

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 72
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Lillian Gerard (212) 956-7296
Pat Rosen (212) 956-7298

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES COME TO WEST 53rd STREET:
"WHAT'S HAPPENING?" SERIES OPENS NEW SEASON AT
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND THE DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER

The New York Public Library and The Museum of Modern Art, beginning on October 4, will again be joining forces to present the weekly documentary film series "What's Happening?" The programs feature new works on political and social issues, often made from a provocative and controversial viewpoint. Most of the films come out of the burgeoning American independent movement, but included as well are foreign productions and television documentaries from the major networks and public broadcasting.

Films in the series are selected by William Sloan, Film Librarian for The New York Public Library and Guest Programmer for the Museum. The programs are presented every Tuesday at noon at the Donnell Library Center, 20 West 53rd Street, and at 6:00 p.m. on the same day across the street at The Museum of Modern Art. The series will run through June of next year.

Mr. Sloan points out that the issues and ideas in October's programs are typical of the kind of fare that will be presented throughout the year. The series opens with a filmed on-the-spot record of troops seizing power in Portugal and records the aftermath of the revolution; the second program features two anti-multi-national corporation films, one set in Puerto Rico, the other in Africa; the third program consists of five shorts on the lives of Italian-Americans; the last film of the month is about fundamentalist snake handlers in Appalachia. Many of these films will be having their first New York showing.

Following is a brief description of the films for October:

(more)

On October 4, "Viva Portugal" an 80-minute documentary from Europe, which has just recently been made into an English language version by the American filmmaker Marc Weiss, will be shown. It follows the leftist troops in Portugal during 1974-75 as they seize power from the fascist dictatorship of Caetano and attempt to bring about a revolutionary society.

The October 11 program consists of two half-hour documentaries. The first by Alfonso Beato, "Puerto Rico: Paradise Invaded," examines the attitudes of Puerto Ricans towards U.S. business practices in Puerto Rico. The second film on the program, "Bottle Babies," is an attack on a European corporation promoting a nutritional product in Africa that ironically has resulted in widespread malnutrition among babies.

On October 18, five films of varying lengths about Italian-Americans make up the program. Two shorts by Tony de Nonno will open the screening: "Part of Your Loving" on a baker who lives his work, and "It's All in My Hands" about a shoemaker who also lives his work. Both are neighbors of the filmmaker in Brooklyn. The third entry, "The Italian Americans" is by feature filmmaker Martin Scorsese who has here turned his hand to documentary in this recent study of his parents who live in New York's Little Italy. The fourth film is Kathleen Dowdey's "La Dolce Festa" depicting the San Gennaro Festival and what it means to the people of Little Italy. The last film is "L' Italia Vive Anche in America" by Anna Lomax. It records an unusual music festival in Washington, D.C., in which Italian Americans perform on a variety of musical instruments, many of them traditional, dating back to the Middle Ages or earlier.

The last film of the month, on October 25, is Karen Kramer's "The Jolo Serpent Handlers." It contains unusual color footage of a sect in West Virginia that handles poisonous snakes during its church service and takes the viewer into the homes of these people to reveal their attitudes and life style.