

# NFB to Expand Shadbolt Animation

*Touched Alive* is a unique short film made by animating the paintings of internationally renowned Vancouver artist Jack Shadbolt. The one-and-a-half minute film, made this year, will be expanded in 1997 to a four-minute set of three "movements," to be produced and owned by the National Film Board of Canada.

The film is an example of the rarely-seen idiom of fine-art animation, where the animator becomes a choreographer, not of dancers, but of images.

"Shadbolt's paintings are exquisitely and brilliantly animated by Arthur into a mesmerizing and haunting film that not only does justice to the artist, but also lingers a hundred times longer than its two minute running time," wrote festival judge Dan Ireland at the Northwest Film & Video Festival.

"I am astonished," says Jack Shadbolt, "by how Stephen Arthur has, by a kind of psycho-chemistry, penetrated the very image-making process that I've developed in my painting, to produce exactly its dynamic complexity. This animation is not only about my work visually, but it's as though I were producing it in actuality."

"The restlessness of Shadbolt's paintings is nowhere better reflected," wrote Vancouver Sun art critic Michael Scott, "...the paintings hum and pulse and mutate into one another. The message that art is never finished comes through loud and clear in Arthur's remarkable etude."

"I have seen the film at least six times and the brilliance of the first impact renews itself with each viewing," says Doris Shadbolt, former senior curator and associate director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Of course my husband's particular approach lends itself well to Arthur's conception, but there is no question that it is Arthur who is the artist here."



From the film

The 35-mm film premiered in September at the Toronto International Film Festival, followed by the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Atlantic Film Festival (Halifax), and awards at the NY Short Film Expo, Northwest Film Festival (Portland), and Black Maria Film Festival (NJ). It played as a pre-feature short at seven Vancouver commercial theatres for three weeks, and will tour with the 1997 Spike and Mike Animation Festival, the Best of the Northwest tour, and the Black Maria tour (21 states).

Television appearances of *Touched Alive* began on Nov. 29 on CBC's Canadian Reflections. CBC national television purchased a one-year exclusive license. The Knowledge Network has produced a short piece for their Studio BC program profiling Arthur and showing how he made the film (coming up soon).

*Touched Alive* was created on a personal computer, requiring nine months of labour. It was recorded to film by shooting it frame-by-frame directly off the computer's monitor, placed under the NFB's animation camera.

Stephen Arthur was born in Vancouver. He has made animated and experimental films, and authored six feature screenplays. He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in film production from the University of Southern California, and a Master of Science degree from UBC.