

## TWO-WEEK RETROSPECTIVE DEVOTED TO AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKER

Over the past fifteen years, Steve Dwoskin, an American filmmaker who has lived and worked in Britain since 1964, has created a rich, consistent body of avant-garde work. The Museum of Modern Art's complete retrospective, STEVE DWOSKIN, A PERSONAL CINEMA, will include 10 programs of features and shorts, plus the American premiere of the artist's most recent film, "The Silent Cry," to be shown at 8:30 p.m., May 11th, the opening day of the series, which will continue through May 26th.

Born in New York in 1939, trained as a graphic artist, painter and photographer, recognized and exhibited before making his first film in 1961, Steve Dwoskin makes movies that frame and structure the unfettered improvisations of primarily non-professional actors to focus on the converging extremes of social and private behavior, sex and solitude. (Thus, these films are not recommended for children of any age.)

Dwoskin's cinema functions without the benefit of conventional narrative. "They are not direct story narrative films but allow others to introduce their own narratives, as it were...I follow my instinct," Dwoskin says--"the films themselves are their own realities." Audiences have greeted his concern for "the film experience" with responses ranging from sympathetic tears to anger and violence.

Although his isolated settings are rarely conducive to sociological statements, Dwoskin's films carry political implications daring enough to account for their disturbing effect. Verina Glaessner, in a review of "Dyn Amo" for London's Time Out magazine, notes that Dwoskin's cinema "explores aspects of woman's slavery, a slavery that involves them in acting out fantasies that have lost whatever social value they had long

ago; woman as servant, woman as little girl, woman as programmed seductress offering instant gratification...roles are less the subject of the film than the effect of this role-playing on those who...are precipitating it into an increasingly painful divorce of self from action...it is also revolutionary to the extent that Dwoskin shows these false roles to be escapable. They are more dangerous continued than abandoned. And the women in the film remain...aware, if not of an alternative, at least of the desperate need for one."

Raymond Durnat, in his book Sexual Alienation in the Cinema, compares Dwoskin's "Alone" to Dryer's "The Passion of Joan of Arc" in describing Dwoskin's use of facial expressions to establish emotional atmosphere, and points out that "if the comparison with a religious film-maker again imposes itself it is because the religious films concern a value-system supposedly beyond society...while these (Dwoskin films) concern a human confrontation with nothingness which an anomic society cannot even for a second conceal."

Dwoskin's intensity is regulated by his visual sense of the medium, and a resolute attention to fantasy. Nevertheless, when confronted by these primal excursions into our contemporary collective unconscious, Andy Warhol was moved to ask him, "How do you do it?" Dwoskin (lecturer in Film and Television at the Royal College of Art, frequent Museum of Modern Art CINEPROBE guest, and author of Film Is: The International Free Cinema, Overlook Press, Woodstock, 1975) replied that he didn't know. It is this openness that allows Dwoskin to reach out through his films to share a relentless desire for intimate mutual self-recognition.

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