

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THIRTY YEARS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CINEMA ON EXHIBITION

To celebrate the richness, diversity and vitality of American avant-garde cinema, as part of its 50th Anniversary festivities, The Museum of Modern Art will present a program of American Independent Cinema of the past thirty years. Starting July 3, and throughout the entire month of July, the Department of Film will offer in the Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium 56 highly symbolic motion pictures, from eight seconds to three hours in length, made by Mark Rappaport, James Broughton, Stan Brakhage, Warren Sonbert, Storm de Hirsch, James Benning, Hollis Frampton and others whose names may be unfamiliar to the general public, though well known to enthusiasts of experimental cinema the world over.

Jon Gartenberg, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Film, has organized this retrospective covering the wide variety of independent films. Mr. Gartenberg points out that the Museum in the past five years has steadily added to its unparalleled archives of classic and foreign films a sizeable number of contemporary independent movies which are included in this series. It will be one of the largest avant-garde film showings in the Museum's history.

In the introduction to this program, Gartenberg notes, independent cinema is produced outside normal channels, and frequently it is made with

"limited funds and scarce resources." In visual imagery and emotional mood it also varies greatly. At the same time it reflects the multiple concerns of American filmmakers who frequently reject conventional linear narrative and utilize instead slow and accelerated motion, pixilation, collage, superimposition, distorted lenses, and even silence. Repetition and variation of a specific situation, image, or word predominates and the symbolic value of a given object--a statue, an eye, a telephone, a photograph--is primary.

Today's independents work with many genres and styles such as travel diaries, minimal and structural cinema, animation, political and social documentaries, and an exploration of human communication. In addition, because they derive their inspiration from primitive American film, they sometimes pay homage to early films and filmmakers.

Not until the 1940s did the American experimentalists formally take root, and Sidney Peterson, known for "The Cage," became one of the pivotal figures in the movement. Other innovators included Maya Deren, Hy Hirsh, Kenneth Anger, and Len Lye. There were still earlier innovative works of the '20s and '30s such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Webber and Watson and Robert Florey's "The Life and Death of a Hollywood Extra," both made in 1928, and the 1934 film "Pie in the Sky" by Elia Kazan, Ralph Steiner and Irving Lerner. All these films had been circulated for many years by the Department of Film.

While the Museum in the past has held individual shows of the works of Shirley Clarke, Stan Brakhage, Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton, the present exhibition supplies an overview of the evolution of themes and interests of our American independent cinema tradition; more than anything

else, it is a report on the state of the collection of contemporary independent subjects in The Museum of Modern Art. The collection has been augmented through the support of the Jerome Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Creative Artists Public Service Program, and the individual filmmakers.

The schedule is enclosed.

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 * Screenings of Independent Cinema will be arranged *
 * upon request by contacting Pamela Sweeney, Depart- *
 * ment of Public Information, (212) 956-7501, or *
 * Jon Gartenberg, Department of Film, (212) 956-4208. *
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 * Stills are available together with program notes *
 * by Jon Gartenberg. *
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For further information, please contact Lillian Gerard, Special Projects Coordinator, (212) 956-7296, or Pamela Sweeney, (212) 956-7501, the Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019.

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CINEMA: RECENT ACQUISITIONS

July 3 - July 31, 1979

This exhibition reveals the scope and vitality of American independent cinema. Several programs are devoted to individual filmmakers: these include James Broughton, Sidney Peterson, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, and Mark Rappaport. Other programs reflect the diverse concerns and themes of independent film such as the travel diary, minimal and structural cinema, animation, homages to primitive motion pictures, and political and social documentaries. This show consists of sixteen programs of fifty-six films which range in date from 1946 through 1978 and in duration from 8 seconds to 3 hours.

All films have been acquired by the Archives of the Department of Film during the last five years, primarily through the generous support of the Jerome Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts Living American Artists Program, the individual filmmakers, the NEH Learning Museum Program, and the Creative Artists Public Service Program. This exhibition of independent American films has been organized by Jon Gartenberg, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Film.

Tuesday, July 3 at 2:30

Sidney Peterson, Pioneering Independent.
THE POTTED PSALM (1946, 25 min., silent, co-filmmaker James Broughton); THE CAGE (1947, 25 min., silent); THE PETRIFIED DOG (1948, 19 min.); MR. FRENHOFER AND THE MINOTAUR (1949, 21 min.) Total program: 90 minutes.

Friday, July 6 at 6:00

James Broughton, Cinema Poet.
FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON (1951, 15 min.); THE PLEASURE GARDEN (1954, 38 min.); THE GOLDEN POSITIONS (1970, 32 min.); SONG OF THE GODBODY (1977, co-filmmaker Joel Singer, 10 min.) Total program: 95 minutes.

Monday, July 9 at 6:00

Films by Sidney Peterson. See July 3 at 2:30.

Tuesday, July 10 at 2:30

Films by James Broughton. See July 6 at 6:00.

Tuesday, July 10 at 6:00

Mark Rappaport: Films About Relationships.
CASUAL RELATIONS. 1973. With Sis Smith, Mel Austin, Peter Campus. 80 minutes.

Thursday, July 12 at 2:30

Social and Political Documentaries from 1972.
THE LIBERAL WAR (Nick Macdonald, 35 min.); RED SQUAD (The Pacific Street Film Collective, 41 min.); JOYCE AT 34 (Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill, 28 min.) Total program: 104 minutes.

- Thursday, July 12 at 6:00 Early Cinema Homages/Cinema Space.
VIEW FROM FRONT OF TRAIN (ca 1889, American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, 1 min., silent); VALSE TRISTE (1978, Bruce Conner, 5 min.); THE LOVES OF FRANISTAN (1948, Jules Victor Schwerin, 20 min.); VIEWMASTER (1976, George Griffin, 4 min.); BLOCK PRINT (1977, George Griffin, 17 min., silent); CUBES (1977, David Haxton, 10 min., silent). Total program: 57 minutes.
- Thursday, July 12 at 8:30 Stan Brakhage: Short Films.
REFLECTIONS ON BLACK (1955, 12 min.); LOVING (1957, 5 min.); MOTHLIGHT (1963, 4 min.); PASHT (1965, 6 min.); EYE MYTH (1972, 8 seconds); SEXUAL MEDITATION: OPEN FIELD (1972, 6 min.); THE RIDDLE OF LUMEN (1972, 15 min.); ACQUARIEN (1974, 3 min.) Total program: 51 min. All silent.
- Friday, July 13 at 2:30 Same program as July 12 at 6:00.
- Friday, July 13 at 6:00 Travel Diaries.
CAYUGA RUN (1967, Storm de Hirsch, 20 min.); A VISIT TO INDIANA (1970, Ted Davis and Curt McDowell, 10 min.); RUDE AWAKENING (1976, Warren Sonbert, 36 min., silent). Total program: 66 minutes.
- Saturday, July 14 at 2:30 Same program as July 12 at 2:30.
- Saturday, July 14 at 5:00 Cultural Documents.
PULL MY DAISY (1959, Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie, 24 min.); KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOES (1965, Kenneth Anger, 1 min.); AMPHETAMINE (1966, Warren Sonbert, 10 min.); ROBERT HAVING HIS NIPPLE PIERCED (1970, Sandy Daley, with Robert Mapplethorpe, David Crosland, soundtrack by Patti Smith, 30 min.); SHAMELESS (1974, Victor Faccinto, 15 min.) Total program: 80 minutes.
- Sunday, July 15 at 2:30 Same program as July 13 at 6:00.
- Sunday, July 15 at 5:00 Films by Stan Brakhage. See July 12 at 8:30.
- Monday, July 16 at 2:30 The Cinema as Light.
THE TEXT OF LIGHT. 1974. Stan Brakhage. 74 minutes. Silent.
- Monday, July 16 at 6:00 Contemplation of the Photograph.
ONE SECOND IN MONTREAL (1969, Michael Snow, 17 min., silent); NOSTALGIA (1971, Hollis Frampton, 36 min.) Words and Images, Sounds and Meaning.
BLUE STREAK (1971, Mark Rappaport, 16 min.); PHONEME FROLICS (1978, Dana Hodgdon, 11 min.) Total program: 80 minutes.
- Tuesday, July 17 at 2:30 Same program as July 16 at 6:00.

Tuesday, July 17 at 6:00 Same program as July 14 at 5:00.

Thursday, July 19 at 2:30 Breaking Relations.
 CHRONICLE (1970, Mark Rappaport, 30 min.); CRITICAL
 MASS (1971, Hollis Frampton, 25 min.)
 Total program: 55 minutes.

Thursday, July 19 at 6:00 Same program as July 16 at 2:30.

Thursday, July 19 at 8:30 Minimal and Structural Film.
 THE FLICKER (1966, Tony Conrad, 30 min.) May induce
 mild symptoms of shock or seizure in some people.
 ←→ (1969, Michael Snow, 52 min.)
 Total program: 82 minutes.

Friday, July 20 at 2:30 Same program as July 19 at 8:30.

Friday, July 20 at 6:00 Same program as July 19 at 2:30.

Saturday, July 21 at 3:00 Jonas Mekas, Father of the Independent Film.
 LOST, LOST, LOST. 1976. Reels 1 through 6 of Jonas
 Mekas's DIARIES, NOTES & SKETCHES, covering the
 years 1949-1963. 175 minutes.

Sunday, July 22 at 2:30 Animation Styles.
 FRANK FILM (1973, Frank Mouris, 9 min.); FUJI (1974,
 Robert Breer, 9 min.); RAINBOW BRIDGE (1975, Vicki Z.
 Peterson, 43 min., silent). Total program: 61 minutes.

Sunday, July 22 at 5:00 Abstract Films/Image Texture.
 1-2-3 (1968, John Whitney, 1 min.); ALLURES (1964,
 Jordan Belson, 8 min.); RE-ENTRY (1966, Jordan Belson,
 6 min.); MUSIC OF THE SPHERES (1978, Jordan Belson,
 10 min.); ONCE THE FERNS (1973, Marvin Albert, 9 min.);
 APALACHEE (1974, James Herbert, 12 min., silent); IN
 A REHEARSAL ROOM (1975, David Hahn, 11 min.); A FILM
 (1976, Steve Gluck, 3 min.) Total program: 60 minutes.

Monday, July 23 at 2:30 Same program as July 22 at 5:00.

Monday, July 23 at 6:00 Same program as July 22 at 2:30.

Tuesday, July 24 at 2:30 Same program as July 21 at 3:00.

Friday, July 27 at 6:00 James Benning and the Midwest Landscape.
 11 X 14. 1977. James Benning. 81 minutes.

Tuesday, July 31 at 2:30 Same program as July 27 at 6:00.

The Museum's film program is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.