

FESTIVAL KEY TAPES: selection by Steven Bode

Sunday
Wilde Theatre
10am & 7pm

THE MAN OF THE CROWD *Mark Wilcox 35 mins*

BAD NEIGHBOURS *Triplevision 20 mins*

GIRL ZONE *Birmingham Film and Video Workshop
38 mins*

REFLECTING *Jeremy Welsh 28 mins*

The task of choosing the festival's own short-list of 'key tapes' from amongst a record number of entries, each and every one of which had to be taken down from the shelf and looked at in turn, definitely had my name on it from the start. But, at the end of the day - nearer four if you really want to know - a programme came together almost of its own accord that I'd only be too happy to put my name to, come rain or shine.

The process of judging independent video gets harder and harder as the sector grows ever more diverse. Having first to compare and then choose between work done on different formats and budgets, with different aims and audiences in mind, is never easy at the best of times. Our selection, then, is simply some kind of attempt to bring together examples of work that stood out in the respective areas of art, documentary, media, sexual representation and so on covered by the different magazines, as well as work which, by dint of its individuality or ideosyncrasy, may have fallen beyond or between the categories at hand.

One thing that was obvious from the start and that needs no qualification whatsoever was the continuing high standard of independent documentary/campaign tapes. Triplevision's **Bad Neighbours** was a graphic account of racial attacks and racial harrasment in East London that consolidated its phenomenology of the fear experienced by local Asian communities with interviews that were telling and to the point. Chapter Video Workshop's **Celber** was an equally strong piece

he said etc. I tell lies or I'll arrest y

THE TVS STUDENT AWARD WILL BE
PRESENTED BEFORE THE 7pm
PERFORMANCE OF THE KEY TAPES

that looked critically at the reasons and ramifications of the shutting down of a South Wales colliery; having former miners both give vent and give focus to the absurdities of forced closure of their pit. Multiple Image's **We're Not Mad, We're Angry**, on the circumscribing and controlling nature of much modern psychiatry, and Open Eye's **The World has a Way of Looking at People**, on the representation of disability, also stood out. Touching on similar themes but with a different approach, Simon Robertshaw's **One of Those Things You See All The Time** deserves a mention too.



It was always as interesting, scanning through the year's crop of experimental video and video art, to see both a new set of effects being put through their paces as well as the formal or intellectual uses to which they were put. In John Goff's **Transitive Four**, Steve Littman's **The Winner** and Zoid Pictures **The Dead Pigeon**, a multiplicity of texts and surfaces, typographies and signs all fought for space and clamoured for your eye. Only Jeremy Welsh, however, who provided two resplendent and accomplished tapes, came out and nailed a quote from Jean Baudrillard up there for all to see. Quaintly, Welsh's tape on the intricate vicissitudes of the contemporary image-machine was called **Reflecting**, whilst his lucent and lyrical slice of video-portraiture was called **Labyrinths**. It's a funny old world, isn't it?

Kevin Atherton obviously thinks so, and will probably continue to do so as long as there's a TV set chattering incessantly and inanely in the corner of someone's room. **The Television - Live From Glasgow** held up a mirror and a microphone to many of the self-conscious preoccupations of TV art. Birmingham Film and Video Workshop's **Girl Zone** was a tape on many people's lips, and lists, but it was less easy to see exactly where a work as ideosyncratic as Jude Andrews **The Rest Is Silence** would fit in. An Irish mystery story with something of the comic wit of Flann O'Brien that keeps losing itself up blind alleys and absurdities of