

Arts & Ideas

'Dances with Wolves' a remarkable work

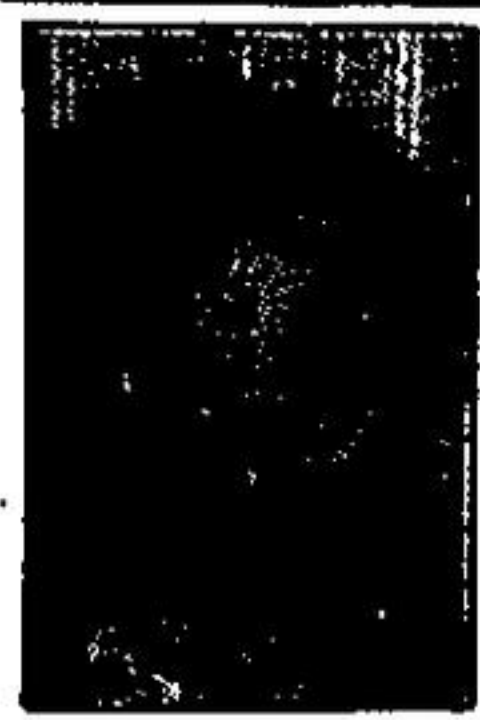
My choice for "best film of the year" is Kevin Costner's "Dances with Wolves." This remarkable work of movie art is a belated monument to the Sioux and their Indian Nation in North Dakota.

The Sioux were nomads who followed the buffalo in their seasonal wanderings. The buffalo provided the Sioux with meat, with leather for their garments and tents, and even with heat. The droppings of the plentiful beasts were gathered and used as the fuel of campfires. The Indians also venerated the buffalo as a link between nature and the gods.

It didn't take the white people very long to destroy this foundation of Sioux culture. The animals that moved over the grasslands in huge herds a hundred miles in diameter, were killed off by the millions by professional hunters, to provide food for thousands of workers who put down the tracks for the transcontinental railway.

Before the free life of the Sioux came to an end, they managed to humiliate the United States Government by forcing them, in 1888, to sign a contract that spelled out the abandonment of three forts named Fort Phil Kearny, Fort C.F. Smith, and Fort Reno.

The retreating soldiers had to watch the burning of these forts by the Indians, and to top it all off, the victorious chief Red Cloud, was received by President Ulysses S. Grant in the White House as an equal.



John Sommer
IDEAS AND THE ARTS

For the Sioux, the respite did not last long. An expedition discovered gold in Sioux territory and mobs of gold diggers moved into the land that had been promised to the Sioux to be theirs "for eternity." The Indians remained unprovoked, however, with the result that General George Armstrong Custer took the initiative.

His army units invaded Sioux territory, and on June 25, 1876, the Sioux, under the leadership of their great chiefs, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, defeated Custer's 7th Cavalry at Little Big Horn River. None of the 250 invaders returned home, but the fabric of Sioux society was weakened beyond repair.

Pursued, robbed of their source of food, and therefore starving, the remaining Sioux eventually entered the reserves, the white man had grudgingly put aside for them.

The reserves were, in reality, prisons, in which these once proud people languished in increasing despair and hopelessness. Sitting Bull, the last great hero of his people, tried, in unflinching opposition to the white man's way of life, to collect other dissidents around him.

An attempt by the police to kidnap him and to remove him from his people, resulted in Sitting Bull's death by assassination on Dec. 15, 1890.

Traumatized by Sitting Bull's death and fearing military actions, a group of Indians, under the leadership of their chief Big Foot, left the reserve near the Cheyenne River, to walk to Pine Ridge, where they hoped to come under the protection of chief Red Cloud. Two thirds of the fleeing Indians were women and children.

The United States Army stopped the ragged band and brought them to a camping place called Wounded Knee. 500 soldiers surrounded the Indians and on December 29, 1890, some of them entered the camp looking for weapons. The majority of the Indians remained calm, but one young Sioux resisted when he was told to hand over his gun. In the resulting scuffle, a shot was fired and a soldier was killed.

Within seconds all the soldiers surrounding the camp started firing, killing everybody who moved, and pursuing fleeing women

and children for miles.

The massacre lasted a good thirty minutes and as many as 300 of the Sioux might have been

killed.

These events are the heritage we are still living with exactly 100 years later.



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Edmonton artist wins national sculpture competition

Edmonton artist Catherine Burgess has won Macdonald Stewart Art Centre's 1990 National Sculpture Competition sponsored by Imperial Tobacco Limited.

The announcement was made on December 2nd by the Honorable Pauline McGibbon, Chair of DuMaurier Arts Limited and Honorary Chair of the Art Centre's Sculpture Park Fund. Burgess's sculpture will be the 11th to be permanently installed in the Donald Forster Sculpture Park. Mr. Wilmat Tennyson, President of Imperial Tobacco Ltd. was in attendance and expressed his company's commitment to this community through its sponsorship of the Sculpture Park. Imperial Tobacco Ltd., which has previously sponsored the commissions of three other sculptures in the Park, will contribute \$30,000 toward this commission.

Burgess's proposed sculpture is a table shape upon which several simple objects are placed. As Burgess explains, "The forms of these objects, their placement, and their interrelationships result in abstract sculptures which also function as personal narratives, autobiographical in their nature". The title of the proposed sculpture, GUELPH:

SEPTEMBER 27, 1990 refers to a day which the artist spent visiting Guelph this fall. The sculpture will be cast in bronze at Artcast, Inc. in Georgetown and will measure approximately 19 inches high by 10 feet seven inches long by 27 inches wide.

Catherine Burgess has been exhibiting her steel and bronze sculpture for over ten years; a solo exhibition of her recent work is currently on view at the Edmonton Art Gallery. This will be her first outdoor sculpture.

The other pieces in the Sculpture Park collection include works by Cynthia Short, Kosso Eloul, Walter Bachinski, Andreas Drenters and Frances Gage, and two historical bronzes by Frances Loring and Florence Wyle. Also included are the commissions by 1987 competition winners Tony Urquhart and Robert Weins and 1988 competition winner Evan Penny.

CORRECTION NOTICE*
In a recent advertisement for Final Touch Esthetics, The Herald incorrectly printed that this establishment was open for business Jan. 1 and 2, when in fact, it was closed. The Herald apologizes to any Final Touch Esthetics' clients who were inconvenienced by this error.

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