

GAY PEOPLE'S CHRONICLE

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by **Bob Boone**

Cleveland—Five remarkable films comprise the Ten Percent Cinema of this year's Cleveland Film Society's International Film Festival.

The eleven-day film fest kicks off March 13 and includes over sixty films and some 45 independent shorts.

Hide and Seek

Written by Su Friedrich and Cathy Nan Quinlan
Directed by Su Friedrich
Women Make Movies

"By making *Hide and Seek*, I hoped to reveal the imaginary universe of young lesbians and to dispel some of the myths that have darkened our dreams," said writer and director Su Friedrich.

As a result, she has successfully braided together the story of a teenage girl named Lou, insightful interviews with twenty adult lesbians, and various enlightening archival footage, such as a 1950s sex education film for girls.

Shot in Hi-8 black-and-white, the film has



Su Friedrich

the air of a home movie as we follow the events of Lou (Chels Holland) and her friends. It is a diary for Lou as she sees her treasured friendship with Betsy (Ariel Mara) tested by the onset of adolescence. Innocence and long-ing intermingle as the girls play and go to school, the zoo, and to slumber parties.

The performances of the young actresses are so natural that it seems as if a camera has been secretly mounted in their tree house and we are eavesdropping on their private play. Holland as Lou seems sincere in her jealous dismay that Betsy is discussing pierced ears and crushes on boys. Mara equally convinces us that Betsy is devastated by Lou's sudden pronouncement that when she grows up, she is moving to Africa. Betsy's dreams of the two girls living next door to one another and their children playing together are instantly dashed.

The slumber parties provide the perfect backdrop to highlight all of Lou's brooding emotions. The playful seriousness of a game of truth or dare and the drama of a seance convey the affectionate bonds that the girls develop among themselves, while whispers and giggles hint at the rejection any of the girls faces if she takes those bonds too close to heart.

The interspersed interviews with the adult women remind us that the adventures of Lou and Betsy are real and cherished memories. The women's stories of longing as little girls for their best friends, the fear of reaction from their families, and the indoctrination of societal roles are the perfect 20/20 hindsight that Lou needs to hear.

More than one hundred photos of lesbians when they were young girls are also peppered throughout the film as if to remind Lou and one another that none of them are alone.

According to director Friedrich, *Hide and Seek* is "about being at an age when sexual feelings are still vague and about how a girl might know, even then, that her Prince Charming is a princess."

A graduate of Oberlin College in 1975, Friedrich has produced over a dozen other films. Her films *Sink or Swim* and *Damned If You Don't* received awards from film festivals in Melbourne, San Francisco, and Atlanta.