

The Museum of Modern Art

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

VALI - United States, 1966

Produced, directed and photographed by Sheldon Rochlin

Editing: Sheldon and Diane Rochlin

Sound: Mark Dichter

Original commentary written and spoken by Vali Myers and Rudi Rappold

Collaborating Producers: George Plimpton and Mark Lawrence

Assisting Directors: Diane Rochlin, Vali Myers, Rudi Rappold

Distribution: Film-makers' Distribution Center

Starring: Vali Myers, Rudi Rappold, Caroline Thompson and Diane Rochlin as themselves

Color

Running time: 65 minutes

"Vali Myers, an Australian by birth, came to Paris shortly after the war, and in the ambience of American and European expatriates became at once the symbol and plaything of the restless, confused, vice-enthralled, intellectual milieu that haunted the cafes and bistros of the Left Bank. Celebrated for her remarkable dancing, Vali refused to dance professionally preferring tiny areas cleared for her in small clubs. She lived on practically nothing, her belongings scattered from room to room and hotel to hotel through the Latin Quarter.

"...She married a young Austrian architect. For a time the couple lived in a tiny room in a small hotel in St. Germaine de Près. Preferring the dark, Vali remained in her room and devoted her time to the painting of Beardsley-like reflections of herself, owls and five-petalled flowers which she considers good luck devices.

"Vali and Rudi have now moved to Italy where they live in an isolated wood outside Positano. They are without running water and electricity. But they do have a family - Ramona the pig, Foxy the fox, a goat, horse and donkey."

-- PARIS REVIEW

Sheldon Rochlin and his wife Diane lived with Vali and Rudi for several months acquainting themselves with the temperament of the couple and slowly becoming absorbed into Vali's world. The film is about one day in the life of this exotic young woman. However, the material is a composite of the footage shot by the Rochlins over a three-month period from October 1965 to January 1966. At times,

(more)

through the use of still photographs and narration the film stretches back 14 years.

The film includes Vali and Rudi in their "Garden of Eden," a trip to Naples and Rosina, Vali dancing, Vali as a witch giving a young girl draughts of love potion, and a visit to another girl, a protegee of Vali's from New Zealand living in a nearby cave.

Sheldon and Diane Rochlin were both born in 1938. Mr. Rochlin, whose interest in film-making resulted from encounters with Jonas Mekas seven years ago at the experimental film screenings in the Living Theatre, attended the Film School at New York University. Dissatisfied with the academic approach, he left the school and began shooting films independently. He has worked with Conrad Rooks, Claes Oldenburg and Robert Frank. He was the cameraman for GUNS OF THE TREES (1962) by Jonas Mekas. Over the past seven years he has been employed as cameraman, editor and production manager by National Educational Television, Bob Drew Associates, U.S.I.A., Encyclopedia Britannica Films and a West German television firm.

Mrs. Rochlin has collaborated with her husband on such recent shorts as IN THE LAST TOWN, HARVEST FESTIVAL, CRETE SAILOR'S DANCE, and DIANE, THE ZEBRA WOMAN. She has made several of her own 8mm films and is currently editing a full length 8mm film concerning a trip to Morocco. Some of her footage has been used by Claes Oldenburg and Carolee Schneeman. She has also appeared in several independent films including those by Ken Jacobs, Storm de Hirsch and her husband.

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Release No. 162 - mailed on Friday, December 30, 1966
sent to the following people:

John Gruen - World Journal Tribune
James Fitzsimmons - Art International - Airmail
John Perreault - The Village Voice
Gordon Brown - Arts Magazine
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Anthony Bower - Art in America
Robert Lyle - King Features Synd.
Vivian Campbell - Life Mag.
Cranston Jones - Time Magazine
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