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FILM DESCRIPTION

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Film Title:
Art Project: Ghosts of Woodrow

Programme: SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS
Director: Graeme Patterson
Country: Canada
Year: 2005
Time: 27 minutes



The "Ghosts of Woodrow" project includes the following works:

Romancing the Farm
 4 minutes
 CANADA, 2003

The Games Room: Bowling
 7 minutes
 CANADA, 2005

Monkey and Deer
 8 minutes
 CANADA, 2004

Lafleche vs Woodrow, 1972
 4 minutes
 CANADA, 2005

The Games Room: Horseshoes
 4 minutes
 CANADA, 2005



The Canadian family farm is in bad shape. The legacy of the prairies as the breadbasket of the world is fast crumbling. Today's cereal farmers and cattle ranchers are nearly extinct, driven off the land by low market prices, steadily rising costs and less strenuous career options for their youth. In reaction to the demographic and economic shifts that have redefined rural spaces, Canadian artist Graeme Patterson has produced a series of intricately related stop-motion animations and sculptural installations that reflect on disconnection and loss. These spatial, social and economic vacuums in rural society are the focus of "Ghosts of Woodrow."

After graduating from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 2002, Patterson took up residence on his grandfather's abandoned farm to create an homage to this fast-disappearing rural culture. Over a two year period, he produced five melancholic yet lighthearted animated shorts that focus on ghostly characters engaged in the fleeting pursuits of rural life (hockey, church, bowling, etc.). Patterson has sculpted miniature likenesses of various icons of farm life, from his grandmother playing an oversized church organ to the puttering activities of his grandfather, as well as stereotypically "farm league" hockey players (reminiscent of those in the popular *Slap Shot* movies). Patterson sets his various characters in the familiar locales of the farm and hamlet. Their range of activity is limited but rendered enchanting and otherworldly when accompanied by the schmaltzy soundtrack.

Patterson maintains that "the surrealistic nature of the animations and sculpture comes from an intention to place the environment in its own little world. The quiriness of the characters and their gestured activity, as well as the miniature scale, unify them." He applies the same surrealistic approach to his depiction of domestic and wild animals that inhabit the dimly lit, floating worlds of church and grain elevator. Their tentative rendering and whimsical interaction is informed by Patterson's blend of romantic visions of farm and wild life and the discontinuity of flights of fantasy - spectacles that similarly reflect on the transitory and the impermanent in both human and animal worlds.

- Wayne Baerwaldt



Graeme Patterson was born in Saskatoon and earned his bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. His works have toured in solo and group exhibitions and film festivals. *Don't Ride Shopping Carts*, Patterson's 2003 animated short, won awards at the Garden State Film Festival and the Atlantic Film Festival.

The Ghosts of Woodrow project will be on display at the Church of the Redeemer at the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street from noon until 8pm Monday, September 12 and Tuesday September 13. Open to the public. No tickets required. Free admission.

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