

SHADBOLT'S PAINTINGS ARE "TOUCHED ALIVE" BY VANCOUVER ANIMATOR

Called "the eminence grise of West-Coast modernism," Jack Shadbolt continues to flourish at the age of 87 as one of Canada's leading painters. As a tribute to Shadbolt's art, Stephen Arthur has animated a series of thirty paintings in a short film entitled *Touched Alive*. In this example of the rarely-seen idiom of fine-art animation, the animator becomes a choreographer, not of dancers, but of images.

The film's subtitle, *A Masque of Desire and Doom*, refers to the filmmaker's attempt to illustrate and extrapolate, through action and metamorphosis, what Jack Shadbolt describes as "the human need for communion working itself out through strange and compulsive rituals of time, season, growth, encounter, decay, and rebirth."

While Shadbolt is critical of popular animation, he has entrusted Stephen Arthur to do a serious and original job of animating his paintings. The hallucinatory procession of *Touched Alive* is intended, as Shadbolt intends for his paintings, "to stimulate the imagination in ways that may be as often disturbing as reassuring."

In this era of arts funding cuts, Stephen Arthur is one of the pioneers of the low-tech approach to high tech. He created the animation on a consumer-level personal computer, in high-resolution, entirely as two-dimensional bit-mapped images. Requiring nine months of working time for a film that is less than two minutes long, production relied more on human labour than on computing power. Recording to 35-mm film was made affordable by shooting it directly from the computer's monitor, placed under the animation camera at the National Film Board. Finally, a complex sound track was synchronized to the action solely by counting frames.

Stephen Arthur is a fifth-generation British Columbian who holds master's degrees in both film production and brain physiology. He has made animated and experimental films, and authored six feature screenplays. He makes a living as a technical writer.

Those not familiar with Shadbolt's paintings can view a very large one at the pavilion of the new Wall Centre Garden Hotel on Burrard Street, or see the reproductions in the book by Scott Watson, available in most bookstores.

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