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Born in Flames is Cinema of Women's second major feature film, and like the first, Question of Silence, it is opening at the Screen on the Green Islington and then transferring to other cinemas in London and other parts of the country. / To anyone who has seen Born in Flames or Question of Silence it might seem obvious that they can be watched in warm comfortable cinemas by large audiences. To us, at Cinema of Women it is a major achievement.

For many years feminist films tended to mean sitting in less-than-luxurious community centres or school, or otherwise having to de-code exploitative and distorting publicity: one Frenchwoman's film actually ended up being distributed under the title of A Young Emanuelle ! Even those films like German Sisters and At First Sight which did reach cinemas in a form the film makers would have recognised usually ended up in small art-houses with exclusive rather than popular images.

As a feminist group already distributing about 40 short films we felt it was essential that films like Question of Silence and Born in Flames reached as large an audience as possible, and that they should be recognised as the major films that they are. This meant borrowing large amounts of money, persuading cinemas that there was a market for ~~such~~ 'difficult' films, and dealing with a whole range of film businessmen who at first found it hard to take us seriously. ] Traditionally innovative feature films get at least some support from film reviewers, but in the case of Question of Silence their response was nothing short of hysterical - the Standard for instance, said that liking the film was equivalent to being a supporter of 'Herod's slaughter of infants', while the socialist New Statesman dismissed it in the one line they usually reserve for children's films and soft porn. Reviews such as these did

nothing to boost audience figures, and for the first few weeks it looked as though the feminist in-road into mainstream film might be very shortlived indeed.

In the end, however, the film did manage to reach the kind of wide audience that it had been intended for, and it took it's rightful place as one of the most important films of last year. Born in Flames is a completely different film made in a very different kind of way, but the problems associated with getting it onto the screen have been very similiar : a long grind of deals and negotiations, discussions over publicity, struggles to get it the kind of sympathetic press coverage that it deserves. We hope that the same kind of numbers of women who enjoyed Question of Silence will like Born in Flames, but even if you don't we hope that you will appreciate being able to see it at all.

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