

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
September 1989

THE FILMS OF EMILE DE ANTONIO

September 28 - October 8, 1989

A retrospective of documentaries by American filmmaker Emile de Antonio opens at The Museum of Modern Art on September 28, 1989. THE FILMS OF EMILE DE ANTONIO features nine political documentaries, including such well-known works as Milhouse: A White Comedy (1971) and In the Year of the Pig (1969). The world premiere of his most recent film, Mr. Hoover and I (1989), which intertwines histories of J. Edgar Hoover and de Antonio, will be introduced by the filmmaker on Tuesday, October 3, at 6:00 p.m.

De Antonio's films have been called "documents of radical dissent"; the filmmaker defines them as "political theater." He stated in a 1975 City of San Francisco interview, "I always saw film as the equivalent of Marx's statement that religion was the opiate of the people. Film was the poppy of the Depression....I had contempt for that kind of filmmaking....Then something happened to me that is very hard to put together." His first film, Point of Order (1963), was compiled from 188 hours of network television news coverage of the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings. It was immediately hailed by critics and pushed de Antonio to the forefront of American documentary filmmaking.

In Milhouse: A White Comedy, de Antonio incorporates news, interviews, and television footage of Richard Nixon's career in politics as an illustration of how the manipulation of the media can alter the democratic process. Painters Painting (1972), a film about contemporary American artists, features interviews with artists, critics, gallery owners, private collectors, and museum professionals. The Year of the Pig is a devastating portrayal of Vietnam from the early 1930s through the Tet offensive of 1968.

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Other films include That's Where the Action Is (1965), concerning the 1965 mayoral race in New York; Rush to Judgement (1966), regarding the Warren Report and Kennedy assassination; and America is Hard to See (1970), concerning the 1968 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Born in 1919 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, de Antonio graduated from Harvard, taught philosophy at the College of William and Mary, became a longshoreman, and a World War II veteran. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, he joined the New York art scene. It was as this time that he began filmmaking. In 1975 The Museum of Modern Art screened all of his works.

Organized by William Sloan, Librarian, Department of Film, the works are drawn from the Circulating Film Library of the Museum.

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For more information or film stills, contact Sarah Eaton, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.