

The Museum of Modern Art

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CITY OF BERLIN FOCUS OF FILM EXHIBITION OPENING AT MOMA JUNE 11

Films that reflect the unique conditions of West Berlin comprise the exhibition BERLINART: 20 FILMS. Opening at The Museum of Modern Art on Thursday, June 11, at 6:30 p.m., with Helma Sanders-Brahms's Laputa (1986), this series offers independent, often defiant works that reverberate with the tensions characterizing contemporary Berlin life. Organized by Laurence Kardish, curator in the Department of Film, BERLINART: 20 FILMS takes place on Thursdays and Saturdays through September 5, 1987, in the Museum's Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2 (complete schedule enclosed).

Laputa stars Krystyna Janda as a Polish photographer and Sami Frey as a French architect who have an affair in a transient Berlin. Ms. Sanders-Brahms develops a relationship with constricted parameters that recall the physical and spiritual boundaries of the city itself.

The works in BERLINART: 20 FILMS present themes related to the unique cinematic subculture of that city. In "Berlin and Film," an essay included in the Museum's publication BERLINART 1961-1987, Mr. Kardish writes: "Dislocation is an experience familiar to Berlin life and a theme frequent in Berlin art. The dislocation derives in part from the city's spectacular resurrection and its disassociation with a past that in spite of cursory reminders becomes increasingly, not less, unthinkable."

The dislocation born of Berlin's isolation is a current permeating these films. For example, the female protagonist and the city each function as a metaphor for the divided order in Helke Sander's The All-Round Reduced

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Personality--Redupers (1977). Substar American performers attempt to work in an alien cityscape in Rosa von Praunheim's impromptu musical City of Lost Souls--Berlin Blues (1983). In Ulrike Ottinger's highly exaggerated Portrait of a Woman Drinker (1979), the city provides congenial spaces and anonymity for the female protagonist's narcissistic acts of shocking others.

Dislocation also characterizes films in the series by Americans Yvonne Rainer, Ernie Gehr, and Steve Dwoskin, who have worked in Berlin. And estrangement is at the root of the relatively large super-8mm Berlin film subculture, which is represented in the exhibition by a special program.

A symposium entitled "Berlin and Film," presented in cooperation with Goethe House New York, takes place on Thursday, June 26, at 8:30 p.m., in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1. Moderator is Laurence Kardish; panelists include Ulrich Gregor, Clara Burckner, Eric Rentschler, and Ingrid Scheib-Rothbart. Tickets are free with Museum admission. Those attending the 6:30 p.m. screening of The All-Round Reduced Personality--Redupers may remain in the theater for the symposium. Separate tickets for the symposium only are available at the information desk in the Museum's lobby.

BERLINART: 20 FILMS is the film component of BERLINART 1961-1987, an exhibition representing fifty-five artists from ten countries. The first museum exhibition in the United States to present and assess Berlin's contribution to contemporary art, it remains on view from June 4 through September 8.

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For further information and photographic materials, contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9752.