

The Museum of Modern Art

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

NO. 18
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MINI-FESTIVAL OF NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS CO-SPONSORED BY FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER AND MUSEUM

"New Directors/New Films," the 2nd annual international showcase for talented cineastes co-sponsored by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and The Museum of Modern Art, begins March 30 and includes 11 films from nine countries. The films, all made by directors not yet widely exposed in this country, come from India, Senegal, France, Japan, Bulgaria, England, Switzerland, Mexico and Czechoslovakia.

Last year when the "New Directors/New Films" program was initiated Vincent Canby, critic of The New York Times, noted that "the show is providing some talented young filmmakers with the kind of unhurried presentation not possible at a more or less conventional festival." Roger Greenspun referred to the series in the Times as "the loveliest body of cinema work that I have seen in some years."

The films chosen this year, catholic in scope, include among others an anarchic comedy from France, a contemporary Japanese political documentary, a Bulgarian film based on a 17th-century folk-tale, and a drama of the Mexican Revolution as seen through the writings of the American journalist John Reed.

"John Reed (Insurgent Mexico)" reconstructs the turbulent years leading up to the Mexican Revolution of 1913. Based on the experiences of the then unknown American Reed, this first narrative film by 30-year-old Mexican Paul Leduc, formerly a documentary filmmaker, depicts not only the events of the revolution itself but also the transformation of John Reed from passive observer to committed participant. Reed was later to gain fame for his coverage of the Russian Revolution and his classic book "Ten Days That Shook the World."

Well-known sculptor Niki de St. Phalle has teamed with English documentary filmmaker Peter Whitehead to make "Daddy" (1972), an unusual feature about a woman who humiliates her once tyrannical, seductive father, and then indulges with her mother in sexual obsessions. The first film to express women's sex fantasies, it is not so much

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anti-male as pro-female, and, according to reports from London, it provokes feelings of outrage in men and of liberation in women.

France is represented by two comedies, one an apocalyptic fantasy, the other a "nostalgic" comedy. Claude Faraldo's "Themroc" (1973) stars Michel Piccoli as a factory worker who decides to rid himself of all taboos -- social, sexual, political -- in an effort to attain total individual freedom. The dialog is deliberately incomprehensible and Themroc eventually utters only cries as he reverts to Stone Age man, running through the subway tunnels of Paris and hunting police as food. Pascal Thomas' "Les Zozos," currently one of the most popular films in Paris, is the story of two frustrated French school-boys who are so anxious for sexual adventures that they hitch-hike to Sweden in search of women.

From Czechoslovakia comes the "The Cremator," made by Juraj Herz in 1968, just before the reorganization of the Czech film industry. Called "a brilliant feat" by Thomas Quinn Curtis in the International Herald Tribune, the film is a grim comedy about an employee in a crematorium who, obsessed with the extermination of his Jewish family, eventually becomes director of the crematorium.

Senegalese cinema is represented by Ababacar Samb's 1971 film "Kodou," the story of a young woman who, unable to participate in a traditional tattooing ceremony, loses contact with reality and lives in a dream world. Both modern European psychology and traditional African rites are employed to cure her, with neither proving adequate. The film thus becomes an allegory of the modern African condition as perceived by Franz Fanon in his book "The Wretched of the Earth": neither the methods of the West nor the folklore of an ancient culture offer acceptable solutions to current African problems. New ways must be sought; leaving the film unresolved at the end, Samb suggests that the African dilemma is not susceptible to easy solutions. On the same program with "Kodou" a 30-minute film from India will be shown, Anthony Korner's "Helen, Queen of the Nautch Girls," a study of the life and career of a famous professional dancer seen in the Busby Berkeley-like film fare of the Indian masses.

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Japan is represented by two pictures. "Time Within Memory," a first feature by Toichiro Narushima, is a story in which space and time, present and past, intercut to depict the hero's mysterious journey between illusion and reality. A second Japanese film is "The Peasants of the Second Fortress" (1971), a documentary by Shinsuke Ogawa about the bitter struggle by workers, students and peasants to prevent construction of an international airport on peasants' land near Tokyo. The direct participation of the filmmakers in the fighting brings to the film an unusual degree of involvement in the events it portrays.

Another first feature is 29-year-old Daniel Schmid's Swiss film "Tonight or Never" in which a wealthy woman revives an old annual custom of servants and masters exchanging roles for an evening. The results of this switch are "bizarrely fascinating" according to Variety.

Metodi Andonov's "The Goat Horn" (1972), Bulgaria's most popular film since World War II, seen by almost half its population, is a 17th-century folk-tale of a goatherd and his daughter who devote their lives to avenging the rape and murder of the goatherd's wife. The screenplay was written by Nikolai Haitov, currently Bulgaria's most popular writer.

All screenings in the New Directors/New Films series are scheduled for 6:00 and 8:30 in the Museum auditorium. From March 18, single tickets will be on sale for \$2.00; \$1.50 for members and students at The Museum of Modern Art Lobby Information Desk. Series tickets are also available at \$15.00 for ten programs, \$10.00 for members and students, and may be ordered immediately from the Film Society of Lincoln Center, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023, or bought at the Museum as of March 18.

Helen, Queen of the Nautch Girls. India, 1972. Directed and narrated by Anthony Korner. 30 min. A Merchant-Ivory Production. Courtesy New Yorker Films.

Kodou. Senegal, 1971. Directed by Ababacar Samb. 80 min.

Friday, March 30, 6:00 and Saturday, March 31, 8:30

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Les Zozos. France, 1973. Directed by Pascal Thomas. 112 min.
Friday, March 30, 8:30 and Saturday, March 31, 6:00

Time Within Memory. Japan, 1973. Directed and photographed by Toichiro Narushima. 118 min.
Sunday, April 1, 6:00 and Monday, April 2, 8:30

The Goat Horn. Bulgaria, 1972. Directed by Metodi Andonov. 95 min.
Sunday, April 1, 8:30 and Monday, April 2, 6:00

Daddy. England/Switzerland, 1972. Directed by Peter Whitehead and Niki de St. Phalle. 90 min.
Tuesday, April 3, 6:00 and Friday, April 6, 8:30

Tonight or Never. Switzerland, 1972. Directed by Daniel Schmid. 90 min.
Tuesday, April 3, 8:30 and Friday, April 6, 6:00

Themroc. France/Italy, 1973. Directed by Claude Faraldo. With Michel Piccoli. 105 min.
Saturday, April 7, 6:00 and Sunday, April 8, 8:30

John Reed (Insurgent Mexico). Mexico, 1972. Directed by Paul Leduc. 124 min.
Saturday, April 7, 8:30 and Sunday, April 8, 6:00

The Peasants of the Second Fortress. Japan, 1971. Directed by Shinsuke Ogawa. 143 min. Courtesy Tricontinental Films.
Monday, April 9, 6:00 and Tuesday, April 10, 8:30

The Cremator. Czechoslovakia, 1968. Directed by Juraj Herz. 90 min.
Monday, April 9, 8:30 and Tuesday, April 10, 6:00

All films have English subtitles.

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