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Denver I.F.F. '88

Switzerland



Alice

Director: Jan Svankmajer

Producer: Michael Havas, Keith Griffiths

Screenplay: Jan Svankmajer, adapted from the story by Lewis Carroll

Cinematographer: Svatopluk Maly

Cast: Kristyna Kohoutova

Print Source: First Run Features 1988/color/84 min.

Familiar themes of magic, cruelty, and childhood are explored in this free adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* by the Czech master of animation, Jan Svankmajer. While the film remains true to the absurdity of Carroll's original story, it bears the stamp of Svankmajer's own distinctive surrealistic style. Everything in *Alice* has an intensely vivid physical presence. Most of the story's action occurs indoors in a cramped and cluttered room where animated household items and worn-looking dolls give Alice's adventures in illogic an undertone of menace. Floorboards groan and every door creaks loudly when opened. Svankmajer shows a genius for the shockingly textural, and the inappropriate use of food. Thumbtacks appear in marmalade and live bedbugs scurry around in a can of sardines. At one point a stuffed frog in footman's livery clobbers a series of insects with a grossly outsized calf's tongue. Beginning his career as a puppeteer at Prague's Laterna Majika, the self-described surrealist has been making short films using puppet animation since 1964, and is the acknowledged mentor to the American animators, the Brothers Quay. In this first feature Svankmajer has realized a lifetime ambition to interpret Carroll's story and succeeded in rendering a piercing, original vision of the child's imaginative landscape.

11:45 pm, Friday, October 14 (D5) Tivoli

11:30 pm, Saturday, October 15 (A12) Tivoli