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“New Film/ New York”

By Bruce Jenkins



From Ericka Beckman's *The Broken Rule*

ERICKA BECKMAN

The Broken Rule (1979)

Super-8/color/sound/23 minutes

“One person's work is another person's play.

Play creates competition.

Competition is the basis of all work.

This film pictures 'learning blocks' as relays, the systematic approach to the working world as a game, and girls as scores.”

—Ericka Beckman

Utilizing television-commercial stereotypes of women as either laundresses or cheerleaders and of men as engaged either in sports or commerce (or both), Ericka Beckman creates an ideological satire on sexism and American capitalism. As men engage in such team sports as relay races with briefcases or mock-violent games of red-rover, women are seen and heard from off-screen cheering them on with such chants as “Compete, Compete, Compete” and “Go Team Go.”

Riveting in its choreography of space and rhythm, *The Broken Rule* is a sort of Marxist musical. Oddly suggestive of the work of Tashlin, the film is constructed with the precision of an animated work, and with the formal humor of a Landow.

Filmmaker Ericka Beckman, who

in 1978 was nominated for “Best Emerging Filmmaker” in the Independent Film category by the *Soho Weekly News* and received a “Critics Choice” in the *Village Voice*, has been making films in Super-8mm since 1977. She received a BFA from Washington University in St. Louis, an MFA from California Institute of the Arts, and participated in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. She has been a Visiting Artist at California Institute of the Arts, Hochschule fur Bildende Kunst in Hamburg, Germany, the Pratt Institute and the University of Hartford School of Art. Beckman is the recipient of a 1980 NEA Individual Artist Fellowship and a 1978 CAPS Film Grant, and her films have been screened at Millennium, The Collective for Living Cinema, Chicago Filmmakers, Artist's Space, The Mudd Club, London Film Co-op, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, The Kitchen and Bleecker Street Cinema, among others. Exhibitions of her still photography have been mounted in New York, San Francisco and Milano, Italy. Articles on Beckman's work have appeared in *Reallife Magazine*, *Cover*, *Film Comment*, *American Film*, *Flash Art Magazine* and *Artforum*. She is currently completing work on her new film, *Out of Hand*.