

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

No. 14
Friday, January 31, 1969
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW CANADIAN CINEMA OFFERED BY MUSEUM PART OF ITS CINEPROBE SERIES

The works of young Canadian film-makers, many of them painters and sculptors, will be presented on the first and third Tuesday of February, February 4th and 18th, at 5:30 p.m. in the auditorium of The Museum of Modern Art. The New Canadian Cinema will be shown as part of the Museum's Cineprobe series, concerned largely with new and experimental films.

Adrienne Mancina, Assistant Curator, who is responsible for Cineprobe, now a bi-monthly event, has chosen with Larry Kardish, Curatorial Assistant, films from the entries in "Canadian Artists, 1968", a recent Toronto competition. Jonas Mekas, who acted as judge of this competition, found the New Canadian Cinema "a frontier-breaking cinema. I am talking about the frontiers of senses, of mind, of soul," he said.

Of the eleven films, six were made by artists who work in other fields. In fact, one film, "R 34" is an artist's vision of another artist. Made by Jack Chambers, it is a documentary on Greg Curnoe, how he lives and works in his Ontario studio. The title, "R 34," was taken from a red dirigible in a Curnoe painting. It inspired Chambers to make the film, which he will discuss February 4th, when he will be present to answer questions from the audience. Chambers is a musician as well as a painter.

Joyce Weiland, another painter turned film-maker, has three films in the Museum program: "1933," which is also the year of her birth, alternates the numerals of the year with a speeded up street scene shot from a window; "Cat Food" studies a luxuriously furred cat devouring fish and, as described by Manny Farber in Artforum, "is filled with supreme succulent color, sometimes recalling Manet." He also finds that "Rat Life and Diet in North America," another of Miss Weiland's films, has

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"the deep, ovular splendour of a Caravaggio." It tells of revolutionary rodents who escape from their cat jailors and find refuge up the river on the estate of a millionaire where they learn to become guerrilla fighters. "It has some hard-to-forget, singular images," Mr. Farber writes, referring to the "incredible color shots of paper doilies, cut glass goblets and a lavish spread on which the hungry rodents eat their fill," which the critic finds "overpowering for its recall of Spanish still life. Miss Weiland is more than a diary-life recorder of domestic enthusiasms."

The artist, who has been represented in group exhibitions and in a Biennial of Canadian Painting, will speak about her film work when it is shown on February 18th.

Among other artists contributing to the February's Cineprobes is Les Levine, the Dublin born sculptor, who migrated to Canada, whose works have been exhibited and circulated by The Museum of Modern Art. His film is called "White Noise;" it falls into the same non-narrative category as "Steel Mushrooms," a work by Gary Lee-Nova, 25, of Vancouver, whose film features hinges, toggle bolts, gauges, dials and other hardware that form mushroom clouds and allude to the bomb. Nova's style has been likened to "the way Léger paints scaffolding, clouds and workers."

The New Canadian Cinema will also introduce other non-narrative work: "Maltese Cross Movement," Keewatin Dewdney's light-hearted collage of a verse ending with "if you die tonight, tomorrow you're gone;" and the sensual imagery of John Hofsess, 25-year-old film-maker, whose "Palace of Pleasure," projected on two screens, received the first prize at the Vancouver Film Festival.

Clarke MacKey's "On Nothing Days," described as an adolescent frustration movie, deals with a young boy who does nothing "with colossal mindlessness." The camera follows his gauche, embarrassed, ambivalent thoughts, fantasies and actions. MacKey completed this film when he was eighteen.

The only conventional movie that will be part of the Canadian program is "San Francisco: Summer 1967," made for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation series "The Way It Is" by Don Shebib, a documentary on the hippies, to be shown at 2:00 p.m. February 18th.

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Canadian cinema is exciting, according to Jonas Mekas, film commentator for The Village Voice, because it views reality from that galactic point where it's at in 1968. It sees man and things from a different angle. It reveals man in his changes, and since what's new in man, is always the least graspable, it is necessary to catch his essence indirectly through the form, the style, the rhythm of the New Cinema.

The New Cinema, according to Mekas, a film-maker himself, employs the same techniques everywhere in the world today. He referred to single frames, free camera movements, certain forms, sensibilities and structures, and a preoccupation with light and rhythm. "All this is the same in Torino, in Hamburg, in San Francisco, in Toronto. We differ only in the degree of angles, of shadings, of movements."

The new content can be revealed only by way of new technology, new form and new style, Mekas believes. He gives primary importance to the aesthetic properties of a work, and because of the new technology, material, vocabulary and syntax of young Canadian film-makers, their films contain "a finer vibration, a finer density, and a finer matter."

The schedule of New Canadian Cinema follows:

February 4 at 5:30 p.m.

"1933," a film by Joyce Weiland. Canadian living and working in New York - one event seen a couple of times, or maybe not one event. 3 min.

"R34," a film by Jack Chambers on the celebrated Canadian artist Greg Curnoe. A new type of documentary vision. Chambers will be present for discussion. 30 min.

"Steel Mushrooms," a film by Gary Lee-Nova. Inanimate things begin to move. West-Coast film-maker. 7 min.

"Palace of Pleasure," a film by John Hofsess. 2 screens. sensual imagery in the manner of Huysmanns. One of the first works of New Canadian cinema. 35 min.

Jack Chambers will be present to participate in discussion.

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February 18 at 2:00 p.m.

"Maltese Cross Movement," a film by Keewatin Dewdney in which life takes a revolution and comes, more or less, full circle . 7 min.

"Catfood," a film by Joyce Weiland. Joyce's cat eats food. Canadian living and working in New York. 13 min.

"White Noise," a film by Les Levine, sculptor. Canadian living and working in New York. 10 min.

"Rat Life and Diet in North America," a film by Joyce Weiland. The gerbils revolt against U.S. domination and scurry to Canada to launch an invasion. 14 min.

"On Nothing Days," a film by Clarke MacKey. Made by an 18 year old with an exciting visual style. 21 min.

"Magic Circle," a film by Gary Lee-Nova of an artist in process of designing mandalas. 9 min.

Joyce Weiland will be present for discussion with audience.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.