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LONG SHOT FILMS

Viewers of the HBO series *True Detective* might have noticed the very cool, six-minute-long shot that ended the fourth episode. What's a long, or extended, shot, you ask? It's one continuous shot without any edits or cuts. Not a lot of filmmakers use them — they're a lot of work — but when they do, it's very cool. Here are six of the best. /Shane Hnetka

1 ROPE (1948)

Alfred Hitchcock wanted to make a film without any cuts. The result was this thriller. *Rope* actually has 10 cuts, but they're hidden — the camera pans into areas of darkness every time there's a cut. It's a little gimmicky at times but essentially it works.



2 TOUCH OF EVIL (1958)

The opening to Orson Welles' masterpiece crime thriller follows a group of cars and people as they cross the U.S./Mexico border one warm summer night. What follows sets off a chain of events that drives the entire picture.

3 WEEKEND (1967)

Jean-Luc Godard isn't for everyone but I happen to enjoy his movies immensely, and this surreal film is one of my favourites. It also has a brilliant long shot of a married couple stuck in traffic.

4 CHILDREN OF MEN (2006)

Director Alfonso Cuarón loves long shots and *Children of Men* has a couple of them. My favourite is near the end of the film, when all hell breaks loose.



5 GOODFELLAS (1990)

Martin Scorsese loves extended shots and *Goodfellas* has a masterful one. Scorsese's camera follows Ray Liotta as he brings his date, played by Lorraine Bracco, into a restaurant/club through a back entrance. The camera follows Liotta and Bracco across a street, down stairs, through hallways and the restaurant's kitchen, around tables and past waiters, patrons and other characters. The scene lasts three minutes. It's often been imitated but never surpassed.

6 HARD BOILED (1992)

John Woo's masterpiece of violence has an epic long shot where our heroes, two cops, storm a hospital and fight the bad guys hall by hall. The continuous, three-minute scene is terrific.

the arts section



Ride Of The Valkyries Atkins' short, weird and wonderful films are fantastic | by Gregory Beatty

ART



AMALIE ATKINS
MACKENZIE GALLERY
UNTIL JUNE 14

Saskatoon artist Amalie Atkins is a rising star in the Canadian art world. She was recently featured

on the cover of *Canadian Art*, and in the past four years has been included in two major surveys: one of emerging Saskatchewan artists called *Mind the Gap!* presented by the Dunlop in 2010, and the nation-wide survey *Oh Canada!* that the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art hosted in 2012.

Atkins received her BFA from the Alberta College of Art & Design in 2001. She majored in textiles, and that's still a major part of her practice. But she's been gravitating toward film and video lately — to the point where she's got a major film in production called *we live on the edge of disaster and imagine we are in a musical* which she worked on during a recent residency at Open Space in Victoria.

Three excerpts from the film are included in this exhibition, along with three other video installations. Once the exhibition, which is Atkins' first solo show, closes at the MacKenzie it will travel to the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. After that, who knows?

If I was a curator somewhere, and I had a chance to book it, I definitely would. You'd need a decent size space to install the show, but it packs up light and wouldn't cost a ton to ship. So it'd be easy on the budget. Plus, it's damn good.

The MacKenzie has the show installed in the hardwood Kenderdine Gallery, which always lends itself to dramatic displays. When you enter, you're greeted by several lushly erected tents that recall a fair or carnival.

The tents are scattered, so there's no set path to follow. Each tent has an opening where you can enter and view a short work by Atkins with the aid of headphones. Videos range in length from 3'02" to 12'18".

One tent's been augmented with fabric foliage and a pile of bright red apples. Another looks like a giant cake. It's got a video screening inside that's set in winter, and depicts a young woman struggling across a snowy field while carrying a large cake. To recreate the winter landscape for viewers, the tent floor is covered in finely crushed white glass. Special slip-on boots are provided for you to wear when you enter the tent.

Then there's a third installation where you sit at an antique pedal sewing machine and power a projector to show a 16mm film. It was sticking a bit when I tried it, and I struggled to get the right rhythm. That's perhaps been fixed now. Or maybe that's the way Atkins intends it to work.

Anyway, you get the idea. Seeing this show is an adventure. And that's always fun.

There's some borderline dark/weird imagery, but the show's still kid-friendly as Atkins' videos have a strong fairy tale vibe. Kids will be suitably perplexed and intrigued, and adults will find plenty of striking visuals and quirky narrative threads to ponder on.

During a walkthrough on Feb. 1, Atkins described her working method as being somewhat haphazard. And necessity truly is the mother of invention for her low-budget videos.

Speaking about her use of animal-headed figures, for instance, Atkins said they arose out of an ill-fated commercial venture to sell head-warmers as fuzzy winter wear. When that idea didn't fly she used them in *Three Minute Miracle* (2008), the video with the

cake woman, where she ends up at a bizarre vaudeville show at a church; and *Scenes From A Secret World* (2009), which is another country tale set in summer where a girl on a bike encounters a wolf-headed creature in the woods at night.

Atkins films have to be seen to be appreciated — I can't possibly do them justice in a review. But here's some thematic keys to keep in mind when you're watching them: twins, isolation, prairie, journey, red (and not just the nod to Little Red Riding Hood in *Scenes From A Secret World* either), vaudeville, silent movies, and more.

Of the three works tied to *we live on the edge of disaster*, *The Summoning* (2014) is the most prominent. It's projected larger than life-size on a gallery wall, and begins with six young women in red dresses drilling in roller skates on a paved path in a remote location. Later, two similarly dressed girls who are conjoined twins are shown waking up in a field. Eventually, they meet up with the "Valkyries", who are kind of twin-like themselves, and are given a white axe.

The other films are *The Braid Harvesters* (2013) and *Embrace* (2013). The former shows a mother and daughter gathering braids of ribboned hair as they float by in a creek and hanging them on a line to dry while the latter depicts two elderly women (twins, both with short hair) meeting on a path like the one in *Summoning* and embracing.

To me, the videos seem related. In the first one, the conjoined twins share an intertwined braid. If they used the axe to separate themselves, they'd have to cut it. In *Braid Harvesters*, the braids that have been discarded by girls who separated from their twin and became "Valkyries" are shown being harvested. Then, assuming the twins did cut their braids and separate, *Embrace* depicts a poignant meeting between them in old age.

That's just my take on it. Others will have their own interpretation. Regardless, this is a show worth checking out. 