



## ***13th Cineffable Lesbienes Film Festival, Paris, November 1-5, 2001***

### **Special Report By Moira Sullivan**

1989 French women were frustrated with the fact that lesbian films won the People's Choice awards at the larger Parisian International Women's Film Festival at Créteil but that hardly any attention was given to films made by lesbians. Out of this discontent the Cineffable Lesbian Film Festival was born which just celebrated its 13th year November 1-5. Despite the financial problems customary to women only events where sponsors are reluctant to pledge support the volunteer festival organizers insist on the right for lesbians to be center stage in a festival of their own. There's also time for entertainment and parties, this year a duo from Normandy 'Dun Leia'--and debates on themes which the films raise such as violence in relationships and minority political groups. This makes Cineffable rather unique in Europe with only one other lesbian film festival, Immaginaria in Bologna Italy every February.

This year five films were presented in the feature film competition. Best film went to Nisha Ganatra's *Chutney Popcorn* from the US, a film about Reena a lesbian of Indian descent living in New York who decides to become artificially impregnated in order to help out her sterile straight sister Sarita and her husband. When Sarita changes her mind Reena decides to bring up the child together with her at first reluctant girlfriend. Runner up was Lea Pool's *Lost and Delirious* from Canada but the film's complication about a lesbian who loses out to a straight woman's fear and the film's negative ending did not go home with the audience.

Sande Zeig's *The Girl* was also definitely unpopular with the Cineffable crowd for its flat story and uninteresting plot about a lesbian painter who falls for a straight nightclub singer who sleeps with the boss. Equally *Desi's Looking for a New Girl* by Mary Guzman from San Francisco featuring Desi del Valle and Marga Gomez though stylishly made was considered thin on story. In essence, you can't fool the Cineffable crowd which demands realistic stories about lesbian lives. In the medium length feature animation or experimental category of 37 entries best film went to *Incidental Journey* by Jofei Chen from Taiwan, an impressionistic expose on an artist and a hitchhiker who reminisce about love and life. The short or medium length best documentary of 23 entries went to *Out: The Making of a Revolutionary*, by Sonja de Vries and Rhonda Collins from the US, a true story about the political activist Laura Whitehorn who was incarcerated for 14 years in US prison for crimes against the state. The best feature length film of three entries went to Kate Davis's *Southern Comfort* from the US about the last days of 52-year-old female to male transsexual Robert Eads who was diagnosed with terminal uterine cancer.

The expanding Cineffable festival has been looking for a new site and the tenacity of the organizers and their public guarantees that the 14th festival held during All Souls Day-Halloween week every year will go on. The website is: <http://www.cineffable.fr>

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