

The Museum of Modern Art

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART INTRODUCES BRAZILIAN FILMS

In honor of Brazil's new cinema movement called Cinema Novo, The Museum of Modern Art will present a ten-day program of features and shorts that reflect the recent changes and growth of the film industry in that country.

Cinema Novo: Brasil, the New Cinema of Brazil, begins October 7, and continues through October 17th. Nine feature-length films, the work of eight young directors, who represent the New Wave of Brazil, will be shown along with a selection of short subjects. Adrienne Mancina, Assistant Curator, Department of Film, assembled the program.

In the past seven years, the Brazilians have earned 40 international awards. In Berlin, Genoa and Moscow. Brazilian film retrospectives have been held in acknowledgement of the vigorous Cinema Novo that has taken root in that country.

Cinema Novo of Brazil has had a stormy history. The first stirring began in the early 50's with the discontent of young filmmakers who objected to imitative Hollywood musical comedies, known as "chanchadas," which dominated traditional Brazilian cinema.

This protest found a response among young film critics who were inspired by Italian neo-realism and other foreign influences to demand a cinema indigenous to Brazil. A handful of young directors were determined to discover a cinematic language that would reflect the nation's social and human problems.

The leading exponent of Cinema Novo, Glauber Rocha, in his late twenties, stated the commitment of Brazil's youthful cineastes when he wrote: "In our society everything is still to be done: opening roads through the forest, populating the desert, educating the masses, harnessing the rivers. In our cinema, everything is yet to be done: We must make our cinema one that does not accept the past, that does not accept extraneous cultural influences; a cinema that struggles between newness and non-existence."

Film-making in Brazil began the end of the last century. Two Italian immigrants and a Portuguese citizen contributed to its development, but industrial conditions of the country

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resulted in sporadic activities by isolated individuals and, during the period of silent films, all accomplishments were regional and lacked national scope. In the 1930's only 80 feature films were made; in the 40's, 100 were produced. The majority of motion pictures shown in Brazil were imported.

An attempt was made to build a studio in Rio de Janeiro more than 30 years ago. Technicians and actors were trained there, but the foreign competition was too strong and the Brazilian industry continued to produce "chanchadas," which attracted the masses to the cinema in the same way early chase comedies attracted crowds in American movie houses. The popularity of the "chanchadas" was so great that 300 of them were made in the 50's.

In 1959, however, Nelson Pereira dos Santos' first film introduced the elements of serious drama and he became the founder of Cinema Novo. This former newspaper man and documentary filmmaker was responsible for forming a group of dedicated filmmakers who, today, represent twenty percent of Brazil's motion picture directors. In a recent interview, he said that one of Cinema Novo's greatest contributions was to give cultural status to the Brazilian cinema. The director's film Vidas Secas (Barren Lives) is considered the most important film of Cinema Novo's formative period.

The great social problems of Rio's "favelados" (hill-dwellers) and North Eastern Brazil's "cangacerios" (old time bandits) and "retirantes" (drought ridden migrants) provide tragic and profound subject matter for the Brazilian filmmaker of today. As Miguel Torres, the late screen writer and critic wrote, "What is good about these young men is that they have no great certainties. Fortunately, up to now, they have not found an absolute truth. Their duty is to record the historical, political, and social moment of our era without pleasing anybody's vision. As long as they do not make films to conform they shall be equal to our present times."

Adrienne Mancina finds that film in Brazil is looked upon as an instrument with which "to explore and analyze reality, with the hope of eventually changing it." Mrs. Mancina refers to Cinema Novo as "work in progress" that is attempting to discover an authentic Brazilian voice. "At the same time," she says, "it is a search for identity, a thirst for truth that originates from a sense of alienation and oppression."

The Museum program represents only a sample of the 32 films produced by Cinema Novo in the past six years. It is intended to stimulate interest in still another branch of the interna-

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tional cinema scene. The pictures, with the exception of Tropici, which has been acquired for American distribution, have not been seen in this country.

When the Brazilian show opens at The Museum of Modern Art, several of the filmmakers will come from Brazil to participate in this event. Among them will be Nelson Pereira dos Santos and Glauber Rocha, who contributed three pictures to the program. Dos Santos, president of the Brazilian film authors, is also a film instructor, while Rocha, a former law student, newspaper man and critic, is responsible for "Revision and Criticism of the Brazilian Cinema," a manifesto defending the independent cinema. Two other directors, Ruy Guerra and David Neves, also known as a film critic, will attend with cameraman Luiz Carlos Barreto, and Zelita Viana, the producer.

The program of Cinema Nôvo at The Museum of Modern Art, October 7 - 17, 1968:

- Monday, Oct. 7 Vidas Secas (Barren Lives). A film by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, adapted from the novel of the same title by Graciliano Ramos. It concerns the frustrations of a migratory family in search of a place to live in the sertão, an arid, scarcely populated region in the interior of Brazil. 105 min.
- Tuesday, Oct. 8 Tropici (Tropics). Directed and written by Giano Amico, an Italian who has lived in Brazil. Inspired by Vidas Secas, it deals with Miguel and his family and their strange encounters with fortune seekers, as they trek across the Nordeste. The picture is being shown by courtesy of New Yorker Films. 87 min.
- Wednesday, Oct. 9 Three short subjects will be presented at noon: Amazonas by Jean Mancon, a lyric vision of the Amazon. The Sao Paulo Museum of Art by the same director. Carnival by Carlos Luiz Conto, twenty hours of a carnival day in Rio. 47 min.
- Thursday, Oct. 10 Os Fuzis (The Guns). Directed by Ruy Guerra, which received the Silver Bear Award at the Berlin Festival, tells the story of a mystic who leads his hungry followers to believe in a miracle and their subsequent confrontation with the police. 105 min.
- Friday, Oct. 11 Hora Evez de Augusto Matraga (Matraga). Directed and written by Roberto Santos, has as its theme the conflict in a man with a humble and a violent nature. Santos, the author, studied philosophy and architecture before becoming a filmmaker. 110 min.
- Saturday, Oct. 12 Menino de Engen Ho (The Plantation Boy). A film by Walter Lima, Jr., from the novel of the same title by Jose Lins de Rego. The film was shot entirely on location in Varzan do Paracliba, and the plantation boy was chosen by the director from hundreds of non-professionals. Two-and-one-half years in the making, it is a story of Carlinho growing up as he copes with death, marriage, love, as well as less momentous changes that occur on the plantation where he lives. 90 min.
- Sunday, Oct. 13 Memorias do Cangaco (Memory of the Cangaco). A short film by Paulo Gil Soares, received the International Critics' Award, at the 11th International Festival, Tours, France; it also received awards in Rio de Janeiro and Florence. The director deals with the "cangacerios" bands roaming the inlands for survival or killing for vengeance. In this film the most

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famous of the "cangaceiros of Brazil, Lampiao, and his cohorts are interviewed and their stories are interwoven with documentary footage of the region and the activities of the bands of brigands. 25 min.

Deus e o Diabolo na Terra do Sol (Black God and White Devil). A film by Glauber Rocha, written and directed by Rocha, winner of the III International Festival Award of Free Cinema, Porreta Terme, Italy. Of this film, Alberto Moravia wrote: "It has a very modern theme: the hallucination, vision, effect and shocking behavior that hunger, misery and ignorance can provoke in a hopeless people." The story from Brazilian folklore blends the real and unreal to give an insight into the two most potent forces in the Brazilian backlands, the clergy and the lawless. 115 min.

Monday, Oct. 14

A Falecida (The Deceased). The film by Leo Hirszman, based on the novel by Nelson Rodriguez, adapted by the director and Eduardo Coutinho, deals with a woman in Rio who is obsessed by the idea of death when she has an extra-marital affair. The picture received a special award from the Jury of the Rio Festival. 110 min.

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Grande Cidade (The Big City). Directed and written by Carlos Diegues, concerns the adventure of Luzia, who comes to Rio in search of her fiance. Diegues, a former film critic, was born in the Northeast of Brazil but his film concentrates on the city. It is notable that films dealing with the Northeast are often directed by city-born filmmakers. 80 min.

Thursday, Oct. 17

Terra em Transe (Land in a Trance). Directed and written by Glauber Rocha, is the story of a poet. It reviews his past as a political protege, journalist, lover, derelict, propogandist, and political aspirant. 115 min.

The films will be shown twice daily weekdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

There is an additional showing Thursday evening at 8:00 p.m. and on Saturdays the showings are at 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All the above films in Portuguese, with English titles.

Stillts and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.