



VORO-NOVA

review Gerry Waller for Variety

**RELEASE OF A ROTTERDAM FILM PRODUCTION. SALES: CACTUS FILM, PRODUCED BY DIRK RIJNEKE, MILDRED VAN LEEUWAARDEN, JAN HEIJS, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY VAN LEEUWAARDEN AND RIJNEKE, STARRING: AAD CELEN, CAMERA: RIJNEKE, EDITING: RIJNEKE, ROB VAN STEENSEL, EDITING ADVICE: WIM LOUWRIER, MUSIC: FELIX VISSER, SOUND: VAN LEEUWAARDEN
REVIEWED AT NOB SHOWROOM, HILVERSUM, JAN. 19, 1985. RUNNING TIME: 86 MIN**

Film preemed at Montreal festival, and will open the Rotterdam one. Like previous Rijnke pics, it will undoubtedly travel the festival grand tour. VORO-NOVA is ideal fare for art houses, fests, universities, and for others who care about film; as art, as a way of expression, as a means of communication. Pic is intriguing, innovative, quietly self assertive. It combines stunning photography with an arresting use of music and sound, to tell the shortest of short stories: an anecdote about a man and a bunch of kids.

The man lives at a quarantine site. There is a large house with empty rooms; there's a kind of shed on wheels. The grounds are extensive. They go down the vast waterway, with Rotterdam looming on the other side. The man is about thirty, an electronic freak. He collects computer debris, broken down calculators, tv-sets. He's built himself a studio with dozens of screens, writing consoles, print-out machines; also a closed television circuit with camera's which scan the grounds. He can distort the pictures of the screens, play with them. He's quite good-looking, a loner. He does not utter two dozen words during the whole of the film. Some of his computers are clever. They can say a few words, count a bit. He does not talk, but he creates noise: he scrapes a table over the floor, he puts his cup down with more force than necessary. He's not rich, but apparently has enough money for his needs. He throws a party: many people, all dressed up; lots of food, lots to drink. He rigged up the loudspeakers for the dancing, he polished the floor beforehand, he cleans up afterwards, he puts out the light, but he does not mingle with the guests. He's very clean. His clothes, even the t-shirts are spotless. He rinses his glass before drinking. His actions are not desultory, rather the contrary, but slow. He walks slowly, works slowly, eats slowly, chews slowly. He is not unhappy. He does nobody any harm. He seems dedicated to aimlessness.

The children have somehow found their way into the grounds. They are around fifteen, all colors, white, black, brown, yellow. Boys and girls. For them it is an ideal spot. No grown-ups to worry them. The man doesn't seem to mind, not even if they sit in the back of the pick-up when he takes a ride into town. They can do whatever they like, build a bonfire, swim and have harmless but noisy fights, get dirty, use dirty words, tell dirty jokes, tease

each other, and scare each other with deliciously horrifying stories about ghosts and haunted houses. The kids are continuously busy. They are not childish, just children.

That's all the story there is: the man, the site, the kids. No flashbacks, no 'message', no politics, no philosophy. The why doesn't one's attention sag for even one moment, what is it that leaves the viewer in the end with such a feeling of satisfaction? The answer: VORO-NOVA is pure film, and is all film. Rijnke and van Leeuwen are literally 'film makers' .. The Zen archer, they let the medium take over. The fascination of the pictures and the persuasiveness of the sound track enthrall. Seeing the film is an experience, albeit a most agreeable one.

It would not have worked if the two were not so skilled in their crafts, and so dedicated to them. In order to get the 'Dutch light' known from old paintings, they shot the picture only between 5 and 9 p.m. during summer and early fall. They were with kids from the early morning, trying out ideas on them, and with them, improvising, playing till the actual shooting could be done quickly.

Rijnke's pictures often capture attention by their pure beauty. Framing, and camera movements sometimes remind one of Antonioni, of Tarkovsky. Van Leeuwen worked with direct sound, but the greater part of the music was fed into and transformed by a computer. The result, intriguingly and teasingly different, still sounds very much like music, not at all like electronic blues.

VORO-NOVA is not a pic to dissect and describe (although this will undoubtedly will be done by eager theorists and sociological explorers). VORO-NOVA is a film to see and hear, to absorb, and to remember, as a touchstone for other pictures.

Wall. Variety

