

Mixed Feelings

Directed by Karin Junger

Last night's Margaret Mead Film Festival opened with *Mixed Feelings* (showing again October 3, Museum of Natural History), a powerful documentary that focuses on an interracial couple living in South Africa. This 60-minute film starts out as a piece about race and racism in this part of the world, but slowly evolves into a story about gender and the universality of sexism.

Dutch filmmaker Karin Junger and her husband—themselves an interracial couple living in Holland—went to Africa to film Jerry and Annette, a couple who'd gained extreme notoriety and prejudice when they married in 1987. Annette received the stronger blows. Her white family disowned her, and her friends deserted her. When the pair moved into a black township they were never fully accepted there either.

It is into the midst of this hostile environment that the filmmakers immerse themselves, moving in with Annette and Jerry to document their lives. At first it seems as if love has conquered all, but as the film unfolds slowly and imperceptively a new picture begins to emerge. In separate scenes of the white women and later the black men talking to each other it becomes clear that Annette is hopelessly trapped. Her husband, who is the product of male-dominated culture, believes strongly in the subjugation of women; the woman is there to serve the man. Annette is forced to hold a full-

time job while doing all the housework. She reveals to Junger that she is losing her identity, the last thing that has not been taken away from her. In the final shot of Annette alone ironing, she talks about escape but knows how impossible that is.

Junger is known as a documentary filmmaker whose personal life gets interwoven into her work. Her previous film, *Birthplace Unknown*, focused on her adopted sister's biological parents in Korea. In *Mixed Feelings* the filmmaker is not content to simply document another couple's marriage, but incorporates her own as well. By interweaving her thoughts about interracial marriage in general and about her husband specifically, she gives extra layers of meaning and depth to the film. —Karen Kramer

REEL TO REEL



Karin Junger's *Mixed Feelings* follows an interracial relationship in South Africa.