

# The Museum of Modern Art

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

NO. 14

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKER HOLLIS FRAMPTON IN MUSEUM RETROSPECTIVE

The complete films of Hollis Frampton, one of America's leading avant-garde filmmakers, will be shown from March 8 through March 12 at The Museum of Modern Art. The retrospective, organized by Donald Richie, Curator of Film, will include the first public showing of the entire seven-part film "Hapax Legomena," which was called by Jonas Mekas "the most important work of cinema produced in this country in the year 1972." Frampton will be present on Saturday, March 10, at 3:00 P.M., to introduce the three-hour film.

While he did not turn from still photography to filmmaking until the mid-1960s, Hollis Frampton emerged almost immediately as a leading figure in the avant-garde at a time when a new movement was coalescing in the New American Cinema. The films of this movement were characterized by a focus on cinematic structure to the point where structure or over-all shape became the content of the film, replacing conventional narrative, characters and sometimes even action. Critic P. Adams Sitney called these works "structural films."

Intellectual but often sensuous, didactic but frequently humorous, Frampton's films, according to Sitney, "resemble logical hypotheses, propositions, and ultimately paradoxes." Bill Simon, writing in Artforum, has observed that Frampton "isolates an idea, a theory, a concept, usually concerning a particular aspect or problem in the cinematic experience and creates a structure that demonstrates and elucidates it." For example, in "Zorns Lemma" (1970), his first full-length film and in some ways the culmination of his previous short works, Frampton deals with the problem of how a film can be structured. Instead of letting editing decisions emerge intuitively from the filmed material, Frampton devises, in this film, a precise system according to which the film is structured a priori. Yet structure is only one aspect of this complex film. As Wanda Bershen has

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written in Artforum, "the film is ultimately concerned with a kind of cosmology, that is, the theory of the universe as an ordered whole governed by a set of general laws."

While Frampton's cinematic structures may be conceived by the filmmaker even before any filming has taken place, "the experience of a Frampton film is one which can exist only in time," notes Donald Richie. The systems Frampton deploys are perceived only gradually by the viewer; one becomes actively engaged in a process of comprehension. A Frampton film is a kind of learning experience in which one is continually assimilating information and reorganizing hypotheses about the structure of the film, with understanding coming only gradually and becoming complete only at the conclusion. Not only does the organization of the universe serve as a model for the filmmaker, but the processes of apprehending that universe are used as well.

"Hapax Legomena" is Frampton's longest film and his most recent large-scale work. While each of its seven parts can be seen as a separate film, the entire work can be considered "a kind of spiritual biography, the biography of a person who resembles me in some ways, and in others doesn't resemble me at all," according to Frampton. Among the multiple concerns in the different parts of this complex work are time, memory, and anticipation in "Nostalgia"; auditory and visual disjunction in "Critical Mass"; conventional narrative and the relationship between images and words in "Poetic Justice"; a basic, primary kind of vision in "Travelling Matte"; the liberation and acceleration of the eye in time and space in "Ordinary Matter" and "Remote Control"; and the film frame itself in "Special Effects." On one level, the work as a whole deals with the passage by the filmmaker from still photography to film, and with the ongoing realization of the manifold possibilities of the film medium.

Please turn over for the schedule of The Films of Hollis Frampton.

The Films of Hollis Frampton

Program I: MANUAL OF ARMS, 1966; PROCESS RED, 1966; INFORMATION, 1966; STATES, 1967, revised 1970; HETERODYNE, 1967; SNOWBLIND, 1968; WORKS AND DAYS, 1969. Silent program. 68 min.

Thursday, March 8, 5:30 and Sunday, March 11, 5:30

Program II: MAXWELL'S DEMON, 1968; SURFACE TENSION, 1968; PALINDROME, 1969; CARROTS AND PEAS, 1969; LEMON, 1969; PRINCE RUPERT'S DROPS, 1969; ARTIFICIAL LIGHT, 1969. 85 min.

Thursday, March 8, 8:00 and Monday, March 12, 2:00

Program III: ZORNS LEMMA, 1970; APPARATUS SUM, 1972; TIGER BALMS, 1972; YELLOW SPRINGS, 1972. 78 min.

Friday, March 9, 2:00 and Monday, March 12, 5:30

Program IV: HAPAX LEGOMENA, 1972, consisting of NOSTALGIA, TRAVELLING MATTE, CRITICAL MASS, SPECIAL EFFECTS, POETIC JUSTICE, ORDINARY MATTER, REMOTE CONTROL. 195 min.

Saturday, March 10, 3:00

Hollis Frampton will be present to introduce this program.

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Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Special Projects Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7296, -7295.