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FLICKS | REVIEW 09.30.04

You say you want a revolution?

BY [FELICIA FEASTER](#)

It's a sad fact of living in a visual age.

We have to see to believe.

It was graphic, unforgettable news imagery that soured Americans on Vietnam.

And in that great void of imagery that is Iraq, Vietnam has jumped in to serve as metaphor: a quagmire like our own, haunted by the specter of endless guerrilla attacks, big business interests and increasing grunt resentment with the nature of their roles.

A not-to-be-missed series of Vietnam-era short films screening Oct. 2 at Eyedrum demonstrates the essential role visuals played, not only in ending the war, but in giving artists and filmmakers the material for their protest.

Andy Ditzler programs a regular experimental film series for Eyedrum, featuring "everything from Brakhage to the Beats" called *Frequent Small Meals*. He was inspired to create a program devoted to protest by New York's Whitney Museum's ongoing film series, *WAR! Protest in America, 1965-2004*.

Orchestrated with the lost, intoxicatingly textured hum of actual movie projectors showing the 16mm treasures, Ditzler's provocative series *Protesting the Vietnam War, 1966-1974* not only revisits essential film documents, but re-creates the activist '60s spirit in Eyedrum's alternative culture living room.

Protesting is filled with moments of overwhelming horror and chilling parallels to our own times, including Peter Gessner's reassembled nightmare, "Time of the Locust," a document of wartime's normalized sadism.

Particularly haunting is Fred Wellington's film "What Are You Thinking, Daddy?," featuring still images of a father playing gingerly with his infant. On the surface, the film is a series of tender family snapshots, but a disturbing final image of war's devastation suggests that the father's mind is elsewhere, and that his own child triggers thoughts of the suffering of Vietnamese children. New York avant-garde artist Carolee Schneemann's "Viet-Flakes" burns with earnest rage as it juxtaposes cheery radio pop tunes to horrific newspaper photos in a style devoid of the easy irony that characterizes the modern, political response to horror.

Divided into documentary and experimental art films, *Protesting* proves both genres well equipped at evoking the devastation of the times and a feeling, still tangible today, of uncontainable agony for the cruelties done in America's name abroad.

Protesting the Vietnam War, 1966-1974 screens Sat., Oct. 2, at 8 p.m., Eyedrum Art and Music Gallery, Suite 8, 290 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. 404-522-0655. <http://www.eyedrum.org/>. For mature audiences only.

09.30.04



From *Protesting the Vietnam War, 1966-1974* at Eyedrum

(Eyedrum)

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