

EXTRACT: GILES BAILEY

It occurred to her that the nodding of her head, as the film's interminable, voiceover continued, might have constituted a private act of defiance. She wanted to be able to close her eyes and move into another entire reality. Then she must have nodded off. She came to in the midst of a discussion, a Q & A. The director was firmly batting away a few slightly critical points raised by the audience. She seemed surprisingly impervious to any apprehension or doubt about the quality or significance of what she had made. It was as though she, the director, was able to selectively absorb only what approbation emanated from them, from the audience. She had the sense that this was a very particular skill that was learned or acquired either at great expense or at great personal cost. Perhaps it could even be inherited, she thought, absentmindedly. Looking beyond and behind the conversation, she noticed that the image remaining on the screen behind the talk was intriguing and a little perplexing. It slowly dawned on her that the projectionist was screening the opening scenes of Robert Altman's *Three Women* - the scenes around the pool, but the film was playing in ultra slow motion, so slow that she began to think it was not moving at all but when she looked away and looked back again, something tiny seemed to have moved or changed.