

Question of Silence (15)

Screen on the Green; Paris
Pullman

Question of Silence concerns another perplexing criminal case, though the circumstances and style are far different. Three women, strangers to each other, join forces in an Amsterdam boutique to kick and

mutilate the male owner (the body is tactfully left just outside the camera's range). The male-dominated legal system scratches its head at the crime, but a female criminal psychiatrist becomes increasingly sympathetic, refusing to hide the women's actions under the mantle of insanity. The Dutch writer-director Marleen Gorris, here making her first feature, is clearly a forthright feminist who enjoys thrashing out at an obdurate male society. Yet the film serves its cause far better when the hammering stops and the camera quietly observes the psychiatrist coming to grips with her three charges - housewife Christina, withdrawn into silence; waitress Annie, strenuously jolly; secretary Andrea, highly caustic. In these scenes, at least, Gorris creates an effectively unsettling mood; her career should be watched.

Geoff Brown