

"The Odds of Recovery" by Holly Willis, LA WEEKLY, December 6, 2002

# LA WEEKLY

DECEMBER 6 - 12, 2002

## CALENDAR FILM

## S P E C I A L E V E N T S

"The patient tolerated the procedure well," notes a voice in experimental filmmaker Su Friedrich's latest film, *The Odds of Recovery*, which chronicles the many operations she's endured since 1977. But Friedrich does not tolerate her procedures well. Her spleen, an ovary, both knees and her right breast are crisscrossed by knurly scars, and, thanks to errant hormones, she's suffered a depressed libido alongside other inchoate symptoms. Her numerous doctors are clueless about deeper causes, leaving the filmmaker rightfully pissed. In the context of her other, more rigorously constructed work, Friedrich opts for a deceptively simple approach, mixing film, video, text and voice-over, and frequently turning the camera on herself. "What the fuck is this?" she growls, holding up pink paper apparel in the hospital, while later, looking down into the camera lens, she laments her ongoing maladies in a petulant but well-earned rant. More difficult ideas turn up as text, silently voicing shadowy fears. The film is rife with moments of rage alongside those of quiet revelation, and the deft interplay of voices, words and images coalesces into a steady accretion of metaphors and insights that are sharp and multilayered. While Friedrich effectively critiques Western medicine and demonstrates exhilarating filmmaking skills, its true achievement is as self-portraiture, boldly revealing a woman in all her difficult, naked complexity. (Filmforum at the Egyptian; Sun., Dec. 8, 7 p.m. 323-466-3456)

—Holly Willis