox, who've made the films and experience the projects and budgets under their hands, "Hire me."



...STORIES OF SOME OF OUR LIVES...



...STORIES OF SOME OF OUR LIVES...

A film by
Mariposa
Film Group:

Nancy Adair
Peter Adair
Andrew Brown

Robert Epstein
Lucy Massie Phenix
Veronica Selver

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"WORD IS OUT, stories of some of our lives", is a film made by the Mariposa Film Group and released by Adair Films. The six documentary filmmakers are:

Nancy Adair
Peter Adair
Andrew Brown

Robert Epstein
Lucy Massie Phenix
Veronica Selver



"I feel a responsibility to the other weird people of the world to be a representative intelligent weird person."
Roger Harkenrider, in his late thirties, survived farm life and "pimples of death" to become an actor and to start his own acting company in Boston.



"There are some real love relationships clearly going on in the Bible--David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi--but the Church has never seen fit to validate those relationships."
Sally Gearhart grew up in the South, was a college professor in Texas, and now lives in San Francisco where she is on the Women's Studies faculty at State University. In her forties, she is active in radical lesbian politics.



"Pretty soon all the girls were french kissing on the couch and all the boys were dancing to slow Rock and Roll records. I loved it."
Nick Dorsky is a San Francisco filmmaker who spent his youth in the East. He is thirty-five.



"I could not make a conscious thing of it until I met a lesbian and talked to her about my feelings. Then I realized who I was. It didn't take long."
Ann Samsell is a veterinarian from North Carolina where she, along with several other lesbian vets, operates a mobile clinic.



"If you'd asked me eight years ago if I was going to be queer, live with another woman and give up my children, I would have said 'you're a lousy liar'." Pam Jackson is a waitress who lives in San Mateo with Rusty Millington and Rusty's four children from a previous marriage. Pam's children were taken away by the court because she is a lesbian. Pam and Rusty were introduced to each other by the Avon Lady nine years ago and have been together ever since.



"In high school I thought I was just one of those people who could never love anybody. When I fell in love with Henry, it meant I had incredibly deep emotions--it meant I was human." David Gillon is in his mid-twenties, studied radio broadcasting at the U. of Massachusetts and is currently living in Boston.



"I just loved her eyes; they reminded me of my dog Snooch's eyes." Cynthia Gair came out with the feminist movement in Washington, D.C. where she is co-owner of Women in Distribution, a feminist literature distributing company. She is in her late twenties.



"I feel that the radicals are necessary and I feel that we are necessary." Mark Pinney, in his early 40's is an executive Vice President of a New York corporation. He was raised in Santa Monica, California and feels that he has a *"vested interest in gay liberation."*



George Mendenhall is from Los Angeles, where an arrest for homosexuality squelched his chances of ever applying his teaching credential. *"So with twenty dollars in my pocket, I took a Greyhound bus to San Francisco, ran into a police officer and asked, 'Where's a gay bar'."* George, middle aged, tells about early gay unity. He lives in San Francisco, works in a can factory, and writes for the Advocate and other gay publications.



Rick Stokes grew up on a farm and fell in love with the boy next door, whose picture he *"had set out on my footlocker in the Army when other guys had their girls' pictures out."* He was committed to a mental institution and given shock treatments as a result of his family and his wife discovering he was gay. He served on the San Francisco Board of Permit Appeals, was a recent candidate for Supervisor, and has an active law practice with his lover David Clayton.



"If there was a problem connected with my being a lesbian, even after I became aware of it, it was the loneliness, the fact that I didn't know anybody like me." Elsa Gidlow, 79, grew up in poverty in England and Canada. First published when she was 17, Elsa continues to write poetry and magazine articles from her home north of San Francisco. She has recently published a collection of poetry titled From 17 to 70.



"We're all born naked and anything anybody wears at any time is drag." Tede Mathews calls himself a drag queen and a feminist, and knows and has resolved the inconsistencies between the two roles. He lives in San Francisco and is active in radical gay politics and theatre.



Pat Bond is a middle-aged ex-WAC who witnessed the Army's inquisition during the early 50's.....*"sending lots of women home for dishonorable discharges---everyday your friends were testifying that, yeh, they had seen you reeking with a woman or dancing too close."* She experienced communal, though role-defined lesbian life in post-war years. In her fifties, Pat is a comedienne and appears at San Francisco area meeting places.



"I don't regret I was married...it was a really happy seven years. Being a father, or a mother is an experience that most gay people don't have." Freddie Gray plays the bass with Buena Vista, a group that appears in the film. He lives with Mariposa Filmmaker, Andrew Brown.



"I was the American dream daughter--cheerleader, Prom queen, straight A student, president of the honor society, newspaper editor.....I was miserable." Linda Marco grew up in the South, got married, put her husband through school, got divorced and now works as a secretary in North Carolina. She is 27.



"We are closer now than we have ever been." Harry Hay and John Burnside, both in their middle sixties, live in New Mexico where they operate a kaleidoscope factory. Harry was one of the founders of the Mattachine Society, an early gay liberation organization.



"You go through a lot of hurt when someone calls you a Chinaman, so that in one sense you are more able to deal with someone calling you a fag." Dennis Chiu, the son of Chinese immigrant parents, grew up in Washington. He now lives in San Francisco and has been active with gay Asian support groups.



Michael Mintz went to Princeton, *"determined to let the cards fall where they might,"* He met Earl, fell in love, got involved in gay politics, and found that, politically, *"being black made it very difficult to be gay, and vice-versa."* He now lives with Earl in New Jersey where he is working on becoming a singer.



*"Send me a lock of your wildflower hair
Write a note full of sky"*
Trish Nugent is a singer whose first album, Foxglove Woman was recently released. She provides much of the music for the film, is in her late twenties, lives in Berkeley, and intends to become a lawyer.



"Lesbians and gay men have a great deal to offer in terms of restructuring the world culture." Betty Powell, in her late thirties, is a member of the National Gay Task Force and has served on a Presidential advisory committee. She lives in Brooklyn and is a professor.



"My wife and I moved back to Philadelphia and I decided that this is what I have to do because this is the way I feel... 'cuz in fighting it, you're just going against yourself. It's a headbuster." Donald Hackett is an unemployed truck driver living in Philadelphia. He is in his early thirties



"...being yourself and doing what I want. You love each other, you care. You do little things for each other. And you always want to be together." Nadine Armijo lives with her lover Rosa in New Mexico in a house without plumbing and heating which they eventually plan to put in themselves. Filmmakers Nancy and Peter Adair have known Nadine since grade school.



"So I asked what was a lesbian, and everybody laughed. 'That's a girl who likes other girls instead of boys' and I thought, 'uh-oh, sounds just like me.'" Whitey's parents sent her to a mental institution for 4 years when she was thirteen. She grew up in the Bronx and now lives in Northern California in a cabin she built herself. She is in her mid-thirties.

2½ yrs in film / Peter then Nancy
the objectives of the film changed, or rather expanded from
the original eight people" Veronica

Lucy the scope of the film "I believed in it for me"
"The last of the film became an
entity" Lucy

"It started out as a film about role models
to be used in classrooms" Peter.
"So that's who we are"

"A particular experience
chosen principally on a kind of uniqueness that the
subject. A particular experience that nobody else
held or described it in a way that no one
else does" Veronica

"Each person we chose is self-actualized
to some degree. They have come to
accept themselves. They weren't timid about
talking." Veronica

"We tried to get a history. Not personal opinions" Peter

"The most significant manipulation was in the
selection of the people" Veronica

Significance

"The film is an initial step, a beginning" Veronica

"People are continually throwing the negatives at you" Andrew

"I made the movie to change people's minds. ^{It's not that simple}
And how do you ~~to~~ change people's minds
through affecting them. If you don't affect them
you don't change them. And how do you affect
them ~~but by you manipulating them~~" Peter

"make the people care by showing people
on the screen who are real. We were
always true to the people we filmed." Peter

"The film accurately projects reflects the
future of who ^{say} people can be. The
film points to the possibilities of being
^{say} not the reality." Peter.

"Hold up a mirror that can clarify some
of the positive things." Lucy

"A complex doesn't answer the needs of
the people I want to speak to. I don't want
to put up more question marks." Andrew

- response forms -

"We had more than ourselves
in the editing room." Nancy

"They have left the thunder feeling
really good that they can be
gay. partly because there are 26
gay men and lesbians ~~fell~~ in the
screen talking. Just talking. That's
enough." Nancy

"A role model isn't necessarily blond, tall,
pretty." Nancy

"It goes beyond gay liberation and
sexuality. People are people." Nancy



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It's already beginning has a client list topped Bogdanovich. Big gun p credits to make a Louis Sting, "Taxi Driver," and "Close Encounters of the Tomlin, who will be doing "Woman" as the kickoff star, write, produce, and tures. Big gun Ellen Burstyn, was considerable on "Alice more," is just as influential a project—about a female Renee Missel and Howard Wertmuller—a critical case controversial films, "Seven Sea," "The Seduction of Mimi, Anarchy"—has just completed (starring Giancarlo Giannini and first of a four-picture Warner

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"In the Best Interest of the Children: A Film About Lesbian Mothers" and Iris Feminist lesbian mothers and somely well adjusted remains with the is, I suppose, far more a stacked deck.

The movie-of-the-year might just be "Word Is Out; Stories of Some of Our Lives," by a San Francisco collective of three men and three women: Nancy Adair, her brother Peter Adair, Veronica Selter, Lucy Massie, Rob Epstein, and Andrew Brown. In "Word Is Out," a number of homosexuals of varying backgrounds speak intimately about being gay. The film developed over a two-year period in which more than 20 screenings were held in the Bay area and in New York, not only for comments by the gay community (which the collective incorporated) but also as a fund-raising procedure to keep the project going.

None of these women is alone effecting change, but the general buzz of activity is there whether it concerns a few recognized big guns or unstoppable new talents like Patricia Birch, choreographer of the "Grease." A novice, she is expected to direct "Grease II" when it starts filming. Darling, actress, acting coach, and Norman Lear's tutelage, began her career with "First Love," an erotic love story which Paramount will produce. Or Karen Arthur, director of "Clouds" (a bizarre tale of two sisters and their journey to the moon, produced independently by star Lee Grant and Carol Ann Cox, who've made a "Pretty Picture") Coolidge Cox, who've made films and experience projects and budgets under \$100,000, "Hire me."

the exception of 20th Century-Fox, one major female executive, of acquisitions or distribution. Lyn Heller at Columbia; Nancy Hardin at Universal; Marcia Lansing at MGM; and at Roger Corman's New Line Film—the brain-child of the publisher of the "New York Times" is forming in Atlanta. Only three years ago, Women in Film, according to its current president, Barbara Boyle, "hopes to get women into power positions within the industry. We're a support



WORD · IS · OUT

stories · of · some · of · our · lives



26 · gay · americans

A FILM BY MARIPOSA FILM GROUP · PETER ADAIR · NANCY ADAIR · VERONICA SELVER · ROBERT EPSTEIN · ANDREW BROWN · LUCY MASSIE PHENIX · DISTRIBUTED BY ADAIR NEW YORKER FILMS · 16 WEST 61ST STREET · NEW YORK CITY 10023

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