
* Because of its importance and the difficulty of seeing this film, press *
* previews are scheduled as follows: *
* *
* Tuesday, September 28, 3 p.m. and Thursday, September 30, 10 a.m., *
* in the Fourth Floor projection room, The Museum of Modern Art, *
* 21 West 53 Street, New York. *
* *
* Wednesday, September 29, 7 p.m. and Friday, October 1, 7 p.m., *
* at Preview Theater, 9th Floor, 1600 Broadway, New York. *
* *
* Phone: 956-7296. *
* *

SEE RELEASE ATTACHED

The Museum of Modern Art

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

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NO. 109
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTROVERSIAL FILM TO PREMIERE AT MUSEUM "THE MURDER OF FRED HAMPTON" -- BLACK PANTHER

"The Murder of Fred Hampton," a documentary study of the life and death of the slain Black Panther leader, will have its New York premiere at The Museum of Modern Art. On Monday, October 4, at 3:30 p. m., the picture will be shown to the public for the first time. The following day it will inaugurate the Department of Film's 1971-72 Cineprobe Series and director Mike Gray will be present at the 5:30 showing to discuss his independently made, controversial film. The 88-minute socio-political film profile, shown at the recent Cannes Film Festival, was widely praised and much discussed at selected showings on the Continent.

"The Murder of Fred Hampton" has a dual focus: the philosophy and activity of Hampton and other Panthers, as reflected in footage shot by Mike Gray & Associates before Hampton was killed; and the controversial shoot-out itself, which the film attempts to piece together from descriptions as divergent as those of Cook County State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan and of several surviving Black Panthers. The film "creates many nagging questions and a few very uncomfortable conclusions," noted Variety in its review.

Because this film is representative of contemporary filmmaking, it was selected by Adrienne Mancina, Associate Curator of the Department of Film, to initiate the fourth season of the Cineprobe Series, which was launched in October of 1968 to provide exposure for independent and experimental filmmakers. The series is unique in that it offers a dialogue with the director, who is always present to discuss his work and exchange ideas with the audience.

For the purpose of developing Cineprobe as a showcase and forum for independent filmmakers, the Museum's Department of Film has received a grant of \$10,000 from Standard Oil Company (New Jersey). This marks the first time the Department of Film has obtained a corporation grant for its film exhibition program and it constitutes a major step

(more)

in activating the Museum's role as intermediary between filmmakers and the public.

"The Murder of Fred Hampton" was originally undertaken late in 1968 as a film document by Mike Gray & Associates on the community activities of the newly formed Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. The filmmakers, who were familiar with Chairman Fred Hampton from their earlier film, "American Revolution II," spent over one year filming his interaction with Chicago's black community. Hampton's death changed the film into an investigation of the raid, as well as a study of the leader himself. A hand-held camera was used in many scenes which could not have been filmed otherwise.

As Newsweek noted in its review, the film "presents a compelling case against the state -- and powerfully demonstrates film's capability as an investigative tool." The Museum showings provide the first opportunity to see the picture, which until now has not been available to the public.

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

September 1971