

library reference

San Francisco Cinematheque

1984 Program Notes

From the collection of the

Prelinger
Library

San Francisco, California
2007

"THINGS ARE MORE LIKE THEY ARE NOW THAN THEY EVER WERE BEFORE":

THE BEAT ERA

The 50's was a time of H-bombs, witch hunts and Cold War hysteria. It also provided the fertile ground for an explosion of growth in American art. While Kerouac was leading the Beat poets to a rejection of America's white Protestant underpinnings, the new cinema was struggling to assert itself. Middle-class complacency was answered by anger and a Bohemian life of freedom and romance. Today, in the face of rearmament and Reagan's Big Stick policy, these films of the Beat Era and the early 60's have the immediacy of a deja-vu that has been brought into focus by our disturbing entry into 1984.

PROGRAM: Beat (Chris Maclaine, 6 min.); Doomshow (Ray Wisniewski, 10 min.); Aleph (Wallace Berman, 15 min.); The End (Chris Maclaine, 35 min); The Hipster, the Delinquent and the Square (19 min.).

Tonight's program features a newly reconstructed print of The End by Chris Maclaine. This print was made from the original picture and sound printing rolls, rediscovered by J.J. Murphy in 1981 at W.A. Palmer Labs (Maclaine's film laboratory).

Maclaine was a poet who came to San Francisco as a student at the University of California. For 14 years, from 1947 to 1960, he wrote poetry, publishing his own and others' works in such magazines as Contour, Beatitude and Golden Goose. He was an eccentric and colorful figure. Using Artaud as a model he assumed the pose of enlightened madman whose work showed a mystical, almost messianic fervor. When The End premiered it was met with almost total hostility. J.J. Murphy quotes Larry Jordan in Film Culture #70-71 as saying that

"They didn't have lyrical qualities. They weren't psychodramas - they didn't come out of Maya Deren and they weren't cinemoems - they didn't come out of Belson. And they weren't poems, the way Broughton's early works were. They were harbingers of doom, very personal. They were ahead of their time."

Maclaine died in 1975. He spent the last 6 years of his life committed to Sunnyside Convalescent Hospital, the victim of methedrine abuse and his own demons of despair.

Also included in tonight's program are:

Doomshow by Ray Wisniewski, c. 1961, 10 min. In a letter to the Filmmakers' Cooperative, NYC, "Dear Bill, I lost Doomshow Tuesday evening on the 'D' train...Maybe it's better that way: Doomshow, was there ever a Doomshow? Let it lie, wherever it is, Jammed up someone's vein, say, dead, and dead it might LIVE as myth. Yours truly, Ray Wisniewski." (The film has since been found.)

Aleph by Wallace Berman, 1965, 15 min. Originally made in 8mm and then blown up to 16mm, the film is a densely packed collision of fleeting images. Every frame is hand-painted with Hebraic images and letters, evoking a sense of Kabalistic mystery shared with his collages, frescoes and sculptures.

The Delinquent, the Hipster and the Square, 1959, 19min. Produced by CBS, this is a kinescope of a live TV show dwelling on the evils of beatnik living and the dangers they pose for the boy next door. It includes a performance by the Max Roach Quintet. "An hilarious satire of exaggerated adolescent style." Print courtesy of Craig Baldwin.

CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING...

NEW AND SELECTED FILMS OF GARY ADKINS

SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE AT NEWSPACE
JANUARY 21, 1984

PROGRAM:

UNDER THE MACHINES OF FIRE (1981)
CONFIGURATIONS UNTO THEMSELVES (1983)
CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING... (1983)
EUCALYPTUS (1978)
CANTS FROM NATURAL HISTORY WORKS (1975)

UNDER THE MACHINES OF FIRE (1981) 16mm. Color. Sound. 23 minutes.

Upon first looking out...Under the influence of social forces...
Reflecting on human conditions...Surreal visions of threat...In
shadows of daily existence...Images gathered outside and then
brought home...As children held with innocence...A possible
translation occurs...Towards new affirmations. A Travelog
Parade of exploding tropical landscapes; satellite cloud patterns;
industrial pig iron light; naval ships and toy models; ruins of
ancient civilizations; mastodons and Chinatown; lionel trains;
oaxaca lights and punta banda waves; 8mm. diary entries; and
kodachrome roses in a backyard with Gail. 'Sweep the garden, any size'
Filmed in Oaxaca, Yucatan, Baja - Mexico, San Diego, S.F. & Chi.79-81.

* * * * *

CONFIGURATIONS UNTO THEMSELVES (1983) 16mm. Color. Silent. 11 minutes.

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING... (1983) 16mm. Color. Silent. 19 minutes.

* * * * *

EUCALYPTUS (1978) 16mm. Color. Silent. 7 minutes.

"...a poetic film about a turtle, eucalyptus nuts and oriental
landscape painting. The nuts and the turtle are metaphorically
identified in terms of having shells. Finally, the editing pinpoints
a mountain in one of the landscape pictures. It's contour suggests
the trutle's shell, recalling the ancient cosmological belief that
the world is but a turtle balanced on infinite tiers of progressively
larger turtles. Humorously, Adkins turns the mountain upside down---
a typical plight of turtles. I suspect that this film may merit a
complicated symbolic interpretation. However, the clear, elegant
poetic analogies Adkins is able to suggest between the disparate
objects in the film are more than enough to sustain my interest."

Noel Carroll - SOHO NEWS, 1979

CANTS FROM NATURAL HISTORY WORKS (1975) 16mm. Color. Sound. 14 minutes.

In CANTS FROM NATURAL HISTORY WORKS the original story is by Jorge Luis Borges, from the book, Labyrinths. The spoken voice is generously read by filmmaker Michael Guccione.

A Parable of the Endless Recurrence. A dream that deliberately attempts to exhaust its possibilities and borders on its own parody; the duplication of space and the memory of time. In the recognition of a caged leopard. An image of human thought. The apparent contradictions of illusion. Dante dying in Rochester.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1984

HOLLIS FRAMPTON

THE MAGELLAN CYCLE

Tiger Balm, 1972, 10 min.

The Straits of Magellan, 1977, 52 min.

Magellan's First Dream (Matrix), 1972, 25 min.

"Hollis Frampton is currently at work on a leviathan work entitled Magellan. Almost as if to hyperbolize the prime axiom of the structural film, the overall shape of this serial work is so complex (as opposed to being the "impression" one would be left with) that it would require several pages to describe just the matrices governing the relationships among the several hundred parts of the work. Initially conceived with a running time of nine hours, thirty-six minutes, the work itself will eventually run thirty-six hours and be seen over a period of one year and four days.

"Although the structure of the overall work has been guided by mathematical formulations, the individual films (parts), themselves, seem in no way to resemble the formulaic "structural" film. The difference between these recent films and the presumed "structural" aspects of Frampton's own earlier work involves the complexity of the schemes used to generate the formal deployment of elements. In his older films, for instance, the "structures," and even the a priori schemes which generated them, were visible, that is, recoverable to varying degrees by the spectator. In the films of Magellan, this is no longer the case; the output of the a priori schemes has become so large, so complex, that the "structures" they generate are no longer seen, are no longer retrievable. And though the "seasonal films" of Straits of Magellan involve what Frampton has called "situations in which nature is very clearly imitating art," these films utilize a scientific technology which allows art to formally imitate nature... Just as a lump of coal presents to us nothing of its complex arrangement of carbon chains, these films simply appear, while any systematic formulas which may have generated them do not.

"Magellan announces a major development which becomes significant, not in relation to the myth of "structural film," but in view of the achievements of Frampton's past work and the recent history of avant-garde film. The received wisdom about Frampton proclaims his interest in intellectual structures, in scientific and mathematical formulas for generating works. Frampton has been contrasted with Snow: the former engaging in the construction of an intellectual space, the latter exploring the dialectics of plastic space. Such an opposition obscures a major aspect of Frampton's work which underpinned many of his early films and

which, with the films of Magellan, has become a dominant concern: the development of an epistemology of vision. In the earlier films, this took the form of apperceptive strategies which highlighted the relation between perception and modes of cognition in the spectator. With Magellan, Frampton has at last succeeded in the total merging of intellectual space with the space of the world. The paradoxical is achieved by the dynamic welding of presumed dualities; forms are created where once it was presumed boundaries existed."

Bruce Jenkins
Wide Angle Vol. 2, No. 3, 1978

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

ROBERT NELSON RETROSPECTIVE

MARCH 29, 1984

The San Francisco Cinematheque presents a three part retrospective of the films of Robert Nelson, native San Franciscan, whose work in the 1960s in collaboration with Funk Artists William Wiley and Robert Hudson, composer Steve Reich, and San Francisco Mime Troupe Director, Ron Davis, established his reputation as an original voice in San Francisco's "hipster cinema".

Reflecting and encouraging an irreverence for polite middleclass values via an ironic, playful, and unrelenting "un-uptight sense of humor", Nelson and his SF Art Institute cohorts mirrored the transforming climate of the post-beat/prepsychedelic 60s. Collective imagination infused the films, and the artists' offhanded approach to process allowed the idiosyncratic nature of the works to reign free and expressive. With Nelson, art values and entertainment values collide ecstatically.

"-(Nelson) has long been recognized (along with Bruce Conner, the Kuchar Brothers and a few others) as the avant-garde cinema's most potent comic filmmaker... nearly all Nelson's films develop one form of humor or another. This along with his improvisational methods, his connection with the SF Art Institute, and the Eastern influences on his work have made him a representative of what's usually thought of as an essential element of 'West Coast Filmmaking'."

-Scott MacDonald

The conclusion of this three part presentation of Nelson's work will be a screening of Suite California: Stops and Passes (Parts I and II) on May 3.

"... I'd say that everybody knew something was going on, but nobody I knew imagined what would actually happen in the 60s explosion... many of the people who were already in the art scene, who were just a little bit older, kept some distance. They'd already formed their own alternate lifestyles. To the extent that their lives overlapped with what was happening in the mid-'60s, they were a part of it, but they were already there when it exploded.... I'd seen a few avant-garde films, so I already knew you could do anything you wanted." -R.N.

THE AWFUL BACKLASH (1967) 14 min Soundtrack by Nelson

"Bill Allan came over to my house one day, at about the time that Blondino was nearly finished, and said that we should make a film about a fishing reel backlash. He fishes all the time and the idea came to him while casting... I'm really happy with this movie and I think that it's nearly perfect. I showed it a lot in Europe last year, and some people over there thought it was a put-on but it isn't, others hated it because it is so boring. I usually feel very good when I see it." -R.N.

THE OFF-HAND JAPE (1967) 9 min Soundtrack by Nelson and William T. Wiley

"...I've always felt good about this film because it's beyond criticism. No one can say it's awful, no matter what elaborate reasons they construct,

without talking about what's good in the film. If it's truly awful, then it's just right, because that's exactly what we had in mind. If you can't enjoy that kind of awfulness, that's another matter... and I'd have to say 'that's your problem because, after all, there are plenty of other kinds of awfulness that you really do enjoy, and YOU know it!'"... R.N.

BLEU SHUT (1970) 33 min Soundtrack by Nelson with William Wiley

"Bleu Shut is a prime example of the participatory film, a form which emerged at the end of the 1960s out of extensions of the structural film... The participatory films follow the direction established by the structural cinema in finding corollaries for the conscious mind..." P.A. Sitney, Visionary Film

"...You can see a boat in a harbor and have one reaction to it, walk around and see the name and have a different reaction. The boat feels one way if it's called Mary Jane; it feels another way if it's called The Weekender. It looks different. For me those names, and the kitsch mentality they reflect are appealing and repulsive. Since you can feel both ways about them, there's an edge and that edge appeals to me... The clock came out of my own arduous struggle to sit through a lot of independent movies. I often have a powerful urge to look back to see how much is left on the reel. When I succumb, the reel always looks huge! I put the clock up there so that no one would have to turn around." -R.N.

DEEP WESTERN (1974) 6 min

"Nelson calls Deep Western a 'death film'. Dr. Samuel West, an Oakland dentist who was an early supporter and collector of Wiley, Geis, Hudson, et al, had died shortly before the film was made. 'Nothing was spelled out,' Nelson says, 'but it was in all our minds at the time'. Deep Western is a memorial gesture and a meditation on mortality. At the same time, it pays tribute to the enduring ties and personal affection that have characterized the work of Nelson, Wiley and their friends. And this friendship is, in great measure, the subject of their work." -J. Hoberman

HAMLET ACT (1982) 21 min Screenplay by Joe Chang

-Docu-Drama style (Hamlet as a video camera-person)

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

ROBERT NELSON RETROSPECTIVE

MARCH 22, 1984

The San Francisco Cinematheque presents a three part retrospective of the films of Robert Nelson, native San Franciscan, whose work in the 1960s in collaboration with Funk Artists William Wiley and Robert Hudson, composer Steve Reich, and San Francisco Mime Troupe Director, Ron Davis, established his reputation as an original voice in San Francisco's "hipster cinema".

Reflecting and encouraging an irreverance for polite middleclass values via an ironic, playful, and unrelenting "un-uptight sense of humor", Nelson and his SF Art Institute cohorts mirrored the transforming climate of the postbeat/prepsychedelic 60s. Collective imagination infused the films, and the artists' offhanded approach to process allowed the idiosyncratic nature of the works to reign free and expressive. With Nelson, art values and entertainment collide ecstatically.

"-(Nelson) has long been recognized (along with Bruce Connor, the Kuchar Brothers and a few others) as the avantgarde cinema's most potent comic filmmaker...nearly all Nelson's films develop one form of humor or another. This along with his improvisational methods, his connection with the SF Art Institute, and the Eastern influences on his work have made him a representative of what's usually thought of as an essential element of 'West Coast Filmmaking'."- Scott Macdonald

The Cinematheque is proud to present three evenings of Nelson's works. On March 29 the program will include The Awful Backlash , The Off-Handed Jape , Bleu Shut , Deep Westurn , and Hamlet Act . On May 3 Suite California: Stops and Passes (Parts I and II) will be screened.

" You're not aloof or remote or superior. You just feel submerged. In a way you're safe because you're invulnerable because you know what the things you're involved with represent and you know what they are, and you know the absurdity and meaninglessness of them..." -R.N.

PLASTIC HAIRCUT (1963) 15 min.

"Bill Wiley, Ron Davis, Robert Hudson and myself got excited about the idea of making a film together. I had made two home movies before this time using a borrowed camera, so I was the technical expert. None of us knew anything about making movies at that time, but we all knew about art (namely, that it had something to do with having a good time)..." -R.N.

O DEM WATERMELONS (1965) 12 min.

"...we all had a good time running around the Mission District and Potrero Hill District busting up watermelons, showing off, and having fun. A few weeks later, when I had the film roughly edited, I ran it silent for Ron and Saul and a few people at the Mime Troupe. There was deadly silence and it looked awful. Everyone was embarrassed for me and didn't know what to say. I faked it by saying that it was good and I told them not to worry... the track (by Steve Reich) has helped the film a lot."

"...my view was that stereotypes in themselves can't say anything, they obscure rather than reveal. To present them blatantly, in a context that made them confrontational, seemed to me a way of being bold and daring... and a way of creating a lure for racist projections... the film is about being on a razor line." -R.N.

HOT LEATHERETTE (1967) 5½ min.

"... I think this is a pretty good movie, maybe just a shade too tricky. I showed it in Mill Valley one night and it made a girl puke (the second best compliment that I've ever gotten for my movies)." -R.N.

GRATEFUL DEAD (1967) 7½ min.

"...overnight the whole scene was born. From my point of view it was almost instantaneous. Old icons were tumbling and floating downstream; other gods were disappearing over the horizon. It was an astounding continual shock and people came- young people, bigger crowds, still bigger crowds- all dancing in the streets, and taking acid and being transformed by it."- R.N.

"...Nelson jams (on optical printer) with the rock group/Concert footage of The Dead manipulated-presented using various modes: color positive and negative, mirror printing, loop printing, various forms of stepped and stop motion, blurring swish pans, frenetic zooming. This is accompanied by a jaggedly rhythmic sound collage of Dead music. The sounds and images move (with considerable dexterity) in and out of rhythmic synchronization." Scott MacDonald

THE GREAT BLONDINO (1967) 41 min.

"...We didn't have any ideas or script. We just had characters... the rest we just made up as we went along. Mostly, we just worked out simple visual ideas and took a lot of shots of Wiley's paintings and constructions. The form of the movie was made up at the editing table..." -R.N.

"...Blondino is a long never-resolved dialogue between it's protagonist's inner and outer worlds, between film as material and film as representation, between art and entertainment... he (Nelson) was able to orchestrate Blondino's elements into a grand summation of a 20 year cycle in San Francisco avante-garde filmmaking... developed through the separate work of Peterson and Broughton, the films of Christopher MacLaine and those of Ron Rice, and (the style) was to reach an apogee with The Great Blondino. Thus exhausted, the picaresque mode itself was eclipsed in San Francisco by a style of psychedelic abstraction."

- J. Hoberman

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

EARLY ANIMATION: THE SILENT FILM/A PARALLEL HISTORY

Programmed by Jon DiBenedetto.

Animation is usually overlooked when considering the early silent film. A particular focus of this program of obscure works is the characteristic reflexivity of early animation which often included the animator's presence, the animator as the magician in the cinema, and the technical transition from paper to cel-animation.

The program will include the premier of two films by Emile Cohl recently released in America.

Tonights show will include: Drame Chez Les Fantoces, (1906) and The man in the moon, (1907) Emile Cohl; Sure - locked homes, (1926) Otto Mesmer; The voice of the night- ingale, (1923) Vladidslas Starevitc; Max and Moritz (1920) Wilhelm Bush; Down where the limburger blows (1917), Bray Studios featuring the Katzenjammer Kids; Willi's nightmare (1926), Paul Perofs: Princess Nicotine (1909) J, Stuart Blackton; Adam raises cain (1920) Tony Sarg; Animated hair cartoon; A.W.O.L. , and other films.

There will be a short intermission.

SUNDAY APRIL 1, 7:30 p.m. at S.F. ART INSTITUTE.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE
The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

New College Gallery
Saturday 7 April 1984

NO FAMILY PICTURES

Film and Music by James Irwin
(1983) 22min/S8mm/color/sound

This is a personal, at times an expressive film concerned with film education and its effect on the relationship between women and media.

"Cameras are boxes for transporting appearances", writes John Berger in Another Way of Telling. "The photographer chooses the event he photographs. This choice can be thought of as a cultural construction."

What do the appearances in this film mean to you?

Various manipulations of the image: (a) the filmmaker is always present (b) film is a physical, pliable medium.

I try to understand the equipment available to me and use it to its fullest, rather than envision a result and spend money on fulfilling that vision. My choice to use S8mm is for economic, political and aesthetic reasons tied inseparably together. Except for the printing and a short section of sound transfer, all the film and music work was done in my small studio using reasonably modest tools.

Therefore the film is itself an example of the low-cost, small-format media it implicitly advocates.

- J.I.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

"The film is there and you are here. You're equal. It's neither fascism nor entertainment."- Michael Snow

The San Francisco Cinematheque presents Michael Snow's monumental work

LA REGION CENTRALE, 1970-71, 190 min., sound

The following notes are excerpted from Snow's discussion of the film in Form and Structure in Recent Film published by the Vancouver Art Gallery.

"Standard Time had the germ of the idea. When I saw what happened with the continuous circular, horizontal pans I realized there was alot to be done with it. If properly orchestrated it can do some powerful physical-psychic things. It can really move you around. If you become completely involved in the reality of these circular movements it's 'you' who is spinning surrounded with everything, or conversely, you who are a stationary centre and it's all revolving around you. But on the screen it's the centre which is never seen, which is mysterious. One of the titles I considered using was !?432101234?! [and adaptation of a sculpture title] by which I meant that as you move down in dimensions you approach zero and in this film, La Region Centrale that zero point is the absolute centre, Nirvanic zero, being the ecstatic centre of a complete sphere. You see, the camera moves around an invisible point completely in 360 degrees, not only horizontally but in 'every' direction and on every plane of a sphere. Not only does it move in predirected orbits and spirals but it itself also turns, rolls and spins. So that there are circles within circles and cycles within cycles. Eventually there's no gravity. The film is a cosmic strip

... In various philosophies and religions there has often been the suggestion, sometimes the dogma, that transcendence would be a fusion of opposites. In Back and Forth there's the possibility of such a fusion being achieved by velocity. I've said before, and perhaps I can quote myself, 'New York Eve and Ear Control is philosophy, Wavelength is metaphysics and Back and Forth₂ is physics.' By the last I mean the conversion of matter into energy. $E=mc^2$. La Region continues this but it becomes simultaneously micro and macro, cosmic-planetary as well as atomic. Totality is achieved in terms of cycles rather than action and reaction. It's 'above' that.

...In my films I've tried to make something happen that couldn't happen in any other way so that there is something special about the experience that comes from the possibilities of the medium. If it seems worthwhile to make art works at all which is sometimes questionable you'd better do something that adds to the world, not in a material sense but that as an experience has some distinction to it. At the same time the films are not coercive, they're objective." M.S. 1972

The Foundation for Art in Cinema

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

Saturday, May 5, 1984

"Muzak and Other Evidence"

Films by Scott Stark

Circus Animal - 1983, 3 Super 8 Projectors, Sound

Made with Mary Schneberger. When you pay to see a film you are essentially paying for a product, which is the privilege of seeing through the camera's point of view. In this piece the camera/point of view becomes purely a commercial product which can be purchased like any other product.

Hotel Cartograph - 1983, 16mm Color Sound

A study of an urban environment in an exploratory manner. The film is one shot only, using a 16mm synch sound rig with the camera mounted on a movable cart. Cartograph = cart + graph, or the creation of a graph/graphic image using movement; also, cartography, the art of map making. Theoretically one could partially reconstruct the layout of the building using the film as a map or score.

Muzak and Other Evidence - 1984, Super 8 Color Sound

I once had a science teacher who talked about how we rely more heavily on visual information than oral information. "If you saw a duck that made a noise like a train," he said, "you'd say 'Hey, that duck sounds like a train' rather than 'Hey, that train looks like a duck.'"

Third in a series of three, this film involves the gathering of evidence for a sociological statement. The film is deconstructed into its elements and attempts to examine both the process of recording the information and the information itself. Key concerns include the effect of sound on visuals and the use of the components of the film - sound, light, color - as artifacts.

In Anticipation of the Circuitous Disappearance of the Umbrella Man Involving the Evocation and Deliniation of the Threshold of Density
- 1983, 16mm Color Silent

A formal study of the relationship between film and the object being filmed. An emotional event contextualized for meaning/statement, and pushed beyond the point of comprehension, pushed to the wall(paper). Searching for the point where a threshold of comprehension exists.

Thanks to Patricia Powers, Jim O'Brien, Chris Sanborn, Mary Schneberger, Jun Jalbuena, Mike Krewer.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

May 5, 1984

Films by Sharon Greytak

Some Pleasure on the Level of the Source - 1982, 16mm Color Sound

Psychical formations, images of memory, etc., become the tangible deviants of censorship. When sync sound is heard momentarily before the image is seen, sound functions as narration or commentary. When picture and sound are in unison, sound works as description. The dissolve in film has historically been a signifier for transition. I use the image of a young girl to point out minute detail in a developmental process. The filmic act, as well as culturally imposed acts, are questioned by focusing on a perception of an occurrence or transition that would normally go unseen. I am interested in the formation and transmittance of shifting content during that moment within the film; how meaning can be exploited and/or heightened (heightened meaning being new meaning or another meaning). This leads back to censorship where a supposed understanding or relationship between the filtered down fragments manage to form; posing as complete thought.

Czechoslovakian Woman - 1982, 16mm Black & White Sound

The manipulation of filming photographs of such cultural content is an outward gesture of the desire to understand an incident by means of the scrutinization of isolated detail. This melancholy act results in a futile attempt to draw limitless information or to reconcile with a past since one can never be close enough to that photograph/situation as depicted.

The Living Room - 1983, 16mm Color Sound

No notes available.

Notes by S.G.

CINEMATHEQUE

San Francisco May 10 1984

(bovs) 1984 2 minutes b/w Melanie Shopa
Satire.....b: a usu. topical literary composition holding up human or individual vices, folly, abuses, or shortcomings to censure by means of ridicule, irony or other methods sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement.

Thought Transference 1984 10 minutes colour Alexandra Konigsmann
"Another way of communication."

April 84 USA 1984 3 minutes colour Thomas Tellander
"A diary."

YUFU in the first position 1978 10 minutes David Ronce
"A bicycle ride between success and failure. Ideological measurement for the usefulness of each."

Forum 1981 8 minutes b/w Alexandra Konigsmann
"Four empty rooms; building up and down-----in Germany."

Mololog 1984 b/w 4 minutes Lars Erik Berg
(light and sound)²
thought = film .

INTERMISSION

B.L.T. 1982 10 minutes (installation) Thomas Tellander/ Melanie Shopa

Next 1984 6 minutes Knut Wilhelm
"The pigs of today are the pork chops of tomorrow".....(graffiti statement)
".....an evolutionary chase on concrete."

I am not... 1984 45 seconds Alexandra Konigsmann
"... a machine."

Falling Apart 1984 5 minutes Thomas Tellander
" See what I mean."

(There will be a reception in the courtyard following the program.)

May 17, 1984

THE SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE

presents

a MERRY, JOYFUL, MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

to

HOLLIS FRAMPTON

1936

1984

Films this evening:

Short Films 1975, #3, by Stan Brakhage / 16mm / color / silent / 2 min.
A portrait of H.F. and of the animal traditionally likened to persons of high intellect.

Information 1966 / silent / 4 min. / "Hypothetical 'first film' for a synthetic tradition constructed from scratch on reasonable principles, given: 1) camera; 2) rawstock; 3) a single bare light-bulb. I admit to having made a number of splices." - H.F.

Manual of Arms / 1966 / silent / 17 min. / "Courtly dances with friends and lovers in the form of a 14-part drill for the camera, incorporating physiognomic & locomotor evidence related to the lens by 13 artists and an historian, namely: C. Andre, B. Brown, R. Castoro, L. Childs, B. Goldensohn, R. Huot, E. Lloyd, L. Lozano, L. Meyer, L. Poons, M. Snow, M. Steinbrecher, T. Tharp, J. Weiland." - H.F.

Lemon (for Robert Huot) / 1969 / silent / 7-1/2 min. / color
"As a voluptuous lemon is devoured by the same light that reveals it, its image passes from the spatial rhetoric of illusion into the spatial grammar of the graphic arts." - H.F.

Carrots & Peas / 1969 / 5-1/2 min. / sound / color / "A 'traditional' side-dish of mixed vegetables inhabits a succession of 'traditional' art-styles. The sumptuous, sometimes tiresome paradox of the static image in film, is rudely presented in the form of an art historian's slide-lecture... for which genre of discourse the spoken commentary is of about average relevance to the images." - H.F.

Hapax Legomena III [Critical Mass] / 1971 / 25-1/2 min. / sound / b/w
"As a work of art I think [CRITICAL MASS] is quite universal and deals with all quarrels (those between men and women, or men and men, or women and women, or children, or war.) It is war!... It is one of the most delicate and clear statements of inter-human relationships and the difficulties of them that I have ever seen. It is very funny, and rather obviously so. It is a magic film in that you can enjoy it, with greater and greater appreciation, each time you look at it. Most esthetic experiences are not enjoyable on the surface. You have to look at them a number of times before you are able to fully enjoy them, but this one stands up at once, and again and again, and is amazingly clear." - Stan Brakhage

- INTERMISSION -

Gloria (from the Magellan cycle) / 1980 / silent / 8 min. / color
H.F. had a grandmother whose companionship and spiritual spunk helped sustain his childhood trials. This film offers an objectification of his feelings and thoughts for her.

Otherwise Unexplained Fires 1977 / silent / 18 min. / color
Filmed in large part during H.F.'s lecture-screening tour in the Bay Area: visit(s) to the Musee Mechanique, Land's End, the Cliff House. The S.F. fog is proclaimed, as also are the cypress trees that line parts of our local beach. A visit to the Brakhage Colorado residence provided images of chickens/roosters.

Winter Solstice (from the Magellan cycle) 1974 / silent / 33 min.
/ color

"Magellan... Initially conceived with a running time of nine hours, thirty-six minutes, the work itself will eventually run thirty-six hours and be seen over a period of one year and four days.

"Although the structure of the overall work has been guided by mathematical formulations, the individual (parts), themselves, seem in no way to resemble the formulaic "structural" film... In the films of Magellan... the output of the a priori schemes has become so large, so complex, that the "structures" they generate are no longer seen, are no longer retrievable... the "seasonal films" of Straits of Magellan involve what Frampton has called 'situations in which nature is very clearly imitating art.'...

"A film like Autumnal Equinox or Summer Solstice is no less 'systematic' than the films of Frampton's earlier period; it is simply less metrical, less concerned with duration as a prime compositional component. This shift from the metric to the rhythmic undercuts the kinds of anticipation structures or timing devices which operated in several of Frampton's previous works. Instead of 'baring the device' of the dialectic of temporal engagement (memory/anticipation), the recent films go one step further in suspending the elements and representational aspects. And as the key to these films no longer entails a discernable generative principle or a priori scheme, what becomes foregrounded is the act of perception...

"Magellan... announces a major development... in view of the achievements of Frampton's past work and the recent history of avant-garde film... A dominant concern: the development of an epistemology of vision. In [Frampton's] earlier films, this took the form of apperceptive strategies which highlighted the relation between perception and modes of cognition in the spectator. With Magellan, Frampton has at last succeeded in the total merging of intellectual space with the space of the world. The paradoxical is achieved by the dynamic welding of presumed dualities; forms are created where once it was presumed boundaries existed." *

* Bruce Jenkins, Wide Angle magazine, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1978:
"Frampton Unstructured - Notes for a metacritical history,"
pp. 22-27.



June 7 San Francisco Cinematheque

DIFFERENT PLACES/BAD PLACES

A selection of films by (mostly) women.

A Setting:

Clever men build cities, Clever women
topple them.
Beautiful, these clever women. But they
are owls, they are kites.
Women have long tongues, Stairways
to ruin.
Disorder is not sent down from Heaven,
But bred by these women.

from The Book of Songs (Shih Ching),
a Confucian classic.

"If women have a role to play, ...it is only in assuming a negative
function: reject everything finite, definite, structured, loaded
with meaning, in the existing state of society. Such an attitude
places women on the side of the explosion of social codes: with
revolutionary movements."

Julia Kristeva, from an interview with
Xaviere Gauthier in Tel Quel #58

"...woman has sex organs just about everywhere. She experiences
pleasure almost everywhere...The geography of her pleasure is
much more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more
complex, more subtle, than is imagined--in an imaginary (system).
centered a bit too much on one and the same.

"She" is infinitely other in herself. That is undoubtedly the
reason she is called temperamental, incomprehensible, perturbed,
capricious--not to mention her language in which "she" goes off in
all directions and in which "he" is unable to discern the coherence
of any meaning. Contradictory words seem a little crazy to the
logic of reason, and inaudible for him who listens with ready-made
grids, a code prepared in advance. In her statements--at least when
she dares to speak out--woman retouches herself constantly."

Luce Irigaray, Ce Sexe qui n'en est
pas un (This sex which isn't one),
1977.

"For analysis has a way of failing to participate in the very spirit
which it would analyse, and therefore not involving itself in an
ironic self-contradiction, but in a violation and negation of that
to which it is attempting to do justice."

Zen and the Comic Spirit, by Conrad Hyers.

DIFFERENT PLACES/BAD PLACES

All of the films being shown tonight are somehow concerned with speaking, and speaking from the "outside". They resist or reject any conventional relationship to language and dominant culture, and to a fixed form or structure. They assume the legitimacy of their own voices?

A question is posed: Is this the voice of the women with long tongues, of negativity, of narcissism, or of something else?

Linda Peckham, UNTITLED, 1984, 10 minutes

The feminine voice is not the transparency of a consciousness. It is the irresponsible focal point of these events, where the moments of concealing and revealing are dislocated as reference for memory and narrative.

-L. Peckham

Lee Sokol, AQUI SE LO HALLA (Here You Will Find It), 1982, 18 minutes

Aqui Se Lo Halla juxtaposes both sensual and violent footage of Mexico with a 40 year old Mexican's poignant account of a youthful passion. It works through a series of doublings: a woman uses a man to talk with a particularly "feminine" sensitivity about women and the possibility of a heterosexuality of differences.

-L. Thornton

Su Friedrich, SCAR TISSUE, 1980, 6 minutes

I wanted to notate as precisely as I could the essential rhythms and emotions of the environment, while undermining its essence; to build slowly from a quietly threatening atmosphere to one in which there is no possible contact between the men and the women, where the urge to get somewhere destroys the need to understand the meaning of the journey. It concerns the chaste being chased, the chaser being captured, the captivating being captive, the chaste being powerless, the captor being impotent tho powerful.

-S. Friedrich

Lawrence Sheinfeld, HOW I GOT HERE, 1984, 14½ minutes

How I Got Here is another of my arguments for making efficiency and expediency the twin pillars of a new, truly American aesthetic. This is the cheap fraud refined, so as to be cheaper. Rather than apologizing for our lack of a past such as we believe we would like to have had, and rather than, in all glum earnestness, setting about to recreate such a past in a convincing way, we must learn to represent our desire for that past. If the past is everything we haven't got, then the desire for it will prompt frantic efforts to achieve by any means possible the singular moment of absolute rest which is our sham past.

-L. Sheinfeld

Su Friedrich, BUT NO ONE, 1982, 9 minutes

In the dream, I was unable to act according to my good conscience. When I awoke, the women were still outside my window, hard at work. On a walk through the city, I saw the men tearing down and building up the world. Meanwhile, fish were being killed for my evening meal.

-S. Friedrich

Leslie Thornton an excerpt from PEGGY AND FRED IN HELL, 1984, 20 minutes

A room overstuffed with the detritus of culture is the setting in which the young Peggy and Fred "learn to talk". They scramble over the surfaces of meaning like little imperfect recording machines, getting everything wrong, with a feeling and conviction that is both marvelous and frightening. The children are being inscribed into the Symbolic Order, he alienated from himself, but not language, she from language, but not herself. He builds their house and she looks for their voice.

(Note: This is an autonomous sequence from a feature length work-in-progress.)

L. Thornton

Films programmed and notes prepared by Leslie Thornton

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

Saturday, June 8, 1984

Brakhage: The Roman Numeral Series
and Other Films

This evening's program will be only the second time that the Roman Numeral Series has been shown in sequence, and in its entirety, in the United States.

Roman Numeral Series I-IX, 1979-80, 16mm color/silent, 48 min.

"This begins a new series of films which would ordinarily be called 'abstract', 'non-objective', 'non-representational', etc. I cannot tolerate any of those terms and, in fact, had to struggle against all such historical concepts to proceed with my work. Midst creative process, the sound 'imagnostic' kept ringing in my ears. It seems to be an enjambment of Latin and Greek; but Charlton T. Lewis' 'Elementary Latin Dictionary' gives me (via Guy Davenport) 'image' ... Sanskrit=AIC='like', GNOSIS 'knowledge', GHOSTIC=AGNOSCO='to recognize/to know' and the happier IMAGINOUSUS 'full of fancies'/ 'fantasies', illustrated by Catullus' singular use (perhaps creation of the term?) in the line 'His mind solidly filled with 'fancies of a girl'. Even though exhausted by this etymological pursuit, and despite my prejudice against taking on 'foreign airs' of tongue, 'Imagnostic' keeps singing in my head and escaping my lips in conversation." - S.B.

The following films have only recently been released through the Canyon Cinema Supplement.

Wedlock House: An Intercourse, 1959, 16mm, color/silent, 11 min.

"The first months of marriage, with moments of mutual awareness, frightening understandings, lovemaking." - Cinema 16

Angels', 1971, 16mm, color/silent, 2 min.

"This then the property of many angels." - S.B.

Door, 1971, 16mm, color/silent, 2 min.

"This the only all-inclusive autobiography I've yet managed; and as I'm still alive, it is to be understood as a metaphor which defines the limits of expectation." - S.B.

Fox Fire Child Watch, 1971, 16mm, color/silent, 3 min.

"Ken, Flo, and Nisi Jacobs in the Syracuse Airport: this is what you might call baby-sitting in the swamp." - S.B.

The Peaceable Kingdom, 1971, 16mm, color/silent, 8 min.

"This film, one of the most perfect it has ever been given to me to make, was inspired by the series of paintings of the same title by Edward Hicks." - S.B.

San Francisco Cinematheque

June 10, 1984

POETS ON FILM: FRANK O'HARA

The Last Clean Shirt. Film by Alfred Leslie. Subtitles by Frank O'Hara. Song "The Last Clean Shirt" by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller. Original black-&-white version, 1964, destroyed by fire in 1966; present red-&-white version printed by the filmmaker in 1970. 45 minutes.

Intermission

USA: Poetry: Frank O'Hara. The 11th in a series of filmed interviews and readings, produced & directed by Richard Moore for KQED-TV and National Educational Television. Photographed and edited by Philip Green. Filmed in 16 mm. at O'Hara's apartment and Alfred Leslie's studio in New York, March 5, 1966. First televised on September 1, 1966. 15 minutes.

Frank O'Hara: Second Edition. From unused footage for USA: Poetry, produced by Gordon C.A. Craig and edited by Peter Kunz for the American Poetry Archive and Resource Center at the Poetry Center, San Francisco State University. 1975. 35 minutes.

"Nobody should experience anything they don't need to, if they don't need poetry bully for them, I like the movies too. And after all, only Whitman and Crane and Williams, of the American poets, are better than the movies."

-- Frank O'Hara, from Personism: A Manifesto, 1959.

"To most people reality is a confirmation of their expectations. Some part of an artist's practice should be to consciously try to add alternatives to what others think they see. Pull My Daisy and The Last Clean Shirt are the best known of my films that explore that idea."

-- Alfred Leslie
Amherst, Mass. 1984

Notes

The Last Clean Shirt

"The first of its three parts has a young Negro get into an open car with a young white woman, set an alarm clock at 12:00, and then start driving around the city. The camera is in the back of the car so you can see the couple of the ordinary city sights. She talks continuously in a made-up language -- similar to the Bergmanese in The Silence. At 12:07, they're still riding and she's still talking. (By this time, the audience was booing.) The car drives on, passes a church where a loud speaker is blaring something about 'Ashes to ashes'. Around 12:10, the car is back at its starting place; and while the couple is getting out, a man's voice on the soundtrack sings "They put the last clean shirt on my poor brother Bill." Fin.

Part two repeats the whole thing exactly as we saw and heard it the first time -- except it is accompanied by subtitles indicating what the woman is saying. Her continuous patter reads like e.e. cummings under the influence of Gracie Allen. Once again the car and its passengers return to the starting point and "the last clean shirt on my poor brother Bill." Fin -- again (with so much applause on the sound track that it almost drowned out the booing of the real audience). Part three shows exactly the same visuals from 12 o'clock on, but with new subtitles, this time revealing what the man is thinking while the woman chatters on. And his stream of consciousness winds up with an expression of hatred for that "last clean shirt" song..."

-- review of the premiere of The Last Clean Shirt at the 1964 New York Film Festival, by Philip T. Hartung, The Commonweal, October 23, 1964.

Finally in Sweden, March 1962, during a preposterous ride in the back seat of a convertible, the combination of the wind, the motor roar, the Swedish language, and my already faulty hearing produced what turned out to be the final notes for The Last Clean Shirt. I made a rough draft of the film in October 1962 on returning from Europe, using as its basis the car ride, A Life and Time, and the outline of a scene I had written for Mr. Z.

In 1963 Shirt was filmed. In the first days' shooting the camera was focused and tied and left to operate independently in the back seat of a convertible. In the second shooting I tied the camera to the knees of a friend who was then strapped into the back of a station wagon. Knowing what the camera would see at that angle and position, I simply drove around looking for things to shoot through the rear view mirror of the car. When something looked right I yelled, "Shoot," and the camera would be turned on.

Later I was given the use of a record called The Last Clean Shirt, written, produced, and released by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller. Because I liked it so much and because the music and lyrics had so much to do with the ideas in the film, I named the film after the song:

When the composite print was complete, I screened it for Frank O'Hara to see if we could work out a way for him to write the sub-titles for what would be reels two and three. O'Hara and I had considered doing a few things earlier: an animated film based on an idea of Joe LeSeur's called *Messy Lives*, an animation of some poems, and also the staging of a pornographic tape of mine called *The Flower Girls*. None of these had ever worked out because the production time seemed too immense to coordinate with our respective work schedules. But this project seemed measurable, and we worked out this method of collaboration. O'Hara would write whatever he wanted. I would adapt the transfer, the timing, and the word and letter spacing of the sub-titles on the screen. I could also repeat any line or lines as frequently as I wanted, as long as they remained in the original sequence.

I burned the titles in at Titra, and a complete version of the film was screened at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco in the summer of 1964. The showing there was the only sympathetic viewing of the film I have ever known of. More usual was the hissing, booing, slow clapping, and foot stamping that greeted the film at the New York and London Film Festivals.

A description of the London screening appears in a very complete and sympathetic review by Philip French in an issue of *Encounter* magazine, 1964. A piece about the film in the *Catholic Film Review* saw the film as a search for truth, and eventually the film won an award in Bergamo, Italy. It then was ignored.

ITS LOSS:

Two years later, on October 16, 1966, a few months after Frank O'Hara's death, my studio and its entire contents were destroyed in a disastrous fire that took the lives of twelve firemen. But the fire, destroying everything else, apparently did not burn all of my films. They looked to be safe and intact since they were in a steel cabinet that was supposed to be fire resistant. The entire cabinet was visible from the street, jammed into a corner of the building. I tried to get a cherry picker to pluck it out. Not only was I unable to borrow one from any private person or from any city or state department, I was unable to get assistance of any kind to get anything out. Despite one week of endless telephone calls to all the museums in New York and to countless friends and acquaintances, I got no help. Finally, the building was knocked down into rubble and the cabinet with the film merged with the rest of the brick and fire trash. Fortunately, while they were carting away the debris, a few reels fell out of the cabinet and I was able to get them and save them. Also fortunately, at least regarding *The Last Clean Shirt*, a print of the film was in the Bergamo Archive, and a 35mm negative was still with the lab. The sub-title slugs had remained with Titra in New Jersey, but the time sheets with the valuable measurements of screen time were gone, as were all of the out-takes, original 16mm negative, and other film documents. But a new print could be made if I could get the measurements for the sub-titles from the Bergamo copy. I wrote Bergamo requesting help with this and got no reply.

ITS RECOVERY:

In 1970, Kynaston McShine asked for a complete print of the film for the Information Show he was putting on at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Wanting a complete version of the film he assisted me in what turned out to be an almost comic struggle with the Bergamo Archive to get their cooperation. It seemed they would only help us for a price. In order to get their help we would have to find and send them a print of a film they wanted for their collection. But we were unable to get the film they wanted. It took months of overseas calls, letters, telegrams, and finally arm twisting to get the material we needed. It could certainly never have been accomplished without the help of both Kynaston McShine and the Museum of Modern Art:

Finally, having the measurements for the sub-titles, I was able to make a complete print. But this new print was not identical to the original. I did incorporate into it one change. Because of the poor quality of the 35mm negative I had at the lab, I made the new print up in red and white rather than in black and white. The red made up for the thinness of the 35mm negative, by shortening the tonal range and by giving the eye different expectations. Color works differently than black and white in its expression of dark and light. Like Rubens, who used vermilion and brown to express the darkest force, I used a reddish brown instead of black.

I still have the other shreds of film I saved from the rubble. I believe they are part of the picture track of the work print of the other film I had made in collaboration with Frank O'Hara called *Philosophy in the Bedroom* (1966). This is a film of three people in bed making love. O'Hara's sub-titles tell us what happens immediately after the people leave the bed, and an on-screen character's monologue tells us what happened to them before they got into bed, and before we see them on the screen. The picture was shot on 8mm black and white film with sync sound. A 16mm color master was struck off of that, and then a 35mm negative was made from that master. A complete composite print, with music by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller (a three minute composition repeated for one hour); was screened at a number of places, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, thanks to the courtesy and care of Willard Van Dyke.

-- Alfred Leslie, from notes for A Tribute to Anthology Film Archives' Avantgarde Film Preservation Program, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 19, 1977.

USA: Poetry: Frank O'Hara

Frank O'Hara: Second Edition

Scenes are shot in O'Hara's floor-through apartment at 791 Broadway and Leslie's studio further down on the Lower East Side. (The studio is the same one that burned in October of 1966.) Leslie & O'Hara are discussing the script for Philosophy in the Bedroom, later entitled Act & Portrait. O'Hara's prose text for the film is included in Selected Plays (Full Court, 1978). The voice-over is that of Richard Moore. The tabby cat's name was Boris. The assemblage over O'Hara's desk with Bendiga Nuestra Casa in it is by Joe Brainard (not Larry Rivers as the titles suggest). The large action painting behind O'Hara & Leslie in the last sequence is by Michael Goldberg, and the multi-bulbed lamp is by Larry Rivers. The "Jim" that phones to relate his experience with a "flashing bolt" is the poet Jim Brodey. The audio portion of the reading of "Having a Coke with You" is reproduced on Biting Off the Tongue of a Corpse (LP, Giorno Poetry Systems, 1975).

(Program Notes compiled by Bill Berkson)

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Steve Bassett of the American Poetry Archive for making this screening of the film Frank O'Hara: Second Edition possible; to the Indiana University Audio-Visual Center for USA: Poetry: Frank O'Hara; and to Alfred Leslie and Jonas Mekas for The Last Clean Shirt.

San Francisco Cinematheque
June 16, 1984

GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM (1981)
THE TIES THAT BIND (1984)

By Su Friedrich

The text of GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM is a succession of fourteen dreams taken from eight years of my journals. I chose to work with dreams that were the most troubling to me, that expressed my deepest anxieties and longings, or that had forced a sudden awareness about a nagging problem. Since anything repeated often enough tends to lose its mysterious ritual power, I hoped that I might exorcise certain personal obsessions while using a language that was direct enough to allow others to recognize their own demons (assuming that our desire for attachment and our fear of it can be equally demonic).

I also respect those dreams that can create an uncanny confusion between what was dreamt and what was done "in real life". Some of the dreams seemed so plausible, but were physically impossible. Somehow, these metaphors had more credibility or impact than do most real experiences. In general, I am more concerned with finding ways to integrate the (harsh) wisdom of dreams into my life than I am in analysing the structure and function of dreams through any given system (Freudian, Jungian, etc).



Let me state very simply that, in making THE TIES THAT BIND, I had no intention of creating a general portrait of all Germans, or of all German women, nor did I intend to explain the origins of the war or of Nazism. The film began as a personal investigation of my own mother's life before and during the war, primarily from age 10 to 28. I was often tempted to extend the film beyond the parameters of her own stories, but I decided against that; I wanted to stay close to her text and work within the confines of a single life. Since the war has engendered such a wide range of material, which often takes such a broad, "objective", view of the events, I was interested in taking a more subjective and "limited" approach. Moreover, it would be ludicrous to presume objectivity when working with material about my mother (although I tried hard to maintain my scepticism throughout the project).

I restricted my found footage of Germany to that of Ulm, which I acquired on a trip in 1982. Even though nothing in the images distinguishes them as shots of Ulm, it was important for me to know that it was her hometown rather than just "images of war". In particular, the shot of the Nazi banner strung across the road forced me to admit and imagine the Nazi presence in her daily life much more than if I had used the familiar propaganda footage of marches, etc. Similarly, all the footage of contemporary Germany (of Dachau, the Berlin Wall, etc.) was shot by me during the same trip; I just didn't want to depend on anyone else's view of the sites.

I juxtaposed images of my mother in her current life with stories of her past largely because those experiences still haunt her terribly, and because I can't separate who she is now from who she became because of Nazism and the war. But beyond that, it seemed to create a conversation between the images, which I made, and the sound, which she made.

From the inception of the project, I tried to learn more about Nazi and pre-Nazi Germany. Despite being 75% German-American and learning quite generally about the war in school and through the mass media, I was surprised at how little I knew of the details. I also understand now that my own shame at the legacy of the Germans kept me from finding out more about the war when I was younger. The more I learn, the more questions I find, and I think that making this film was just the beginning of a long process of uncovering German history for myself.

I was committed to investigating the areas of German complicity and resistance, independent of my mother's accounts. Memory is a tricky thing, and moreso when one is forced to recall (by a persistent daughter) an experience as traumatic as a war (and one as fraught with guilt and silence as World War Two). I learned a new patience in talking with her when I finally understood that sometimes the truth gets let out slowly, in small batches, and that that doesn't make it less of a truth. But I also did alot

fact-checking with my father, who had heard about the same events soon after they occurred. This put me in a very uncomfortable position, since one doesn't like to entertain the notion that a parent would lie--but the results confirmed my feeling that my mother was making every effort to present the material in all honesty, as best she could remember it.

I began the film thinking of her as a relatively courageous person, given the popular image of all Germans as thoroughly complicitous and im- or amoral. In the end, I understood that she was courageous, but within the limits of what any ethical person would do who isn't given to acts of martyrdom or organized group resistance. That led to a most urgent question for me: How much can and does any ordinary-but-conscientious person do (outside of group actions) when presented with a terrorist society in which even the "safest" citizen (Catholic, "Aryan") is potentially quite unsafe? She inherited the Nazis; she was 13 years old when Hitler was made Chancellor. Had she been an adult in 1933, the film might have been quite different. But it was a fully enforced terrorist state by the time she was old enough to act independently.

So I found myself wondering over and over: If I had been her, would I have resisted more, knowing that I would probably die for it? It's easy to imagine ones' heroism from this safe distance, where one can demonstrate, leaflet, and make films without fear of guaranteed imprisonment or death. But when I put myself in her place, I can't answer that question. It certainly doesn't let my mother (or other Germans) off the hook; it just puts me on the hook with her. Obviously, fascism "works" because most people are so afraid or ill-equipped to confront such extreme physical violence.

It seems that often when people are faced with terrorism, they lend their wiles much more readily to devising escape routes (whether psychological or physical) than to formulating an effective opposition. I don't know entirely why that is, but I do know that that dynamic is as relevant to current American politics as it was to Nazi policy.

Su Friedrich
May, 1984

P.s. Several years ago I was arrested for hitchhiking. When I lied and told the cop that I didn't know it was illegal, he grinned, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed".

Many thanks to Leslie Thornton for all her help in making this show possible.

Jerry Wentz and Gary Doberman
San Francisco Cinematheque, June 21, 1984

Domicile, 1977, Gary Doberman, 7½ min

"Think of a couple of things like they say: 'Limits are what any of us are inside of ...', 'Verse consists of a constant and a variant ...' Already the world is here, truly, and anyone who has ever had experience of actual confinement -- jail, hospital, body, army -- common to human state can't really be patient with any assumption that we need to do it to ourselves...

"[However] [t]he artist has specific responsibility in that he or she is often in a territory of hitherto inacknowledged significance ...

"In this film there is a simple accessible constant which you will have no difficulty in recognizing. There is an equally apparent variable. So your question -- to phrase it poorly -- might be, what is it that is being measured here?.

"The materials of this film are personal, comfortably so. Nothing in that way distorted or untoward. But the choices of the artist are both crucial and defining, and there is evident attention to what he has called boundaries. One is also impressed that there is such confident articulation of resources particular to film, marked technical skill -- 'without which nothing.'"

-- Robert Creely,
Was That a Real Poem
and other Essays

Marks of Reference, 1980, Gary Doberman, 11½ min

"As I said, but wish to imprint, Marks of Reference is one of your very greatest films to me, Gary -- a breakthrough for for my comprehension of your work over these 'inner rectangles' for years in your films ... " --- Stan Brakhage.

Water Marks, 1981, Jerry Wentz, 41 min

An autobiographical film in which the filmmaker, during a trip home to visit his family, recalls the religious atmosphere (Fundamentalism) that he grew up in. Memories of childhood in subtitles are juxtaposed in contrast with images and sounds of his relatives, the family dogs, religious television programs, and "created environments" of allegorical significance. A finely balanced sense of the tragic and the comic weaves the dimensions of sound, image, and word. The multi-layered story that unfolds reveals religion's stake in the electronic media.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

Thursday, September 20, 1984:

THE FILMS OF KURT KREN -- With Kren in person

"Kubelka's reputation outside Europe is vast compared with that of his fellow Austrian Kurt Kren. But for European film-makers the work of Kren has had a more significant influence. Unlike Kubelka, who has spent much of his time in the U.S.A., Kren remained in Europe and has made films consistently since 1957, to date completing about thirty 16mm works. Again compared with Kubelka, his work is more involved and varied, initiating a wider variety of formal issues and basic philosophical questions. There are broadly three phases in his work. The first is highly systemic; the second, beginning about 1964, is no less formal, but works in relationship to the Material-Actions of Otto Muehl and Gunter Brus, bringing a new set of issues not easily relatable to his formal notions; and the third starts around 1967, where the formal notions are again dominant but often combined with a more expressive or provocative content. As his work continues to develop in tune with current directions, he should not simply be seen in his historical role."

--Malcolm Le Grice, Abstract Film and Beyond (1977)

PROGRAM:

- "3/60-Trees In Autumn", b&w, opt. sound, 5 min.
- "6/64-Mama and Papa (M.-A. Muehl)", color, sil., 4 min.
- "8/64-ANA(Action Brus)", b&w sil., 3 min.
- "10/65-67-Selfmutilation (Action Brus)", b&w sil., 6 min.
- "15/67-TV" b&w, sil., 5 min.
- "24/70-Western", col., sil., 3 min.
- "31/75-Asylum", col., sil., 9 min.
- "32/76-An W + B", col., sil., 7 min.
- "33/77-No Danube", col., sil., 9 min.
- "36/78-Rischart", col., sil., 3 min.
- "37/78-Tree Again", col., sil., 4 min.
- "38/79-Sentimental Punk", col., sil., 4 min.
- "39/81-Which Way To CA?", b&w, sil., 3 min.
- "40/81-Breakfast im Gr-uen", b&w, sil., 3 min.
- "41/82-Getting Warm", col., sil., 3 min.
- "42/83-No Film", b&w, sil., ½ min.

Discussion

- "16/67-September 20th", b&w, sil., 10 min.

Kurt Kren's original scores for many of the films shown tonight will be on display on the Lecture Hall walls.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE
The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

NEW FILMS BY WILLIE VARELA

September 27, 1984

Order of Program:

LIGHT JOURNALS 1-5	16mm, color, silent, 20 min.
NO LEFT TURN	Super 8, color, silent, 25 min.
Intermission	
PUSH PULL	Super 8, color, silent, 5 min.
FOREST LAWN	Super 8, B & W, sound, 3 min.
IN THE FLESH	Super 8, color, sound, 3 min.
THE PERFECT NINE	Super 8, B & W, sound, 3 min.
5TH & MARKET	Super 8, B & W, sound, 3 min.
LOSS OF NERVE	Super 8, B & W, sound, 3 min.
JAMES BROUGHTON	Super 8, color, sound, 7 min.
GEORGE KUCHAR	Super 8, color, sound, 7 min.

The LIGHT JOURNALS were shot and edited between 1976 and 1979. They were originally shot in Super 8 and later blown up to 16mm. These films are records of daily life observed and commented on, and are not meant to be seen as anything more - or less. Rather, the task of trying to enter into the flow of spontaneous events, into life as it exists in front of you, is a difficult one. The motivating force behind the making of this kind of film is to render the light that strikes objects and people in an interesting, engaging, and even compelling way. For me, the challenge in making this kind of film is to take material that is inherently very personal and would seem to concern only the maker, and elevate it into something that will have meaning to others. While the problems of working with sensuous, "beautiful" images (especially in today's artistic/political climate) might appear to be insurmountable, the opening up of daily experience seems to me to still be a worthwhile undertaking. In these films, the desire to investigate the world in order to create a new "world" on film was the overriding concern.

NO LEFT TURN is a Super 8 film that was shot in 1982 and part of 1983. It was made for the purpose of coming to grips visually with a new environment (in this case, San Francisco). I moved here from El Paso in the summer of 1982 and immediately began shooting film as a way to feel more at ease in a new place. Of course, I also initially found the city visually stimulating. However, as shooting progressed, I began asking myself if I was really learning anything about San Francisco just by shooting film of it. In a sense, I was still really just a tourist, and would remain so for a while longer. Gradually, I realized that I was shooting events that had meaning for me, but that somehow seemed to be more charged because of the new environment. NO LEFT TURN, then, is as much a film about me as it is about San Francisco. The surface has been scratched, with truth still an elusive goal.

In PUSH PULL, there is an attempt to define and extend the tensions that arise from juxtaposing abstract and representational images. The inspiration for this film came from the handpainted films of Stan Brakhage. However, what I tried to do here was to ground the film in that technique and then insert straightforward imagery to create a new wrinkle. FOREST LAWN is a deliberately vulgar and mocking gesture aimed at the antiseptic "packaging" of death that Forest Lawn cemetery stands for. IN THE FLESH is a film about the (dis)embodiment of erotic desire. By deliberately not showing faces but only parts of two bodies, the skin, hair, and the light that defines the contours of these bodies become the focus of the film, and a balance between the pornographic



and erotic imagination is attempted. In THE PERFECT NINE, a public event is scrutinized and subjectively recorded and commented upon. The occasion was a promotional appearance by Marine Jaman, the dancer and actress who did the dancing for Jennifer Beals in the movie "Flashdance". I attended this event at Macy's downtown more out of curiosity than anything else. I was interested in seeing how an individual who was largely responsible for the mammoth success of a commercial movie would cope with having to perform in a department store in order to promote a line of clothing, all because she was not credited in the film and therefore denied mass recognition. 5TH & MARKET is also a record of a public event, of a sort, in that the life that centers around the 5th and Market area downtown is as much a "spectacle" as the Macy's promotion, only the actors in this drama are not acting but simply living out their lives in a highly visible, "public" manner. The film is largely edited in the camera and the soundtrack is of a black woman preacher who is seen at the beginning of the film and again towards the end. LOSS OF NERVE is again a record of a public event, in this case a Mark Pauline performance that was held in September of 1983 as part of an urban art exhibition that was being sponsored by New Langton Arts, then 80 Langton. What initially attracted me to filming this "performance" of industrial machines was the highly sensationalistic manner in which Pauline and his associates at Survival Research Laboratories were promoting this event. Pauline had been hyping this event in the local press as a possibly dangerous happening, dangerous at least to the spectators. One especially provocative piece had appeared in the Music Calendar of Spet. '83 wherein Pauline had strongly hinted that anyone who attended this event might be in serious danger of getting hurt, and that he simply was not going to be responsible if anything went wrong. Admittedly I was attracted as much by the possibility and thrill of danger as being just plain curious. In the end, Pauline turned out to be just another poseur, a true "show biz" personality in that he had manipulated the media in such a skillful way only to mount a gratuitously menacing event, one in which he exerted such precise and complete control over his machines that very little was actually left to chance. In a piece that appeared in the Sunday Pink Section of this past June announcing yet another performance, Pauline admitted that he and his partners were in such control of their violent, menacing machines that nothing could possibly go wrong. The only thing he didn't say was that this was a show "for the whole family". Ironically, the film makes the event look more exciting than it really was. The last two films are portraits of James Broughton and George Kuchar, respectively. Poet/filmmaker James Broughton reads some recent poems and filmmaker George Kuchar relates various childhood traumas, including his obsession with the "lean people".

-----Willie Varela
September 1984

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

THE OTHER SIDE: EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE CINEMA --

1960-1980 - Program II

POLAND/YUGOSLAVIA

Text-Door (1974), 2 min., b/w; Tea-Spoon (1976), 2 min., b/w;
Match-Box (1975), 5 min., b/w--all by Wojciech Bruszewski

"What I do is nothing else than setting traps from what exists. I try to set the traps on the borderline of the 'spiritual' and the 'material', of 'what we know and think of' and 'what there is.'" (W.B. in Film as Film catalogue, 1979)

30 Sound Situations (1975), 10 min., b/w, by Ryszard Wasko

Wasko's 30 Sound Situations is precisely what its title tells us it will be. The film was shot in one day in Lodz, in March, 1975. The artist himself appears in each scene and claps two pieces of wood carefully in the same way in thirty different settings. Each clapping is conditioned by its surroundings--including other sounds and the position of the microphone--yet there are no dramatic peaks, no high points. The film and Wasko intentionally pass from one sound situation to another, presenting the viewer with an alternative way of constructing film.

Straight Line/Stevens-Duke (1964), 8 min., b/w; The Morning Of A Faun (1963), 8 min., b/w--by Tomislav Gotovac

Straight Line/Stevens-Duke was shot with a camera fixed on a tripod at the head of a tram, behind its driver. The camera's journey through Belgrade--past people, houses, trees, boulevards, cars and trucks--is repeated a number of times, as is Ellington's accompanying "Creole Love Call". The Morning Of A Faun consists of three scenes. The first is a long shot, taken from a fixed camera position, peering onto the terrace of a surgical ward of a hospital. Patients are seen resting, relaxing, in behaviour which looks eccentric and comic. In the film's second brief section, the camera zooms toward a plaster wall in need of repair. And in the last and longest scene, Gotovac films the intersection of a square--its small chapel, parked car, and streets--with a constantly zooming camera. If these three scenes seem enigmatic, Gotovac compounds this with his sound-track. As in other of his films, this one opens with the music of Glenn Miller and his big-band tunes. The terrace scene is accompanied by the sound-track from a section of Godard's Vivre Sa Vie. The cracked wall sequence is silent, while the treet scene incorporates part of the sound-track from Hollywood's The Time Machine.

THE OTHER SIDE: POLAND/YUGOSLAVIA

Forwards-Backwards Piano (1977), 18 min., color; Two Times In One Space (1976-79), 12 min., b/w--by Ivan Ladislav Galeta

Forwards-Backwards Piano is a delightful surprise in the way it takes classical music as material for an experiment in sound. Concert pianist Fred Dosek plays Chopin's Waltz #2, opus 64, at a grand piano four times. The first version is played and heard as written by Chopin. The other three are manipulated by pianist, filmmaker, or both. Prior to each playing, the version is announced in writing, e.g. the words "version 2", written backwards, signal that the piece will be filmed in reverse. Dosek presents an equally dignified performance with each manipulation of the Chopin, which makes all the more humorous the iconoclastic way Galeta subverts the romantic score.

Two Times In One Space is a domestic comedy which plays with film space. Galeta selected a segment of the 1969 film In The Kitchen, directed by Nikola Stojanovic, projected two identical prints, and superimposed them with a 240-frame, ten-second time delay between the two. As Galeta's film opens, the family is eating at a table. After ten seconds, the second 'layer' of images appears. The woman walks over and removes a white sheet from a doorway; the son and husband are preparing for bed; the wife prepares food; her husband awkwardly lends a hand. An erotic situation develops on the opposite balcony, followed by an apparent suicide. Finally, the husband pulls down a black shade. The film winds down to one layer of images and ends.

The House (1977), 8 min., color, by Radoslav Vladich

The protective spaces Vladich films are those of his own house with parents, wife and child. Each room in the house has its own character; each is handled on film in a different way. In "Mother's Room" we are given shots of a woman's hands sewing and of a man playing accordion. Family pictures are proudly displayed. A panning camera with short, jerking movements presents the sitting room, while the room where the child of the house sleeps is filmed from the floor. We are treated to close-ups of foods in the pantry and, finally, stills of the family which lead to the dining room. Seen through Vladich's camera, the house is presented as a warm and comforting place full of love.

The Other Side: European Avant-Garde Cinema 1960-1980 was curated by Regina Cornwell and sponsored by the American Federation of the Arts. Program notes were by Cornwell (Catalogues are available for \$3.00). Future programs in the series will be: West Germany (co-sponsored with the Goethe Institute), Nov. 1; Hungary, Nov. 4; France/Italy, Nov. 15. Five other programs from the initial series will be shown at the Pacific Film Archive (call 642-1412 for details).

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

THE OTHER SIDE:

EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE CINEMA, 1960-1980

PROGRAM III: WEST GERMANY

Lutz Mommartz: Selbstschusse (Self-Shooting), 1967, 7 minutes.

Self-Shooting parodies the preoccupation with the self-reflexive in cinema. Mommartz plays both subject and object. Holding his camera in every possible position, he shoots himself: above his head, in front of himself at arm's length, behind, below, at various awkward and distorting angles. He joins his camera antics with a potpourri of program music, to both heighten and lighten his parody.

Dore O. Nekes: Lawale, 1969, 30 minutes.

Lawale stands out as something of a departure from O's other films. The domestic air is here, but most of the film is shot in a bright, harsh, cold and extremely petit bourgeois home. The compositions tend to be angular, formal and tableau-like, the scenes dominated by women. Dore O herself is present, sometimes pushed to the side as she struggles for some kind of identity in this speechless atmosphere.

Vlado Kristl: Italienisches Capriccio, 1969, 30 minutes.

Kristl presents us with capricious events within the Italian landscape: a man, fully clothed, dives into the sea; people stop at the roadside to clean their car windows as "MILIT'A'R" appears, is spoken and sung; people appear to be listening hard, one man with an ear to the ground. Sound is distorted, and seems at times to run backward. The fully-clothed diver emerges from the water, undresses, neatly places his clothes on the sand, and lies beside them, then dresses and returns to the water. At one point, sounds of drilling drown out what needs to be heard. Near the end, someone speaking in German asks: "Are you in the military? Answer! Answer!" But no one does.

Klaus Wyborny: Dallas Texas--After the Goldrush, 1970/71, 35 minutes.

The hyphenated title actually represents two films, the first done in 1970 and the second in 1971. In the 35 minute screening, the two are divided by leader, separately titled, and repeated. Wyborny presents us with two narrative fragments which use the same location, but are shot at different angles and with different players (a small car backs partially into the frame, where it remains; a man is seen running toward a cabin; the door opens and we see, from extreme long shot, a man falling inside) from which the viewer infers a love triangle involving one woman and two men.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

THE OTHER SIDE: EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE CINEMA

1960-1980

PROGRAM V: FRANCE/ITALY

La Petite Fille (The Little Girl) by Pascal Auger, 1980, 11 min.

Pascal Auger is associated with the Paris Film Co-op, and his The Little Girl illustrates one kind of filmic research with which the group is identified. Her Auger plays with time through the vehicle of a child at play, manipulating real time for his own cinematic reconstruction of it. Auger edits the images of the little girl in the sand in short back-and-forth bursts of past and present motions, thus distorting her gestures. Each of the child's movements seems to be a struggle because of the exaggerations of the editing, but each is finally executed, and the little girl moves on to her next action. The process is then repeated, over and over.

Tosca by Dominique Noguez, 1978, 20 min.

For his film, Noguez takes part of the second act of Puccini's opera and works within a static frame, calling attention to the offscreen space in which action is implied via the use of arias from the opera. On the edges of a banquet table, we see a man's hands and occasionally, a woman's. Tosca, with back to camera, is pleading with Scarpia, who is eating and drinking. We never see their faces. Finally there is a scurry back and forth across the screen: Tosca has left with Scarpia in pursuit, yet the camera does not move or follow them. Later, they return: he is seen taking paper from the table, and Tosca's hand stealthily picks up the knife. There is a violent scuffle as the table moves while the camera remains still. The screen is black for a considerable time. Finally we glimpse light from a burning candle, and the film ends.

Der Brautigam, Die Komodiantin und Der Zuhalter (The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp) by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, 1968, 23 min, featuring Werner Fassbinder

The Bridegroom opens on graffiti on the wall of a Munich post office: "Stupid old Germany/I hate it over here/I hope I can go home soon/Patricia," over which are superimposed the credits, followed by a four-minute moving camera shot through Munich's red-light district at night, accompanied by a Bach oratorio. The second part is a Ferdinand Bruckner play, The Sickness of Youth, shot in a single take lasting ten minutes. The stark stage, which has a Mao quotation scrawled on its back wall and is filmed in long shot, is the scene of abrupt melodramatic entrances and exits. The third part, inspired by a newspaper article about a

romance between an ex-prostitute and a Black man, includes a chase, a wedding, recitations from John of the Cross, a murder, and more Bach.

La Verifica Incerta. by Gianfranco Baruchello, 1964, 45 min., with Alberto Griffi.

La Verifica Incerta is a witty montage made exclusively of several dozen Hollywood Cinemascope films which appear squeezed or elongated on the screen. Genres are mixed, chases mismatched as the film moves at a rapid pace, disorderly yet creating its own kind of order by relying on classical Hollywood film editing. What results is a kind of "creative geography" -- as Lev Kuleshov, Soviet director and one of the pioneers of montage, called it -- in which relationships that haven't previously existed can be constructed simply by juxtaposing strips of film.

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

FILMS OF BRUCE CONNER -- November 18, 1984

Television Assassination (8mm Installation), filmed in 1963 and 1964 on 16mm; final 100' film reduced to 8mm, and seven copies spliced head to tail on one reel.

Ten Second Film (1965), 16mm, 10 sec., b&w, silent

Permian Strata (1969), 16mm, 4 min., b&w, sound

Mongoloid (1978), 16mm, 4 min., b&w, sound

America Is Waiting (1981), 16mm, 3½min., b&w, sound

A Movie (1958), 16mm, 12 min., b&w, sound

Report (1963-1967), 16mm, 13 min., b&w, sound

Take The 5:10 To Dreamland (1976), 16mm, 5:10 min., b&w, sound

Valse Triste (1979), 16mm, 5 min., b&w, sound

Intermission

Breakaway (1966), 16mm, 5 min., b&w, sound

Vivian (1964), 16mm, 3 min., b&w, sound

The White Rose (1967), 16mm, 7 min., b&w, sound

Marilyn Times Five (1968-73), 16mm, 13 min., b&w, sound

Looking For Mushrooms (1960-1963), 100' 16mm original reduced to 8mm, projected at 5 f.p.s.

Easter Morning (1967), filmed in 8mm. "All of the multiple exposures and editing created in sequence on the original film. Only a few frames were removed before this final copy was made."--B.C. Projected at 5 f.p.s.

Music for the above two films is IN "C" by Terry Riley.

"Like dreams, Conner's films reawaken memories of past movie experiences, those films which form our sense of narrative expectation in film. The inexorable chase of A MOVIE, the incessant repetition of what we do not want to see in REPORT, the incomprehensible force of the Atomic Bomb in CROSSROADS, and the elusive feelings and logic conjured by the images of TAKE THE 5:10 TO DREAMLAND, are all structured as films dreaming about films. Their structure has the ineluctable logic of dreams as they rush elliptically to their conclusion. Finally Conner's films are his theory of the film experience, his montage is directed toward the material of film composition and the feeling of his (our) being possessed by the demon of film's past and the collective memory of its iconography (images)
--John Hanhardt

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

Saturday, December 1, 1984

Ken Jacobs' TOM, TOM, THE PIPER'S SON

16mm

115 min.

B&W/color

silent

1969

This is a mega-work of the American avant-garde cinema. In it, Jacobs broadens, resurrects and expands upon an ancient-early film, extracting from it form and life-potential such as only the rare artist can -- proving, as it is said, that it takes an artist to see (then make) a living art. From a playful black and white 1905 vintage Billy Bitzer film, wonderous passages are laid bare via Jacobs' magic use of re-framings, re-playings, re-photography. A present tense is opened that mines the "score" that was, here, the original brief film. Perhaps without realization consciously, Jacobs' divine sense of drama has given Tom true manner of autobiographic follow-throughs of love of detail. A lost animal (a pig) embodies here the living muse of one man's cinema, personally re-hatched and effervesced with complete adoration. Worlds within worlds are born of meaningful emulsion-grain vignettes and tapestries of the unexpected -- a celebration of the heroic "chase". The film's single color passage quietly blasts us in our seats.

- Gail Camhi

"Original 1905 film shot and probably directed by G. W. "Billy" Bitzer, rescued via a paper print filed for copyright purposes with the Library of Congress. It is most reverently examined here, absolutely loved, with a new movie, almost as a side effect, coming into being.

"Ghosts! Cine-recordings of the vivacious doings of persons long dead. The preservation of their memory ceases at the edges of the frame... The staging and cutting is pre-Griffith. Seven infinitely complex cine-tapestries comprise the original film, and the style is not primitive, not uncinematic but the cleanest, inspired indication of a path of cinematic development whose value has only recently been rediscovered. My camera closes in, only to better ascertain the infinite richness (playing with fate, taking advantage of the loop-character of all movies, recalling with variations some visual complexes again and again for particular savoring), searching out incongruities in the story-telling (a person, confused, suddenly looks out of an actor's face), delighting in the whole bizarre human phenomena of story-telling itself and this within the fantasy of reading any bygone time out of the visual crudities of film: dream within a dream!

"And then I wanted to show the actual present of film, just to begin to indicate its energy. A train of images passes like enough and different enough to imply to the mind that its eyes are seeing an arm lift, or a door close; I wanted to "bring to the surface" that multi-rhythmic collision-contesting of dark and light two-dimensional force-areas struggling edge to edge for identity of shape...to get into the amoebic grain pattern itself - a chemical dispersion pattern unique to each frame, each cold still...stirred to life by a successive 16-24 f.p.s. pattering on our retinas, the teeming energies elicited (the grains!) then collaborating, unknowingly and ironically, to form the always-poignant-because-always-past-illusion."

- Ken Jacobs

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SEX?" : Films from Canyon Cinema.

Thursday, December 6 1984. 8:00, S.F. Art Institute Auditorium.

The title for this program comes from the fact that sexually explicit avant-garde filmwork after 1976 is rare. In the days when Rob and Laura Petrie slept in separate beds, the avant-garde was one of the few places to see graphic sexuality treated with any intelligence. But as early as 1966 Andrew Sarris could claim that "relaxed censorship is depriving the avant-garde of its raison d'etre."

Now we have Joan Collins in Playboy, Miss America in Penthouse, every other TV movie is about incest or prostitution, and home video pornography is a booming business. As if in reaction, the avant-garde is looking pretty chaste.

There must be reasons for this. There is a welcome increase in awareness of sexual exploitation, for instance, and few people dare to be misunderstood in the arena of sexual politics. Exhibition venues have become more middle-class, many festivals rejecting work they feel to be unsuitable for the kiddies. But the avant-garde has usually ignored, or purposefully antagonized, such concerns. The question remains: whatever happened to sex?

Clues may be found in these films. They were chosen because they deal explicitly with sex (not eroticism), and/or because of their attendant commentary on male/female relationships. Two threads run through most of them.

One is obfuscation. All of them, in one way or another, employ distancing devices, shields behind which the artists hide. Three are animation works, two use found footage not of the artist's making, one secretly spies on people, and one isolates body parts, depersonalizing them. None has solved the problem of confronting sex head-on.

The second thread is that most of these films say less about sex than about the way media represents it. Despite changes in superficial attitudes, sex remains a highly personal and emotionally volatile activity. Rarely is it presented plainly, honestly, and without manipulation.

Perhaps the flurry of explicitness from 1970 to 1975 took this graphic-yet-distanced strategy as far as it could go. It may be that the next step - personal sexual films without obfuscation - requires more daring, and involves more risks, than most filmmakers and audiences are prepared for. We shall see.

Dangling Participle (1970) 18min, b&w, snd. By Standish Lawder. Culled from sex-education films of the 1950's, it is both hilarious and discomfiting. It shows the sexual education The Beaver was getting at school as Ward fondled June's pearls at home. In other words, it makes clear why a "sexual revolution" was inevitable.

Home on the Range (1973) 3min, col, snd. By Darrell Forney. An odd little work, anticipating video-projection "home entertain-

ment centers". A treat for dog lovers.

Near the Big Chakra (1972) 17min, col, sil. By Anne Severson. Contemplative shots of 37 female genitals, from babies to senior citizens. The casual aloofness of the film is fascinating, yet problematic, a condition giving it a charged presence. Though pudenda is what sexual difference is all about, one feels afterwards that the film has nothing to do with sex.

The Secrete of Life (1971) 15min, col, snd. By Victor Faccinto. Part II of Faccinto's "Video Vic" series, it is funny, mean-spirited, inventive and infuriating all at the same time. He has obvious psycho-sexual anxieties which he parades before us, his often horrified viewers-cum-analysts.

Keep Bright the Devil's Doorknob (1978) 5min, col, snd. By Richard Beveridge. As Brakhage did with autopsies in The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes, Beveridge does with pornography: he excerpts the most appalling and intense moments, out of context, and strings them together. It makes one long for Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler.

Crocus (1971) 7min, col, snd. By Suzan Pitt. As the married couple in this animated film are about to make love, their baby cries for a drink of water. The mother tends to it as the father pouts, and you wonder why more filmmakers don't show that sex is inseparable from the rest of life.

Voyeuristic Tendencies (1983) 17min, b&w, snd. By Dominic Angerame. Possibly the sexiest film in the program by virtue of what it doesn't portray, and a perfect sex film for the 1980's. We are teased, cajoled, lured and finally snubbed as we learn one possible answer to what has happened to sex: it has been subsumed in our society's current confusion between artifice and reality.

- James Irwin
Guest Curator

The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

BLACK-AMERICAN FOLK ARTISTS ON FILM
(FILMMAKERS WILL BE PRESENT)

THE ANGEL THAT STANDS BY ME (1983) Produced by Allie Light and Irving Saraf, 28 min.

Minnie Evans is the embodiment of the visionary artist. She is an 88-year old Black painter of Wilmington, North Carolina, who has created a world of mythic animals, religious symbols, and natural beauty. ANGEL... concludes Light and Saraf's series on American Folk Artists (Visions of Paradise). Each artist in the series was self taught, comes from a different ethnic background and began pursuing their art late in life.

Allie Light taught in the Woman's Studies department at San Francisco State and taught Screenwriting at both State and City College. She has been working in film for the last seven years. Irving Saraf headed the film department at KQED and worked at the Saul Zaentz Company for ten years where he designed their Film Center.

Light and Saraf have collaborated for the last ten years and have produced seven award winning documentaries. The two Bay Area filmmakers are currently developing a feature to be shot on location in the Four Corners area in Utah.

TCHUBA...MEANS RAIN (1981) Produced by Kathryn Golden and Ashley James, 12min.

An introductory film on Cape Verdean history and culture. The island archipelago nation is located 360 miles off the northwest coast of Africa. The film was funded by a grant from the Polaroid Foundation.

AMERICAN TREASURE: THE FOLK ART OF JOAQUIM MIGUEL ALMEIDA (1984) Produced by Kathryn Golden and Ashley James, 30min. PREMIERE

AMERICAN TREASURE... is a portrait of an extraordinary 86-year old artist, Joaquim Miguel Almeida. Yet, it also tells the story of a people (Cape-Verdean-Americans) as we look at Joaquim's art work and listen to his memories. Joaquim learned to carve the model whaling boats and packet vessels in Cape Verde. His art is inspired by the poetry and folklore of Cape-Verdean-Americans, the first black people to immigrate to the United States voluntarily. It was filmed entirely in the historic old whaling port of New Bedford, Massachusetts. American Treasure is a Film Arts Foundation sponsored project, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Council.

Kathryn Golden has produced three films: Majestic Theatre, Nightsplay, and The PASSIVE EARTH. She is currently collaborating with Ashley James at Searchlight Films on the next film in their Cape-Verdean-American series.

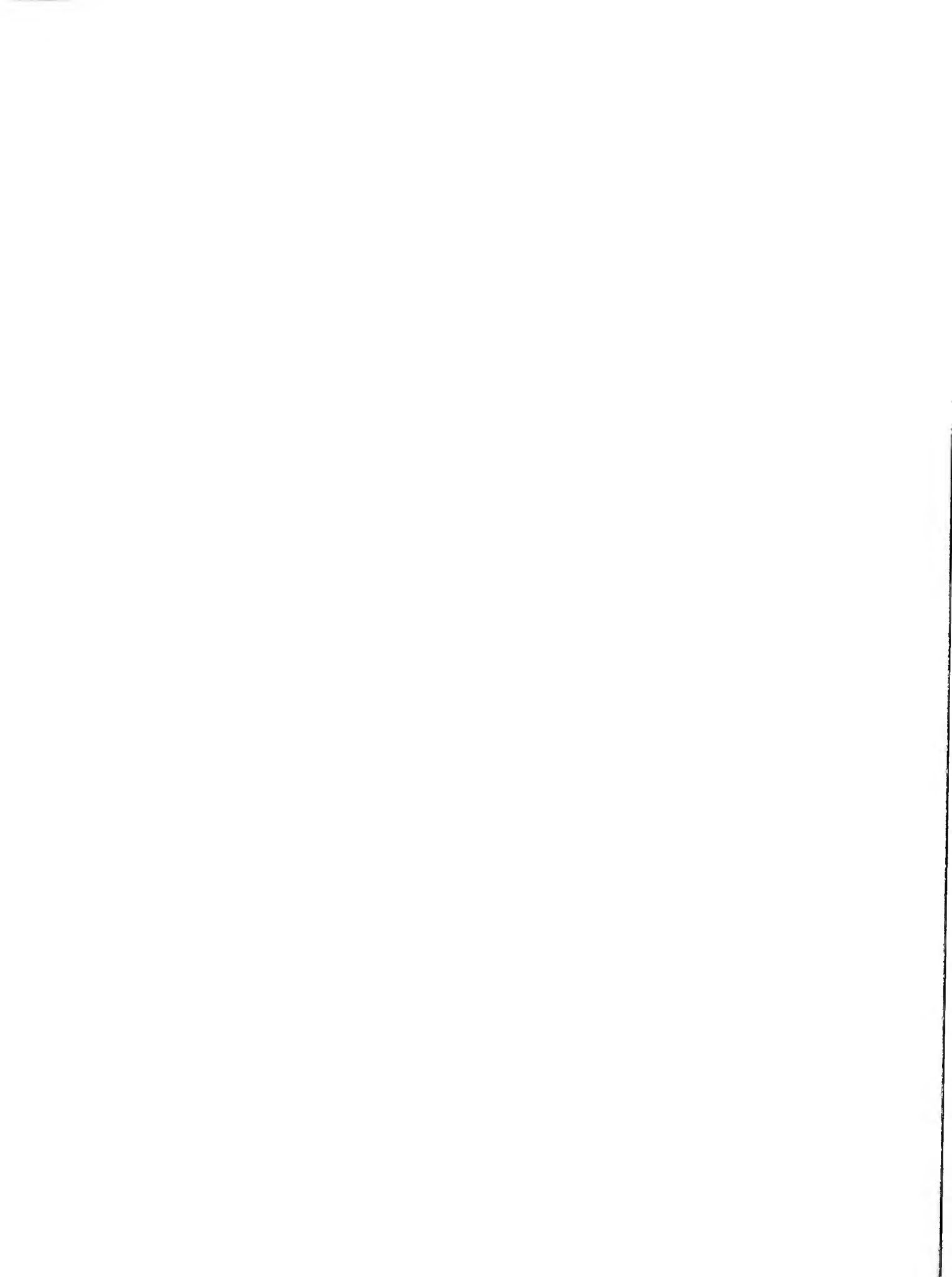
Ashley James is currently directing and producing The Vertigo Tour- a documentary on jazz pianist Ran Blake and his compositions for and fascination with Hitchcock's Vertigo. He is also directing a film on the late jazz musician Earl Fatha Hines. His past award winning credits include Booker, The Case of the Legless Veteran, Fade-Out, Zack, and Ancestors.



Film Arts Foundation

346 Ninth Street—Second Floor, San Francisco, California 94103

Administrative Offices 415-552-8760 • Editing Facility 415-552-6350



The Foundation for Art in Cinema

CINEMATHEQUE

The Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film

THE FILMS OF SAUL LEVINE -- Part 1

December 13th, 1984
Personal Appearance

Chicago Reds and Blues (1973) 16mm from S-8mm orig., 5¹/₂ min., color

A pun on communists and music, the title is the film. The words red and blue alternately flash on the upper and lower portions of the screen at variable intervals. When held on the screen, the word seems to become its color and in the end actually intercut with colored leader; when flashed intermittantly, both words appear to be on the screen simultaneously, making a strobe-like effect on the ceiling and the floor of the room. The minimal nature of the film seems to be a joke, a response to the simplistic demands to unite art and politics, form and content often made on politically active artists.

described by
Marjorie Keller

New Left Notes (1968-76) 16mm from regular 8mm orig., 28 min., color

We are given a unique viewpoint of an active participant (Saul was the editor of New Left Notes the SDS journal) in the civil rights movement. Two subjects take up most of the film 1) the protest rallies in numerous east coast locations, in particular centering on a young woman activist who functions as a catalyst for both public and private activities depicted, and 2) the film medium itself most apparent by the volatile attack on film editing via the very visible splice line bar between almost every other frame. A sort of fallout occurs from this visceral undermining of the medium in that we see grain patterns, color flicker, and flare outs as an integral part of the story-telling apparatus. It appears as if Levine wants us to see the unrest of the sixties as a call to the self-examination of not only our relationship to politics but most imperatively to ourselves. No conclusions are made, but observations and reflections combine into the "notes" format to make viewing the film an experience akin to pondering the philosopher's stone. We see, we experience, and we go onward, ever onward. Although the film was left unfinished, its release in 1983 (The concern of Marjorie Keller and Bill Brand who brought about the reg. 8mm to 16mm blowup and preservation of the film) strikes a most strident note as we as a nation face Ray Gun and all of the conservative death trip that he encompasses.

described by
Bruce Posner

Notes of an Early Fall (1976-77) S-8mm sound, 38 min., color

A film about displacement and if it seems as if I was obsessed with sound in making this film, I was! Using a single system S-8mm camera and a sound projector to edit, I solved the mystery of expanding the range of the material by counting up 18 frames when I'd make a cut (something I don't have too much trouble doing.) That no seasonal Fall is depicted is a clue as to how to read the film. In exploring the gaps, the holes of the material, spin offs were subject and object division, fall in the history of western philosophy, the discrepancy in light and sound waves... With my films I am seeking/finding new formal sophistication rooted in real attempts to illuminate the world.

comments made by
Saul after screening
San Francisco Art Inst
December 11th, 1984



The Big Stick (1968-72), 16mm from regular 8mm orig., 13¹/₂ min., black & white

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: WHO IS TELLING YOU WHAT TIME IT IS? THE BIG STICK A MOLECULE WHICH IS CERTAINLY ROBUST ENOUGH TO HANG AROUND FOR YEARS--RUSSIAN AMERICAN INTERCOURSE, CASUAL AND NECESSARY*-UNREACTIVE, UNPRODUCTIVE, AND LOADED WITH MALARIAL UNDERSTANDING PACKED FOR THE FUTURE, COMPLEX, SLOW IN BURSTING, FRIESHTED: BUT JUST NOW, IN THIS TROUGH OF EVENTS WAITING ALMOST IMMOBILE IN HISTORY, NOT GREASED TO SLIP TO THE BRAIN, NOT CLEAN IN SHAPE LIKE THE TRANSCENDENTAL WHIZZ KIDS, BUT TRUNCATED, DELICACY IN FURY, THE SHAPE OF A SKYLINE APPROACHING A BOMB CRATER. THERE ARE EXPLOSIONS ON THE HORIZON, THERE IS NO PLACE TO TURN. THE GUILLOTINES BEGIN TO SOUND LIKE MACHINE GUNS. THE MOTION PICTURING OF THE PAST MAY PAUSE FOR THE FORMAL, THE DRAMATICAL, OR THE RHETORICAL EMPHASIS, FOR REFLECTION, BUT NOT FOR THOSE HEADS AND BODIES TUMBLING THROUGH THE FRAMES LIKE GRAINS IN A BARREL. SAUL, YOU WERE SHOCKED THAT I WOULD WANT TO LOOK AT THE FILM FRAME BY FRAME, WITH THE EXHORTANT POWER TO ROAM, IN SOME STOPPED MOMENT, AFRAID MAYBE THAT THE ARCHITECTURE ERECTED IN THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FRAMES WOULD RATTLE DOWN TO SUFFOCATE ME IN PLASTIC DR__ (unclear Ed.) FILLING A SPACE ONTOLOGICALLY HURTLING IMMOBILE IN THE SKY AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE THE BODY AND CONTEMPLATE THE BLOW ABOUT TO LAND.

described by
Dan Barnett





The Foundation for Art in Cinema
CINEMATHEQUE

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde film.

THE FILMS OF SAUL LEVINE -- Part 2

December 15, 1984

The Notes are an expanding collection of nine films that move between their source in personal history and their manifestation in visual constructs. The material from which they come is the casual, daily activity of those around the filmmaker and the filmmaker himself, being filmed by a responsive, improvisational camera eye, educated in the "palette" of film emulsions. By their range of imagery, a sense that all the activity surrounding the filmmaker is potential art, not because of the privileged genius of the artist for living or seeing life, but out of the sense that there is no "lofty subject" - all life is worthy of consideration."

Marjorie Keller

Note One, 1967, 8mm, 6½ min. "As the only note entirely in B&W, Note One stands as the purest example of Levine's drive to sculpt simple light into an image. The figures of his parents emerge from the grainy darkness into the intimate space of home. The intensity of the grain fights the images and often overpowers them, making a shadowplay that lends an aura of the ephemeral to the figures themselves...The restive gaze of the camera, contemplating the Sabbath evening as the shawl is donned and the candles are lit, carries with it a reverence for the unmanipulated image-as-document that the later Notes bely. It is fitting as the first, illustrating the contextual and formal sources for the later films."

-Marjorie Keller

Note to Coleen, 1974, 8mm, 5 min. "...Perhaps Note to Coleen is an oracle, giving all answers to all questions, for to me it spoke of the meaning of language, the economics of millimeter, the ideology of image...the art fair throws into especial relief the problems of popular vs. elitist arts, the cul-de-sac of the filmmaker trying to be at once political and artistic revolutionary without incurring the wrath of comrades on either side."

-B. Ruby Rich

Not Even a Note, 1978, 2½ min.

On the Spot, 1973, 28 min.

Near Sight, 1977-78, 2 min.

Arrested: Breaking Time, Part 2, 1977-82, 8mm, 8 min. "While it is part of the series of films titled Breaking Time, this film evokes Levine's earlier series The Notes, especially Note to Pati. The silent poetry of winter and thaw, shovelling snow, people made large and small through the intercutting of close ups and



long shots, movement and stillness created through fast cutting - all are similar to strategies from his earlier work. In this film, a large Marlboro billboard with a running bull is used to further these themes by minisculizing the men who are painting it, and making metaphorical enlargements of houses, rivers, and even the reflection of the filmmaker himself." - Marjorie Keller

A Few Tunes Going Out: Part-1: Bopping the Great Wall of China Blue, 1979, S-8, 7 min.

Part 2: Groove to Groove, 1979, S-8, 12 min.

A Brennan Soll Columbusns Medina, 1984, 13 min.

"A Few Tunes Going Out is a set of meditations on the relationship of film to music. Levine is an ardent fan of American blues and jazz, and in these films combines a love of the wail of blues with the structure of avant-garde jazz. Both films play with the edge which joins and separates film and music. Translation, "bi-lingualism," and visual onomatopoeia are the motives that keep the interpenetrability of image and sound going.

"Bopping the Great Wall of China Blue is a triple portrait of the blues disc jockey May Kramer, the filmmaker Dan Barnett, and Levine himself. It is cut rapidly between May talking, Dan editing a film at a Steenbeck and "bopping" down the steps of the Great Wall while listening to a portable radio, and Saul delivering pasteries, smoking, and hack coughing. Shots of an astronaut floating in space, clouds, and Chinese women performing slow motion exercises expand the portraits' domains. The work of delivery and its required knocking on doors becomes music through the editing...The metaphorical unity of the characters of Levine's world, in which China is both "red" and "blue" (as Chicago was for him ten years earlier), is affirmed, as always, in the editing."

"Groove to Groove continues this kind of portraiture, concentrating on May Kramer and Levine, and develops the "bi-lingual" paradigm of film and music...Through the 18 frame disjunction between sound and image necessary in cutting single-system Super 8mm sound film, splices are made before we hear the sound of the splicer, voices are heard before we see the speaker. A series of jokes told in English and Yiddish about language and misunderstandings created by, in the first case, English and in the second instance, by the naming of Jewish holidays, affirms the film's themes of translation." - Marjorie Keller

Star Film, 1968-71, 15 min. Recently reprinted, this is a 1st answer print. "Repetition was a feature in the creation of the two other films shown. The first was an untitled work which Levine refers to as "the Star Film": it's a 16mm film in which handprinted stars are placed on a filmstrip that has been stained and tinted. The shifts in color and in resonance make the film particularly attractive: at times, as when green stains and stars appear on a pale pink tint, it is a ravishing visual experience."

-Daryl Chin

Soho Weekly News

