

ing as are interviews with survivors of the ghettos and the various kinds of camps. Many of these women were truly courageous and Lenore Weitzman and Dalia Ofer are to be congratulated for bringing this diverse and comprehensive set of works together as well as contributing outstanding original research of their own.

MARKER OF CHANGE: THE STORY OF THE WOMEN'S MONUMENT

Sher Morgan and Pamela Miller.
Film. Vancouver: Moving Images
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BY JOSEPHINE MILLS

Marker of Change: The Story of the Women's Monument deploys the best aspects of documentary film. Producers Sher Morgan and Pamela Miller focus on the women who created a Vancouver memorial to the 14 women murdered at L'École Polytechnique (L'Université de Montréal). Through attention to the decision-making processes involved in creating the project, the film provides an overview of the startling variety of issues which this one monument evokes. In particular, the arguments made for and against the monument highlight larger debates within contemporary feminism. As well, the film raises questions about the role of public art; the relationship between controversy and the mass media; and the variation between official and alternative perspectives on significant events. At the same time, Morgan and Miller never lose sight of the powerful emotional effect of *Marker of Change*, the completed work.

The film opens and closes with

scenes from the dedication ceremony. This framing demonstrates that the organizers' perseverance produced a successful means to speak about a tragic and complex event. As the body of the film outlines, arriving at this moment was no simple feat. Immediately following the massacre, feminists across Canada were outraged that the mainstream media tried to deny the clearly misogynist goal of the murderer and emphasized his name instead of the 14 students. In Vancouver, a group of women proposed creating a memorial to the 14 students which would recognize the issue of male violence against women and allow a space for public contemplation and grief. This proposal led to a five-year process of raising donations, obtaining civic approval, selecting the actual work, and, most significantly, justifying their proposal to oppositional feminist groups as well as against an anti-feminist onslaught.

The project caused a media furor at every step. In particular, the frenzy focused on the dedication. The film includes highlights of opponents arguing that the overt reference to male violence against women was actually "female sexism." As well, the documentary explores how the organizers worked with feminist ideals for decision-making in order to collaborate with the Vancouver Parks Board and produce a text panel which maintains its effect yet could overcome the opposition.

The attention to conflicts within feminism over the political viability of art production is the strength of both the monument and the film. Morgan and Miller include articulate responses from the organizers concerning their decision to "gamble on the powers of art." The organizing committee discuss their choice of a conceptual approach to creating social change—instead of direct action, their project will facilitate collective grief and contemplation as well as make visible the need for such practices within a critical analysis of violence against women.

This choice did not produce a unifying effect within the Vancouver feminist community. As theorists and grassroots organizers have had to face, there are strong divisions concerning the selection of activist strategies. The opposition to the monument by other feminists reveals the stark differences in assumptions about the value of cultural work. Most striking, a representative of a support organization for battered women appears on camera dismissing the memorial because, as a "front-line worker" in the battle against male violence, she thinks the money could have been spent on something better than "fancy little benches" or "tombstones." Yet, at the same time, the film details that there are plenty of people who share the belief in a need for a permanent monument as a means for creating social change.

Marker of Change: The Story of the Women's Monument illustrates that the process for creating this memorial is as important as the final product. Such a perspective fits with the representational strategies of *Marker of Change* itself. This is a monument designed to encourage meeting and acknowledgment of emotion rather than the imposition of a single, final reading on a past event. As such, there is room for personal memories of the murdered women and one's own experience of first hearing that news. Morgan and Miller bring home this last aspect through their inclusion of support of the monument by family members such as Pierre Leclair and Suzanne Laplante Edward. The documentary of *Marker of Change*, like the memorial itself, opens up many areas for discussion about the Montréal massacre, its representation and place in both official and private record, and specific feminist efforts to redress the societal problems which transcend the event.