

FILMMAKER FOUND INSPIRATION IN MUSIC VIDEO

By Peter Goddard

Nelson Henricks is the focus of the Images Festival's Canadian Artist Spotlight for a good number of reasons, starting with his prodigious video and film output over the past 20 years, and his role at Montreal's Concordia University mentoring several generations of young experimental filmmakers.

He's also responsible for one of the greatest of all Canadian short films with *Conspiracy of Lies* (1992), screening tomorrow with other works at the Workman Theatre. Certain ideas recur throughout the work of the 44-year-old artist, including his obsession with systems, order and numbers, the importance of layered music and sound and the space given to autobiographical revelation.

Based on a diary-like collection of papers Henricks happened across one day, *Conspiracy* unfolds as a sound poem about a directionless generation. It features around a dozen voices reciting bits of the anonymous text ("avoid drinking ... buy a book"), ceaseless rhythmic walking, a discreet funky music track and the sound of someone counting to 100 over and over again.

Look to MTV and MuchMusic as a starting point, Henricks suggests.

"When I was growing up (in Alberta) and then was in art school (Alberta College of Art) my first encounter with experimental film production was through music video," he says on the phone.

"What we now do comes halfway between cinema and TV on one end, and the art world on the other."