

## Undershorts Film Festival

The fourth annual Undershorts Film Festival runs Friday through Sunday, May 18 through 20, at the Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln. Tickets are \$7, and on Sunday a single admission covers the entire day's screenings. Unless otherwise noted, all films will be projected from videotape. For more information call 773-856-5220.

### FRIDAY, MAY 18

#### Short films, program one

See Critic's Choice. (8:00)

### SATURDAY, MAY 19

#### Short films, program two

The best reason for seeing this program is Guy Maddin's epochal *The Heart of the World*, a silent SF extravaganza in 16-millimeter that lasts less than seven minutes but has all the depth of a feature; like David Cronenberg's *Camera* (see Critic's Choice), it was commissioned last year as part of the Toronto film festival's "Prelude" series of short films. Otherwise the binding thread in this collection of a dozen shorts appears to be irreverence—with hilarious results in the case of Dan Hertzfeldt's animation *Rejected*, part of which purports to have been commissioned but discarded by "the Family Learning Channel." Suzie Silver's fancy gender-bending music video *A Spy (Hester Reeves Does the Doors)*, which has been around for ages, is worth checking out, and Jim Finn's Latino music video *Quera?* is almost as weird. There's also artier fare, such as Justin Krohn's nicely textured *Subway 2:36 AM* (2000), a Columbia College opus that crosscuts between two characters.

freeze-framed *Slawg* by Casandra, which comes off as an Alshabir-meets-

### SUNDAY

#### Short films, program two

See Critic's Choice listing for program two. (1:00)

#### We're

A rambunctious Ramones, the Brooklyn foursome that founded punk rock in the mid-70s. Built around their 1996 farewell concert at the Palace in LA, this 1997 documentary by Kevin Kerslake is stuffed with inter-

CRITIC'S CHOICE



Knuckleface Jones

### Short films, program one

Normally, viewing 16 shorts in a row is a bit like following ice cream with pickles, cheese dip, key lime pie, lima beans, bread pudding, and spinach. But this lineup is relatively homogeneous in its strangeness—evident in the actor's monologue filmed by children that constitutes David Cronenberg's 35-millimeter *Camera* (2000, 6 min.), Joshua Pritzker's weird animation *Small Car* (7 min.), Jim Finn's *Communista* (a compilation of three songs), and most of all,

which offers the most peculiar and dreamlike cross-gendered sex I can recall seeing. There are more surrealist high jinks in the other animated shorts, some featuring puppets and clay animation, plus an experimental black-and-white documentary (Trevor Arnholt's 13-minute digital video *The Composer*) and a parodic trailer starring Eric Stoltz and Tate Donovan (Paul Harrison's *Jesus and Hutch*). The program runs about 95 minutes, and overall it's not a bad lineup. Biograph, Friday, May 18, Sunday, May 20, 1:00. —Jonathan Rosenbaum

Normally, viewing 16 shorts in a row is a bit like following ice cream with pickles, cheese dip, key lime pie, lima beans, bread pudding, and spinach. But this lineup is relatively homogeneous in its strangeness—most of all, Todd Rohal's wildly surrealist *Knuckleface Jones* (1999, 13 min.), which offers the most peculiar and dreamlike cross-gendered sex I can recall seeing. Biograph, Friday, May 18, 8:00, and Sunday, May 20, 1:00. —Jonathan Rosenbaum

#### Mutant Aliens

Bill Plympton, a perennial favorite at animation festivals, created this feature about an astronaut left for dead by an unscrupulous space agency who's rescued

#### Short films, program three

The standout in this hodgepodge of shorts, most of them by students, is S. Rothenberg's *Number .0001* (2000), a dizzying montage of jets, escalators, ele-

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Fratelli's *Mondo Ford* (allegedly released in 1965) is a canny Italian-language spoof of the notorious exposé *Mondo Cane*, using archival "evidence" to reveal the shocking truth that Gerald Ford was a space alien who helped assassinate JFK. Jannea McClure's *Purge-atory* (1999) is a John Waters-style parody of *American Beauty* that gets its laughs at the expense of bulimic teenagers. In the longest entry, *Making a Killing* (2000), Kelly Anderson and Tami Gold examine the global sales strategy and deceptive advertising of Philip Morris; as with most antitobacco screeds, they demonize the industry but ignore the inconvenient fact that it's bankrolled by tens of millions of Americans. On the same program, which