



MOVIES

STOLEN
DIRECTED BY
REBECCA DREYFUS.
PERSISTENCE
OF VISION FILMS.
NOT RATED.

LITTLE TURNS OUT well in Rebecca Dreyfus's *Stolen*, a haunting and expansive documentary about the search for the precious paintings stolen in 1990 from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner museum. Dreyfus keeps returning to Vermeer's *The Concert*, and in between detective scenes and rather longish exchanges between Mrs. Gardner (read by Blythe Danner) and art critic Bernard Berenson (read by Campbell Scott), she interviews highly emotional Vermeer experts, who describe how the artist captures a fleeting moment so exquisitely that *The Concert* transcends time. It does not, however, transcend greed: The art thieves we see look like boorish, macho businessmen—indelibly ugly.

At the center of *Stolen* is a man whose ugliness is only skin-deep: the steadfast art investigator Harold Smith, whose face has been eaten away (literally) by a virulent skin cancer. What an object for a film about the loss of great art. With his Magritte bowler, eye patch, and false nose, he cries out to be painted by a master. ■

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