

INNIS FILM SOCIETY

2 SUSSEX AVE. TORONTO 978-7790 FOR INFORMATION

(FILM TAKES UP EMULSION SIDE OUT)

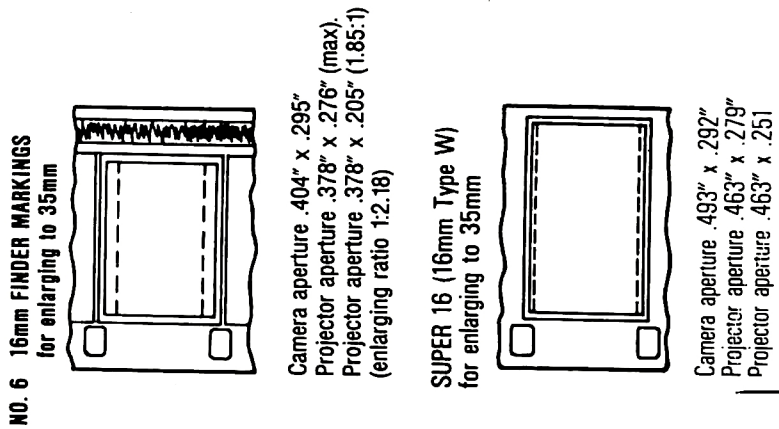
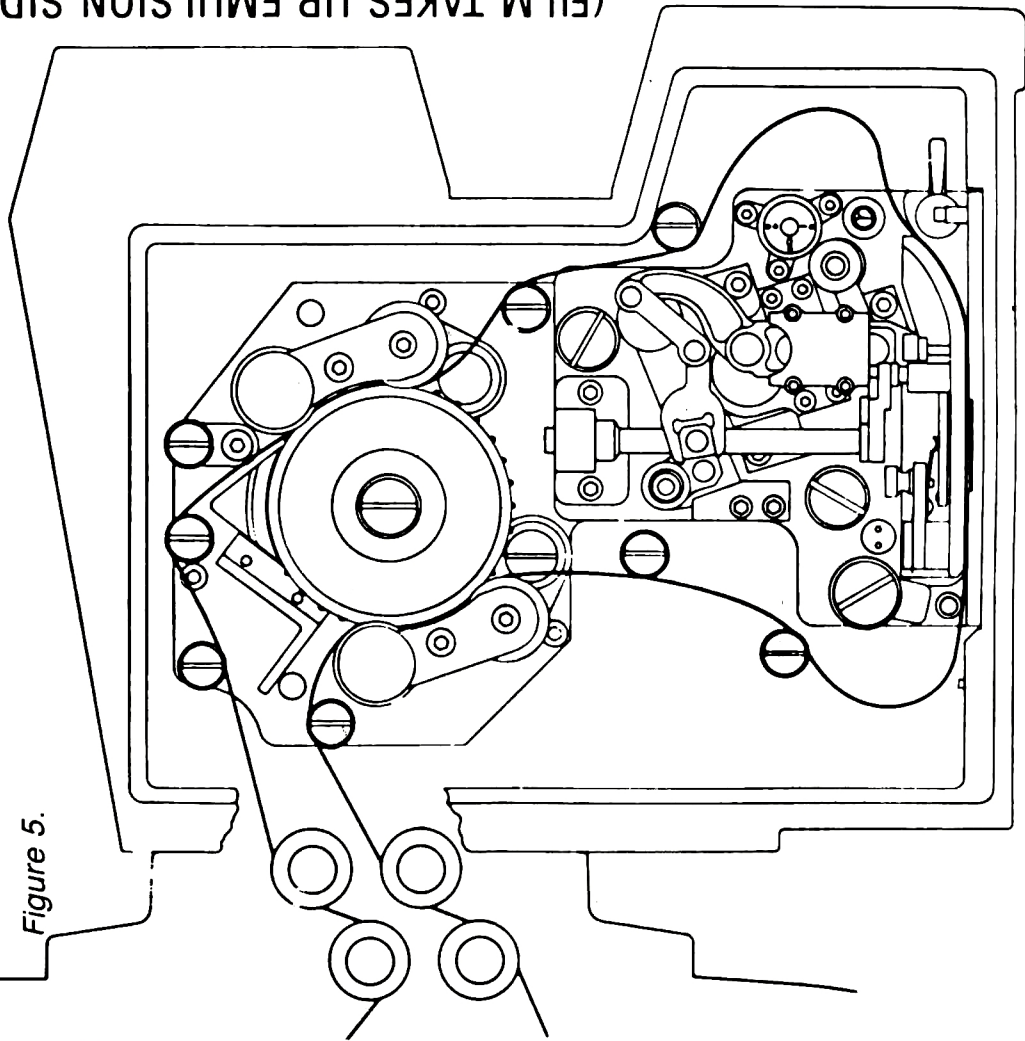


Figure 5.



FALL/WINTER 1991

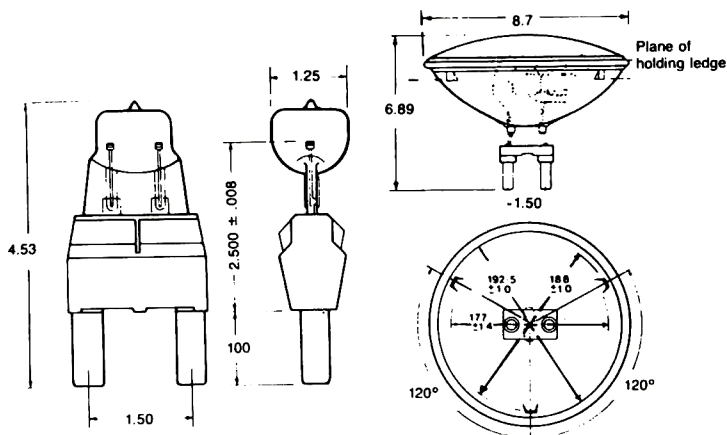
Dreyer

thursday, september 19, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, free

Day of Wrath, Carl-Theodor Dreyer, 1943, 105 min., b&w, sound, 16mm.

"No better term than 'circular' could be found to describe Dreyer's scenography in *Day of Wrath*. The film reminds us how Dreyer's films, from the start of his career, are intimately linked to that tradition of chamber art that includes Hammershoi and Vermeer. The director who compared cinema to architecture finds human-made space, especially the closed chamber, to be the primary site of action. Furthermore, in *Day of Wrath*, as in *Thou Shalt Honor Thy Wife*, the chamber is a familial space. After Jeanne d'Arc's cell, the monks' court, Léone's sickroom, the doctor's warehouse, Dreyer returns to the family parlor. The rectory parlour stands at the intersection of the family's activities: Anne's bedroom, Absalon's study, Merete's bedroom, and the corridor to the outdoors all give onto the rectory parlor. Topographically, the parlor is meeting place and microcosm for the family's social activities. [...] With its prayer stall, its windows looking onto nature, its staircase leading up to the loft, the parlor appears as an abbreviated anthology of several motifs in the plot. And in the course of the narrative, the parlor will function, progressively, as a setting for reunion, concealment, sexual intrigue, and murder; the last time we see it, it has become Absolon's crypt." (David Bordwell, *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer*)



Gallagher/Rimmer

thursday, september 26, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, \$3.00

Surfacing on the Thames, David Rimmer, 1970, 9 min., colour, silent, 16 f.p.s., 16mm.

"In this film five feet of found footage are expanded into nine meters through the use of freeze frames and dissolves which retard the original movement. The single image is of a barge on a river with the London skyline behind it and something else, something indecipherable, something that looks like a gunship in the foreground. As the barge passes this object, the increments of its movement are marked by particles of dust and scratches that literally 'surface on' each frame as it is fixed and then dissolved into the next one." (Catherine Russell, "Reproduction and Repetition of History: David Rimmer's Found Footage," *CineAction!*, Spring 1989.)

Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper, David Rimmer, 1970, 8.5 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

"Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper ... begins with a black and white shot of a woman lifting a huge piece of cellophane in a factory. The brief moment is repeated on a loop, while the graphic components of the image are repeated in variations of rephotography and solarization." (Russell, *op. cit.*)

"Variations begins with a shot of a woman worker unrolling a large heavy sheet of cellophane before the camera in a most mechanical movement. In the course of the opening eight-second sequence the sheet unfurls to its full length in a brisk succession of undulating waves. The fine gradations of grey tone in the original shot progressively dissolve into high contrast, over-exposed, solid black and white areas. The very next sequence is shown in negative images. Eventually the representational forms are reduced into simple black and white patterns. As the tempo of the film increases the patterns themselves give way to nervous flickering dots and dashes and colour is introduced. Throughout each of the successively attenuated variations the dominant rhythms of the fluttering wave of the unfolding sheet remain present. It is almost as

if the rhythm has become part of us, in us. While the visual images virtually disintegrate into a staccato blur before our eyes, it is this dominant rhythmic undercurrent which gives the film its palpable, very real, cohesion." (Walter Klepac, *Mind & Matter*)

Atmosphere, Chris Gallagher, 1979, 10 min., b&w & colour, sound, 16mm.

The Nine-O'Clock Gun, Chris Gallagher, 1980, 8 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Seeing in the Rain, Chris Gallagher, 1981, 10 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Terminal City, Chris Gallagher, 1981, 10 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Mirage, Chris Gallagher, 1983, 7 min., colour, sound, 16mm

"Like many Canadian experimental filmmakers, Gallagher shares a basic concern for issues of representation, [and] for the relation between the film image and the world. In fact, Gallagher's best work is characterized by a restraint which evacuates his own mediation in order to forge a more 'direct' connection between the world represented and the viewer. Instead of assertive editing and image manipulation, many of Gallagher's films favour rigorous attention to a priori temporal and graphic structures which allow the camera to capture moments of intense beauty, and often, the grotesque. *Atmosphere* [...] posits a radical draining of the artists ego. The film, a single 10 minute irregular back and forth pan of costal landscape, is directed by nature: the final shot reveals that the movement of the camera is controlled by a wind-vane. The film is obviously related to Michael Snow's ↔ (in its camera movement) and *La région centrale* (there is no one behind or in front of the camera) and can be thought of in terms of Bruce Elder's thesis on the centrality of the photographic [image] to Canadian experimental film. [...] In *The Nine O'Clock Gun*, a scene in Vancouver's Stanley Park centres on an enigmatic device in the middle of the frame, the gun of the title, whose firing forms the central event of the film. *Terminal City* records the demolition of the Devonshire Hotel in Vancouver; through extreme slow-motion (200 frames per second) and symmetrical diagonal framing, Gallagher underscores the passage from order to chaos within the event. The spareness of this centring and the patience required of the viewer heightens the literally explosive climaxes of the films, and transforms the everyday violence of the events into moments of convulsive beauty. [...] *Seeing in the Rain* and *Mirage* synthesize the two tendencies in Gallagher's work of extended image manipulation by the filmmaker and a more passive approach to the camera's image creation.

"[*Mirage*] is grounded in one visual loop (a native Hawaiian woman taking off her sarong and dancing nude for the camera) and one sound loop (Elvis Presley singing 'Dreams come true/in Blue Hawaii'). Superimposed over the central image is a sequence of ten different (apparently) found footage segments: goldfish under the reflective surface of water; surfers; a Hawaiian man digging out a canoe; a "Welcome to Hawaii" tableaux of hula dancers; black and white Pearl Harbor footage of Japanese bombers (intercut at one point by a colour aerial shot of the islands); a hand-held shot of totem poles; volcanic eruption; flowing lava; all ending with a man opening a hotel door and looking out over a balcony. The movement inscribed by this sequence is an obvious (and ironic) sexual metaphor replete with phallic imagery, 'climaxing' in the volcanic eruption (whose crevasses and spout resemble sexual organs)." (Jim Shedden and Mike Zryd, *The Independent Eye*, CFMDC)

Canadian Pacific I & II, David Rimmer, 1970, 9 min., colour, silent, twin-screen, 16 f.p.s., 16mm.

"If any one film could be taken as emblematic of a Canadian landscape cinema, it would be *Canadian Pacific*. Through a deceptively plain structure, the film opposes the technological and the natural world in a manner typical of Canadian culture's response to the landscape." (Bart Testa, *Spirit in the Landscape*, AGO)

venues

innis town hall: 2 Sussex Avenue (enter from St. George St., one block south of Bloor)

cinecycle: 317 Spadina Avenue (enter from alley east of Spadina, south of Baldwin)

john spotton theatre: National Film Board, 150 John Street (at Richmond, one street south of Queen)

jackman hall: Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street West (enter from McCaul Street doors)

Chambers x 4

thursday, october 3, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, free

"1) Perception is the instant intake of Real energy from objects in the outside world. 2) Experience is the record of that in-take on the nervous system and then the process of substantiation of the energy input by the mind into the object 'tree.' 3) Description is an accurate memory object (colour foto) of the experience to replace invention and style. Style was the hallmark, necessarily, of all painted realisms before the modern (camera and) colour foto. Without the facsimile, they had to try to piece together what they saw by notes and human memory. Style was the result..." (Jack Chambers)

Mosaic, 1964-5, 9 min., b&w, sound, 16mm.

Chambers' first film anticipates many of the concerns of his later more monumental works *Circle* and *Hart of London*, namely the cycle of birth and death, creation and disintegration.

"There is a familiar narrative present in *Mosaic*.... That familiar narrative strung out in images like clothes on a line would look something like this: Olga on the back step taking in the laundry from the line; Olga visiting the doctor's office; Olga at the baby shower; Olga having contractions in the front seat of the Volkswagen; Olga feeding her baby. Strung out this way, the familiar narrative is as insistently and expectedly there as the arrangement of snapshots in the wedding or baby album. To turn the pages is to see what does not even require the turning; it is there as an illusion, drawing the viewer away from himself by placing him in someone else's fiction so numbing is its effect that it barely reminds him of his own. Indeed, it is the very 'false life plot' -- 'safe job' and 'proper living' -- from which Chambers has fled in seeking out for what would become Spain. That 'plot' is there, as indeed it is there for everyone. Chambers' task was to dismantle it and put it together again in a form that was uniquely his own. The film is an attempt to remain true to himself while apparently settling down to what would obviously appear to be, or become, a perfectly conventional, middle-class, North London, Lombardo Street life." (Ross Woodman)

Hybrid, 1966, 14 min., b&w & colour, silent, 16mm.

"The Vietnam war was very upsetting to me: I did not agree with the American presence in Vietnam. I thought that a film showing some of the tragic aspects of war would serve as a useful tool for fund-raising." (Jack Chambers)

R-34, 1967, 30 min., colour, sound (by Nihilist Spasm Band), 16mm.

"*R-34* is the greatest film on the creative process I've yet seen." (Stan Brakhage)

"...I was finishing a film on Greg Curnoe called *R-34*. It was a kind of self-expressive documentary about someone else. Greg was one of the three or four artists in London who had a studio in 1967 and devoted all his time to painting and other related things. When I left London in the fifties no one was painting full-time. Greg was apparently the first one to do so in London, and when I returned in 1961 he was the only artist with a studio of his own." (Jack Chambers)

Circle, 1968-9, 28 min., b&w & colour, silent and sound, 16mm.

"Film [...] truly is a construction in light -- and one that, as Bazin stated, does not demand the intervention of a maker. The cinema therefore was an ideal form for Chambers to pursue his program of perceptual realism, for in it he could honestly and fully embody his Luminist convictions. There is another reason why Chambers turned to cinema at this time. The concept of perception upon which his theory of perceptual realism holds that the act of perception is a synthetic one and that in the act of perception a number of discrete elements are joined together in a luminous moment of insight. This understanding of the nature of perception provides some of the ideas that structure his film *Circle*." (Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity*)

A Toronto Arts Week event.

1991 Oberhausen Winners

thursday, october 10, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, \$3.00

Tod des Stalinismus, Jan Svankmajer, Czechoslovakia, 1990, 8 min., 35mm.

Zehn Minuten vor dem Flug des Ikarus, Litauen, Arunas Matelia, USSR, 1990, 10 min., 35mm.

Westchnienie, Maria F. Warsinski, Poland, 1990, 17 min., 35mm.

5/4, Ivan Maksimov, USSR, 1990, 7 min., 35mm.

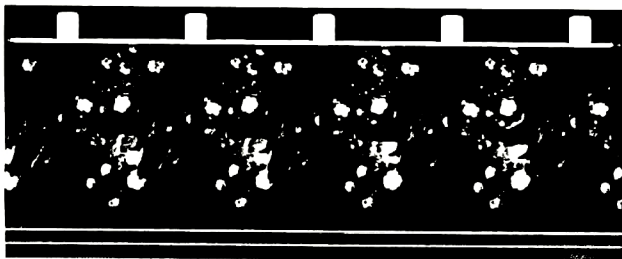
The Comb, Brothers Quay, Great Britain, 1990, 18 min., 35mm.

Grabowski (Maus des Lebens), Mariola Brillowska, East Germany, 1990, 20 min., 35mm.

Und da soll einer eagen, in der Schweiz ändert sich nichts, Joachim Spiess, Markus Wolff, Christoph Frick, Switzerland, 1991, 5 min., 16mm.

Don't be afraid, Vera Neubauer, Great Britain, 1990, 28 min., 16mm.

Films will be introduced by Ms Angela Haardt, director of the Oberhausen Short Film Festival. This evening co-presented with the Goethe-Institut Toronto.



Warren Sonbert, Back by Popular Demand

thursday, october 17, 1991

cinecycle, 7:00 pm, \$3:00

Friendly Witness, 1989, 32 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

"The first thing one notices about *Friendly Witness* is that not only is there no dramatic narrative, but there is no continuity in space or time. Sonbert cuts effortlessly across several continents and several decades, juxtaposing footage of parades, circuses, cathedrals, cities, natural settings, couples, people alone. If there is one central principle operating in his editing, it is that each cut pulls the viewer away from an image just when one is becoming most involved with it. Since the image that follows is almost invariably very different, one feels the film as a perpetual pulling away or tearing apart. That Sonbert is quite conscious of this is apparent in his remarks to an interviewer: 'My cuts are almost like slaps in the face -- you get one reality, but then, no, this next scene cancels it, trumps it, by another kind of reality...yanking you away from it before you can actually be satisfied.'" (Fred Camper)

Short Fuse, 1991, 37 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Warren Sonbert, one of the more enthusiastically received guests of the Film Society in 1990, returns to Toronto with his latest film which works in a similar aesthetic and thematic vein as *Friendly Witness*, with images "cancelling" one another, shifts from care-free playful imagery to that of military and police footage. Sonbert will be present to introduce films and answer questions at this, our first screening at the already famous, funky CineCycle.

Bruce Elder I

friday, october 18, 1991

john spotton theatre, 9:30 pm, \$4:00

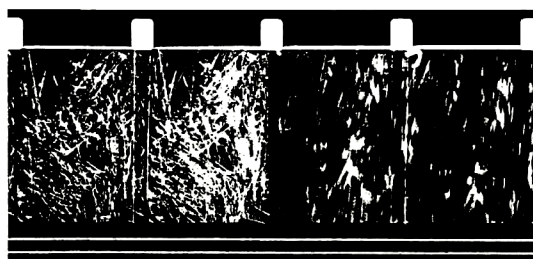
Flesh Angels, 1991, 113 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Elder's *Flesh Angels* resumes a large multi-film cycle, called *The Book of All the Dead*, he has been working on since the late Seventies and that has earned Elder the reputation as one of Canada's leading avant-garde filmmakers. The theme of these films was the Blakean descent from innocent paradise to experience and dread. *Flesh Angels* resumes the theme but the film also marks a major departure for Elder into a glittering high-tech style.

Consolations (1988) suggested some stage of synthesis. *Flesh Angels* now shows that the film was just a purgatorial step, and it is modelled consciously on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Sharply adjusting his approach, Elder gives up the percussive cutting and elaborate over-titling that were previous stylistic signatures in favour of sensual and luxuriant textures.

Elder associates *Flesh Angels* with De Stijl, the Twenties art movement led by Mondrian that sought cosmological meaning in the purity of mathematics applied to painting and architecture. Elder updates this mathematic structuring using the latest image technology and exotic new computer mathematics like fractals and cellular automata and rhyming these with Dante's medieval cosmology. The result is a heady blend of the high-tech and the antique and *Flesh Angels* is an extraordinarily opulent and technically advanced work that dazzles the eye. (Bart Testa)

Co-presented with the National Film Board. Elder will be present to introduce film.



Seated Figures, 1988 by Michael Snow

Carl Brown

saturday, october 19, 1991

john spotton theatre, 7:30 pm, \$4:00

Condensation of Sensation, 1987, 73 min., colour, sound (by CCMC), 16mm.

The first in a three-part look at the work of Toronto's Carl Brown, co-presented with the National Film Board. Brown will be present to introduce film.

saturday, october 19, 1991

john spotton theatre, 9:30 pm, \$4:00

Full Moon Darkness, 1985, 90 min., b&w, sound (by Randy Smith), 16mm.

The second in a three-part look at the work of Toronto's Carl Brown, co-presented with the National Film Board. Brown will be present to introduce film. Images by Steve Sanguedolce.

"Frankly inspired by Psychiatrist Thomas Szasz's maverick work, *The Myth of Mental Illness*, Canadian filmmaker Carl Brown's film juxtaposes Szasz's indictment of the abusive powers of his profession with interviews with several patients who 'survived' their treatment. The film is hardly a straightforward documentary, however. Brown and his cinematographer Steven Sanguedolce have created a disorienting experience for the viewer by turning the camera into a nervous -- and nervy -- instrument of investigation and observation. Boldly zooming in to extreme close-ups of one fidgety survivor, it travels at first haltingly and then rapidly and repeatedly past another sitting on a park bench. In a third case, it focuses on the ruins of a building while we hear a woman's voice on the soundtrack. The result is disturbing as the film both challenges institutionalized psychiatry, while it also reflects the otherness of the 'victim,' whose inner world remains an unknowable, discomfiting place." (Tony Pipolo, Anthology Film Archives program notes)

Carl Brown

thursday, october 24, 1991

cinecycle, 7:00 pm, \$3:00

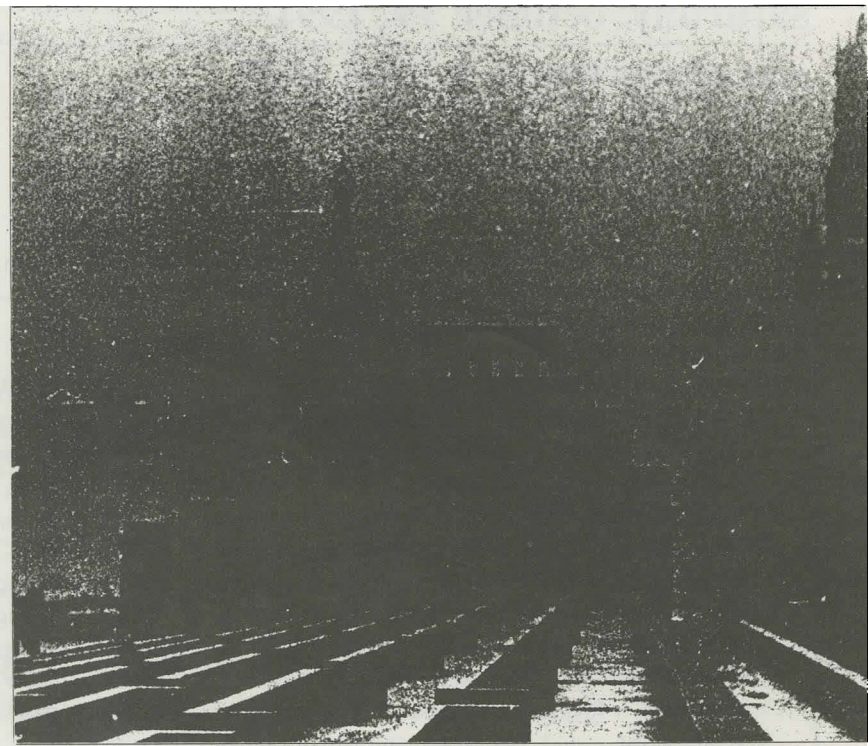
Cloister, 1990, 31 min., b&w, sound (by Michael Snow and John Kamevar), 16mm.

As the wheel turns, the religion of the body moves to and through the physical into psychological. We see the feared, all is moved. There is a hint of seclusion, an idea from the past re-wored and still dangerous. The participants unsure choose for a convent and are still revealed. Through a window there appears a tree, and then a forest. Too many options. The monastic life, safe and sure. We cluster for the cloister.

Re:Entry, 1990, 68 min., colour, sound (by Kaiser Nietzsche), 16mm.

"The images are flowing and layered: a swimmer in a pool, a rushing stream, tall conifers against a close horizon, a heron stalking in water, cars and a clapboard house, a raging fire... Images often return, re-coloured or re-edited, relentless. The sound is also active, layers of voices and machinery whines, a passing helicopter, long drones and hums, a rising aggression. Spoken texts underlie or cover over other "noise": a male voice reading "relaxation" exercises, phone-in radio conversation, an extended confession ("I killed my mother and father ..."). Sound is never synchronous with image, whose brilliant tints are created by Brown himself as he processes and prints the footage. This is an artist who "lives" his work, his personal history surfacing in both images and textures. As film, *Re:Entry* could hardly be more pure. A story in light and colour and movement, it becomes an extended essay on change wrought through time, through chemistry, through experience. It shows memory tattered but obsessive, a recurring drift of thought and allusion. Though much of the imagery is based in nature, the audio is distinctly urban: nervous, speedy and full of aural debris. *Re:Entry* qualifies and characterizes the materiality and physicality of cinematic experience. Conscious of both its antecedents and its present context, this is radical work." (Peggy Gale, Bial de la Imagen en Movimiento 90, Centra de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain, 1990)

Most film artists historically have seized upon the issues of the lens and the cut (or camera movement) as the basis of their aesthetics. Instead, Brown attends to the moment between shooting and editing: the development and the printing of the image. Treating the shot image as a canvas-like terrain Brown subjects these to variations attained by manipulating emulsions. Because the effects look very painterly, *Re:Entry* recalls some of Stan Brakhage's films in basic appearance and Brakhage's influence on Brown is sometimes obvious, particularly with respect to the rhythms of his montage. But *Re:Entry* is really a liquid cinema while Brakhage's is a cinema of light. On the path that Man Ray pioneered in the Twenties, Brown makes films from what the heats and colds, the chemicals and the light-gouges together create in the cinema's surface. Brown treats them like the play of sensations on the skin of his art. (Bart Testa)



Lenin's tomb: *Three Songs of Lenin*

Richard Kerr in Person with his Films

thursday, october 31, 1991

cinecycle, 7:00 pm, \$3:00

Regina-based filmmaker Kerr, an expatriate Torontonion, returns to Toronto for an all-new programme of work.

Cruel Rhythm, 1991, 40 min., colour/b&w, sound, 16mm.

Cruel Rhythm picks up from the ashes of *Last Days of Contrition* (1988). Like *Contrition*, *Cruel Rhythm* speculates on an America of the not too distant future. The film starts in the midst of the Big Fire shot on location in Los Vegas, the Mojave Desert and Los Angeles. The film is a study in the rhythms of a demoralized 'nation of followers' detached from the 'dream' and just hanging onto their souls. The soundtrack articulates the conscience of America around the time of the 'Mother of all Battles,' the Gulf War.

The Machine in the Garden, 1991, 20 min., colour, sound. 16mm.

With a specially designed 'spinning turret device' mounted on a moving vehicle, Kerr roams the byways of Beverly Hills and Malibu, creating an image structure that attempts to break down Renaissance perspective. This work is inspired by Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*.

Plein Air Etude #1, 1991, 20 min., colour/b&w, silent, 16mm.

This abstract travelogue documents a journey through the Canadian Shield of Northern Ontario. This is the first work employing the 'spinning turret device.' *Plein Air* is a continuation of Kerr's fascination with landscape cinema. Inspired by Stan Brakhage's essay on Canadian landscape art, *Space as Menace* (unpublished).

Jerome Hill's *Film Portrait*

thursday, november 7, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, \$3.00

Film Portrait, 1970, 80.5 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

"Jerome Hill's film *Film Portrait* is one of the key works in the comparatively new genre of the diary film, the autobiographical film. It's a genre of film where the author works basically with the footage that comes from close around his own life. By means of this footage, he leads us into the period of the class from which he comes, or into his own ideas. In this particular case, among many other things, through the *Film Portrait*, Jerome Hill leads us into a social background that is not only very uniquely American but which also is about the least documented in cinema -- at least not as genuinely as Jerome Hill does it in his film: the life, the feeling, and the style of the well-to-do American class at the beginning of the century. Specifically, the film deals with the family of James J. Hill, the family that built the railroads of America, and the development of Jerome Hill himself as a Young Man and an Artist. Since the period dealt with in this film coincides with the development of Cinema as a Young Art, and the development of the Avantgarde Film as a form of cinema, *Film Portrait* becomes also a film about the art of cinema and a film about the Avantgarde Film...It's about the liberation of an artist from the bonds of his family, his class, the fashionable art styles, and one thousand other bonds: a liberation through cinema..." (Jonas Mekas)

"He unfolds them, he fakes them, reanimates them, he daubs them with paint, mocks them, and glorifies them in a carousel of visual experience, from collage to animated gouache. It is a truly Proustian recreation of the crazy Franco-American years from Tiffany to Fitzgerald, and then, a reflection on the role of cinema. Hill defines superbly the art of the 'editor': on his left the future, on his right the past, in the center the present of the imagination." (*Le Point*, Paris)

Alain Fleischer in Person with his Films.

thursday, november 14, 1991

cinecycle, 7:00 pm, \$3:00

Fleischer is a multi-media artist working in Rome and Paris and will be visiting Canada on a Canada Council Visiting Foreign Artist Grant to create an installation at Optica in Montréal. Fleischer's programme for the Film Society will consist of three personal, experimental documentaries on the visual arts.

L'Art d'exposer, 1984, 45 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

On the Musée Condé in Chantilly.

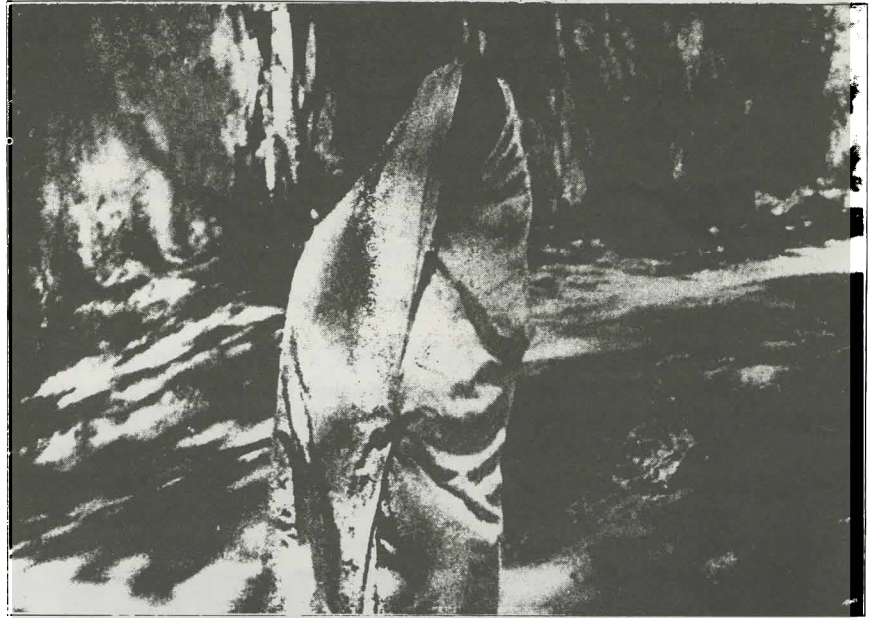
A la recherche de Christian B., 1989, 42 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

"Christian Boltanski is one of the greatest contemporary French artists, known the world over. The narrator, who once knew Boltanski, attempts to reassemble the images of a friend he hasn't seen in twenty years. This is the starting point for a kind of investigation in which documents of varying sources are thrown into the file. Recognized and accredited works are combined with other images. The common thread of each sequence is the cumulative effect of lives, beings, events, news items, objects, traces. If the presence of the artist can be found among them, it is only to designate the content of the world as the sole source of inspiration." (Festival of Films on Art, Montreal, 1990)

Un Monde parallèle, 1989, 14 min., colour, sound, 35mm.

On the Grand Gallery of the Louvre. Also, three short films, each 100 seconds, on three tableaux in the Louvre.

reductive ontology of the medium based on the simple principle of oppositional exclusion. In essence, Snow's strategies were based on the fundamental principle of non-exclusion. He demanded the right to use both representation [sic] and abstract imagery; his work employs both 'illusionistic' devices and devices which emphasize the objecthood of a work of art. Thus, while modernist art was clearly based on principles the effect of which was to exclude certain characteristics from painting, sculpture, etc., Snow has worked systematically to re-instate those features into each of these media as he proceeded to work in each in turn and to revise it using those features to balance the features which modernist art included. But, in a sense he has worked them to devise a kind of art work which could also conform to the ideals of modernism - other than its principle of exclusion. In a sense, with ↔ as the double-arrow title indicates, he has wanted to have it both ways - modernist and otherwise." (R. Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity*)



Three Songs of Lenin

Michael Snow's ↔

thursday, november 21, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, \$3.00

↔ (**Back and Forth**), 1968-9, 50 min, colour, sound, 16mm.

"Like Wavelength, the organizing principle of Michael Snow's ↔ derives from a single sort of camera movement and that movement's relation to architectural space and human actions. But the structure of is not as linear as Wavelength's nor does it make such an investment in directionality. It is much more concerned with reversals and repetitions. [...] The major variable in ↔ is the rate of the panning. When the film commences, the camera is panned at a moderate rate. Throughout the early part of the film, the panning slows down until it reaches a very slow pace, and from then on (at least for the most part, though there are some local variations on the pattern) the rate of panning speeds up to the point where, about 1000 feet (that is 28 minutes) into the film, the windows appear as a mere streak, then, by about 200 feet (five and one half minutes) later, the contents of the frame appear merely as a blur of colour and light. At first this abstraction appears as geometric shapes travelling across the screen, but as the speeding up continues, even these geometric figures dissolve into blurred streaks. At this point, colour asserts itself above form, so that the forms of objects represented are transfigured into pastel blues and pinks. [...] Snow's use of the visual sign ↔ rather than a verbal one for the title of his film seems calculated to elude that singularity, that lack of ambiguity, typical of a verbal construct — or at least any verbal construct which is referential rather than poetic in nature. The strategy is to use a diagram of the film's action for the title. Despite its referentiality, that diagram (especially when considered in relation to film) conjures up many thoughts - movement, activity, energy, rhythmical oscillation, flatness of the picture plane, a non-narrative, non-teleological structure (since the arrow points in both directions rather than simply ahead) and the correlative idea of an accretionary modular construction as well as the idea of the balancing of opposites or, more precisely, of complementary pairs. [...]

"It is within this context [the theory of modernist art] that the radical nature of Snow's work becomes almost obvious. In common with other artists formulating that art which is now commonly referred to as postmodernist, Snow's work involves a repudiation of the modernist ideas of 'purity' and 'essentiality' as well as the aspiration to construct a

Bruce Elder II

sunday, november 24, 1991

john spotton theatre, 8:00 pm, \$4:00

Newton and Me, 1991, 117 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

"Anxious questions about the legacy of possibly the greatest genius England has produced (his obvious near rival being Shakespeare). Yet his anti-trinitarianism represents a rejection of the mystery of the incarnation. Moreover his philosophy is a study in a natural magic, a discipline devoted to the inquiry into occult powers. It is, in the end, a version of gnosticism; and gnosticism identifies knowledge with mastery. Is the idea that humans become godlike by acquiring understanding of the Divine Order blasphemy -- and the source of our technological hubris? What knowledge is it proper for humans to possess?

We have all heard that Newton's science reduced matter to a dull affair, soundless, scentless and colourless -- merely the scurrying about of particles of brute matter. But was it Newton's gnostic disposition that is responsible for the disenchantment of the material world -- and for the arrogance that human subjectivity endows phenomenal reality with its sensuous beauty? Is this conception of reality responsible for moderns' contempt for flesh and matter?

These are the hard questions Newton's legacy poses. Perhaps Blake was correct in this matter as well:

Reasons says 'Miracle'; Newton says 'Doubt'

Aye, that's the way to make all Nature out.

Then again, the great modern saint Simone Weil inclined towards gnosticism." (R. Bruce Elder)

Co-presented with the National Film Board. Elder will be present to introduce the film.

Dziga Vertov: Four Neglected Films

thursday, november 28, 1991

art gallery of ontario, jackman hall, 7:00 pm, \$5:00

Forward, Soviet! (The Moscow Soviet: Past, Present, and Future), 1926, 73 min., b&w, silent, 16mm.

friday, november 29, 1991

art gallery of ontario, jackman hall, 7:00 pm, \$5:00

A Sixth of the World (Kino-Eye's Travels through the USSR), 1926, 74 min., b&w, silent, 16mm.

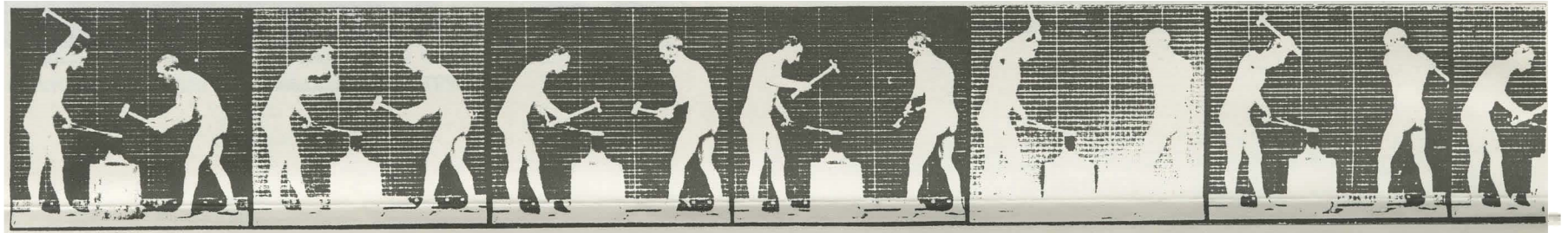
saturday, november 30, 1991

art gallery of ontario, jackman hall, 7:00 pm, \$5:00

The Eleventh Year, 1928, 59 min., b&w, silent, 16mm.

Three Songs About Lenin, 1934, 59 min., sound, 16mm.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is perhaps fitting to pay tribute to one of the union's most notable achievements, the artistic avant-garde which flourished in the decade and a half following the October Revolution of 1917. To this end, the Film Society and AGO are presenting four films by the most aesthetically radical filmmaker of that period, Dziga Vertov.



Vertov, born in 1896 as Denis Arkadievich Kaufman in Bialystok (now in Poland), studied at the Psychoneurological Institute in Petrograd, specializing in human perception. After some experiments in sound recording in 1916, Vertov discovered the cinema in 1917 at Kafé poetov, a renowned meeting place of Moscow artists. By 1918 Kaufman, who had changed his name to Dziga Vertov ("spinning top") had become the secretary of the newsreel department of the Moscow Film Committee. This was the start of an extraordinarily productive career which was ultimately crippled by the rise of socialist realism and the crackdown on such "formalists" as Vertov. Until the end of the 1960s, when art critic Annette Michelson championed *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) as a pioneering masterpiece of film art, Vertov's artistic output was by-and-large neglected. The four films in this series have still not received their proper due.

Working at the height of Constructivism and Russian Formalism, often with such artists as Mayakovsky and Rodchenko, Vertov's goal in both his writing and his filmmaking was to challenge the system of representation dominant in cinema, in order to create a new, non-narrative cinema which would, in Vlada Petric's words, "engage the moviegoer's 'dormant' consciousness and foster an active mental participation both during and after the screening." Vertov's cinema was to be a documentary one, of a sort, for he argued that filmmakers should document 'life-facts', and eschew sets, actors, and other elements of the 'staged photoplay'. Vertov did not argue for the straightforward representation of reality, however; instead, the so-called 'life-facts' were to be constructed, through montage, into 'film-facts'. One senses, in Vertov, a necessity for cinema to perform a dual function: to present life-as-it-is in order to de-mystify bourgeois society; and to "express a new vision of reality." Petric characterizes Vertov's method as simultaneously dealing "with 'life-facts' as they appeared in external reality" and exploiting film's technical potential in order to "recreate a new visual structure (the 'film-thing'), not only phenomenologically different from its prototype but far more revealing than reality itself." Vertov himself, in his *WE manifesto* (1919), refers to the "art of organizing the necessary movements of objects in space as a rhythmical artistic whole, in harmony with the properties of the material and the internal rhythm of each object." Like Rodchenko, who recombined everyday snapshots into exquisite photomontages, Vertov elaborately reconstructs basic newsreel shots in order to make poetic cinema montages.

Vertov shared with his Constructivist colleagues a fascination with machinery and was engaged in the utopian project of transforming man, that imperfect machine, into a more perfect one. In the *WE Manifesto* Vertov proclaims: "Our path leads through the poetry of machines, from the bungling citizen to the perfect electric man." Cinema's role in this transformation would be to change the consciousness of "bourgeois" citizens by participating in the reinvigoration of language and perception. The "kino-eye" is capable of overcoming the limits of conventional human vision. Consider this extraordinary quote from a later manifesto of Vertov's, *Kinoks: A Revolution* (1922):

I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it.

Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then away from objects, I crawl under, I climb onto them. I move apace with the muzzle of a galloping horse, I plunge full speed into a crowd, I outstrip running soldiers, I fall on my back, I ascent with an airplane, I plunge and soar together with plunging and soaring bodies. Now I, a camera, fling myself along their resultant, manoeuvring in the chaos of movement, recording movement, starting with movements composed of the most complex combinations.

Of the four films presented at the AGO both *Forward, Soviet!*, a newsreel compilation, and *One Sixth of the World*, which Vertov characterizes as a "film poem", evince Vertov's obsession with the poetry of machinery and mechanical movement. *The Eleventh Year* is a commissioned newsreel compilation on hydroelectric power. *Three Songs About Lenin*, Vertov's second sound film, is a complexly edited collage of both archival newsreel footage of Lenin and newly-filmed sequences, archival tapes of Lenin's voice, and folk songs about Lenin. This was Vertov's last fully realized large-scale project. Thereafter, bureaucratic harassment and hostility of his fellow artists crippled Vertov's filmmaking endeavours in mid-career. (Jim Shedden)

Prints courtesy of Anthology Film Archives.

Day without Art: A Tribute to Curt McDowell

Sunday, December 1, 1991

art gallery of ontario, jackman hall, 7:00 pm, \$5:00

A Visit to Indiana, 1970, 10 min., colour, sound, 16mm.

Confessions, 1971, 16 min., b/w, sound, 16mm.

Ronnie, 1972, 7 min., b&w, sound, 16mm.

A Night with Gilda Peck, 1973, 10 min., b/w, sound, 16mm.

True Blue and Dreamy, 1974, 4 min., b/w, sound, 16mm.

Nudes (A Sketchbook), 1975, 30 min., b/w, 16mm.

In conjunction with Day Without Art, the Film Society and the AGO will present an evening of films by the late San Francisco-based filmmaker, Curt McDowell.

Established in 1989, Day Without Art is held every year on December 1 to coincide with the World Health Organization's AIDS Awareness Day. Day Without Art honours the accomplishments of artists who have died of AIDS and encourages us to reflect on the loss everyone experiences by the AIDS crisis. While the first year of Day Without Art consisted largely of negative interventions by museums, theatres and other cultural venues -- removing or covering works of art, closing one's doors, etc. -- in order to convey a sense of loss, in 1990 activities by the 2,500 participating organizations included affirmative interventions as well.

This year the Film Society presents an evening of films by Curt McDowell. Before his death in 1987 at the age of 42, McDowell was a pivotal figure in the San Francisco independent film scene. The AGO program consists of six of McDowell's short films, most of which engage in erotic themes. McDowell's camp sensibility is evidenced in his

satirical treatments of middle-class values. At the same time, there is a serious, probing autobiographical side to his work. In *Nudes (A Sketchbook)*, possibly McDowell's most compelling work, this is manifest in highly personalized, often sexualized, portraits of McDowell's closest friends. *Nudes*, like all of McDowell's work, is a testimony to the great loss the art world suffered with McDowell's tragic death in 1987 due to AIDS-related illnesses. (Jim Shedden)

Frampton x 4

thursday, december 5, 1991

innis town hall, 7:00 pm, \$3:00

Manual of Arms, 1966, 17 min., b&w, silent, 16mm.

"*Manual of Arms* features fourteen dancers, filmmakers, painters, photographers, sculptors, and a historian whom Frampton knew at the time in New York: Carl Andre, Barbara Brown, Rosemarie Castoro, Lucinda Childs, Bob Goldensohn, Robert Huot, Eric Lloyd, Lee Lozano, Linda Meyer, Larry Poons, Michael Snow, Marcia Steinbrecher, Twyla Tharp, and Joyce Wieland. They appear in two series, both shot in alphabetical order. The first series consists of close-up portraits, lasting 9 to 14 seconds, in which only half the face of the subject is lit. The second comprises portraits in motion, lasting 35 to 90 seconds, each transformed by an entire manual of varied camera movements and editing methods: an array of angles, focuses, lighting, and varied-speed movements, including animation, metric editing, and the careful interpolation of flash frames and black leader, which sometimes create flicker effects and at other times construct fictional continuities." (MOMA, *Circulating Film and Video Library Catalog*, vol. 2)

"I established a set of conditions within which, nominally, anything that happened would suit me fine. What I had in mind was a series of portraits, but portraits that had to do with the kinesics of the people involved, the way they disposed themselves in a space under very limiting conditions. There was a plain backdrop, one light with a little bounce fill, and a stool. The rule was that you didn't have to sit on the stool, but you had to stay near it. You could do anything you wanted to,

or you could leave the space at any time you wanted to, at which moment the filming would stop. That was it. The gestures that I made with the camera and in editing had to do with my understanding of the people involved. Michael Snow comes out a prestidigitator and in the end advertises his *Walking Woman*. Some people I perceived as physically more active and aggressive. Lee Lozano, with whom I was living at the time, talked a blue streak from morning to night. She talked as most people do, at once to reveal and obscure herself. Her portrait is part of the time her face and part of the time her shadow.

overlay of gritty, claustrophobic funk that permeated that whole period. It's also a formalist's snapshot album. Those people were friends of mine during a fairly interesting time. We were all lepers, 'out-of-it,' or what have you, with the possible exception of Larry Poons." (Hollis Frampton, interviewed by Scott MacDonald)

Snowblind, 1968, 5 min., b&w, silent, 16mm.

"*Snowblind* is both a souvenir of and an homage to an environmental sculpture of Michael Snow. *Blind*, which was installed at the Poindexter Gallery in New York in 1967. The sculpture was a set of different types of metal fences, placed one behind the other but with a space allowing one to talk between them, thus suggesting a labyrinth or metal maze. Into this maze, Frampton introduced an actor, its maker, who could stand still or engage in movement; he introduced light by providing Snow with a flashlight that could be shone in a fixed direction or moved; and he introduced his own camera, with its repertoire of fixed and moving shots, including vertical and horizontal pans, superimpositions, dissolves, and racked focus. By alternating between Snow in light and darkness, between Snow in and out of focus and other contrasts, Frampton wittily and profoundly puns on the interaction between the maker and his maze and the textural materiality of the place and the abstract principle of its construction by titling it *Snowblind*." (MOMA, *Circulating Film and Video Library Catalog*, vol. 2)

"The problem was to reconstruct an object which subsists in deep space and is ambiguous: specifically, a sculpture called *Blind* that Mike Snow showed at the Poindexter Gallery in 1967. In classic film editing, there are at least three strategies for reconstructing a deep space object: one is to look at it and go around it; another is to pass through it; and another is to retrieve the object by retrieving an interaction of something else with it. The third is the most obvious. The last section of the film, where Mike

gradually walks out of the piece in that 'cubistified' way, is an obvious parody of the typical Eisensteinian gesture of intercutting the same action three or four times from three or four different points of view." (Hollis Frampton, interviewed by Scott MacDonald)

Zorns Lemma, 1970, 60 min., b&w & colour, silent & sound, 16mm.

"Frampton's film is an exercise in mathematical logic in cinema. Or is it a mechanical logic? Three viewings do not help me to explain to you what the film is all about. It's about alphabet. It's about the unities of similarities. It's about sameness in a confusion. It's about logic in chance. It's about structure and logic. It's about rhythm. Ah, what a difference between *Zorns Lemma* and all the 'serious' commercial movies that I occasionally praise! I am ashamed." (Jonas Mekas)

"My very grateful thanks for the opportunity to see *Zorns Lemma*; and this then an appreciation of that event.

"Yes! the film manages to create its own world, utterly and visually. First come 'sayings,' then 'letters,' then 'words' -- language DID surely develop in that order; and yet it clearly no longer ordinarily DOES: thus *Zorns Lemma* closes circle on itself...That last shot is a miracle...

"Besides all this, it is hellish fun to watch. No description of the film which I have heard (and I've heard many) prepared me at all for the experience of watching *Zorns Lemma*." (Stan Brakhage)

"We find here an expression of the infinite cinema of which Frampton writes: God is the infinite film projector; world and humankind and language are the film that is projected by means of the pure, white, Divine light. And my life, and yours are partially ordered sets of that maximally ordered set. As is that synecdoche of the infinite film, *Zorns Lemma*." (Allen Weiss, *October*)

Less, 1973, 1 second, b&w, silent, 16mm.

"This is Frampton's shortest film. It is one second long and repeats the same 'picture' twenty-four times, but alters each frame. Frampton had once discussed, with Paul Sharits and Tony Conrad, whether a film could be one frame and, in 1973, he took an untitled kodak print of a black-and-white photograph that Les Krims had one shot of his wife, Les, in 1969, and made this punning work about Les and Les." (MOMA, *Circulating Film and Video Library Catalog*, vol. 2)

information

For more information please call 978 7790 or 581 0127.

A subscription to the entire series (September through June) may be purchased for \$35.00. *This subscription does not provide admission to National Film Board screenings.*

The Film Society appreciates the generous funding of the following institutions: the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Innis College Student Society. The Film Society is grateful to the following organizations for their assistance and cooperation: the Art Gallery of Ontario (Film Department), Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (Photographic Arts), the Hart House Film Board, New Music Concerts, the National Film Board (Toronto), the Goethe-Institut Toronto, Anthology Film Archives, and Optica (Montréal).

The mailing address for the Film Society is 2 Sussex Avenue, Toronto ON M5S 1J5.

INNIS FILM WINTER 1991 — inn of icy elitisms

34

(FILM TAKES UP EMULSION S

Dreyer	thursday	september	19	7:00 pm	innis	free
Gallagher/Rimmer	thursday	september	26	7:00 pm	innis	\$3.00
Chambers X 4	thursday	october	3	7:00 pm	innis	free
Oberhausen Winners	thursday	october	10	7:00 pm	innis	\$3.00
Warren Sobbett	thursday	october	17	7:00 pm	cinecycle	\$3.00
Bruce Elder I	friday	october	18	9:30 pm	nfb	\$4.00
Carl Brown I	saturday	october	19	7:30 pm	nfb	\$4.00
Carl Brown II	saturday	october	19	9:30 pm	nfb	\$4.00
Carl Brown III	thursday	october	24	7:00 pm	cinecycle	\$3.00
Richard Kerr	thursday	october	31	7:00 pm	cinecycle	\$3.00
Jerome Hill	thursday	november	7	7:00 pm	innis	\$3.00
Alain Fleischer	thursday	november	14	7:00 pm	cinecycle	\$3.00
Michael Snow	thursday	november	21	7:00 pm	innis	\$3.00
Bruce Elder II	sunday	november	24	8:00 pm	nfb	\$4.00
Dziga Vertov I	thursday	november	28	7:00 pm	ago	\$5.00
Dziga Vertov II	friday	november	29	7:00 pm	ago	\$5.00
Dziga Vertov III	saturday	november	30	7:00 pm	ago	\$5.00
Curt McDowell	sunday	december	1	7:00 pm	ago	\$5.00
Frampton X 4	thursday	december	5	7:00 pm	innis	\$3.00

venues

call 978 7790 or 581 0127
for more information
subscriptions to the entire series
(september to june) may
be purchased for \$35.
subscriptions do not include
admission to screenings
at the nfb john
spotton
theatre

innis town hall: 2 Sussex Avenue (enter from St. George St.,
one block south of Bloor)

cinecycle: 317 Spadina Avenue (enter from alley east of
Spadina, south of Baldwin)

nfb john spotton theatre: National Film Board, 150 John
Street (at Richmond, one street south of Queen)

ago jackman hall: Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street
West (enter from McCaul Street doors)