

# europa

by Klaus Schönherr  
(Translation by B. Hein & G.)

The travelling film exposition which Sitney exposed the European cities to was a great success.

Before this I had heard about filmmakers' films only through the press: "Underground, that means a flickering on the screen." "The filmmakers are usually high when they make their films," "films which only they themselves understand." Those were the reports of the film critics. Europe is overcrowded with film critics, that is cineastes who seem to leave their eyes at the box-office window when they go to see a motion picture.

Sitney came with his very fine pioneer face, his pioneer beard and suit, and talked to the people like a savior about the way to discover happiness.

✓ The films were surprising. I was overwhelmed and stunned when I saw Markopoulos's THROUGH A LENS BRIGHTLY: MARK TURBYFILL in the Autumn of '67 in Zurich. I could no longer concentrate anymore on the subsequent films that evening. Actually, the film program had the effect of a bomb explosion. After each performance the spectators gathered, more or less helpless, discussing whether what they had seen was art, film, commerce, or simply great. Only the film critics or cineastes rejected the attitudes of those who wondered what they had seen. The reason for this was because it meant that the opponents of the films, the new films, would need to: change their theories or rework their own efforts; and this

all seemed too impossible, if not difficult. So they did not approve of the films completely, but only in part. Their attitude was that the new films lacked a sense of the logical, that they were devoid of technique, that in reality the group of filmmakers who made these new films were small in number. And, since it is now fashionable to make politically oriented films, the new films shown by Sitney were accused of not being political. This was a ridiculous attitude. Nevertheless, there were individuals for whom the new films had a vital meaning.

EUROPE: There are many people in Europe making films. Besides the commercially inclined, there are the underground inclined; the ones who I believe are hiding their stories, mostly traditional, through the use of experimental tricks. These are easily engulfed by the aura of the critics and the cultural functionaries; for in them they place their hopes, their great hopes. These are individuals who are eager to obtain support through public funds.

Then there are a few truly independent filmmakers who are producing films using their own ideas. Some work very hard. Some do not work at all and only attempt filmmaking as such. Until now there has been no collective name for the independent filmmakers. They are not very much liked by the underground-minded. Indeed, they are often placed in the appendix at festivals like Oberhausen, Pesaro, Spoleto, etc. These filmmakers do everything themselves, using old machines. They have outgrown their ideal inspirers (the German Expressionists, Richter,

Markopoulos, Brakhage, Smith, etc.) in their attempt to produce original works. Their films will be a surprise for American filmmakers once the possibility of showing them in the United States becomes a reality. To name some of the best of these films:

Kurt Kren: "LEDA UND DER SCHWAN"/"48 KOEPFE AUS DEM SZONDI TEST"; Birgit & Wilhelm Hein: "GRUEN"; Alfredo Leonardi: "SE L'INCONSCIO SI RIBELLA"/"ESERCIZIO DI MEDITAZIONE"; Ernst Schmidt: "BODYBUILDING"; Werner Nekes: "Schwarzhuhnbraunhuhnschwarz-huhnweiss-huhnrothuhnweiss oder putt putt"; Peter Weibel: "AKTION CUTTING"; Klaus Schönherr: "THALER'S, MEIER'S, SADKOWSKY'S LIFE IN THE EVENING"/"AUTOPORTRAIT" etc.

EUROPEAN COOPS: There are cooperatives in nearly every European country. Most of these cooperatives were founded during 1967 and 1968. Generally the filmmakers receive 60% of the rental income. However, the programs of the cooperatives are poorly organized; and, it is only the more underground-minded or commercial filmmakers who are able to recoup something.

The smallest cooperative with probably the best films available is that of Vienna, Austria. Their films are also distributed by the Hamburg Cooperative, Germany. I should say, that in my opinion, Germany has no other independent films than those of Nekes and Hein. In Germany there are two organizations, X SCREEN (Cologne) and Independent Filmcenter (Munich) which are rather successful in the regular screenings of the independent films and are able to pay reasonable rentals to filmmakers. The oldest cooperative is that in Switzerland, but they have no good films at all; and usually pay nothing to

the filmmaker. The Cooperative Cinema Indipendente in Italy is very active. They circulate programs throughout Italy; and also, in some cases, distribute European films. The cooperatives of England and the Netherlands are said to exist, but do not seem to be very active. It is the same with the cooperative in France; as a matter of fact, it was from Paris that the idea of a cooperative, a European Cooperative, emanated. At the same time, Paris did little to promote the idea.

THERE ARE SOME MAGAZINES: Kinema, Filmartikel, Film (German), Ombre Elettriche, Filmcritica (Italy); but the only exclusive one for independent films (still small) and produced with international cooperation is SUPERVISUELL. SUPERVISUELL is published in Zurich with correspondents in Rome, Vienna, Cologne, Paris, New York. The address of SUPERVISUELL is c/o Klaus Schonherr, Birmensdorferstr. 511, 8055 Zurich.

A real European Cooperative is needed very much. One problem is that of prints, for it is impossible at the moment to give a print of each film to the various European cooperatives. The first attempt of the European Filmmakers to sever themselves from the half-commercial will be made in Munich in November. There better means will be found to cooperate on an international basis. We hope that one of the results will be an exchange program with the New American Cinema group of New York City; this, as we want to see the films made by young filmmakers in the United States; and, of course, are eager to make our films known there also.

Mr. Schuchman,  
La Lente...

A photo-act of a part  
of the Newsletter.

Markyalep

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