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Triangles and Triptychs

These arty flicks pose questions about life, love and the universe. | By Candace Moore



MUST-SEE CABLE TV

If you watch nothing else this month, watch these two incredible series. The fifth seasons of both HBO's *The Wire* and Showtime's *The L Word* are captivating work featuring sexy lesbian characters and deserve your full attention. *The L Word* has dyke drama, L.A.-specific barbs and an Alice storyline that makes me proud to be a lesbian journalist. Gals will love it. But it's *The Wire*, with gay outlaw vigilante Omar (the excellent Michael Kenneth Williams) and African American lesbian cop Shakima Griggs (the understated Sonja Sohn), whose crime, drama and gritty urban life is filmed so pitch-perfectly that you'll think you're on the streets of Baltimore yourself. Better yet, watch seasons one through four of both series on DVD to remember why you love them. (sho.com; hbo.com) — Diane Anderson-Minshall



Pensive in *Vivere*

Strangers, sisters, rivals, lovers and others: The women of these three indie films search for, stumble upon, resist and explore one another in scenarios that tend toward the complicated.

***Vivere* (Regent Releasing):** Three German women of differing generations travel to Rotterdam by night in this structurally artful, beautifully rendered film, their stories diverging and intersecting again and again as they lose and find one another (and themselves). Director Angelina Maccarone has trumped her last exquisite, quiet feature, *Unveiled*, perhaps the smartest lesbian-themed film of 2005. *Vivere* confirms that Maccarone may indeed be a queer, female, German Krzysztof Kieslowski; we're tempted to buy into the auteur theory solely on her account. Her use of subjective music, the camera and time has a poetic delicacy that reverberates; scenes feel hand-sewn rather than cut. The pot slowly starting to boil to the right of a stunning older woman (Hannelore Elsner) who is miserable eating alone; the blaring rock music in the car of the frustrated 20-something dyke (Esther Zimmering) who mothers her sister; the pregnant teenager (Kim Schnitzer) who runs through turnstiles and vomits in a train station far from home—this film is all in the details, spaces, silences and carefully chosen words. (regentreleasing.com)

***When Night Is Falling* (Wolfe):** Released in its intended, unrated version for the first time on DVD, along with director Patricia Rozema's 25-minute short, *Passion*, 1995's *When Night Is Falling* is the latest sparkler in Wolfe's vintage collection. This sumptuous Canadian romance between a tightly wound Christian schoolteacher, Camille (Pascale Bussi eres), and a big-hearted "Sirkus of Sorts" performer, Petra (Rachael Crawford), who juggles glowing lights and dances with irons, seems forged between elements, equally frozen by snow and singed by heat. After a "switcheroo" in a laundromat, Petra plays Cupid to Camille's Psyche, shooting cute note-arrows in through her apartment window and taking her flying on a hang glider. At first, Camille's petrified of her own desires, of the open sky and the expanse of ground beneath, but the film shows her embracing tender lovemaking with Petra while reforming her theological notions. Camille tries to break it off with her condescending boyfriend and explain to her minister that God might want her to be happy with a woman, but both men just talk over her, hoping to "love the sinner and hate the sin." More than a coming-out narrative set against religious tensions, though, this film ends up being about queer world-making, the divine places we create together with a little faith. (wolfevideo.com)

Exposing The

Red Is the Color Of (Bear Island Films):

Each time Mary Shaw (Finnish film star Irina Björklund) feels career angst or marriage bed-death bubbling up, she eases a fresh syringe into her arm. Not to shoot up, but to download blood—her signature paint. The art world's darling, Mary is in her 30s and ostensibly has it all: the chic looks, the spacious studio, the fey agent, and rabid fans from a proto-feminist girl group, the Bloody Marys, who stalk her. She even bankrolls her husband David's dead-end realist art practice, shelling out for his nude muse, Julie, a sarcastic grad student with a luscious, dirty mouth. When Julie's red skivvies surface under her bed, rather than oust the nymphet, Mary pulls her in closer, making sure the younger woman's shot glass never runs dry. The two women tumble into a deep entanglement that causes even the voracious but emotionally cold Julie to develop feelings. Their "romantic friendship" (for lack of a better word) propels the drama as it careens to the brink of the physical, but hovers there confoundedly, leaving this tale to yawn out to a hetero forgone conclusion. Björklund's rendition of a neurotic artist who keeps herself from going all tigress, because "they shoot tigers," bolsters a smart and quirky film that falls somewhere between *Red Shoe Diaries* and *Sex and the City*, thematically. Here, however, red is the color of bi-erotic foreplay pitched for mostly straight titillation.

(redisthecolorof.com) ■



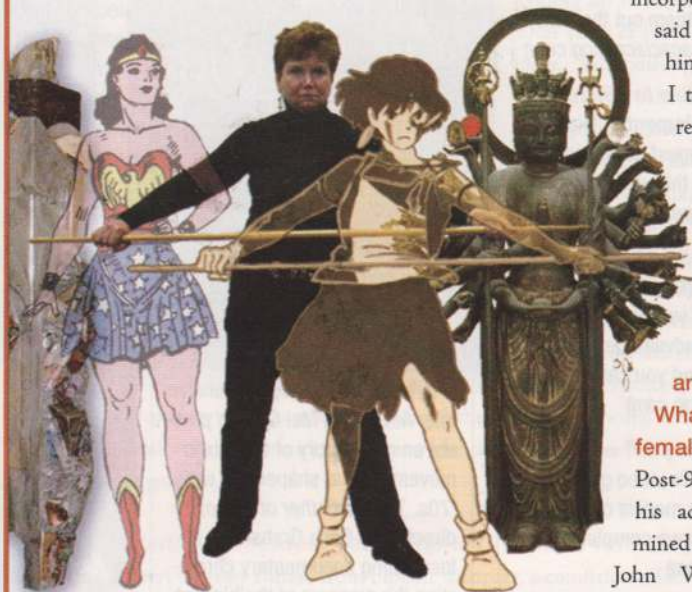
Bi-erotic in *Red*

Q+A
Linda Stein

The sculptor Linda Stein may be best known as one of the "commoners" duped by Sacha Baron Cohen in his 2006 film *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*—and for writing and giving interviews about that experience—but she has the last laugh. Her female Knights (lindastein.com), three larger-than-life bronze sculptures, have been chosen as the central sculpture commission for the \$4 million Walk of the Heroines at Portland State University in Oregon. *CURVE* spoke with Stein at her studio in New York City's Tribeca neighborhood. — *Stephanie Schroeder*

How has the Borat incident affected your life and art?

At the time the movie came out, the *New York Post* did a story on me and called me Borat's "big catch." Media coverage after that snowballed and I was interviewed by news outlets around the world. I was recently interviewed by the BBC, based on my exhibition at Rutgers [which featured three 7-foot bronze and paper knights paired with shadowy images of Borat, Wonder Woman and Marilyn Monroe, respectively]. A reporter from the BBC asked about my sculpture



incorporating Borat's image. He said that he noticed I had given him a small phallus and didn't I think it was a low blow? I replied I was simply continuing the conversation Borat started about sexism, homophobia and racism, and that he could use a little exposure himself.

Why did you start making female knights and woman warriors?

What is your theory about female heroism?

Post-9/11, the media, Bush and his administration were determined to bring back men—in a John Wayne-cowboy way—and make them heroes in every scenario,

while rendering all women damsels in distress. Women such as the 9/11 widows were portrayed as weak and vulnerable—their husbands were the heroes, not them. If the widows were career women or did heroic things themselves, the media weren't interested. But if the women were housewives or otherwise nonthreatening, then the media made a big showing of how America—and American women—needed men as heroes.

My work is a corrective to that notion. I have chosen to highlight females as heroes and have chosen as source material Wonder Woman, the anime of *Princess Mononoke* and the Asian goddess of compassion, Kuan-yin.

And then I wondered how I, as a pacifist, a jogger who steps around anthills, was creating these warriors. When I stumbled on Wonder Woman, whom I had loved as a kid, and also thought of knights in shining armor, they were always female. It's the female knight who is the real hero. ■