

SELF-REFERENTIAL FILM SERIES FEATURES FILMS ABOUT FILM

SELF-REFERENTIAL CINEMA, an unusual series of films which explore the means and processes of filmmaking itself, will begin May 14 at The Museum of Modern Art. Among the films selected by Donald Richie, Curator of Film, from many different genres and periods, are Bergman's "Persona," Dziga Vertov's "The Man with a Movie Camera," Ken Jacobs' "Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son," Vilgot Sjöman's "I Am Curious (Yellow & Blue)," H. C. Potter's "Hellzapoppin," Fellini's "8 1/2" and Godard's "Contempt."

In a note on the nature of self-referential films, Mr. Richie writes:

A self-referential film is one which is about itself. Unlike the traditional narrative film, which seeks to maintain the illusion that what we are seeing is reality, the self-referential film wants to show that it itself is an illusion. Consequently, one often sees the camera, the mike, the movieola, the cutting board, even, occasionally, the audience--us. In showing that it is an illusion, however, the self-referential film also suggests another reality--that, for example, of the makers of the self-referential film we are seeing. This reality is presented as a more real reality than that which the ordinary illusion-film offers. All self-referential cinema becomes, then, a search for reality, or for truth.

A film asserts its self-referential nature in various ways, notes Mr. Richie. Some take the form of diaries or journals; in others, the camera sits in a stationary position and records whatever passes in front of it; and sometimes film leader and bad footage are deliberately included.

The concern of the medium with its own means is not peculiar to film. In recent years, painters and sculptors have chosen to let their materials be what they are, rather than something to be transformed. Structure and process are no longer factors to be hidden in a finished product; they are the product if, indeed, there is a

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finished product at all.

Mr. Richie notes the contemporary impatience with façade as one of the reasons behind self-referential films. This façade can be the illusion of reality conveyed by a story and/or by various technical means. Therefore, stories are often done away with or undercut by making explicit the fact that they are stories, and the apparatus and processes of the medium are exposed rather than hidden.

Film, unlike the other visual arts, according to Mr. Richie, must always present the audience with another illusion-- in film one cannot get away from the illusion of the image. As he says, "The philosophical perspective in these pictures... is that of a hall of mirrors, or more, perhaps, a vortex leading to a vacuum which is the nature of reality itself. The inability of film to escape from this portrayal of an ostensible reality is, however, also among its capabilities: it can lead us to question reality and hence, as these films indicate, force us to define that reality which will be our own."

The schedule of SELF-REFERENTIAL CINEMA follows:

Friday, May 14 (2:00, 5:30)

MOVIES ARE ADVENTURE (1948). Presented by members of the motion picture industry in cooperation with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Courtesy Yale University. 10 min. INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED (1968). Directed, written and with decorations by Dusan Makavejev. With Dragoljub Aleksic, Ana Miloslavljevic. English titles. Courtesy Grove Press/Evergreen Films. 78 min.

Saturday, May 15 (3:00, 5:30)

UNTITLED (1968). Directed by Lawrence Robins and Jerry Wechsler. 3 min. PERSONA (1965-6). Directed by Ingmar Bergman. With Bibi Andersson, Liv Ullmann. English titles. Courtesy United Artists. 85 min.

Sunday, May 16 (2:00, 5:30)

OLD TIME COMEDY NIGHT (1969). Directed by David Devensky. 10 min. CONTEMPT (1964). Written and directed by Jean-Luc Godard. With Brigitte Bardot, Jack Palance, Fritz Lang. English titles. Courtesy Avco/Embassy Pictures. 103 min.

Monday, May 17 (12:30)

THE MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA (1929). Directed by Dziga Vertov. Silent. No English titles. 80 min.

Wednesday, May 19 (2:00, 5:30)

RUNAWAY (1970). By Standish Lawder. Courtesy Film-makers Cooperative. 8 min. TOM, TOM, THE PIPER'S SON (1969). By Ken Jacobs. Courtesy Film-makers Cooperative. Silent. 90 min.

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Thursday, May 20

2:00 : I AM CURIOUS (BLUE) (1966-7). Directed by Vilgot Sjöman. With Lena Nyman. English titles. Courtesy Grove Press/Evergreen Films. 103 min.

5:30 : I AM CURIOUS (YELLOW) (1966-7). Directed by Vilgot Sjöman. With Lena Nyman. English titles. Courtesy Grove Press/Evergreen Films. 120 min. To be followed without intermission by I AM CURIOUS (BLUE).

Friday, May 21 (2:00, 5:30)

AN ACTOR AND HIS DIRECTOR LOOK AT FOOTAGE SHOWING PREPARATION FOR AN UNMADE FILM (1968). Directed by Morgan Fischer. With Paul Morrison and Morgan Fischer. 15 min. GEORG (1964). Written and directed by Stanton Kaye. With Lynn Averill, Mark Cheka. Courtesy Film-makers Cooperative. 55 min.

Saturday, May 22 (3:00, 5:30)

THE BIG SWALLOW (1901). Anonymous. The Williamson Company. Silent. Courtesy Yale University. ca. 1 min. HELLZAPOPPIN (1941). Directed by H.C. Potter. With Ole Olsen, Chic Johnson, Martha Raye. Courtesy Universal/MCA. 83 min.

Sunday, May 23 (2:00, 5:30)

THE SECRET CINEMA (1966). Written and directed by Paul Bartel. Courtesy Film-makers Cooperative. 30 min. THE PROJECTIONIST (1971). Written and directed by Harry Hurwitz. With Chuck McCann, Ina Balin, Rodney Dangerfield. Courtesy Maron Films, Ltd. 88 min.

Monday, May 24 (12:30)

DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY (1967). Directed by Jim McBride and Bob Maurice. With L.M. Kit Carson. Courtesy McBride/Paradigm Films and Film-makers Cooperative. 74 min.

Tuesday, May 25 (5:30)

8 1/2 (1963). Directed by Federico Fellini. With Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale. English titles. Courtesy Avco/Embassy Pictures. 135 min.

Wednesday, May 26 (2:00, 5:30)

COMING APART (1969). Directed by Milton Moses Ginsberg. With Rip Torn, Sally Kirkland. Courtesy Kaleidoscope Films/New Line Cinema. 110 min.

Thursday, May 27 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00)

To be announced.

Friday, May 28 (2:00, 5:30)

OCTOBER IN MADRID (1964-5). Written and directed by Marcel Hanoun. No English titles. Courtesy Anthology Film Archives. ca. 90 min.

Saturday, May 29 (3:00, 5:30)

A MOVIE (1958). By Bruce Conner. 12 min. EVERYTHING FOR SALE (1968). Written and directed by Andrzej Wajda. English titles. Courtesy Liszka Attractions, Inc. ca. 90 min.

Sunday, May 30 (2:00, 5:30)

HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED (1966). By George Kuchar. Courtesy Film-makers Cooperative. 17 min. LE DÉPART (1967). Directed by Jerzy Skolimowski. With Jean-Pierre Léaud, Catharine Duport. English titles. Courtesy Pathe Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films. 91 min.

Monday, May 31 (12:30) and Tuesday, June 1 (5:30)

TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS (1967). Written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet. With Jean-Louis Trintignant. Courtesy American-International Pictures. 92 min.

Wednesday, June 2 (2:00, 5:30)

THE LICKERISH QUARTET (1970). Directed by Radley Metzger. Courtesy Audobon Films. 90

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