

The Museum of Modern Art

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STAN BRAKHAGE: A RETROSPECTIVE, 1977-1995

October 13 - November 7, 1995

A retrospective of America's most influential avant-garde filmmaker, Stan Brakhage (b. 1933), opens at The Museum of Modern Art on October 13, 1995. On view through November 7, **STAN BRAKHAGE: A RETROSPECTIVE, 1977-1995** features more than one hundred 16mm and 35mm works. On Friday, October 13, at 6:00 p.m., Mr. Brakhage introduces the exhibition during the world premiere of *Trilogy* (1995), a hand-painted feature in three parts.

"Brakhage is concerned with vision, and with evanescent and modulated light as privately received by a viewer in a public space," states Laurence Kardish, Curator, Department of Film and Video, and organizer of the exhibition. "He is an artistic innovator who explores an expanded sense of vision."

According to the filmmaker, vision includes such things as "the dots and whirls and shapes that come when the eyes are closed and that can be seen when they are open; memory, the remembering of images or the in-gathering of light in the immediacy of the eyes' opening." He creates these images by distorting lenses and by scratching, photographing, and hand-painting film as methods of manipulating light.

This retrospective presents all of Brakhage's work completed during the last twenty years, including his hand-painted films, his abstract *Roman* and *Arabic Numeral* series, his series of films inspired by the Faust legend, and his collaboration with filmmaker Phil Solomon. Most of Brakhage's films are made in 16mm color and are silent. In the late 1980s, however, particularly with his Faust films, he began working with musicians and such sound artists

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as Rick Corrigan and Joel Haertling to make a series of sound-inflected works.

Included in the exhibition are *RR* (1981), an eight-minute silent film comprised of landscape images seen from train windows; *Hell Spit Flexion* (1983), a hand-painted film that Brakhage describes as "the most rhythmically exact of all my work;" and *The Loom* (1986), a multiple-superimposition, hand-painted study of animal life.

In the brochure that accompanies the retrospective, Canadian film theorist and avant-garde filmmaker Bruce Elder writes that in such hand-painted works as *Trilogy* and such photographed works as the *Roman Numeral Series* (1979-80), Brakhage "attempts to convey the surging electrical energies within the body -- the exchanges of excitement at our nerve endings, which cause our experience."

Brakhage was born in 1933 in Kansas City, Missouri. He made his first film in 1952 at age nineteen. Today, slightly more than two generations later, the master artist has completed over 250 films, lasting from several seconds to many hours. "This body probably qualifies Brakhage as cinema's most prolific living filmmaker, but such quantification would not be interesting if his work were not so aesthetically significant, important, and pleasurable," says Mr. Kardish. This retrospective is the filmmaker's third at The Museum of Modern Art, which continues its commitment to present and acquire Brakhage's films.

Support for **STAN BRAKHAGE: A RETROSPECTIVE, 1977-1995** is provided by the Contemporary Exhibition Fund of The Museum of Modern Art. The acquisition of Brakhage's films is made possible by Celeste Bartos.

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For further information or film stills, contact Samantha Graham, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750. No. 44