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CRACKED, NOT BROKEN ****
Directed by Paul Perrier. 64 min. Nov 14, 8pm. The Drake Hotel Underground, 1150 Queen W.

This documentary portrait of an addict is neither pitying nor damning; it is, in its subject's words, merely truthful. *Cracked, Not Broken* tells the story of Lisa, who has endured years of cocaine abuse. While clean from drugs, Lisa was so affected by a short film photographer/filmmaker Paul Perrier — her best friend's husband — was making about another addict, she agreed to be interviewed if she ever relapsed. *Cracked, Not Broken* captures that interview and finds Lisa to be intelligent, calm, desperate, lucid and deluded all at once.

Perrier uses small tricks to keep the audience on their toes, but in general the intensity of the conversation is engaging enough on its own. **NF**



August Diehl (left) and Ellen Page in *Mouth to Mouth*.

THIEVES OF INNOCENCE ***
Directed by Paul Arcand. (STC) 88 min. Opens Nov 11.

This Quebecois documentary is a cathartic, didactic but largely effective assault on both the province's child-welfare system and the notion that our country can adequately provide safety to those who need it the most. A veteran broadcast journal-

ist, director Paul Arcand mounts his offensive with tenacity and sometimes overbearing tactics, including the Michael Moore-like sandbagging of several mealy-mouthed bureaucrats. *Thieves of Innocence* may be more admirable for its political aims than its cinematic virtues but it's still a fierce piece of agit-prop. **JA**

MOUTH TO MOUTH ***
Starring Ellen Page, Eric Thal. Written and directed by Alison Murray. (14A) 98 min. Opens Nov 11 at Camera.

Based on the director's experiences as a teenaged squatter and cult member, Alison Murray's patchy but visually arresting *Mouth to Mouth* depicts a runaway's experiences with a grungy posse of anarchists as they tumble across Europe like some evil production of *Stompi!*. Neglected by her mother, Sherry (Ellen Page) is easy prey for SPARK (Street People Armed with Radical Knowledge). Its permanently shirtless leader Harry (Eric Thal) may preach self-determination and positivity, but is mostly interested in increasing his hold over his impressionable charges.

The fact that Harry's promised Shangri-La will turn out to be a slice of hell is telegraphed far too early but Murray — best known for her muscular dance films —

invests her scenes with a surprising degree of movement and colour. And though the Sundance hit *Hard Candy* is a much stronger showcase for the precociously talented Page (expect a Toronto release in early '06), she too uses her smarts and ferocity to remarkable effect. **JA**

Film Related.

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There's no getting around it: a film festival centering on issues of mental health and addiction is going to be heavy. This year's Rendez-Vous With Madness features some truly wrenching films, including Allan

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