

he Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

GALAXIE - United States, 1966

A study in film portraiture by Gregory J. Markopoulos

Portraits in order of appearance: Parker Tyler, Storm De Hirsch, Amy Taubin, Donald Droll, Harry Koursaros & Gordon Herzig, Ben Weber, George & Mike Kuchar, Erick Hawkins, Louise Grady, Frances Steloff, Charles Boultenhouse, Alfonso Ossorio, Jasper Johns, Jonas Mekas, W.H. Auden, Jerome Hill, Allen Ginsberg & Peter Orlovsky, Robert Ossorio, Gregory Battcock, Hendrik Ruitenbeck, Shirley Clarke, Jan Cremer, Kenneth Kelman, Maurice Sendak, Paul Thek, Susan Sontag, Tom Chomont, Gian Carlo Menotti, Ed Emshwiller, Robert C. Scull.

Distribution: Film-Makers' Distribution Center

Color

Running time: 90 minutes

GALAXIE consists of 30 film portraits each 3 minutes long. Most of the "sittings" were taken at the homes of the portrait subjects and averaged from one to two hours. A "100" roll of Ektachrome Commercial was used for each portrait and run and rerun as many as ten different times through the Bolex camera which Markopoulos uses exclusively. All fades, dissolves and single frames were conceived and executed during the moment of the "sitting." The portraits become more varied and complex as the study progresses.

"[Markopoulos] opens each sequence like a composer and states its clear-phrase visual theme. Then he bursts the theme open with variation upon variation montaged upon the architecture of each human and creating through swift views other realities. A stony, staid and silent face may stay reclused on one side of the frame while another [image] of the same person (in a happier moment) may be introduced talking, living, metamorphosizing....

"...Markopoulos throughout the film utilizes one sound: an electronic anvil... [that clangs] down upon each subject....

"Except for those who have been teamed up and treated as 'one being,' all are presented in individual portraits. They are framed by a name-title in advance and with darkness at the end of their appearances. They do not meet, interact or participate in any obvious story or plot....

"As a biophotographer Markopoulos deserves considerable respect. He has pro-

(more)

293

duced a creation that is unique and opens a new domain in cinematography. Of course this film, like all of his, bears the stamp of the director, both for good and bad. He utilized objectivity only in the technical aspect of his craft; he draws strength almost completely from his own personal vision..." -- George Christopoulos, from an article to appear in FILM CULTURE

Mr. Markopoulos began shooting films at 18. His films use a personal and startling visual vocabulary and take liberty with traditional forms. Among his works since the late 40's are a trilogy DU SANG DE LA VOLUPTE ET DE LA MORT (PSYCHE, LYSIS, CHARMIDES); FLOWERS OF ASPHALT; SWAIN; and TWICE A MAN (1963), which won the Prix Lambert at the Third International Film Competition at Knokke-Le Zoute, Belgium, 1964. Mr. Markopoulos is presently Visiting Associate Professor of Cinematography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

* * * * *