

MUSEUM TO SHOW FILMS OF SHIRLEY CLARKE

THE FILMS OF SHIRLEY CLARKE, a week-long program including "The Connection," "The Cool World" and "Portrait of Jason," will begin Thursday, May 6, at The Museum of Modern Art. On opening night, at the showing of "The Cool World" at 8 P.M., the public will have its first opportunity to participate with Shirley Clarke in a Video experience. Shirley Clarke refers to Video -- the medium in which she is now working-- as "occupational grope therapy or play time" but insists that while "it may be Theater or Dance or Electronic Painting and/or Music... the only thing it is not is mini-movies."

Shirley Clarke's films dealt with controversial issues such as drugs or the world of Harlem before such issues were considered even indirectly by most filmmakers. "I believed that the time had come for American film makers to deal with the realities of life in a new mature way," she has said. To do this, she used the direct technique of cinema verité, though she emphasizes that all her features were "theatrical re-creations, not documentaries."

Born in New York City, Shirley Clarke was originally a dancer. She studied with Martha Graham and worked and danced with Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey and Anna Sokolow. As Chairman-of-the-Board of the National Dance Association, she sent dancers and dance films all over the world and became increasingly interested in the possibilities of using dance in film. In 1953, she gave up dance and began making films.

Since that time, Miss Clarke has made numerous short films, a program of which will be included in the Museum series. Among these is "Loops," several 2-1/2-minute loop films made for the American Pavilion of the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels.

Her first feature film, "The Connection," was completed in 1961. With a screenplay by Jack Gelber, based on his play, the film was seized two days after opening on the grounds of obscenity. The film eventually reopened after a prolonged legal battle. It con-

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cerns a film director trying and ultimately failing to make a movie about junkies. Set in a Greenwich Village flat, the film conveys a spontaneity suggestive of documentary. However, as Donald Richie, now Curator of Film at the Museum, wrote in "The Nation" when the film was shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1961, "Little or nothing is actually spontaneous in the film; Miss Clarke's is the art that hides art."

"The Cool World" (1964), Miss Clarke's second feature, is based on a novel by Warren Miller. "The power of the film," said one reviewer, "is in Miss Clarke's vision of Harlem, and the manner in which she uses that vision is the purest kind of moviemaking." Discussing the technique of the film, Miss Clarke has said, "'The Cool World' does use many documentary techniques in the shooting.... This 'new documentary' technique can be used as in 'The Cool World' to make it possible to tell a story on social, psychological and emotional levels. I like to call this kind of film 'new realism,' not documentary."

About "Portrait of Jason," shot in 1967 in one twelve-hour evening at Miss Clarke's apartment, the filmmaker has said, "It is a film that reveals the humor and pathos, the joys and pains of Jason, a unique and extraordinary human being and somehow all Jason's problems and ambiguities seem to explain our own.... In many ways I think 'Portrait of Jason' is an attempt to reach myself -- though somehow I still seem to need an intermediary."

This need seems less important in Miss Clarke's current work, as Video allows the immediate and direct recording of one's own activities and experiences. According to Miss Clarke, "The electronic age has put into our hands 1/2" videotape and soon we won't have to teach little children to read or write. We have already started the space-age folk stories, novels, auto-biographies and certainly the do-it-yourself TV talk shows."

The schedule of THE FILMS OF SHIRLEY CLARKE follows:

- Thursday, May 6 (2:00, 5:30)
 DANCE IN THE SUN (1953), 7 min. By Shirley Clarke. IN PARIS PARKS (1954), 13 min. By Shirley Clarke. BULLFIGHT (1955), 5 min. By Shirley Clarke. A MOMENT IN LOVE (1957), 9 min. By Shirley Clarke. BRIDGES-GO-ROUND (1958-9), 3 1/2 min. By Shirley Clarke. LOOPS (1958), ca. 10 min. By Shirley Clarke. SKYSCRAPER (1959), 20 min. By Shirley Clarke, Willard Van Dyke, Irving Jacoby. A SCARY TIME (1960), 20 min. By Shirley Clarke and Robert Hughes.

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Thursday, May 6 (8:00)

THE COOL WORLD (1964). Directed and edited by Shirley Clarke. With Hampton Clanton, Yolanda Rodriguez, Carl Lee. Courtesy of Cinema V. 105 min.

Friday, May 7 (2:00, 5:30)

PORTRAIT OF JASON (1967). Directed and edited by Shirley Clarke. With Jason Holliday. 105 min.

Saturday, May 8 (3:00, 5:30)

THE CONNECTION (1961). Directed and edited by Shirley Clarke. With Warren Finnerty, Jerome Raphael, Garry Goodrow. Courtesy of Vineyard Films. 103 min.

Sunday, May 9 (2:00, 5:30)

THE COOL WORLD (see Thursday, May 6).

Monday, May 10 (12:30)

Same program as Thursday, May 6, at 2:00 and 5:30.

Tuesday, May 11 (5:30)

THE CONNECTION (see Saturday, May 8).

Wednesday, May 12 (2:00, 5:30)

PORTRAIT OF JASON (see Friday, May 7).

Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York 10019. Tel: (212) 956-7296.