

## THE NEW AMERICAN CINEMA EXPOSITION

by P. Adams Sitney

In 1964 a retrospective collection of the New American Cinema, about thirty hours long, went to Germany, Holland, Sweden, France, England, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. When the films came back to New York a rain of letters followed and kept up for three years, some from cities we did not visit demanding a chance to see the 1964 Exposition, some from the cities we visited demanding new films, many from students, painters, film-makers asking for information, single films, anything at all.

There were people reading *Film Culture*, learning and thinking about films they could not see. For two years we answered these letters with a mimeographed response offering a program of films for rental; the exhibitor would have to pay airship to and from his country and a double rental to the film-maker because the prints would be out of circulation so long. No one rented a program. No one could. For Italy an evening's program would have cost about four hundred dollars; for Holland about the same. If fifty dollars change hands during a screening in either country, it is considered a smash success.

In 1967 it became evident that a grant could be obtained by The Film-makers Cinematheque to purchase a collection of film prints for another exposition in Europe. Jonas Mekas and I selected about fifty hours of film as a minimal introduction to the New American Cinema since 1964, including certain older films, most notably Harry Smith's, which were discovered since 1964. We wrote to film-makers for the right to make a copy of their films and explained the economics of the exposition — that the sponsoring film archive would pay shipment, transportation, and the living expenses of the director of the Exposition, but there would be no rental returns. Only one film-maker refused. Our grant ran out before we could complete the collection; so forty of the fifty hours of film selected left for Torino Italy with Jonas Mekas. He had promised to present the first programs himself and I joined him in Rome and directed the showings for fourteen months after he returned to New York.

The following are a collection of letters written to film-makers, the first from Mekas, the rest from me, describing the effect of the program. Since I have returned to New York a single word has been omnipresent in the questions film-makers ask of me: "response": What was the response to my film in Paris?, How do the Europeans respond to this or that? The aggregate of individuals that are any audience respond in unison only to the simplest of forms, certainly not to works as complex as many of the films selected for this Exposition. I have not dwelt on audience reactions in these letters. I am pleased that the *range of response* in all of the major programs (where the entire exposition was shown as opposed to university programs of three to ten hours of film) Torino, Rome, Naples, Zurich, Lucerne,

Bruxelles, Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, Belgrade, Ljubljana, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Uppsala, Lund, Oslo, Helsinki, Copenhagen, London, Cologne, Munich, Frankfurt was wide, for those who booed Landow's *BARDO FOLLIES* there was always someone who spoke with great enthusiasm and understanding about the film. The measure of the success of the 1967-8 Exposition over that of 1964 was precisely this — that everywhere the films went there was a part of the audience fully ready and appreciative of them. The seeds of a film-makers cooperatives have been planted in Europe. A few films are being distributed there. If there can be a standard of the success of this tour it will be seen in the next few years as films come to be distributed, to the film-makers profit, without the need for another Exposition.

Italy, July 5, 1967:

Like I have to be very brief. Like it's impossible to tell everything. Our first show opened in Torino, at the Galleria Del Arte Moderna on May 12th and closed on May 22nd.

The show was a tremendous success. It was well attended. It was well covered by the Press. The discussions after the films went on for hours and hours and the reports are that the discussions are still continuing.

Italy, from what I have seen, of all the European countries, is most ready to start its own New Cinema. Our programs are helping them to collect their courage. Torino, and later Pesaro (May 26-June 5) and Rome shows (June 10-14) (I am listing those shows which I supervised myself —beginning June 15th Sitney came to Italy to take over my work). —Yes, as I started saying, our shows became rallying points for the Italian film underground. Not many, but a good dozen of the undergrounders exist in Italy, scattered across the country (Torino, Rome, Napoli, Milano, Genoa, etc.) and their work is quite good, sometimes VERY good, and if you didn't know that their films were made in Italy, you'd think they were made in New York. As one of the results of the Exposition, the Italian underground forces, which were beginning to stir, but were sort of hesitating—took definite steps and this June created the Italian Film-Makers' Cooperative (address: Alfredo Leonardi, p. Caprettari 70, Rome). (It's of interest, perhaps, that another very important gathering took place as an offshoot of the Exposition and that is the creation of the Italian Theatre Coop, inspired by the success of the Film-Makers' Coop.) (At Pesaro, and everywhere I went, there was an immense interest expressed in how the Coop works. It seems that everywhere the commercial distribution set-ups have finally reached their expected sad end and film-makers are ready to revolutionize the distribution and production aspects, and they are studying our lessons.) One of the reasons why Italy is more ready than any other country for the New Cinema, is the expositions which we had previously sent to Spoleto, Rapallo, Porretta Terme, Bergamo. The number two reason is the amazing Taylor Mead who keeps travelling. He is everywhere (he even showed up at Torino) and there is always half a dozen most far out young people in every city that he passes through who follow him and before they know they begin



to click single frames. Torino group is practically the product of Taylor's travels. And they are very good. Third reason, the most important one, is Alfredo Leonardi. Alfredo Leonardi's work (in Rome) extends beyond his film work (AMORE AMORE is VERY good). He has translated a number of essays, letters and other materials by Brakhage, Markopoulos and others and published them in critical periodicals. He is now making arrangements with Feltrinelli for the Italian edition of "Metaphors on Vision". (A German edition of "Metaphors" will be coming out later this year.) He has been one of the moving spirits behind the creation of the Italian Film-Makers' Coop. He is VERY bright.

At Pesaro Film Festival we screened only FOUR, but very long programs, selected at random. The festival was attended by large delegations from Eastern countries and this gave them a rare occasion to get familiar with what we are doing. Czechs and Yugoslavs in particular expressed a great excitement.

No use going and almost impossible to go into single films, how they were received. Just to give you some idea: THE ART OF VISION was accepted in all three places as an unquestionable masterpiece. And not only by film-makers: it has been seriously discussed by learned theoreticians and aestheticians (the analytical criticism in Italy is pretty far advanced) in Torino, Pesaro and Rome. BARDO FOLLIES, RELATIVITY, CASTRO STREET, THROUGH A LENS BRIGHTLY, TIME OF THE LOCUST, all of Breer's, MELTING, OH DEM WATERMELONS, EARLY ABSTRACTIONS, the work of Bruce Conner, Brooks' WINTER 64-66, Cavanaugh's work, Fluxus Anthology, BRIDGES-GO-ROUND, ANTICORRIDA, and Carl Linder's work were liked everywhere. That doesn't mean that others were not liked, though. However, most of them failed to see any value in Harry Smith's MAGIC FEATURE and Markopoulos' HIMSELF AS HERSELF, which must be symptomatic of some kind of myopia, what kind though, hard to tell.

Italy, June 27, 1967:

It is the 27th of June. I am writing from Torino, a large city in northern Italy, near the French border; an intellectual city by the highest European standards, where Jonas held the first screenings of the Exposition. I did not arrive before the projections here ended and Jonas will be writing of them, but the results I can observe are impressive. Last night the Torino delegation to the July 3rd congress in Rome for the establishment of an Italian Film-Makers' Cooperative met. It seems as if things will be changing in the cinema throughout all Italy.

The entire exposition was presented in Torino, about half of it appeared in the Festival of Pesaro, all at Rome and four long programs in Naples. Jonas has a complete press file of reviews through Rome. I arrived the last night of the Roman manifestation. The theatre was crowded and the back doors were opened so that the surplus standing room audience could queue to the end of the building for a peek at the screen.

Everywhere I go, I hear that the 1964 screenings in Porretta Terme and in Rapallo have been a continual topic

of debate for the past three years. The response of the Italian audience is certainly different now. Three years ago they conceded that one film (SCORPIO RISING) was of outstanding value and that a few others were interesting. Now the audiences are as enthusiastic as any I have seen in New York, and bigger.

The Nuova Cultura group of Naples showed the following programs: (1) David Brooks: WINTER 64-66, Stan Vanderbeek: A LA MODE, SKULLDUGGERY, PANELS FOR THE WALLS OF THE WORLD, Robert Nelson: OH DEM WATERMELONS, George Landow: BARDO FOLLIES, Peter Gessner: TIME OF THE LOCUST; (2) Bruce Baillie: TUNG, CASTRO STREET, Larry Jordan: DUO CONCERTANTES, Andrew Meyer: MATCH GIRL, THE FLUXUS ANTHOLOGY; (3) Jonas Mekas: THE BRIG, Thom Andersen: MELTING, Shirley Clarke: BRIDGES-GO-ROUND, Jerome Hill: L'ANTICORRIDA, Red Grooms: FAT FEET, Ira Schneider: LOST IN CUDDIHY, Bruce Conner: VIVIAN, COSMIC RAY, A MOVIE, BREAKWAY, LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS; (4) Stan Brakhage: THE ART OF VISION. When it became evident that all of the films could not be screened in Naples, not even privately, for a lack of time, I added Harry Smith's EARLY ABSTRACTIONS, and Storm De Hirsch's TRAP DANCE and PEYOTE QUEEN to the first show. Peter Kubelka's ADEBAR, SCHWECHATER, ARNULF RAINER, and UNSERE AFRIKAREISE, and Ed Emshwiller's RELATIVITY to the second, and Robert Breer's films to the third.

As a program note they mimeographed part of an interview with Jonas and a long article on the ART OF VISION by Fred Camper, both in Italian. I spoke briefly before each program and answered questions afterwards. The most vociferous and demonstrative of the audience were middle-aged communists, who had a preconceived notion of the New American Cinema as a left wing political movement.

The journalists who had attended the Festival of Pesaro and had reviewed the NAC after it, wrote nothing of the Naples screenings. Only UNITA, the official organ of the Communist Party, commented on our films. They wrote that TIME OF THE LOCUST for political reasons, and ART OF VISION, on aesthetic principles, were the most impressive works seen. OH DEM WATERMELONS, DUO CONCERTANTES, FLUXUS ANTHOLOGY, L'ANTICORRIDA, and THE BRIG were also praised. I am including a copy of the article in Italian in a letter to Jonas and copies will be sent to everyone mentioned in it.

A Film-Makers' Cooperative already exists in Naples. Functionally it is patterned on the New York Cooperative and it will probably take charge for the Italian federation of film-makers' cooperatives which will be organized next week.

At the present time our Italian schedule is uncertain, but within a week the second series of projections, including Milan, Venice, Perugia, Genoa, and Savona will begin.

Italy, August 7, 1967:

In July we have had four "minor" manifestations of The New American Cinema in Italy and Yugoslavia. I have attempted to describe the first I organized, in Naples, in a letter some four weeks ago, and I believe Jonas has written of the major programs in Rome, Torino, and Pesaro in the *Village Voice*. The distinction between major and minor programs is simply one of SIZE, in number of programs, of spectators, and of critical reviews.



The summer is a very slow period in southern Europe, even slower than in the US, much slower. While Jonas was in Italy it seemed as though ten cities wanted to see all of our films before they left the country. Unfortunately they all wanted them during the same two weeks, after which everyone disappears for vacation. So after our Naples screenings the original barrage of requests dwindled to one show in Perugia, one in Como, and a week in Savona. From the rest of Italy we always have the same response: "if you could stay until November we could show all the films everywhere, Milano, Sardinia, Genova, Perugia, Venezia, Trieste, etc."

This encouraging, though vain, response is the result of a truly remarkable coverage by the professional press of the showings in Torino and Pesaro. In fact, when I saw Louis Marcorelles in Pula, for the Yugoslavian film festival, he told me that recognition at all, never mind the kind of favorable recognition that we have been receiving, by papers like *Unita*, *La Stampa*, and *Avanti* would have been inconceivable three years ago. Unione Culturale, our general host in Italy, is sending a pressbook to the Film-Makers' Cooperative from which Xerox copies can be made for every film-maker whenever his work is mentioned. In Perugia our show took place in the auditorium of the Academia Belle Arti (University Art School) for about sixty people. Jerome Hill's *ANTICORRIDA*, Harry Smith's *EARLY ABSTRACTIONS*, *HEAVEN AND EARTH*, *MAGIC*, Bruce Baillie's *TUNG*, Gregory Markopoulos' *HIMSELF AS HERSELF*, and Peter Kubelka's films were shown. It is particularly difficult for me to describe the reaction of the Perugia Academy that afternoon because the problem of introducing the films publicly in Italian for the first time fills my memory, leaving room for little else. In Como, being surer and freer with my Italian, I was able to establish an immediate rapport with the audience of the film club of Bruno Munari, whose films were shown at the Film-Makers Cinematheque last year. The directors of the film club had asked for George Landow's *BARDO FOLLIES*, Marie Menken's *WRESTLING*, Thom Andersen's *MELTING*, Willard Maas' *ANDY WARHOL'S SILVER FLOTATIONS*, and Storm De Hirsch's *TRAP DANCE* and *PEYOTE QUEEN*, to which I added Jonas Mekas' *CIRCUS DIARY* and Stan Brakhage's *23RD PSALM BRANCH*.

The audience was very demanding, firm, and vociferous; they wanted to know everything at once, in an instant, and they stayed late into the morning to ask questions. The next day the Provincial newspaper printed a polite review of the show as a whole, "Interesting Evening of American Films", carefully avoiding an intellectual commitment to any of the individual films, and quoting my dictum that the form of every film presented was answerable only to the will of its film-maker (an idea almost incredible to the average Italian intellectual, accustomed to a history of economic and social censorship in the cinema).

In Savona we presented seven programs: (1) Shirley Clarke: *BRIDGES-GO-ROUND*, Bruce Conner: *VIVIAN*, *COSMIC RAY*, *A MOVIE*, *BREAKAWAY*, and *LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS*, David Brooks: *WINTER 64-66*, Carl Linder: *OVERFLOW*, Ed Emshwiller: *RELATIVITY*, Stan Vanderbeek: *PANELS FOR THE WALLS OF THE WORLD* and *SKULLDUGGERY*; (2) Peter Gessner: *TIME OF THE LOCUST*, Harry Smith: *Complete Works*; (3) Stan Brakhage: *ART OF VISION*; (4) Ron Rice: *SENSELESS*, Peter Kubelka: *ADEBAR*, *SCHWECHATER*, *ARNULF*

*RAINER*, *UNSERE AFRIKAREISE*, Robert Breer: 9 films, (5) Jonas Mekas: *CIRCUS DIARY*, Storm De Hirsch: *PEYOTE QUEEN*, Bruce Baillie: *TUNG*, *CASTRO STREET*, George Landow: *BARDO FOLLIES*, Thom Andersen: *MELTING*, Ben Van Meter: *UP TIGHT*, L.A. IS *BURNING...SHIT*; (6) Pola Chapelle: *A MATTER OF BAOBAB*, *FLUXUS ANTHOLOGY*, Jerome Hill: *ANTI-CORRIDA*, Taylor Mead: *EUROPEAN DIARIES*, Robert Nelson: *OH DEM WATERMELONS*, Marie Menken: *WRESTLING*, Red Grooms: *Fat Feet*; (7) Gordon Ball: *GEORGIA*, Andrew Meyer: *MATCH GIRL*, Gregory Markopoulos: *HIMSELF AS HERSELF*, Warren Sonbert: *WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO?*

The audience for the Savona series was the most extraordinary I have ever seen: a fourth were railroad workers and friends of the man who organized the screenings—Mirko Bottero, a train driver and Communist with no particular interest in cinema but a tremendous sense of social responsibility towards his town, to which he has invited every avantgarde exposition available; one or two international beatniks were there; and the rest were students.

By far the most talked about film was Harry Smith's *MAGIC FEATURE*, and Bruce Baillie's *CASTRO STREET* won a special ovation from the railroad contingent. Only one article appeared in the Press, but that was extremely favorable, demonstrating a particular Italian desire to be both avantgarde (here by reproducing Robert Kelly's line "Because we cherish life, we cherish the poem as a life-sustaining force") and social (by postulating the socio-economic conditions presumably fundamental to an avantgarde cinema—invariably simple minded).

With the coming of August everything is closed in Italy. We can expect no more shows until the complete program in Zurich, Switzerland, begins at the end of the month. We conclude our Italian program with greater success than could possibly have been predicted from the shows in 1964. In my next letter I shall try to describe the shows in Pula, Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia: \_\_\_\_\_

A set of press clippings from Italy has not yet been sent to New York. Every day something new arrives, favorable polemically, opposed, uncertain, confused, by film critics, by priests, by Marxists (thinking like Karl and speaking like Chico). Eventually all will be Xeroxed and sent to New York.

During this month everything is closed in Italy, even the museum guards close shop and take a couple of hours for siesta in the afternoon. When July ended and it became evident that no shows could be arranged for the whole of August, we made some spur of the moment arrangements with a Yugoslav film-maker, Dimitri Makavejev, packed a suitcase with some of his favorite NAC films and headed for Pula, just across the border. For the first week of every August the Yugoslav film industry holds a national film festival in the Roman Colosseum of this coastal town. This year a special sideshow for the NAC was made by the youth group of the national film society organization. Makavejev had asked us to bring the Fluxus anthology, *CIRCUS NOTEBOOK* of Jonas Mekas, *RELATIVITY* by Ed Emshwiller, *OH DEM WATERMELONS* by Robert Nelson, *TUNG* by Bruce Baillie, *UP TIGHT* L.A. IS



BURNING by Ben Van Meter, L'ANTICORRIDA by Jerome Hill, SKULLDUGGERY by Stan Vanderbeek, MELTING by Thom Andersen and Bruce Conner's films. He also requested Brakhage's SONGS which he hadn't seen.

Every afternoon following lunch, I showed a program of the SONGS in our hotel room. It was always packed, once with almost forty reverently perspiring (remember this is August with the windows covered by a blanket to kill the light) movie stars, directors, beatniks, writers. By the end of the festival all the SONGS had been shown as well as a program of selected SONGS for late arrivals and those wishing a second viewing.

The night screenings were equally successful. At midnight after the official programs two hundred people applauded every film. Following the festival we were invited to have shows of the full exposition in Belgrade, Zagreb, Lubjanev, and Sarajevo in December and January.

Soon some film-makers may be receiving invitations to publish eight millimeter copies of their films in Italy through the publisher Feltrinelli. From my one meeting with Feltrinelli I cannot advise film-makers to accept or reject the proposal. I followed up a request sent to Shirley Clarke by Mrs. Feltrinelli to send films to Italy for possible distribution through their publishing house. Whenever I spoke with her on the telephone, Mrs. Feltrinelli was very encouraging and seemed genuinely interested in helping the NAC in Italy; her enthusiasm seemed so sincere, in fact, that I offered to give a private projection at the Feltrinelli office in Milano of some of the very short films in the Exposition: Bruce Conner's, Shirley Clarke's BRIDGES-GO-ROUND, Robert Breer's, Harry Smith's etc. Unfortunately when we arrived Mrs. Feltrinelli was not there, and her husband treated us like fuller brush salesmen for the NAC. I was quite puzzled by his attitude and eventually had to assume that he was simply too preoccupied with a trip to Cuba and Bolivia he was about to make (Castro is writing his memoirs exclusively for the Feltrinelli house) and which has subsequently turned into a police harrassment for him in Bolivia and Peru as the Italian papers report. In any case, I was unable to assess the value of his project for eight millimeter distribution of avantgarde films in Italy. He has left most of the details up to two young and very sincere film-makers from Torino. Ultimately I think this could prove very fruitful for the film-maker who carefully examines the conditions and benefits of any publishing arrangement in advance. In September there will be manifestations of our Exposition in Switzerland and Belgium. I shall send details following each program.

Switzerland, September 4th, 1967:

As I write now the first program of the New American Cinema in Zurich is in progress. It is Brakhage's ART OF VISION, playing to a small theatre filled to the walls with young people. So many came that a second program of the films has been announced.

There are about a half a million people in Zurich. Dada was invented in a cafe two blocks from where I am writing. Across the street Lenin spent his exile. It has been quiet since then. The Zurich press has been remarkably sympathetic to us. The Sunday paper printed an entire

page and a half, that is, an article of mine and one by a critic who was at Pesaro when Jonas showed the films there, devoted to our show. I shall forward the press material to New York next week.

During the past three days we held five screenings in the tourist town of Luzern. Switzerland is divided into a number of independent Cantons, each with a Canton religion and language and legal system. Luzern, a Catholic Canton, was the first place censorship has affected our shows so far. A board of three men had to approve of all films. After much debate among themselves they forbade both Carl Linder's DEVIL IS DEAD and OVERFLOW. The rest of the films somehow passed: Harry Smith's EARLY ABSTRACTIONS and LATE SUPERIMPOSITIONS, Ed Emshwiller's RELATIVITY, Brakhage's ART OF VISION, Markopoulos' HIMSELF AS HERSELF, all of Robert Breer and Bruce Conner, Storm De Hirsch's TRAP DANCE and PEYOTE QUEEN, Gordon Ball's GEORGIA, Ira Schneider's LOST IN CUDDIHY, David Brooks' WINTER 64-6, Andrew Meyers' MATCH GIRL, Warren Sonbert's WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO?, Jonas Mekas' THE BRIG, and CIRCUS NOTEBOOK. Ron Rice's SENSELESS, Robert Nelson's OH DEM WATERMELONS, Ben Van Meter's UP TIGHT L.A. IS BURNING, Bruce Baillie's TUNG and CASTRO STREET, Peter Kubelka's UNSERE AFRIKAREISE, Vanderbeek's SKULLDUGGERY and PANELS FOR THE WALLS OF THE WORLD, Larry Jordan's DUO CONCERTANTES, Shirley Clarke's BRIDGES-GO-ROUND, Willard Maas' ANDY WARHOL SILVER FLOTATIONS, Red Grooms' FAT FEET, Jerome Hill's ANTCORRIDA, Peter Gessner's TIME OF THE LOCUST, and Carl Linder's DETONATION.

A group in Zurich is beginning to form a Swiss film-makers' cooperative and they tell me of a parallel group forming in France. When I go to Brussels in two weeks I shall propose to Ledoux that there be a meeting of representatives from all the cooperatives at the Brussels Experimental Film Festival in December. I am sure now that an effective and profitable system of independent film distribution can be established in Europe. The details vary with national importation laws. Very, very many people want to be able to see New American Films all the time, not just during two week expositions. Dissatisfaction with the official European cinema is very strong among the young here, in Italy, and I expect in many other parts of Europe. I am including the program of the Filmklub Zurich. In addition to this the Film Forum of Zurich are showing the ART OF VISION, HIMSELF AS HERSELF, George Landow's BARDO FOLLIES, Kubelka's films, and a special program of the films excluded from the regular program for lack of time. By separate mail I shall send a copy of the thirty page program notes printed for the Exposition.

Switzerland, September 25th, 1967:

I wrote last as the first screenings were beginning in Zurich. At that time I sent a copy of the program and one of the booklets published on the New American Cinema by the Filmklub of Zurich. I have received no critical articles from Swiss papers following the programs and I assume there were none. Nevertheless the audience was far larger and more enthusiastic than the organizers of our program expected. They anticipated that only a small number of



people would want to sit for five hours of the ART OF VISION, and therefore showed it in a smaller theatre than the auditorium where most of the films were shown. So many people showed up for it that they had to make three screenings. For HIMSELF AS HERSELF they had to make two.

In addition to the films listed on the printed program ARNULF RAINER of Peter Kubelka, BARDO FOLLIES of George Landow, and the 23RD PSALM BRANCH of Brakhage were shown. A small group of Brakhage enthusiasts looked at the remaining three hours of 8mm SONGS at a private club. In Zurich BARDO FOLLIES was the most passionately received; a group of painters told me it was the most original film they had seen.

I accepted invitations from the small town of Solothurn and the city of Lausanne for long one day programs. In the former Robert Breer's films, CIRCUS NOTEBOOK, BARDO FOLLIES, HIMSELF AS HERSELF, Bruce Conner's films, Harry Smith's EARLY ABSTRACTIONS, Ira Schneider's LOST IN CUDDIHY, DOG STAR MAN PART 2 (from THE ART OF VISION), Andrew Meyer's MATCH GIRL, Ron Rice's SENSELESS, and Peter Kubelka's UNSERE AFRIKAREISE were shown in three sessions.

The audience was very provincial, hooted during BARDO FOLLIES, and left puzzled. The next day I presented two hours of film at the festival of New Cinema in Lausanne. The audience was exhausted but enthusiastic. They had been seeing ten hours of film every day for a week. From what I could see of their program the New American Cinema section was all that deserved to be called New: should have been the "recent" cinema festival.

The film-makers' cooperative of Switzerland showed me about three hours of films, from highschool operas to handpainted animations. One film stands out: Freddy Murer's CHICOREE, a witty and abstract portrait of Zurich's best poet, a twenty three year old Nerval with about two feet of hair called Urban Gwerner.

I am including here copies of the program in Brussels. Every film is being shown twice and nothing left out. So far the audience has been much smaller than the Italian and Swiss manifestations led me to expect. Yet for me the situation is clearly optimistic. Brussels is the first city we are showing films which was on the route of the 1964 Exposition. The basic antagonism is gone. For the young here, the New American Cinema is not a freak but an essential part of the world cinema. In time they'll learn it's more than that.

Elliot Stein, a critic for *Sight and Sound* and the *Financial Times* of London (which has an unusually intelligent critical staff) passed by here about a month ago praising RELATIVITY. Both screenings of it sold out, and nobody seemed disappointed after seeing it. THE ART OF VISION too sold out, but a large part of the audience left after the first half hour. As far as I'm concerned that's all for the best. It leaves those who care to see the whole film free of the rustlings and comments of the unhappy. There is nothing dramatic, nothing newsworthy to write you about. The films are seen in peace, cared for by the young and the artists, ignored by the professional critics. The projection in Brussels is better than any 16mm system I have ever seen.

One note comes back to my memory as I write: the Italian radio in Zurich interviewed me, but the head of the station, an orthodox Marxist, refused to allow the broadcast because I contradicted his idea that the New American Cinema was essentially an organ of leftwing political criticism

of American society. Naturally he was not interested in seeing the films. Something like the Caliph Omar who is said to have burned the library of Alexandria because any book that agrees with the *Koran* must be superfluous and any that contradicts it must be heretical.

Austria, October 27, 1967:

When I last wrote from Brussels I must have expressed some slight disappointment with the general reaction there. During the second week of screenings, in which all the films were repeated, many of the programs were sold out. The press continued to ignore us and the audience was only slightly more responsive during question and answer sessions; nevertheless, even this mild approval was a vast improvement over my experience of four years ago. During the last days of the Brussels show, we were invited to the city of Liege for an evening of films (Mekas: CIRCUS NOTEBOOK, Rice: SENSELESS, CHUMLUM, Nelson: OH DEM WATERMELONS, Markopoulos: HIMSELF AS HERSELF, Hill: ANTICORRIDA, and Breer: RECREATION, MIRACLE, JAMESTOWN BALOOS, HOMAGE TO TINGUELY). I am including a copy of their program.

I arrived in Vienna at the beginning of October to find a large article in the *Kurier* announcing our series. I am sending a few copies of the complete program here and I hope it will be reproduced. Peter Kubelka managed to send many extra films from New York which for various reasons, basically financial, couldn't be included in our normal series. I was particularly puzzled to see that Kubelka chose to commence the series with an evening of Landow and Conrad. It had been my usual policy to show BARDO FOLLIES late in a series to an audience more accustomed to radically new cinema. Therefore I was astonished to see the solidly sympathetic reaction of the audience and hear more than an hour's worth of intelligent questions.

The day after the first program all the fourteen evenings had sold out. I rewrote my general introduction of the exposition to cover the new films. That was published and freely distributed to the audience along with notes from the Cooperative catalogue on each individual film and special articles I had written on Harry Smith's HEAVEN AND EARTH MAGIC and Brakhage's 23RD PSALM BRANCH.

Vienna may be the world's largest and most sophisticated small town. I say this to invoke more of the positive than negative aspects of that aspect of life. For instance, there seem to be about one hundred people actively interested in making or at least experiencing contemporary art. I see these same one hundred at every screening. When Schuldt came to Vienna to read his poems, the same group, hardly any more or less, came to hear him. As far as I can tell, among this group of people the New American Cinema is taken for granted as the foremost world cinema today. By a series of carefully planned programs with the film-makers present (Vanderbeek, Brakhage, Mekas) during the past two years, Mr. Konlechner and Mr. Kubelka, the co-directors of the film museum have carefully prepared an audience for the careful viewing an avantgarde cinema demands.

In addition to the core of about one hundred artists, etc. mentioned above, there have been about one hundred and fifty other students, Americans, and film people at all of our programs.

Both Jerome Hill and Gregory Markopoulos accepted invi-



tations to come to Vienna to present their films. Tomorrow we go to Berlin for the opening of our two week series at the Academy of Fine Arts. After that there will be a week of films in Hamburg and one night programs in Gottingen and Frankfurt.

Hamburg, West Germany, November 20th, 1967:

About thirty minutes ago a series of eight evenings of New American Cinema ended at the Amerika Haus and the students' union. Hamburg hadn't been one of the cities on my original schedule for the European tour, but when the Exposition was in Vienna one of the members of the Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum who had moved to Hamburg learned of the showings and so avidly sought a projection in his new city—he called a half dozen times with information on the kind of projectors we could have, etc.—that I agreed to come during a week's interval I had left between Berlin and Paris.

The decision was certainly worthwhile. The past eight days have made for the best attended and best received program of New American Cinema of the four we have had in Germany (Ulm and Munich in 1964, and Berlin this year). About four hundred people, mostly students, attended every screening. The documentation the students prepared, of which I am sending copies to New York, is the handsomest yet of this tour.

The press mentioned only one program in detail: Andy Warhol's HARLOT. Unfortunately I was unable to retrieve a copy of this article. Everyone told me it was an unfavorable report, but so many people came because of it that we had to make two screenings. On the same program was Peter Kubelka's films, which were foolishly left out of the printed program and documentation because someone could not see his connection to New American Cinema. Errors of this sort proliferate simply because the rigorous schedule makes it impossible for me to arrive in a new city more than two days before the showing begins, by which time all documentation is printed.

Today *Der Spiegel*, the *Time* and *Newsweek* of Germany, printed a three page article on the New American Cinema. The theater and cinema editor met me in Vienna, seemed quite bright, pooh-poohed the coverage of New American Cinema in *Time* last year, etc., but when it came to doing his own article it was pure pulp with a German accent. Their approach is positive, with a picture of myself and one each from RELATIVITY and OH DEM WATERMELONS. All in all the article is about the best one could expect in such a publication; there are paragraph summaries on Harry Smith, Ed Emshwiller, Stan Brakhage, Bruce Conner, the Kuchars, Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol, Robert Nelson, and Jonas Mekas. I'll send a few to New York.

During one day of the Hamburg program I accepted an invitation to the University of Gottingen with six hours of films. Over seven hundred students came to see Kubelka, Markopoulos, Van Meter, Nelson, Warhol, Mekas, Harry Smith, and Conner.

Tomorrow we go to Paris for two weeks of all the films at the Cinematheque Francaise. We shall probably take a few days rest in France or Italy before going on to Zagreb for their experimental film festival on Dec. 18.

France:

I wrote about the three weeks of our program in Paris as soon as it ended, but that letter has been lost. The following is from memory almost a year later.

We came to the Cinematheque from Hamburg. Most readers will know the mythology of the Cinematheque Francaise, especially now that it has won its publicized fight with the De Gaulle regime; for those who don't, it is unlike any other film archive in the world. Henri Langlois who founded and singlehandedly guides it is surely one of the half dozen greatest men of the cinema, and his idiosyncracies are at least as great as his greatness. Our program was wildly scrambled. In all the other cities we visited, except Vienna where Kubelka made the program with additions from America, and London where Richard Roud made the program after my suggestions, I made the programs grouping all the films by one man together. In Paris Langlois shuffled everything.

When I was finally able to find out what the program would be, no easy task, I had a short introduction translated into French and mimeographed it at my own expense along with a cross index of the films, listed alphabetically by film-maker. By the beginning of the second screening we were stapling and handing it out.

The first program had been in the elegant Palais de Chaillot theatre and the rest were in the more accessible theatre in the student quarter. There were two theatres before the May Revolution and a total of six or seven features were screened there every day. A typical Langlois program was in progress while we were in Paris: a series of over three hundred Russian films. The year previous he had shown five hundred Japanese films. There are so many Cinematheque screenings that he can present these marathons along with the regular barrage of retrospectives and homages.

Four years ago the theatre had usually been half empty when we showed films in Paris. This time it was always packed to capacity even though most of the screenings were scheduled for the 6:30 sessions, the worst hour possible. One of the ladies who sell tickets told me she had never seen such crowds for a 6:30 program over so long a period (three weeks).

The details of those screenings have escaped my memory now. Yet I do recall how changed I found the film climate in Paris. A gallery owner asked me to show him several films, some of which he purchased directly from the film-makers and now sells to collectors. Soon another gallery was writing for me to come back to Paris; they wanted to do the same thing, but I was off in Yugoslavia by then. Several commercial distributors were interested in opening some of the films from our exposition. In each case I referred them to the film-makers to negotiate, but they were not willing to pay sufficient rentals to make the plan seem probable. Yet Madame Decarisse, the most daring of the Parisian distributors, contacted some film-makers after I left and had a highly successful week of the New American Cinema in one of her theatres just before Christmas.

The work of the new young film-makers in Paris was particularly interesting: Jean Jacques Lebel, Pierre Clementi, and Etienne O'Leary, all influenced by Happenings and Psychedelia, were refreshingly free of the commercial seduction I had always associated with the independent cinema in France.



Italy, Yugoslavia:

In December following our program in Paris, we went to Yugoslavia. The economic situation of Yugoslavia like that of most Socialist countries has two faces: internal and external, for the value of a *dinar* within the country is infinitely greater than outside of it. This led to a serious complication in our shipment of films from Paris. Because of the weakness of the *dinar* outside of the country and because, as you know, every country that wants to show the NAC Exposition must pay the shipment from the previous country as well as our train fare, the films had to be sent to Beograd by train rather than air as we usually do. Furthermore, the Yugoslavian film archive could not pay our train fare from Paris, but could afford to fly us to both Knokke-le-Zoute in Belgium and Amsterdam, simply because they bought the tickets within their own country. In order to pay our way to Yugoslavia I arranged to show Brakhage's *SONGS* and Warhol's *HARLOT* in Torino and Milano. These were the only films not shown there last summer when Jonas Mekas opened the Exposition. The Torino program was a big success as all of our shows there have been. In Milano it was another story. You will remember that I described the relation of politics to art in Italy when reporting on our shows there last year. Briefly, most Italian intellectuals are leftists and more or less officially associated with one of the many political parties. In every city there are cultural clubs connected with the parties. The activities of these clubs sustain what there is of an avantgarde in Italy. In almost all cases the hard core political people do not care what goes on in the cultural clubs of their parties, yet in Milano, when the editors of the drama review *Theatre* rented a party club to show *SONGS* and *HARLOT*, in that order, on two different nights, the officials refused to have the second screening there. Eventually Fernanda Pivano Sotsass, a literary critic who has translated Ginsberg and Kerouac in Italy, offered her studio for the *HARLOT* session, but we could not stay long enough in Italy to arrange it.

The Italian stopover financed our trip to Zagreb where the first NAC screenings were to take place. The occasion was the biannual festival of GEF, a remarkable affair in which the entire Yugoslavian cinema comes together, feature makers, professional animators, experimenters, dadaists of the film and rank amateurs in 8mm clubs. At GEF film-making is treated as a general activity aside from economic and other conventional factors. The special attraction of this particular GEF was to be 35 hours of the NAC in three of the four days of the festival. It began on the 21st of December, which unfortunately coincided with a postal strike in France against the heavy load of Christmas work there. Our films were on a train when the strike began and it did not end until after GEF was under way. To further complicate matters a blizzard held up all trains in Yugoslavia for another day. I showed the 8mm *SONGS* which travel in my suitcase, and anxiously awaited the films from Paris and *HARLOT* from Italy (held up by normal Italian bureaucracy). Finally on the last day of the festival the films arrived and we made a selection twelve hours long. GEF ended on Christmas Eve. The next day we were to be in Knokke-le-Zoute for the festival of experimental films. That manifestation is too important to be summarized here. I have written a long article on it which the

*Village Voice* would not print, but which will appear in the next *Film Culture*.

On the 3rd of January we were back in Yugoslavia for the Beograd screenings of the whole exposition. I do not even pretend to understand what happened there. The audience was of about one hundred people, who never asked questions and seldom commented to me at all. Our hosts were so gracious, so extremely gracious like the princes of fairyland, giving us the very best of hotels and fine meals, that it was painful for me to have to harrangue the projectionists in their presence for their sloppy handling of the films. Yet this was always necessary, for their attitude to technique was as primitive as their hospitality large. What time I had free from our guided trips, parties, and fine dinners, I had to spend cleaning the prints on the rewinds of an old projector, repairing leaders, or scrubbing the gates of the projectors in use.

Add to this that the shows, in four different cities, including Zagreb for the GEF, were always highly condensed into three or four days. From Beograd we went to Sarajevo, a trip of an entire night on the train. This is where Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and thus began the Great War. It is an arabesque town with several mosques and a Turkish market. I have not been in Asia in the places where the Museum of Modern Art sent some New American Cinema films, but to me Sarajevo seems the strangest place to find OH DEM WATERMELONS or Harry Smith's films. We stayed there two days and made only one program of about three hours.

After another night's train ride we were in Ljubana in the north near Zagreb where the entire collection was shown in four days. Every city we went to was part of a different nation united into Yugoslavia; the languages, religions, and temper of the people were different. Perhaps my lack of a clear impression of Yugoslavia results from presenting films in four separate countries in twelve days.

One or two newspapers wrote about the shows there and several people asked me for interviews, the results of which I have not seen, nor do I expect to. My translator in Beograd read to me from the GEF review which especially praised the FLUXUS ANTHOLOGY, but found the Exposition in general not up to the dadaist standards of the festival! And it is a kind of dada that absorbs the avantgarde in Yugoslavia. The two most interesting film-makers Vladimir Petek, who is technically quite close to Brakhage (at the same time he invented collage of foreign elements within the frame, etc.) and Dusan Makavejev conceive of their own work within an absurdist tradition. In Ljubana some young people gave me their poetry book of pages with holes punched out and boxes of loose cards. They had never heard of Diter Rot or George Brecht or Emmet Williams, and though they hated the town in which they lived they would not consider moving to Zagreb or Beograd where they would find collaborators, because those towns were the centers of different nations to them. They said they would feel as foreign there as in New York or Tokyo.

Holland:

The New American Cinema program in Holland from January 15 to February 15 benefitted from the publicity of the recent and neighboring festival of Knokke-le-Zoute. The names of Markopoulos, Nelson, De Hirsch, Breer,



Kubelka, Vanderbeek had recently appeared in the reviews of Knokke which generally held the American contribution to that festival as the most sophisticated.

For the first time, as we entered Holland, we had trouble passing a border: the customs officials took us out of the passport line, inspected our tickets from Yugoslavia, and asked us how much money I had. Usually I travel with very small funds, but that afternoon I had reached my all time low with about five dollars in my wallet, so I avoided the question and said that all of our expenses would be paid by the Netherlands Film Museum, which was true. They weren't convinced when I showed them letters from our sponsors there, nor when the travel desk paged me to deliver a letter from the director of the Film Museum indicating our hotel and welcoming us to Holland. It was only when he happened to call the airport for us that we were allowed to pass.

We were not informed why we were stopped. They did not ask to look into our baggage. After a week in Holland I came to realize that it was probably part of the government crackdown on Provos, which has been utterly successful, to detain any bearded travellers. Without the Provos Amsterdam was not the city of its recent international reputation. Everyone I had known four years ago, the film-makers, the poets, called this a very uninteresting time for Holland. The reactionary press syndicate was gaining power, the avantgarde newspaper IETS was raided and suppressed for a still from or an article about, coincidentally, Barbara Rubin's CHRISTMAS ON EARTH, a film never shown there.

A day after we arrived Shirley Clarke came and showed JASON for the opening night of our series in the Film Museum. In the next two weeks there were four more programs there and two in the associated Film League. The press came and wrote favorably, though without insight, as I conclude from the texts translated to me. The coterie of Dutch film-makers showed up occasionally, the audiences were large and enthusiastic, yet such an infectious calm prevailed throughout our showings and in all the native manifestations I noticed, such as a protest painting of the walls of the Museum of Modern Art, under the museum's permission, so many film-makers were inactive, without money, that I recalled the artificial quiet that was imposed upon New York the summer of the World's Fair.

I took advantage of the days between programs and the first hints of spring to shoot a short film on Gevaert stock from the Knokke festival. Amsterdam is a beautiful city of small brick buildings and numerous canals. To walk there without an overcoat was a pleasure after the damp and cold of central Yugoslavia.

Shirley Clarke left for Denmark, Finland and Sweden a few days after she arrived. We had discussed at length the values and futility in showing films outside of the immediate cultural context of America. She had just come from Paris where her old friends proved a familiar audience, but Amsterdam was the first show she had made in a new city. The artificial quiet I described, the civility of our press conference, and the unresponsive audience drove her to doubt the value of showing the New American Cinema away from home. On my worst days I know her feeling well. Yet again and again I meet people who had seen our Exposition four years ago, who still vividly remember individual films, and who describe the gradually increasing effect a particular film has had upon them in the years following.

The students of the film school in Amsterdam invited me to lecture one evening after their classes. I presented Brakhage's 23RD PSALM BRANCH and spoke about the possibilities of 8mm as a medium distinct from 16mm and 35mm, about its economic and mobility advantages. Except for the one student who most urged me to come to the school, the students and the teachers, even more so, rejected the film and the medium. One teacher became furious that I would dare present such ideas and such a film before would-be professionals.

I had come to the same school four years earlier, under the same conditions, and witnessed the same total misunderstanding of Bob Fleischner and Ken Jacobs' BLONDE COBRA. More shocking than the technical attitude is the moral position of so-called film teachers who argue that a film about war without specific literary conclusions is a work to be condemned. The students think they are more advanced than the teachers by demanding radical works created within the technical conventions of the style they are educated to reproduce. The force of the indoctrination is so great that they consider any attitude to materials aside from that of their textbooks heretical. Naturally they cannot see the canon of professional techniques dominant today as implying a specific aesthetics: to them it is the whole ocean of possibilities and the deviations from it are mistakes.

I am including here copies of the Amsterdam programs. In addition to this there was one afternoon presentation of Brakhage's THE ART OF VISION and Ron Rice's SENSELESS was shown one evening along with a film called EROSTRATUS by Don Levy, which the bourgeoisie found very exciting at Knokke.

Sweden, Norway, and Finland:

After a brief taste of spring in Holland we flew north into the middle of winter for the last two weeks of February and the whole of March. Our original schedule called for a three-week program in Stockholm and a shorter one in Copenhagen immediately after it. When the Danish Film-museum had to move our program from the tenth of March to the first of April, the Norwegian film clubs and an art festival in Helsinki quickly requested programs for the free weeks.

When we made our large Exposition in 1964, Stockholm was by far the most successful of our programs. At that time the Museum of Modern Art was our host and we benefitted from the tremendous enthusiasm created by a large show of Dine, Warhol, Lichtenstein, Wesselman, Rosenquist, and Oldenburg in the museum at the same time. Since 1964 a Swedish Film Institute has been created. The program they made for us last month was at least as successful as that of 1964, though less dramatically so for me because of the earlier good reactions in Italy, Vienna, and Paris.

I have sent to New York a number of copies of the Stockholm program, a splendid multicolored poster with an article about Shirley Clarke, who presented her films two weeks before we arrived and Jonas Mekas' speech to the Philadelphia School of Art. Unfortunately two or three errors in the names of film-makers mar an otherwise ideal giveaway sheet. For each program notes from the Film-makers Cooperative Catalogue or special program notes



were given away and a great number of copies of Sheldon Renan's and Gregory Battcock's books were sold. In addition to our complete program and Shirley Clarke's films, the Swedish Film Archive presented works from their own collection, such as *THE QUEEN OF SHEBA MEETS THE ATOM MAN*, *PULL MY DAISY*, *THE BRIG*, *HALLELUJAH THE HILLS*, *IMAGE*, and *FLAMING CREATURES*. Much as I dislike D. W. Griffith, I am sorry to have missed the evening a few months ago when Taylor Mead was invited by the same archive to supply a soundtrack to one of his films.

Two films by George Kuchar, *COLOR ME SHAMELESS* and *DEATH OF THE SUN VIRGIN*, were borrowed from Brussels to complete the program.

For every session there were large and enthusiastic audiences—enough to make at least one commercial distributor eager to open a New American Cinema program in a local theatre. The film magazine *Chaplin* devoted half an issue to translations of excerpts from *Film Culture* and a study of *FLAMING CREATURES*.

The Stockholm shows were spread out over a month with about four screenings a week. During my free days I made a tour of the university cities of Uppsala (four programs), Lund (four programs), and Gottenburg (two programs). Single programs were scheduled in two other cities, but I was too exhausted to make a presentation myself. I sent the films with a technician to insure proper projection. While I was touring the universities the most outrageous accident of the course of this exposition occurred: our copy of *WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO* was lost. I am not paranoid enough to believe that someone actually stole the film, but somehow it disappeared while on shipment and several eager searches have produced no trace of it. All the time that our series was in progress Andy Warhol's *CHELSEA GIRLS* was being screened at the Museum of Modern Art as part of a successful show of his work there. Immediately following the Stockholm program we flew to Oslo for five programs and then rode north to Trondheim, the closest I've been to the top of the world, for four more. Although there were good audiences in both cities and a fair amount of press coverage, the Norwegian tour was decidedly less interesting than the Swedish. One thing particularly amused me: several years ago *Film Culture* in an act of reckless liberalism printed Edouard De Laurot's sarcastic "Glossary of the New American Cinema". Both *Fant*, the Norwegian film magazine, and the program of the Uppsala film club, reprinted the "Glossary" which they interpreted as a highly pro-NAC retort to the commercial film mentality.

In Helsinki we showed all of our collection in only five days as part of a monster art event produced by Finnish students. In one giant modernistic culture building several musical groups, theatre groups, dancers, etc. performed. The corridors were choked with hideous art works and in one auditorium crowds of young people came to see our films. The Finnish Film Archive, a very sympathetic organization, co-sponsored our showings and translated a great number of pages of notes for the audiences in order to ease the onslaught of forty hours of avantgarde films in five days.

My initial reaction to the Helsinki situation was that such a compression of work could not produce a reasonable viewing situation. Yet the comment of one independent film-maker and his wife, a week after our program ended and after I had rested in Leningrad from the hectic pace of our Scandinavian tour, changed my mind; they said

that everywhere they went people would not stop talking about the NAC. Eventually they would say they had not seen any of the films to avoid hearing the prevailing topic. We are now in Copenhagen for eight programs and are about to go to England for almost two months. I shall write again soon.

Denmark, England, Germany:

Since my last brief letter we have been in Denmark, England, and are now back in Germany. Although the long showings in each of these countries have been outstanding successes I am beginning to feel that we have been touring too long. After more than a year (for it was at the end of May that Jonas Mekas made the first presentations in Torino, and the middle of June that I took the films over from him), the prints are beginning to show their wear, and I find I can anticipate most of the questions of the press and the audience during almost every discussion session and am therefore less and less fresh, and ultimately less response-ABLE to them. In any case these are the final weeks of the tour which I shall try to synthesize in my next letter, in August.

For me Copenhagen was a particular success. Four years ago, when the first major Exposition was on tour, the Danish Film Museum after many letters decided not to present our films, assuming that there was not sufficient interest in Copenhagen in the American avantgarde cinema. Their assumption was based on scattered experiences of films from the Forties and early Fifties and on the small Canyon Cinema tour of 1964.

This year Mr. Monty agreed to show a week of the New American Cinema, even though he did not expect an audience. I, on the other hand, was convinced that he would have a tremendous success and asked that afternoon screening time be set aside for the films he felt would be certainly avoided by his regular audience, most notably Brakhage's *ART OF VISION*, whose length, four and one half hours, made him apprehensive.

As I had expected the program was an overwhelming success. Often there was neither floor space free nor standing room. The programs that were scheduled for the afternoon were also exceptionally well attended. The Danish radio devoted forty minutes to the most serious discussion of the aesthetics of the New American Cinema that I have yet participated in within a mass medium; and a number of newspapers discussed the films, although without remarkable insight. One expects a section of the Danish film magazine *Kosmorama* to be devoted to this series, as was a considerable part of the Swedish *Chaplin*. I made three other one program presentations in Denmark, but they were uninspired, and received a mediocre reception.

The British Film Institute in London, like the Danish Film Museum, had been reluctant to show this Exposition and like the Copenhagen series it was an outstanding success. As is often the case with the New American Cinema screenings the directors of the National Film Theatre, the organ of the BFI that screens films, said the audience for us was not their normal one.

The program notes which the BFI provided, written by Richard Roud, quoted heavily from the silliest passages of Sheldon Renan's *Introduction to the American Underground Film*, and generally presented a quasi-comic image



of the New American Cinema, that would be more usual for a weekly newsmagazine than for a serious film archive. There were also available large information sheets, actually four full newspaper pages from the *International Times*. Simon Hartog and Steven Dwoskin of the film-makers cooperative in London prepared these notes from the large folder we send to all the inviting organizations. It included my general introduction, a note by Hartog on the theory of film-makers cooperatives, and quotations from various film-makers. Unfortunately the *International Times* insisted on superimposing a vague visual image over the whole of the writing, keeping this center spread of their paper consistent with their usual psychedelic image. I have sent enough copies of both sets of notes for distribution to all the participating film-makers.

The university tour of England was considerably less successful than I had anticipated. For the most part it was organized in the individual universities by the directors of Students Unions rather than the Film Societies; so that the sponsors sometimes had only a vague and more often wrong notion of what they were showing. In one university, Essex, the most noted for its radical and rebellious student body, a clique managed to disturb the entire performance with incessant noise and wisecracks. It was at those universities in which more than one session of films was organized, Oxford, Cambridge, Brighton, and Exeter, that the program created a clear understanding of the elements of the New American Cinema. The remaining sessions at Essex, Keele, Swansea, York, Reading, and Birmingham were hit and miss affairs that I would not repeat. The financial arrangements of the sponsors within the British universities brought me to great sympathy with the problems of the London film-makers cooperative. The students pay very little, the universities charge for the use of halls and projection, and the whole of commercial 16mm distribution in England is content with the situation as it is.

During the past year I have met several film-makers who happened to be in Europe, mostly at Knokke-le-Zoute, and occasionally elsewhere, who have expressed an uncertainty about the economic structure of this Exposition. I shall now review the years budget for their sake and to avoid further confusions.

When Jonas Mekas asked me to head the tour I explained that I would not be able to do so unless some arrangement could be made so that I might take my wife with me. At that time I was assured of the following: my travel expenses from one city to another, the hotel and food costs of my wife and myself, and the cost of film shipment all paid by the sponsoring film museums. (It is, I should add, the universal policy of film archives not to pay rentals for films shown. Yet on occasion individual film-makers have been able to receive honoraria. I add this because the personal experiences of some artists travelling with their films sometimes differs from the general rule.) To the above expenses were to be added from New York the costs of my wife's travel from city to city and a small salary to cover expenses beyond room and food.

For the first four months the economy proceeded as expected, while we toured Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, and Austria. Then the overwhelming expenses of the new Cinematheque abolished the small salary I had been receiving from New York. In addition to that, a number of organizations were not fully meeting even our food expenses. At this time, after a correspondence with New York, I decided to accept a number of university screenings which would pay

a small rental for the films. Therefore from a week in Hamburg we received almost three hundred dollars. It was possible to charge Hamburg because the initial expenses of importing the films into Germany had been paid by the Berlin sponsors as well as our travel from Austria. After conferring with Jonas, I accepted the three hundred dollars in lieu of my abolished expense salary. Much of this was then spent in Paris where we had to pay for the mimeographing of our program notes (the Cinematheque Francaise preferred to have none) and for all but one meal a day. We went from France, through Italy again, and to four cities in Yugoslavia covered by the remainder of the Hamburg money. In Holland we received another three hundred dollars, in Sweden two hundred, in Denmark fifty, and in London approximately one hundred and fifty for showings outside of the main archives. With this money I paid for the travel through Holland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and England, replaced the suitcases in which we carry the films when on tour of universities, bought what clothes were needed for the remainder of the year, and paid miscellaneous telephone, telegram etc. bills. Now that we are back in Germany, we are charging 35 dollars per program in each of the three cities presenting the whole festival, Cologne, Munich, and Frankfurt. Since the USIS has agreed to pay the travel, room, and food expenses of my wife and myself, this rental will be returned to New York. The specific sorting of this money will be a problem to be worked out by participating film-makers in New York.

I write the above to make clear the nature of the finances involved during the past twelve months. If any film-maker has questions about this I shall be glad to answer directly by mail. All letters addressed to the Film-makers Cooperative in New York, marked for me, eventually find me in Europe. I trust that the above will clarify any previously obscure matter.

I had thought that another letter would not be necessary until after our program at the Festival of San Sebastian in Spain, but the situation of our screening in Germany has become so intricate in the last few days that I feel the need to write before the details become obscured by time. In the first place the programs in Cologne and Munich are tremendous successes. In the former city almost every screening was sold out and in the latter, where the theatre is larger, all are full. It is ironic that I had originally decided not to make more than one screening in Germany because of the relatively poor reception in Berlin. The present series which includes Cologne, Munich, Freiburg, and Frankfurt, as well as a special event screening during the Documenta in Kassel, was made possible because the United States Information Service offered to pay the initial expenses of bringing us and the films to Germany and paying our daily hotel and food costs.

With these expenses subscribed I was able to ask for a fee that would go to the film-makers. After discussion with the USIS we decided upon between twenty-five and thirty-five dollars per program. Yet when we arrived in Munich, we found that the audiences were paying far more than had been our experience (about one dollar admission) in the other cities and that the audience was much larger than



normal. This is partly the result of a very good press and partly the solid organization of our hosts the USIS and the Gallery Friedrich. I immediately requested that the small fee be abolished and that sixty per cent of the house take be given to the film-makers.

Gregory Markopoulos, who happened to be in Munich at the same time, and who strongly disliked and distrusted the Gallery Friedrich, urged me to cancel the entire show. I felt bound by my commitment and eventually managed to obtain an agreement on sixty percent of the gross income. Markopoulos refused to allow his films to be shown, and withdrew them from the three future shows as well, in Frankfurt, Kassel, and San Sebastian. In a newspaper article here Markopoulos proclaimed his wish to be disassociated from the other film-makers "as a group", and to me personally he explained, reasonably, that he is in a much better financial position by arranging his own European screenings. His position is clear and it is strong; certainly it deserves discussion.

Any film-maker who plans to spend some time abroad is capable of earning a little, perhaps even a lot of money by making a series of screenings. Since an entire 16mm program can be carried in a suitcase, usually as personal luggage, the customs problem is avoided. In this regard I have NEVER heard of a case where this led to legal complications. If the work of such a film-maker is exceptionally concentrated in a few films made over many years, there may be an argument against participation in a large Exposition, which shows films at no profit to the artists, although Peter Kubelka, whose situation is precisely this, does not think so.

I assume that Bruce Conner does reason this way, because while we were in England he wrote me that he did not want his films shown anymore. He thought the Exposition had gone on too long. Naturally I excluded him from all the German programs and will do so in San Sebastian. When I return in September I shall make an annotated list of the people friendly to the New American Cinema who may help film-makers in arranging tours of Europe, either by extending the hospitality of room and expenses, as the Film Archives can, or by renting films and paying for lectures as the universities and film schools do.

Finally, I should warn film-makers that on almost every poster I send back there is either an omission or a misspelling. In the case of Munich Andrew Meyer's MATCH GIRL was mistakenly left off the programs and the names of Robert Breer and Storm De Hirsch misspelled. I am constantly running one program and planning the next, simultaneously, and it is impossible for me to see proof sheets or control just how much of the program notes that we send are used by our sponsors.

**FAR FROM VIETNAM**. Over-all editing: Chris Marker. Directors: Alain Resnais, William Klein, Joris Ivens, Agnes Varda, Claude LeLouch, Jean-Luc Godard. Producers: Slon Film, Sofracima, 36 rue de Ponthieu, Paris 8, France, c/o Mrs. Catherine Winter.

(The inspiration and impetus came from Chris Marker who by phone in a single night got commitments from the participating directors. Each had wanted to do something on Vietnam but had not found his way. Each agreed to send his film to Marker to shape into final form with permission to use all, part, or none of his contribution. Each worked independently.)

#### *Retrospections by Frances Starr:*

Footage shot in North Vietnam Onscreen civilians are building bombshelters by hand with wooden forms and cement The narration relates that this is the largest industry in North Vietnam That work proceeds slowly because of the crude production methods The narration gets dense with statistics of war weapons death deprivation The screen action is absorbing The ingenuity industry efficiency of these people The two fight with each other for attention and as is usually the case action wins

On screen the woman is talking her daughter squirming in her lap Her husband had set himself on fire to protest the war in Vietnam She is being interviewed at the home of Vietnamese friends with whom she is staying Her husband felt very strongly about the injustice of American intervention in Vietnam It is possible their friendship with this Vietnamese couple enforced his feeling she responds to a question In any event his feelings were so deep about this injustice that he felt he had to call attention to it dramatize it and that his protest must be in proportion to his convictions He sacrificed his life His wife understands completely He was a man of integrity and he did what he had to do

A cinema verite interview with a highschool or college age American girl immediately preoccupied with self school job boyfriend Too young to remember the last big war too far away to be concerned with this one and disinterested unknowledgable She supports the presidents policy and his judgment Hes the president He knows about such things Thats his job

There are at several points in the film fragments of Johnson Westmoreland McNamara Cardinal Spellman speaking sometimes shot straight sometimes distorted TV images sometimes presented uninterrupted sometimes intercut with battlescenes fragments of speeches

There is footage shot aboard an American aircraft carrier Sailors are loading bombs cold shiny passive waiting by the hundreds The narration informs of their destructive power of the size of these daily shipments

Alain Resnais was the only sequence shot in a studio using actors and with prepared script Essentially a monolog self investigation by a writer whose feelings about American participation in Vietnam are ambiguous but who is forced to get off the fence commit himself by deciding or not to adapt (translate?) a book on escalation He is in his apartment talking to himself to us at his girlfriend His problem is he cant see the issue clearly in terms of black and white It is too fashionable to be antiAmerican now Why so much protest Why Vietnam Why not (?) (a legitimate country) where thousands are being slaughtered How much does